

Lawyers enlisted to deal with DV

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EXTRA lawyers will be brought in to double the response to the "overwhelming" need in domestic violence cases at some of the state's busiest courts.

Additional specialist duty lawyers will offer free services to both the aggrieved and respondents from next month.

A new dedicated service providing a duty lawyer for men in domestic violence cases began at Holland Park Magistrates Court this week.

Funded through Legal Aid, the extra lawyers are part of the rollout of the State Government's response to the *Not Now, Not Ever* report's recommendation of a statewide service.

Previously, 14 courts in Queensland had two duty lawyers operating for domestic violence cases in limited ways, depending on circumstances.

Five of those courts now will have an extra two lawyers so there will be four free lawyers operating on set days.

It means more courts will

have the same number of domestic violence duty lawyers as Southport, the trial site for the specialist domestic violence

court. A spokesman for Legal Aid yesterday said it was still not known where the State Government would seek to have the extra staff positioned.

Caxton Legal Centre director Scott McDougall said he expected lawyers to be based at Brisbane Magistrates Court where there was a huge need to cover domestic violence cases.

"Under new arrangements, there will be two lawyers for aggrieved and two for respondents which will mean greater capacity to provide comprehensive services to address family law issues," he said. "There is an overwhelming need, a bottomless pit, for legal advice and assistance in these matters."

"And this is good because domestic violence is often at front end so if we can capture clients early we can hopefully prevent larger problems from escalating and get

perpetrators into programs at the earliest possible point to give them and their children the best chance of having meaningful relationships down the track."

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