

DV experts want special classes for offenders

COURTS should force Ipswich domestic violence abusers to attend behaviour change classes.

That's the call from family abuse experts, who say many perpetrators are manipulating the DVO system because they don't fear the legal consequences of not complying with orders.

NewsRegional research shows our police are under the pump applying for thousands more domestic violence orders compared to five years ago, while facing a massive increase in breaches as abusers flout the law.

In the Ipswich police district, DVO applications jumped 60.10% between 2012-2013 and 2016-17.

Over the same period there was a 137.3% increase in breaches of DVOs.

Over the five years, police applied for 7833 domestic violence orders and

recorded 5085 breaches.

Women's Legal Service Queensland, the Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research and Domestic Violence Action Centre representatives all said they would like to see a greater spotlight on changing perpetrator attitudes.

Queensland courts can order offenders to complete behaviour change programs

but it is not mandatory and it rarely happened, the experts said. DVAC helps domestic violence survivors across Ipswich and integrated response manager Dawn Osborne said many clients faced continual breaches of their DVOs.

"Some of the issues of concern for survivors is where they go to report a breach and gathering evidence that they are able to provide for police to take the matter forward," Ms Osborne said.

"We need to put the

responsibility firmly where it should be, which is the behaviour of the abusers not on the victim."

WLSQ chief solicitor Rachel Neil said police needed irrefutable evidence breaches occurred otherwise courts would toss the case out.

"I think that more resources for, and an

emphasis on, perpetrator programs would be useful in a lot of cases," she said.

The Queensland Government will spend \$7.67 million on perpetrator programs this financial year.

This includes funding for programs in Ipswich.

"The courts are best placed to decide whether perpetrators should be referred to these programs," Attorney-General Yvette D'Ath said.