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Mid North Coast women miss out on a share of \$129 million for domestic violence victims

The decision about how the federal government's previously announced [\\$129 million over four years](#) for women's legal services to combat domestic violence will be allocated across NSW was [announced by NSW Attorney General Mark Speakman](#) yesterday.

Mid North Coast Legal Centre was disappointed to hear that the region will not be receiving a share of this funding.

In 2021 a dedicated and specialised domestic violence legal program to women was offered for the first time ever in the Mid North Coast. The Mid North Coast Legal Centre utilised once-off emergency Covid funding to set up this successful program. The Centre had hoped that a share of this historic injection of funding for domestic violence legal services would allow this vital local program to continue. MNCLC yesterday learnt the Centre would not receive a share of the funding and the program would need to cease to operate in two weeks if a funding source could not be identified.

"We absolutely welcome this vital funding for domestic violence victims across NSW, including funding for State-wide women's legal services and other regionally based community legal centres, however we are extremely disappointed the Mid North Coast has not been included in funding for domestic violence legal services. We know there are so many women in our region who face domestic violence and need this service." Sarah Dahlenburg, Assistant Principal Solicitor, MNCLC.

Emma Smallwood, Domestic Violence Specialist Solicitor, has advised over 150 women fleeing violence in 2021 and represented vulnerable Mid North Coast women in Court helping them to secure housing and keep their children safe in family law matters.

"I'm really concerned about what this will mean for the hundreds of women who fear for their lives and need a face-to-face local service and a lawyer to advocate for them to help them keep themselves and their children safe. Women here have faced bushfires, floods, a pandemic and often face violence in their own home on top of that." "Women have benefitted from having access to a lawyer who lives and works here in their community. There is so much need for this service on the Mid North Coast."

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