

We need to get behind women's DV helpline

FOR many domestic violence survivors, legal support is something they simply cannot afford. Survivor Jennifer reveals Women's Legal Service Queensland was there in her time of need and she hopes the Queensland Government will be there in the WLSQ's time of need.

I WAS thrown into the gutter after leaving my ex. I had been controlled in every way.

He controlled my bank account. I had no access to money, no friends, no family. I was alone and I had nowhere to go.

I was destitute and abandoned. I felt and thought my life was over.

I couldn't get legal aid and definitely couldn't afford a private lawyer.

Living in a small town there was no help on the ground. I felt like I was fumbling in the dark. I felt so alone.

The WLSQ Helpline was a literal lifeline to me.

Through the Women's Legal Service Helpline, I have been able to represent myself in court eight times against my violent former partner.

The WLSQ solicitors showed empathy and understanding to what I was facing.

I can't tell you what it means to go to a service that "gets it", that understands what I was going through and how I felt; how desperate I was, and that I needed their help.

Without the helpline,

without access for people like me in the country, I wouldn't have had advice about the law and my own safety to help me stay alive.

I don't like to think what would have happened if I hadn't made that call.

In a few weeks, this lifeline will be halved, purely due to a lack of government funding.

Cutting the Helpline will mean women like me won't be able to get through.

The WLSQ is asking regional women who have experienced domestic violence to call on Premier Anastasia Palaszczuk to encourage her to provide \$300,000 a year for the domestic violence helpline.

The helpline provides vital legal support for thousands of Queensland women yearly and without a commitment from the State Government, about 13,000 calls annually will go unanswered.

I was isolated because of violence and it was hard to pick up the phone to get help.

I don't want another woman to suffer in silence.

Regional Queenslanders with nowhere else to go need this service. There are lives on the line.

To take part, visit <https://womenslegal.service.good.do/livesonthe linesave thehelpline/>

■ For 24-hour support in Queensland, telephone DVConnect on 1800 811 811, MensLine on 1800 600 636 or the national hotline 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732.