



Legal dosage at Youthlaw - balancing depth and breadth

VICTORIA LAW FOUNDATION
RESEARCH NETWORK,
24 JUNE 2026

Katie Fraser, Manager of Data and Grants
katie@youthlaw.asn.au

What I'm talking about today...



01

What Youthlaw does - our low/high dosage service mix and resourcing

02

What data and evaluation shows about outcomes of low and high -dosage work

03

A reflection on where next data -informed strategic planning -

Some context -- where Youthlaw is at...

New CEO
Lee Carnie



Organisational
growth--doubled



Strategic
planning



Youthlaw's work and service mix

1

Intensive, integrated casework and representation for young people at risk

- outreach
- integrated services
- intensive wraparound support
- early intervention
- health justice partnerships



2

Legal information and advice

- Legal Helpline
- Friday Fines clinic
- RMIT student legal service

3

Community Legal Education

*Policy and advocacy coming soon!



Resourcing is relative...

Intensive, holistic & integrated services




Low dosage services -
legal information,
advice and referral



How we make it work ...

- Pro bono help - at least 1 FTE position
- Short term funding - government and philanthropic
- Student volunteers
- RMIT

A red pencil with a sharpened lead tip lies diagonally across the right side of a spiral-bound notebook. The notebook has white pages with blue horizontal lines. The text 'What's Working Well?' is written in black cursive on the left side of the page.

What's

Working Well?

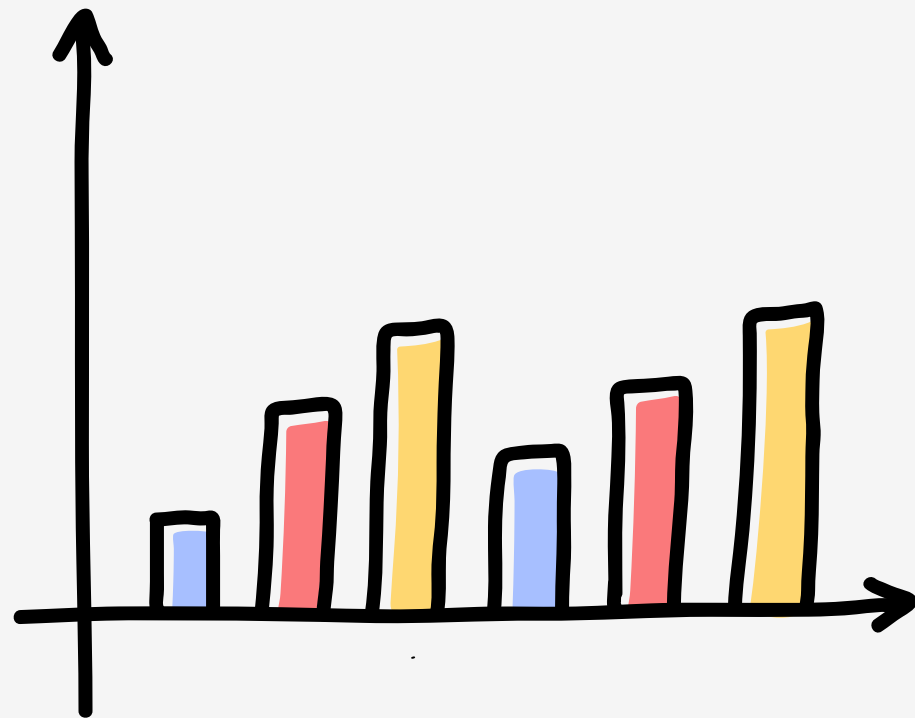
And how do we know...?

We evaluate intensive, 'high dosage' services*

*Because philanthropic funders require it and we need ongoing funding!



Close file surveys by lawyers, social workers and clients



Data analysis



Reflection by our workers and partners



Did our work contribute to good legal outcomes?

OUTCOMES (high dosage service)

From our Early Intervention Criminal Law Project*

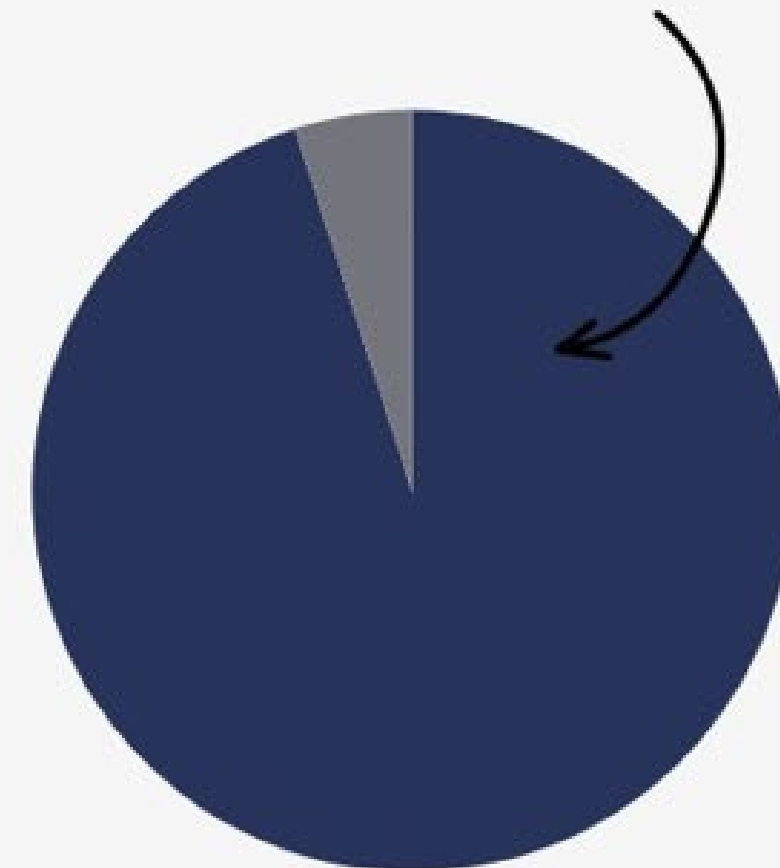
*funded by VLSB+C 2025 -27

Data snapshot: Outcomes

35 young people who participated in in-depth close-file interviews revealed that:

- 89% received legal help before court
- 77% received social work help before court
- 63% were represented with police
- 90% were represented in court
- 77% complied with bail conditions
- 94% had outcomes lawyers described as “good,” with only one “not good”

94% of criminal charges resulted in diversion, caution or withdrawal



What clients say (high dosage service)

From our Stand Up for Our Rights Project*

*for children in out of home care, funded by the Children Young People and Families Philanthropic Funding Network 2022 -25

“

I was in court for a driving matter. [The lawyer] persuaded the court to give me the chance I needed. She got the ducks lined up. If she hadn't then I would have lost my licence. Because she helped, I kept my licence. This allowed me to go back to work and get my life back on track. I only got a fine.

”

“

Made me not get charges on my record so I can keep my job.

“

Yeah, it means I'm not locked up. [If Youthlaw hadn't helped, I'd have] rotted away to be honest.

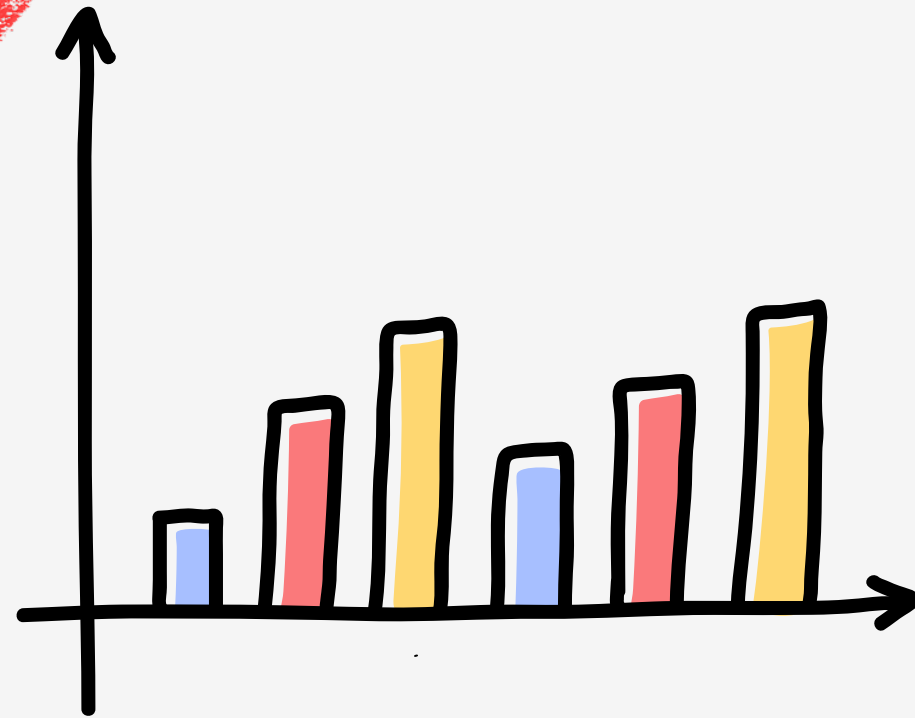
”

We don't evaluate low dosage services...

*Because we've done it forever, it's low cost, it has been a lower priority



Close file surveys by
lawyers, social workers
and clients



Data analysis



Reflection by our
workers and partners



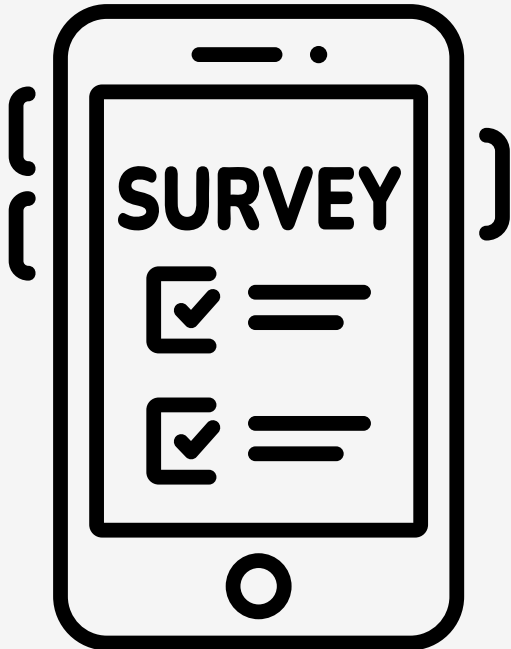
Did our work contribute
to good legal
outcomes?

Legal and client outcomes (low dosage services)

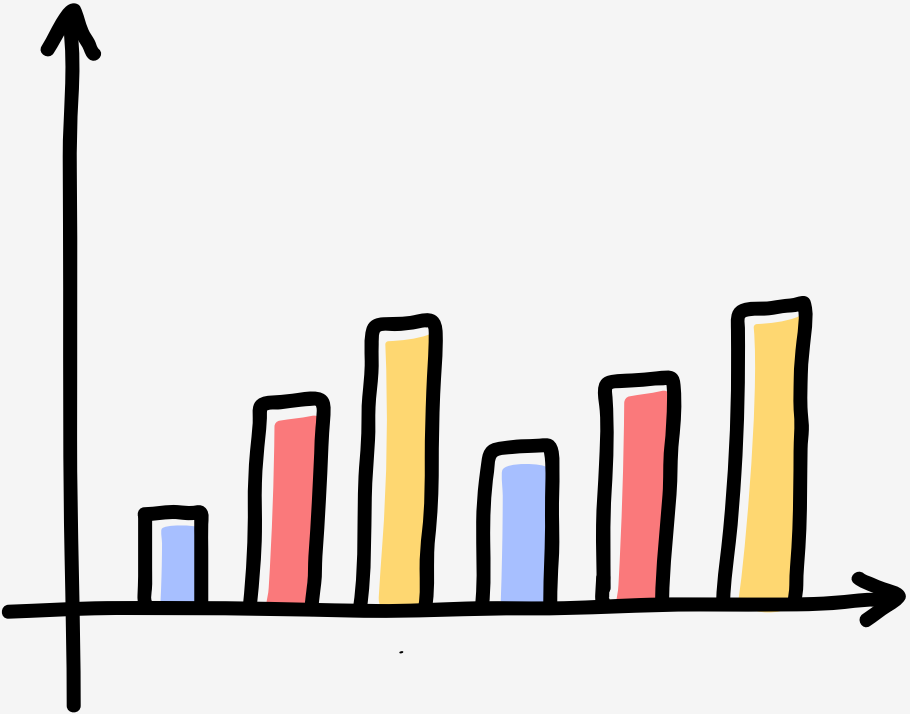


Our service reach -- low and high dosage

Legal Needs Analysis



Young people and stakeholders



Data analysis - who we see



Research – who we don't see



What young people tell us they want...

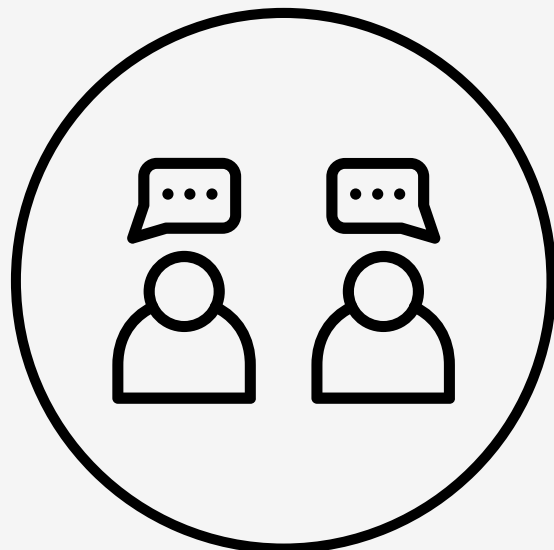
107 responses!

Access to legal help

Fast and easy access



Direct services



Access to legal information

Legal info they can
access online

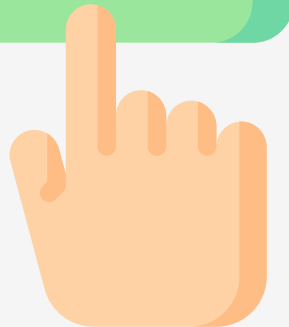


School based
learning and
training for
teachers and
workers



Self service

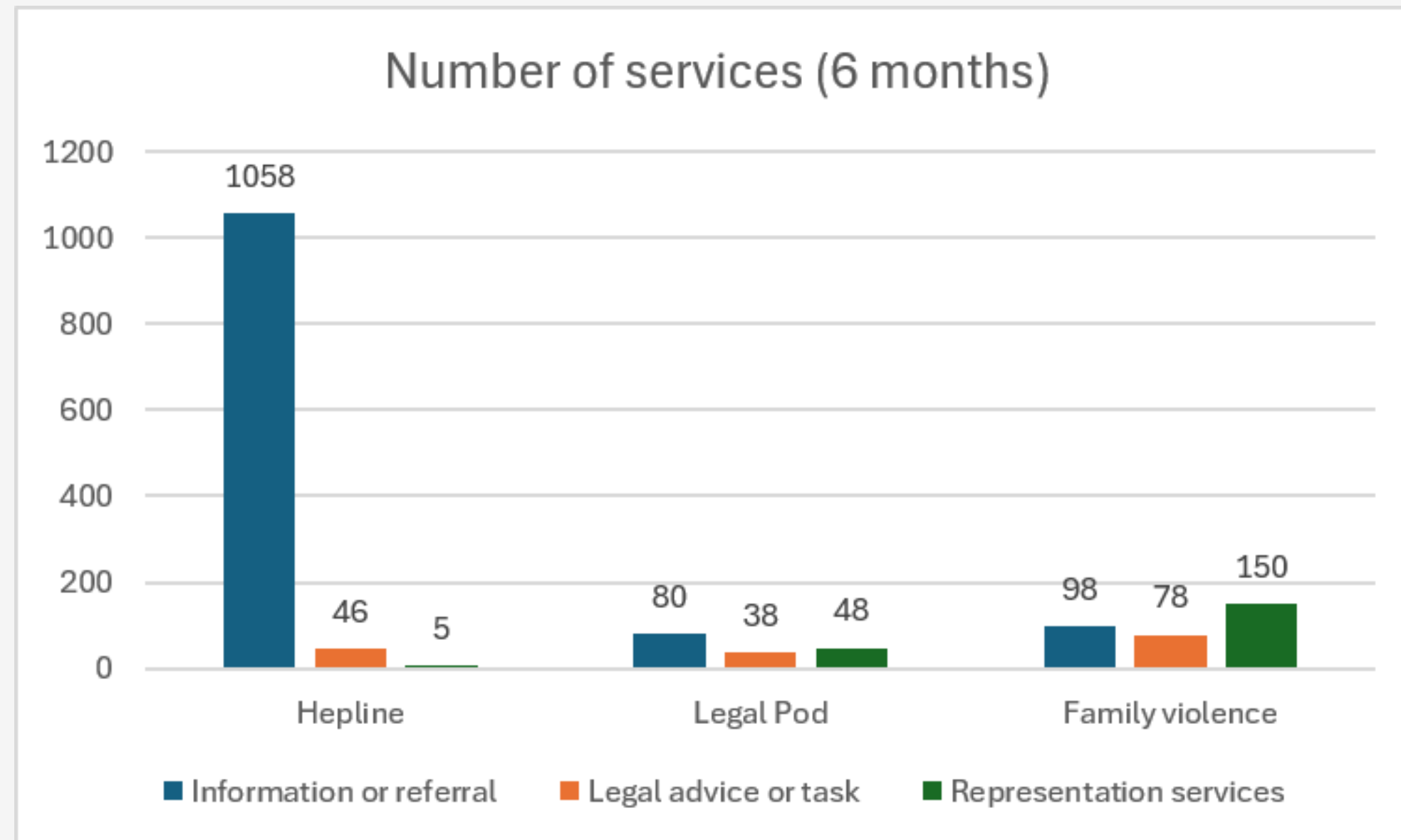
SELF
SERVICE



The numbers...

e.g. Legal Helpline (low dosage), FV program and Legal Pod for children exiting OOHC
(both high dosage)*

*data from July -December 2025. All funded by 2026 -26 by Public Purpose Fund



Low dosage

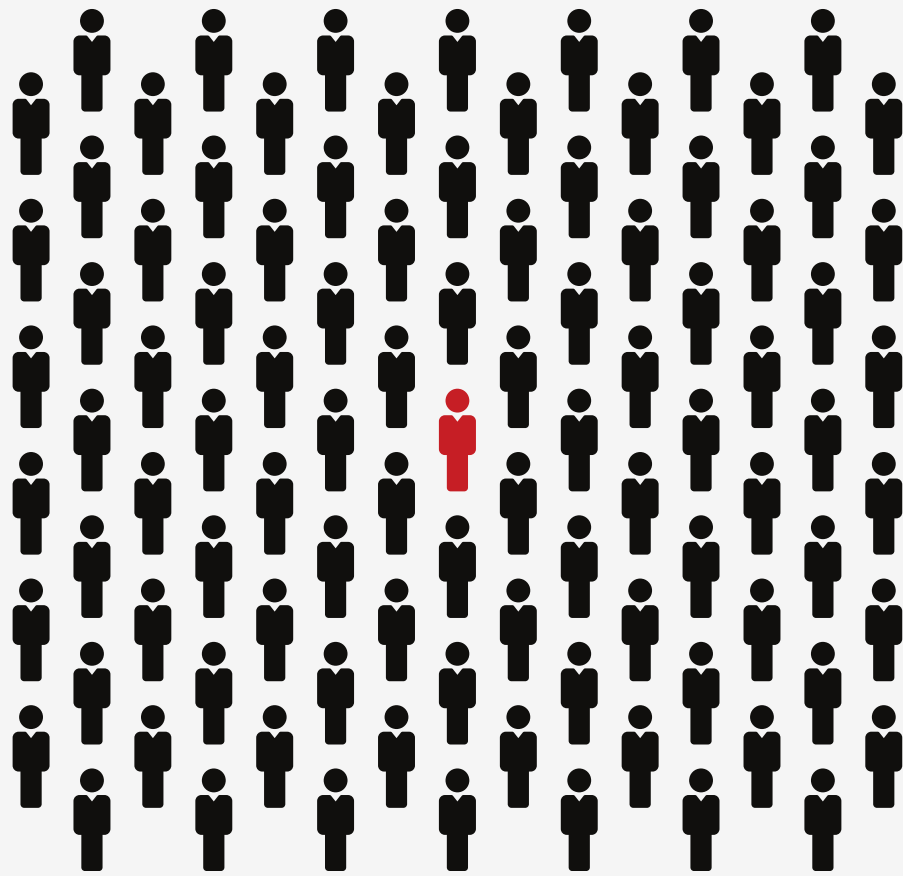
- more info and referral
- small number of advices

High dosage

- more advice
- more representation

Service reach and impact (high dosage)

It's pretty narrow



Looking at location of our offices and location of need - we help most people where we have offices, do outreach and form partnerships - Melbourne and Ballarat

We meet a small piece of the potential need



6,000 children exit out of home care every year, 450 exit into independence. We help about 100 young people who've exited OOHC every year.

Service reach and impact (low dosage)



We don't know where the majority of young people are calling from (if they only get info or referral we often don't ask) or what difference our help makes

Next steps...

How do we prioritise?

Evidence -based strategic planning

- Impact of services —legal and client outcomes (e.g. number of convictions avoided)
- What partners and young people tell us they want

And...

- Existing funding mix and funding opportunities
- Existing staff expertise
- Scope for systemic advocacy



Where we're at...

Breadth and depth

Next steps for low - dosage

Evaluate, innovate, find the \$

- **Evaluate** low - dosage services
 - where are people accessing us from?
 - what difference does a low-dosage service make?
- **Innovate** - find new ways to provide breadth services - e.g. chatbots, AI, school curriculum
- **Find the \$\$\$...**



**Keep asking what
works!**

Katie Fraser

katie@youthlaw.asn.au