



## Workplace, school scourge attacked

# Bullying laws put to the test

### Ashley Gardiner

state politics reporter

ANTI-bullying laws put into place after the death of teenager Brodie Panlock are being flexed for the first time.

A year after the laws were introduced, police were pursuing workplace investigations, Assistant Commissioner Stephen Fontana said yesterday.

"These are long-term, they can take a while. They're quite complex depending on the seriousness of the matters that are being raised," he said at the launch of a new state government anti-bullying campaign.

"It's a very serious offence, and it comes with significant penalties, up to 10 years (in jail).

"Police have an obligation to investigate these matters."

The law was named after Brodie Panlock, who was 19 when she took her own life in 2006 after months of physical and emotional bullying.

Her parents, Damien and Rae, campaigned for the new laws.



**Brodie Panlock**

Mrs Panlock said at the launch that no family should have to endure what her family had. "Bullying is a scourge, and it really needs to be stamped out," she said.

Attorney-General Robert Clark said having the law in place was an important first step.

"It's even more important to get the message out there that bullying is unacceptable and that people need to stop," Mr

Clark said. "Bullying can manifest itself in a variety of ways.

"Ideally, there will be no prosecutions because there are no crimes. But as Victoria Police have indicated, they have some cases under investigation, so Brodie's Law is having its effect."

Anti-bullying posters have been delivered to 8000 schools, workplaces and police stations as part of the campaign.

In Canberra yesterday, Governor-General Quentin Bryce spoke of the devastating effects of cyber bullying as she launched an Orygen Youth Health program to train peer support workers to help families of young people diagnosed with mental health issues.

"Some of these issues, like that insidious cyber bullying, are very confronting to us," she said.

"These are very big health issues for our country and our young people."

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# Victim's parents speak out on bullying

**MELBOURNE:** The parents of workplace bullying victim Brodie Panlock say education and prevention measures are needed so nobody else should ever face a similar experience.

Brodie, a waitress, took her own life in 2006 after being subjected to workplace bullying at a Melbourne cafe.

Speaking at the launch of a campaign to raise awareness of Victorian workplace bullying laws, introduced one year ago, Rae and Damien Panlock fought back tears as they described their daughter as compassionate and beautiful.

"What we need to do is educate and prevent; it doesn't need to go where we went," Mr Panlock said.

More than 8000 schools, workplaces and police stations will soon receive



**EMOTIONAL:** Rae and Damien Panlock

posters and pamphlets containing information about Brodie's Law and bullying.

The Victorian parliament unani

mously voted to make workplace bullying a criminal offence and offenders now face penalties of up to 10 years' imprisonment if found guilty of bullying.

Mrs Panlock said 19-year-old Brodie had set out on an adventure into the workplace to gain her independence, but what she found was a toxic environment that led to the end of her life.

"She was a beautiful young girl full of life and compassion," Mrs Panlock said at the launch of the anti-bullying campaign.

"Bullying is a scourge and it really needs to be stamped out."

Attorney-General Robert Clark said the law sent a message that bullying would not be tolerated. **-AAP**



# Campaign stands up to bullies

**JOSH FAGAN**

**WORKPLACE** and schoolyard bullying is being targeted in a community campaign, as Bendigo businesses continue to invest in education and training to stamp out the issue.

The statewide awareness campaign comes a year after the introduction of Brodie's Law – a change to the Crimes Act that gives 10-year prison terms for serious bullying.

Brodie Panlock was 19 when she committed suicide after relentless workplace bullying at a cafe in Glenferrie.

Attorney-General Robert Clark said it was time for Victorians take a stand.

He said the campaign was about reminding people that

bullying could have devastating consequences and that help and support was available to assist anyone experiencing serious bullying.

"Everyone is entitled to be safe in our community and no one should be forced to suffer from bullying," he said. Bendigo Business Council chief executive Patrick Falconer said bullying was an issue that needed to be addressed.

Mr Falconer said the impact of bullying was felt in every community, and local businesses had worked hard to draw awareness to its serious consequences.

He said the education campaign in workplaces and schools needed to continually grow and evolve.

"A number of businesses in Bendigo already have regular training and education making people aware of what constitutes bullying and the impacts it can have on people," he said.

"But employers are often not aware of what bullying is. We've got to educate management as well that there's no never any need to bully anybody."

The "take a stand against bullying" campaign will see information about bullying and Brodie's Law given to more than 8000 schools, workplaces and police stations across Victoria.

Brodie's parents, Damien and Rae, joined the push for awareness to combat the "scourge of bullying".

"We don't want any family

to endure what we have been through which is why we are committed to all efforts to raise awareness about the very serious nature of bullying and its consequences," Mr and Mrs Panlock said.

Mr Falconer said within the Bendigo community, the happiest and most productive workplaces were where bullying was confronted head-on.

"Being a smaller city, we have the opportunity to learn from our peers and colleagues because we know and talk to them on a more regular basis," he said.

"Those companies that spend time and money to derive benefits from their workers leads to happier workers and healthier workplaces."



# Posters call for action

ANTI-BULLYING posters have been delivered to more than 8000 Victorian schools, workplaces and police stations as part of a campaign to stamp out bullying.

A year after the introduction of a law making serious bullying a criminal offence, the state government has urged people to speak up about bullying behaviour.

Nobody has been prosecuted under

Brodie's law, which carries penalties of up to 10 years' imprisonment, but Victorian Attorney-General Robert Clark said the law was about sending a message.

"If you are a bully there will be serious consequences," Mr Clark said.

He told reporters that ideally there would be no prosecutions under Brodie's law.

Investigations are

currently under way by Victoria Police into a number of complaints.

The parents of Brodie Panlock, whose suicide prompted the introduction of the law, said nobody should have to endure what they had been through.

"Bullying is a scourge that must be stamped out," her mum, Rae Panlock, said yesterday.



Damian and Rae Panlock



# Education key to stop the bullies

THE parents of workplace bullying victim Brodie Panlock say education and prevention measures are needed so nobody else faces a similar experience.

Brodie, a waitress, took her life in 2006 after being bullied at work at a Melbourne cafe.

Speaking at the launch of a campaign to raise awareness of Victorian workplace bullying laws, introduced a year ago, Rae and Damien Panlock cried as they described their compassionate and beautiful daughter.

"We need to educate and prevent; it doesn't need to go where we went," Mr Panlock said.

From yesterday, more than 8000 schools, workplaces and police stations will receive posters and pamphlets with information about Brodie's Law.

The state parliament

unanimously voted to make workplace bullying a criminal offence and offenders face penalties of up to 10 years' jail.

Mrs Panlock said Brodie, 19, had found a toxic work environment that led to the end of her life.

"She was a beautiful young girl full of life and compassion," she said.

"Bullying is a scourge that needs to be stamped out."

Nobody has been convicted under the new laws, but Victoria Police Assistant Commissioner Steve Fontana said several investigations were in progress.

Attorney-General Robert Clark said the law sent the message bullying would not be tolerated.

"Brodie's law is having its effect," he said.

"It needs to be backed up by a campaign."

He said, ideally, there would be no prosecutions because there would be no crimes, but making bullying a criminal offence sent a clear message to perpetrators.

"The previous law did not make it clear bullying was a criminal offence," Mr Clark said.

Psychologist Evelyn Field said bullying was the reality for more than one in three employees.

Lifeline Melbourne manager Terry Keating said many of the 550,000 calls Lifeline took each year were from young people seeking counselling about bullying.

**Readers seeking support and information about suicide prevention can contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467.**

## **VIC:Victim's parents speak out on bullying**

By Genevieve Gannon

MELBOURNE, Aug 8 AAP - The parents of workplace bullying victim Brodie Panlock say education and prevention measures are needed so nobody else should ever face a similar experience.

Brodie, a waitress, took her own life in 2006 after being subjected to workplace bullying at a Melbourne cafe.

Speaking at the launch of a campaign to raise awareness of Victorian workplace bullying laws, introduced one year ago, Rae and Damien Panlock fought back tears as they described their compassionate and beautiful daughter.

"What we need to do is educate and prevent; it doesn't need to go where we went," Mr Panlock said.

From Wednesday, more than 8000 schools, workplaces and police stations will receive posters and pamphlets containing information about Brodie's Law and bullying.

The Victorian parliament unanimously voted to make workplace bullying a criminal offence and offenders now face penalties of up to 10 years imprisonment if found guilty of bullying.

Mrs Panlock said 19-year-old Brodie had set out on an adventure into the workplace to gain her independence, but what she found was a toxic environment that led to the end of her life.

"She was a beautiful young girl full of life and compassion," Mrs Panlock told reporters at the launch of the anti-bullying campaign.

"Bullying is a scourge and it really needs to be stamped out."

Nobody has been convicted under the new laws, but Victoria Police Assistant Commissioner Steve Fontana said a number of investigations were underway.

Attorney-General Robert Clark said the law sent a message that bullying would not be tolerated.

"Brodie's law is having its effect," he said.

"It now needs to be backed up by a campaign."

He said ideally there would be no prosecutions because there would be no crimes, but making bullying a criminal offence sent a clear message to perpetrators.

"It was vital to have that law on the statute book because the previous law did not make it clear bullying (was) a criminal offence," Mr Clark said.

Psychologist Evelyn Field said bullying was the reality for more than one in three employees and the government was showing leadership by introducing criminal consequences.

Lifeline Melbourne manager Terry Keating said many of the 550,000 phone calls Lifeline took each year were from young people seeking counselling about bullying.

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