



**Morning Bulletin
(Rockhampton)
Wednesday 16/03/2016**

Page: 15
Section: General News
Region: Rockhampton QLD, AU
Circulation: 11247
Type: Regional
Size: 81.00 sq.cms.



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80,000 miss out on legal advice ahead of cuts

AFTER turning away 80,000 Queenslanders seeking legal advice last year, the community sector has urged the Turnbull government to reverse its funding cuts due to take effect next year.

Queensland Association of Independent Legal Services director James Farrell joined other similar groups in Canberra meeting with ministers and MPs on the funding cuts.

The \$38 million in cuts to community legal centres, which Attorney-General George Brandis last year delayed due to the potential effect on legal services for domestic violence victims, will still take effect in July next year.

Mr Farrell said the cuts would have a much larger effect on the half of Queensland's CLC's in regional areas and on the 60% of the state's CLC clients who earn \$26,000 or less a year.

He said while the Queensland centres helped about 50,000 people last year, some 80,000 people were turned away – people who could potentially end up representing themselves in family court, “walking away from work entitlements” or even homeless.

Mr Farrell also said withdrawing the funding undermined the government's stated intention of “ending family violence”.

The CLC groups were due to meet the Attorney-General late yesterday.