

Policy backflip a coup for legal centres

COMMUNITY legal centres, including the South West Brisbane Community Legal Centre at Inala, are celebrating a Federal Government backflip on significant funding cuts to their service.

The centres were expecting a 30 per cent cut to funding from July, but have instead been promised

\$39 million over the next three years.

Attorney-General George Brandis said that the funding would be directed specifically to the areas of family law and family violence services.

South West Brisbane

Community Legal Centre (SWBCLC) acting director

Jonathan Ward said the reinstated funding was "great news" but there was still more to be done to support disadvantaged community members in need of free legal representation.

An 18-month Commonwealth-funded Outreach Family Law and Domestic Violence Service would end

this year after its funding was not extended.

The centre also had its core funding cut by 8.2 per cent.

Mr Ward said this had

forced an increased reliance on volunteers.

"We have put on two part-time volunteer receptionists to help our staff to deal with

the large number of phone inquiries that we receive," Mr Ward said

"We have increased the number of volunteer solicitors from six to 19.

"Also, the number of available legal appointments with volunteer solicitors each week has risen from four to 34."