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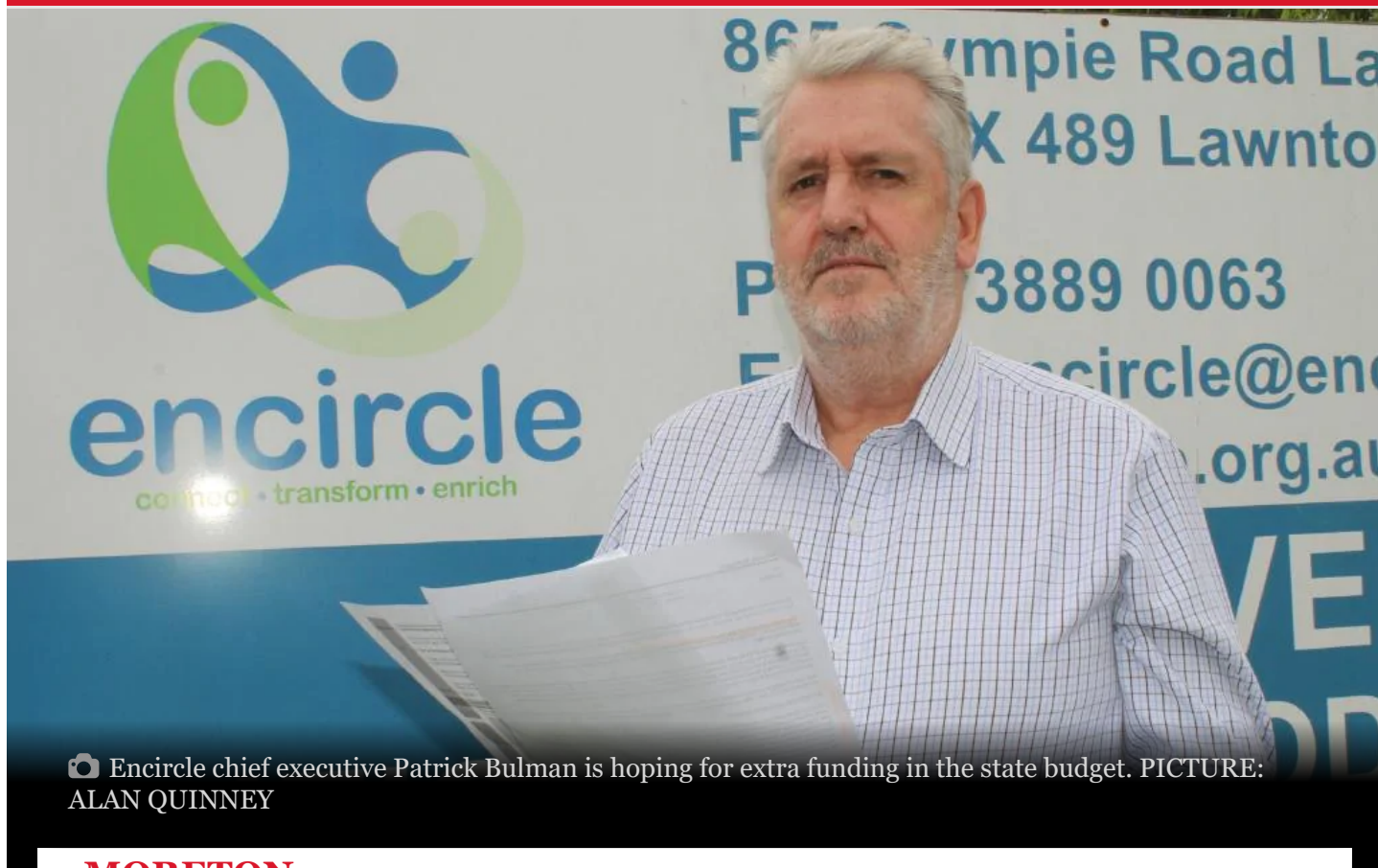
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Encircle chief executive Patrick Bulman is hoping for extra funding in the state budget. PICTURE: ALAN QUINNEY

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Safety risk for community outreach staff and volunteers

Alan Quinney, Pine Rivers Press

May 2, 2019 3:00pm

Subscriber only



INADEQUATE funding of neighbourhood centres is putting staff safety and community wellbeing at risk, according to operators.

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“This funding allows for only one full-time worker at each centre to run programs, as well as pay for IT systems, utilities, maintenance, materials, programs and, in some cases, rent.

“This is putting volunteers at risk from people with complex problems.

“Centres like Bribie Island and Deception Bay run with minimal staff and staff are only trained to a certain point.”

Mr Bulman said funding had increased by \$5000 since 2016-17 but the demand for services in that time had doubled.

“At least give us a decent amount to properly run our services,” he said.

Encircle has 55 staff and 204 volunteers. The Zillmere premises and the legal office at Strathpine are rented spaces.

“Not all staff are full time as we can’t afford it,” Mr Bulman said.

He said by the time Encircle met its costs there was a shortfall of about \$85,000 and it had to raise funds through barbecues, sponsorship and grants.

“People see neighbourhood centres as a place of hope that their needs will be met.

“The QFCA meets here every two months and a common theme from people is the need for more funding just to provide a safe working environment,” Mr Bulman said.

These funds were from the Thriving Queensland Community Grants program.

