

Legal 'marauders' misleading the public

A GAP between the services Legal Aid offers for civil actions and the costs of lawyers has allowed legal 'marauders' to set up shop on the Gold Coast.

According to the founder the chairman of the Robina Community Legal Centre Ross Lee (pictured) the Gold Coast was replete with people who were offering legal advice while misleading people as to the extent of their legal abilities.

Mr Lee said the fact that these people could operate showed the large gap between demand for services and the supply.

"It's very difficult where you've got commercial rates for lawyers and you've got legal aid which is narrow in terms of what it covers in the civil area," he said.

"And where you get this huge gap you get people who need to get advice and, while there is a lot of consumer protection in getting advice



from a lawyer, they will chose to visit a 'bush lawyer'."

However, he said there was a lot of potential lost opportunity in getting the wrong advice which could lead to people losing their homes, going bankrupt or being cut out of a will.

"It also leads to financial frustrations which we have seen culminate in domestic violence."

He said one example was insolvency advisers who would charge between \$10,000 and \$15,000 to help people avoid bankruptcy.

"But when push comes to shove they turn around and say the situation was too far gone but they will make the landing easy.

"There are legal marauders out there that are misleading and deceiving people because they tell them what they want to hear."