

ANNUAL
REPORT
2014
2015

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quality

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respect

OUR MISSION, VALUES, VISION

MISSION

To empower and support people who live, work or study in the catchment who are disadvantaged and vulnerable to address their legal needs.

VALUES

Fairness
Empowerment
Accessibility
Respect
Independence
Quality

VISION

A fair and inclusive society that promotes and protects human rights and equality before the law.

OUR OBJECTIVES

1

To effectively and innovatively utilise, manage and expand resources to achieve our mission.

2

To provide free and accessible legal advice, casework and representation in the Centre's catchment area, targeted to assist the most vulnerable.

3

To provide community legal education to empower and inform the community about legal rights and responsibilities.

4

To initiate and participate in law reform and legal policy activities relevant to the Centre's client base.

5

To develop, maintain and monitor relationships with stakeholders.

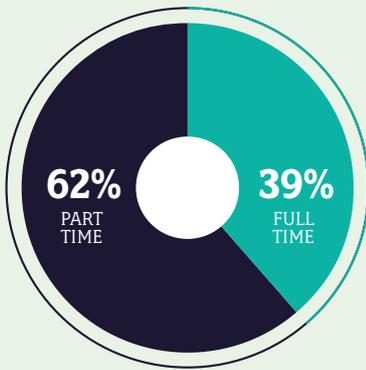
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To effectively promote services.

OUR TEAM

Management Committee

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Chairperson | John Wadsley |
| Vice Chairperson | Victoria Campbell |
| Treasurer | Jen Kelly |
| Secretary | Paul Bradley |
| Members | Celestine Moon, Julian Bartlett, Richard O'Donovan Quinn McCormack, Amanda Graham |



Staff

Jackie Galloway
Chief Executive Officer

Gillian Wilks
Deputy Chief Executive Officer

Legal Practice

Victoria Mullings
Principal Lawyer

Brendan Stackpole
Deputy Principal Lawyer

General Managers

Andrea Staunton
Volunteers & Education

Sue Vincent
Administration

Deputy Managers

Hellen Argiriou
Administration

Saskia Weerheim
Volunteers & Education

Administrative Workers

Beth Weerheim
Caitlin Wilson
Elle Hitchens
Jasminka Kumbaric
Nina Mitris
Vicki Holmes

Executive Support

Valmai Scully

Community Lawyers

Chris Gunasekera
Chris Horsfall
Danny Haworth
Gregory O'Brien
Kate Gustke
Kate Ross
Natalie Altman
Sokha Um

Education & Policy Lawyer

Saskia Rijfkoegel

Advocates

Cathie Currie
Chris Horsburgh
Elizabeth Divers
Vanessa Saunders

Community Workers

Chris Horsburgh
Aldo Taranto

Social Work

Michelle Cauchi

Contract Staff

Jodie De Gregorio - Finance Officer

Casual Staff

Elsje Van Moorst
Ashley Galvin

The following staff left during this period

Claire Williams
Jasmin Underwood
Stacey Penny

fairness

Volunteers

Lawyers

Trudy Ararat
 Chris Atmore
 Katherine Awad
 Leonie Bailey
 Rebekah Bessant
 Helen Betros
 Adam Birch
 Rohani Bixler
 Susan Borg
 Bill Boucher
 Prue Burrell
 Victoria Campbell
 Jane Carter
 John Connell
 Philip Cottier
 Peter Coutts
 Radek Dajer
 Michael Denison
 Amelia Edwards
 George Erlichster
 Travis Fewster
 Natalie Fleming
 Kathryn Footner
 Rebekah French
 David Galloway
 Ashley Galvin
 Canda Glanville
 Chris Gunasekera
 Angelica Guz
 Chris Hill
 Ian Hone
 Chris Horsfall
 Kristen House
 Kirsten Hughes
 Amanda Humphreys
 Michael Labiris
 Alison Laird
 Vincent Licciardi
 Cara Litterick
 Damian Lynch
 Jennifer Maher
 Peter Martin
 Luke Martin
 Vivien Mavropoulos
 Adam McBeth

Quinn McCormack
 Daniel McQuinn
 Danielle Mercuri
 Natalie Mikkelsen
 Michael Morehead
 Victor Moss
 Julie Newdick
 Jacqui Newton
 Michael Nguyen
 Greg O'Brien
 Barbara Osafo-Kwaako
 Hayley Pope
 Villy Raki
 Jonathan Rhall
 Ashley Richardson
 Saskia Rijfkogel
 Trish Samson
 Vanessa Saunders
 Christine Sedrak
 Ekta Shah
 Emily Short
 Joel Silver
 Patrick Smith
 Will Stidston
 Emma Strugnell
 Carolyn Tadross
 Sokha Um
 John Wadsley
 Zoe Watson
 Terry Weerappah
 Scott Whitechurch
 Nina Zec

Paralegals

Stefan Bagg
 Dean Balassis
 Renee Barnes
 Lynnette Bennett
 Matthew Berry
 Ivan Bezbradica
 Ashley Brown
 Andrew Campbell
 Phillip Carr
 Damien Christmas
 Hannah Clarke
 Rosie Cole
 Talitha Curcio

Rachel Curnow
 Luke Denham
 Christian Deppeler
 Elizabeth Divers
 Aija Dowling
 Andrew Doyle
 Samantha Doyle
 Carrie Ewin
 Sonari Fernando
 Marcus Frajman
 Jackie Galloway
 Mark Gilbert
 Natalia Gorges
 Anna Grage
 Jade Gregory
 Nadeera Gunawardena
 Stephanie Hansen
 Lauren Harston
 Vicki Holmes
 Cassandra Jansz
 Tammy Kamil
 Shohan Khan
 Claire Loughnan
 Daizy Maan
 Alex Marcou
 Katrina Markwick
 Danielle McCartin
 Adele McLeod
 Michele Mihailovic
 Kara Miller
 Vanettia Milne
 Sarah Mitchell
 John Moneir
 Benjamin Needleman
 Brylee Newman
 Tanita Northcott
 Lillian O'Connor
 Amelia O'Donovan Schulz
 Allana Olah
 Kirsty Osborne
 Barbara Padfield
 Priya Padhye
 Thierry Pascal
 Olga Pecherski
 Heather Perry
 Ricky Plummer
 Valerie Power

Stephanie Richardson
 Emily Rydel
 Amber Salter
 Kelly Schober
 Geeta Shyam
 Luke Sinclair
 Jonathan Sise
 Patrick Smith
 Shai Sommer
 Anthony Staunton
 Bethany Stewart
 Claire Stratton
 Aldo Taranto
 Brittany Tolson
 Allison Van Beers
 Jesse Williams
 Brigitte Wise
 Tia Wishart
 Rebecca Wright

Special Projects

Family Violence Research Project
 Inez Dussuyer

Thank you to all of our volunteers for sharing your time, knowledge and skills to ensure that poverty and other forms of disadvantage are not barriers to justice.

OUR AWARDS

accessibility

Kath Neilsen Memorial Award

We congratulate lawyer volunteer Chris Hill on receiving the 2014 Kath Neilsen Memorial Award, in recognition of his exceptional service to the Centre over 28 years. Throughout that time, he has assisted hundreds of our clients with a range of legal problems. His unfailing compassion and courtesy make him a pleasure to work with, and we have been grateful for the additional pro bono assistance he has provided clients.

This Award was created in 2002 in honour of the late Kath Neilsen, a founder and strong supporter of the Centre.

In accepting the Award, Chris said that contributing to Peninsula CLC was “an honour and a privilege.” He praised the work of community legal centres, saying:

“CLCs enable members of the community to come to a place where their problems can be identified and put into perspective so that they can be set upon the right path to resolution. Legal problems are often complex and involve both legal and non-legal issues. A CLC provides an important role in helping the community obtain the necessary legal advice as well as providing access to a range of other government and non-government services from other community welfare related organisations.

I feel honoured to have been associated with the Peninsula CLC over the last 28 years. Despite running my own busy legal practice in Mornington, the Centre is a place where I can apply the 28 years of legal experience that I have gathered and feel that the advice and service that I provide is useful and valued, not only by clients but the Centre and its loyal and dedicated staff.”

Volunteer Encouragement Awards

We were delighted to recognise some of our “rising stars” and thank them for their commitment, reliability, flexibility and willingness to help the Centre in extra ways. There were six winners of 2014 Volunteer Encouragement Awards, who each received a framed certificate and book voucher. Congratulations Alison Laird, Anna Grage, Danielle McCartin, Renee Barnes, Ben Needleman and Alex Marcou.

Volunteer Long Service Awards

We are fortunate to have many long term volunteers, who have devoted years to serving their communities through volunteering with us. We appreciate their invaluable support. Congratulations to Paul Bradley (10 years), Anthony Staunton (10 years) and Andrew Doyle (10 years).

Warmest thanks to Maurice Blackburn Lawyers for again sponsoring our volunteer awards.

Staff Long Service Awards

Congratulations to Victoria Mullings on achieving 20 years of service and Valmai Scully on achieving 15 years of service to Peninsula Community Legal Centre.

OUR YEAR

Our year at Peninsula Community Legal Centre Inc. held many challenges as we strived to address the ever increasing demand for our services across our vast and diverse community.

Our team's dedication and resilience bought about a lasting impact for many of our clients; we helped people at risk of homelessness, families were reunited, we secured remedies on a wide range of legal issues, we listened, supported and advocated as women shared their harrowing stories of family violence.

We spoke out about the scourge that is family violence, joining the No More Deaths campaign and making a submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence. We participated locally and on a state level in forums, community events, workshops highlighting our experiences of the prevalence and severity of family violence and we continued our work with women to navigate an often complex and fragmented legal system.

We were encouraged by the findings of the Productivity Commission's Report on Access to Justice Arrangements. The report highlighted that disadvantaged people face a number of barriers in accessing the civil justice system which make them more susceptible to, and less equipped to deal with, legal disputes. If left unresolved, civil problems can have a big impact on the lives of the most disadvantaged. The report also

confirmed our experience that demand for legal assistance far outweighed the resources available, with the Commission recommending an interim investment of \$200 million nationally, just to meet the most pressing of civil law needs. We were disheartened by the news that a number of CLCs would face Commonwealth funding cuts in 2015. This decision has since been reversed, however there are clear indications that community legal centres including PCLC will face significant cuts in Commonwealth funding in 2017/18.

Commonwealth Reforms and the new National Partnership Agreement (NPA) for legal assistance funding were topical issues for the sector in the past few months of the year bringing a number of changes and challenges that will take effect in the new financial year and beyond.

We continue to review the scope of our operations and explore new ways to enhance and improve our services to the community. We conducted a major review of our intake processes in response to the increasing demand for services and excessive waiting times. This resulted in the development of a new intake triage model which the Centre will trial over the coming year. We were also delighted to receive a two year grant from the Phyllis Connor Memorial Innovation Program (Equity Trustees) for an Integrated Law and Social Work Project, which will pilot and evaluate the integration of an in-house social worker in a generalist community legal setting and provide for a more holistic service to our clients.

The development, implementation, monitoring and review of policy, procedures and associated practices and tools is an ongoing process to which the Centre is committed. After gaining Tier One accreditation and certification under the National Association of Community Legal Centre's scheme in May 2014, we have continued to work across all levels and aspects of the organisation to ensure that we met our obligations and to reflect on and improve our practices.

As part of its review processes, the Management Committee has been working on its governance and strategic thinking and were fortunate to secure the pro-bono services of management consultants, Halpin Partnership to assist. The committee also focused on three key governance issues, developing sub committee's in the areas of finance, policy and board planning. These committees actively engage with the responsible staff in each area.

Our warmest thanks to the Management Committee for it's leadership, guidance and support over the year. We thank the organisations and individuals who support the Centre through funding and in-kind assistance.

We offer our heartfelt thanks to our wonderful management team, staff and volunteers for their passion, commitment and resilience throughout another demanding year.

7,702
ADVICES

2,716
CASES OPENED

2,679
COURT / TRIBUNAL
ASSISTANCE

5,494
CLIENTS ASSISTED

empowerment

OUR FUNDING

Peninsula Community Legal Centre is funded by the Australian Government Attorney-General's Department and by the Victorian Department of Justice (administered by Victoria Legal Aid) to provide legal services, including legal education and law reform.

Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) funds the Centre to deliver the Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Program (TAAP), Consumer Advice and Advocacy Program (CAAP) and the Rooming House Outreach Program.

The Centre receives financial assistance from local governments to support its work in those municipalities. Frankston City Council also provides in-kind support through the use of premises for the Centre's Frankston North service.

This year the Centre received grants from the Phyllis Connor Memorial Trust to conduct the Integrated Law and Social Work Project and the William Angliss (Vic) Charitable Trust to support the work of the Centre.

Key funding sources are demonstrated in the following graph.

Full details of income appear in Our Financial Summary, later in this report

| | | |
|--|----|-----------|
| Australian Government Attorney-General's Dept. | \$ | 720,776 |
| Victoria Legal Aid | \$ | 917,336 |
| Consumer Affairs Victoria | \$ | 394,902 |
| Local Government | \$ | 189,656 |
| The William Angliss (Vic) Charitable Trust | \$ | 2,000 |
| Phyllis Connor Memorial Trust | \$ | 20,000* |
| Other | \$ | 123,083 |
| | \$ | 2,367,753 |

**In 14/15 funding totaling \$80,000 was received from the Phyllis Connor Memorial Trust. The funding is to be used exclusively for the purpose as outlined in the funding application. As at June 30, 2015, approximately \$20,000 had been utilized on the project and accordingly \$60,000 has been carried forward to be utilized in the subsequent financial year. As a result \$20,000 has been recognized in income in the 2014/15 year, and \$60,000 has been recorded as a liability in the Statement of Financial position for unused project funds.*

quality



OUR PRO BONO RELATIONSHIPS

Pro Bono Partnership

Our highly regarded pro bono partnership with **Russell Kennedy** delivered another year of valuable assistance to the Centre. The Russell Kennedy team has supported the Centre and its staff with advice and assistance by partners, mentoring by special counsel and administrative support for which we are very appreciative.

In 2014-15, Russell Kennedy's in-kind and financial support was costed at **\$55,360.80**

This included:

- Client Disbursement Fund
- Legal advice on PCLC's professional indemnity insurances
- Legal advice on Privacy Principles
- Continuing Professional Development Day for staff and volunteer lawyers with CLC only practising certificates
- Mentoring and advice on client files
- Printing 500 copies of brochures
- Professional development session to PCLC staff
- Sharing of legal updates and client bulletins
- Staff attendance at Russell Kennedy Professional Development sessions
- Printing & collating volunteer manuals
- Design and printing two editions of our public newsletter Community Law News
- Provision of meeting space – Community Development & Community Legal Education Working Group
- Complimentary ticket to Human Rights Dinner

Special thanks to Victor Harcourt, Principal, Sophie McNamara, Associate, Emma Dunlevie, Senior Associate and the fantastic pro bono team at Russell Kennedy for their wholehearted support.

Pro Bono Support

We welcomed **Halpin Partnership** to the Centre, Halpin Partnership are providing their management consultancy services pro bono to work with the Centre's Management Committee to set the foundations for the development of a strategic and influential board. We thank Dr Eibhlin Fletcher for her generosity and support.

We thank **Maurice Blackburn** for their continued support, sponsoring our Volunteer Long Service Awards, which recognise volunteers who have dedicated ten years of service to the Centre and the Volunteer Encouragement Awards. We also appreciate their involvement in our Social Work project and sharing of knowledge with the Centre's staff.

The **Peninsula Lawyer Discount Scheme**, now in its second year, operates out of our Rosebud Branch. Clients who were unable to be assisted by the Centre on an ongoing basis, do not qualify for legal aid and are unable to pay full fees for legal assistance are referred to the scheme, where a discount of up to 50% may be offered. The scheme was initiated by **Michael Morehead** of Morehead Lawyers.

This past year we were able to continue our professional development activities to staff and volunteers with the support of local legal practitioners who kindly donated their time, knowledge and resources, including

- **Amanda Graham**, White Cleland & **Anthony Grimes**, Family Relationship Centre, Frankston & Mornington Peninsula, 'Family Law - Negotiating Care Arrangements'
- **Victoria Campbell**, Barrister, & **Amanda Graham**, White Cleland, 'Family Law & Family Violence'
- **James Gorman**, Gorman & Hannan, 'Introduction to Child Protection'

- **Amanda Graham**, White Cleland, 'Family Law, Property Settlement & Financial Support'
- **Victor Moss**, Moss Legal, a series of workshops on crime.
- **Victoria Legal Aid** providing access to Law Guru, and to its Professional Legal Education seminars to staff lawyers and volunteer lawyers with a CLC practising certificate.

A very big thank you to the legal community who throughout the year provided mentoring, in particular Amanda Humphreys, Kennedy Partners and Terry Weerapah, Bayside Solicitors and the many barristers who supported our clients by agreeing to reduced fee briefs.

A special thank you to Barristers, Victoria Campbell and Ivan Brewer, who conducted several complex matters on a pro bono basis.

respect

OUR COMMUNITY: LEGAL NEEDS

South East quick facts



South East Legal Needs Analysis (SELNA)

The SELNA was a collaborative project undertaken over almost two and a half years by community legal centres based in the south eastern region of Melbourne and Victoria Legal Aid (VLA). The Legal Needs Assessment Framework developed for the National Association of Community Legal Centres was the underpinning methodology for the SELNA. VLA provided resources for the employment of a consultant, Sam Horsfield (Real Politic Consulting), to work alongside the co-ordinating Group to collect and collate demographic and service data and the outcomes of stakeholder consultation from across the region.

In June 2015 the Legal Needs Analysis of the South East Metro Region of Victoria report was finalised. As stated in the report (p.5), The following broad questions guided the conduct of the this analysis and the structure of the report:

1. What is the demographic make-up of Victoria's South East metropolitan region? What is the level of legal need within South East communities?
2. Are VLA and CLC[s] generating clients from and, and providing services to areas within the South East relative to population, low SEIFA Index rating and high indicators of legal need?
3. Where are the gaps in service provision? What might legal need look like in the South East in the future?"

The report could be considered to mark the completion of stage one of the SELNA. It "...does not consider nor recommend directions of initiatives relevant to service planning in the South East region...it provides a preliminary evidence base to inform future service planning."

The SELNA has been a massive undertaking to date, but more work is required. The challenge for partner organisations now is to maintain momentum, ensure that we understand the findings and their implications, and then to consider if and how we can work co-operatively to engage in planning and delivery of legal assistance services on a regional level.

PCLC has greatly valued the opportunity to work closely with Springvale Monash Legal Service, Casey Cardinia Community Legal Service, St Kilda Legal Service and Victoria Legal Aid in undertaking the SELNA. We note that relationship building and knowledge and skills development have been important additional benefits derived from the process.

Reference

SELNA Co-ordinating Group 2015 Legal Needs Analysis of the South East Metro Region of Victoria, Melbourne

OUR CLIENTS



Client profile snapshot

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Female | 60% |
| Sole parent with dependent children | 24% |
| Born in Australia | 70% |
| Aged between 35-44 | 27% |
| Have a disability | 23% |
| Disability type - psychiatric | 35% |
| Low income | 75% |
| Income source - government benefit | 51% |
| Family violence indicated | 27% |

Client satisfaction survey

We are committed to ensuring that our services are high quality, accessible and effective. We seek feedback from our clients through an annual client satisfaction survey, this year conducted in April/May 2015. Clients who completed the survey reported a high level of satisfaction, with comments demonstrating the importance of clients feeling valued and respected.

Comments

"Friendly staff who quickly grasped my situation"

"Feel much better with my direction and options to take"

"Peninsula Community Legal Centre made my appointment almost straight away. The lawyer was very helpful and gave me good advice".

OUR STATISTICS



Legal work undertaken

| | |
|------------------------|--------|
| Client activities | 10,418 |
| Clients assisted | 5,494 |
| Advice activities | 7,702 |
| Cases opened | 2,716 |
| Cases closed | 2,768 |
| Information activities | 14,860 |

Contact Type

| | |
|------------------|-------|
| Face to face | 6,186 |
| Telephone advice | 1,487 |
| Mail/email/other | 29 |

Client Activities at Branches

| | |
|------------|-------|
| Frankston | 4,526 |
| Cranbourne | 1,127 |
| Bentleigh | 810 |
| Rosebud | 750 |
| Pines | 73 |

Client Activities at Visiting Services

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| CAV Advocacy Outreach | 224 |
| Chelsea | 124 |
| Hastings | 99 |
| Home visits | 6 |

Client Activities at Courts

| | |
|---|-------|
| Magistrates' Court Frankston | 1,338 |
| Federal Circuit Court Dandenong | 1,096 |
| Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal | 245 |

Problem Type

% Problem Types

| | |
|--------------|-----|
| Family Law | 54% |
| Civil Law | 37% |
| Criminal Law | 9% |

Top Ten Problem Types

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Child contact or contact orders | 1,816 |
| Family or domestic violence order | 1,619 |
| Child residency | 1,029 |
| Property in marriage | 829 |
| Road traffic/motor vehicle offences | 522 |
| Divorce | 522 |
| Tenancy - other | 394 |
| Civil violence/restraining orders | 352 |
| Tenancy notice | 346 |
| Tenancy rent | 313 |

accessibility

OUR SERVICES

Community Legal Services Program

2015 has been the year in which family violence has finally received clear recognition as the scourge that it is, sadly vindicating PCLC's decision many years ago, in the face of rising local statistics, to make it our priority area of work.

The public outcry at the death of Luke Batty, and the commencement of the state Royal Commission into Family Violence have placed the spotlight squarely on the insidious impact that violence has on the lives of far too many of our clients.

The focus of our casework practice during this time has increasingly been on expanding our capacity to take on ongoing and complex matters where violence has had an effect, whether this is around the more obvious family violence orders and family law, or in related areas such as fines, debt or tenancy.

As part of this focus, we are about to trial a new intake model, which we expect will not only cut waiting lists, but will allow for additional casework time. It encompasses a triage system to ensure that those who have some capacity for self-help are resourced and encouraged to do so, and those who are most vulnerable in our community are referred to our caseworkers for additional help and support. The sheer volume of requests for assistance has meant that increasingly, our casework resources are having to be directed only to those who fall into clear categories of disadvantage, with many clients of limited means only able to be provided with advice.

While most of the initial intake will be by telephone, helpful for those in the most distant reaches of the Centre's very large catchment, we are also retaining appointments for 'special circumstance' clients and our visiting services to Chelsea & Hastings, (soon to include Mornington as well, in a joint project with our local Victoria Legal Aid office), as well as volunteer-run sessions where clients are seen face-to-face.

Those assessed as vulnerable can be seen at our nearest office, and if necessary, provided with legal support at one of our duty services at the Federal Circuit Court, the family violence list at Frankston Magistrates' Court, or the civil claims or residential tenancies lists at VCAT in Dandenong.

The Centre has always placed great value on our links with local agencies and support services. One of the strengths of CLCs is the more holistic approach we offer. Many of our clients present with a multiplicity of problems, and to add to the options available, we have been pleased to incorporate a social worker into our practice, enabling us to offer support with the non-legal aspects of client matters.

The legal practice is central to all we do at PCLC, and the client experience informs not only our law reform work, and community legal education initiatives, but all our interactions with funding and peak bodies, local agencies and other government organisations. Our submission to the Royal Commission was strongly influenced by witnessing the difficulties encountered by clients in attempting to achieve safe outcomes for themselves and their children, particularly through the court system.

Family Violence & Family Law

We were proud but sad this year to have been involved, as part of a team, in the Coroner's Inquest into the tragic death of Luke Batty, which we hope, along with the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Family Violence, will result in findings which will go some way towards prevention of future deaths.

As mentioned, one of the key concerns that has arisen is the difficulty for victims of violence in negotiating the 'system' currently in place. Multiple court appearances, cross applications by perpetrators of violence, and a lack of understanding by authorities of the all-important dynamics of family violence are

fairness

just some of the many barriers to securing a safe outcome.

Our casework practice encounters many of these concerns in the course of our work, and we are proactive in raising issues with the relevant organization, be it courts, police or community groups. The police response to violence over the past several years has improved substantially. This year, our lawyers have addressed issues of gun safety, risk assessment, service of Intervention Orders, and identification of primary victims both with police in the local area, and the police policy unit. This has occurred either directly, or through the Federation of CLC working groups, Integrated Family Violence partnerships and various family violence networks.

It is clear that for many people, negotiating that system without legal assistance is a near impossibility, and for those that are facing 'high risk' behavior, the need is even more acute. We support moves to set up monitoring groups for high risk matters, and additional training for all involved in the family violence sector. Men's Behaviour Change groups are an important element of the systemic response to prevention, and our Centre is encouraged by the renewed focus in this space, while recognizing that it is only part of the picture.

It is crucial in family violence matters that victims especially have access to family law advice and casework services. At PCLC, clients can be referred to our Family Law Program. This Program provides family law advice, casework, and duty lawyer services at the Federal Circuit Court, Dandenong, and endeavours to focus on children's matters where family violence is present and the safety and welfare of children is alleged to be a concern. Consequently, the Program often deals with urgent matters involving the location and recovery of children, airport watch list orders and urgent applications for children's orders. These are often complex matters where victim has low

income, is female, and from a culturally and linguistically diverse background.

Perhaps partly due to the more stringent notification requirements, the Family Law Program has seen an increase in the numbers and severity of family violence within disputes. Our duty lawyer service at the Federal Circuit Court, Dandenong is busy and well-respected, and has been proactive in alerting the Federal Circuit Court to processes which add to the difficulty for victims, including an acceptance of contravention applications at the nearest registry, rather than the registry where orders were initially made. While the primary focus is, and always will be on children's issues, occasionally we are also able to address severe financial disadvantage by providing help with, for example, applications for superannuation split, where there is little or nothing in the way of other assets.

Child Support is another area in which the Family Law team are able to provide advice & help, both through paternity testing (PCLC has a low-cost arrangement with one of the testing clinics) and changes of assessment, and the centre also runs a weekly priority appointment day for clients attending the Family Relationship Centre Frankston & Mornington Peninsula, to expedite matters for those who are in the course of mediating agreements for the care of their children.

These services are all part of a comprehensive suite of assistance available to our clients, dependant on need and vulnerability factors such as family violence. They have developed over time in response to the needs of our local community, for whom family violence and family law are key issues, as evidenced by the statistics on family violence throughout our catchment.

Civil & Criminal Law

During the past year Centre's lawyers have assisted a number of clients facing criminal charges and requiring psychiatric reports and representation, many of whom, with the additional limits now on legal aid guidelines, have been provided with help from barristers acting pro-bono. Reports have been obtained through our Client Disbursement Fund, kindly donated by our pro-bono partners, Russell Kennedy, and this fund has also supported a number of 'Special Circumstances' clients dealing with often thousands of dollars in fines to obtain the necessary paperwork to put their particular situation to the court.

Infringements is an area of law where we have noticed a substantial increase in enquiries over the past few years. The impact of fines, particularly from tollways, where there may be multiple breaches, all incurring rapid costs increases, has been catastrophic on disadvantaged clients. Despite there being a system in place for those with special circumstances, it is often indecipherable to those it is aimed at. PCLC supports the recent proposals by the FCLC Infringements Working Group for sensible reform. Legal centres are being overwhelmed by demand for help, and again, are having to limit ongoing assistance to only those in the most dire situations.

The Centre also handles a variety of other matters, including debt problems, neighbour disputes, VOCAT applications, Centrelink issues, advice concerning motor vehicle accidents, and a limited service providing wills for palliative care patients and other people with special needs.

Tenant and Consumer Advice and Advocacy Program

Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) funds PCLC to deliver the Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Program (TAAP), including the Metropolitan Rooming House Residents Support service, and the Consumer Advice and Advocacy Program (CAAP). The TAAP and CAAP programs operate with trained advocates and under the supervision of the Centre's legal practice.

Our workers made contact with 700 residents during the year through visits to registered and suspected unregistered rooming houses and attending community meals and events across the southern and eastern metropolitan region. The primary reason for contacting residents was to advise them of their rights and responsibilities and to link them to relevant services. Our workers also co-operated with key agencies and participated in housing and rooming house networks across the region.

Our workers reported wide variation in the standard of premises and management of the rooming houses and in the approaches taken by different local councils to registration and compliance. Our experience is that rooming house residents are unlikely to enforce their rights due to factors such as limited alternative and affordable housing options.

Access to safe and secure housing is a basic human right. Without adequate housing, it can often be difficult to attend to all of the other matters that may be impacting upon one's life. The Law and Justice Foundation of NSW has found as part of its Legal Australia Wide Survey that *"respondents who had rented publicly and privately in the previous twelve months were particularly vulnerable to legal problems. This vulnerability concerned not only housing-specific, but a broad range of different types of legal problems."*¹

All of these factors highlight the importance of tenants, particularly

those who are the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, being able to access timely and appropriate assistance when issues arise regarding their housing.

Our TAAP service operates across the southern metropolitan region. Advocates provided a combination of tenancy related advice, assistance and representation to between 140 and 210 clients in each quarter of 2014-2015. Advocates provided representation for tenancy matters at more than 200 Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) hearings. Duty services were regularly offered at VCAT in Dandenong and Frankston. Possession applications, bond and compensation claims, repairs, lease break and rent arrears were the main issues for which tenants sought assistance.

"We arrived at the courts having no real idea of how the whole system worked or what to expect. My poor daughter had been quite traumatised by the whole process, having never stepped inside a court and knowing she hadn't done anything wrong. Luckily, the Advocate stepped in to help us and the Member could see exactly what we could see and it all went in our favour. Please pass on my thanks to [the Advocate]... she has restored a little faith for me but in particular, my daughter. This experience taught her that sometimes fighting for what you believe is worth it."

"Without this service me and my three girls would have been homeless."

Our workers participated in the FCLC's Tenancy Working Group and attended meetings of the VCAT Residential Tenancies Users Group.

The CAAP program, covering the southern and eastern metropolitan regions and Gippsland, assisted between 30 and 60

¹ (Macourt & Iriana, 2014, p.11)

clients in each quarter. Quality issues/ consumer guarantees, consumer disputes and delays/failure to supply were the main problem areas for which assistance was provided. More than \$100,000 was recovered for clients through tribunal processes and successful negotiation. Good outcomes were also achieved in terms of rectification works, refunds, repairs and waiver of fees.

There was a high level of demand for the TAAP and CAAP services with over 700 clients assisted in 2014-2015.

The Centre wishes to acknowledge the support and positive co-operation provided by the CAV Funded Services team and VCAT staff at Dandenong and Frankston. We note our appreciation to the Tenants Union of Victoria and the Consumer Action Law Centre for the complex casework support and specialised professional development opportunities offered during the year.

Reference

Macourt D & Iriana R 2014 Updating Justice No: 40 Are renters worse off? The legal needs of public and private tenants, Law and Justice Foundation of NSW

Our Volunteers

Four nights a week our doors are open, thanks to the tremendous contribution of our volunteers. Volunteers significantly strengthen our ability to respond to the legal

needs of our community, providing up to nine additional free legal advice sessions a week across our five branches.

This year a new record was set, with volunteer lawyers providing 2,012 free legal advices – the first time the impressive 2,000 mark has been exceeded. Paralegal volunteers coordinated the sessions, conducted preliminary client interviews and provided research and administrative support.

We have also benefited from the work of policy and research volunteers, with Alison Laird assisting in our submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence and Dr Inez Dussuyer commencing a Family Violence Research Project.

With the support of lawyer volunteer Ash Galvin, our new Pines volunteer service commenced in October and operates weekly from the Mahogany Integrated Services Hub providing free legal advice and ongoing assistance to vulnerable people from the Frankston North and surrounding communities.

Our capacity to undertake complex casework was also boosted this year by the substantial and ongoing additional volunteer work undertaken by Chris Horsfall, Ash Galvin and Alison Laird. Thank you to Jacqui Newton and John Connell who provided volunteer casework support for part of the year and the Department

of Justice for releasing Angelica Guz to undertake a short secondment with us.

We are justly proud of our volunteer team and thank them for their devotion to improving access to justice for our clients and community.

Family Relationship Centre and Legal Assistance Services Partnership

We thank our partners, Family Life and Victoria Legal Aid (Peninsula Regional Office), for their ongoing goodwill and support of this partnership to ensure access to free legal assistance services for clients of the Family Relationship Centre Frankston and Mornington Peninsula.

Key achievements this year included:

- 20 Legal Information for Parents workshops, delivered to 215 participants;
- 89 free legal advices;
- 19 ongoing cases;
- Quarterly Partnership Working Group meetings; and
- Two informal ‘Meet and Greet’ activities for workers of partner organisations.

We are pleased that our Memorandum of Understanding has been extended to 30 June 2016, and look forward to continuing working together to support separated families make safe and workable arrangements for their children.

Key volunteer achievements



Integrated Law and Social Work Project

In late 2014, PCLC was successful in a grant application to the Phyllis Connor Memorial Innovation Fund. Through this grant PCLC is piloting and evaluating the employment of a social work professional in a generalist community legal centre setting. The project is premised on the understanding that successful resolution of legal problems in the short to medium term is often contingent upon addressing associated personal and structural factors. The Project aims to improve client outcomes through providing integrated and collaborative services which deal with legal problems and better identify and address non-legal matters. The Project will also aim to build capacity and strengthen this holistic approach across the organisation and to share learnings with the legal assistance sector.

The first few months of the Integrated Law and Social Work Project have encouraged the organisation to look at practices and culture and to consider approaches to working collaboratively across disciplines to improve client outcomes. Staff often did not feel they were able to assist to the extent required with non-legal aspects of matters because of time limitations, but now are reporting a sense of relief that there is someone who can pick up and further explore matters with clients.

A Reference Group has been established to provide guidance to the Project. The contributions of Professor Mary Anne Noone (La Trobe University School of Law), Sophie Beiers (Centrelink Frankston and Mornington Peninsula) and Canda Glanville (Maurice Blackburn Lawyers) is greatly appreciated.

This project was supported by the Phyllis Connor Memorial Trust, managed by Equity Trustees and Mr Norman Bourke. PCLC gratefully acknowledges and thanks the Trust for providing funds to pilot the Integrated Law and Social Work Project.

Trainee Lawyer Placement Program

During 2014-2015 PCLC has piloted a program through which law graduates who are completing a practical legal training course can undertake a placement at the Centre. Nina Zec and Elena Farro completed placements and Amelia O'Donovan Schulz and Katrina Markwick began placements during the year.

Feedback from the trainee lawyers and from the experienced employee lawyers with whom they were placed has been very positive. Trainees have reported that they have been given the opportunity to be involved in a range of activities, to undertake relevant tasks and to have client contact. They also report that they are learning a lot, being challenged and extended, having their learning needs met and are being appropriately supervised and supported.

“What I found impressive was that no matter how busy the lawyers were, they were always willing to sit down and talk things through with me, making sure I really grasped the content or what I was asked to do. This quality was seen again and again and really made me feel like the staff at PCLC wanted me to learn as much as I could during my placement. I found the high quality work that the lawyers carry out for their clients has driven me to work in the community legal sector with the same approach and attitude.” Elena Farro

The PCLC lawyers have reported that the trainees have been very open to learning, that it has been helpful to have the assistance of the trainees and that being a ‘supervisor’ has provided some impetus for reflection on their own practice.

We are delighted to report that all of the trainees are volunteering with PCLC, an unexpected but very welcome benefit of the pilot program. Evaluation of the Trainee Lawyer Placement Program pilot is underway.

Services / Open Hours
as at 30 June 2015

- Head Office (Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm)
- Bentleigh (Mon, Wed & Thurs 9am - 3pm)
- Cranbourne (Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm)
- Pines Branch (By appointment)
- Rosebud (Mon, Wed & Thurs 9am - 5pm)
- Federal Circuit Court Dandenong (Mon - Fri 9.30am)
- Magistrates' Court Frankston (Mon, Tues & Wed 9.15am)

| MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| Family Law Duty Lawyer Service | Family Law Duty Lawyer Service | Family Law Duty Lawyer Service | Family Law Duty Lawyer Service | Family Law Duty Lawyer Service |
| Family Violence Duty Lawyer Service | Family Violence Duty Lawyer Service | Family Violence Duty Lawyer Service | CAV Advocacy <i>(Head Office)</i> | CAV Advocacy <i>(Head Office)</i> |
| CAV Advocacy <i>(Head Office & Dandenong)</i> | CAV Advocacy <i>(Head Office & Dandenong)</i> | CAV Advocacy <i>(Head Office)</i> | Family Law Appointments <i>(Frankston & Bentleigh)</i> | Telephone Advice |
| Telephone Advice | Family Law Appointments | Family Law Appointments <i>(Bentleigh)</i> | General Legal Appointments <i>(Cranbourne)</i> | Visiting Service <i>(Chelsea/Hastings f/n)</i> |
| Family Law Appointments <i>(FRC)</i> | Drop-in Service 1.30pm | Child Support Appointments <i>(Rosebud & Bentleigh)</i> | Volunteer Service 1.00pm | Rooming House Outreach |
| Child Support Appointments <i>(Frankston & Cranbourne)</i> | Volunteer Night Service <i>(Cranbourne & Rosebud)</i> | General Legal Appointments <i>(Head Office & Rosebud)</i> | Volunteer Night Service <i>(Bentleigh)</i> | Tenancy Duty Advocacy Service <i>(Frankston)</i> |
| General Legal Appointments <i>(Bentleigh & Cranbourne)</i> | Tenancy Duty Advocacy Service <i>(Dandenong)</i> | Volunteer Night Service <i>(Frankston & Pines)</i> | Rooming House Outreach | |
| Volunteer Night Service <i>(Head Office & Bentleigh)</i> | | Rooming House Outreach | | |
| Tenancy Duty Advocacy Service <i>(Dandenong)</i> | | | | |

independence

OUR STORIES



empowerment

Yasmin's Story

Yasmin was the subject of a police IVO application, which had removed her from her home the previous day, and she had spent the night on a friend's couch. Her two small children had remained at the home with her partner, and she was unsure how they were.

Yasmin was undergoing cancer treatment, was stressed and upset, and seemed slow in taking in advice. She indicated, and had told police, that she was the primary victim, and there had been frequent violence in the past, (although less so recently), with IVOs against her partner, and a history of heavy drug use. Police accepted her story when raised at court, but indicated that their decisions were based on available evidence, in this case the partner's blood nose, and consequently, their guidelines required them to take action against her.

The partner, who was a large man, was insisting on a full order, which would have left Yasmin homeless, but police, after discussions with PCLC's duty lawyer, refused to support this, and ultimately Yasmin agreed to a limited interim order allowing her to return home. She felt, due to her illness, unable to cope with homelessness, and preferred to return home, despite the risk, with advice to call police if there were any incidents.

At our request, the matter was adjourned to a date a few weeks later to allow police and DHS to conduct risk assessments, Yasmin was also referred to the Applicant Worker for safety planning.

Vini's Story

'Vini' was born in SE Asia, and her English was limited. She had come to Australia with her husband, and had two very young children. There had been a number of past incidents of family violence, increasing since arriving in Victoria.

As a result of a serious assault by her husband which included attempted choking in front of the children, Vini found herself in the Magistrates' Court facing an intervention order application brought by the husband, alleging that she had torn his clothing and abused him. Prior to issuing the application, her husband had taken the children away to stay with his family.

Although no interim order was made, police serving the application told her incorrectly that she must leave the home, and she was forced to move into crisis accommodation without

her children. She had seen them only infrequently since then.

PCLC's duty lawyer service assisted Vini at court, using an interpreter, advising her to make a cross-application, which she did, and sought clarification regarding the husband's application. The court confirmed that his application for an interim order had been earlier refused and the Centre has subsequently raised the issue of her incorrect removal from the home with police.

The duty lawyer also sought an interim order in respect of Vini's application, but because the interpreter had to leave, the Magistrate was persuaded to hear her evidence without one, so that an order could be obtained. Ultimately despite the violent history, only an interim 'safe contact' order was made, which did not require the return of the children. Vini could return home if she felt safe, but because the children were elsewhere, she has remained in a refuge, and

PCLC has continued to liaise with her support services as regards family law assistance and continuing help with the intervention order proceedings, which are ongoing.

Lucille's Story

'Lucille' and her ex-husband 'Sam' had been together some years, and had two small children, both with special needs. They separated recently because of family violence, and Sam's generally poor attitude towards the needs of the children, who remained with Lucille.

Life was difficult for Lucille, and she had fears for the future, given her ongoing inability to earn an income due to her carer responsibilities. The parties had no assets other than Sam's superannuation, which was reasonably substantial.

PCLC was able to negotiate a 'super split' settlement with Sam, who was initially reluctant, but finally conceded

that the court would likely order such a split. The Centre drew and filed consent orders, and finalised the process for Lucille, who received an almost three figure sum, some of which might be accessible if times were especially hard.

PCLC also tried unsuccessfully to negotiate children's arrangements, finally assisting her with an affidavit and response to Sam's application for contact made at an interstate registry, and helping to get the matter transferred to the FCC at Dandenong, where she could receive ongoing assistance from the Centre's duty lawyer service there.

Hope's Story

Hope is a married woman living in the South East region with her two children from her previous relationship. She had been a victim of verbal and serious physical abuse by her husband since they were married after an

arranged wedding. She was an Australian citizen and had sponsored the husband to Australia.

The elders of the extended family convinced Hope to put up with the violence until the husband settled down into family life.

The violence escalated when Hope became pregnant with their first child. The husband tried to kick her in the stomach when she was in the late stages of pregnancy, but she turned in time and was kicked in the leg.

When the police attended Hope was instructed by the elders not to complain as it was not acceptable in their culture for women to rebel against their husbands. Because of the pressure from the elders, she withdrew her statement to the police.

At one point the husband assaulted both the young baby and the older child, and was charged, receiving first a suspended sentence

and subsequently a term of imprisonment.

Because of the seriousness of the violence, local police were very supportive.

After the husband was released from prison Hope heard that he was planning to kidnap the children and return to his home country. Our duty lawyer assisted with an urgent application for the children to be placed on the airport watch list.

The effect of family violence is not only direct. Hope was unfortunately ostracized by her community and ultimately lost the support of her family.

She is continuing to receive assistance at court until the matter is finally resolved and is now working on establishing a new life.

This matter has received significant pro bono assistance from barrister Ivan Brewer, for which this Centre is especially grateful.

Ted's Story

Ted was an elderly gentleman on an aged pension who had saved money for some time to go on an overseas holiday to visit family, in what was likely to be his last overseas trip. A few weeks prior to his leaving, Ted became seriously unwell requiring several hospital stays which meant he was unable to travel as planned. Unfortunately for him he had not arranged travel insurance, with the airline only prepared to offer a small refund in response to his travel agent's negotiations. Ted was not happy with this outcome and sought the services of our Tenant and Consumer Advocacy Program. The advocate wrote to the airline and after negotiations the airline agreed to refund half of the original amount paid by Ted, giving him some opportunity to save and reschedule his trip.

accessibility

Jenny's Story

Jenny was a sole parent of four children whose sole income was Centrelink benefits. She had been struggling to meet her expenses including the rent. She fell into arrears and had failed to understand the repercussions of this. Jenny not only faced the risk of homelessness, with a pending application for possession by the landlord, but also of her children being removed from her care if the eviction was to occur. The Centre's tenant advocate liaised with Jenny's support workers and local housing agencies to source housing establishment funding for Jenny. This enabled the advocate to propose a realistic payment plan for the arrears to the landlord's representative, which was refused. The advocate subsequently submitted the payment plan proposal to the Tribunal with a submission seeking that the Tribunal exercise its discretion and allow Jenny to remain in

the premises on the proposed plan. The Tribunal accepted the advocate's proposal avoiding Jenny and her children becoming homeless.

Alice's Story

Alice attended the FCC duty service seeking orders to take her young child to Afghanistan to see her dying grandmother who was terminally ill. The grandmother had been given four weeks to live and was most anxious to see her youngest great grandchild. Alice had applied for a passport for the child but had been refused without the father's signature.

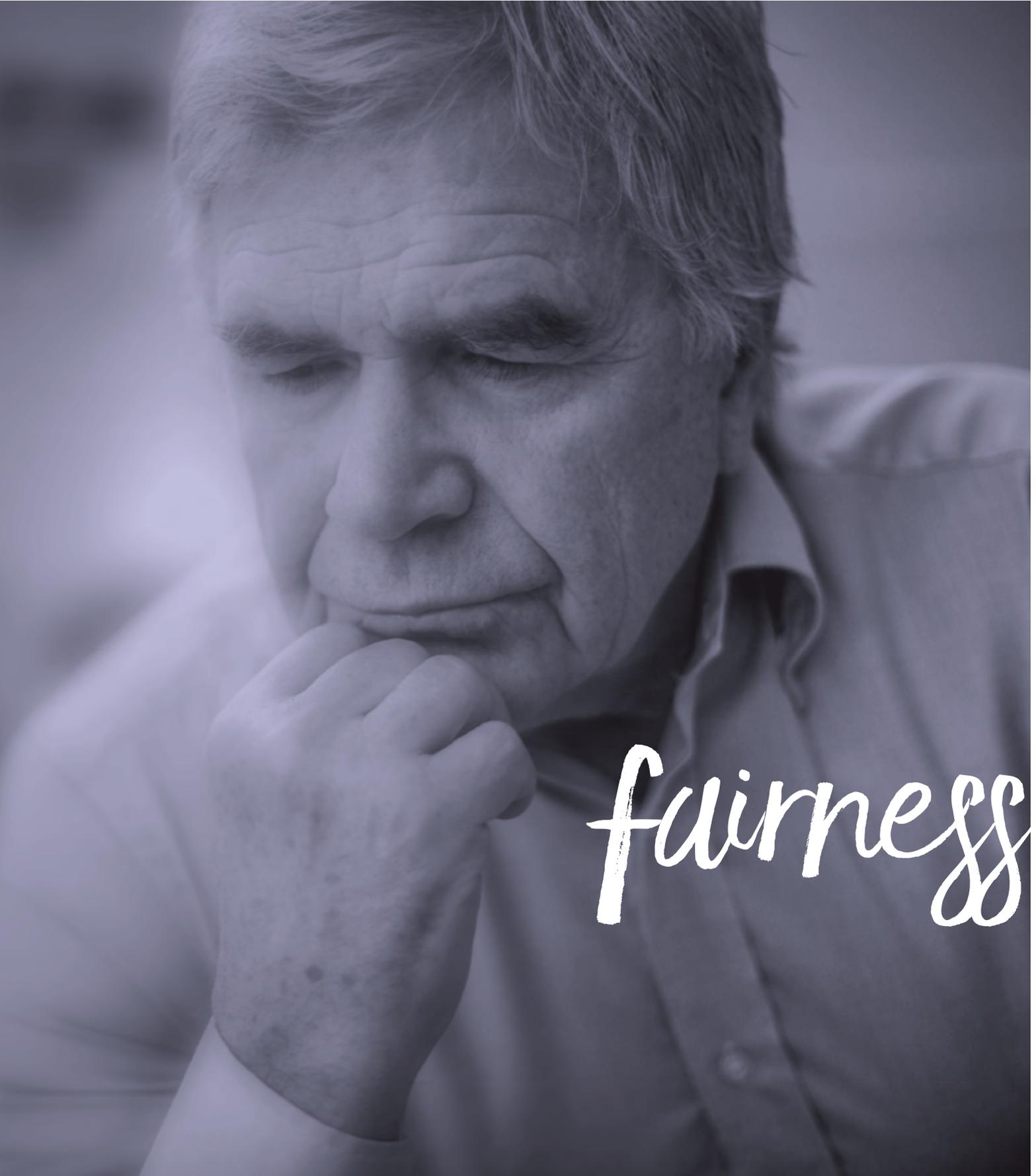
Alice had separated several years earlier from her former partner who had returned to his homeland, not making contact with Alice or the children since.

During the relationship, Alice's husband had been extremely violent and controlling, with both Alice and the eldest child subjected to regular beatings.

After separation, Alice and her family had been subjected to threats to kill by the father's brother and an intervention order was made for their protection.

Our duty lawyer assisted Alice to lodge an urgent application to have the matter heard in the father's absence, together with an application to dispense with service of all documents on him. Given the risk of harm to Alice from the father's family, it was not reasonable to expect her to make enquiries of them about the father's whereabouts. Orders were also sought that a passport be issued for the child without the father's signature and that the mother be permitted to remove the child from Australia for the intended travel.

At the urgent hearing, which occurred the following day, the court made the orders that were sought and Alice was able to make the trip to her home country in safety.



fairness

OUR COMMUNITY EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT

Community Legal Education

Community legal education activities enable us to reach out to our community and connect with people who are experiencing, or are likely to experience, legal need. Whilst some activities aim to improve legal knowledge for participants, others are designed to enhance the ability of vulnerable people, or those working with them, to identify legal problems and seek help.

Over the past year we undertook 175 community legal education activities (excluding our Consumer Affairs Program).

CLE Activities 2014-15



This year we reached out to:

- People affected by family violence.** This included talks to Men’s Behaviour Change groups (with support from Peninsula Health Community Health), co-organising a ‘Ladies Only’ morning (with WAYSS, VLA and Victoria Police) and speaking at Frankston’s ‘Domestic Violence Forum – a Call to Action’ attended by 500+ people.

We also led a project with Frankston & Mornington Peninsula Family Violence Network and maternal and child health nurses in both local government areas to develop a family violence referral resource that is now included in all maternal and child health books. Special thanks to St Kilda Legal Service for sharing this project with us.

- Another highlight was our development of ‘Family Violence in Our Community’ posters to raise awareness of the prevalence of family violence locally, and dispel the myth that family violence is happening ‘somewhere else’. These were developed with the Outer South Peninsula Integrated Family Violence Partnership and distributed to a range of organisations, as well as at a major public event.
- Young people.** We provided workshops for students with learning disabilities, supported a local L2P driving program and delivered ‘Rent Ready’ workshops with Anglicare, Department of Human Services (Centrelink) and Enhanced Maternal and Child Health for vulnerable young people seeking to rent for the first time. We also helped students at Mt Eliza Secondary College undertake research for a law drama project.
- Seniors** were keen to learn about strategies for preventing elder abuse and get information about Powers of Attorney and Wills. We partnered with Seniors Rights Victoria in undertaking a range of initiatives, including: Law Week Forum in Hastings (with Mornington Peninsula Shire and Peninsula Advisory Council for Elders); Legal Matters for Older Fellas (with City of Glen Eira); World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Morning Trivia (with Frankston City) and Senior’s Festival Forum (with Frankston City). Participants enjoyed the interactive presentation of ‘Wills Lingo Bingo’, adapted from a project by Eastern CLC.
- Community workers** were also a key focus as their clients typically experience high legal need. We participated in meetings and delivered talks to highlight local legal need and encourage referrals for people working with those experiencing financial disadvantage, disability and other forms of vulnerability. We also participated in

Fitzroy Legal Service's 'Law 4 Community Workers' initiative, providing training on infringements and other civil law issues.

Collaborating with a range of experts and other organisations adds great value to our activities, and we thank all of our partners for joining with us to provide high quality, targeted community legal education.

Community Relationships

We prize our local connections and were pleased to participate in the following networks in 2014-15:

- Court Users' Meetings (Frankston Magistrates' Court and Dandenong Family Law Courts);
- Critical Linkages (Casey / Cardinia Family Violence Network);
- Family Relationship Services Community Reference Group;
- Frankston City Council Housing Reference Group;
- Frankston & Mornington Peninsula Family Violence Network;
- Frankston & Mornington Peninsula Police Practice in Common Community Advisory Group;
- Mornington Peninsula Combined Service Provider Network;
- Outer South Integrated Family Violence Partnership;
- Dads Matter Network (Casey Family Services);
- Frankston North Collaborative Partnership;
- Kingston Family & Youth Services;
- VCAT Residential Tenancies User Group Melbourne.
- Legal Answers for Permanent Care Families Working Group
- Melbourne Metropolitan Rooming House Group
- St Kilda Rooming House Network
- Dandenong Rooming House Working Group
- Eastern Homelessness Network.

We also met with a variety of local organisations to undertake stakeholder consultations relevant to our South East Legal Needs Analysis, discussed earlier in this Report.

We were pleased to take part in a range of community events to raise awareness of our free legal services for the broader community. Highlights included:

- Peninsula Proud GLBTIQ Community Celebration Day;
- Ageing Well Expo (Frankston & Mornington Peninsula);
- Bay Mob Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Health & Education Expo;
- Family Violence Public Forum: Let's Make a Change (Peninsula Theatre, Mornington); and
- Frankston City Mayor's Family Picnic.

Legal Assistance Sector

We are fortunate to be part of a sector that embraces collaboration and the open exchange of information and ideas. We regularly meet with Victoria Legal Aid, neighbouring CLCs and the Federation of CLCs. We have valued participating in the following Federation of CLC Working Groups in the past year:

- Applicant Lawyers Group;
- Child Protection Working Group;
- Community Development and Community Legal Education Working Group;
- Infringements Working Group;
- Management Committee of Federation of CLCs;
- Principal Lawyers' Network;
- Sector Development Working Group;
- Violence Against Women and Children Working Group.

We have also enjoyed collaborating with our peers through convening the Community Development and Community Legal Education Working Group of the Federation of CLCs, which provides a dedicated and

supportive space for workers to collaborate, innovate and build capacity across the sector. The group is also collaborating with Victoria Legal Aid, the Infringements Working Group and 12 CLCs in undertaking a scoping project for a joint statewide community legal education project on infringements.

On a national level, we were pleased to convene a National Community Legal Education Network meeting prior to the National Conference of CLCs in August 2014, which led to the network becoming an ongoing and active group that now meets quarterly, with a representative participating in the National Legal Aid Community Legal Education Working Group.

We were delighted this year to join the National Association of Community Legal Centre's (NACLC) Advisory Council, this inaugural group provides a consultation forum for the NACLC board and provides key information and advice on the experiences, views and the issues facing the sector.

quality

OUR VOICE

We welcomed the findings of the Productivity Commission in relation to law reform and systemic advocacy in its Inquiry Report into Access to Justice Arrangements, released in December 2014. The Commission reported:

“Given the number and type of cases they see, legal assistance providers are uniquely placed to identify systemic problems affecting disadvantaged Australians. Addressing systemic problems can be an efficient way to use limited funding.”¹

The Commission also stated that:

“LACs and CLCs also provide services that seek to address the needs of entire groups within the community. They do so by identifying and acting on systemic issues. This can take the form of strategic advocacy, law reform activities and public interest litigation.

These activities can benefit people directly affected by a particular issue and, by clarifying or improving the law, they can also benefit the community more broadly and improve access to justice (through positive spill-overs). For example, addressing an underlying problem that has led to many disputes can free up the resources of affected parties, legal assistance providers, private lawyers, courts and governments.”²

We support the recommendation of the Commission that the Australian, State and Territory Governments should provide funding for strategic advocacy and law reform activities that seek to identify and remedy systemic issues and so reduce demand for frontline services.³

¹ Source: Volume 2, p.703, Productivity Commission 2014, Access to Justice Arrangements, Inquiry Report No.72, Canberra.

² Ibid, p.708.

³ Ibid, p.713.

In giving voice to the experiences of vulnerable members of our community, family violence was a key focus of our law reform and public policy activities throughout the year. We joined the No More Deaths campaign, which called for family violence to be at the top of the 2014 Victorian election agenda. The campaign was supported by the Federation of Community Legal Centres and other highly respected peak bodies working in family violence, and called for action to keep women safe and housed; make the justice system safe and supportive; hold violent perpetrators to account; break down the system silos that endanger women and children; and prevent violence against women and children. We raised awareness of the campaign with community partners and election candidates.

We also made a submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence and provided feedback to the Federation of CLCs to help inform their submission. In our submission, we shared some of our initiatives aimed at better informing our community about family violence and we touched on research into underlying causes of family violence and experiences of other jurisdictions with lower rates of family violence. We noted that, in our experience, both the prevalence and severity of family violence have been rising. We also recounted our clients' stories and experiences to highlight the challenges they faced in navigating inadequate, complex and fragmented systems, which made it difficult for them to feel safe and compounded their distress.

We also remain concerned about the impact of the infringements system on vulnerable clients. We were pleased to participate in the Infringements Working Group of the Federation of Community Legal Centres, which wrote to the Victorian Attorney-General regarding the Fines Reform Act 2014 (Vic) and we endorsed the Group's letter to the Infringements Court regarding assessment of revocation applications.

Other activities this year included:

- Submission to the Victorian Law Reform Commission on Photographing and Filming Tenants' Possessions for Advertising Purposes;
- Endorsed NGO Shadow Report to the United Nations Committee Against Torture;
- Endorsed Joint NGO Submission to the second Universal Periodic Review of Australia (Australia's Human Rights Scorecard);
- Submission to 2015 (8 Year) Review of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

Copies of our public submissions are available on our website, www.pclc.org.au.



respect

Pictured: A visual representation of the family violence system, as experienced by many women and children, created by artist Ricky Howell to support the submission of Peninsula Community Legal Centre to the Royal Commission into Family Violence, 2015.

OUR
FINANCIAL
SUMMARY

for the year ended
30 June 2015

dependence respect quality fairness independence
quality empowerment accessibility independence respect qual
e respect quality fairness accessibility emp
bility quality respect empowerment quality fair
dependence fairness independence respect quality
quality

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER
COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

For the year ended 30 June 2015

| | NOTE | 2015 \$ | 2014 \$ |
|--|------|--------------|----------------|
| CONTINUING OPERATIONS | | | |
| INCOME | | | |
| Grant Funding | 2 | 2,212,246 | 2,089,073 |
| Other Income | 3 | 125,083 | 98,457 |
| | | 2,337,329 | 2,187,530 |
| EXPENSES | | | |
| Communication Expenses | | (43,001) | (41,601) |
| Depreciation Expense | | (70,392) | (74,500) |
| Employment Expenses | | (1,811,140) | (1,669,411) |
| Finance Expenses | | (10,939) | (12,326) |
| Occupancy Expenses | | (182,310) | (178,422) |
| Office & Administrative Expenses | | (138,134) | (127,573) |
| Repairs & Maintenance Expenses | | (23,034) | (25,372) |
| Resources Expenses | | (15,231) | (29,808) |
| Travel & Accommodation Expenses | | (33,325) | (32,657) |
| | | (2,327,506) | (2,191,670) |
| NET PROFIT/(LOSS) | | 9,823 | (4,140) |
| Other Comprehensive Income | | | |
| - Items that may be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss when specific conditions are met | | - | - |
| - Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss | | - | - |
| TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME | | 9,823 | (4,140) |

accessibility

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 30 June 2015

| | NOTE | 2015 \$ | 2014 \$ |
|--------------------------------------|------|------------------|----------------|
| CURRENT ASSETS | | | |
| Cash at Bank and on Hand | 11a | 302,765 | 217,091 |
| Receivables | | 226 | 2,271 |
| Accrued Income | | 21,720 | 21,073 |
| Term Deposit | | 650,000 | 450,000 |
| Other Assets | 4 | 10,873 | 9,973 |
| TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS | | 985,584 | 700,408 |
| NON-CURRENT ASSETS | | | |
| Fixed Assets | 5 | 154,331 | 217,192 |
| TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS | | 154,331 | 217,192 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | | 1,139,915 | 917,600 |
| CURRENT LIABILITIES | | | |
| Trade and Other Payables | 6 | 72,308 | 67,780 |
| Payroll Liabilities | 7 | 89,414 | 66,165 |
| Employee Provisions | 8 | 247,589 | 184,062 |
| Grants in Advance | 9 | 60,000 | - |
| VLA Unused Funds | 10 | 162,721 | 84,737 |
| TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES | | 632,032 | 402,744 |
| NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES | | | |
| Employee Provisions | 8 | 28,049 | 44,845 |
| TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES | | 28,049 | 44,845 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES | | 660,081 | 447,589 |
| NET ASSETS | | 479,834 | 470,011 |
| EQUITY | | | |
| Retained Earnings | | 479,834 | 470,011 |
| TOTAL EQUITY | | 479,834 | 470,011 |

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

For the year ended 30 June 2015

| | NOTE | 2015 \$ | 2014 \$ |
|---|------|----------------|----------------|
| RETAINED EARNINGS | | | |
| Opening Balance | | 470,011 | 474,151 |
| Profit / (loss) in the current year | | 9,823 | (4,140) |
| Other Comprehensive Income | | - | - |
| CLOSING BALANCE OF RETAINED EARNINGS | | 479,834 | 470,011 |
| TOTAL EQUITY | | 479,834 | 470,011 |

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the year ended 30 June 2015

| | NOTE | 2015 \$ | 2014 \$ |
|--|--------------|------------------|------------------|
| CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES | | | |
| Receipts from Grants & Other Income | | 2,576,790 | 2,424,266 |
| Payments to Suppliers and Employees | | (2,310,662) | (2,242,751) |
| Interest Received | | 27,077 | 23,097 |
| Net cash provided by (used in) Operating Activities | 11(b) | 293,205 | 204,612 |
| CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES | | | |
| Payment for fixed assets | | (7,531) | - |
| Investment in Term Deposits | | (200,000) | (150,000) |
| Net cash provided (used in) Investing Activities | | (207,531) | (150,000) |
| CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES | | | |
| Net cash provided by (used in) Financing Activities | | - | - |
| Net Increase in Cash Held | | 85,674 | 54,612 |
| Cash at the beginning of the year | | 217,091 | 162,479 |
| Cash at the end of the year | 11(a) | 302,765 | 217,091 |

HEAD OFFICE

441 Nepean Highway
Frankston, Vic 3199
Tel: 03 9783 3600
Fax: 03 9770 5200
Free Call: 1800 064 784
DX 19953 Frankston
Email: pclc@pclc.org.au

Hours: Mon – Fri
9am – 5pm

BENTLEIGH BRANCH

82 Brady Road
Bentleigh, Vic 3165
Tel: 03 9570 8455

Hours: Mon, Wed & Thurs
9am – 3pm

CRANBOURNE BRANCH

Bella Centre
Suite 12
33-39 High Street
Cranbourne, Vic 3977
Tel: 03 5995 3722

Hours: Mon – Fri
9am – 5pm

PINES BRANCH

28 Mahogany Avenue
Frankston North, Vic 3200
Tel: 03 9786 6980

Hours: Wed 7pm

ROSEBUD BRANCH

1375 Point Nepean Road
Rosebud, Vic 3939
Tel: 03 5981 2422

Hours: Mon, Wed & Thurs
9am – 5pm

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Legal Centre Inc

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