



Information Sheet

About our Centre

Peninsula Community Legal Centre is a free legal advice service based in Frankston with branches located in Bentleigh, Cranbourne and Frankston North. The legal centre is one of the largest Community Legal Centres in Australia.

Local solicitors volunteer their time to assist in the provision of legal advice. Community volunteers also assist by interviewing clients prior to seeing a solicitor.

Follow up work is completed by solicitors employed at the legal centre, which may include letters, documents and negotiations. Legal centre solicitors may also provide representation in court in some cases.

The Centre undertakes a range of community legal education activities to provide information and empower the community. These include workshops, seminars, media, articles, public stalls and participation in networks to increase awareness of legal rights and responsibilities and help people handle their own legal matters.

Community development activities also form a large part of the centre's efforts to strengthen its community. The legal centre works closely with other local agencies to assist their growth and development.

The centre is an Incorporated Association. The centre's major administrative and policy decisions are made by its community based management committee.

Who can use the centre?

Anyone who lives, works or studies in the legal centre's catchment area which incorporates the Cities of Frankston, Casey, Cardinia, Glen Eira, Kingston and the Mornington Peninsula Shire.

There are no restrictions on coming to the legal centre for initial legal advice free of charge. The provision of ongoing casework is subject to the legal centre's Advice & Casework Guidelines. Confidentiality and privacy is assured.

Funding

The legal centre gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance from:-

- Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department
- Department of Justice (Vic)
- Consumer Affairs Victoria
- Victoria Legal Aid
- Cities of Frankston, Casey, Glen Eira, Kingston and Mornington Peninsula Shire.

Role

To provide free legal advice and casework (subject to guidelines) which may include letters, documents and negotiations, court representation in some cases, and referrals to appropriate agencies for non legal issues, community education and law reform.

Difference between Community Legal Centres and Victoria Legal Aid

Although both organisations have the same fundamental aims, community legal centres do not have a bureaucratic structure like Victoria Legal Aid, but are run by a committee of management drawn from the local community. As a result, they are able to respond more easily to local issues and are able to assist clients who may not be eligible for legal aid. Community legal centres have their own guidelines to target the assistance they provide, and may offer extra services such as basic wills for low income clients. Both organisations offer advice, casework and legal education.

SERVICE USER'S CHARTER

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT.....

- To be treated with respect, dignity and consideration regardless of your social status, education, age, race, ethnicity, disability, gender, religious belief, sexuality or political belief.
- To receive appropriate thorough and well researched advice and/or referrals to other agencies.
- To confidentiality, meaning staff and volunteers at the legal centre cannot discuss your file with another person without your consent.
- To have an advocate (friend, family member and/or interpreter) present when attending the centre if you wish.
- To be informed about the cost of any services provided, where this is applicable.
- To be informed of possible alternatives to legal action.
- To be informed of any potential entitlements to legal aid.
- To receive an itemised trust account statement if the centre receives or distributes any money on your behalf.
- To request a receipt for any money paid to the centre.

It is reasonable for you to expect:-

- Where the matter is ongoing, to be promptly informed regarding any important developments which may occur.
- Adequate time (subject to reasonable limits) and attention from the lawyer.
- That you will be notified if the file is transferred to another worker within the centre, and that the worker will be adequately briefed as to the issues.
- A lawyer who is free from conflicts of interest meaning the lawyer cannot act on your behalf where their judgment is or is likely to be affected by competing interests. For example, in a family law matter the lawyer cannot represent both the husband and or wife, or in drafting a will the lawyer cannot make provision for a gift to be made to themselves.
- That where a lawyer has any prejudices that may affect your matter, they disclose that information so that you can decide whether you still want assistance from that lawyer.

FEEDBACK/SUGGESTIONS

Peninsula Community Legal Centre welcomes feedback from clients in relation to their services. Boxes are placed in the reception area. Please feel free to speak to one of our staff or put your suggestion in the box.

COMPLAINTS

Please refer to our Service User's Complaints Procedure brochure for further information.

Conflict of Interest

Solicitors are not able to act for both parties in a dispute.

A conflict of interest arises where a party seeks advice on a matter when we have already given the other party advice in the past.

Where possible we will search our records prior to advice being given to ensure a conflict of interest does not exist.

If a conflict exists you will be referred to another community legal centre, Victoria Legal Aid or a private solicitor.

Privacy & Confidentiality

Peninsula Community Legal Centre is committed to protecting the privacy of our clients and the confidentiality of all information provided to us.

We do not provide your private information to any other organisations including government bodies without your permission except in the form of anonymous stats.

Our centre complies with State and Federal Privacy Legislation.

If you would like a copy of our Client Confidentiality and Privacy Policy please ask.

File Destruction

It is a requirement of the Legal Practice Act that files are kept for a period of seven (7) years from the date of the last consultation.

At the time of your first interview you will be asked to sign a form giving consent to destroy the file at the end of that time. Consent is required to destroy the file.

Collection of Statistical Information

We collect statistical information for a centralised scheme. Our funding body requires us to do this.

The information is collected for the following reasons:

1. To show the funding body that we provide the services we are being funded to provide.
2. To allow us to plan our services to meet the needs of our clients, including in areas such as law reform and community legal education, as well as legal casework.
3. To alert us to any issues which may affect the advice we give to our clients.

Drop-in Sessions - How does it work?

No appointment necessary.

Numbers will be handed out and clients seen in turn. If the number of clients exceed the session limit, the supervisor will determine if any matters are urgent and therefore must be seen on that day.

If we are unable to see you, you will be referred to the next available session.

Your Interview

To save long delays, it would be appreciated if all clients could bear in mind that their interview should run for approximately 15 minutes.

However, some interviews do take longer than the 15 minutes allocated.

Statistical information will be collected from you prior to advice being given.

MISSION

To empower and support disadvantaged community members of the South East and Westernport Region to use the law and legal system to protect and advance their rights and broaden their awareness of their responsibilities.

If you would like to apply to become a member of our Association please complete the following section together with your fees and mail to our Head Office or hand it to reception.

Joining fee \$1.00

Annual Membership \$2.00



Peninsula Community Legal Centre Inc

Application for Membership Peninsula Community Legal Centre

I, _____

Of _____

Occupation: _____

Desire to become a member of Peninsula Community Legal Centre Inc. In the event of my admission as a member, I agree to be bound by the Rules of the Association for the time being in force.

Signed:

Date:

Office Use Only

I, _____

A member of the Association, nominate the above applicant, who is personally known to me, for membership to the Association.

Signed:

Dated:

I, _____

A member of the Association, nominate the above applicant, who is personally known to me, for membership to the Association.

Signed:

Dated:

Payment Enclosed: \$

Head Office

Chatsworth House
Suite 1- 4, 431 Nepean Highway
Frankston Vic 3199
DX: 19953 Frankston
Ph: (03) 9783 3600
Fax: (03) 9770 5200
Free Call: 1800 064 784
Email: pclc@pclc.org.au
www.communitylaw.org.au/peninsula

Bentleigh Branch

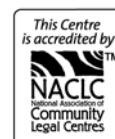
82 Brady Road
Bentleigh East Vic 3165
Ph: (03) 9570 8455
Fax: (03) 9570 8466

Cranbourne Branch

Bella Centre
Suite 12, 33 - 39 High Street
Cranbourne Vic 3977
Ph: (03) 5995 3722
Fax: (03) 5995 3799

Pines Branch

2a Candlebark Crescent
Frankston North Vic 3200
Ph: (03) 9786 6980
Fax: (03) 9785 3582



Donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible