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24 Mar 2017 - 3:34am

## Fears women could fall foul of new DV laws

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The Women's Legal Service has urged authorities to ensure women who should be protected by new domestic violence laws don't fall foul of them.

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24 Mar 2017 - 3:34 AM UPDATED 24 Mar 2017 - 3:34 AM

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A key legal service has raised concerns the women meant to be protected by changes to Queensland's domestic violence laws could actually fall foul of them.

The Women's Legal Service Queensland has broadly welcomed the changes, which were passed in the early hours of Thursday morning, with bills from both the Liberal National Party and the Labor government both passing.

But they fear good intentions could backfire.

A key change was the LNP's push to reverse the onus of proof for bail for those accused of domestic violence, meaning they would have to convince a court why they should be released on bail rather than prosecutors showing why they should remain behind bars.

QLS's Angela Lynch said that was a good thing, but the way new legislation has been put into effect means some women could find themselves having to prove why they should be released.

"It is not uncommon for women to be charged in a domestic violence situation with assault as a result of self-defence," Ms Lynch told AAP in a statement.

"As a consequence there is an important need for police to be making the right assessment in domestic violence situations about who is in the most need of protection and to be charging the right person with the appropriate criminal offence."

The opposition was pleased most of its changes passed through, however, LNP leader Tim Nicholls said they were disappointed the government amended the requirement for courts to notify victims of domestic violence when the alleged perpetrator made an application for bail.

The government instead put forward a "charter of agreement" for bail applications to be reported to those affected.

"We hope that the charter works, and we will keep an eye on it, but certainly the stronger power was in the legislation ensuring the court must let someone know," Mr Nicholls said on Thursday.

National domestic violence helpline: 1800 737 732 or 1800RESPECT. In an emergency call triple-zero.

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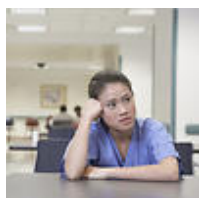
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