

Children's Rights in Victoria: Promoting a rights-based approach and embedding children's perspectives in practice

6 October 2010

10.00am – 1.00pm, RACV Club, Melbourne

AGENDA

10.00- 10.10am Welcome and introduction

10.15-10.55am Keynote address

Moira Rayner

(Biography provided overleaf)

11.00-11.05am Introduction of Chair & and panel members

(Biographies provided overleaf)

Chair

James McDougall, Director, National Children's and Youth Law Centre

Panellists

Hugh de Kretser, Executive Officer, Federation of Community Legal Centres

Dr Virginia Dods, Senior Project Officer, Office of the Child Safety Commissioner

Sue Hackney, Project Coordinator, Cobaw Community Health Centre

Lauren Oliver, Youth Empowerment Project Officer, Berry Street

11.05-11.40am Panel discussion - three questions

11.40am-12pm Participant questions

12- 12.30pm Close and lunch

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Moira Rayner – Bio

Moira Rayner is a senior and experienced lawyer, particularly in the high-risk area of managing workplace behaviours. Until June 2005 she was Deputy Managing Director of a national employer organisation and managed its Melbourne office. She teaches in the postgraduate discrimination law course as a Senior Fellow at Melbourne University's Law School. Her postgraduate qualifications in public policy have been put to good use in several statutory offices.

Moira Rayner is best known in Victoria as its last Commissioner for Equal Opportunity. She has also been the Acting Deputy Director (Research) of the Australian Institute of Family Studies; a Hearings Commissioner of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, and a full-time consultant in the national law firm Dunhill Madden Butler (now Deacons) for more than six years, when she helped establish the firm's Discrimination Law Practice, and worked with major employers, universities and government departments. In 2000 she became the first Director of the Office of Children's Rights Commissioner for London, which modeled effective children's participation in government and is now an integral part of the Greater London Authority, London's new regional government. She has co-authored several books on governance, human rights, government policy and women and power.

Chair – Bio

James McDougall, Director, National Children's and Youth Law Centre

James McDougall has been Director of the National Children's and Youth Law Centre since January 2005. He was Director of the National Association of Community Legal Centres (from 2001 to 2003); Operations Coordinator for Youth Justice Conferencing for the NSW Government (in 2000) and Manager of the Youth Legal Service WA (from 1994 to 1999). Before then he worked as a lawyer in criminal, industrial and civil law in Adelaide and Perth.

He has also worked as a consultant in child rights and human rights, management, planning and governance in Australia and the Asia Pacific.



Panelists – Bios

Hugh de Kretser, Executive Officer, Federation of Community Legal Centres (Vic)- TO BE PROVIDED

Hugh de Kretser is the Executive Officer of the Federation of Community Legal Centres (Victoria), the peak body for Victoria's 50 community legal centres. He is also a Commissioner on the Victorian Law Reform Commission, a Director of the Sentencing Advisory Council and a member of the Victorian Government's Human Rights Leadership Forum. Hugh previously managed the Brimbank Melton Community Legal Centre after starting his career in a corporate law firm.

Dr Virginia Dods, Senior Project Officer, Office of the Child Safety Commissioner- TO BE PROVIDED

Virginia completed a Bachelor of Behavioural Science (BBSc (Hons)) degree at La Trobe University in 1988 and then commenced with the Australian Federal Police (AFP) in Canberra under the Graduate Administrative Assistant (GAA) program in 1989. This was followed by a return to Melbourne to commence the Masters in Forensic Psychology course at Monash University in 1990 and then employment as an AFP officer in 1991. Virginia commenced a decade of work in Child Protection in the Western Metropolitan Region of Melbourne, and undertook a Doctorate in Forensic Psychology, until becoming the Sexual Assault Program and Policy adviser at DHS in 2002. A brief period on secondment to the Department of Justice in 2004 to manage the Family Violence Prevention Pilot projects in Brimbank and Shepparton for the VCCAV (Victorian Community Council Against Violence) followed. Virginia began with the Office of the Child Safety Commissioner (OCSC) shortly after its establishment in 2005. Virginia is currently employed as a Senior Policy Adviser in the Promotions and Policy team, covering the portfolios of sexual assault, family violence and CALD community issues amongst others.

Sue Hackney, Coordinator, Way Out Rural Victorian Youth & Sexual Diversity Project.

Sue has been working as Coordinator of the Way Out, Rural Victorian Youth & Sexual Diversity Project since its commenced in 2002. The project focuses on raising awareness about the needs of same sex attracted and gender questioning young people and the nature and effects of discrimination in rural and regional communities. The work ranges from broad community development initiatives to work with organisations, schools, groups and individuals.

Prior to this role, Sue has worked for approximately 20 years in universities, government and community organizations in the areas of equal opportunity/human rights training, advocacy, policy development and complaint handling. She has a Bachelor of Social Work and has undertaken further studies in fields such as mediation and narrative therapy and is currently doing a Masters in Public Health.



Lauren Oliver, Internal Consultant- Youth Empowerment & Participation, Berry Street.

Lauren joined Berry Street in 2007 in the role of Internal Consultant - Youth Empowerment & Participation, a new role developed to focus on building a framework for meaningful youth participation and consultation across the organisation and to build the capacity of Berry Street to provide effective services to adolescents in the Child Protection System.

Lauren has worked with at risk young people internationally since 1995. Volunteer placements in India, Ethiopia and Guatemala as well as a role in the supported housing sector in the UK have enabled her to develop a breadth of experience when it comes to understanding the diverse needs of marginalised young people.

In addition Lauren has held roles in the corporate community brokerage sector with a focus on enabling corporate organisations to work with community organisations to better the opportunities available to disenfranchised young people in Melbourne and Sydney. Most recently, prior to her role at Berry Street, Lauren was the Founding Director of Fifteen Foundation Australia, the Australian version of the charity developed by Jamie Oliver in the UK to support disadvantaged young people to turn their lives around through intensive Chef training in a high-end restaurant (Fifteen Melbourne).



Community sector survey

– Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities

VCOSS is undertaking this survey as a follow-up to its 2008 report, *Using the Charter in Policy and Practice*. This report examined the changes that had been made by community sector organisations to incorporate the Charter - and human rights principles more broadly - into organisational policies, procedures or service delivery. It included substantial appendices providing examples from the organisations surveyed including a Project Plan, a Human Rights Committee's Terms of Reference, a Watching Brief, and examples of revised policies. The 2008 report is available on the VCOSS website: www.vcooss.org.au

The intention of this survey is to document the further changes made by community sector organisations to incorporate the Charter into organisational policies, procedures and/or service delivery. The survey results will be compiled into a follow-up report to be published later in 2010.

BACKGROUND

It has been four years since the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities (the Charter) was introduced, and it is due for review in 2011. The Charter includes many universal rights contained in international human rights treaties ratified by Australia and requires Government and public authorities to observe human rights when making laws and providing services.

VCOSS has been actively involved in the development and implementation of the Charter, from conducting consultations around its introduction to advocacy, training of community sector workers and advocates, education and publications and a report on the ways in which community sector organisations are using the Charter in policy and practice.

In order to ensure that the experiences of community sector organisations are included in the review, VCOSS is documenting community sector views and experiences of the Charter and human rights through four human rights forums and a survey. The findings from the survey and forums will be compiled in a final report to the Department of Justice in late 2010.

SURVEY

Please take the time to fill out the attached survey – your input is greatly appreciated!

If you would prefer to provide feedback verbally regarding your organisation's experience of the Charter and its impact on organisational policy, practice and/or service delivery, please contact Christiane Gurner, Human Rights Officer at VCOSS –

T: 03 9654 5050

E: christiane.gurner@vcooss.org.au.

Thank you for your participation.