

Award-winning lawyer raises DV awareness



NEWS | 11 OCTOBER 2017 | EMMA RYAN

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The chief executive of Women's Legal Service has used a recent award-win to speak out about the prevalence of domestic violence in Australia.

Angela Lynch, CEO of Women's Legal Service recently scooped up the Women's Agenda National Emerging Leader in the Legal Sector for 2017 accolade, recognising the domestic violence prevention work she and her team are doing in an attempt to combat the high levels of domestic violence incidences in the country.

"I have been working for WLS for 23 years and in that time seen the impact of our service to tens of thousands of women across Queensland who otherwise would have had no access to legal help," Ms Lynch told Lawyers Weekly, speaking about what the award win meant to her.

"I don't see this award as personal recognition, but instead as an acknowledgement of the cumulative work of many dedicated women across our history – both staff and our volunteers."

The award, Ms Lynch said, specifically acknowledged the development of Women's Legal Service's Penda app, which she noted is "Australia's first financial empowerment app for women who have experienced domestic violence and financial abuse".

"The award also recognised a social media campaign run earlier this year that helped to keep our Helpline open through a period of funding uncertainty," Ms Lynch added.

"I see the award as recognition of the hard work of everyone at Women's Legal Service who make our service a leader in the sector."

Ms Lynch said it's become more important than ever to shine a spotlight on the issue of domestic violence, encouraging other legal professionals to join in the efforts.

"The award has helped to raise awareness of domestic violence, and more crucially the importance of specialist legal assistance in ensuring the long-term safety for women and their children affected by violence," she said.

"Appropriate legal support to help women understand their rights for children, property and their own safety can mean the difference between continuing to live in fear or reaching a safer future.

"This award highlights that legal advice is just as important as ensuring that women have a roof over their head and access to resources when leaving situations of domestic violence."

Asked how she intends to use her award-win, Ms Lynch said, "To raise further awareness of domestic violence and the importance of specialist legal responses in this area."

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