

STREET RIGHTS

NEWSLETTER OF THE PILCH HOMELESS PERSONS' LEGAL CLINIC

Edition 34 – December 2007

The Team at HPLC wishes our clients, lawyers and supporters a very merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year

Where can I go on Christmas Day?

Football clubs, churches, the Salvos and agencies in and around Melbourne are generously providing Christmas lunch to those most in need:

Our Lady of Help of Christians Parish

Free Traditional Christmas luncheon on Christmas Day at 12:00

49 Nicholson st East Brunswick
No 96 East Brunswick tram from Bourke St, stop no. 22
Bookings essential 9898 3438



Sacred Heart Mission

87 Grey St. (cnr. Neptune St.) St Kilda.
Christmas lunch on Christmas Day 11.30 – 1.30
Free, no restrictions. No need to book.



Ozanam Community Centre

268 Abbotsford St. North Melbourne. (Arden Street entrance)
Christmas lunch on Christmas Day 11.00am – 2.00pm
Free, no restrictions, no booking necessary. Lunch will be served in 2 seatings. The first will be at 11:45pm and the second will be at approx. 12:30pm.



The Big Give

Richmond Football Club
Christmas Day Lunch from 11.30am to 2.30pm
For healthcare card holders only. Free entry by ticket only.
(Please call Kathy Hogarty PH: 94176497 for further information)

PILCH Homeless Persons' Legal Clinic - Holiday Closures

(See right for addresses and regular Clinic times)

Clinic	Final Clinic - 2007	First Clinic – 2008
The Big Issue	Monday 24 December	Monday 7 January
Melbourne Citymission	Monday 17 December	Monday 4 February
Ozanam House	Tuesday 18 December	Tuesday 8 January
Urban Seed (Credo Café)	Tuesday 18 December	Tuesday 5 February
Flagstaff Crisis Accommodation	Tuesday 18 December	Tuesday 8 January
Salvation Army Life Centre	Tuesday 27 November	Tuesday 5 February
St Peter's Eastern Hill	Wednesday 19 December	Wednesday 9 January
Hanover Southbank	Wednesday 19 December	Wednesday 9 January
HomeGround Housing	Thursday 13 December	Thursday 10 January
VACRO	Thursday 20 December	Thursday 17 January
Koonung Mental Health Clinic	Friday 14 December 2007	Friday 11 January 2008

If you would like to make an appointment, or for further information about any of our Clinics, please contact us on (freecall) 1800 606 313 or 9225 6684.

THE CLINIC PROVIDES FREE LEGAL ADVICE AT THESE LOCATIONS AND TIMES:

The Big Issue
148 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne 3000
Mon: 10:00am - 11:00am

Melbourne Citymission
214 Nicholson Street
Footscray 3011
Mon: 10:30am - 1:00pm
Footscray train station
Tram 82 (Droop St)

Ozanam House
179 Flemington Rd
North Melbourne 3051
Tues: 10:00am - 12:00pm
Flemington Bridge train station
Trams 55, 59, 68 (Flemington Rd)

Urban Seed (Credo Café)
174 Collins St, Melb 3000
Tues: 12:00pm - 1:00pm

Flagstaff Crisis Accommodation
9 Roden St,
West Melbourne 3003
Tues: 1:00pm - 2:30pm
North Melbourne train station
Tram 57 (Victoria St)

Salvation Army Life Centre
69 Bourke Street
Melbourne 3000
Tues: 12:30pm – 2:00pm

The Lazarus Centre
203 Flinders Lane
Melbourne 3000
By appointment - call 9639 8510

St Peter's Eastern Hill
15 Gisborne Street
East Melbourne 3002
Wed: 7:30am - 9:00am
Parliament train station
Trams 24, 42, 109 (Victoria Pde)

Hanover Southbank
52 Haig St, Southbank 3205
Wed: 1:15pm - 3:00pm
Spencer Street train station
Tram 112 (Clarendon St)

HomeGround Housing
1A/68 Oxford Street
Collingwood 3066
Thurs: 12:00pm - 2:00pm
Collingwood train station
Tram 86 (Smith St)

VACRO
116 Hardware Street
Melbourne 3000
Thurs: 1.00 – 3.00pm
Melbourne central station
Tram 19, 57 and 59 (Elizabeth St)

Koonung Mental Health Clinic
Operates fortnightly
Friday 1pm – 3pm
Level 1, 43 Carrington Rd
Box Hill 3128
Ph: (03) 9843 5800

Hoping for change: Our new governments' response to homelessness

"When I visited homeless shelters during the campaign the turn away rate for people who presented homeless shelters is horrific. Turn away rates of something like 80 or 90 per cent. Now this is just wrong in a country as wealthy as ours."
Kevin Rudd, The 7:30 Report, 27 November 2007.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's interview on the ABC's 7:30 Report marks the first time in 11 years that an Australian Prime Minister has taken steps to talk publicly about homelessness and commit to addressing it. Mr Rudd has described the turn away rates at crisis accommodation centres as a specific national policy challenge. With availability of public housing at an all time low, emergency accommodation at maximum capacity and many people with nowhere to call home, our nation's housing and homelessness policies are in desperate need of reform.

As the new Ministry settles into life in Canberra, now is a great time to lobby for change and increased support for the homeless and disadvantaged. A couple of weeks ago, our new Prime Minister set his Ministers 'homework' to visit homeless shelters in or near their electorates and report on local supply and demand situations.

Ms Tanya Plibersek is the first Housing Minister at a federal level since the Hawke and Keating Governments. Prior to the election the ALP committed to increasing funding to emergency and transitional accommodation, developing a national housing strategy and creating of the National Affordable Housing Agreement to replace the existing Commonwealth State Housing Agreement.

Now is a crucial time to ensure that the newly elected Government holds true to its word. There are many ways to voice your opinion and to invite politicians to confront the realities of life for thousands of homeless or insecurely housed Australians. Write a letter or an email to your local member inviting them to familiarise themselves with local housing issues.

If you would like assistance to contact your local minister or for more information, please call Clinic on (freecall) 1800 606 313 or email us at hplc@pilch.org.au.

Have you or someone you know been discriminated against?

'Sometimes you can be treated like a lifeless machine rather than a child who has grown into a man'.

'People stare at you like they don't want to know you...go somewhere else, don't hang around here.'

Research conducted by the Clinic earlier this year found that almost 70% of people experiencing homelessness had experienced discrimination on the basis of homelessness or social status at the hands of accommodation providers. 60% also reported discrimination from goods and service providers such as shops, cafes, restaurants and banks.

In an attempt to address these concerning findings, this year the Department of Justice developed voluntary guidelines for business operators and goods and services providers to assist them to ensure they treat all consumers equally, and with dignity and respect.

Even so, in Victoria it is still lawful to discriminate against someone on the basis of their homelessness or social status. This means it is lawful to turn someone away from a café because of their appearance, or to refuse someone a hotel room because they receive income from Centrelink.

Another example is refusal of an application to a rental property on the basis of unemployment or unstable employment history. Such experiences of discrimination can leave a person with feelings of exclusion, disempowerment and hopelessness, making it harder to 'break the cycle'.

Currently, an independent review of the *Equal Opportunity Act 1995* (Vic) is underway and provides a wonderful opportunity to campaign to make such discrimination illegal.

The HPLC is preparing a submission to lobby for change. If you would like to contribute or lend your support, we encourage you to contact us at the Clinic on (freecall) 1800 606 313 or caroline.adler@pilch.org.au. We can also assist you to make an independent submission to the Review.

HPLC GOOD NEWS STORIES

* Names have been changed

Helping prisoners: Mrs X attended the Clinic on behalf of her husband to seek assistance to rectify an inaccuracy reported by a leading newspaper. At the time her husband, Mr X, was serving a prison sentence after he was convicted of drug possession. The newspaper published a story relating to Mr X's conviction, stating that Mr X had claimed that a third party had forced him to be part of a drug operation. The transcript of the trial and the judgment showed that this was incorrect. As a result of the publication of the article Mr X said that his and his family's safety was jeopardised. HPLC Lawyers argued that the parts of the article concerning Mr X were manifestly incorrect and as such the article was not a fair and accurate report of the Court proceedings and contrary to the Australian Press Council's Statement of Principles. Despite the newspaper not having a corrections policy, we managed to arrange a 'clarification' of the original article, which was ultimately published earlier this year.

Infringements: HPLC lawyers successfully assisted Peter in applying for internal review of a number of infringements, and applied for a rehearing of an infringement offence in the Children's Court which was later withdrawn. Peter has now moved interstate and does not require any further assistance.