



Cuts to hurt legal services

FEARS: Legal practitioner Allana Janke talks about the changes to community legal services in Ipswich.

PHOTO: ROB WILLIAMS



**HANNAH
BUSCH**

hannah.busch@qt.com.au

GETTING an appointment with one of Ipswich's two community legal service solicitors almost always means a wait of three or four weeks.

The free centre on South St, run by the Toowoomba-based The Advocacy Service Centre, is among the legal service providers facing major funding cuts from July next

year.

Community legal centres and Legal Aid offices in Queensland will lose almost \$2 million in Commonwealth funding even as demand for their services are increasing.

The sector in Queensland received about \$8.9 million in Commonwealth funding this financial year. It will only

receive about \$6.9 million next financial year.

TASC chief executive officer Philippa Whitman does not yet know how much funding the service will lose from next July.

"Realistically, we've got to accept the fact that we'll suffer some cut in funding but we'll just try to be innovative in how we deal with that," she said.

The service has already felt some squeeze.

Its Ipswich office dropped from five days a week to three days a week in 2014, despite demand for a fully operational office.

Ms Whitman said the average wait time for an appointment at TASC's main office in Toowoomba had been about three weeks since last October.