



1 in 3 women experience domestic violence

## QLD NEWS

# Temporary protection orders are failing children and sending them into violent situations

Daryl Passmore, The Courier-Mail

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A MOTHER fears for her daughter's safety after being caught in a legal Catch-22 described by domestic [violence](#) experts as "an enormous issue".

A magistrate granted the Brisbane southside woman, who cannot be named, a temporary protection order against her ex-husband after complaining to police that he was violent towards the 11-year-old girl.

The order bans the man going within 100m of the pair – but the woman says it is futile because there is an exclusion due to an existing parenting order made by the Family Court that the girl stays with her father every other week.

It comes as a surge in demand for help means more than half of calls to the Women's Legal Service's helpline are going unanswered.

In this case, the temporary protection order was granted after an incident when the man allegedly grabbed his daughter by the arm and dragged her through a shopping centre until he was tackled by security guards when the girl said she did not want to go with him at a regular "handover" meeting between her parents.



Children can be sent to violent homes when custody is shared. Picture: File photo

The woman said her daughter had been hit on several occasions and when she said she no longer wanted to stay with her father, he had threatened he would kill himself and take her with him.

"It is an unknown but it's a risk I cannot take," the woman said. The girl is due to go to her father next week.

"She will not go. She is frightened," her mother said.

She would not make her daughter go, but fears she will be in breach of the parenting order and the next Family Court appearance is not until the end of the month.

"I just hope I can show them that I had to do this," she said.

"The one thing that needs to change is that if there is a protection order in her name, as there is, it should take priority so that she is safe."

The ex-husband has now taken a tit-for-tat protection order, claiming the woman had threatened him.

Women's Legal Service chief Angela Lynch said it was a scenario they dealt with "all the time, just all the time.

"Women are in this Catch-22 between from these two courts. They want to protect their children but they are scared of stopping court-ordered contact. It's an enormous issue that we deal with every day," Ms Lynch said.

The service is adding more staff with the number of calls expected to rise from 11,000 to more than 16,000 this year. Only 39 per cent are being answered.

"Unfortunately there is no way for us to know what the women who don't get through to us are calling about – or whether they will have the courage or opportunity to call again," Ms Lynch said.



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