

# Tamworth Family Support Service calls for domestic violence early intervention

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THERE are more than 2500 calls for help a year, but that's just scratching the surface of Tamworth's domestic violence issue, according to a local support service.

[The ball is rolling to establish a women's health centre in Tamworth](#), with advocates around the state pressuring the NSW government to fund a one-stop shop model of support for New England's women.

Tamworth Family Support Service (TFSS) already provides a range of domestic violence assistance, predominantly after those involved have reached a "crisis point".

General Manager Belinda Kotris told *The Leader* there's real ground to be made on prevention and earlier intervention in domestic violence.



HEALTH CENTRE PUSH: Work needs to be done on earlier intervention according to local support services.

“By the time its reached police intervention, it's at the point of crisis,” Ms Kotris said.

“We're still missing a lot of the early intervention.”

With a lot of help being provided to victims after police intervention, Ms Kotris said the numbers would “absolutely” be a lot higher than the reported 2500 calls for assistance through TFSS.

“We've seen some horrendous cases where people have been essentially locked up in their own house,” she said.

“Their life is so controlled, they can't just say 'this is domestic violence, I'll go and seek services.’”

Ms Kotris said a women’s health centre with a “one-stop-shop model” would provide “a soft entry point” for victims to access local support.

“Some of our services would be co-located there, so it would be somewhere we could capture and support victims,” she said.

The proposal for a Tamworth women’s health centre was tabled by SOS Women’s Services and Leichhardt Community Women’s Health Centre to the NSW government last week.

It detailed the centre “should operate domestic violence prevention clinics”, which Ms Kotris said would focus on educating about “healthy relationships”.

New figures released by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research found incidents of domestic violence in the Tamworth Regional Council area have remained stable over the last two years.

In 2016, there were 336 incidents of domestic violence related assault in the Tamworth area, slightly down from 361 incidents in 2015.

NSW Police Minister Troy Grant welcomed the latest report which showed crime was either stable or in decline across the majority of regional NSW.

“The latest figures show crime rates in NSW have been falling significantly over the past five years in both major cities and many regional towns,” Mr Grant said.

“However, we cannot be complacent. The NSW Government will continue to provide police with the support and resources they need to keep communities across the state safe.”

The Domestic Violence Line is available on 1800 656 463.