

Background Brief

After success in digital initiatives in our Not-for-profit Law Service, in 2016 Justice Connect decided to [increase its focus on digital strategies to scale its services](#), accessibility and impact.

In late 2016, Justice Connect was awarded \$250,000 in seed funding by google.org towards a program of work known as the Gateway Project.

[The Gateway Project](#) will see Justice Connect develop a suite of products, each targeted at addressing particular issues identified in six months of extensive user research and design.

These products are:

- The **online intake tool**, launching today, helps people quickly and easily understand whether they are eligible for Justice Connect services and make a full application online. It provides real-time feedback, and referrals to other services and information where Justice Connect cannot assist.
- The **referral tool** will allow others in the sector to easily warm-refer clients deep into Justice Connect's system, reducing referral drop-out. This is currently under development and will be released in early 2019.
- The **pro bono portal** will revolutionise how Justice Connect works with its network of 10,000 pro bono lawyers, making the most of their capacity and matching them with the right clients. This portal is already designed and is now under development. 14 firms have signed on as pilot partners, and the tool will ultimately be rolled out to all lawyers in Justice Connect's network in 2019.

The project will also involve [working with other legal assistance sector agencies](#) on system-level change and integrations to improve the experience of people looking for legal help.

The importance of user-centred design

All the Gateway Project products have been co-designed with the people who will ultimately use them. This common sense approach takes time and commitment.

19 CO-DESIGN WORKSHOPS
231 LAWYERS SURVEYED
22 COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES PARTICIPATED
34 HELP SEEKERS IN PRODUCT REFINEMENT TESTING

For more insight into Justice Connect's approach, watch this [short video highlights the co-design process](#).



Beyond solving problems for people across Australia, Justice Connect's research (and deep involvement in international pro bono forums) demonstrates that its products could have real benefits and impact in other countries, too.

What is the impact of the Gateway Project?

The Gateway Project is important for a range of reasons, including:

- Making Justice Connect's service more accessible to people - providing avenues to really understand what we do and apply for assistance at any time day or night.
- Saving staff and clients time. This means clients get to the right legal help quicker, and staff can help more people. This can help address some of the 4.5 million Australians with unmet legal needs.
- Building integrations and clear entry points between Justice Connect and other organisations for easier sector collaboration - joining up justice
- Unlocking latent pro bono capacity - Justice Connect has 10,000 pro bono lawyers in its network, and the Gateway will help better track their interests and capacity. Research shows that lawyers want to do more, and we need to get smarter about matching unmet legal need with available capacity and expertise
- Better data capture and tracking, to better address unmet legal need. Improved data will also help Justice Connect advocate for improved funding and for system and legal changes where we identify systemic problems (for an example of this work, [see our Just Life Report](#))

About Justice Connect

Justice Connect builds a fairer and better society by using the law to help people and community groups left behind by an unfair and complicated legal system.

Whether it's a single mother facing homelessness, a local community group or an older person dealing with family violence, real-life problems so often have legal solutions.

That's why Justice Connect links people with legal help. Justice Connect uses the power of the law to open up the legal system for those locked out of it, and to change the system where it is broken.

For over 25 years, Justice Connect has worked towards bridging the Justice Gap, which in that time has disappointingly widened. It runs legal programs with staff lawyers, as well as working alongside 10,000 pro bono lawyers to provide access to high quality legal assistance where there are no other options.

Justice Connect is a registered charity and public benevolent institution.

Key Project facts:

- Tool available at justiceconnect.org.au/help
- Key project funders and supporters are Google.org, Perpetual Ltd, The Myer Foundation, The Victorian Department of Justice and Regulation, DLA Piper, Hive Legal
- [See the full list of Justice Connect's member firms](#)
- Over 40 clients were involved in the design of the tool, as well as hundreds of lawyers, 22 community legal centres, and sector colleagues such as social workers and court workers

Read more:

- Legal help Gateway Project page
Justice Connect: www.justiceconnect.org.au