



PARADISE LOST? Behind closed doors, domestic violence is rife on the Coast.

# Domestic violence on the rise

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WHAT happens behind closed doors on the Sunshine Coast has been revealed through the latest statistics from the Department of Communities.

The picture is not one of domestic bliss.

In the 2008 and 2009 financial year there were 1041 applications to courts for domestic violence orders against spouses and family members.

The bulk of those cases – 642 applications – passed through Maroochydore Magistrates Court.

Chris Turner, the CEO of Sunny Kids, which assists Coast families broken by domestic violence, was not surprised by the figures. "There is more demand than ever because families are under more pressure," Mr Turner said.

Community Services Minister Karen Struthers will be on the Coast tomorrow for a community forum on domestic violence and how laws can be improved to address the growing social problem.

The government is holding a series of community forums across the state as part of the most comprehensive review of Queensland domestic violence laws in 20 years.

"We want to hear from people about what's working and what's not when it comes to holding perpetrators responsible and supporting victims," Ms Struthers said.

Mr Turner welcomed the forum but he said laws alone could not prevent domestic violence. "You can't legislate for morality. There are some key questions our society needs to reflect on in regards to violence and abuse in our community, in particular the treatment of the disadvantaged and disempowered," he said.

People can view the consultation paper at [www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au](http://www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au). Written submissions will be accepted until May 31.

The forum will be held at Millwell Road Community Centre in Maroochydore from 1 to 5pm. Call Vivienne Courbet on 5420 1301 or email [vivienne.courbet@communities.qld.gov.au](mailto:vivienne.courbet@communities.qld.gov.au)

## Thugs tamper with canoes

A CALOUNDRA boat hire operator claims he loses \$5000 in sabotaged equipment every year after vandals struck again on the Anzac Day long weekend.

Bill's Boat Hire owner Michael McNamara believes vandals who cast off three canoes over-

night are responsible for sinking several of his boats earlier this year.

Mr McNamara said the offenders sank several of his leisure craft boats after removing the "bung" or plugs.

He said staff discovered three kayaks missing from their Espla-

nade, Golden Beach address yesterday.

Staff has since recovered two.

"We lose about \$100 every week," Mr McNamara said.

Anyone who witnessed the vandalism should call Caloundra police on 5439 4444.

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