

Government slashes Coast DV legal support funding

SUNCOAST Community Legal Service has lost 39% of its funding, putting the level of support it provides victims of domestic violence under enormous pressure.

The service, which had been due to celebrate at its annual general meeting last night a year of achievement in every area of support for people struggling with legal issues, has been left wondering how it can stretch its drastically-reduced budget.

Lawyer Julian Porter said the service's funding submission had highlighted the region's rapid and expected future growth.

"We need money now and a lot more into the future," he said.

The latest allocation has slashed its budget to just

\$409,000 to service the Sunshine Coast.

The \$240,000 cut would cost the jobs of the two lawyers engaged to do the work, as well as support staff who had enabled a 44% increase in case work to meet demand in family law, family and domestic violence and child protection with most family law matters having an element of domestic violence.

The service was told yesterday cuts indicated in March relative to the 2016/17 financial year still stood.

It had been receiving 'one-off' funding to assist the victims of domestic and family violence for the past two years.

Funding has reduced to

2014/15 funding levels at a time community demand for those legal services was increasing.

In April the Federal Government reversed a 30% funding cut to community

centres nationally and left allocation of the reinstated funds to the states.

Interim funding delivered by the State Government in May wind up this month.

"We are in a bit of shock," Mr Porter said. "We had been really confident we would get something in this round."

Attorney General Yvette D'Ath has been contacted for comment.