

This edition shows you how to keep up-to-date with new laws, how to order a new disability discrimination booklet, and how to call Victoria Legal Aid for help with a legal problem. It also reports on legal services for residents affected by the Cranbourne gas leak.

### Legal help for gas leak residents

Brookland Greens Estate residents can now access a range of legal services to help them with legal issues associated with the gas leak from a former municipal rubbish tip in Cranbourne.

Victoria Legal Aid and community legal centres can provide residents with preliminary legal advice on a broad range of legal, financial, contractual, commercial, housing, accommodation and environmental law matters.

Victoria Legal Aid's Frankston and Dandenong offices are able to provide preliminary advice and referral to appropriate legal services. The Frankston office (9784 5222) and Dandenong office (9767 7111) may also conduct advice clinics.

The Frankston office of Victoria Legal Aid is on the corner of O'Grady Avenue and Dandenong Rd, Frankston. The Dandenong office is at Level 1, 9-15 Pultney St, Dandenong.

The Cranbourne office of the Peninsula Community Legal Centre has also agreed to provide free legal advice, assistance and referral for Brookland Greens residents.

The Cranbourne office can be contacted on 5995 3722 and is located at Suite 12, 33-39 High Street, Bella Centre, Cranbourne.

The Environment Defenders' Office, a specialist legal centre, has also offered to provide free advice to residents in relation to environmental law matters on 1300 336 842.

### New Law service

New Law is an online Victoria Legal Aid service that lists recent changes to law that may affect Victoria Legal Aid clients. The service summarises new laws and points out where to find further information.

### Recent new laws include:

#### Child support

There is a new formula to assess the amount of child support that needs to be paid to care for children after parents have separated. This change affects all parents who pay or receive child support.

#### Family disputes

People who have a dispute over children have to make a genuine effort to sort things out before they apply to the Family or Federal Magistrates courts.

#### Offensive behaviour

Police can now issue fines for some minor offences such as offensive behaviour, low level property damage and alcohol-related disorderly conduct.



#### Careless driving

Police may choose to issue a fine to someone if they believe that person has committed a careless driving offence.

#### Shoplifting

Police can now issue a fine to adults who shoplift up to \$600 worth of goods.

Visit the New Law page at Victoria Legal Aid's website for more details about each of these new laws.

## New edition of disability booklet

*Using Disability Discrimination Law* has been reprinted and is now available.

It covers the following frequently asked questions:

- The differences between state and federal laws, and what is the right place to lodge a complaint
- What is involved in legal action
- What the law says about employment and disability – what you have to disclose to an employer about your disability, and what sorts of adjustments an employer can reasonably be expected to make.

Changes worth noting from the previous edition are:

- New case studies have been added
- New information about what the law says about ‘assistance animals’ such as guide dogs
- Information about the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities

The free booklet is co-authored by Victoria Legal Aid, the Villamanta Legal Service and the Disability Discrimination Legal Service.



You can order copies online now.

This publication will soon also be available in both CD and braille.

Visit Victoria Legal Aid's website for details about VLA's many publications.

## Family law workshops

Victoria Legal Aid runs free family law information workshops in Melbourne and Dandenong for people involved in preparing a family law case and who may have to represent themselves in court.

**Workshop 1** is an introductory workshop to help you get started. It covers:

- an introduction to the Family Law Act and courts
- applying for and responding to a court order
- what to do at court.

**Workshop 2** provides information on preparing for the hearing. It covers:

- preparing documents for final trial
- witnesses
- how to appeal.

Workshops are held at:

- Melbourne Family Court on the last Wednesday of every month, phone 9269 0223 or 1800 677 402 (country callers) to book
- Dandenong Family Court on the first Wednesday of every month, phone 9767 7111 to book.

At the workshop you will be given a booklet and kit to help you prepare your family law case and represent yourself in court.



You can also order this booklet from Victoria Legal Aid's website or by calling 9269 0223.

## Legal information service

Victoria Legal Aid's telephone legal information service receives more than 70,000 calls each year.

The free service is available Monday to Friday between 8.45 am and 5.15 pm (**tel: 9269 0120, or 1800 677 402 for country callers**). It provides legal information and referrals and helps callers to access VLA's lawyers and legal services and other legal help.



The service is also provided in languages other than English by bilingual staff or with a telephone interpreter.

You can ring Victoria Legal Aid's information service on the phone numbers below or ring the **Translating and Interpreting Service** on 131 450 and ask to be put through to VLA for all other languages.

Arabic	9269 0127	Polish	9269 0228
Cantonese	9269 0161	Russian	9269 0315
Croatian	9269 0164	Serbian	9269 0332
Greek	9269 0167	Spanish	9269 0384
Italian	9269 0202	Turkish	9269 0386
Macedonian	9269 0477	Ukrainian	9269 0390
Mandarin	9269 0212	Vietnamese	9269 0391

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