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## Thousands still 'locked out' of DV legal assistance

31 January 2017 Emma Ryan 0 comments

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**A new report has highlighted that while there are six times more people receiving legal assistance for domestic violence-related issues thousands more are still being "locked out" of this service.**



According to the new report by Community Legal Centres Queensland, *Enough is Enough*, over five years there has been a 600 per cent increase in Queenslanders experiencing domestic violence seeking legal support.

The report showed there has been a 125 per cent increase in legal information provided over the phone, a 58 per cent increase in face-to-face advice offered by lawyers and a 608 per cent increase in ongoing assistance to people going to court since 2011.

Community Legal Centres Queensland director James Farrell said while it was encouraging to see the rapid increase in people obtaining legal assistance in DV matters, there are still many people missing out.

"More and more women experiencing domestic violence are finding their voice and saying 'Enough is enough'. One of the first steps they take to address this problem is to call their closest community legal centre. Unfortunately only half of the people who ask for legal help are able to access it. The remaining 50 per cent are turned away because we just don't have the resources we need to provide help for everyone who qualifies," Mr Farrell said.

"While six times more people got help to understand how they could apply for a protection order or respond to an application, these people have many more legal problems and often can't get the help they need.

"People experiencing family violence can have many other legal problems, including family law, housing, employment and debt. It's vital that these people can address all of their legal problems while they access safety, but the safety net is under threat."

Mr Farrell noted that in July this year the Commonwealth government will cut almost 30 per cent of funding to community legal centres across Australia, adding to the problem.

"Community Legal Centres Queensland is calling on Malcolm Turnbull and George Brandis to reverse this decision, to ensure people experiencing domestic violence are able to get the legal help they need and get the justice they deserve," Mr Farrell said.

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