

Legal guns helping 5000 people a year

COMMUNITY SERVICES UNDER THREAT FOR LACK OF FUNDS

Bernie Dowling

THOUSANDS of victims of domestic violence are seeking legal help every year in Pine Rivers - help which is restricted by funding and reliant on volunteers.

"Robyn" is in her 70s and endured five years of emotional and physical abuse from her husband before she approached Pine Rivers Community Legal Service.

Community Legal Service principal solicitor Louise

Skidmore (pictured)

said she and fellow solicitor Alison McGeachie,

legal student volunteer Tess Little and legal and office volunteers helped 5000 people last year.

Unfortunately "Robyn" had to return to her abusive home a few times for financial reasons but said she felt safe now.

She said it was difficult to

make that decision to leave.

"There are financial factors and sometimes kids are involved and sometimes you just feel worn out.

"Without these wonderful people and Louise in particular, I would not have received the guidance and comfort I needed."

Ms Skidmore said all their efforts were restricted by the need for more funding and volunteers.

"There is a very real unmet need for vulnerable



people to access legal advice early on in a matter."

Even as government funds are dwindling, 1750 volunteers contribute 96,000 hours to 28 community legal centres across Queensland.

The top three reasons people accessed the legal centre was for domestic/family violence, homelessness and family law issues.

The legal service is at 481 Gympie Rd, Strathpine. Phone 381 3500.