

Research Network

How much legal is enough?

Exploring the dosage question



An event by
Victoria Law
Foundation



iintouch

Multicultural Centre
Against Family Violence

WOMEN'S LEGAL CENTRE

MULTI- CULTURAL CENTRE AGAINST FAMILY VIOLENCE

iintouch

Multicultural Centre
Against Family Violence

WOMEN'S LEGAL CENTRE

Presented by:

Ajsela Siskovic

Principal Lawyer

Legal Pathways to Recovery

Strengthening access to justice for migrant and
refugee women

Intouch delivered Legal information webinars that
were designed to be culturally inclusive and trauma
informed.

Findings of the Final Evaluation

- **64 webinars on 6 Topics:** Parenting, Property, Divorce, Immigration - Family Violence Provisions, Intervention Orders, Financial Assistance Scheme
- Demonstrated high demand for free, in-language legal education tailored to migrant and refugee women experiencing family violence and it addressed a key gap in the service system

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Findings of the Final Evaluation

The project achieved its intended short-term outcomes and these outcomes were significant to women survivors and the staff who support them.

The final evaluation showed significant increases in participants' self-reported knowledge of legal topics and their confidence or capability to make decisions about those topics.

Key outcomes summary

- statistically significant increases in knowledge of key legal topics
- increased confidence of participants to take the next step
 - increased engagement with the service
- increased trust in the service and legal processes
 - some increases in ability to self-help
- some observed increases in efficiency of legal advice clinics

Feedback - Knowledge and Peace of mind

“[I] don't know anything about Australia's laws. The information gave me peace. I felt blind. [The webinar] gave me a lot of peace of mind.” - Client

“[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.” - Staff member

Feedback - Empowerment and Action

“With all this information I realised my ex-husband was manipulating me”

“Ideas and information about my options... allows me to be prepared if I need to escape urgently”

“It meant that I could do the [divorce application] process myself afterwards, which saved me so much money.”

“Because of these sessions I learned the procedure myself...They help me to learn the basics [which was] very important. I went through mediation and got positive result.”

Feedback - Staff Benefit in an Integrated Setting

- Greater collaboration and information sharing across teams
- Strengthened practice for some case managers and intake workers

“Often, clients trust 100% their partner. There are certain cultures where women navigate the world through their partner. So when they separate, they trust what their partner says. [The partner] 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 information but we can [correct misinformation].” - Staff Member

Critical success factors

- **Safe**

"I feel safe because nobody can see me or meet me. I didn't want to see anyone."

- **Trusted**

"it was so valuable, especially as it was from an experienced lawyer."

- **In real time**

"I understood it very clearly. I had no idea about the topics. I was clueless. I asked questions and understood even better."

Key Takeaways

The right legal education can increase survivors' sense of agency, safety, emotional or financial wellbeing, and provide more timely access to the law.

The project delivered significant, positive outcomes for participants - and unexpected benefits for staff.



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Creating conditions for confidence

New research from Justice
Connect

Melanie Saunders



Justice Connect achieves impact at scale through digital channels



Evaluating resource effectiveness and testing new interventions

64 survey
and simulation
participants

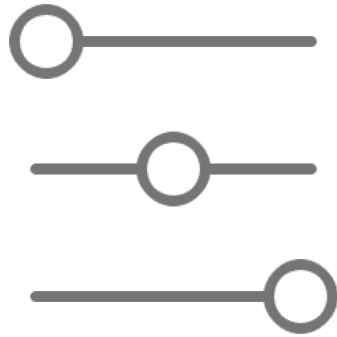
9 interviews

51 proto-
type testers

135 surveys
with resource
providers

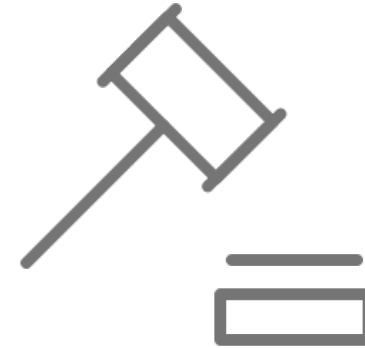
1. Do resources work to address unmet need?
2. What makes them effective?
3. How can we measure impact?
4. How do we improve resource effectiveness in a funding constrained environment?

Useability metrics, longitudinal surveys and attribution of outcomes



Useability metrics

- Resource is easy to read
- Resource is easy to navigate
- Resource is easy to understand



Outcomes achieved

- Satisfactory legal outcome reached
- Individual wellbeing improved
- Legal capability strengthened

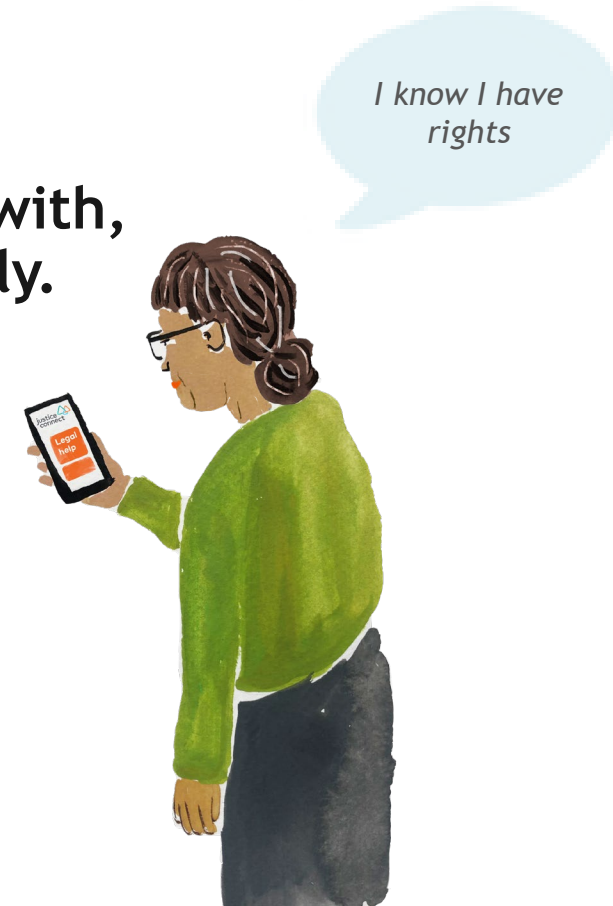
Comprehension

Confidence

Action-readiness

When legal information is easier to engage with, users are more likely to interpret it correctly.

Resources that score well according to usability metrics better support users to complete simulated legal problem-solving activities.



Comprehension

Confidence

Action-readiness

Confidence is key. Users need to feel capable to apply what they've learned.

Even when users demonstrated understanding, low confidence prevented them from achieving real or simulated outcomes. Comprehension must be paired with confidence.



I think I can enforce them

Comprehension

Confidence

Action-readiness

**Action-readiness doesn't happen by accident.
We must intentionally design for it.**

The biggest factor influencing if users are ready to act is the resource itself, not a users' life experiences. **This makes confidence an essential design objective.**



The resource empowered me to take control

So what?



Measurement

- Confidence can be measured at point of use
- It provides an early indicator of future outcomes



Design

- Small changes significantly improve outcomes
- Confidence can be intentionally designed for



Impact

- Low-dosage interventions build capability and address legal need

Published soon...

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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

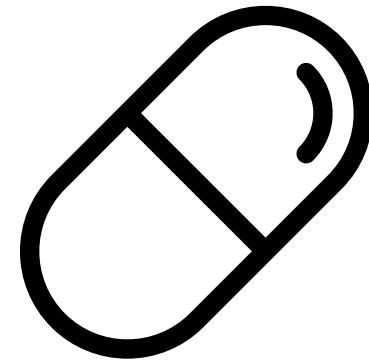
Legal information and advice

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

3

Community Legal Education

*Policy and advocacy coming soon!

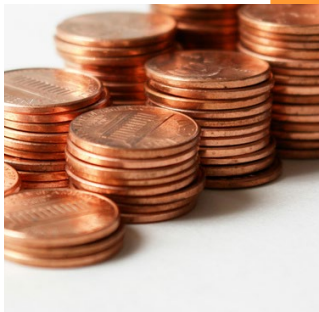


Resourcing is relative...

Intensive, holistic & integrated services

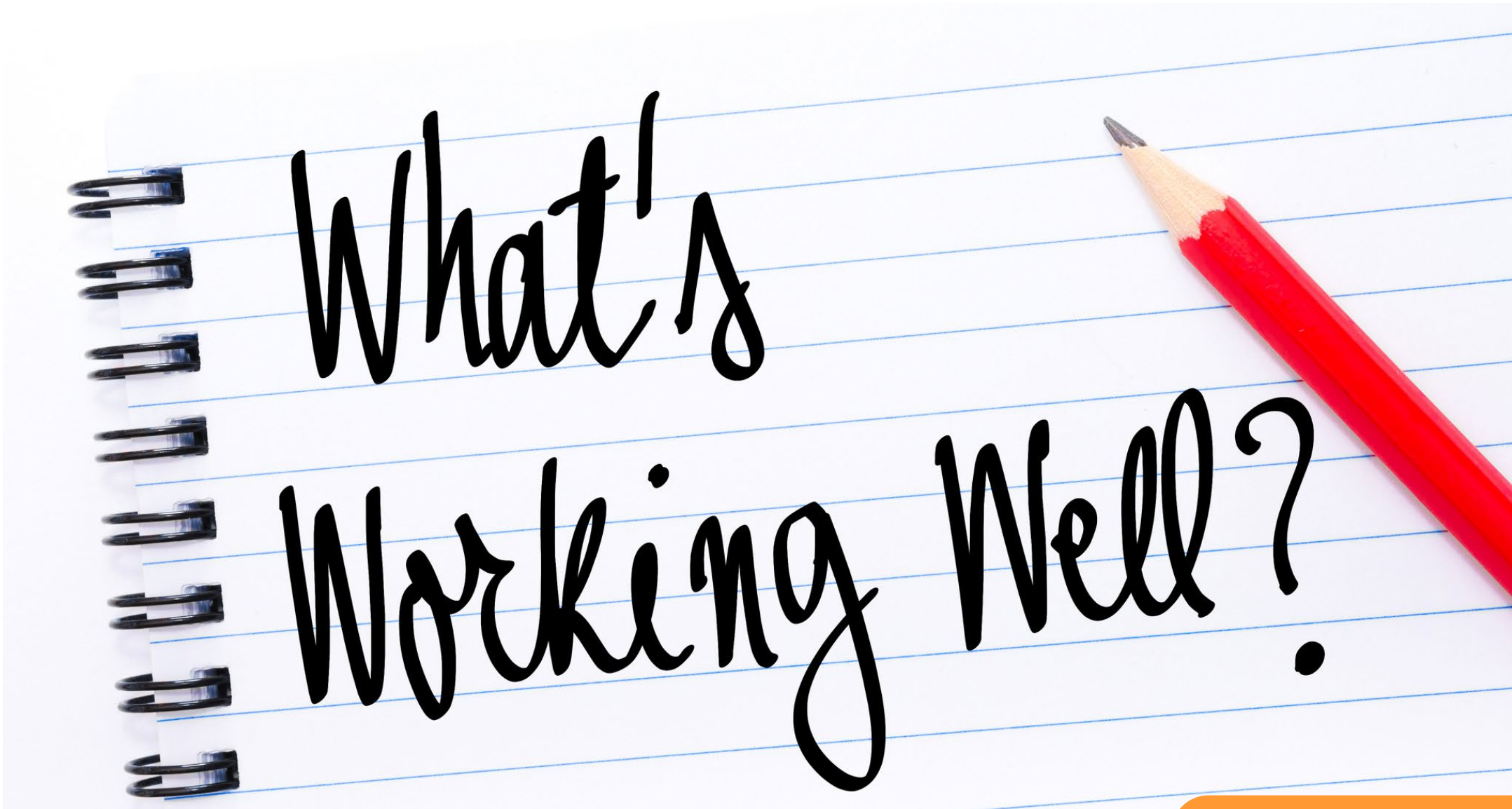


Low dosage services-legal information, advice and referral



How we make it work...

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



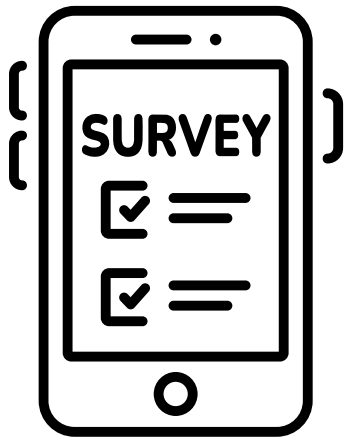
What's

Working Well?

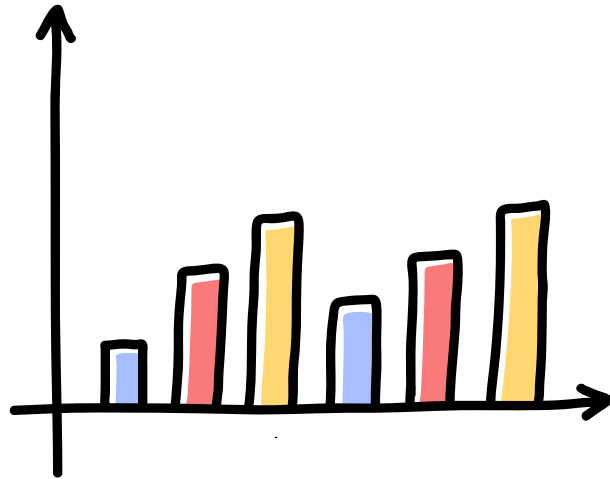
And how do we know...?

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*

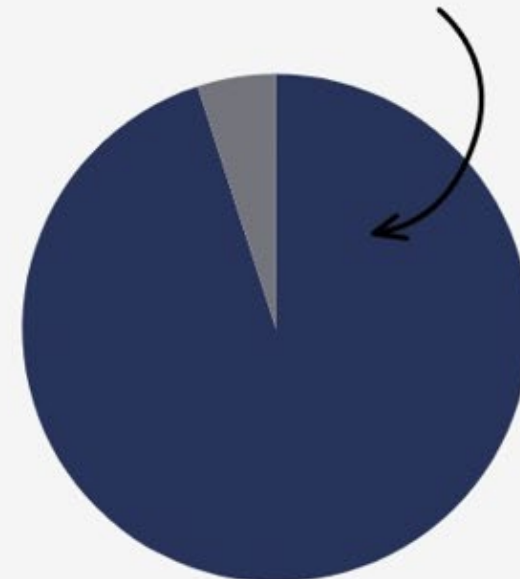
*funded by VLSB+C 2025-27

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.

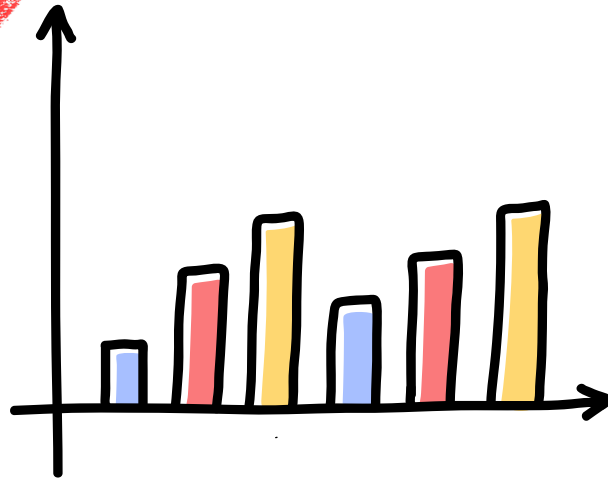
”

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



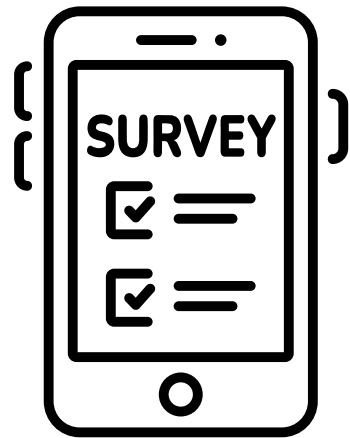
Did our work contribute to
good legal outcomes?

Legal and client outcomes (low dosage services)

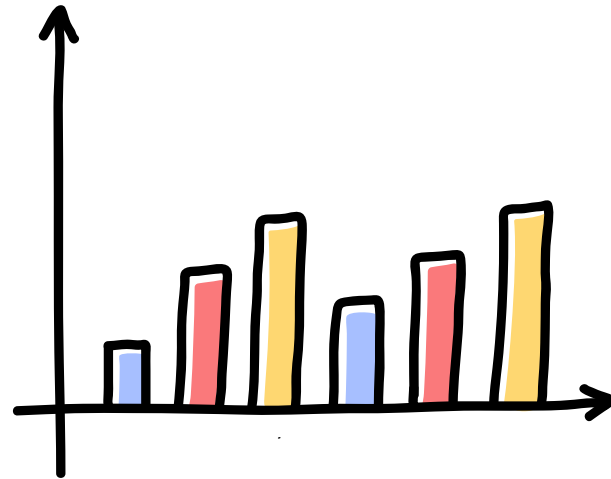


Our service reach--low and high dosage

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...

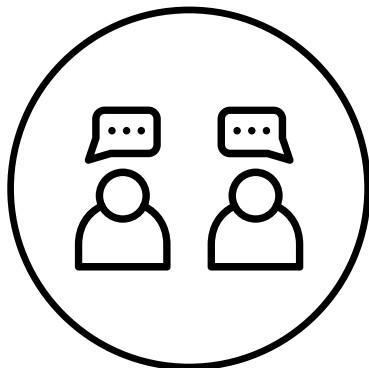
107 responses!

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



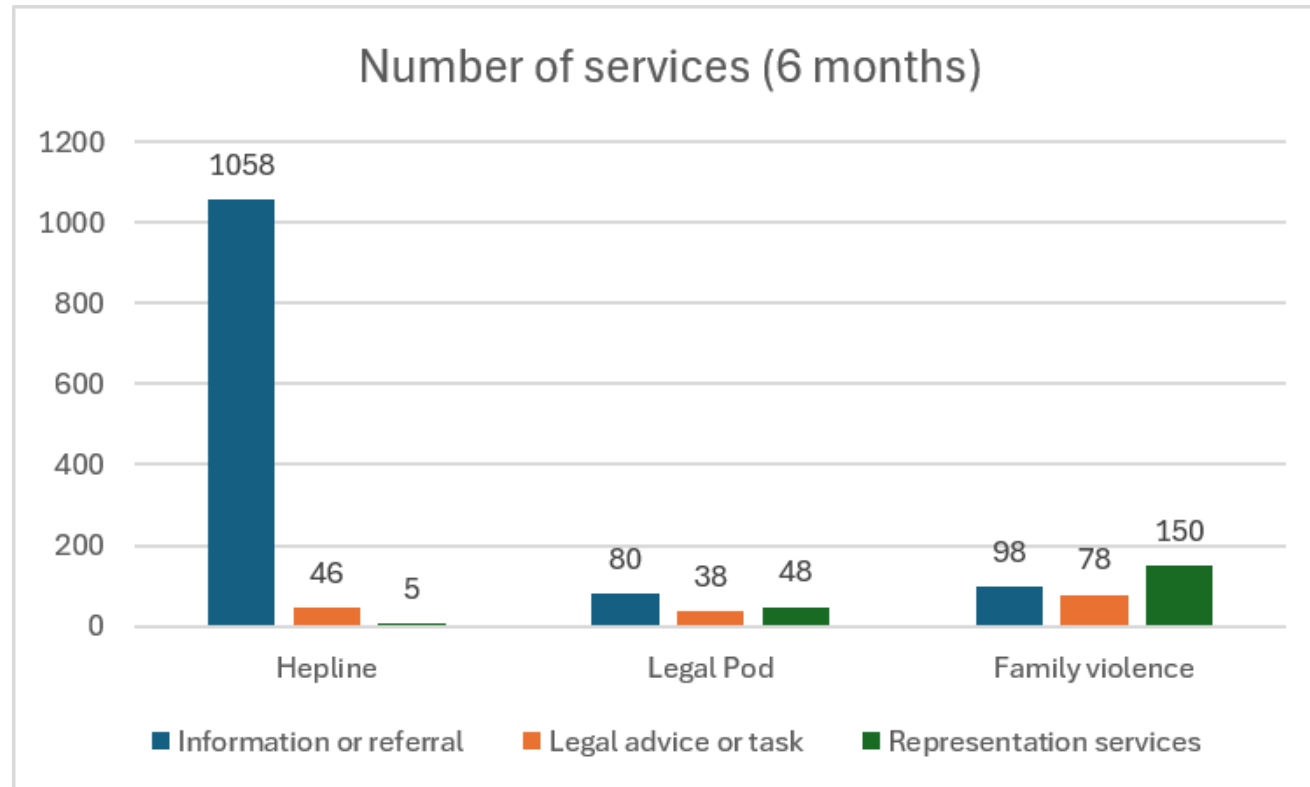
Self service



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

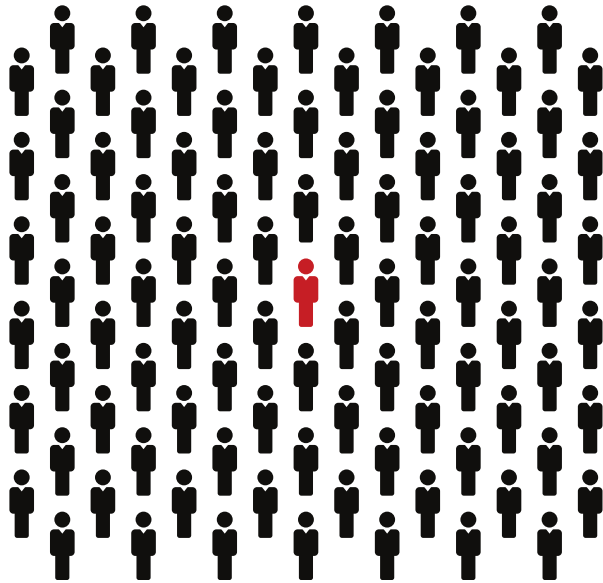
- more info and referral
- small number of advices

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 OOHHC 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

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Victoria **Law** Foundation

Supporting better justice through
research, education and grants

