

ALP commits funds for community legal service

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Bill Gissane (Labor Candidate for Fisher), Scott Anderson (Labor Candidate For Fisher), Louise Jeffs (SCLS), Senator Claire Moore and Alexandra Brunswick (SCLS).

Contributed

THE Australian Labor Party has committed to provide \$450,000 in funding for the Suncoast Community Legal Service if the ALP wins federal government.

In Maroochydore yesterday, Scott Anderson, ALP Candidate for Fairfax and Bill Gissane, ALP Candidate for Fisher, accompanied by Senator Claire Moore, committed \$450,000 to fund the Suncoast Community Legal Service over three years, from July 2017.

Community Legal Centres Queensland director, James Farrell, said funding for community legal services was uncertain, with the Coalition Government slating a funding cut of 30% for 2017.

"These vital services shouldn't be a political football - we need all of our political leaders to commit to supporting to the hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders who have a legal problem each year," Mr Farrell said.

"We call on all of our political leaders to work with us to ensure access to justice for all Queenslanders."

Suncoast Community Legal Service coordinator, Louise Jeffs, said the service assisted 13,000 people during the past three years, and said there was a growing need for families, including those affected by domestic violence, to access legal advice and support services.

"We cannot meet the needs of our community to access legal advice without continued funding," she said.

"Already we have a waiting time for up to two weeks for an appointment and our outreach services are also heavily utilised.

"More than forty percent of our clients in the past year have presented to us with Family Law matters.

"Certainty of funding will enable us to retain current services and commit to having a legal professional who could visit clients affected by domestic violence in their place of residence or refuge as soon as assistance is needed."

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