



from Humble Beginnings

A Brief History of
Peninsula Community Legal Centre
1977-2007

by Victoria Erlichster

“Well done to all of the volunteers, to the Management Committees, and to all the staff that have been involved over the years. We started off as one of the smallest community legal centres 30 years ago, we are now one of the largest and proudest. Everyone should be very proud, because I certainly am.”

Helen Constan, Chief Executive Officer of Peninsula Community Legal Centre.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Victoria Erlichster

Written by Victoria Erlichster

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PREFACE

The history of Peninsula Community Legal Centre (PCLC) is akin to an adventure story, for it is a tale of hardship, elation, uncertainty, disappointment, perseverance and celebration.

From humble beginnings, the Frankston North Legal Service (FNLS), driven by dedicated volunteers and staff, has transformed itself from a tiny advice and referral service operating out of the Pines Forest Community Centre, into Peninsula Community Legal Centre Inc, a community organisation that provides free legal services to almost 800,000 people in the south east of Melbourne and in adjoining rural areas.

When asked to create a history of the Centre for its 30th birthday I could only conceptualise the service as I saw it – a modern, multi-tiered, community-minded organisation. However, while compiling this history it became clear to me that what I see today is the result of decades of hard work. Things have not always run quite so smoothly.

While creating this publication I was fortunate enough to be able to meet with a number of past and present staff members, volunteers and community workers. I was impressed by their fondness for an organisation that, for some, played only a fleeting part in their lives. This publication is a compilation of their memories and experiences and is, indeed, a tribute to both them, and to every other person, who worked hard to make PCLC what it is today.

Victoria Erlichster

IN THE BEGINNING 'THE PINES'

'The Pines', 1976. Brash and burly. Rough and tumble. A hard-nosed 'burb where there was always your fair share of trouble. In the words of John Finlayson, a founder of the Frankston North Legal Service, "the Pines had a pretty rough reputation."

Frankston North was home to many working class families who were attracted to the area's low-cost housing. Relationships were often strained as many men faced the pressures of long, hard hours at work,

while many women faced the pressures of raising their children and managing their households almost alone. Families battled to stay together as they tried to realise the 'Australian Dream'.

Many young people found themselves caught up in the criminal justice system. It is unsurprising then, that the relationship between the police and community was rife with suspicion and distrust.

"Frankston North was an area which had a high adolescent population so there were lots of issues with summary crime, motor vehicles and family law... the sort of lifeblood stuff you would imagine the community would have problems with."

Michael Denison, former president of the Management Committee and long time solicitor volunteer.

HISTORICAL BACKDROP

Without a shadow of a doubt there was a need for some sort of subsidised legal service in the Pines, for high costs barred access to much needed legal advice and representation.

Although there were some, minimal, legal aid services operating in Victoria in the early seventies, such as the Australian Legal Aid Office, such services were decidedly limited. The residents of Frankston North found themselves at a particular disadvantage for they often could not, due to limited public transport facilities, even utilise the minimal services available, for these services habitually operated in Melbourne.

Fortunately, in the late 1970's the time was ripe for the introduction of a grass roots, community based, legal service in Frankston North. In 1972, Australia's political landscape

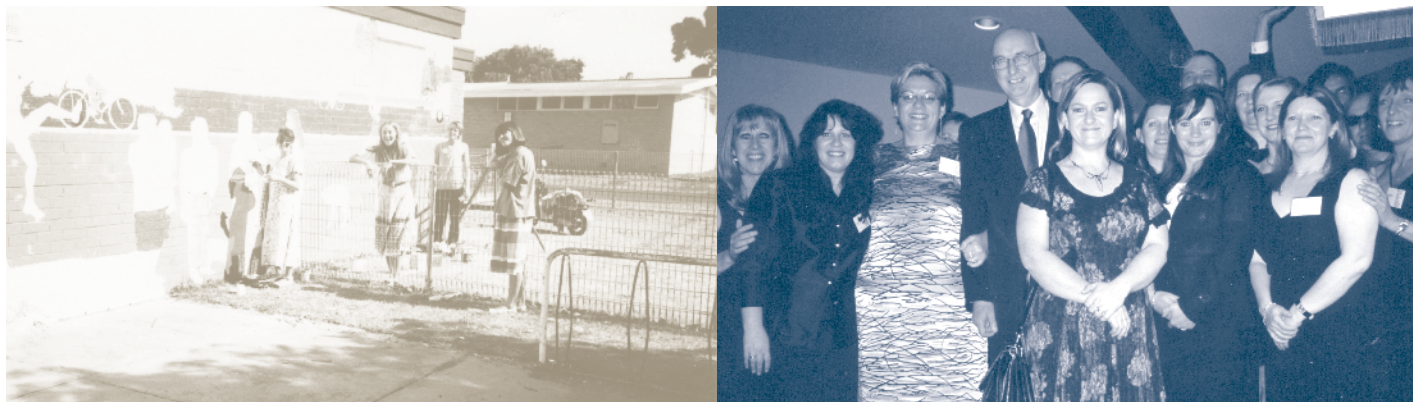
"In the 1970s I did not really expect community legal centres to survive into the next decade let alone to survive for 25 years. Indeed many of the wonderful initiatives of the 1970s did not survive and it is interesting to reflect on why the Legal Centre has. There are many reasons why bodies can survive so long. The Peninsula Community Legal Centre is modern, efficient, effective and entrepreneurial. All of these are important but they are not enough. What is of most importance is the commitment and the passion and the fact that the passion still remains today."

Former Victorian Public Advocate and Former Director of the Legal Aid Commission of Victoria, Julian Gardner (extract from speech given at PCLC's 25th anniversary celebrations).

changed, as Gough Whitlam and his party took over the governance of Australia. The new Commonwealth Attorney General, Lionel Murphy (1972-1975), proved to be a strong supporter of the legal aid movement, and of community legal services.

Indeed, by the time Frankston North Legal Service opened

its doors in 1977, a handful of Victorian community legal services already existed, including Fitzroy Legal Service and Springvale Community Legal Service. These existing services, particularly the Fitzroy Legal Service, served as a model for FNLS' founders, served as a model of what could be.



*Pines Forest
Community Centre,
Frankston North*

*Julian Gardner
with Cr Cathy Wilson
and Staff of PCLC*

CONCEPTION

"I remember some of the early conversations with John Finlayson about the difficulties people were experiencing with credit (particularly with an establishment called Waltons Stores). Legal advice wasn't accessible, it was too expensive, it wasn't available (to locals). It was something they didn't understand. It was an enemy rather than a friend. And we had conversations about what it would be like if we could somehow make the law more accessible."

Ian Boag, a founder of FNLS.

The idea itself was simple enough. Attract a small band of volunteer solicitors and have them dispense free legal advice from the Pines Forest Community Centre on Mahogany Avenue. The administrative work, it was envisioned, would be carried out by the local women who congregated at the community centre.

It was a small and dedicated group that set about getting things up and running. It included John Finlayson, a community youth worker who had been a founder of the Fitzroy Legal Service in 1972, youth workers Ian Boag and Christine Vincent, locals Kath Neilsen and Margaret McGrath and local solicitor, Rudi Meier.

It is likely, though, that a plethora of other community members also put in their two cents early on.

In order for the proposed community service to be able to operate out of the community centre, a public meeting had to be held to officially establish the new body.

Memories of this public meeting are hazy. However, it is remembered to have been held on the 23rd of June 1977, in the confines of the community centre. Present were local community members, local councillors, representatives from the Fitzroy Legal Service, and a few of those that would go on to become the service's first volunteer solicitors. These solicitors had previously been

invited along to a wine and cheese night where, struck by the potential value of the proposed legal service, they had expressed interest in giving their time to dispense advice.

This historical meeting was not without incident. Ian Boag who was, at the time, a youth worker in the Pines recalls that ten minutes into the meeting, without warning, those in attendance were plunged into darkness. "I'm quite sure half the people there thought they were going to be murdered," he says with a laugh. As it turned out, some of the more mischievous local kids had removed fuses from the switchboard. It took some time – for a mad search had to be conducted for replacement fuses – before decorum was restored.

Nonetheless the incident was received with good humour and before long a vote was cast, and the service established.

And then the hard work began.

EARLY DAYS (I)

Ask anyone to describe those first days in the Pines and you will immediately get a description of the community centre that housed the service. It is as if that building has etched itself in the memory of those who experienced it and stands as a symbol of the humble and unassuming beginnings of the vibrant organisation that exists today.

There was a long thin room with offices at either end with a kitchen area in the centre. Numerous community organisations shared the small space. Indeed, long time solicitor volunteer Michael Denison happily recalls the 'coup' of getting two lock-up offices in the early eighties.

Many remember, with a smile, the general hubbub in the community centre, recall the sort of energy that naturally attaches itself to busy community spaces – the senior citizens line dancing, costumes in the toilets, the bingo sessions which volunteers would nip off to during quiet times, and the kids playing billiards.

"(The environment) was pretty rugged. But it was fun as well – the characters were just so fascinating. I think the lawyers quite enjoyed coming in too. The Centre was an excellent thing for the community because they weren't afraid to ask for advice because it was so low key and relaxed – there was no threat"

Willie Krooglik, former coordinator of FNLS.

Pictured in front of the Community Centre (from left): Dale Wilson, Burwyn Davidson, Elaine Pierson, Claire McNamara, Neil Cole and Colin Hampton.



THE WOMEN OF THE PINES

It is said that it was the women of the Pines who provided the impetus for creating a legal service in Frankston North.

John Finlayson recalls a time, in the mid-seventies, when a women's group would meet in the Pines Forest Community Centre. These women were often struggling financially and would band together to discuss life's problems. He remembers hearing them confer about their concerns regarding their debts and children.

Not only was it evident that these women would benefit from free legal advice but it was

also clear that many were stuck in a cycle of despair. It was reasoned that should they be given some training, and then put to work as administrative volunteers, they would be given the chance to break the cycle, for they would be empowered by new practical life skills.

Indeed, it was hoped these women would eventually be able to play a major role in running the community centre, with all its activities.

As it happened those women were empowered. And not only did they provide an invaluable administrative service for the

new legal advice body, but it is also said that in doing so they also taught man a thing or two about the power of woman, her value and utility in the workplace.

Despite its growth, the Legal Centre continues to be, thirty years later, a great supporter of women's issues and remains, undoubtedly, a female friendly environment. Women are at the Centre's roots and will always play a crucial role in its functioning and provision of services.

"(The Legal Service) was about creating opportunities for families, particularly for the women, to take responsibility for the social issues that were impacting on their lives."

John Finlayson, a founder of FNLS.

EARLY DAYS (2)

The first available service was a weekly evening service, during which a volunteer solicitor would come in and dispense advice for a couple of hours. It was up and running in November 1977.

Immediately the service was a success in the local community. In fact there was very little active advertising in those first years for fear that the service would be unable to meet client demand. Publicity, in those first days, was a real word of mouth affair.

Over time, as the number of volunteer solicitors increased, there were about six by 1981, the service became more certain of itself and the number of advice sessions provided each week multiplied.

Nonetheless the demand for legal advice still often exceeded

"25 years ago the service ran well but the demand was so huge - if we had been there for 24 hours a day we would have had people coming in 24 hours a day" Willie Krooglik, *former coordinator of FNLS.*

supply. As former Management Committee president and long time solicitor volunteer Greg Russo recalls, "At the Pines (early on) there was a real lack of solicitors on the ground. I was starting to dread going, as I would be seeing ten people in a row."

The Centre's move from being a purely volunteer based organisation to one with paid staff members was unremarkable. It was done in small steps out of necessity more than clear policy. It is believed that the first person to ever receive any sort of reimbursement was Kath

Neilsen, one of the Centre's founding members. Although she worked on a voluntary basis, in the late seventies she began having her work related expenses paid for by the Centre. Willie Krooglik later came on as a paid coordinator in 1981, after funding was obtained from the Legal Aid Commission, when it was realised the service was simply getting too big to handle without official administration. She worked part-time in that capacity.

Celebrating International Women's Day: (From left back) Helen Constas, Jackie Galloway, Andrea Florance, Celestine Moon (From left front) Kaeleene Owen, Katrina Haller and Hellen Argiriou



Maureen Staton with volunteer Elaine

EARLY SERVICES

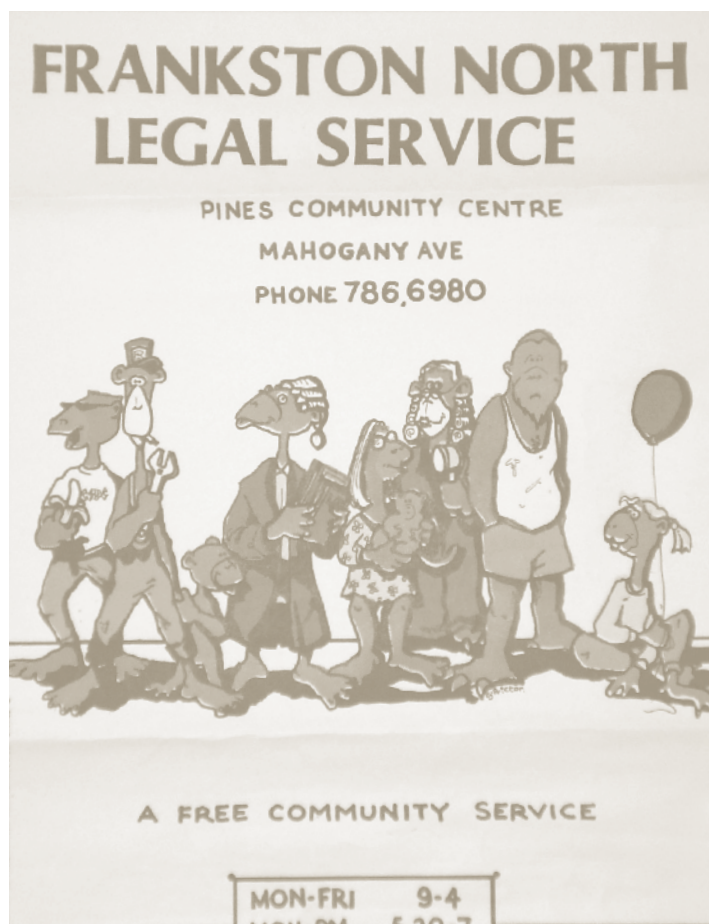
While in 2007 the Centre provides comprehensive casework services in accordance with its guidelines, in the seventies and eighties, casework services were far more limited, and necessarily involved a greater emphasis on advice and referral.

Long time solicitor volunteer Michael Denison remembers occasionally wanting to take on a client matter as a test case, but being prevented by a lack of resources. He recalls, in 1984, past Management Committee President Ted Holman searching for private legal firms in Frankston to take on particularly pertinent cases before finding, sadly, that most firms in the Frankston area were small businesses that simply couldn't afford to take on the extra work pro bono.

Nonetheless the service was undeniably helpful. Founder John Finlayson recalls the infamous Frankston riots in which 12 out of the 13 people arrested were from the Pines area. Solicitors at the legal service became intrinsically involved, offering free, much needed, legal assistance to many of these young people.

"In those opening sessions out in Frankston North... people would come in with a problem and I'd say 'we'll write a letter and send it to the other side'. On that first night I probably said that to four or five clients. I thought the letters would be written up by someone else, but of course there was no-one there to write them. Helen Constas said 'sit down and start writing letters.' It was like detention. I learnt it's only an advice session, not casework."

Chris Gallagher, *president of the Management Committee.*



EARLY LEGAL EDUCATION



"The classes were empowering, clients were actually taking charge,"

Andrea Florance, *Manager of Volunteer and Education Programs.*

At the launch of the Centre's 'Buyer Beware' booklet

Right from the beginning community legal education placed itself squarely on the legal service's agenda. From the late seventies media articles appeared in local newspapers, such as the *Frankston Standard*, informing the locals about their legal rights and responsibilities. Workshop sessions, teaching community members how to handle their own legal affairs, were conducted with vigour.

Chief Executive Officer and former legal education worker, Helen Constas, used to run 'do-it-yourself divorce' classes in the early eighties. During these classes a small group of maybe half a dozen would

gather in the community centre and bring with them a copy of their marriage certificate and other relevant documentation. They would then be talked through the process of filling out their divorce paperwork step-by-step. "I loved it," Helen Constas says, "the classes even ended up being a matchmaking service sometimes. You'd get the blokes in and the women in... it was very popular."

These sessions were later discontinued when the Family Court of Australia created an easy to use divorce kit, which, in effect, made such classes unnecessary.

EARLY FUNDING

Since the late seventies the Centre has received financial backing from a core group of bodies, including state and federal government and Victoria Legal Aid.

However, early on there was some debate amongst the Centre's founding members as to whether the service should seek out funding to employ staff members. The crux of the issue was really - should the service be one based wholly on goodwill and volunteerism, or should it seek to expand into a more formal body?

Founding member and early administrative volunteer Kath Neilsen is said to have been particularly committed to the idea of providing a solely volunteer based service, for she feared salaried workers would discourage local community members from getting involved.

However, PCLC's Manager of Projects and Development, Gillian Wilks, feels that even though in 2007 PCLC is run in a very professional manner, employing over twenty staff

"It was a real shoestring affair"

Michael Denison, *Management Committee member and solicitor volunteer.*

members, the Centre has managed to maintain close links to its roots, to its community base. "Community members remain involved at a governance level and as volunteers," she says, "they assist in direct service provision."

Once the Centre became committed to seeking out funding for staff, despite the support of key funding bodies, there was still rarely enough in the kitty. In fact so lean did times become that, at one point in the early eighties, something akin to a chook raffle was held to ensure staff would receive holiday pay.

Other similar raffles were held around that time to fund particular programs. Past paralegal volunteer Margaret McGrath is said to have been

run off her feet organising these events. Tickets went for a dollar or two, and first prize was often something like a video recorder, not too shabby a prize for way back then, some might say!

It is also remembered that in the late seventies, funds from weekly bingo games, which were held at the community centre, were distributed amongst various community organisations including the legal service.

Indeed, obtaining funding was quite a hand-to-mouth process. CEO Helen Conostas recalls that when she started working with the Centre in 1982 there was a mere nine thousand dollars in the Centre's bank account. When the Centre wished to expand its services, or hire a staff member, a flurry of lobbying would ensue.

THE EARLY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

"I remember I spent my first meeting designing stationery. I spent days after that meeting designing. We did small things like that at some of the early meetings."

George Kennedy, *past paralegal volunteer and early committee member.*

Prior to the Centre's incorporation in 1984 there did exist some form of management body. For the most part that informal body, in the words of long time solicitor volunteer Rudi Meier, 'just moseyed along'. Consisting of a smattering of local practitioners and community members, the early management body concerned itself with issues of policy,

legal education, funding, and the eternal question of 'who is going to do what, when'. There were no formal processes of election and for the most part the committee consisted of those that were interested in helping out. It is remembered that many of the early committee meetings were simply conducted over an amiable dinner at a committee member's home.



Pictured (from left): Allan Nicol (Legal Aid Commission of Victoria), Michael Denison (Treasurer of FNLS), Helen Conostas (Co-ordinator of FNLS), Jim Kennan (Victorian Attorney-General) and Jane Hill MP.



Pictured (from left): Cr David Lee, Scott Whitechurch, Michael Denison, Margaret McGrath, Willie Krooglich



HELEN'S STORY

HELEN CONSTAS: Chief Executive Officer

It was 1982. Helen, a young university student, was involved in a car accident and was in need of some legal advice. She had always known of the Frankston North Legal Service as she was a local girl, having grown up in the Pines. On her sister's recommendation she visited the service and so embarked on a path that would take her from volunteer, to part-time education worker, to full-time coordinator, to CEO of a burgeoning legal service. Early staff remember her as vibrant, full of energy and extraordinarily well organised. Today, Helen works hard to ensure the Centre's funding is secured and maintained, reports to the management committee, and manages the Centre on a day-to-day basis.



Helen Constas

"Helen was so young and vital... I fell pregnant and I said to Helen to share the job with me by taking on the community legal education work. So we worked together for a little while and... she was so dynamic. She's been there ever since and the place has just gone from strength to strength."

Willie Krooglik, former coordinator of FNLS.

VOLUNTEERING

In 2007 the Centre has close to sixty solicitors on its books, all of whom dedicate time each month to provide services at various advice sessions. This number is extraordinary when one considers that in 1977 there were just a handful of solicitors running a weekly session out of the community centre.

The solicitors are now, as they were back then, largely drawn from the Centre's catchment area. They either call in to volunteer their services or are approached by the service to volunteer.

The experiences of volunteer solicitors are best told in their own words:

MICHAEL DENISON Volunteer Solicitor 1982 - 2007

"It is good to see people in a situation where you are trying to provide them with a little bit of advice to steer them in the right direction without actually

"The service has always done its best to make sure volunteers are helped out. I know if I've got a problem, like I'm running late because I'm in court, or I can't make it (to an advice session) - they'll be very amenable to my position" *Peter LeSouef, volunteer solicitor.*

taking over the management of the problem. You don't have to worry about any of the commercial reality arguments (you face in private practice) when you are volunteering. At the same time you can't be treating (volunteering) flippantly or facetiously. You have to be considered in the advice you give and make sure you make an appropriate referral when that is warranted."

CHRIS GALAGHER Volunteer Solicitor 1984 - 2007

"It's always interesting. You hear a wide variety of problems... some of which you say 'I've never heard something like that. I saw someone once who wanted to launch a

constitutional attack on the government!... I do find it rewarding. That's essentially why I'm still here twenty-something years later."

RUDI MEIER Volunteer Solicitor 1977 - 2007

"(Back in those early days) you would turn up to the centre and, you saw as many clients as you could in an hour or an hour and a half or so. We didn't write letters for clients. I'd tell them what to do and if it was something they needed ongoing advice with, I would give them a list (of solicitors) they could go to. If a phone call to someone would potentially resolve the problem you would make the phone call."

GREG RUSSO Volunteer Solicitor 1990's - 2007

"It's a good way to get back to basics. We see different people who would normally be too scared to walk into a law firm."

continued...



*Peter LeSouef and
Andrea Florance*

VOLUNTEERING CONTINUED

Today, solicitors are given an orientation session by staff before they begin meeting with clients. And it is, as it has always been, the policy of the service that volunteer solicitors never drum for business. If a referral to a solicitor is deemed necessary clients are given a list of potential solicitors to choose from. This policy prevents the service from taking on a commercial nature, and means there is never financial gain associated with advice given.

After being absorbed into the fray, many solicitors report that volunteering has not only given them a feeling of personal satisfaction but has also complemented their private practice, for they encounter unique problems that keep them on top of changes to the law. Indeed, many volunteers who move away from the area and cease volunteering find they are drawn back to the service years later.

The Centre has always been committed to making the volunteer experience a comfortable one. The role of volunteer coordinator was created in 2001 to make rostering and recruitment more efficient.

THE PARALEGAL EXPERIENCE

"I find volunteering as a paralegal really rewarding. I leave with a real sense of satisfaction. We work as a team. I feel the centre is a really valuable resource for the community"

Rhonda Sandardos, volunteer paralegal coordinator at the Bentleigh branch.

Paralegals are a crucial part of the community legal centre model. They are volunteers who give freely of their time each week to help the legal service run smoothly and efficiently. At evening drop-in sessions the paralegal is often the first person a client meets and just how comfortable a client feels with the legal service is highly dependant on the calibre of that paralegal.

Paralegals get a sense of who the client is, what their problem is, and make preliminary notes to assist the solicitors on duty. At times, while taking a summary of a person's problem, the paralegal might recommend a person make an appointment to see a specialist staff solicitor at a later time.

Back in the seventies many paralegals were either teachers from local schools or women from the Pines community. Today, PCLC paralegals are drawn from the ranks of law students and local community members. These volunteers undergo a series of training sessions, before they begin

volunteering, which give them a sense of what community legal centres are all about and what their role will be.

"Clients would come in and tell you their stories. There was a social aspect to the job, it was more than just legal. Part of my job was to get clients to (highlight) what exactly the legal problem they needed resolved was... I needed to help them cut through the anger and the grief and get them into a more focused state of mind before they met with the lawyer."
- George Kennedy, paralegal volunteer in the seventies and eighties.

Many paralegals later find that their time at PCLC has assisted them in their future careers, for while they volunteer, they learn about the workings of the legal system and make valuable professional contacts.



*Paralegal Volunteer,
James Daly*

TIMES OF TRANSITION

The Centre has undergone significant periods of transition over the years.

Perhaps the first one can be identified as the Centre's incorporation in 1984 - when it went from being a more or less unofficial community body to something more structured and stable. In fact the Centre was one of the first ten organisations to incorporate under the *Associations Incorporation Act (Vic)*, which passed in 1981.

It is remembered that CEO Helen Constas took very little persuasion to set the incorporation wheels in motion, as it was realised early on that a body like the legal service would benefit from attaining a legal status that would prevent its constituent members from being exposed to personal liability in the event of any catastrophic financial event. While some form of management body had always existed, after 1984 the service was mindful of having an official committee of

"About ten years ago I sat down and thought to myself 'where should the Centre go'? There was this idea of having 'satellite cities' and that's where it has gone - having all these branch offices." Helen Constas, CEO.

management, holding regular annual general meetings, and adopting a Statement of Purpose.

Around the same time there was a push to have the newly incorporated body afforded public benevolent status. After nearly ten years of work, the Centre was granted this status in the early nineties and was henceforth able to accept tax-deductible donations from those wishing to support it.

A second period of transition occurred over the 1995/1996 period, when the Centre began to see itself less as a centrally based organisation, focused solely on the Pines neighbourhood, but more as a fluid organisation committed to outreach services. This change in self-perception was evidenced in the Centre's change of name. After 1995 it was no longer Frankston North Legal Service but rather Peninsula Community Legal Centre - a service for the Peninsula.

Shortly thereafter in 1998 the Centre moved from its base at the community centre to its current location on the Nepean Highway. The Pines branch office was thus established as a separate entity.

Another period of significant transition occurred in 1998, when Southern Community Legal Centre found that it could no longer sustain itself for lack of sufficient funding. After lengthy discussions it was decided that PCLC would, rather than see the work of Southern Community Legal Centre wholly abandoned, merge with that Centre and adopt its catchment area. Consequently PCLC began servicing the City of Glen Eira, and the Bentleigh Branch of PCLC was established. Another branch office replaced the outreach service to Cranbourne in 2005.

The successful emergence from each of these transitional times can only be attributed to extraordinary hard work.

*Sue Vincent during the move
from the community centre*

THE 1980's

The 1980's was undoubtedly a time when the service established itself as a fixture in the Pines community.

Nonetheless, in 1984 the legal service had a brief identity crisis. In that year the Frankston office of Victoria Legal Aid was established. In truth, part of the rationale behind creating the Frankston North Legal Service was the very fact that legal aid had always been difficult to obtain because of its far off location in Melbourne. Thus FNLS spent the latter part of the eighties carving out its own identity, finding ways in which it could support and complement the services provided by the new legal aid office.

After a time it was realised that FNLS had been in no way made redundant as clients, attracted by the grass-roots nature of the service, continued to flock in. Indeed, the word of FNLS soon spread far beyond.



Staff and volunteers at Frankston North Legal Service

"Initially it was a service for Frankston North. It is a tribute to the energy of the people originally associated, both the practitioners and non-lawyer volunteers, who managed to get the service's profile out to the community at large. Soon we started getting referrals from the (larger) community."

Michael Denison, current Management Committee member and solicitor volunteer.

THE 1990's



Pictured (from left): Lyn Reid, Cathie Currie and Hazel Buckley

The nineties are perhaps best described as the time when the Centre burgeoned and blossomed. Not only were two branch offices established, but staff numbers also increased dramatically.

It was during this period that the Centre began to offer specialist programs in areas of high client need. The Child Support Program provided much-needed legal advice and casework

services to carer and liable parents, while the Tenant and Consumer Support Program assisted clients with a range of housing issues. A number of the Centre's advice sessions became 'drop-in' sessions, rather than appointment-based sessions, to try and alleviate the huge waiting periods for appointments – sometimes as much as nine weeks!

A fondly remembered nineties initiative was the 'Crosswire Program'. This program was aimed at people aged 15-25. It saw the creation of a telephone service for young people to call if they found themselves taken to designated police stations. When called, volunteers, many of whom were solicitors already involved with the Centre, were either able to offer advice or go down to the police station themselves to assist as a 'third party'. The service operated between Friday afternoon and Monday morning. Unfortunately the funding for this program ceased in 1993, for the service was being underutilised.

"There were a lot of young people who were kind of hesitant, reluctant to exercise their rights while in a police station. It was a successful program, well regarded within the community."

Former Crosswire Coordinator and current staff member, Cathie Currie.

THE NEW MILLENNIUM

Current
Staff



"The Legal Centre is an exciting and dynamic place to work. The staff are fantastic and the work environment is friendly and supportive."

Saskia Weerheim, PCLC staff member.

The new millennium. A time of exciting new technology, expansion and overall consolidation at the Centre.

Today, staff are always in a hurry and one gets a sense that they are always fighting against the clock. There are neat relay races - people passing tasks or important legal titbits to one another as they dash through the foyer. There are conferences about difficult cases

and addressing client concerns, and the phone never stops ringing. It's chaotic.

But it's a wonderful sort of ordered chaos. And a friendly, comfortable place to work, where suits are rarely seen, and a steady stream of visitors pop by to say hello or drop off baked goods or greeting cards to say thanks for a job well done.

CHATSWORTH HOUSE

"I've always said that while I'm in this chair there will always be a presence in the Pines, whether people like it or not, because that is where we came from and the community still needs us." Helen Constas, CEO.

The office in the Pines Forest Community Centre is remembered as a vibrant space, but also one that was physically unpleasant. In fact, lack of light is said to have caused mushrooms to grow on the carpet. It was far too hot in summer and far too small to house a growing organisation. Indeed, staff remember tripping over each other and having to close up the office in the early afternoon when the temperature (sometimes in the high forties) became a health and safety risk.

Frankston City Council had allowed the legal service to use the premises without charge and, when Council decided to rebuild the Community Centre, alternative premises were offered to PCLC. However, the proposed premises were not able to accommodate the burgeoning organisation. Happily though, with the Centre's successful tender to provide a new Tenant and Consumer Support Program in 1998, it became possible to move to a larger office in Frankston's central business district.

Pictured (from left back): Janet Ward, Candy Butler, Ian Petty, Helen Constas, Patrick Burns, Sue Vincent, Greg Russo (From left front): Catherine Bragg, Jackie Galloway, Mary Franich, Meagan Wilson, Victoria Mullings, Leonie Engelfield.

After negotiations regarding rent and funding proved successful, the Centre found itself with a new home in the Chatsworth House complex on Nepean Highway, Frankston. Further office space within Chatsworth House was later acquired. The Centre's head office now consists of individual offices, open plan office space, interview rooms and a meeting room. Whilst a dramatic improvement on the Centre's first home, space is still at a premium, and the facilities are quite basic. In the words of CEO, Helen Constas, "It's not L.A. Law."

Despite the move there remains a keen awareness of the Centre's roots in Frankston North.

BRANCHES

It may very well have been beyond the wild imaginings of PCLC's founders, but today the Centre proudly consists of not only an office in Frankston but also of branch offices in Bentleigh, Cranbourne and the Pines. There is also hope that a branch office in Rosebud will be established in the near future.

Each of these offices is seen as a necessity due to the sheer magnitude of the Centre's catchment area. After all, it is reasoned that being accessible means being close to the people who need you. Today each branch office provides a series of drop-in and/or appointment services each week.

The branches are a pertinent part of the Legal Centre in the new millennium. Here are their stories.

THE BENTLEIGH BRANCH

"I find it satisfying to assist the clients of the Centre, many of whom find the legal system overwhelming"

George Erlichster, solicitor volunteer at the Bentleigh Branch.

The Bentleigh Branch of PCLC was born in 1998 when the centre took over Southern Community Legal Centre's Glen Eira catchment. The branch office is located in a small converted infant welfare centre on Brady Road, and feels warm and welcoming. Rental costs are subsidised by the City of Glen Eira. During the two weekly night drop-in sessions two volunteer solicitors arrive at 6.30pm and stay until 9pm, or whenever it is that the last client leaves. During business hours, the branch is open for six hours

a day, three days a week and clients make appointments to come in and see a staff solicitor, or, alternatively, utilise the branch's telephone advice service.

Common issues that clients present with include neighbourhood disputes and Centrelink concerns. The branch also sees a large number of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and often utilises the services of interpreters.



Pictured (from left): Victoria Mullings, Candy Butler, Glen Eira Council representative, Inga Peulich MP, Kaeleene Owen, Jill Richardson, Sue Vincent, Rob Cornall, Leonie Engelfield and Ian Petty

THE PINES BRANCH

"The Pines Branch of PCLC epitomises the spirit of 'community', with friendly and approachable volunteers, happy to give their time to an appreciative community, assisting with an array of legal matters, both large and small, but more importantly, giving peace of mind to those in need."

Anthony Staunton, paralegal volunteer at the Pines branch.

Situated on Candlebark Crescent, just a ten-minute drive from the Nepean Highway office, the Pines branch is a small one. Born in 1998, the branch offers local community members a weekly drop-in service, staffed by volunteers. The branch office, which is provided by Frankston City Council, is located near the site of PCLC's former home, the Pines Forest Community Centre, and acts, in part, as an assurance to the residents of Frankston North that PCLC will continue to cater to their needs no matter how big the service becomes.

Pictured (from left): Dean Rankin, Brendan Stackpole, Jill Richardson, Leo Grogan, Meagan Wilson, Helen Conostas, Jennifer Michel, Serge Strajt and Jackie Galloway

THE CRANBOURNE BRANCH

PCLC has had some involvement with the suburb of Cranbourne since the early nineties. At that time a number of clients from the wider Cranbourne area began travelling down to the Pines to access the free legal service. In light of this, in 1992, staff at the Centre approached the Shire of Cranbourne about obtaining funding to institute an outreach service in Cranbourne.

Support from the Shire (and its successor, the City of Casey) was forthcoming and the resulting outreach service, which operated weekly, was incredibly successful. So successful, in fact, that client demand soon began to exceed the Centre's ability to supply. The State Government took note of this excessive demand, and Victorian Attorney-General (and also now Deputy Premier) Rob Hulls announced funding for a legal service in the area. The Centre then, despite some steep competition, successfully put in a tender to service Melbourne's outer south east.

The new Cranbourne office was thus established in 2005, replacing the existing outreach service. Overall, the move is said to have been a smooth one given the fact the Centre had already fostered positive relationships in Cranbourne with the general public, local government and other Cranbourne-based community organisations.

The Cranbourne branch offers advice by appointment as well as telephone advice, and will soon become a full-time office, open five days per week. Volunteer solicitors also staff a Tuesday evening drop-in session.

"The Cranbourne office is going great guns and is very busy, the appointments are filling up well. We expect it will get busier because Cranbourne (and neighbouring areas) is one of the fastest growing housing areas in Australia" - Victoria Mullings, *Principal Solicitor.*

The Hon Rob Hulls, Victorian Attorney-General, at the official opening of the Cranbourne Branch.



OUTREACH

An outreach is a service that sees workers heading (or more accurately dashing madly) to designated locations scattered across the Centre's catchment, in order to see clients who have made appointments.

In 2007 there are six outreach locations in Hastings, Mornington, Rosebud, Chelsea, Hampton Park and Pakenham. At each of these locations the Centre has fostered a relationship with the local agency housing the service, and the dispensed staff member can thus use that organisation's facilities and set up shop for the duration of the session. These local agencies include Good Shepherd Youth and Family Services, Mornington Community Contact and Bentons Square Community Centre, Southern Peninsula Community Support and Information Centre, Chelsea Information and Support Service, Hampton Park Community Centre and Living and Learning in Cardinia, and the dispensed staff member can thus use that

organisation's facilities and set up shop for the duration of the session. Outreach services are also supported by financial assistance from relevant local governments, including the Mornington Peninsula Shire, City of Kingston and City of Casey.

A specialised outreach solicitor was first hired in 1990 when the Commonwealth Government increased PCLC's funding.

"(I started in) an outreach position in 1995. On the day I started it was a bit of a round the world visit to all the outreaches. On the second day, off I went with my bag, Law Handbook and a phone number to ring in case I got into any dramatic trouble. And that was it. I guess I managed ok. I did the outreaches at Hastings, Mornington, Rosebud and Cranbourne... back then."

Victoria Mullings, Principal Solicitor.

During the late nineties and early into the new millennium, the Centre operated eleven outreach services, with support from local governments and Monash University Student Union (Caulfield and Peninsula). At present most locations are serviced at least once a fortnight and some outreaches have even grown to include volunteer-operated evening advice sessions.

A WEALTH OF SERVICES

It is safe to say that most people don't anticipate the legal woes that pop up in their lives. Legal troubles can range from the relatively minor, such as an unpaid parking fine, to the life changing, like divorce. What is common to many legal predicaments is that they are accompanied by a world of legalese that can be both incomprehensible and daunting. It is for this reason that PCLC believes being accessible is of supreme importance. The service needs to be available when a crisis occurs - not days or weeks later, by which time a client may have been forced to endure both panic and uncertainty.

Today PCLC provides a mixture of appointment, drop-in and telephone advice services at branch offices and outreach locations. The service is available to anyone, subject to guidelines, who lives, works or studies in its catchment area, an area which incorporates the Cities of Frankston, Casey, Glen Eira and Kingston and the Shires of Mornington Peninsula and Cardinia. The Centre provides comprehensive advice and casework services in

"If a client needs legal advice and the Centre is closed then we are not really meeting that need."

Helen Constas, CEO.

most non-commercial areas of law. Where appropriate, the Centre may also arrange reduced fee or pro bono assistance for clients through established schemes, and by liaising directly with private firms.

Where once the service provided legal advice just one night a week, in 2007 there are up to seven after hours' services running each week. In the event of emergency a client can usually be assisted that very day, or be seen at an advice session running that evening.

The telephone advice services are particularly useful. At the Frankston office, for example, clients call in on Thursday mornings at 9.30 am. Administrative staff then conduct a quick conflict of interest search through the computer system to see if the other party to the dispute has already sought legal advice from the Centre. Should no problem arise the client is then assigned an 'appointment'

time during which to call back. This invaluable service saves clients travel time and makes the service more accessible to those who are unable to attend at the defined face-to-face sessions. Should the other party to a dispute have already approached the Centre the client is then referred on to another community legal service.

Today, the Legal Centre is often able to do follow up work after appointments, work which may include writing letters or creating documents, and also provides a 'wills and power of attorney service' for low income earners



Claire McNamara, Outreach Solicitor, with the Hon. Michael Duff, Federal Attorney-General, at the launch of the Outreach Service, held at the Westernport Marina in Hastings on 23 February 1993.

THE FAMILY LAW PROGRAM

“A typical situation (facing solicitors in the family law program) would be one in which a female was attending an appointment where her separation (from her partner) is quite fresh, and where she requires advice in relation to child issues and also about her property entitlements under the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth).”

Brendan Stackpole, Solicitor-in-Charge of the Family Law Program.

Family law matters have a tendency to be particularly emotional, for they involve the primary relationships in people's lives. It is the unfortunate truth that matters of divorce, family violence and children's living arrangements have been central concerns for PCLC's clients since 1977. Thus, addressing these concerns has been high on the Centre's agenda ever since.

The family law service provided in 2007 is in marked contrast to the service available in those early days. Where once family law matters were dealt with within the generalist program of client assistance, today there exists a specialized Family Law Program which is able to provide clients with both ongoing advice and casework services. Simultaneously, a duty lawyer service, which is run out of the Dandenong Registry of the Federal Magistrates' Court in conjunction with Victoria

Legal Aid, now exists. The new program has been very successful to date, having assisted more than 500 clients in its first two years.

The new program, funded by Victoria Legal Aid, has meant that those parties to a family dispute that would otherwise be unrepresented due to high cost, or because a conflict of interest would arise if Victoria Legal Aid were to represent them, can be afforded legal representation.

Nonetheless, the sheer magnitude of family law issues that clients present with, more than 4,000 family law issues arose in 2006, has meant that there is sometimes a streamlining process before clients find their way into the Family Law Program. Often they are first seen by a volunteer or staff solicitor during a regular appointment or drop-in session. If it is decided their

matter can be suitably dealt with within the Family Law Program they are offered an appointment with a solicitor working within the program. And there is always a system of prioritisation. Indeed matters in which the welfare of a child may be in jeopardy are often advanced to the front of the queue.

An important part of the Centre's Family Law Program is the Child Support Program, which assists clients with a range of child support and related issues, including child maintenance and paternity testing. One of only three community legal centres in Victoria with a specialist Child Support Program, it is little wonder that the demand for services is so high. Clients are often struggling to navigate the complex world of assessments, reviews, entitlements and liabilities, particularly in this era of changing family structures.



Brendan Stackpole

THE CONSUMER AFFAIRS PROGRAM

“Often tenants approach us for help when they are facing eviction and homelessness. We have to be both practical, and at times creative, in coming up with solutions. In addition to advising and advocating on legal issues, we link clients with community services that can support them. We often source financial assistance for clients which assists us to negotiate a payment plan for presentation to the Tribunal. This has led to many positive outcomes for tenants – being able to remain in their housing and meet their obligations.” Jackie Galloway, *Manager, Consumer Affairs Program.*

Many clients have sought assistance with consumer and tenancy matters since the Centre's inception in 1977.

Under these broad headings fall complaints regarding eviction and household repairs, rising rents, quality of household goods, and motor vehicle purchase and repair. So varied are client problems they can relate to anything from a fifty dollar purchase to a \$100,000 acquisition.

While the provision of advice regarding all these matters has always been a staple part of the Legal Centre's agenda – the nature and form of the Consumer Affairs Program has altered dramatically over the years.

In those very early days, consumer and tenancy matters were simply dealt with in the generalist program. By the mid-nineties, however, the Centre had a specialist consumer program up and running that saw a part-time

worker employed to provide advice and offer limited casework services to clients.

In 1997 the Centre tendered for a new program – ‘The Consumer and Tenant Support Program’. Operational in 1998, it is said to have been an extraordinary program. Funded by the Victorian Government, under this program five staff members could be sustained to provide extensive outreach services, advise at daily appointment and drop-in sessions, and staff a five day a week telephone advice service.

Unfortunately the program was discontinued in 2005 when the government decided that consumer affairs would be best dealt with in a centralised manner, rather than through the community sector.

Since that time, PCLC has been sub-contracted by the Tenants Union of Victoria to provide the ‘Metro-Advocacy Service’

Jackie Galloway

THE ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

under the new Consumer Affairs Service Model. This means the Centre is funded to assist particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged tenants and consumers by offering advocacy services in the Melbourne Metropolitan area.

In addition 'The Civil Claims Project' has been up and running for the past 18 months, funded by Consumer Affairs Victoria. It seeks to both develop literature to help consumers self-represent at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal, and run workshops to assist consumers and tenants. Simultaneously, the Centre is running a 'Young Renters Program', which seeks to teach young people aged 16-25 about their rights and responsibilities as renters and address the barriers they face in accessing the private rental market.

Other short term projects, funded by Consumer Affairs Victoria, have included the development of an education training module on buying a car, and the 'Caravan Park Project', a one year pilot program run in 2005/2006 which focussed on addressing tenancy problems faced by those living in caravan parks.



Members of the Administration Team: (From left back) Valmai Scully, Georgina Hogan-Keogh, Vicki Holmes, (From left front) Hellen Argiriou, Sue Vincent and Kaeleene Owen

"The administrative team are an extremely professional group of people, providing support and assistance to all staff at PCLC. They also always offer a friendly greeting to all that come through the door or contact PCLC by phone." Cathie Currie, *PCLC staff member.*

'Indispensable' is perhaps the best way to describe the PCLC administrative team. For without them the provision of legal services would presumably be disorderly and erratic. Indeed, an extraordinary 16,760 telephone calls were processed by the administrative team between June 2005 and June 2006.

In the early days the team was made up of volunteers. Today there are but a few administrative volunteers, and the team consists of seven dedicated staff members.

These staff members act as receptionists, word processors, and general administrative assistants.

Current staff member and former administrative volunteer Kaeleene Owen remembers a time when she was a volunteer in the early 1990's. "I was answering phones, greeting clients, setting up workshops... there were just so many people coming through the door. They (PCLC) were so under-resourced!"

In the mid-nineties the Centre involved itself in the 'Jobskills

TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT

"It's hard for new staff to understand where we've come from. The premises and computers today are a luxury, compared with what we used to have."

Sue Vincent, Manager of the Administration Program.

Financial constraints have meant that PCLC has rarely been the first to benefit from new technology.

Early staff remember the 1980's as a decade of minimalism. A time when one computer with a vibrant orange screen was shared by the collective. Indeed, there was a roster that allocated typing time to each staff member, and this system lasted well into the mid-nineties.

Getting the internet in 2000 was a real coup. Sue Vincent, Manager of the Administration Program, explains that until that time the computers in the office were simply too old to handle the technological upgrade. "We had to wait until we were upgraded by Victoria Legal Aid," she explains.

Victoria Campbell, a former secretary of the Management Committee, remembers a time when she didn't have access to a laptop when typing up the minutes during monthly committee meetings. "No-one could understand my writing!" she says. Current Management Committee secretary, Judy del Rio, agrees that not having to handwrite the minutes has been a lifesaver – "thank God we have the computer," she says. "Otherwise I just couldn't do it!"

In truth, looking at PCLC today, outfitted with a plethora of computers and high tech software, it is hard to imagine those sparse days of decades past. In 2007 information about the Centre is available online, with plans to develop a more comprehensive website on the Centre's agenda. Similarly, there are plans to create an electronic diary system that will allow all branches to monitor solicitor appointment times.

The Centre has also been using the Commonwealth Legal Services Information Scheme (CLSIS) for data collection since 2003, which has seen the implementation of a more sophisticated system of recording client data and has helped avoid the sorts of conflict of interest problems that are bound to arise when a legal service operates within a confined community area. Since 2003 the Centre has also adopted 'thin' client technology using terminal services, which means that all branches are able to access the Centre's main computer server.

There is also volunteering in the realm of technology. It is remembered that Gordon Chase provided a wonderful pro bono technological service in the early days.

LAW REFORM

“Casework deals with problems on an individual level and community legal education and law reform activities deal with systemic issues which are informed by our casework experience.” Brendan Stackpole, *Solicitor-in-Charge of the Family Law Program.*

The desire to effect change in the law has been burning strongly since the service's inception. It is believed that the service is one that should not aim to merely aid individual clients, but rather one that also seeks to identify common concerns and instigate change for the benefit of the public generally.

The service often contributes to contemporary legislative debate by making submissions to government bodies, lobbying local politicians and raising issues in the local media.

Over time the sorts of issues that have been at the forefront of the Centre's law reform agenda have shifted. It is remembered that in those early days the Centre's law reform activities centred on preventing abuse of the child support system and seeking to clarify motor vehicle damage assessment schemes.

More recent activities have seen PCLC staff contribute to the debate about proposed changes to both the family law and child support systems, participate in the Victorian Law Reform Commission's inquiry into family violence and make submissions relating to the

Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. Domestic violence, in particular, has been highlighted as a cause around which law reform activities should centre in 2007/2008. Volunteers are also invited into the law reform process as researchers, or to aid with the writing of submissions.

In recent years the service has effected definite change within the community law sector. In 2004 staff at the Centre launched a campaign to have a new category of practising certificate developed for both non-practising and government sector solicitor volunteers.

Manager of the Volunteer and Education Programs, Andrea Florance, explains how the idea came about. “We've got about sixty lawyer volunteers and some of them aren't currently employed as they might be retired or on maternity leave. Others might be working for a government body and be exempt from holding a practising certificate. That meant these people couldn't volunteer for us unless they paid for a practising certificate for about \$200 a year. We believed that people shouldn't

have to be out of pocket when volunteering, they are helping the community.”

After much discussion it was decided that the Centre's objective was not to have certificates for these special categories of practitioners abolished, but rather to lobby for a new category of 'no-fee certificate'. This would mean solicitors would still be subject to necessary scrutiny processes but not be out of pocket.

After gaining the support of other key bodies such as the Federation of Community Legal Centres, the then Legal Practice Board and the Law Institute of Victoria, the Centre liaised with the Victorian Attorney General Rob Hulls and lobbied for the change. Success came in 2005 when the amendment to the *Legal Profession Act 2004* (Vic) passed through Victorian Parliament. Happily a few of the Centre's volunteers now hold these new certificates. “It was a fantastic result,” says Andrea Florance.



Catherine Bragg

COMMUNITY LEGAL EDUCATION

“I have never forgotten what the late Tim McCoy (community lawyer and activist) said to me when I started, ‘Don't get bogged down with casework, community legal education is just as important because you're empowering people, helping them learn about the law.’”
— Helen Constas, CEO.

The realm of community legal education spreads far beyond the jurisdiction of any one worker. Indeed, one of the Centre's core objectives is to be involved in education initiatives and fulfilling this objective is an integral part of every staff member's job.

Nonetheless, there have been titled Community Legal Education Workers since the early days. In 1982 Helen Constas, current CEO, held that role.

Community legal education initiatives focus on taking the mystery out of the law, on informing the wider community about potential legal predicaments and on empowering clients to take

“I think the Valuing Volunteer's Project reflects PCLC's broader concern for the sector. It could have just... developed volunteer training resources just for the Centre but it actually decided to have a go at developing materials and resources that could be used more broadly.” Gillian Wilks, *Manager of Projects and Development.*

control, where possible, of their own legal affairs.

The Buyer Beware information booklet, a publication produced in the nineties, is one example of a successful education initiative. This booklet worked to inform consumers about their rights and responsibilities.

Today workshops about tenancy matters and family violence are run with enthusiasm.

Simultaneously talks at schools and various other community organisations are abundant. Manager of Volunteer and Education Programs, Andrea Florance explains that at times these talks are publicised in the local media and given for the benefit of the wider community

and at other times are given to specific schools or organisations at their request. Talks given to school-aged children revolve around issues such as dealing with police, security guards and ticket inspectors and access to justice and human rights. Talks about wills and guardianship are also popular amongst senior residents in the catchment area.

Public information stalls in shopping centres or at community events have also been commonplace since the 1980's. These stalls are habitually run by staff members and offer the public a range of legal information pamphlets. At times these displays are run in conjunction with an event such as *Law Week*, at other times they merely serve as a publicity tool that works to inform the wider community that a legal service is available to them.

The Centre has also worked to educate the community law sector. Recently, as a result of the 'Valuing Volunteers Project', a manual to assist in the training of volunteers was created by the Centre and distributed amongst the sector.

At the launch of the Valuing Volunteers Kit. From left: Chris Gallagher, Andrea Florance, Helen Constas, Jenny Mikakos MLC, Gillian Wilks, Prof Kathy Laster, Ros Horridge and John Cain

MEDIA INVOLVEMENT

Informing the wider community about both pressing legal issues that concern them, and the service that exists to help them if they find themselves in a legal bind, has been made that much easier because of the positive relationships PCLC has fostered with local media institutions. A column called 'The Law and You' first appeared in 1982 and ran for a number of years. Today, PCLC has no regular newspaper column but a steady stream of articles does continue to appear in the local papers. In truth there has been a great sense of camaraderie between local media and the Centre.

The Centre has even forayed into the domain of radio. In the mid-1990's staff members would appear on radio stations such as *FoxFM*, *3MP* and the *ABC*, informing the community about services offered by the Centre and generally discussing legal rights and responsibilities.

"Fortunately we've found throughout the Legal Centre's history that local papers have been very supportive. They are particularly interested in the work we do because it is not-for-profit. We are able to pick up the phone and call an editor and talk to them about an exciting new initiative or an alarming trend or changes to the law that are going to affect our clients... we have a high success rate in getting our articles published."

Andrea Florance, Manager of Volunteer and Education Programs.



Pro Bono award winners Chris Gallagher and Michael Denison.

Picture: JASON SAMMON. N23FB409

Pro Bono awards for six

SIX Frankston and Mornington Peninsula volunteers have received Pro Bono Service Awards for their work with Peninsula Community Legal Centre.

Attorney-General Rob Hulls presented the awards on June 26 as part of a conference marking the 30th anniversary of the Federation of Community Legal Centres.

One of the Peninsula Community Legal Centre's founders, Rudi Meier, received an award for 27 years' service to the centre. Another recipient, Michael Denison, is Rudi Meier's partner in their Frankston firm, Meier Denison.

He has served the legal centre for 22 years and is vice-president of its management committee.

Chris Gallagher received his award after 21 years' service. He is president of the centre's management committee.

Chris Hill and Peter Le Souef also received the prestigious award.

Joe Gorman served the centre for 20 years and was president of the management committee for several years.

Along with the Pro Bono award he recently received, Mr Gorman was named Victoria's Children and Young Persons' Lawyer of the Year in 2000 and received a certificate of high commendation in last year's National Children's Lawyer Awards.

The awards recognise the integral role of volunteers in delivering community legal services.

THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



"The nature of the organisation is that of a friendly and cooperative group so I think we all like to think we're on the same team"

Chris Gallagher, president of the Management Committee.

Management Committee members: Jack Damschke, Elaine Pierson, Chris Gallagher, Michael Denison, George Erlichster and Victoria Campbell

The current Management Committee is, as it has always been, composed of a committed group of community members.

Today, the CEO manages the Centre on a day-to-day basis, and the Management Committee's role is one of governance. The Committee ensures that the Centre stays true to its aims and objectives, and is involved in the formation of policies. The Committee also ensures that the Centre remains accountable to funders and the community it serves.

The committee – which consists of a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Public Officer and three general committee members – is elected annually in accordance with the *Associations Incorporation Act 1981* (Vic) by the Centre's members, and consists of people that are eager to volunteer their time

to aid the running of a valuable community service.

Despite the official nature of the body, it is evident, upon speaking to Management Committee members, that they feel a sense of kinship with the Centre's staff. Nonetheless as PCLC has grown there has been a need to alter the way staff and Management Committee members interact. Where once staff members involved in different projects would all present reports at monthly meetings, in the interest of saving time (meetings used to be as long as five hours), it is now left to the CEO to present an overview of the Centre's activities generally and to the Program Managers to give regular summaries of their programs' initiatives.

In 2007 four of the eight Management Committee members are lawyers. The other

four are general community members. Indeed there has always been a push to ensure non-lawyer members are on the committee, for they act as a safeguard – they prevent the Centre from losing touch with core community concerns.

Long time Management Committee member, Elaine Pierson, explains, "It doesn't matter if you have a degree, your input (on the committee) is beneficial and that's the way I think it should be. It is a community legal service, you don't just have lawyers because I think that frightens people off. You've got to have people that understand, that have been there and done that."

And as one interviewee cordially suggested – too many lawyers in any situation is bound to be dangerous!



FUNDING

“Liaising with governments is very important... I personally feel it’s the government’s responsibility to adequately fund Community Legal Centres.”

Helen Constas, CEO of PCLC.

PCLC liaises extensively with all three levels of government, and with philanthropic organisations, to ensure that these bodies are aware of the Centre’s work and either pledge to, or continue to, commit the vital funds that keep the service up and running.

Throughout the eighties and nineties, funding was on an annual basis, meaning that the Centre necessarily operated in an environment of uncertainty from one year to the next. Indeed the terms ‘funding’ and ‘stability’ go hand-in-hand. 2003 is remembered as a time of such stability, a time when, after years of lobbying, the Centre entered into its first long-term funding agreement with the Commonwealth Government. This agreement

ensured funds would be available for three years, rather than simply for the usual twelve-month period. One-year contracts meant staff could never be guaranteed more than one year of employment at a time, and long-term strategic planning was difficult, thus the new three-year contract was embraced with much excitement.

Today the Centre’s core funding bodies are: The Commonwealth Attorney-General’s Department, the Department of Justice (Vic), Consumer Affairs Victoria, Victoria Legal Aid, City of Casey, City of Glen Eira, City of Kingston, Frankston City Council and the Mornington Peninsula Shire.

INTERACTION WITH OTHER GROUPS

“It is important for us to be involved. Because we are a bigger organisation we do a lot of resourcing to other Community Legal Centres, just as other Centres helped us in the early days” Helen Constas, CEO

The legal centre has forged strong relationships with numerous service providers and community groups. Some of these bodies provide alternate legal services, while others address wider community issues.

The Centre has been a long time member of both the Federation of Community Legal Centres, the Victorian peak body, and the National Association of Community Legal Centres. For many years, the Centre’s CEO, Helen Constas, was a representative on the Federation’s Management Committee and today she is the sector’s sole representative on the Victoria Legal Aid Community Consultative Committee. Staff members regularly sit on working

groups established by these peak bodies, such as the Sector Development Working Group, Access to Interpreters Working Group, Police Issues Working Group, Violence Against Women and Children Working Group, Community Legal Education Workers Group and Child Support Working Group. These staff members both contribute to, and learn from, vibrant debate surrounding client issues and the community legal sector generally. Additionally, at a national level, the Centre has engaged in joint negotiations with the National Association of Community Legal Centres to secure necessary funds from the Commonwealth Government.

Back in the late eighties, PCLC was also involved in the creation of the Frankston Dispute Settlement Centre, a body which focused on neighbourhood dispute resolution, and Bayside Tenants Information Service.

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

Peninsula Community Legal Centre is first and foremost a community organisation. Consequently staff and volunteers at the Centre have worked hard to foster strong relationships with numerous other community bodies throughout the catchment area.

As a result clients are referred to the Centre from bodies dealing with issues like emergency housing and family violence. The Centre also has a well of resources to draw on when seeking information about client dilemmas.

Leanne Petrides, who has been manager for the past eight years at Cranbourne Information and Support Service Inc (CISS), an independent, government-funded body that provides Cranbourne and Casey South residents with information and support in relation to matters like emergency services and counselling, muses that the relationship between PCLC and CISS has endured for well over ten years. She explains that:

"We had an outreach for PCLC, they used our office space. There was initially one

session a week, (staff solicitor) Victoria Mullings ran it then. She would always be racing in to see clients. They were always booked in one after the other. Later Brendan Stackpole took over (as solicitor) and it soon became apparent that one afternoon a week wasn't enough. So we all pitched in and made submissions and then (with support from the City of Casey) we were able to offer a full day on Tuesdays. People were very happy with the service. All the solicitors that have come in over the years dealt well with our clients, who were very vulnerable, stressed and needed someone to listen to what was hurting them... I felt I could recommend anyone to PCLC."

Although over the years PCLC's relationship with the

Cranbourne area has solidified, with a permanent branch being established in 2005, the relationship with CISS has endured. Today, Leanne Petrides explains, clients are referred to PCLC regarding matters such as family violence, wills and neighbourhood disputes.

Similarly Jen Kelly, a current Management Committee member who works in emergency housing, used to refer clients to PCLC long before she joined the committee. As she explains, she doesn't make referrals to organisations she doesn't have complete faith in. Indeed she often follows up her referrals, and has found that those sent to PCLC have been satisfied.

"We still get people coming in looking for the service... now we just send them across the road. I see the relationship with PCLC as more like a friendship than a formal connection."

Leanne Petrides, Manager at Cranbourne Information and Support Services Inc.

STUDENTS

"It's an opportunity for these students to see the law as it affects people who are often disadvantaged, and that can have an effect on future lawyers, community workers, social workers, police officers and the like. We hope to open their eyes to the impact of the law on these (disadvantaged) people. It is also part of our community spirit to help these students gain experience." *Andrea Florance, Manager of Volunteer and Education Programs.*

The centre also has a proud tradition of welcoming both secondary and tertiary students into the chaotic world of community lawyering.

Over the years a multitude of students have walked through PCLC's doors and been shown the ropes. Indeed long time employees Andrea Florance and Jackie Galloway pleasantly recall their time as work experience students while undertaking

their studies. In the early nineties a young Andrea tagged along with various solicitors as they attended court and outreach services while a few years later Jackie worked on a project on intervention orders.

Most of the Centre's regular paralegal volunteers are tertiary students, who are currently studying Law, Community Development and other justice-related courses.

A special volunteer: Gary MacDonald (2nd from right) spent time at the Centre to research material for a television program.



CLIENTS THEN AND NOW

“The community would be lost without the service, it’s a big help to the community – they go out of their way to help people.” Jack Damschke, *Management Committee member.*

A quick look at the Centre’s recent statistics reveals the following snapshot of PCLC’s client base. About two-thirds of clients seen are female and the vast majority of clients that present have incomes that can be classified as ‘low’. Issues clients present with are extraordinarily varied – from neighbourhood disputes to matters of employment. However, the most common problems for clients are, as they have been since the Centre’s inception, problems relating to family law, domestic violence and child support.

In truth no two clients are the same. Describing the sorts of clients she encounters each day, Principal Solicitor Victoria Mullings has the following to say:

“(The client base) varies a lot. Some people when you are able to resource them are able to run with that (information) quite well and then there are others that simply fall down

every step of the way; often these people have a lot of barriers, they might be educational or language barriers or they may have a disability. If possible we are very big on teaching people how to do things for themselves. I think people are often a lot more capable than they give themselves credit for. I think nothing gives me more pleasure when someone comes back and says ‘thank you for the advice you gave me, I went out and I was able to do this and that and I managed to succeed’.”

Nonetheless the Centre does, at times, encounter a difficult client who becomes frustrated, distraught or aggressive if a solution cannot be immediately found for the problems that confront them. Staff are taught how to deal with distressed clients. Manager of

the Administration Program Sue Vincent, who at times, encounters such clients, is rather pragmatic. “People just want help,” she says, “they are often under a lot of pressure and don’t understand we are not a government department but rather a not-for profit organisation with limitations.”

First and foremost on the Centre’s agenda is identifying and meeting client need. Satisfying this objective has become necessarily more difficult over the years as the Centre expands to incorporate the residents of different municipalities. In Chelsea, for example, where an outreach service has been operative since 1990, the client base tends to be older with wills and probate key client concerns. In comparison the Cranbourne branch sees many a young family walk through the door faced with family law or mortgage related problems.



CASE STUDIES

An elderly gentleman had recently had a kidney transplant after his wife gave him one of her own kidneys. They had purchased a fridge from a fairly well known trader for three and half thousand dollars. The fridge had a special water filter, which the client needed because of his kidney problems. The client noticed that the water coming out of the fridge had a strange odour and taste. The couple contacted the trader who told them to contact the manufacturer. The manufacturer was unhelpful and gave them the run around. The client then contacted PCLC. PCLC contacted the trader who eventually agreed, after talking with the manufacturer, to provide the couple with a new fridge.

A female client who was a sole parent of three children whose only income was a Centrelink benefit had to repair her car in order to take her children to school and had fallen into rental arrears. She was facing eviction at Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT). PCLC arranged for a welfare agency to assist

Here are just a few examples of the sorts of problems clients present with at the Centre. These are the sorts of everyday matters that can drastically affect people’s lives.

with the arrears and provided representation at VCAT. The matter was adjourned for a payment plan allowing the client to remain in the property and pay off the rent arrears.

A woman had an intervention order against her ex-husband who was using child contact changeovers to harass and intimidate her. The ex-husband appealed the intervention order, believing that the woman could not afford a lawyer. PCLC assisted the woman by providing free advice and helped her secure a reduced fee barrister. The ex-husband’s appeal was defeated and changeovers now take place at a police station.

An elderly lady had appointed her late husband’s friend to manage her affairs. Having been granted power of attorney, he soon sold her flat, moved

her into a granny flat at the rear of his family home and bought himself a holiday house. PCLC arranged pro bono assistance with a well-known firm. The matter was settled in favor of the client for a six-figure sum.

And now for one a little more unusual:

A client came in having been served with a Complaint for \$25,000. The other side alleged that the client’s dog had barked at their ostrich, causing it to develop stress-related gallstones. The ostrich had subsequently dropped dead. PCLC staff trawled through ostrich autopsies and soon discovered that ostriches are so sensitive that even a plane flying overhead can traumatise them. The other party later backed down when they realized there was little money to be obtained from PCLC’s client.

“Everyone is going to have a legal problem one way or the other. I’m not talking about crisis situations necessarily, but people will inevitably have a legal problem during their lives.” Helen Constas, *CEO.*



Kath Neilsen's family with staff at the presentation of the inaugural Kath Neilsen Memorial Award.

Kath Neilsen

The late Kath Neilsen was a local resident of the Pines, who fought fearlessly for her community. Kath was one of the founders of the Centre, assisted with volunteer co-ordination and served on the Centre's Management Committee for a number of years. She was a councillor with Frankston City Council, Co-ordinator of the Community Links Action and Resource Centre in Frankston North and a member of the Legal Aid

Review Committee. Kath was vocal against cuts to legal aid, and was quoted in a newspaper article as saying that it was "impossible" to put too high a price on the value of legal aid.

In honour of Kath's dedication and support to the Centre, the Kath Neilson Memorial Award was created in 2002, and is presented annually to a volunteer who has made an outstanding contribution to the Centre.

Paul Booth

Staff, management and volunteers of Peninsula Community Legal Centre were deeply saddened by the loss of Paul Booth, who passed away suddenly in May 2004. Paul was a much loved and respected member of the PCLC family. From 1995 to 2001 he was employed in the role of Finance Officer. After retiring, he applied to become a Management Committee member, serving as Treasurer and Public Officer until his untimely death.

Paul had a strong philosophical commitment to the community legal sector and social justice issues. He stood by his beliefs and willingly participated in community action, such as the Reconciliation March where he carried the Legal Centre's banner. Paul impressed all who knew him as a true gentleman. Paul is sadly missed, and warmly remembered by all who knew him.

FOND MEMORIES

When asked to let their minds drift back many interviewees recalled wonderful anecdotes. Some of them must be recorded here – lest the memories fade and they are forgotten.

European Wasps:

Back when the Cranbourne office was but a dream, and outreach in Cranbourne was conducted out of an office in the Cranbourne Community Information & Support Service, it came to pass that Brendan Stackpole (then an outreach solicitor) opened the door to find a swarm of wasps had hijacked his desk. With some incredulity he sought assistance from CISS staff. After assessing the situation it was decided that a professional was needed. A call was made and a pest control man drolly suggested a can of fly spray might do the trick. Staff were adamant that a little more intervention was needed and insisted the gentleman come down himself. In the words of Manager of Cranbourne and Information Support Services Inc, Leanne Petrides, "the bloke they sent down nearly died of shock." As it turned out, a nest of wasps had made its way into the office. Brendan was relocated, one would imagine much to his relief.

Elaine Pierson and staff at the car dealership

Cars and Crashes:

The Centre acquired its first car in 1993, a Holden Barina. This caused considerable excitement for it meant that outreach solicitors could reach their destinations without having to provide their own transport or worry about arranging reimbursements for petrol. A second car was later leased, and it is remembered that one staff member, most unfortunately, backed one of the Centre's cars into the other!

It is also remembered that accountant Michael Hibbert provided free tax advice to low income earners in the Centre's early days. He is warmly remembered for his outrage at the suggestion that he shouldn't bring his shiny Rolls to the Pines. He parked in front of the Centre every time he volunteered – and his car never had a scratch.

The Sheep Incident:

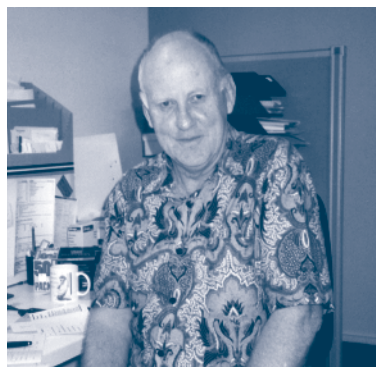
A barbeque was being held in the Pines to commemorate the centre's 20th anniversary. There were some lamb chops sizzling away. Suddenly one of the locals

dropped by, with him a sheep on a lead. There was some uncertainty as whether the sheep had been brought to be eaten, or simply as someone's pet. Nonetheless some staff members felt it a bit rude to eat their lamb in the presence of the sheep.

A Mouse!

Principal Solicitor, Victoria Mullings, was conducting an outreach service in Cranbourne in the late nineties. On one particular day she found that there was no space available for her to conduct client interviews – except the billiards room where youth group meetings were often held. Left with little alternative, Victoria spent the day giving advice perched on the edge of a pool table. To add to the drama of the day, Victoria soon spotted a mouse rummaging in her bag. The mouse was not easily deterred from seeking out Victoria's lunch, and she spent the better part of the afternoon chasing it away.

A local resident helps staff members Leone Engelfield, Helen Constan and Anne O'Dwyer at the Centre's 20th Anniversary BBQ



Paul Booth



FINAL WORD

"Congratulations to the Peninsula Community Legal Centre for your commitment and dedication to providing quality legal services over the past 30 years.

This Centre is a pioneer in the community legal service sector and a fine example of what can be achieved when dedicated people work together to address the needs of their community.

As you reflect on all you have achieved in upholding the principles of human rights, social justice and equity, may you take great pleasure in knowing your services have benefited thousands of people - who may otherwise have obtained a lower quality outcome from their encounter with the legal system.

Thank you and I wish you continued success for the future."

The Hon. Philip Ruddock MP,
Attorney-General.

"For 30 years, Peninsula has been the best kind of agitator for the cause of community justice - taking it up to successive Governments, holding coppers and courts to account, advocating on behalf of its clients and community, and for the wider interests of the law.

Peninsula and its staff, headed by the passionate Helen Constas, embody what we can achieve when we are committed to assisting the disempowered, the disenfranchised and the disadvantaged; when we know that reaching real heights in the legal profession is simply about having

the courage of your convictions and working to realise them. Congratulations, Peninsula - and best wishes for another 30 years more."

The Hon. Rob Hulls MP,
Victorian Attorney-General.

"The Peninsula Community Legal Centre has provided important practical advice and support for our community in areas such as family law and consumer law. They have educated individuals and families about their financial rights and responsibilities and have earned the support and respect of the broader community, the legal profession and funding bodies such as the Commonwealth Government.

I commend and congratulate the dedicated team of paid and volunteer personnel who have turned what can be an intimidating world of law, into practical help and assistance for those in need."

The Hon. Bruce Billson MP,
Federal Member for Dunkley.

"I wish to take this opportunity in congratulating all the Staff, Board Members and Volunteers who have contributed so much over the last 30 years, in making Peninsula Community Legal Centre the oyster of success within our local Community.

It has been a privilege to be part of the continual growth of the PCLC, and subsequently I look forward to working with you all, in fostering a solid relationship between the PCLC and the Brumby Government as we move forward to another 30 years."

Jude Perera MP, *State Member for Cranbourne District.*

"Peninsula CLC enjoys an enviable culture of strong professionalism and efficiency and it distinguishes itself as a legal sector leader by virtue of its strong service delivery ethos and its commitment to clients. Congratulations on thirty years of community service."

Tony Parsons, *Managing Director, Victoria Legal Aid.*

"Congratulations to all of the staff, volunteers and supporters of Peninsula Community Legal Centre on three decades of dedicated work building a strong and effective organisation providing access to justice for the Peninsula community."

Hugh de Krester, *Executive Officer, Federation of Community Legal Centres (Vic) Inc.*

"Where I would like to see the Centre go is continuing to provide the service it does, while increasing the accessibility of the Centre to the community. In one respect it's a well known service, but I am sure there are a lot of people who have legal problems who don't take advantage of the help they could get from the Centre."

Chris Gallagher, *President of the Management Committee and solicitor volunteer.*

"I just hope everything works out for PCLC and they keep going like they are. I just hope everything goes well because they do a good job. We'd be lost without it - the community would - as PCLC is a big help to the community, they go out of their way to help people."

Jack Damschke, *Management Committee member.*

"It is good that the Centre is still there. If (in the future) there is a need for growth there should be growth. I hope that services develop adequately."

Jen Kelly, *Management Committee member.*

"The Centre is a really valuable resource for the community"

Rhonda Sandardos, *paralegal volunteer.*

"I think Chris Gallagher and Helen Constas have done a terrific job at steering PCLC in the right direction at the right pace."

Michael Denison, *current Management Committee member and long time solicitor volunteer.*

"Usually when things alter and get bigger you don't have that approachable friendly sort of thing - you change because you've got all that money and all those things you've got to do. To me the service hasn't altered. The main objective of the whole thing is still to help people"

Elaine Pierson, *Management Committee member.*

"Congratulations on the first 30 years."

Rudi Meier, *long time solicitor volunteer.*

"I'm incredibly proud of being part of what is an incredibly professionally run service that does an awful lot of good. I hope the Centre remains financially viable and continues to service the needs of people. If down the track issues arise I hope the Centre can adapt to meet those needs and hope they keep local solicitors involved."

Greg Russo, *former president of the Management Committee and long time solicitor volunteer.*

"I hope the Centre remains independent; that we can keep up funding and still be an effective force in the community, in law reform and legal assistance."

Victoria Campbell, *Vice President of the Management Committee.*

"I just congratulate everyone who works there, and especially Helen Constas. I am always thinking of them because they just do such a wonderful job."

Willie Krooglik, *former coordinator of FNLS.*

"Sensational... it is sensational that this tiny little service is now impacting across so many communities. And we must always acknowledge that without the women of the Pines we probably wouldn't exist as an organisation. I congratulate the massive expansion into the lives of the people in the region that is so positive to so many people with legal needs."

John Finlayson, *founder of FNLS.*

"Many happy returns to the service, 30 years young!"

George Kennedy, *past paralegal volunteer.*

"Congratulations on turning 30, and congratulations on the way this organisation has evolved and developed from a small volunteer organisation to what it is now."

Judy del Rio, *Management Committee member and paralegal volunteer.*

"Congratulations on being able to operate for 30 years. May it go for a further 30 years."

Peter LeSouef, *long time solicitor volunteer.*

"I'm looking forward to being part of a vibrant future."

George Erlichster, *long time solicitor volunteer and Management Committee member.*

"I am pleased something so significant has grown from such humble beginnings."

Ian Boag, *founder of FNLS.*

THE NEXT 30 YEARS:

Peninsula Community Legal Centre is thirty years old. And like any thirty year old it has already experienced a number of life's milestones. There was its conception and birth in 1977, its childhood in the 1980's and maturation in the 1990's. It changed its name, and in 1998 it merged with another legal centre and moved out of home. It then bore children (branches) over the following years. The Centre is only thirty years young. One can only imagine what the next years will bring. What is certain is that the legacy of PCLC will live on in the memories of the thousands of clients who have walked through its doors.

APOLOGY

It is with both certainty and regret that we advise that a number of people are missing from the following lists of the Centre's management committees, staff and volunteers. Unfortunately, we have been unable to access all of the Centre's records, and we apologise to all of the people who have not been named, but who contributed to the Centre and helped so many in our community achieve access to justice. Thank you for your support.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

Booth, Paul
Burns, Patrick
Campbell, Victoria
Constas, Helen
Coukoulis, Theo
Cruise, Charmaine
Damschke, Jack
De Lacovo, Angela
Del Rio, Judy
Denison, Michael
Erlichster, George
Florance, Andrea
Galagher, Chris
Gilchrist, Beverley
Gill, Colleen
Gorman, Joe
Grant, Elizabeth
Guymer, Lance
Hogan, Cameron
Hogan, Shauna
Holman, Barry
Holman, Ted
Horridge, Ros
Hynes, Helen
Johnson, Margaret
Kelly, Jen
Kinnear, David
Krooglik, Willie
Kuhl, Barbara
Lacy, Chris
Laughlin, Donna
Lee, David
McGrath, Margaret
November, Janet
Pierson, Elaine
Russo, Greg
Skeen, Vivienne
Skeldon, Michael
Slattery, Chris
Tsousis, Poppie
Tsousis, Tola
Warwick, Paul
Watts, Dawn
Whitechurch, Scott

STAFF

Amos, Maree
Argiriou, Hellen
Bennett, Janine
Bennett, Malcolm
Berry, Maren
Blair, Karen
Booth, Paul
Bourke, Colleen
Bragg, Catherine
Brent, Ian
Buckley, Hazel
Budah, Ruthy
Butler, Candy
Chambers, Craig
Chapman, Debbie
Conrad, George
Constas, Helen
Cottrell, Norman
Coyle, Maureen
Currie, Cathie
Deland, Sue
Densley, Kristen
DuPont, Natalie
Englefield, Leonie
Falkiner, Vicki
Faunt, Camilla
Fisher, Cheryl
Florance, Andrea
Franich, Mary
Galloway, Jackie
Grant-Worsnop, Elizabeth
Greenwell, Jack
Haller, Katrina
Hogan-Keogh, Georgina
Holmes, Vicki
Horridge, Ros
Jacobs, Nicki
Kinnear, David
Kuna, Nicki
Lovett, Kate
Maloney, Mark

McCarthy, Claire
McCormack, Quinn
McNamara, Claire
Michel, Jennifer
Mikkelsen, Natalie
Moon, Celestine
Morgan, Marcus
Mouy, Julie
Mullings, Victoria
Owen, Kaeleene
Petty, Ian
Pump, Rachelle
Quick, Ros
Raber, Annette
Ralston, Penelope
Rankine, Dean
Richardson, Jill
Rouw, John
Rowan, Clare
Ryan, Juliana
Scully, Valmai
Skeldon, Alison
Stackpole, Brendan
Sterry, Rita
Stuart, Carolyn
Stuckey, Wendy
Turner, Mark
Vincent, Sue
Ward, Janet
Weate, David
Weelen-Young Carla
Weerheim, Saskia
Weightman, Fiona
Wells, Michael
Wilks, Gillian
Wilson Megan
Wimetal, Linda
Ymer, Sherife

VOLUNTEERS

Adams, John
Alexander, Brylee
Allen, Chris
Alyousef, Ally
Amos, Maree
Andolfatto, Louise
Andolfatto, Ivan
Andrier, Gino
Andrieri, Fino
Anstey, Jack
Ararat, Trudy
Ardi, Woni
Ashworth, Noel
Bainbridge, Kim
Ball, Andrew
Bankhead James
Baring, Merle
Barisic, Michelle
Barker, Darren
Barnes, Katie
Bassett, Shirley
Bates, Rachel
Baxter, Craig
Bayliss, Andrew
Beare, Damien
Beckwith, Charles
Bensley, Deborah
Benvenuto, Mike
Betinsky, Anastasia
Biggs, Garry
Bigu, Nina
Birch, Adam
Birch, Sarnia
Bloch, Gadi
Boag, Ian
Bogomolov Elena
Bombas, Venetia
Bonney, Karina
Booth, Paul
Booth, Vincent
Boucher, Bill
Bowdern, Jennifer
Boymal, Jacqui
Bradley, Paul
Brooks, Marcus
Brown, Malcolm

Brown, Mandy
Brown, Sue
Brusey, Purcy
Burke, Paul
Burns, Patrick
Burton, Amy
Butler, Emma
Bydanov, Oleg
Cain, Darrin
Cain, Patrick
Calley Richard
Campbell, Victoria
Campbell, Jack
Campbell, Jock
Carroll, Joel
Carter, Jane
Carter, Angela
Cas, Jenny
Casagrande, Pamela
Chadwick, Rebekah
Chang, Theresa
Chao, Fay
Chew, Carlyna
Chhit, Poramy
Chibert, Karen
Cho, Esther
Chon, Sora
Classon, Susan
Closey, Andrew
Cole, Lucy
Cole, Robert
Collins, Joan
Conboy, Tim
Conrad, George
Constas, Helen
Cooke, Caroline
Cooper, Mary-Ann
Cooper, Karen
Coppard, Jason
Cottier, Phil
Coukoulis Theo
Cranenburgh, Angela
Cronin, David
Cross, Hannah
Crowley, Sally
Cruise, Charmaine

Cuddihy, Damien
Cullin, Briony
Cupper, Dannielle
Currie, Cathie
Dace, Joanne
Dalling, Meg
Daly, James
Damschke, Jack
Dargie, Sandra
David, Samuel
De Lacovo, Angela
De Souza, Hamish
Deem, Karen
del Rio, Judy
Deland, Sue
Delaney, Sophie
Della Rossa, Santina
Denham, Sally
Denison, Michael
Densley, Kristen
Dick, John
Doer, Michelle
Donovan, Kathleen
Dosanjh, Sonia
Douglas, Guy
Doyle, Andrew
Dragojlovic, Drago
Duck, Matthew
Dudley, Sharleena
Durinck, Judith
Dwyer, Denise
Edney, David
Elliott, Ian
Englefield, Leonie
Erlich, Noah
Erlichster, George
Erlichster, Victoria
Evans, Adrian
Everist, Jan
Evison, Nicole
Featherby, Mark
Feder, Jonathon
Feldman, David
Finlayson, John
Florance, Andrea
Foley, Eileen

Forbes, Emily
Foreman, Andrew
Forster, David
Forsyth, Amanda
Fox, Simone
Fraser, Dean
Freadma, Andrew
Freston, Jane
Galagher, Christopher
Galanopoulos, Ariadne
Galloway, Jackie
Gan, Ellie
Gangemi, Carmela
Gardiner, Jason
Giaccio, Charles
Giaquinta, Mat
Gibbs, David
Gibson, David
Gilhooley, Pat
Giordano, Mirella
Goldsmith, Richard
Goodwach, Renee
Gorman, Joe
Gorman, James
Graham, Amanda
Green, Fiona
Grey, Matt
Griffiths, Bill
Gross, Jan
Gunasekera, Chris
Gunasekera, Dhanya
Guthrie, Heather
Guy, Sarah
Guymer, Lance
Hall, Gregory
Haller, Katrina
Hand, David
Hannan, Gisela
Harris, Damien
Harris, Kim
Heagney, Jody
Heales, Nicole
Healy, Jane
Henderson, David
Hibbert, Ebony
Hibbert, Michael

Hickey, Amanda
Hill, Chris
Hinz, Tony
Ho, William
Hoareau, Peta
Hoey, Patricia
Hogan, Shauna
Holman, Ted
Holmes, Vicki
Honan, Lyn
Hone, Ian
Honey, Tim
Horridge, Ros
Howard, Steven
Hudson, Sarah
Humphreys, Amanda
Hunt, Alan
Hunt, Adam
Hunt, Anne-Marie
Hunt, Ros
Hunting, Claire
Hyams, Brian
Inglis, Elizabeth
Ingram, Andrea
Ioane, Peta
Irani, Paula
Issa, Chad
Jacobs, Nicki
Johnson, Elizabeth
Jones, Margaret
Joseph, Rhonda
Joseph, Melissa
Kafrouni, Michael
Kam, Lisa
Kambouris, Dora
Kane, Michael
Karagounis, Alexandra
Karner, Sascha
Keesham, Chris
Keeshan, Tatiana
Keller, Jennifer
Kennedy, George
King, Elizabeth
Kinnear, David

Kollias, Brian	Melis, Christine	Podolskaya, Yana	Sharkey, Clive	Treloggan, Andrew
Kolouris, Kon	Milder, Debbie	Pollak, Renee	Shaw, Geoff	Tremayne, Leanne
Kowal Sara	Miller, Clarissa	Pollard, Wendy	Shipp, Stephen	Trickey, Leighanne
Kramer, Dana	Miller, David	Pratt, Ben	Short, Renee	Trifkovic, Petar
Krooglik, Willie	Millman Jordana	Preston, Murray	Sise, Jonathan	Troy, Nick
Kuna, Marina	Minahan, Andrew	Prue, Renee	Skeen, Vivienne	Tsousis, Poppie
La Macchia, Nadia	Mirabella, John	Purcell, Felicity	Skeldon, Alison	Tsousis, Toula
Lally, Christine	Moon, Philip	Purcell, Vanessa	Skeldon, Chris	Tuck, Stephen
Landy, Susan	Moon, Celestine	Purcell, Carla	Skoblar, Linda	Turner, Mark
Langton-Bunker, Emma	Morgan, Caroline	Putt, David	Slattery, Chris	Tyser, Peter
Lardner, Jimmy	Morgan, Marcus	Raccanello, Kathy	Smith, Patrick	Ulbrick, David
Lawton, Anne	Moschidies, Fanoula	Ralston, Penelope	Smith, Virginia	Van Nugteren, Louisa
Lee, Julie	Motipalli, Nidhi	Reale, Mariolina	Smith, Barnaby	Vanderzwardt, Jasmine
Leighton, Ingrid	Mould, Annie	Reed, Narelle	Snodgrass, John	Vanhoof, Vidal
Lenegan, Rhiannon	Moulden, Jacinta	Reekie, Roy	Sotiriou, Thomai	Villegas, Lauren
Leonard, Rebecca	Myers, Jenelle	Richardson, Karen	Spicer, Jennifer	Vogel, Natalie
Leshinsky, Rebecca	Mylors, Claudia	Richardson, Kim	Splatt, Allan	Ward, Janet
LeSouef, Peter	Nagorcka, Felicity	Richmond, Michael	Squire, Suzanne	Ward, Carolyn
Lew, Samantha	Nahum, Danielle	Richter, Olaf	Stanley, Jeffrey	Ward, Jenny
Lewis, Justin	Newdick, Julie	Rikkard, Nicole	Staunton, Anthony	Warren, Richard
Lipshatz, Alissa	Nielson, Greg	Riley, Emma	Stephens, Melissa	Warren, Lindsay
Llewlyn, Amanda	Northeast, Simon	Rintoul, Tim	Stephens, Hannah	Watson, Chris
Longo, John	O'Brien, Michael	Rivalland, Sonia	Stern, Werner	Watson, Robyn
Loughlin, Donna	O'Brien, Elizabeth	Rizzo, Mimosa	Stevens, Rebecca	Weerheim, Anika
Lovig, Dean	O'Connell, Helen	Roberts, Nick	Stevens, Judy	Weerheim, Saskia
Lynch, Phillip	O'Donnel, Leanne	Roberts, Graham	Stewart, Chris	Weerheim, Beth
Maher, Jennifer	O'Gorman, Tom	Robi, Sabinus	Stidston, Will	Weitering, Shelley
Mahoney, Lianne	Oliver, John	Robinson, Jenny	Stone, Andrew	Welch, Bernard
Maisey, Isabel	Oliver, Michael	Romanella George	Strajtz, Serge	Wells, Michael
Mandyiaris, Penny	Ongarello, Michael	Ross, Meredith	Sullivan, Nick	Wheatley, Michelle
Mannfolk, Peter	O'Reilly, Jennifer	Roubos, Mary	Sullivan, Narelle	Whitechurch, Scott
Manuel, Michael	Owen, Kaeleene	Rowan, Clare	Summerbell, Phillip	Whittaker, Shaun
Marasco, Bianca	Palmer, John	Rowlands, Marnie	Swaine, Sharon	Widuckel, Christina
Marcus, Isaac	Panagopoulos, Dimitra	Rozkin, Dimitry	Swannie, Vanessa	Wiergenga, Clea
Markopolous, Effie	Papageorgiou, Maria	Russo, Greg	Swart, Emma	Wierzbicki, Dianne
Marks, Jasmin	Parton, Briana	Russo, John	Taaffe, Maggie	Wilkinson, Tara
Marks, Danielle	Partridge, Jacqui	Salanitri, John	Tan, Roderick	Williamson, Lorna
Marshall, Anne	Pasagic, Sanin	Samson, Trish	Tapsas, Nita	Wilson, Carly
Matthews, Damien	Pascoe, Fiona	Samyue, Doris	Taylor, Linda	Winzer, Lyn
Matthews, Eunice	Pascoe, Caroline	Sandardos, Rhonda	Taylor, Gary	Woinarski, Gerry
Mavropoulos, Vivien	Pasquini, Fulvio	Sanger, Kate	Teichtahl, Mirah	Woolf, Alissa
McCarthy, Paul	Peeters, Lola	Sargeant, David	Thomas, Lisa	Worthington, Amanda
McDermott, Michelle	Pennell, Jason	Satkunanathan, Kandiah	Thomas, Fiona	Wright, Marita
McGuire, Margaret	Perkins, Nick	Scally, Sirham	Thomas, Shane	Wynne, Amanda
McGuire, Melissa	Perry, Heather	Scally, Mamoum	Thompson, Leesa	Yandel, Helen
McHugh, Terry	Petinarais, Chris	Schofield, Mark	Thorbeck, Abby	Yessayan, Victoria
McHugh, Petra	Phillips, Hayley	Scott, Ian	Tickner, Ashleigh	Zanjani, Sohila
McLennan, David	Phillips, Joyce	Segal, Mark	Tilev, Tatiana	Zimmermann, Jascha
McSweeney, John	Pierson, Elaine	Segar, Karen	Toop, Greg	Zoet, Willi
Meier, Rudi	Plakourakis, Maria	Sender, Chris	Toy, Chris	
	Plummer, Damian	Shand, Robert	Tran, Minh	