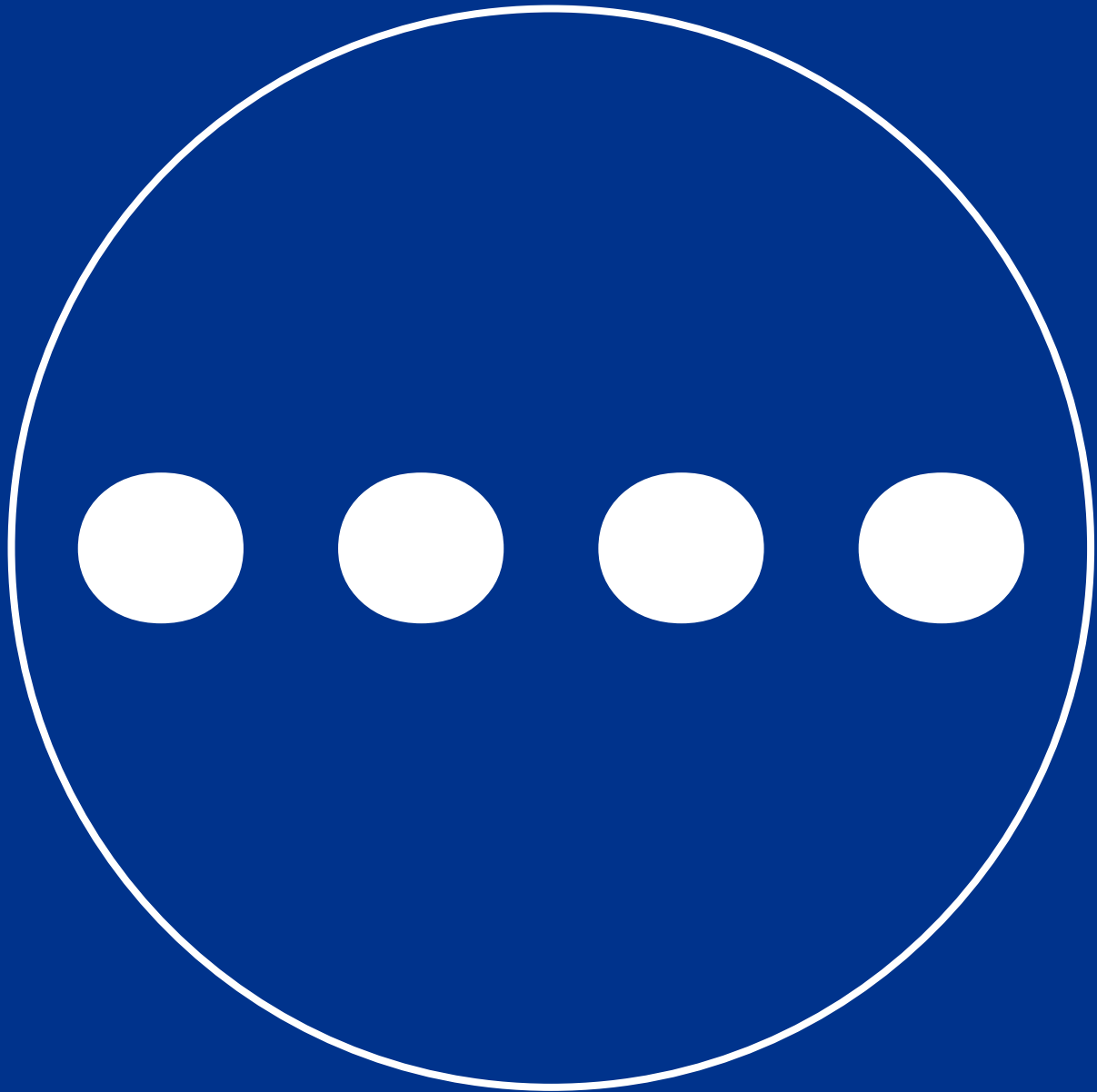


intouch

Multicultural Centre
Against Family Violence

WOMEN'S LEGAL CENTRE



**LEGAL PATHWAYS TO RECOVERY
FINAL EVALUATION REPORT**

April 2026

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the many dedicated intouch staff who contributed to this evaluation over the past two years. Special thanks to Ajsela Siskovic and Yasmin Ildes for their leadership of the LPTR.

Thank you to the generous migrant and refugee victim-survivors who contributed to this evaluation in different ways. We hope you see your voices and perspectives highlighted in this report.

Thanks also to Jo van Twest Farmer for thoughtful advice in the early stages of the evaluation and to Lexi Robinson for support with the statistical analysis.

Lydia Phillips Consulting acknowledges the strength and courage of all migrant and refugee women and gender-diverse people in Australia who have experienced family violence.

This evaluation was conducted on unceded Aboriginal land. Lydia Phillips Consulting pays respects to the traditional Owners of the land and to Elders, past and present.

REPORT PREPARED BY

Lydia Phillips, Lydia Phillips Consulting



SUGGESTED CITATION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What was the pilot?

The Legal Pathways to Recovery Pilot (LPTR) was conceived and delivered by the Women's Legal Centre at intouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence ('intouch'). Funded by the Victorian Legal Services Board + Commissioner, the pilot was borne from a lack of accessible, practical legal information for migrant and refugee victim-survivors and high demand for intouch's legal services, including from clients who did not have immediate legal needs. The LPTR sought to increase migrant and refugee women and gender-diverse victim-survivors' knowledge of key areas of Australian law and their confidence to make decisions relating to those areas so they had greater agency, support and access to safety.

The LPTR provided practical, in-language legal information on intervention orders, parenting, property, divorce, financial assistance for victims of crime and the family violence provisions in immigration law. The LPTR was delivered via free, live webinars with written and aural translation available in over 65 languages. intouch lawyers presented the sessions and answered participant questions in real time.

How was it evaluated?

The evaluation used a mixed method, participatory – social justice design to determine the LPTR's outcomes and better understand the experiences and needs of victim-survivor participants. It drew on statistical analysis of baseline and post-LPTR data of 109 LPTR participants, 26 one-on-one telephone interviews with LPTR participants, six webinar observations and six focus groups with intouch staff. The external evaluator worked with 15 intouch staff members to collectively analyse the evaluation data and identify the key findings.

What did the evaluation find?

Between July 2024 and December 2025, the LPTR delivered 64 webinars for migrant and refugee survivors of family violence. There were 425 attendances at webinars, based on 746 registrations. This 57% attendance rate is particularly strong for live webinars and those supporting people experiencing crisis and/or trauma. It indicates high demand for the LPTR among the target group.

The LPTR achieved significant, important outcomes for participants. Poll data demonstrated statistically significant increases in participant knowledge of key legal topics and their confidence to make decisions relating to those topics. These gains were large in magnitude, and the knowledge gains were particularly notable for a brief, educational offering.

Interviews with LPTR participants and staff focus groups supported these findings and described several examples of the LPTR empowering participants to take independent actions. These actions were both legal (e.g. submitting affidavits, applying for a divorce) and non-legal (e.g. seeking psychological or counselling services). In other cases, the LPTR helped victim-survivors understand their rights and identify practical steps they could take, if or when they chose and safe to do so. Legal Centre staff also reported several LPTR participants attending legal appointments with a higher baseline knowledge of key legal concepts, enabling them to provide more tailored and timely advice in those appointments. While the LPTR did not (and was not intended to) provide individualised advice, it offered foundational information that complemented broader intouch services.

These outcomes were highly significant to LPTR participants. Interviewees described positive emotional impacts of having greater understanding of Australian legal processes and of the practical steps they could take to protect themselves and their children. Some interviewees who had already taken action as a result of LPTR described having less financial pressure or more timely access to the law because they did not need to engage a lawyer or wait several weeks to complete an application form.

Key features of the LPTR model were critical to the achievement of these outcomes. Online and in-language delivery of the LPTR removed key access barriers and the online format offered anonymity, which participants highly valued. Lawyers' delivery of the webinars and capacity to answer participant questions in real-time meant participants trusted the information and could clarify their understanding in the moment. The LPTR's emphasis on practical, strengths-based

information tailored specifically for the target audience was also key. intouch demonstrated a commitment to trauma-informed and culturally safe practice and actively strengthened its approach through the implementation period.

The LPTR also delivered additional benefits for staff members, which could lead to broader organisational benefits in the longer-term with further investment. Staff reported the LPTR increased collaboration and information sharing between the Legal Centre and Direct Client Services team and enabled them to provide more holistic support to clients. Noting the small sample, interviewees from the Direct Client Services team reported increased understanding of legal requirements for victim-survivors and greater confidence to counter misinformation raised by clients. Some reflected that the LPTR strengthened their practice, because the information informed their risk assessments and helped them better identify circumstances where a client needed legal assistance.

Finally, several staff members across the teams reported the LPTR had positive impacts on their own wellbeing. They described relief and professional satisfaction of being able to refer victim-survivors who were ineligible for legal support or unable to quickly access it to the LPTR for timely, free and practical information.

Where to from here?

The LPTR successfully achieved its intended short-term outcomes with a modest level of project resourcing. These outcomes were significant for migrant and refugee victim-survivors and the intouch staff that support them. As a pilot project, intouch strengthened the LPTR model throughout the implementation period based on formative evaluation findings. The refined model was operating consistently and effectively at the end of the funding period.

There is strong need for the LPTR to continue. The evaluation recommendations are:

For funding bodies	1. Provide further funding to continue the LPTR and deliver more frequent, in-language webinars.
For intouch Legal Centre	<p>If further funding is secured:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Continue delivering the LPTR in live, online sessions presented by lawyers with allocated Q&A time and support from paralegals. Continue sharing the roles across the team. 3. Consider broadening LPTR access to intouch’s sister organisations to stabilise webinar attendance numbers and strengthen strategic collaborations. 4. Deliver two webinars per week (on different days and at different times) to increase access and enable clients to attend all webinars before their first legal appointment. 5. Continue strengthening LPTR communication and referral processes with Direct Client Services. 6. Distribute post-webinar summaries to attendees to strengthen and maintain their understanding and confidence. 7. Ensure presenters spend unused webinar time reinforcing key messages. 8. Incorporate evaluation and collective sensemaking into ongoing project implementation. <p>If further funding is not available:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Identify alternative, feasible ways to share the LPTR’s content with clients and staff. Consider involving law students and paralegals in maintaining the currency of the slides. 10. Draw on staff members’ experiences and learnings from the LPTR evaluation to embed similar participatory-social justice evaluation approaches into other intouch projects.

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WHY A LEGAL PATHWAYS TO RECOVERY PILOT?

It is well-documented that migrants and refugees face many barriers in accessing legal services in Australia.¹ These include language and communication barriers, difficulties accessing interpreters and a lack of cultural safety in mainstream service delivery. The 2023 Public Understanding of Law Survey found new migrants were among those with a ‘particularly high percentage of legal needs going unmet’.² Other research indicates people in Australia who speak a language other than English at home are less likely to perceive lawyers as accessible, despite being more likely to value the lawyer role in addressing legal problems.³

Migrant and refugee women who are experiencing, or have experienced, violence face multiple, additional barriers to accessing legal services or legal protection. These include:

- Difficulties accessing violence-specific services (due to a lack of information on where to seek help, language barriers, visa status, isolation)⁴
- Difficulties demonstrating coercive control and/or financial or emotional abuse when there is little or no access to support services⁵
- Reluctance to disclose family violence due to social stigma, lack of community support or fear of being deported or losing access to their children⁶
- Misidentification as perpetrators of family violence⁷
- Difficulties demonstrating property rights if women are newly arrived in Australia, have received cash payments for work due to migration status or a dowry is not clearly demonstrable⁸
- Choosing not to exercise their rights or engage in legal proceedings due to past experiences of racism and/or an absence of emotional and cultural safety in Australian institutions; lack of understanding of their legal rights in Australia and/or fear of police or courts.

Misinformation is often rife in abusive relationships where perpetrators use threats and misinformation to control women’s decision-making. The lack of accessible and widely available information for migrants and refugees can mean misinformation about their legal rights is not quickly countered. Experiences of racism create additional barriers to discussing family violence, such as when mainstream initiatives use deficit language and/or inadvertently present family violence as an issue affecting a particular cultural community.⁹

THE LPTR PILOT

The Legal Pathways To Recovery (‘LPTR’) was a pilot program conceived and implemented by the Legal Centre at Intouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence (‘Intouch’). Intouch is a Victorian specialist service that supports migrant and refugee communities affected by family violence. With grant funding from the Victorian Legal Services Board + Commissioner, the LPTR offered a suite of live webinars providing in-language legal information to migrant and refugee women and gender-diverse survivors of family violence in Victoria.

The LPTR’s content was developed by legal professionals at Intouch, drawing on a needs analysis conducted by Lydia Phillips Consulting in 2024. All webinars provided general legal information that reflected common needs and experiences of migrant and refugee victim-survivors.

The LPTR offered webinars on six key legal topics for migrant and refugee survivors of family violence:

1. Immigration Law – Accessing the Family Violence Provisions
2. Intervention Orders (IVOs)
3. Parenting Matters
4. Property Matters

¹ See for example, Balmer et al, 2019; National Advocacy Group on Women on Temporary Visas Experiencing Violence, 2019; Women’s Health in the North, 2015.

² Balmer et al, 2023.

³ Balmer et al, 2019.

⁴ Vaughn et al, 2019.

⁵ Intouch & Harmony Alliance, 2023; National Advocacy Group on Women on Temporary Visas Experiencing Violence, 2019.

⁶ Intouch & Harmony Alliance, 2023.

⁷ Intouch & Harmony Alliance, 2023.

⁸ Intouch & Harmony Alliance, 2023.

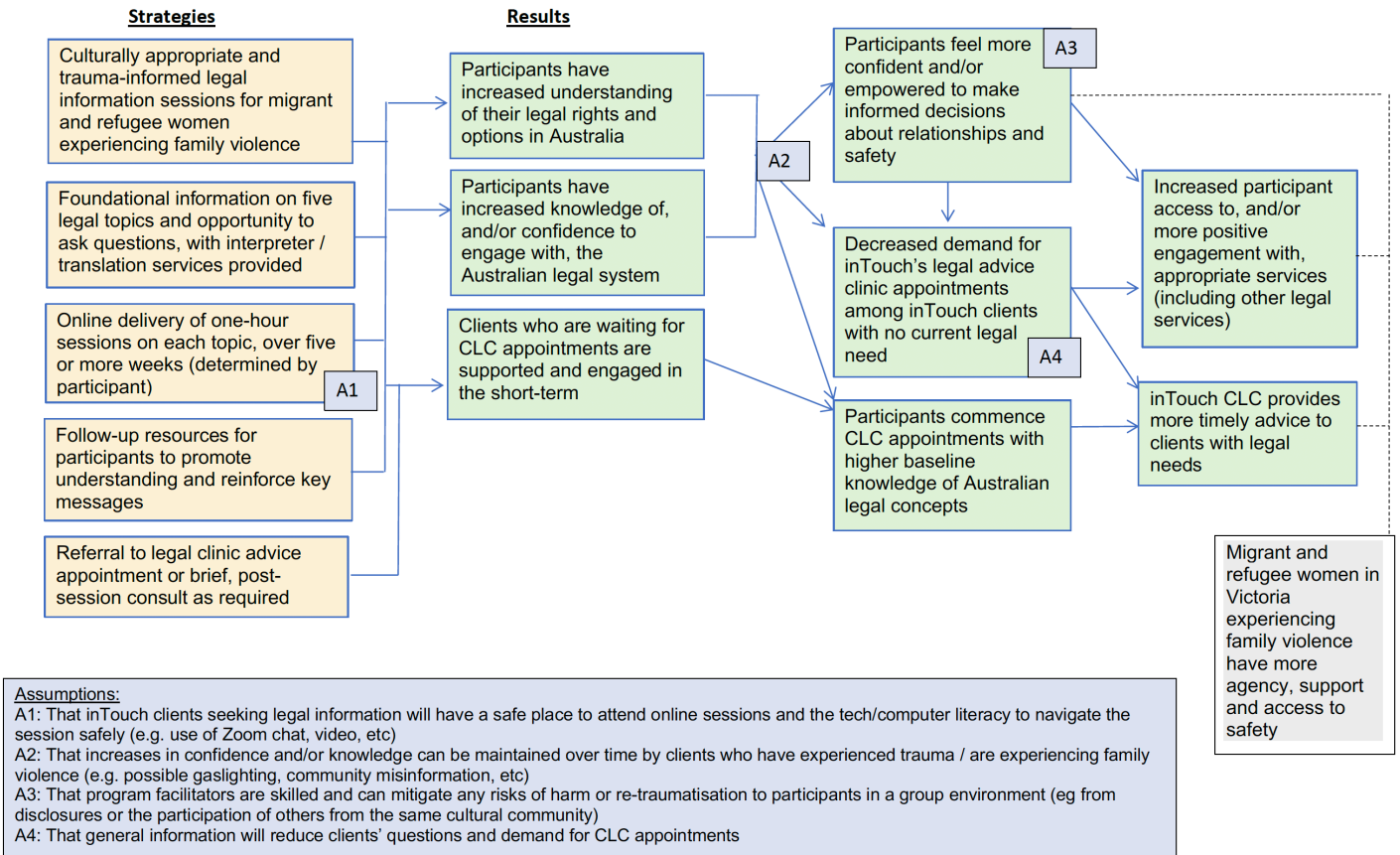
⁹ Taranto et al, 2024; Women’s Health in the North, 2015.

5. The Divorce Process
6. The Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS) - this topic was added in the second half of the project.

Intouch lawyers presented the webinars. In-language translation was provided via the Wordly platform. Each webinar went for up to one hour, with 15 minutes allocated for participant questions, which the lawyer answered in real time. Intouch paralegals provided technical and administrative support to both the presenter and participants throughout the session. This also helped intouch identify any arising safety issues for individual participants and follow them up as required. The Legal Centre liaised with intake workers and case managers in intouch’s Direct Client Services team throughout the implementation period.

A program theory for LPTR was developed in April 2024 as follows:

PROGRAM THEORY FOR THE LEGAL PATHWAYS TO RECOVERY PILOT



The LPTR commenced in July 2024 and formally concluded in December 2025. Webinars were delivered weekly, rotating across topics. Clients could choose any webinars they wished to attend and register via a link provided by their case manager or via the intouch website. Initially, the webinars were only available to intouch clients who were receiving case management services and to Direct Client Services staff members for their own professional development.

Formative evaluation of the pilot was conducted between December 2024 and March 2025 to identify what was working well and what could be improved in the implementation period. The formative evaluation was a collaborative, participatory process with intouch staff helping to analyse the data and identify key findings.

Based on the formative evaluation process, intouch implemented several refinements to the LPTR model, including:

- Reviewing all webinar slides to simplify and condense content and remove jargon that may be difficult to understand or translate.
- Requiring all presenters to read aloud the content of slides to promote consistent delivery and enable translation of all written information.

- Adding a sixth webinar topic to the LPTR suite on the FAS. The webinar topics consequently moved from a five- to six-week rotation.
- Introducing further measures to promote participant safety during the webinars, including adding a 'Quick Exit' button, disabling the group chat and ensuring participant names and any identifying information was hidden from other participants.
- Providing written instructions to registrants on how to join the webinar and access the Zoom and Wordly platforms in advance of the sessions.
- Expanding participant eligibility to include:
 - intouch clients living in refuges;
 - victim-survivors who contacted intouch intake but were ineligible for intouch case management; and
 - professionals supporting migrant and refugee victim-survivors at partner services.

WHY AND WHAT WE EVALUATED

Intouch incorporated evaluation into the LPTR from the outset. It engaged Lydia Phillips Consulting to conduct a needs analysis, which informed the pilot design, and to work with staff to monitor, evaluate and learn from participant experiences and outcomes throughout the implementation period.

The purpose of the evaluation was to understand the LPTR's outcomes and the broader needs and experiences of participants. As above, a formative evaluation was conducted between December 2024 – March 2025 to identify what was working well and what could be improved, while also capturing some outcomes data from participants involved in the early stages of the pilot's roll-out. The summative evaluation was conducted between November 2025 – March 2026. Value-for-money assessment was beyond the scope of the evaluation.

The key evaluation questions guiding the evaluation were:

Domain	Key evaluation question
Safety	1. To what extent do participants experience the LPTR as trauma-informed and culturally safe?
Effectiveness	2. What outcomes is the LPTR achieving in the short and medium term (whether positive or negative, intended or unintended)? For whom and in what circumstances?
Significance	3. How significant are the outcomes to participants?
Sustainability	4. What is emerging about the sustainability of the LPTR model? a. To what extent does the pilot successfully equip participants with the skills and support to maintain any benefits? b. How can government and the broader family violence sector learn from, and build on, this project?

HOW WE EVALUATED THE LPTR

This evaluation used a mixed methods participatory – social justice design. It preferred qualitative data collection and collective analysis to give voice to migrant and refugee communities and counter the historical silencing of minoritised groups. Participants were offered choice in a range of formats and methods to share their views of the pilot.

The evaluation drew on data from a range of sources:



Statistical analysis of pre and post data from 109 LPTR participants



Observation of 6 webinars



26 phone interviews with LPTR participants



6 focus groups with Intouch staff involving:

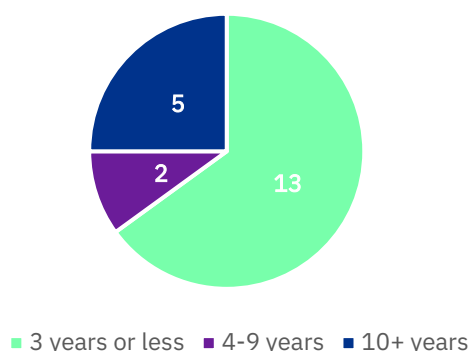
- 6 lawyers
- 6 case managers/intake workers
- 4 paralegals

LPTR participants were asked to complete a short poll at the beginning and end of each webinar to measure any change in their knowledge and/or confidence due to the LPTR. Two statistical tests were conducted to analyse the poll results: a paired t-test and Wilcoxon signed-rank test. As the poll wording was changed during the pilot, the original poll and refined poll were treated separately, and both statistical tests were conducted on each to determine if they showed similar patterns and to increase the robustness of the results. All matched pre-post responses from October 2024 to December 2025 webinars were included in the statistical analyses.

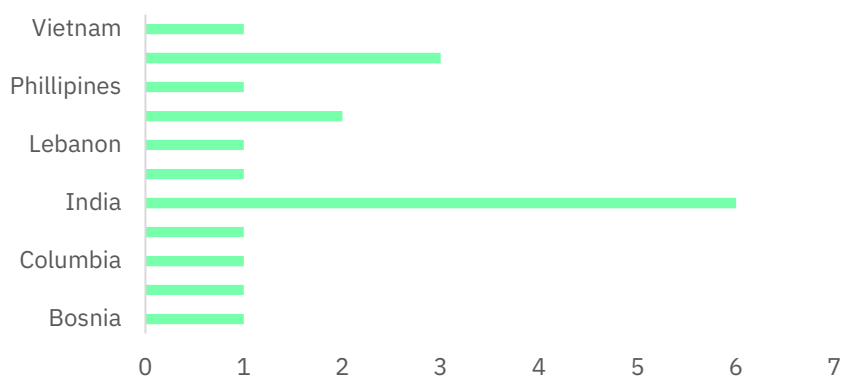
The external evaluator conducted all webinar observations and facilitated the staff focus groups. Half of the observations and focus groups occurred at the project’s midpoint (December 2024 – March 2025) and the remainder between October 2025 – February 2026.

Intouch paralegals conducted 26 one-on-one phone interviews with LPTR participants who were clients of intouch (e.g. not staff members who had attended a webinar). Paralegals used intouch’s existing client communication protocols and an interview protocol. Six LPTR participants were interviewed in the formative evaluation. The remaining 20 were interviewed in late 2025, following a broad invitation from intouch to all recent webinar registrants. These 20 interviewees differed in their visa status, living arrangements, language spoken at home, country of birth and length of time in Australia. Five used interpreter services, in line with intouch’s standard operating procedures.

Interviewees' duration of time living in Australia (n=20)



Country of birth (n=20)



The option of an in-person evaluation interview was available to LPTR participants who wished to speak to someone external to intouch or engage in person. No participants took up this option. A focus group with LPTR participants (either online or in person) was also offered toward the end of the project but not utilised.

The external evaluator and 15 staff members from intouch's Direct Client Services and Legal Centre collectively analysed the final evaluation data and identified key insights and patterns that shaped the evaluation findings presented below.

Some limitations to the evaluation should be acknowledged:

- Participant poll results were unavailable for the first three months of the LPTR (July – September 2024).
- Participants who completed the polls or participated in an interview may have experienced greater benefits from the LPTR and/or had higher computer literacy (affecting their outcomes), than other participants.
- The wording of the poll questions and answer options was refined during implementation to simplify language and increase the response rate. To address this in the analysis stage, the poll was treated as two separate polls (one with the original wording and a second with the refined wording) and two statistical tests were conducted on each poll separately.
- Finally, the evaluation did not involve all staff in the Legal Centre and Direct Client Services teams in focus groups, nor did it involve LPTR participants who were professionals working at other services. While most members of the Legal Centre participated at some point, only 4 of 27 Direct Client Services staff participated directly in the evaluation. This small, self-selected sample may not be representative of the broader team, introducing potential non-response bias and limiting the generalisability of the findings.

WHAT WE FOUND

Between July 2024 – December 2025, the LPTR:

- Delivered **64** webinars on six topics about family law and safety for migrant and refugee survivors of family violence.
- Received **746** webinar registrations and involved **425** webinar attendances. This is a **57%** attendance rate, which is particularly strong for live webinars supporting people experiencing crisis and/or trauma.
- Demonstrated high demand for legal education among migrant and refugee survivors of family violence. There is an important distinction between legal information needs and legal problems. The LPTR offers a viable model to address the legal information needs of migrant and refugee victim-survivors.
- Provided an important building block to improve access to justice for migrant and refugee victim-survivors, by providing relevant, foundational information on key legal topics to complement broader services.

Online delivery of legal information with in-language translation was important to engage migrant and refugee victim-survivors and promoted access for those living in regional Victoria.

The webinar on Immigration Law: Accessing the Family Violence Provisions was the most popular topic (based on registration and attendance numbers), followed closely by Divorce (based on number of attendances). The FAS webinar had a 71% conversion rate, with the largest proportion of registrants going on to attend. However, popularity measures must be interpreted with caution, given many people in the target group were in crisis which likely affected decisions to register and/or capacity to attend.

	# times offered	# registrations	# attendees
Divorce	11	168	88
FAS^	6	59	42
I-AFVP	14	179	89
IVO	10	110	70
Parenting	12	118	65
Property	11	112	71

^FAS webinar was introduced later in the pilot, so its numbers are lower.

1. LPTR ACHIEVED SIGNIFICANT, POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR MIGRANT AND REFUGEE SURVIVORS

“[Many of] our clients are newly arrived, they don’t understand the system... As they [leave the webinar], the big picture messages would stay with them: There’s a process. People can’t just take your kids. Your husband can’t deport you. Slowing down those [concerns] actually means the most. That’s what people walk away with.” – Legal Centre staff member

The LPTR was successful in achieving its intended short-term outcomes for victim survivors of family violence. These outcomes were achieved with a modest level of project resourcing and had profound significance for several victim-survivors.

1.1 Participants reported increased knowledge of key legal topics and increased confidence to make decisions relating to them

There is strong evidence to suggest the LPTR increases participants’ knowledge of key areas of Australian law and their confidence to make decisions pertaining to those areas.

Statistical analyses of the LPTR poll results found large, statistically significant increases in participant knowledge, confidence and/or capability after the webinars. These gains seemed to occur across the webinar topics. The gains in knowledge are particularly notable for such a brief, educational offering.

Although the poll wording and response scales were refined in July 2025 to boost accessibility and completion rates, there was a consistent pattern of improvement across both polls on the intended program outcomes.

For sessions using the original poll instrument, self-reported knowledge increased by an average of 1.27 points (95% CI 1.00–1.53) and capability by 0.86 points (95% CI 0.67–1.04). Similar gains were observed after the survey revision, with knowledge increasing by 1.22 points (95% CI 1.01–1.42) and confidence by 0.90 points (95% CI 0.69–1.11). The size of these changes (effect sizes ranging from approximately 1.1 to 1.5) indicates the improvements were not only statistically significant but meaningful in magnitude.

One-on-one interviews with LPTR participants supported these findings.

“[LPTR is a] very big help for every one of us. Additional knowledge. Makes you feel confident. Allows us to ask questions and resolve our queries.” – Participant

“I had no clue what IVO was, what’s the provision, I was doing my own research, and the webinar made my life easier. I am so grateful.” - Participant

“It helps me to know about other available services and have clarity about Australia’s law. [It] is very important and useful for me. I felt supported when I was in a vulnerable situation” - Participant

“Legal information... helps me prepare for the next step. It is very important to me because I felt overwhelmed and persecuted and after having information and contact with intouch I was able to relax and feel safe.” – Participant[#]

[#] Quote translated via an interpreter.

1.2 The LPTR enabled some victim-survivors to attend legal appointments with a higher baseline knowledge

The LPTR provided support to clients waiting for in-touch legal appointments and built their engagement and relationship with the service. Legal staff reported several LPTR participants attended legal appointments with higher baseline knowledge of the law, enabling lawyers to provide more tailored advice in the appointment.

“They’re stepping into appointments with more information. When we have initial consults, particularly family law and family violence advice clinics, there’s only so much you can go through in one hour. So, if [they’ve] watched the webinars, [their] starting point can be so much more informed.”
– Legal Centre staff member

“I had a client come [to a legal appointment] with a PowerPoint of all their ‘genuine relationship’ evidence. She’d watched the webinar and then prepared all her stuff so when she came for the appointment, she had everything organised, ready to go. It takes some time to gather those documents! [The LPTR is] helpful for us [because]... it speeds up the process and... allows us to give a better consult.” – Legal Centre staff member

Participant interviews also demonstrated some people were able to take action as a result of LPTR without requiring further advice from the Legal Centre. One staff member also recounted a former client who successfully accessed the LPTR to resolve some follow-up questions after her legal case had been closed.

The LPTR did not reduce demand for Legal Centre appointments, as initially theorised. Compared to the previous 18-month period, demand for legal advice clinic appointments increased by approximately 45% in the LPTR implementation period. However, this was likely owing to a range of factors external to LPTR, including significant expansion of the Legal Centre, enabling it to accept more referrals. The Legal Centre reported that its waitlist decreased significantly during the implementation period, from three months to approximately four weeks. The decrease in the waitlist is also likely due to a range of factors, including increased team capacity and some clients no longer requiring clinic appointments. While untested, it is plausible that greater baseline legal knowledge among clients who attended LPTR would increase the efficiency of legal advice clinics, affecting the waitlist time.

1.3 The LPTR empowered victim-survivors to take action, plan or understand their options

The LPTR’s provision of practical, timely information is empowering for many participants and addresses a critical gap in the Victorian landscape. As described above, there is a lack of accessible and tailored legal information and services for migrant and refugee survivors in Victoria. Free and quick access to tailored information from a specialist service empowers women to plan and take action.

“It’s difficult to prove to the department that you’re separated if you’re still living together. [So our message is] You can’t start this process until you move out. [Getting that message early in a webinar means] now you can work with your case manager so you can try to move out and start this process that you’re actually eligible for.” – Legal Centre staff member

“I attended the Divorce clinic, and it helped me. I had to submit an affidavit and I did it alone.” - Participant

“It gave me confidence to apply for my divorce on my own. My only problem is the cost” - Participant[#]

[#] Quote translated via an interpreter.

"[It] helped me to understand the system a little better. This is useful. I have since made a divorce application and have an upcoming divorce hearing." – Participant[#]

"Education about the law will be useful in future as I have family law matters pending."- Participant

For some participants, it enabled them to independently engage in legal processes without requiring further legal advice or representation (such as lodging an application for divorce or for FAS). This can increase survivors' safety by enabling them to engage in legal processes sooner and also reduce financial pressures on survivors who do not require legal representation.

"It meant that I could do the [divorce application] process myself afterwards, which saved me so much money. Otherwise, I would have needed to get a private lawyer and I can't afford that." – Participant

"Because of these sessions I learned the procedure myself. I did not have a lawyer, so I learned lot about how to talk to lawyer and do the procedure myself. So very positive influence... They help me to learn the basics and help me to do the procedure myself. Very important. I went through mediation and got positive result." – Participant

For others, the LPTR offered valued information about their rights and practical steps they could take to increase their safety or protect themselves legally, if and when they chose and judged it safe to do so. This is essential for the safety and empowerment of victim survivors who are not ready to leave an abusive relationship but want legal information about their options.

"It gave me ideas and information about my options. This is very important to me. Keeping this information in my mind allows me to be prepared if I need to escape urgently." -Participant

"The general information was good because it gave me an idea of the process and possible outcomes" – Participant

1.4 Key model features likely contributed to these knowledge and confidence gains

Key features of the LPTR model that were highly valued by participants are likely to have contributed to the achievement of these outcomes. Interviewees valued in-language access to tailored information by a lawyer and the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered in real time. Approximately half of the intervieweed participants volunteered that the opportunity to ask questions was important to them.

"I was just at the beginning of divorce and didn't know what to do... Other parties have an advantage - this was my first source of information, and it was so valuable, especially as it was from an experienced lawyer." –Participant

[#] Quote translated via an interpreter.

“I understood it very clearly. I had no idea about the topics. I was clueless. I asked questions and understood even better.” – Participant

“At the time I was experiencing violence, I was confused and had lots of questions. I was able to ask a question at the end. I wasn’t sure about the evidence I needed or how to get support. The answer to my question really helped me. I was suffering financial control, so me and my baby didn’t get support. The webinar helped me understand what I can do.” – Participant[#]

“It’s so important to have the lawyer there. People from certain cultures aren’t used to [written, online resources]. There’s this idea that only the professionals can handle certain matters... Australia specifically is a very self-make country, you’re given a lot of responsibilities as a citizen, you can apply for your own passport... When you come from a different country, there are things you can’t do for yourself, there has to be someone from the government to do it. A professional needs to do it. So I can tell some clients not to worry, but until she hears it from a lawyer, she won’t truly believe it. So the live session [with a lawyer] is so, so important.” – Direct Client Services staff member

“People hear messages from other [places], social media and don't know if correct or not. They say, ‘I saw this post, is this correct?’ Asking questions of a lawyer busts the myth.” – Direct Client Services staff member

Many interviewees also valued the provision of clear information that helped them understand legal processes and practical steps they could take to protect themselves and their children.

“I needed the knowledge for me to plan... It helped me understand that family violence is not just restricted to physical violence. In divorce process, it helped me understand what it looks like and how I can plan financially to support my children.” - Participant

“I learned what I needed to know, such as how to access the account, access documents, what I was able to claim.” - Participant

“Because I'm just starting the process, the webinar answered my questions and made complex process clear and easy to understand” - Participant

1.5 These outcomes are significant to victim-survivors

These LPTR outcomes were highly significant to participants. Most interviewees described these outcomes as having special value. Some interviewees described the emotional support of legal information, helping them to feel hopeful, less alone and more safe.

“I felt so lonely and overwhelmed, especially because my family and culture was against me... because [of] the lack [of] information I felt weak and scared. But when you have information you feel supported and not alone. I have to go through my divorce, and with all this information I realised my ex-husband was manipulating me.” - Participant

“[The LPTR webinar] helped me understand the law and how to protect myself against my husband. My husband tried to use the law against me and the webinar helped me understand how to use the

[#] Quote translated via an interpreter.

law to protect myself. It is helpful to know what we can do when they try to use the law against us. I didn't know how to use the law back against him, to stop him from making up information about me. I wanted to show that I was innocent.” - Participant#

Other interviewees described the information as meaningfully informing their planning and preparation for upcoming legal proceedings or general safety, whether in the short- or long-term. Several participants reported taking meaningful action as a result of their participation in the program. These actions ranged from legal actions (e.g. filing an affidavit themselves or engaging in existing legal processes in new ways) to broader decisions to support their recovery and wellbeing (e.g. deciding to attend therapy).

“[The LPTR webinar] helped me a lot. My mental health wasn't good at the time, and it helped encourage me to go to therapy knowing that it was covered under FAS.” - Participant

“The most important thing is it can empower our clients. It's good for them to learn about the law for themselves. One client was dealing with parenting arrangements and wasn't eligible for [intouch] legal support [so was instead accessing a mainstream legal service]. She attended the [parenting] webinar and [said] it helped her learn how to negotiate and communicate with her lawyer about what she wanted to put in the parenting plan.” – Direct Client Services staff member

As above, gains in knowledge and confidence about the law were especially valued because they came from a trusted source of information and in a format that enabled participants to ask questions and clarify their understanding.

Quote translated via an interpreter.

2 LPTR ACHIEVED ADDITIONAL POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR INTOUCH

The LPTR delivered several unexpected benefits to intouch staff members, which may produce broader benefits to the organisation in the longer-term with further investment.

2.1 Intake workers and case managers reported increased understanding of legal requirements and improved confidence to reiterate key messages to clients

Staff focus groups highlighted Direct Client Services staff had greater understanding of key legal requirements and greater confidence to reiterate key messages to clients and victim-survivors accessing the intake service. Although Direct Services staff do not provide legal advice, they described common instances where general legal information helps them better support clients and counter misinformation as early as possible.

“Some clients have a verbal parenting agreement. After attending the [parenting] webinar, I’ll encourage them to have a written agreement or a text message to support them.” - Direct Client Services staff member

“We now have more information... Often, clients trust 100% their partners. There are certain cultures where women navigate the world through their partners. So sometimes the perpetrator holds the direction of where the family is going. So when they separate, they trust what their partners says. [The perpetrator] tells the victim ‘if you apply for IVO we’ll both be kicked out of the country’. Now, us knowing that’s not how it works, we don’t give legal advice, but we can [correct the misinformation].” – Direct Client Services staff member

“Having basic knowledge means we can provide simple guidance before their legal appointment comes up. Client can feel more secure.” – Direct Client Services staff member

“With character considerations, it’s good for [clients] to know it’s not good to have an IVO made against them and to get it struck out. It’s good information for people to receive at an early stage.” – Legal Centre staff member

2.2 Case managers reported the LPTR can strengthen practice

Noting the small number of Direct Client Services staff involved in focus groups, those interviewed reported the LPTR strengthened their own practice and increased client engagement in case management processes.

“100% LPTR influences our own practice, because once we have this basic legal knowledge it’s beneficial for our risk assessment. If clients raise an issue or there’s a sign an IVO would be beneficial, it’d definitely shape our safety plan.” – Direct Client Services staff member

“We [staff] can go to the webinar rather than asking all the questions of lawyers. If a client is having difficulty attending, I can go to the Legal Centre to get the [webinar] link and help them.” – Direct Client Services staff member

For case managers and intake workers with high caseloads, the LPTR kept key areas of legal need front of mind so they could refer victim-survivors who needed legal advice:

“When clients have the same issue, I think, I just received an email, there’s a legal webinar on this topic”. – Direct Client Services staff member

“Sometimes when we do needs assessments, [the] client’s distress could be from parenting arrangements, because the perpetrator might try to use a parenting arrangement to manipulate them. So I can identify she needs this [type] of legal advice.” – Direct Client Services staff member

2.3 The LPTR increased information sharing and collaboration between intouch teams

Staff focus groups highlighted that the LPTR facilitated greater information sharing and collaboration between Direct Client Services and the Legal Centre. The LPTR model relied on Direct Client Services staff referring clients to relevant webinars based on their needs and sharing the webinar link. Efforts were made during implementation to clarify the LPTR referral process and target audience and increase Direct Client Services’ engagement with the LPTR.

“The pilot is removing barriers between the Legal Centre and rest of the organisation. To me, it feels services are a little more open... legal information isn’t gate kept”– Legal Centre staff member

The Legal Centre involved all staff in the presenter or support person role, so that delivery of the webinars was shared across the team. This reduced the impost on individuals in a busy legal practice – each lawyer was only required to present for one hour every six weeks.

Several legal staff were involved in preparing and updating webinar content. It is important to note that some webinar topics required regular updates to content, such as the Immigration Law webinar which required updates almost every rotation due to the frequency of changes in migration law. This work provided an opportunity for paralegals to build and consolidate their understanding of different areas of law:

“Even the process of putting the content into slides in a step by step way helps your knowledge of the [legal] processes” – Legal Centre staff member

“The [immigration law] family violence provisions, I didn’t have any knowledge of them before [the LPTR]” - Legal Centre staff member

During 2025, intouch made the LPTR webinars available to new staff in the organisation as part of their induction. Some of those staff reflected that the LPTR webinars gave them an overview of the Legal Centre’s work and the key legal issues clients face. Greater access to key legal information across the organisation is likely to increase consistency in staff understanding of key legal issues for migrant and refugee victim-survivors and consistency in service provision to clients.

2.4 Staff reported positive impacts on their own wellbeing

Among staff involved in focus groups, the LPTR was seen as a mechanism for intouch to deliver more holistic support and information.

“I attended the FAS webinar. So, if the [client] might be eligible for FAS, I let them know – that can give them a little more hope. They know they could be entitled to more support.” – Direct Client Services staff member

Several staff described positive emotional impacts of being able to refer victim-survivors to the LPTR, particularly those who were ineligible for intouch’s Legal service or unable to quickly access it. Staff described a sense of relief or joy at being able to offer people access to timely, free and practical information instead of turning them away.

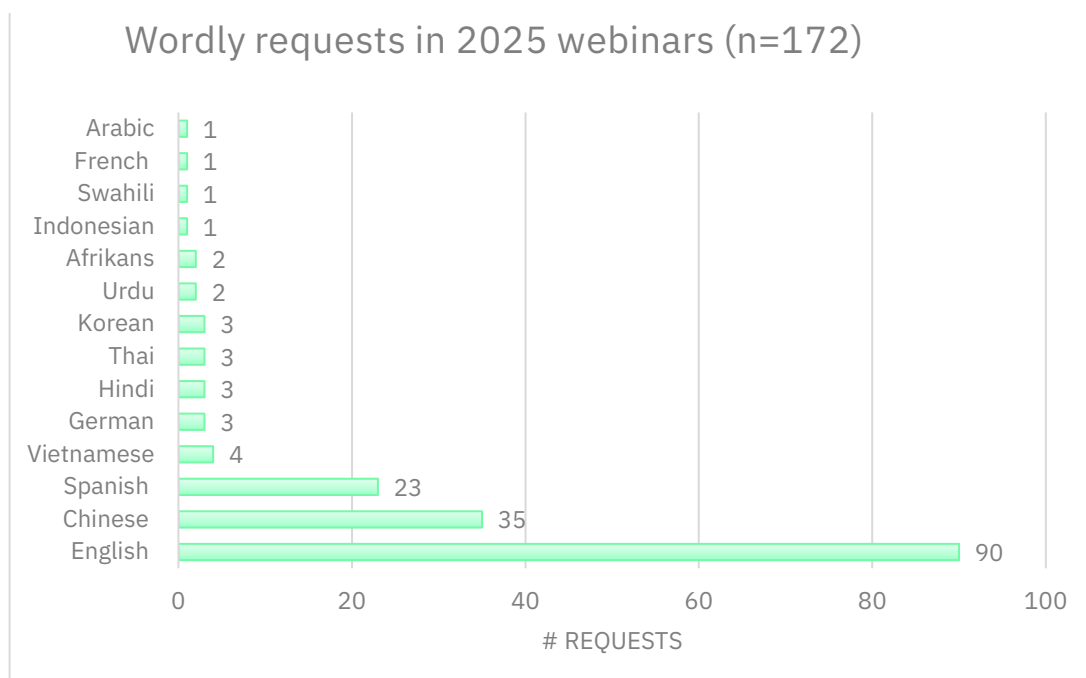
Legal Centre staff also noted the boundaries of the LPTR model – with webinars’ 60-minute duration and focus on general advice – being realistic and rewarding for busy lawyers who wanted to support as many people as possible.

3. LPTR DEMONSTRATED A COMMITMENT TO TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE AND CULTURAL SAFETY

“[I] don't know anything about Australian's laws. The information gave me peace, I felt blind. It gave me a lot of peace of mind.” – Participant#

The LPTR's design and implementation employed many trauma-informed and culturally safe best practices. intouch actively strengthened its approach throughout the pilot period, including in response to formative evaluation findings (discussed above).

The LPTR promoted cultural safety by explicitly welcoming LGBTIQ+ survivors and presenting content and case studies that reflected common situations facing migrant and refugee women in Australia. Use of the Wordly platform enabled participants to receive the information in their preferred language, with choice of over 65 languages. While complete data on LPTR use of the Wordly platform was unavailable, the following provides a snapshot of language requests in 2025 webinars:



The platform enabled participants to receive translated information visually and also aurally, which is particularly beneficial for those with low literacy or vision impairment. In addition, LPTR webinars offered closed captions so participants could mute the session and still engage if they had children or family members nearby. Webinar observations found the Wordly platform enabled participants to follow along and refer back to earlier statements, as it presented large amounts of translated information on the side of the screen (more than what was available with closed captions). This may partly explain the high number of requests for English translation in 2025.

The LPTR employed several strategies to promote participants' sense of internal, external and relational safety, in its content, design and delivery.¹⁰ Webinar content was strengths-based and empowerment-focused. For example, the FAS webinar emphasised that participants determine what they need and what supports would help them move forward. It also emphasised certainty and safety in key messages - for example, by stating upfront that applicants would not need to attend court and the perpetrator would not know if the victim-survivor applied.

Quote translated via an interpreter.

¹⁰ Alessi & Kahn, 2022.

Case studies were also effectively used to unpack the legal issues and demonstrate how they might apply to migrant and refugee survivors in strengths-based ways. For example, the Intervention Orders webinar presented a case study where the victim-survivor did not know what support she could access so went to a friend's house, received supportive advice from her friend and had a positive court experience. The victim-survivor felt hopeful after securing the intervention order and joined a community group for further support. Similarly, the Parenting Matters webinar shared a case study where a mother demonstrated she could provide a stable home for her children and secured full-time custody after attending court.

“The examples were more helpful than just reading information on a website.” - Participant

The webinars provided information about support services and instructions on how to quickly exit the webinar via phone or computer, with diagrams provided for clarity. Webinar settings were updated to ensure participant anonymity was maintained, even when participants posed questions. Further, several participants commented that the presenter's tone and pace supported their experience of safety in the webinars.

“The person who spoke was kind and understanding, listened to us and didn't rush us” - Participant

“Ample time to select answers, understand what is going on... Love the tone ...Didn't feel like I was in a rush” – Participant

Importantly, interviewed LPTR participants reported the online format was key to a safe and positive experience. Approximately half of the interviewees described safe and positive online experiences as those where they were anonymous, could not be seen or did not have to attend in public. Participants shared that they wanted to access legal information privately and from a safe location without needing to travel.

“I feel safe because nobody can see me or meet me. I didn't want to see anyone. [After tragic events]... it was good to go online” - Participant

“I was able to dial in from a safe place and concentrate on the answer” – Participant

“I am new to Melbourne. I am scared of my ex-husband. Attending in person is difficult for me and therefore online is safe.” – Participant

Interviewees reported the convenience of the online format also promoted safety by enabling them to access legal information in limited windows of opportunity.

“I could listen while I was on my way to work and therefore my husband couldn't hear what was going on” – Participant

While online delivery removed access barriers for some participants with caring or work responsibilities who could not attend in person, it should be noted that all LPTR webinars were conducted on Friday mornings, which likely prevented some potential participants from engaging.

4. LEARNINGS ABOUT THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE MODEL

This section presents the evaluation findings as they relate to the sustainability of benefits for LPTR participants and the model's sustainability and key learnings for the broader service system.

4.1 Some participants maintained their benefits of LPTR participation in the short-term

While there was strong evidence that the LPTR increased participant knowledge and confidence in the moment, the evaluation also heard several examples of participants maintaining these gains in the short-term. As described above, several interviewed participants reported taking action as a result of their participation, such as filing legal applications, participating in legal processes or communicating their wishes to their (external) lawyer. Legal staff also reported a higher baseline level of legal knowledge among clients who had participated in the LPTR at their legal appointments, which were often several weeks' later in time.

Focus groups noted that highly educated victim-survivors and those with very straightforward legal queries were more likely to experience maintained benefits of LPTR. Further, most interviewed participants commented on the volume of information in the webinars and several planned to revisit the webinar at a later time. It is unclear how long participant benefits can be maintained without re-engagement or further support.

4.2 More support is required to maintain participant benefits

Given the webinars are short (and participants may not repeat them) and given the multiple barriers to legal information for migrant and refugee victim-survivors, further support should be provided to strengthen and maintain participant benefits.

The LPTR offers foundational information that must be positioned alongside other services. Several people noted the importance of providing multiple opportunities to access information, particularly for migrant and refugee groups and people who are in crisis or experiencing trauma.

“It takes multiple engagements to help clients understand what coercive control is and how it [has] impacted their relationship, so webinars are a layer-upon-layer of foundational knowledge.” – Legal Centre staff member

“I am learning a lot. There are some things I don't understand, so I will watch the session again, but these are big issues and I will take my time to understand them better” – Participant

“It's great the webinars are repeated, it allows us to come back and understand the information to our situation” - Participant

While intouch provides some links and resources to participants after the webinars, further reference materials should be provided to participants. intouch determined not to record the webinars due to the frequency of changes in the law on these topics. This increases the need for reference materials, such as a summary of the webinar slides. Webinar observations and participant interviews found the sessions presented clear but complex information that may be difficult for people to retain without supporting materials. Reference materials are particularly important given the complexity of some legal concepts and the information needs and retention barriers for people who are experiencing trauma and/or receiving misinformation from other sources.

Further, two of the three webinars observed in late 2025 finished early. Given the need for repeated information, there is opportunity for presenters to slow down their delivery even further and use any extra time to reinforce key messages.

More regular webinars (e.g. two rather than one per week) would also likely help embed participant learning and increase engagement. This was not possible within the pilot budget due to the additional, hourly costs of the Wordly platform. With further investment, more regular webinars would enable clients waiting for legal appointments to access

all six webinars in a three week period, rather than waiting six weeks to revisit or clarify information on the one topic. This may further increase their baseline knowledge when they attend legal appointments and enable lawyers to provide even more tailored advice in those appointments. More broadly, increasing the frequency of webinars may also help to build clients' trust in intouch services by increasing live and repeated engagement with different parts of the organisation.

It is recommended that future webinars be scheduled at different times and days of the week to promote more and safer access for victim-survivors with work or caring commitments and those with limited opportunity to attend online in a way that is private and safe.

4.3 The LPTR addressed a key need in the broader service system and provided clear evidence about what is most valued

“Information is empowerment. Knowledge is power.” – Legal Centre staff member

The LPTR addressed a key gap in the broader service system and helped to address barriers to legal information for migrant and refugee victim-survivors. It provided a timely and relevant pathway to greater information and support for migrant and refugee victim-survivors at relatively low cost and in a way that complemented intouch's broader services.

The pilot demonstrated significant demand for legal education among migrant and refugee victim-survivors. It also highlighted the value of community legal services responding to the legal information needs of this cohort, in addition to their legal problems, as a way of improving access to the law and managing legal service waitlists.

The LPTR model was progressively strengthened throughout the implementation period and operated consistently in the latter half of implementation. Intouch undertook significant work to design, implement and optimise the model within a modest project budget. The positive outcomes for participants and intouch staff show the LPTR delivers value and should be continued.

Key features of the LPTR's success were:

- Online delivery of information by a lawyer, with capacity to answer participant questions in real-time
- Free, in-language and practical information specifically tailored for migrant and refugee victim-survivors.

Strong referral processes into the LPTR are key to its sustainability. While the LPTR's registrations and strong attendance rate demonstrated high demand for the webinars, some sessions had very small participant numbers. This reduces the viability of the model – lawyers' time would be better spent providing tailored advice to those individuals rather than presenting general information. Given the importance of the webinars being delivered by lawyers, intouch should continue strengthening and refining the referral process with Direct Client Services.

Intouch could also consider broadening LPTR eligibility to participants of its sister organisations, including those to whom it provides secondary consultation. This should help to ensure sufficient participant numbers at each webinar for the sustainability of the model. As this evaluation did not interview LPTR participants who were professionals at other services, further work should be undertaken to confirm the value of expanding LPTR access to professionals at more partner services. In the longer term, intouch could consider building strategic partnerships with other services to expand the LPTR to include other relevant topics (such as child protection and Centrelink).

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

For funding bodies	1. Provide further funding to continue the LPTR and deliver more frequent, in-language webinars.
For intouch Legal Centre	<p>If further funding is secured:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Continue delivering the LPTR in live, online sessions presented by lawyers with allocated Q&A time and support from paralegals. Continue sharing the roles across the team. 3. Consider broadening LPTR access to intouch’s sister organisations to stabilise webinar attendance numbers and strengthen strategic collaborations. 4. Deliver two webinars per week (on different days and at different times) to increase access and enable clients to attend all webinars before their first legal appointment. 5. Continue strengthening LPTR communication and referral processes with Direct Client Services. 6. Distribute post-webinar summaries to attendees to strengthen and maintain their understanding and confidence. 7. Ensure presenters spend unused webinar time reinforcing key messages. 8. Incorporate evaluation and collective sensemaking into ongoing project implementation. <p>If further funding is not available:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Identify alternative, feasible ways to share the LPTR’s content with clients and staff. Consider involving law students and paralegals in maintaining the currency of the slides. 10. Draw on staff members’ experiences and learnings from the LPTR evaluation to embed similar participatory-social justice evaluation approaches into other intouch projects.

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