

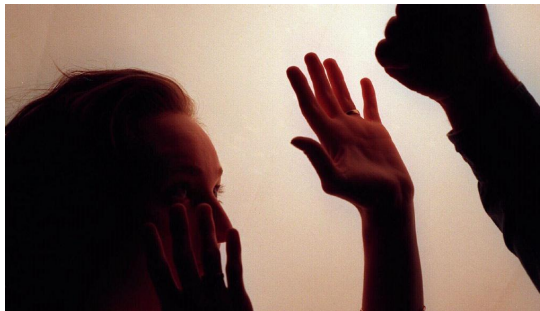
NEWS


North Queensland Women's Legal Service calls for more funding to get through COVID-19

A Townsville legal service working with the region's most vulnerable women has called on the State Government to dig deeper after it claims a multimillion-dollar funding boost "falls short" of what is needed.

SHAYLA BULLOCH, Townsville Bulletin

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 The State Government funding more than \$6 million dollars towards North Queensland Women's Legal Service, but its director said more is needed.

A TOWNSVILLE legal service working with the region's most vulnerable women has called on the State Government to dig deeper after it claims a multi-million-dollar funding boost "falls short" of what is needed.

It comes as COVID-19 repercussions have backed the region's women into a corner, with increased rates of calls for legal help after loss of employment, separation issues and domestic violence.

Attorney-General Yvette D'Ath allocated an extra \$6.95 million to the North Queensland Women's Legal Service to cement its future for the next five years, but director Anne Lewis said it was not enough.

"We are concerned that we will not be able to adequately provide the increased level of legal help that is needed. More needs to be done," she said.

North Queensland Women's Legal Service is a specialist not-for-profit community legal centre providing free legal services for women affected by

domestic violence and family breakdown.

Ms Lewis said women were reaching out in unprecedented numbers she could have never expected when applying for the funding tender.

“The funding will go part-way to meeting the needs of these women but will fall short of addressing the increased need,” she said.

“That is a daunting prospect given the rise in domestic violence, the COVID-19 challenges, as well as the continuing population growth in the North and far north Queensland.”

The *Townsville Bulletin* revealed last week that reports of domestic violence breaches in the Townsville district were higher than those reported from January to April last year, despite the huge spike from the devastating floods.

Ms Lewis said the impacts of delayed legal help had detrimental effects on a woman’s life, including an increased risk of homelessness and complications with their kids.

“We simply cannot match that growing need without additional resources.”