



Senator Murray Watt warns of cuts to legal centre funds.

Coast legal centre cuts 'to cost lives'

PAUL WESTON

LABOR Senator Murray Watt is demanding the Gold Coast's four federal LNP MPs intervene to stop a massive funding cut to the Gold Coast Community Legal Centre.

In a speech in federal Parliament yesterday, Senator Watt warned the Turnbull Government's 30 per cent cut in funding to legal centres across Australia, starting July 1, would cost lives on the Coast.

"On the Gold Coast this will have particularly dire consequences.

"This community legal centre now risks losing both of its specialist domestic violence lawyers," Senator Watt said.

He reminded senators that the Coast had witnessed a series of shocking murders which gained national publicity.

In a letter sent to all MPs, he said the number of domestic violence cases the Gold Coast Community Legal Centre has

handled had risen from 60 to 890 in the past four years.

"That is a shocking 14-fold increase," he added.

During his recent visit to the centre, he said director Victoria Shiel had confirmed that locally these cuts will mean the Coast hub risks losing both of its domestic and family violence lawyers.

"This is the absolute last thing the Gold Coast needs, as reports of domestic violence are on the rise," Senator Watt said.