

In fear of their life

Difficult to identify prime aggressor

By **BIANCA CLARE**

A SUNSHINE Coast children's charity has revealed it provided 21,234 "bed nights" to domestic violence victims over the past two financial years.

SunnyKids CEO Chris Turner said the number could be much higher, but the organisation was forced to turn away 50% of referrals because it did not have enough emergency accommodation.

"We have 38 beds and could easily fill double that," he said.

"SunnyKids is calling on the Department of Communities to review how it invests funding for victims of domestic violence on the Sunshine Coast."

The plea came as a forum was held at Maroochydore yesterday to review current domestic violence legislation.

The meeting was opened by Community Services Minister Karen Struthers and attended by key local stakeholders.

"What I am hearing is there are challenges when it comes to holding perpetrators responsible for their behaviour," Ms Struthers said.

"I am also told there's work to be done to help identify who is the prime aggressor when both parties may have an order. Who is most at risk? Who is living in fear of their life?"

"There are also issues within indigenous communities be-

cause they want the abuse to stop but don't want their partner to be locked up."

Ms Struthers said the government was looking into ways to help reduce the pressure on emergency accommodation providers such as SunnyKids.

She said it was interesting to hear about a program established by SCOPE Regional Domestic and Family Violence Service.

"They have received funding which will help keep domestic violence victims safely at home," she said.

A paper on the review of domestic violence can be found at www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au and submissions will be taken until May 31.



FRONTLINE: Lydia Fairhall and Chris Turner from SunnyKids, which provides emergency accommodation to domestic violence victims. PHOTO: BRETT WORTMAN/190843

One woman's tale of breaking the abuse cycle

A RECENT visit to a Sunshine Coast women's shelter stirred a range of emotions for a woman when she saw the look of fear in the eyes of those around her.

"I recognised it," she wrote, "because I was once one of them. That fear and uncertainty about the future was once mirrored in my eyes."

"It is still difficult for me to talk about. There is a social stigma attached - even when

you are the victim of domestic abuse.

"At the time I never told anyone what I was going through. It's not the type of thing you can just casually mention over a coffee with friends."

"I know what people think, 'why did she put up with that?' or 'why didn't she just leave?'"

"Because it is not only bones that are broken by abuse - but also spirit, self-

belief and the bonds that once held us safe.

"My relationship started with hearts and flowers like most. I was very young and did not see the signs. Not that I knew what to look for."

"In time, little criticisms started to insidiously eat away at my self-confidence until, after years, the abuse escalated and I was terrified and would shake in fear of doing something wrong."

"Everything had to be perfect."

"I was so ground down I couldn't see what I had become and what this relationship was doing to me."

"I was depressed all the time and could not see a way out."

"One night I realised that if I didn't get out I would die. He would kill me or I would kill myself."

"I left a number of times be-

fore I finally became aware that I could be happy and live without permanent stress being on my own."

"When I look back now, I hardly recognise that person that I was then."

"I have so much respect for women who have broken the cycle and made it to a shelter."

"They have let go of a dream and been brave enough to walk away from a nightmare."

NEWS BRIEFS

Fine for oval fire

A 17-YEAR-OLD Sippy Downs youth was charged with setting fire to several wheelie bins on an oval at Siena Catholic College. Brody John Bower also stole marine flares from boats belonging to residents at Hibiscus Retirement Resort and set them alight at a park. The incidents took place between February 26 and March 1. Bower was ordered to complete 100 hours community service and fined \$500 for lighting the marine flares.

Organic workshop

THE benefits and processes of small-scale producers having organic certification will be made clear at a free workshop in Maleny next week. The day will be hosted by the Organic Growers of Australia, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the not-for-profit group Biological Farmers of Australia, and Australia's first certification program that specifically caters for the needs of small-scale organic producers. The workshop, on May 7, will include the latest information on certification, organic growing practices and organic produce markets. It is at Terry, Jenny and Gavin O'Connor's Organic Farm, at 27 Hilltop Crescent, Maleny. For more information, call 1300 331 309, ext 232.

Tractor crash kills

A MAN has died in a tractor crash in north Queensland. The 58-year-old man died at a property on Majors Creek Road, Giru, about 9am yesterday. No other details were available.

- AAP

Noosa **HYUNDAI**

iX35 is here now!
Available for immediate test drive.

Delivers big car torque with small car economy.

3 models to choose from
2.0 2WD Active ~ 2.4 AWD Elite ~
2.0R Series AWD Highlander

Lionel Donovan Drive, Noosaville QLD 4566
Telephone: 07 5474 4778 Fax: 07 5449 8051
carsales.noosa@noosahyundai.com.au

view all our weekly specials at www.noosahyundai.com.au

We sell **FRESH** fruit & vegetables & a **BIG** range of South African products

Follow us on **FACEBOOK**
Crunch@forest Glen

Crunch
At Forest Glen
Monday to Friday 8am - 5.30pm
Saturday 8am - 3pm
Shop 2 Mons Rd,
Forest Glen Shopping Centre,
Forest Glen
5453 7888

You Are a LEGEND

You deserve a Legend. Why not test drive at Kunda Park Maroochydore today. We will pay your Rego, CTP and Stamps for a limited time...

- Super All Wheel Drive
- Drive by Wire precise Acceleration System
- Active Noise Cancellation
- 3.7i SOHC V6 226kW
- ABS, EBD, EBA
- Satellite Navigation
- Reversing Camera
- Leather, Alloys
- BOSE 10 Speaker and More...

HONDA SUNSHINE COAST HONDA

MAROOCHYDORE A/H Rod 0410 493 737
583 Maroochydore Rd Kunda Park
5409 1500