

\$790,000 boost to DV helpline

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WHILE funding for the Suncoast Community Legal Service has been slashed, the State Government has announced it will pump hundreds of thousands of dollars into a telephone helpline.

Women's Legal Service Queensland's telephone helpline was on the verge of slashing its staff hours next month due to a \$300,000-a-year funding black hole.

The service answers about 8000 calls annually, with 4000 of those coming from regional, rural and remote women.

The service started lobbying the State Government in June, while running a range of fundraisers – including a crowdfunding campaign – to get enough money to stave off cutting the service's hours.

In July, the Freemasons of Queensland Hand Heart Pocket charity arm donated \$120,000 to WLSQ.

On Thursday, the Queens-

land Government allocated the legal service \$790,000 over the next three years.

The cash is coming from the \$39 million federal funding that was set aside for community legal centres earlier this year.

Service CEO Angela Lynch said the helpline was a lifesaver for many regional women in domestic violence crisis.

"We have been eagerly waiting for this announcement for many months," she said. "We are pleased our clients have been listened to."

"About 50% of our clients identify concerns for imminent violence towards either themselves or their children."

"This line is essential for safety. On behalf of our staff and clients I also wish to thank all supporters who have advocated to keep the line open."

"We look forward to working with the Queensland and Federal governments to ensure safer futures for our clients – Queensland women

and kids living with domestic and family violence."

WLSQ's legal helpline is 1800 957 957. For 24-hour support in Queensland phone DVConnect on 1800 811 811, MensLine on 1800 600 636 or the national hotline 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732.

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WLSQ DV HELPLINE STATISTICS

- More than 8000 calls answered per year.
- 55% of callers indicate urgent safety risks.
- One in four callers are at risk of homelessness.
- 91% of casework involves domestic violence.
- 50% of callers live in regional, rural or remote Queensland.
- 77% of clients care for at least one child.

Source: Women's Legal Service Queensland.