

JUSTICE CONNECT

Impact Report

26 November 2021

Prepared
for:



Prepared by:

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EVALUATION FOR IMPACT

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List of shortened forms

AVO	Apprehended Violence Order
CLCs	Community legal centres
CLE	Community Legal Education
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)
DBLS	Domestic Building Legal Service
DGR	Deductible gift recipient
FY	Financial year
HLP	Homeless Law in Practice
HPLOs	Homeless Persons Liaison Officers
JC	Justice Connect
LIV	Law Institute of Victoria
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning
POA	Power of Attorney
SVHNS	St Vincent's Health Network Sydney
ToC	Theory of change
WHPPLO	Women's Homelessness Prevention Program Liaison Officer

1. Context and approach for impact

In the face of rising levels of unmet legal need, Justice Connect designs and delivers high impact interventions to increase access to legal support and progress social justice.

Through its multi-channel and multi-intensity legal services and network of over 10,000 pro bono lawyers, Justice Connect works across a range of areas of law and at all stages of legal issues, from providing legal support to communities affected by natural disasters, to helping employees and not-for-profit organisations navigate complex regulatory requirements.

Being nimble and responding to the needs of communities is a priority, so Justice Connect employs inclusive design approaches to help develop legal interventions alongside the people who are most impacted. They recognise the importance of a holistic, client-centred approach and co-locating its services across Victoria and New South Wales to help reach more people. It also democratises access to legal information by developing plain language resources and digital self-help tools that empower people to self-advocate and find solutions.

Consistent with its commitment to closing the justice gap, Justice Connect collaborate with like-minded organisations to share its innovative technology to support the growth of pro bono and access to justice both in Australia and around the world. Justice Connect use digital strategies so its lawyers and social workers can spend their time doing the work that adds the most value: assisting communities that are disproportionately impacted by the law.

Justice Connect doesn't just stop at helping people and community organisations navigate the legal system, it also works to improve it. With passionate and creative staff, a deep expertise in the law and an evidence-informed mindset, it leverages casework insights and data to advocate for policy change and systems level reform.

To build a stronger legal ecosystem that is fair and accessible for all, Justice Connect shares its knowledge and experience in service design and innovation. The organisation stays accountable by rigorously monitoring and evaluating the tangible impacts of its services and being responsive to those learnings to achieve its theory of change.

With new and complex problems emerging, an increasing number of people are being pushed to crisis point, putting deep strain on their wellbeing, relationships, employment, housing security and finances. In particular, the sustained impact of COVID-19 and climate-related disasters has exposed the growing justice gap for many people and not-for-profit organisations. The launch of Justice Connect's 2024 strategy addresses this widening gap. It provides the organisation with a framework that will transform it from its current state to effectively responding to rising legal need into the future.

1. Extending the reach and impact of its services through digital strategies
2. Amplifying and extending the impact of its work through strategic engagement to help drive systems-level change
3. Achieving its purpose in the most effective and financially sustainable way

1.1. Evolving measurement, evaluation and learning framework

Alongside its 2024 Strategy, Justice Connect also [publicly released its organisational Theory of Change](#), which outlines a shared program logic across its services and programs. The design, delivery, evaluation and research required to deliver effective and high impact responses falls into five broad categories of activity across the organisation (referred to as **“What Justice Connect Does”**):

- Develop and deliver education and self-help resources
- Community outreach
- Complementary services (e.g. social work)
- Legal services design and delivery
- Strategic engagement

In late 2020, Justice Connect switched to a new client management system and data analysis tools. These have been influential in improving the way Justice Connect monitors and compares service data consistently across the organisation, along with enabling better identification of trends, better planning, and improved adaption of services in response to legal need.

Justice Connect’s Theory of Change also outlines eleven priority outcomes, focussed on both individual help-seekers and the legal services ecosystem (referred to as the **“Changes Justice Connect See”**):

- Help-Seeker Focussed Outcomes:
 - Better identification of legal problems by help-seekers
 - Increased capacity of help-seekers to self-help
 - Increased access to appropriate and timely legal support for help-seekers
 - Legal problems prevented and resolved
 - More people understand the law, and legal system
- Legal Services Ecosystem Outcomes:
 - Better understanding of users’ experience of legal services ecosystem
 - Better user experience of the legal services ecosystem
 - Increased understanding by decision makers of the legal issues affecting people and community organisations
 - More decision makers prioritise implementing the best solution to legal system problems
 - Increased community awareness about the impact of legal and associated social problems
 - Increased community buy-in and desire to fix legal and associated social problems

Finally, these outcomes culminate in four impact focus areas for Justice Connect (referred to as **“Our Impact”**):

- Stronger & more effective community organisations
- Improved individual wellbeing
- Better responses to legal need
- Better laws & policies

In December 2020, Justice Connect brought on a Measurement, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Lead to help develop a framework for evaluating work against the new Theory of Change and help transition teams to the new programming logic.

This year’s impact report once again reflects this evolving context, with renewed framing aligned with Justice Connect’s Theory of Change, and a focus on measures which more accurately represent the value of its services. Unstandardised outcomes data has been supplied by each program and, as such, is difficult

to compare across the organisation. This is something Justice Connect is prioritising and excited to progress in the coming year.

2. Community outreach

This year Justice Connect has continued to invest heavily in community outreach through its Digital Consumer Outreach Program. The Digital Consumer Outreach Program drives access to Justice Connect’s tools, services, and information. It achieves this by planning far-reaching marketing strategies and tactics to increase engagement with the full range of offerings from Justice Connect. Using a multi-channel approach that includes paid marketing and organic social media, Justice Connect tests tailored messaging targeting individual help-seekers, staff at not-for-profit organisations, frontline services, and local government agencies. This investment is reflected in significant growth across a range of measures.

In FY21 there was substantial growth in the use of Justice Connect websites and a small increase in use of the Not-for-profit Law website, as shown across a range of measures (see Table 1 for further detail):

- Justice Connect websites¹
 - 716,740 unique page views; a 110.3% (375,943) increase on 340,797 in FY20
 - 434,580 unique users; a 161.2% (268,238) increase on 166,342 in FY20 (see Figure 1)
 - 539,016 sessions; a 148.5% (322,074) increase on 216,942 sessions in FY20
 - 57.2% of traffic was from users finding Justice Connect through organic search (308,432 sessions) compared to 63% (136,660 sessions) in FY19.
- Not-for-profit Law website²
 - 433,140 unique page views; a 1.4% (5,932) increase on 427,208 views in FY20
 - 169,413 unique users; a 0.2% (305) decrease on 169,718 in FY20 (see Figure 2)
 - 253,321 sessions; a 4.3% (9,536) increase on 242,785 sessions in FY20
 - 49.5% (125,469 sessions) of traffic was from users finding the Not-for-profit Law website through organic search compared to 57.3% (139,066 sessions) in FY19.

¹ The FY20 figures reported here are different from the figures reported in the FY20 Impact Report, due to a change during FY21 in the way these metrics are calculated.

² The FY20 figures reported here are different from the figures reported in the FY20 Impact Report, due to a change during FY21 in the way these metrics are calculated.



Figure 1: Number of users on Justice Connect’s website per month, FY21, disaggregated by self-help resources and all other pages



Figure 2: Number of users on Not-for-profit Law’s website per month, FY21, disaggregated by self-help resources and all other pages

Table 1: Performance of Justice Connect websites, FY20 and FY21

WEBSITE	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TOTAL	
		FY20	FY21
Justice Connect websites ³	Page views	378,890	1,127,184
	Unique page views	340,797	716,470
	Unique users	166,342	434,580
	Sessions	216,942	539,016
Not-for-profit Law website	Page views	563,922	1,016,290
	Unique page views	427,208	433,140
	Unique users	169,718	169,413
	Sessions	242,785	253,321

This year saw enormous growth in Justice Connect’s social media and digital marketing activity:

- 10,217,508 impressions⁴ overall⁵, a 1,183.3% increase on 796,186 in FY20.
- 251,257 engagements⁶ overall⁷, a 598.2% increase on 35,987 in FY20.
- The engagement rate by impressions declined from 4.5% in FY20 to 2.5%.⁸
This is to be expected when digital engagement activities start to reach a larger group of people who may not be familiar with Justice Connect.
- Justice Connect’s search engine marketing campaigns returned 4,014,224 impressions and 92,956 engagements.
 - This was a substantial increase on FY20; a 10,700% increase on 37,170 impressions and a 4,497% increase on 2,022 engagements.
 - This was the second year the organisation ran full Google Ad campaigns, the first time using YouTube video advertising, and the first time using Bing ads.
 - Justice Connect also made much more deliberate and intensive use of the Google Ad Grant available to not-for-profit organisations, meaning this form of free search advertising accounted for 13% of all impressions from search engine marketing campaigns, and 71% of all engagements.
- Justice Connect achieved a 248% increase in organic social media impressions, despite an increasingly competitive organic social media ecosystem that deprioritises organic posts in favour of paid ads. This was in part due to expansion into new social media platforms like NextDoor.⁹

See Table 2 for further detail.

³ This includes all Justice Connect websites and tools, except for Not-for-profit Law: justiceconnect.org.au, help.justiceconnect.org.au, apps.justiceconnect.org.au, answers.justiceconnect.org.au, hlip.justiceconnect.org.au, joiningupjustice.org.au

⁴ Social media impressions are the number of times social media content is shown to users.

⁵ Includes paid and organic posts across Facebook, Instagram, Facebook’s audience networks, Twitter, LinkedIn, NextDoor, Google and Bing.

⁶ Social media engagement is the measure of user interactions with social media content (e.g. through likes, shares and comments).

⁷ Includes paid and organic posts across Facebook, Instagram, Facebook’s audience networks, Twitter, LinkedIn, NextDoor, Google and Bing.

⁸ This is calculated by dividing Justice Connect’s engagement rate by the number of impressions and multiplying it by 100.

⁹ NextDoor is a hyperlocal neighbourhood-based social media channel popular amongst an older demographic.

Table 2: Consumer outreach impressions and engagement, FY20 and FY21

CONSUMER OUTREACH		IMPRESSIONS		ENGAGEMENT	
		FY20	FY21	FY20	FY21
Paid social media	Facebook, Instagram, Audience Network	273,528	4,514,987	17,072	125,602
Organic social media	All	485,488	1,688,297	16,893	32,699
	- Facebook	98,884	178,420	5,280	7,283
	- Instagram	14,256	36,434	1,637	1,330
	- Twitter (all)	270,557	879,980	5,552	13,825
	- LinkedIn	101,791	249,782	4,424	9,070
	- NextDoor	0	343,681	0	1,191
Search engine ads	All	37,170	4,014,224	2,022	92,956
	- Google Ads	37,170	3,965,178	2,022	92,294
	- Bing Ads	0	49,046	0	662
	TOTAL	796,186	10,217,508	35,987	251,257

Targeted outreach has been a key part of Justice Connect’s strategy to seek new kinds of help-seekers at the point they are trying to resolve their problem or on the digital ecosystems they already frequent. Justice Connect has taken an iterative approach to messaging, campaign development, and implementation to ensure that its resources are being used to its full effect. To guide decision making, Justice Connect use a suite of custom-built digital dashboards that report on key analytics metrics and trends in user behaviour, so that they can adapt their strategies in real time based on what the data is telling them.

3. Enquiries and intake

3.1. Online enquiries

Justice Connect’s online tools enable the organisation to respond to high volumes of initial enquiries without needing staff or help-seekers to spend time on the phone as required by traditional telephone processes. Help-seekers can check their eligibility for help using the Online Intake Tool, or if unsure which program might assist, the Program Sorter Tool. Online enquiries can also be made through Justice Connect’s Referrer Tool. (See box below for more detail.) These tools can be accessed at any time, by anyone with an internet connection, providing help-seekers a quick indication of whether Justice Connect can assist.

During FY21:

- 16,877 entries¹⁰ were made through Justice Connect’s three online enquiry and intake tools; 59.9% fewer than 42,118 in FY20
 - 4,915 enquiries were made via the Program Sorter Tool; an 81.0% decrease on 25,926 in FY20 (see Figure 3)
 - 13,190 entries were made with the Online Intake Tool; a 14.8% decrease on 15,485 in FY20 (see Figure 4)
 - 1,844 entries were made via the Referrer Tool; a 160.8% increase on the 707 entries made during FY20 when it started operating (see Figure 5)
- A higher proportion of online enquiries proceeded to intake¹¹ than in FY20 – approximately 1 in 5, compared with approximately 1 in 20 (5.6%) in FY21. 20.8% cf. 5.6%
 - 20.8% (3,509) online entries proceeded to intake; 50.1% more than 2,338 in FY20
 - 79.2% (13,368) online entries were screened ineligible via the online enquiry and intake process (or dropped out during)

The decrease in total entries, and in particular entries via the Program Sorter Tool, is the result of ongoing work to clarify eligibility requirements for help-seekers, continued testing of the online tools and improvements to filters for spam. At the same time, investment in referral pathways and stakeholder work contributed to increase use of the Referrer Tool. Together these investments lead to more relevant enquiries being made to Justice Connect overall.

Justice Connect’s online enquiry and intake tools

The **Program Sorter Tool** asks a series of questions to identify if a Justice Connect service may be able to assist. This interaction is the equivalent to making an initial enquiry by phone, before proceeding to intake. The Program Sorter Tool is designed to provide quick and easy feedback on eligibility across Justice Connect’s programs and help prevent clearly ineligible help-seekers from over-investing in the application and intake process.

Help-seekers also have the option of making more detailed applications for assistance through Justice Connect’s **Online Intake Tool**. This tool guides help-seekers through intake pathways that provide further screening and feedback, and depending on their answers to the screening questions, may direct them to lodge an application for assistance which is then reviewed by Justice Connect staff.

The online **Referrer Tool** enables frontline workers at community organisations and other CLCs to check whether a person they are assisting is likely to be eligible for a Justice Connect service, and if so, directly refer that person for assistance.

¹⁰ Number of total entries was estimated by adding the number of enquiries made via the Program Sorter Tool, the Intake Tool and the Referrer Tool and then subtracting the number who completed the Program Sorter Tool. This approach assumes that all those who completed the Program Sorter Tool went on to make one entry via the Online Intake Tool, though in practice some may drop off and others may be eligible for help from multiple programs.

¹¹ An online enquiry proceeds to Justice Connect’s full intake process (which involves one-to-one contact with Justice Connect staff; see section 3.2) if screened through the online tools as possibly eligible and a full application then submitted.

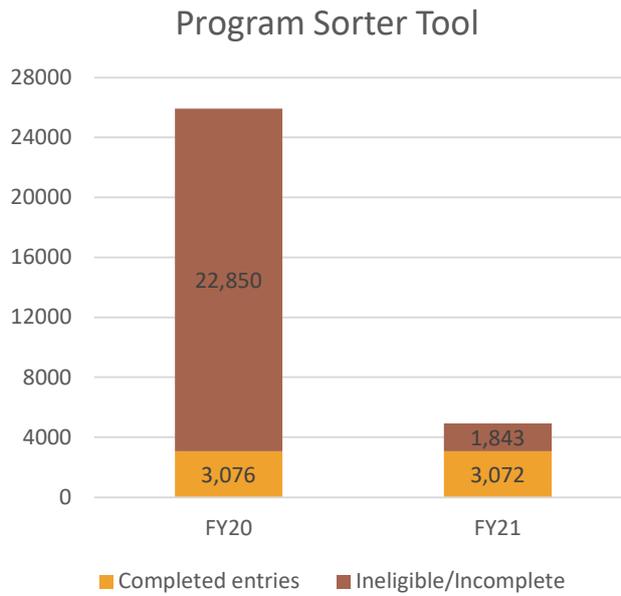


Figure 3: Number of enquiries via Program Sorter Tool in FY20 and FY21, by result

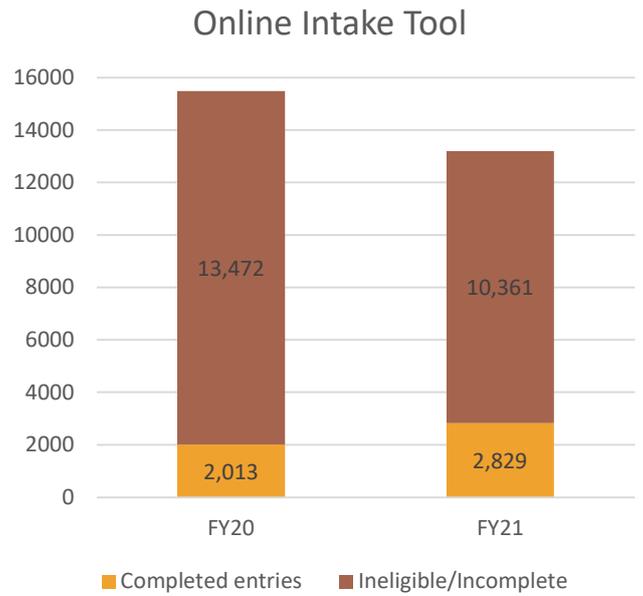


Figure 4: Number of enquiries via Online Intake Tool in FY20 and FY21, by result

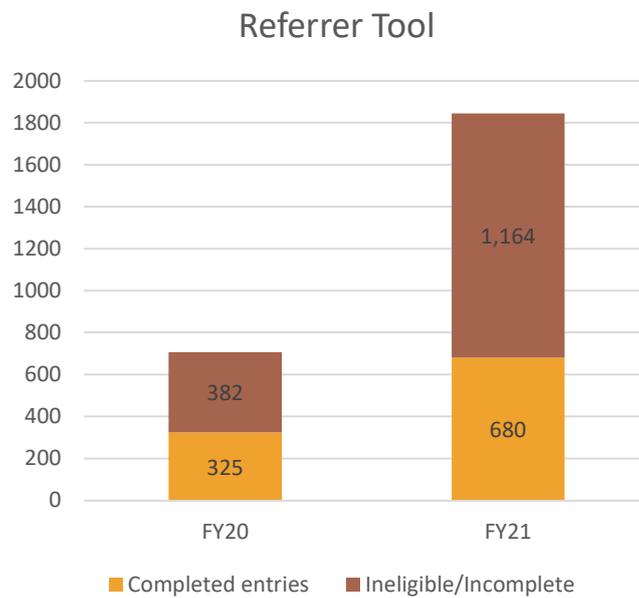


Figure 5: Number of enquiries via Referrer Tool in FY20 and FY21, by result

Common reasons for screening out¹² included: area of law not an area where Justice Connect provides services, income too high and dispute resolution options available have not been explored yet. This is consistent with the design intention of the online tools, which is to help people understand their eligibility quickly and easily online without needing to have a longer engagement with Justice Connect.

Help-seekers who were screened out online received suggestions for other services that may be able to assist them based on the information inputted.

3.2. Intake

The intake process involves Justice Connect staff engaging with help-seekers one-to-one to gather detailed information and review this information to determine eligibility for assistance. Help-seekers may arrive at this point through online intake tools (see section 3.1) via phone, in-person, or email. The different ways in which help is then provided are described in sections 5 and 6.

In FY21, Justice Connect received a total of 8,153 enquiries that proceeded to intake; 11.3% (1,041) fewer than FY20 when intake was 9,194. This fall in intake numbers is due to a reduction in enquiries coming via phone, email and in-person (see Figure 6)¹³.

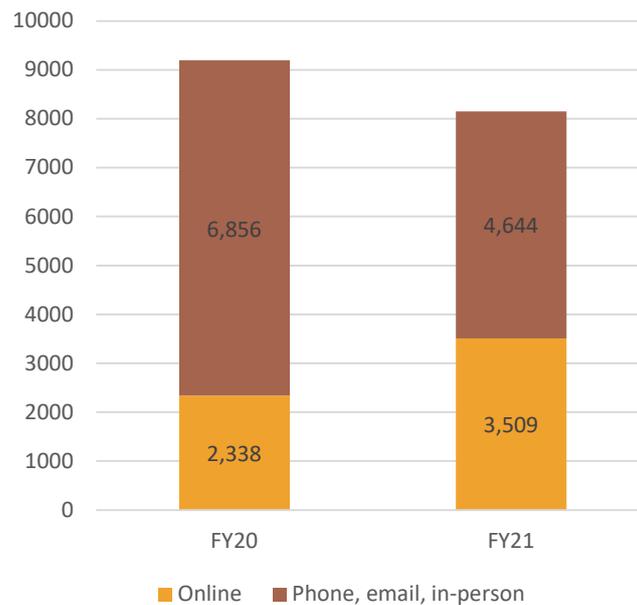


Figure 6: Number of enquiries that proceeded to intake in FY20 and FY21, by enquiry mode

¹² Most help-seekers drop off, rather than get specifically off-ramped, with the biggest drop off points generally at the first question, and then again at the assets test question.

¹³ No offline enquiry data was available for 1/7/20 - 16/11/20 (when a new CRM system was implemented), which explains an unknown proportion of the decrease.

4. Pro bono network

Justice Connect supports a strong and unique referral network of member law firms and barristers.

Justice Connect supports Australian law firms and barristers to help people and community organisations with their legal needs. Members of the profession assist by providing pro bono legal services in specialist legal clinics run by Justice Connect and/or by accepting pro bono referrals from Justice Connect programs. Pro bono referrals are made by Justice Connect staff directly, or via the Pro Bono Portal (see box below), and by community legal centres (CLCs) directly through the *CLCs on the Portal* pilot project (see section 6.2.3). Members can also provide one-off instances of legal advice via Justice Connect Answers, a platform designed like a legal clinic which allows eligible help-seekers to submit quick legal questions online.

In FY21:

- 877 pro bono referrals were placed
 - 714 with member firms, 146 with barristers and 17 with non-member firms¹⁴
 - 81.4% (714) of referrals were the result of matching through the Pro Bono Portal (see box below); an increase of 13.3% since FY20 when 68.1% of referrals were matched through the Portal
 - 12.3% fewer pro bono referrals were placed in FY21 than (1,000) in FY20; as a proportion of all assistance provided by Justice Connect however, pro bono referrals were comparable to last year - 11% cf. 12%¹⁵
- 51,599 hours of pro bono legal help¹⁶ were provided
 - Total pro bono hours grew 14% (6,350 hours) on FY20 when 45,249 hours were provided
 - 29,570 hours were provided via Homeless Law clinics; 57.3% of all pro bono hours
 - 22,029 hours were provided by pro bono partners who assisted through other programs and projects (including Justice Connect Answers, TAG legal diagnosis and other forms of traditional advice or case work); 42.7% of all pro bono hours
- Approximately \$20,639,400 worth of pro bono legal help was provided; a 14% (\$2,540,200) increase on \$18,099,200 in FY20
- Justice Connect trained 970 pro bono lawyers for clinic/appointment services
- 264 questions were answered by members through Justice Connect Answers¹⁷

The **Pro Bono Portal** aims to efficiently match help-seekers to available pro bono resources. It enables firms to maintain highly detailed profiles about the types of matters, areas of law and locations where they have pro bono resources available. Justice Connect staff create pro bono opportunities and tag these opportunities across a range of factors. The Portal can algorithmically suggest firms that are positioned to take on the matters. Staff choose between sending matters directly to firms via the Portal or placing opportunities on the Opportunities Board. Firms can then proactively search for matters on the Opportunity Board enabling them to make use of latent pro bono capacity. Firms also receive a curated alert of matters that have been posted that match their preferences.

¹⁴ Two non-member firms were allocated opportunities via Justice Connect's Pro Bono Portal, the remainder were facilitated offline or via non-Justice Connect tools.

¹⁵ The fall in enquiries and intake overall (see section 3) since FY20 has led to a fall in the number of pro bono referrals made.

¹⁶ Pro bono lawyers assist help-seekers in a range of ways at a range of intensities.

¹⁷ See section 5.3 for more information about Justice Connect Answers.

5. Legal services provided

In the face of rising unmet legal need, Justice Connect designs and delivers high-impact interventions that increase access to legal support and progress social justice.

5.1. Summary of main legal services provided

Justice Connect aims to get the right help to the right people at the right time. Different types of support are provided as needed, such that some people or organisations may receive more than one type of assistance. For example, a client might receive legal information, legal advice, social work support, access a self-help resource and be referred to a non-legal support service. Or prior to becoming a client, a person may have accessed Justice Connect’s self-help resources.

Figure 7 shows the number of times each of Justice Connect’s legal assistance services was delivered in FY21. Further details about each service type follow.

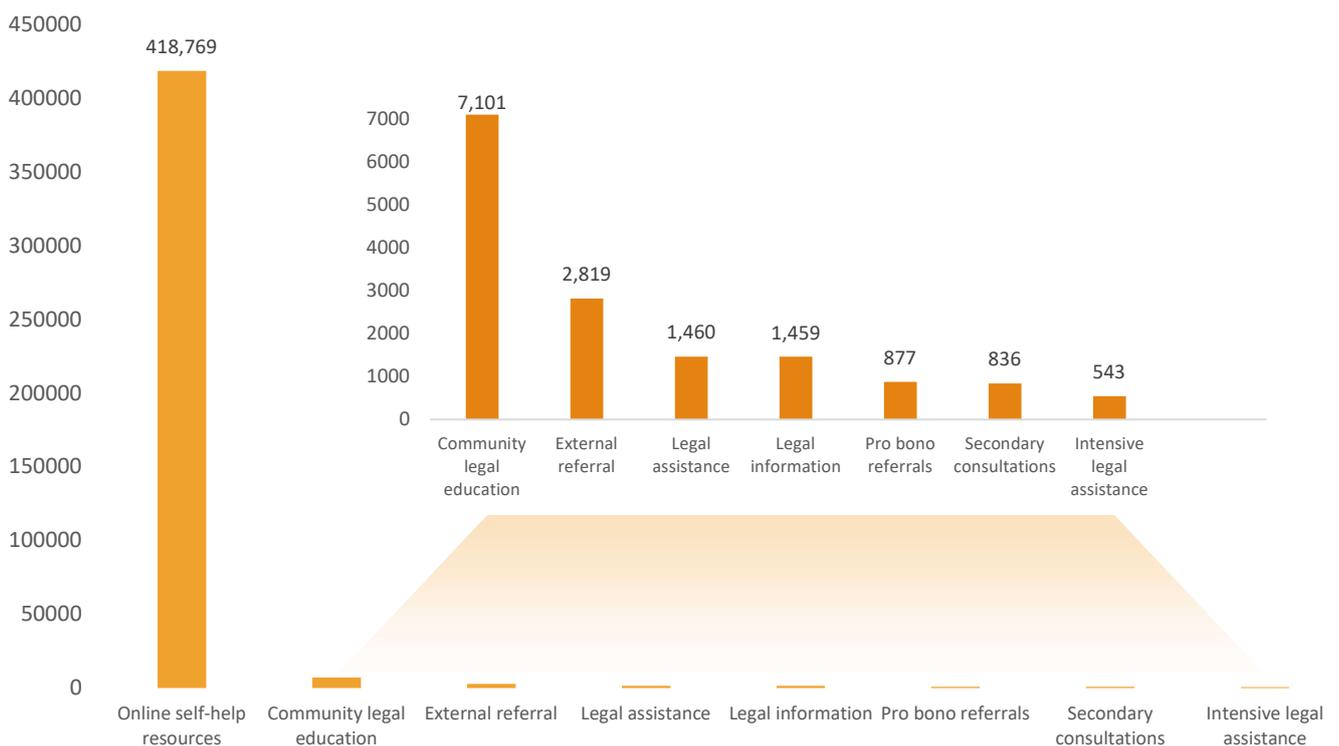


Figure 7: Number of instances of main legal assistance services delivered by Justice Connect in FY21

In FY21:

- 1,773 individuals and 1,146 community organisations were provided one-to-one legal help (i.e. one-to-one legal information, legal assistance, intensive legal assistance, pro bono referrals and external referrals)
 - 67 individuals assisted identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander; 3.8% of all individuals assisted¹⁸
 - 83 organisations identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled; 7.2% of community organisations assisted¹⁹
 - Available gender data showed 55% of clients identified as female and 45% identified as male. ²⁰ A small number of clients identified as gender diverse, transgender or preferred to self-describe, though these totalled less than 1%.²¹

5.2. Community legal education

Justice Connect provides legal education to individuals and representatives of community organisations to help them better understand the law and legal system. Armed with greater understanding, people can then better identify, prevent, and deal with legal problems.

Education is provided in a range of ways, including training in person and by webinar, and on a range of legal issues commonly faced by those who access Justice Connect's services.

With the COVID-19 pandemic continuing throughout FY21 and triggering changing restrictions and ongoing lockdowns across the country, online training continued to be of vital importance for Justice Connect, especially in response to emerging legal needs.

In FY21:

- Justice Connect trained 7,101 help-seekers, across 172 sessions
 - 19.6% (1,162) more help-seekers attended training than in FY20
 - Average attendance was 41 consumers per training session; average attendance in FY20 was also 41
- Training delivered by Not-for-profit Law accounted for most of the community legal education delivered by Justice Connect – 70.9% of sessions and 84.2% of overall attendees
 - Not-for-profit Law ran 122 sessions, attended by 5,979 people
 - Homeless Law ran 21 training sessions, attended by 728 people; this is an almost six-fold increase in help-seeker numbers compared to FY20²²
 - Seniors Law ran 25 sessions, attended by 295 people
 - Access Program ran 4 sessions, attended by 99 people

¹⁸ This is fewer than FY20 when 257 individuals assisted identified as ATSI, equivalent that year to 6% of all individuals assisted.

¹⁹ This is a 52.5% fall in the proportion of community organisations assisted that were ATSI controlled compared with FY20, when 8% (128) of community organisations identified as ATSI controlled.

²⁰ Gender data was not available for a significant proportion of clients (35%) as it is typically not prioritised for short interactions with Justice Connect unless relevant to the matter. For example, gender data was unstated for 77.9% of help-seekers who received legal information, versus 8% of help-seekers who received intensive legal assistance.

²¹ The number of non-binary and transgender help-seekers is likely underreported here, as assisting young transgender people in affirming their gender identity and accessing stage 2 hormone treatment is a priority area for Justice Connect.

²² To maintain embedded collaboration and referral pathways with community and health justice partners while physical co-locations and pro bono outreach clinics were on hold, Homeless Law increased its training program for frontline support workers using digital platforms, and continued to deliver information sessions remotely to potential help-seekers.

CLE feedback

Seniors Law collected feedback from 41 of the 124 participants in a subset of its CLE sessions for older people during FY21:

- All participants rated the sessions positively (48% “excellent”, 31% “very good” and 21% “good”)
- Most participants reported that after the session they knew more about:
 - Powers of Attorney - 88%
 - Enduring Guardians - 85%
 - Elder Abuse - 83%
 - The legal service available to them at the Health Justice Partner - 88%

5.3. Legal assistance

Justice Connect defines legal assistance as unbundled, one-off advices²³ and legal tasks²⁴. One-off advice is delivered to help-seekers by phone, appointment, clinic appointment or in person at court and is provided directly by or under the banner and oversight of Justice Connect programs. Legal tasks that Justice Connect programs assist with include helping a client draft and file applications to VCAT or producing court documents. Access Program and Not-for-profit Law deliver the most advices and legal tasks.

Legal assistance was delivered in some new ways during FY21 in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and resulting restrictions. Seniors Law ran a pilot telehealth project to deliver legal services via videoconference and phone to clients of its health partners, including in the Murrumbidgee local health district. This project commenced before COVID-19 to trial providing ‘lighter-touch’ legal help to more clients at risk of or experiencing elder abuse (compared with typical intensive services for clients). The project allowed the program to continue its important work in preventing and responding to elder abuse throughout lockdown. Some Justice Connect programs also delivered some advice via secure video conferencing platforms.

In FY21:

- Justice Connect provided 1,460 instances of legal assistance to help-seekers; 12.4% (161) more instances were provided than in FY20
 - 23.6% (333) instances were provided to community organisations
 - 77.2% (1,127) instances were provided to individuals
 - 264 instances of legal assistance (approximately 1 in 5) were provided by pro bono partners through Justice Connect Answers²⁵

²³ Legal advice is “fact-specific legal advice to a Service User in response to a request for assistance to resolve specific legal problems”. (National Legal Assistance Data Standards Manual – Version 3 – July 2021; p.5)

²⁴ Legal tasks are “where a Service Provider completes a discrete piece of legal work to assist a Service User to resolve a problem or a particular stage of a problem”. (National Legal Assistance Data Standards Manual – Version 3 – July 2021; p.7)

²⁵ Justice Connect Answers is an online platform through which help-seekers can ask legal questions and seek advice; <https://justiceconnect.org.au/fairmatters/were-answering-your-simple-legal-questions-online/>

5.4. External legal and non-legal referral

As needed and appropriate, Justice Connect programs provide referrals to legal services outside of Justice Connect (e.g. LIV, CLCs, etc.) and to non-legal community support services (e.g. financial counselling, mediation, etc.). As part of a holistic response, external referrals may be made in addition to the different types of legal assistance provided by Justice Connect, or if a Justice Connect program cannot provide the legal assistance needed, referral to another service may be the main way of helping.

In FY21:

- 2,819 intakes were referred elsewhere, either to an external legal service or a non-legal community support service; 3.2% (87) more than 2,732 in FY20
- 34.6% (one in three) intakes were referred externally; a small increase on FY20 when 29.7% were referred externally

5.5. Intensive legal assistance

Intensive legal assistance, or casework, is ongoing legal representation provided by Justice Connect in-house lawyers and clinics, to an individual help-seeker. Intensive legal assistance is provided by the Homeless Law and Seniors Law programs and typically involves advice, negotiation and, in some cases, representation at courts and tribunals. It is a higher intensity service than legal assistance and there is a lawyer-client relationship between Justice Connect and the client for this assistance.

In FY21:

- 543 instances of intensive legal assistance were provided to help-seekers; 12.8% (80) fewer than 623 in FY20
- Of those provided intensive legal assistance, 62.2% (338) were helped by Homeless Law and 37.8% (205) were helped by Seniors Law

5.6. Legal information

Legal information services involve “a direct communication and/or a provision of material”²⁶ (e.g. fact sheets, links to websites, videos) to help people understand the law, legal systems, legal processes, and legal and other support services available that can help resolve legal and related problems. Legal information is of general application, it is not advice. For some people legal information alone will meet their legal needs.

Justice Connect provides legal information in a range of ways.

5.6.1. One-to-one

Legal information is provided one-to-one when an individual or representative of a community organisation has a consultation with Justice Connect or a Health Justice Partner, enquiring about the law, legal systems or legal processes. Information provided is of general application and is given by a lawyer or caseworker. While information is usually provided in person, by phone or email, during FY21 some Justice Programs also provided information via telehealth channels and secure videoconferencing platforms.

²⁶ National Legal Assistance Data Standards Manual – Version 3 – July 2021; p.4.

In FY21:

- One-to-one legal information (no advice) was provided on 1459 occasions
 - 4.9% (68) more one-to-one legal information services were provided than the 1,391 provided in FY20
 - 70.3% (1,026) of recipients of one-to-one legal information were representatives of community organisations and 29.7% (433) were individuals; this is slightly higher for community organisations, and lower for individuals compared with FY20, when the breakdown was 65% and 35%, respectively.

5.6.2. Digital self-help resources

Digital self-help resources are designed to raise awareness and understanding about the law, and how to identify, prevent and deal with legal problems. These resources can be accessed by anyone without making a legal inquiry – all help-seekers access the same version of the resource (e.g. factsheets and websites).

Justice Connect provides self-help resources via two websites targeting different audiences. The Justice Connect website has resources for a range of people (including those representing themselves in court, tenants, LGBTIQ+ people, those with domestic building disputes, seniors, young people, employees and others) while the Not-for-profit Law website has an extensive suite of resources for community groups and not-for-profit organisations.

Throughout the year, Justice Connect used data collected through web traffic, social media, case work, and search term and trend analysis to identify rising legal need and responded by publishing new or revised self-help resources for frequently arising topics, including rental changes, mortgage payments, COVID-19 supports, building work/payments from businesses no longer trading, remote court hearings, and how a state of emergency can be introduced.

5.6.2.1. Resource usage

As the COVID-19 pandemic continued, the number of people looking for legal help online also continued to rise, leading to a substantial increase in the use of Justice Connect and Not-for-profit Law online self-help resources.

In FY21:

- 418,769 unique users accessed online self-help resources across the Justice Connect and Not-for-profit Law websites; 109.9% (219,285) more unique users than 199,484 in FY20
 - Justice Connect self-help resources were accessed by 289,232 unique users (see Figure 1, p.4); a 221.0% increase from 90,097 unique users in FY20²⁷
 - Not-for-profit Law self-help resources were accessed by 129,537 unique users (see Figure 2, p.4); an 18.4% increase from 109,387 unique users in FY20²⁸
- Use of self-help resources across both websites was highest in the first quarter of FY21 (i.e. July, August and September 2020) and lowest in December 2020. This spike aligns with the dates of Victoria's second lockdown, spanning from 9 July to 27 October, while lower traffic in December is typical of people spending more time offline during the festive period.

²⁷ The FY20 figure reported here is different from the figure reported in the FY20 Impact Report, due to a change during FY21 in the way this metric is calculated.

²⁸ The FY20 figure reported here is different from the figure reported in the FY20 Impact Report, due to a change during FY21 in the way this metric is calculated.

- Use of Justice Connect self-help resources peaked notably in August 2020, declined until December 2020 and then slowly increased for the remainder of the year
- Use of Not-for-profit Law self-help resources was relatively stable across the year, with a small peak in September 2020, and a small dip in December 2020

The top six self-help resources accessed by individuals and community organisations are shown in Figure 8 and Figure 9, respectively. The most frequently accessed self-help resource on each website was notably more popular than the other top five resources.

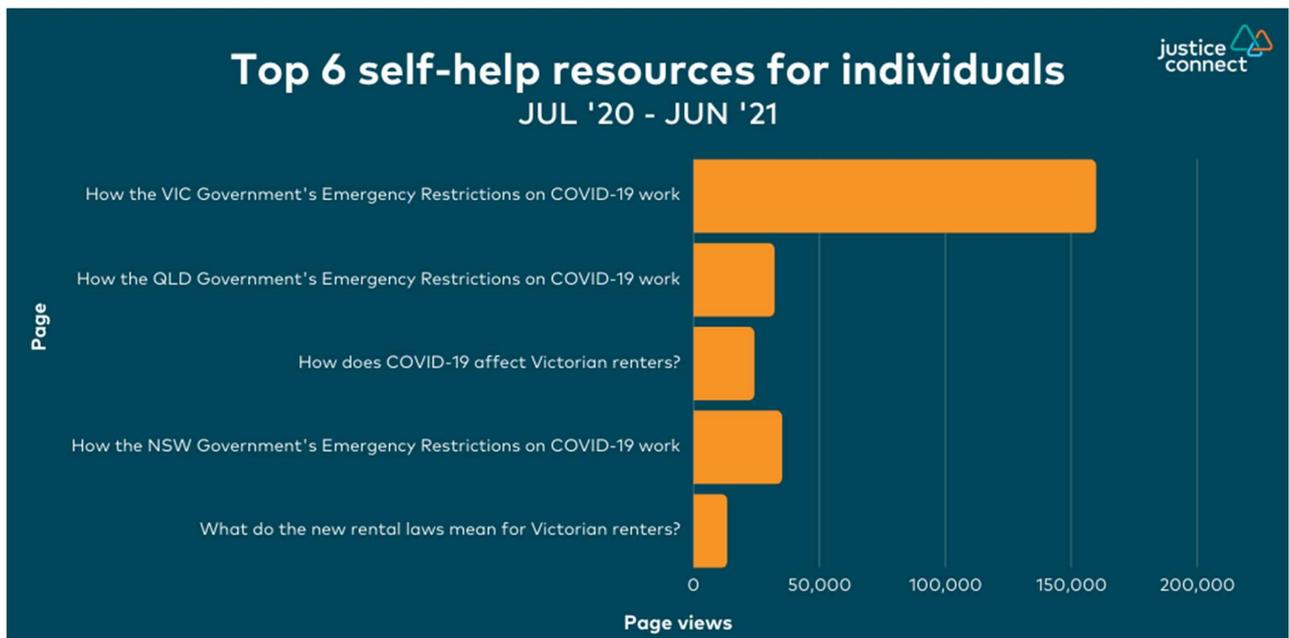


Figure 8: Top 6 self-help resources accessed by individuals FY21



Figure 9: Top 6 self-help resources accessed by community organisations, FY21

In FY21:

- Justice Connect self-help resources
 - The most viewed resource was “How the Victorian Government's Emergency Restrictions on COVID-19 work”, viewed nearly 160,000 times
 - The most viewed resource was viewed 5 times more often than the second most viewed self-help resource on the website (“How the New South Wales Government's Emergency Restrictions on COVID-19 work”) and approximately 8 times more than the most viewed self-help resource in FY20²⁹
- Not-for-profit Law self-help resources
 - The most viewed resource was “Governance and legal duties”, viewed approximately 53,000 times
 - The most viewed resource was viewed 1.6 times as often as the second most viewed Not-for-profit Law self-help resource and approximately twice as often as the most viewed self-help resource (also Governance and legal duties) in FY20

5.6.2.2. Resource users

Age

The proportion of unique users of self-help resources in different age groups was similar across the two websites. Approximately half of the users of on each website were aged 25 – 44 years (see Figure 10).

In FY21:

- Justice Connect self-help resource users:
 - 29.0% aged 25-34 years
 - 17.6% aged 35-44 years
 - 15.9% aged 18-24 years
- Not-for-profit Law self-help resource users:
 - 27.7% aged 25-34 years
 - 17.4% aged 35-44 years
 - 16.4% aged 45-54 years

Gender

Women accessed online self-help resources slightly more than men (see Figure 11).³⁰

In FY21:

- 51.3% of users of Justice Connect self-help resources identified as female
- 55.1% of users of Not-for-profit Law self-help resources identified as female

²⁹ In FY20 the most viewed Justice Connect self-help resource was “NSW emergency restrictions”, viewed just over 20,000 times.

³⁰ NB – gender information was available for 28.9% of Justice Connect self-help resource users and 33.8% of Not-for-profit Law self-help resource users, and only binary options were provided by Google Analytics. This breakdown is consistent with previous years and with practitioner observations.

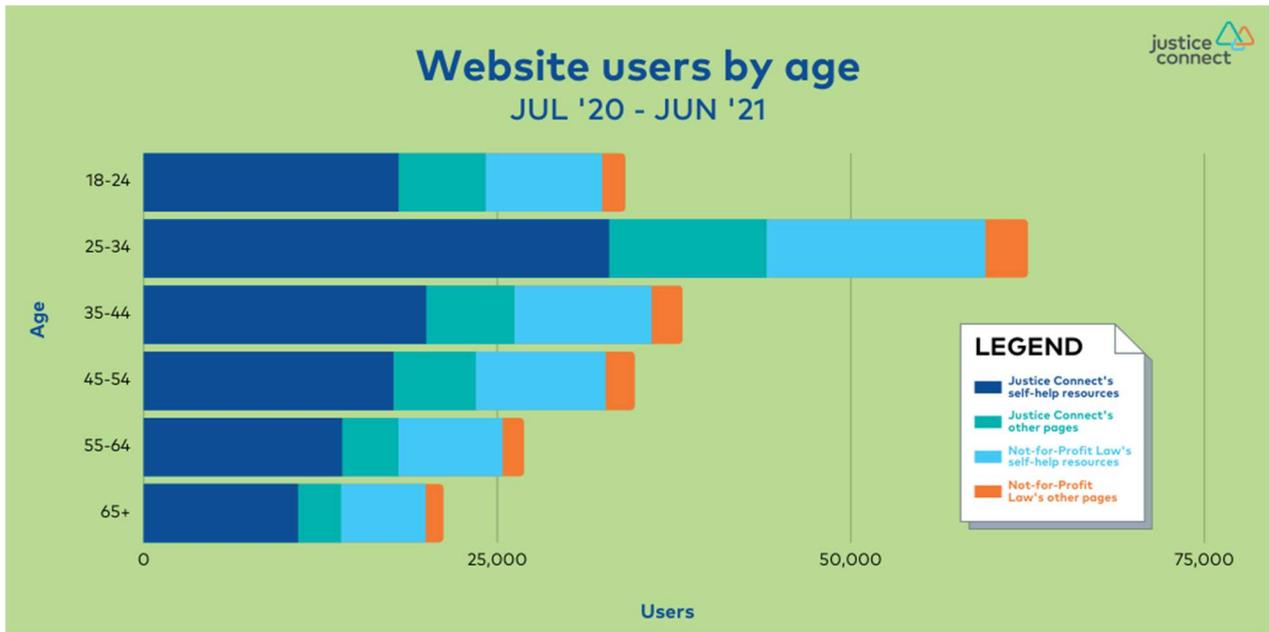


Figure 10: Age groups of users accessing Justice Connect and Not-for-profit Law websites FY21, disaggregated by self-help resources and other pages

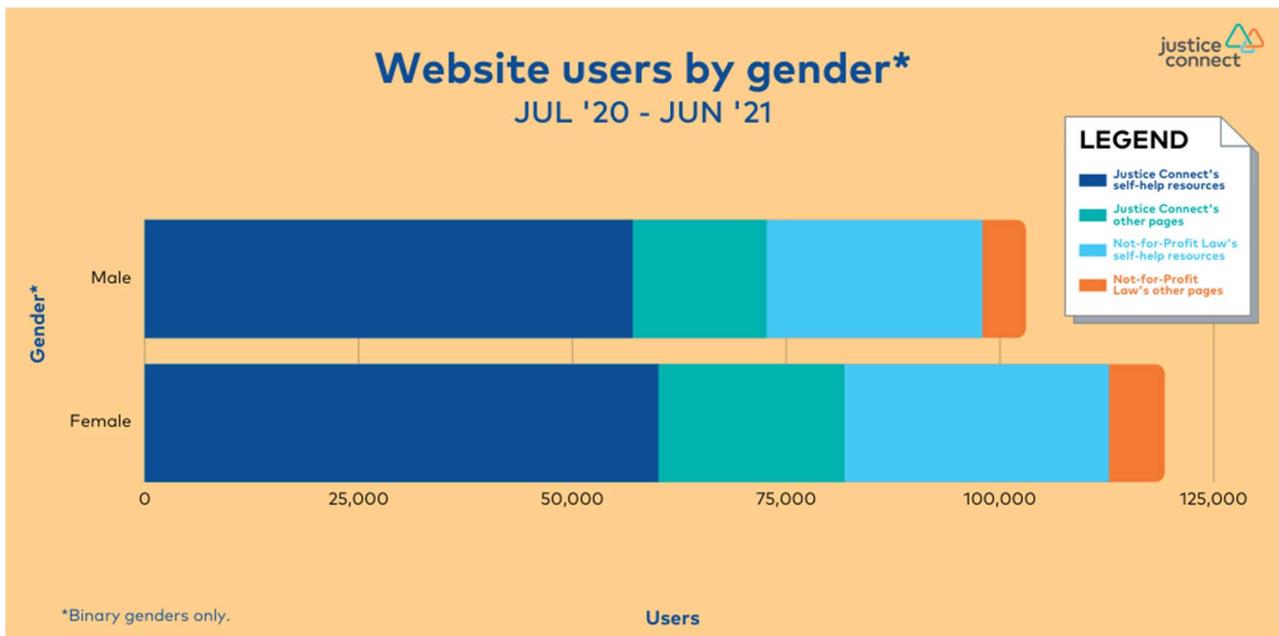


Figure 11: Binary gender split of users accessing Justice Connect and Not-for-profit Law websites FY21, disaggregated by self-help resources and other pages

Location

Justice Connect's and Not-for-profit Law's self-help resources were accessed by users across every state and territory in Australia (see Figure 12).

In FY21:

- Justice Connect:
 - Victorians were the main users, totalling more than all other users together, at approximately 161,000
 - New South Wales users were the second largest group, with approximately 51,000 unique users
- Not-for-profit Law:
 - The main users were from Victoria and New South Wales; approximately 39,000 unique users from each of these states accessed resources
- In all states and territories except Victoria and New South Wales, the number of unique users accessing Justice Connect's self-help resources was approximately equal to the number accessing Not-for-profit Law's self-help resources (see Figure 12)
 - In Victoria, approximately four times as many users accessed Justice Connect's resources as Not-for-profit Law's (161,087 cf. 38,502)
 - In NSW, almost one third more users accessed Justice Connect's resources as Not-for-profit Law's (51,195 cf. 39,388)

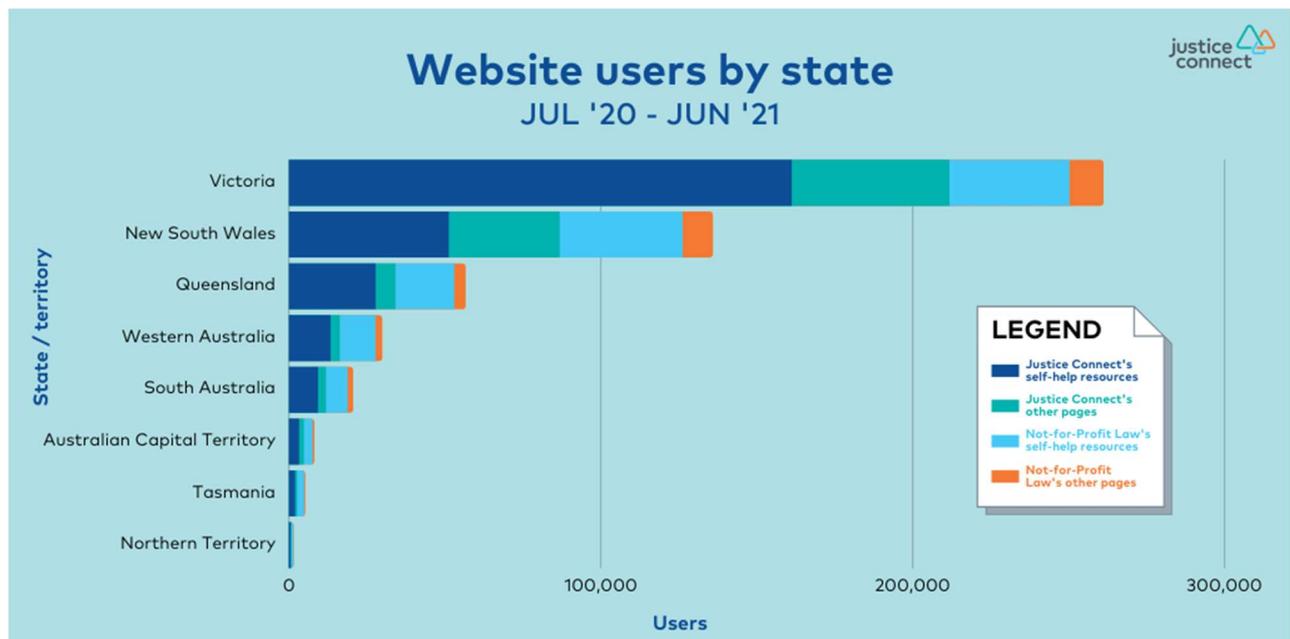


Figure 12: State or territory location of users accessing Justice Connect and Not-for-profit Law websites FY21, disaggregated by self-help resources and other pages

5.6.3. Digital self-help tools

Digital self-help tools are interactive websites and apps that are designed to raise awareness and understanding about the law, and how to identify, prevent and deal with legal problems. Digital self-help tools can be accessed by anyone without making a legal inquiry; however, unlike Digital Resources, because of their interactivity, tools provide tailored support for the help-seeker's situation.

During FY21 Justice Connect continued updating its Dear Landlord self-help tool.³¹ Through a human-centred design process, Dear Landlord was updated to reflect the new rental reforms and to best-support Victorian renters facing rent arrears accrued during COVID. Work was also done to improve the tool's user experience, navigation and accessibility, along with refining the communication strategy for more targeted reach.

Not-for-profit Law launched the Victorian Rules Tool in FY21 and prepared for the launch of the NSW Constitution Tool (September 2021), both of which help incorporated associations navigate complex legal requirements with easy-to-understand, tailored and practical information.

During FY21 Not-for-profit Law also prepared for the launch (in July 2021) of a new tool to help organisations make sense of daunting and confusing tax laws – Not-for-profit Law's DGR Tool asks charities some simple questions to help them work out if they are eligible for deductible gift recipient (DGR) status and their relevant DGR category. At the end of FY21, Not-for-profit Law had 4 self-help tools operating (and 6 at the time this report was written).

Like self-help resources, use of online self-help tools increased markedly over the last 12 months.

In FY21:

- 40,347 unique users accessed Justice Connect's various self-help tools; a 494.2% increase (33,557) on 6,790 in FY20
 - 32,774 accessed the Dear Landlord; a 541.7% (27,667) increase on 5,107 in FY20
 - 7,573 accessed Not-for-profit Law self-help tools; a 350.0% (5,890) increase on 1,683 in FY20
- 1,675 milestones³² were reached by users of Justice Connect's various self-help tools; a 51.4% (569) increase on 1,106 in FY20
 - 707 milestones were reached by users of Dear Landlord; a 75.4% (304) increase on 403 in FY20
 - 968 milestones were reached by users of Not-for-profit Law self-help tools; a 37.7% (265) increase on 703 in FY20

5.7. Pro bono referral

Pro bono referral involves a member firm or individual practitioner, including barristers, taking on a matter and providing advice and representation to the client. Referred matters are run by the pro bono lawyer external to Justice Connect.

³¹ This free tool is available to all Victorians living in private rental. (<https://justiceconnect.org.au/help/dear-landlord/>)

³² Milestones describe when a significant goal was reached by the help-seeker. For example, in Dear Landlord, one milestone is when the user successfully generates a letter using the tool.

In FY21:

- Justice Connect made 877 pro bono referrals; 12.3% (123) fewer than in FY20
 - 41.5% of referrals (364) were for not-for-profit organisations

CLCs were the largest source of pro bono referrals for individuals. Justice Connect undertook a range of engagements with CLCs and referral partners in FY21 to support high conversion of these referrals into pro bono assistance by barristers (e.g. identifying new referral partners in response to emerging legal need).

5.8. Secondary consultations

Secondary consultations are provided to help-seeker intermediaries who are seeking support on behalf of another person.

In FY21:

- Justice Connect programs provided 836 secondary consultations; 42.3% (612) fewer than 1,448 in FY20

Two Justice Connect programs routinely provide secondary consultations.

Seniors Law

Under the Health Justice Partnership model, a health professional who recognises that a patient has a legal issue can consult a lawyer and then relay the relevant legal information (but not legal advice) to the patient. Seniors Law ran 7 Health Justice Partnerships in FY21 – partnerships with cohealth, Alfred health, St Vincent’s Hospital Melbourne, War Memorial Hospital, St Vincent’s Hospital NSW, and St Joseph’s continued, and a new HJP was piloted with Murrumbidgee local health district.

- 768 legal secondary consultations were provided by Seniors Law to health professionals in FY21; 44.9% (624) fewer than 1,392 in FY20³³

Through its annual staff survey³⁴ at St Vincent’s Health Network Sydney (SVHNS), Seniors Law found:

- All respondents reported that the advice or information they received via secondary consultations with Seniors Law was helpful (93.8% “very helpful” and 6.2% “quite helpful”)
- All respondents reported that secondary consults were helpful for patients/clients (75.0% “very helpful” and 25.0% “quite helpful”)

Homeless Law

Secondary consultations are provided by Homeless Law lawyers to external legal and non-legal workers to help them understand the legal issues, timeframes, risks and options of individuals assisted by the program. Homeless Law lawyers also provide legal information to external legal and non-legal workers to pass on to clients. In FY21:

- 56 secondary consultations were provided by Homeless Law lawyers to external legal and non-legal workers; the same amount that were provided in FY20

³³ This fall stemmed from reduced face-to-face service delivery and relationship building opportunities at partner organisations during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

³⁴ While 32 staff across a range of professions and disciplines (including Social Work, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Podiatry) responded to the survey, it is not known how many staff received an invitation to complete the survey. The response rate and confidence interval therefore cannot be calculated, nor the results generalised to the broader staff.

6. Other services provided

6.1. Complementary services – social work

As part of a client-centred, holistic approach, Justice Connect’s Homeless Law program complements legal support with non-legal services. The Homeless Persons’ Liaison Officers are key members of Justice Connect’s Homeless Law program who provide social work support to clients experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness. As part of Homeless Law’s holistic, integrated model for preventing homelessness, these social workers help clients address their non-legal issues including housing, mental and physical health, family violence, drug and alcohol issues and employment.

In FY21:

- 204 clients were provided social work support, 6.0% fewer than the 217 assisted in FY20

6.2. Legal sector improvements

6.2.1. Training

Justice Connect provides training to professionals including community workers, health professionals, and legal sector peers to increase their capability to identify and appropriately respond to legal problems experienced by their clients.

Education is provided in a range of ways, including training in person and by webinar, and on a range of legal issues commonly faced by those who access Justice Connect’s services.

In FY21:

- Justice Connect trained 2,319 professionals, across 110 sessions
 - 23.2% (700) fewer professionals than were trained in FY20 (due to changes in strategy for delivering training³⁵ and COVID-19 reducing the availability of people to attend training³⁶)
 - Number of sessions conducted was just 2 fewer than in FY20³⁷
- Almost half of the professionals trained by Justice Connect attended a session conducted by Homeless Law, while Seniors Law ran approximately two thirds of the training sessions (with lower average attendance numbers; see below)
 - Homeless Law ran 30 sessions, attended by 1,004 professionals
 - Seniors Law ran 73 sessions, attended by 837 professionals
 - Access Program ran 6 sessions, attended by 408 professionals
 - Not-for-profit Law ran 1 session, attended by 70 professionals

³⁵ For example, while continuing to deliver tailored induction, masterclass and supervisor training using digital platforms, Homeless Law prioritised extensively updating and launching the new version of Homeless Law in Practice (see below) as the key way to support Homeless Law pro bono lawyers to understand and apply Victoria’s significantly reformed residential tenancies laws during 2020-21.

³⁶ Victorian hospitals responding to the COVID-19 pandemic faced many challenges caring for COVID and non-COVID patients. Hospital staff who were part of Justice Connect Health Justice Partnerships had much less availability to participate in training.

³⁷ In the FY20 Impact Report, training figures were presented separately for community workers and pro bono lawyers. This year those figures are combined. Data from FY20 (see Training and Education table in Appendix) has been aggregated to allow comparison. Likewise, FY20 data for Court Programs and Public Interest Law have been combined to enable comparison with the Access Program which they merged to form during FY21.

Training feedback

During FY21, Seniors Law surveyed 147 staff trained at their NSW metropolitan health partner organisations³⁸. Training participants reported the following:

- A better understanding of elder abuse - 92%
- More knowledge about the health justice partnership at their hospital - 91%
- Confidence to refer a patient or discuss a matter with the lawyer - 93%
- 98% of respondents rated the training positively overall, with the majority rating it as “excellent”

[The most useful thing I learnt was] indicators of elder abuse, and the sort of questions to ask, when to be more direct with questioning. Also very useful to know when and how to refer to Justice Connect. (Seniors Law training participant)

[The most useful thing I learnt was] the steps to take if you suspect or have been told about elder abuse and the tips about effective questioning. (Seniors Law training participant)

[I am] able to understand my role in aiding and referring patients to Seniors Law service. (Seniors Law training participant)

6.2.2. Resources

In FY21, Justice Connect’s Homeless Law program launched a new version of Homeless Law in Practice (HLP), an online, practice-based resource for its 552 pro bono lawyers and for the wider-Victorian legal assistance and advocacy sector. The new HLP includes customised resources, such as templates and forms, which are designed specifically for pro bono lawyers to access, and incorporates better functionality, to provide more effective and efficient support.

By the end of FY21:

- 170 legal resource-pages on HLP had been created and extensively updated
- 22,638 pageviews had been made by 5,976 users,

The relaunched HLP has significantly scaled Justice Connect’s support for pro bono and wider-community lawyers and advocates in Victoria. Homeless Law will continue to iterate this resource in FY22.

6.2.3. Community Legal Centres on the Portal

In FY21, Justice Connect launched the CLCs on the Portal pilot project, which saw its award-winning Pro Bono Portal opened to CLCs and other legal service organisations so they could efficiently place matters with appropriate law firms.

During the pilot project:

- 14 CLCs posted 75 opportunities via the Pro Bono Portal; 23 (30.7%) were successfully placed with firms
- 12 firms actively responded to opportunities, posting 49 expressions of interest to assist with matters
- Justice Connect facilitated 7 one-to-one training sessions, 2 workshops and a webinar to help onboard and train CLCs and firms to use the portal successfully

³⁸ This sample size provides a response rate of 60.7% and a margin of error of 5% at the 95% confidence level. This means it is 95% likely that the true value for the population (i.e. staff who completed the training) lies within +/- 5% of these percentages.

Feedback from CLCs and firms who participated in the pilot was generally positive, with CLCs users giving it an overall rating of 3.7/5 (from 11 responses) and firm users rating it 4.0/5 (from 6 responses).

Through this project, Justice Connect helped participating CLCs adopt new technology that gave them access to an additional pathway to assist people who would otherwise not have received assistance.

7. Improved outcomes for people and community organisations

Throughout the year Justice Connect programs document a range of client stories that illustrate the effects that legal and associated social problems have on individuals and community organisations, and the positive changes achieved through Justice Connect’s interventions. For this report, 24 case stories were reviewed (6 from each program).

The following sections present the main changes and impacts experienced by help-seekers in FY21, as evidenced by the 24 case stories and a range of feedback collected by the programs from the people they assisted.

7.1. Increased capacity of help-seekers to self-help

The case stories provided examples of how Justice Connect helped increase the capacity of both individual help-seekers and community organisations, to better address their legal issues themselves.

Several case stories from Not-for-profit Law showed that the program’s Governance Health Check Project and associated training on ‘Governing a Not-for-profit Organisation’ helped equip community organisations to address areas of their governance structures and processes that needed strengthening. There were also examples of information and advice enabling community organisations to update their constitutions and change their structures.

The Governance Health Check was brilliant. It gave us a path to set priorities, highlighted areas that were lacking and enabled us to improve things. It gave us a new awareness of what needs to be done and reinvigorated our processes. (Sharyn Marshall, General Manager of Kyogle Together Inc)

An Access Program case story showed how assistance to negotiate with the other party to VCAT proceedings and prepare a submission, helped an individual respond to an application against her for an adverse costs order (approx. \$25,000).

Client feedback

The Access Program collected feedback from 33 clients³⁹ assisted through its three self-representation services – Domestic Building Legal Service, Federal Self Representation Service and the Victorian Self Representation Service.

³⁹ This small sample size precludes generalisation of the findings to all self-representation clients. These findings reflect the experience of these 33 clients, but it is not known if they are indicative of the experience of all clients.

- 94% reported the service helped them better understand the legal process and procedures as they apply to their matter
- 91% reported the service helped them better understand the law as it applied to their matter
- 85% reported that the advice/assistance received from the service helped their matter proceed with fewer problems
- 79% reported a higher level of confidence after their appointment with the service than before
- 67% reported that the advice/assistance received from the service helped their matter proceed more quickly
- 52% reported that the service helped them resolve their legal problem

Among the 437 Not-for-profit Law website users who provided feedback via online survey⁴⁰, most reported that using the website helped increase their capacity to help themselves:

- 74.8% agreed that they successfully resolved a legal problem or navigated a legal process (for example, incorporation, charity registration) themselves without needing to get advice from a lawyer
- 73.8% agreed that they were better prepared with information when they sought advice from a lawyer
- 87.1% agreed that they were more confident to tackle legal issues in their organisation

7.2. Increased access to appropriate and timely legal support

This year's case stories demonstrated the range of ways that Justice Connect provided help-seekers with access to legal support that was both appropriate and timely. They include examples of a range of referrals by Justice Connect – to barristers, firms or to services within Justice Connect – as well as mechanisms for timely referrals to Justice Connect.

Case stories from Seniors Law showed how Health Justice Partnerships helped community workers recognise when their clients had legal problems and provided them an immediate pathway to legal help. The case studies describe referrals from social workers, a community health centre nurse, and a speech pathologist who identified that their clients had legal problems, referred them to a HJP and then collaborated with the lawyer to support the client. Similarly, several case studies described referrals to Homeless Law from community partners who were supporting people accessing emergency hotel accommodation through the Victorian government's Homes for Homeless program during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of these clients were supported with integrated social work services provided by the Homeless Persons' Liaison Officers (HPLOs), in addition to specialist legal assistance from Homeless Law lawyers. These partnerships helped people who were unlikely to have otherwise sought legal assistance, access help and have serious legal problems resolved.

The case stories provided other examples of how people received responses from Justice Connect that were appropriate to their need and circumstances, including a client diagnosed with schizophrenia, depression and an intellectual disability who was helped to access the Assessment and Referral Court

⁴⁰ This sample size provides a margin of error of 5% at the 95% confidence level. This means it is 95% likely that the true value for the population (i.e. all Not-for-profit Law website users) lies within +/- 5% of the percentages reported.

list⁴¹, and numerous community organisations who were provided a range of different assistance in different accessible and affordable formats, from Not-for-profit Law (see 7.6 for more detail).

7.2.1. Pro bono referrals – yield

Data⁴² on the number of approaches to barristers which converted into successful pro bono referrals (yield) showed that access to pro bono legal support increased steadily over the year:

- Q1 2021 – 26.4%
- Q2 2021 – 31.8%
- Q3 2021 – 31.3%
- Q4 2021 – 51.1%

The placement of pro bono referrals with fewer approaches alleviates the efforts required by staff to connect help-seekers with legal assistance, thereby increasing the organisation’s capacity to assist more help-seekers.

7.2.2. Client and sector feedback

Last year, Justice Connect received 763 pieces of feedback for "was this resource helpful?", which was asked at the bottom of each digital self-help article. The options were a thumbs up (like) or a thumbs down (dislike). Overall, 67% of respondents voted Justice Connect content as helpful, and 33% voted it unhelpful. Analysis of qualitative feedback provided in conjunction with likes and dislikes found that many of the negative comments left were about frustration with lockdowns and the government, rather than Justice Connect’s resources. Excluding the articles about “How the Government’s Emergency Restrictions on COVID-19 (Coronavirus) work” for each state / territory, there were 489 pieces of feedback, of which 78% voted the content was helpful and 22% voted it unhelpful.

During the last 6 months of FY21 the Homeless Law team surveyed 20 former clients.⁴³ Feedback indicated that support provided by Homeless Law was appropriate for its clients and highly valued by them:

- 100% rated the quality of Homeless Law’s overall service as “excellent” or “good”
- 100% advised that they better understood their legal options as a result of Homeless Law’s assistance
- 100% said Homeless Law’s lawyers communicated “very well” or “well” while their legal matter was in progress
- 93% indicated they got a better outcome because of Homeless Law’s help
- 90% of clients helped by the Homeless Persons' Liaison Officer (HPLO) or Women’s Homelessness Prevention Program Liaison Officer (WHPLO) social workers, positively rated the quality of this assistance

The lawyer was so good all the way through, the way he spoke with me helped me feel safe.
(Homeless Law client)

⁴¹ A court list for accused persons who have a mental illness and /or a cognitive impairment. A cognitive impairment can include an intellectual disability, acquired brain injury or autism spectrum disorder. (<https://www.mcv.vic.gov.au/about-us/assessment-and-referral-court-arc>)

⁴² This data is from Justice Connect’s Access Program which made almost all (98.6%; 144 out of 146) of the organisation’s referrals to barristers.

⁴³ This survey provides a valuable indication of the experience of these clients however the sample size is too small to confidently generalise these findings to the broader population of Homeless Law clients.

The lawyers were prompt, professional, but easy to understand. (Homeless Law client)

The communication was really good. I felt comfortable with them, and I felt respected and listened to.
(Homeless Law client)

Seniors Law surveyed 10 clients from its NSW HJPs during FY21. These clients reported that the support they received was appropriate on several dimensions.

- 10 respondents agreed that:
 - The service met my needs
 - I got the help I wanted to address my issues
 - I feel supported to deal with my situation
 - I am now more aware that there are services and supports that can help me
 - I have been referred to services that can help me
- 9 agreed that:
 - I am satisfied with the options provided to resolve my issues
 - I feel like I have what I need to deal with my issues
 - I am using the services I have been referred to for my issues

Not-for-profit Law received 84 survey responses from its clients in FY21.⁴⁴

- 94% were satisfied with the service they received
- 96% said they were likely to recommend Justice Connect to others

Not-for-profit Law also sent a survey to users of the Not-for-profit Law website; 437 responses were received.⁴⁵ Users reported that the website and self-help resources were easy to use and covered a comprehensive range of pertinent topics:

- 91.7% agreed that legal information on the website was relevant to their problem
- 92.3% agreed that legal information on the website helped them have a better understanding of the legal issues facing their organisation

It's a pot of gold for community groups. Not-for-profit Law's website answers so many of my questions - and helps me shape my issue when I need to speak to a lawyer. I love the comprehensiveness, the continual updating, the friendly and reassuring tone. (Not-for-profit Law website user)

The website is slick and easy to use with regular easily accessible and pertinent .pdf files relating to the section content specifically dispersed in context with the section dialogue discussion. (Not-for-profit Law website user)

⁴⁴ It is not known how many clients were invited to complete a feedback survey therefore the margin of error cannot be calculated for these survey responses. These findings reflect the experience of 84 clients assisted by Not-for-profit Law, but it is not known if they are indicative of the experience of all clients.

⁴⁵ This sample size provides a margin of error of 5% at the 95% confidence level. This means it is 95% likely that the true value for the population (i.e. all Not-for-profit Law website users) lies within +/- 5% of the percentages reported.

Your information is current, you put in the little details that matter (such as the legislation that applies) that gives me confidence and ability to clarify and you provide the context / impact perspective that a dry document does not. (Not-for-profit Law website user)

A website plug-in (Hot Jar) was used to ask all Not-for-profit Law website users “how would you rate your experience?” on a 5-point scale; 99 people responded.

- 78.0% rated the digital tools 5 out of 5
- 41.5% rated the website 5 out of 5 and 42.5% rated it 4 out of 5

7.3. Better identification of legal problems by help-seekers

Case stories from Justice Connect’s Seniors Law program showed that health justice partnerships contributed to health partner staff identifying legal problems on behalf of older people they were caring for. There were examples of health professionals (including nurses and social workers at hospitals and community health centres) identifying that older people they were assisting were experiencing elder abuse and other serious legal issues and referring them for legal help.

Training⁴⁶ and CLE sessions⁴⁷ provided by the Seniors Law program also contributed to better identification of legal problems by help-seekers, as shown by feedback from participants:

- 92% of staff trained at a NSW health partner organisation reported that after training from Seniors Law they had a better understanding of elder abuse⁴⁸
- 83% of older people reported that after the session they knew more about elder abuse

There was also some data this year that evidenced the objective that Justice Connect’s services and website contribute to better identification of legal problems by help-seekers. Among 1,773 individuals asked during the enquiry process how they heard about Justice Connect, 25.0% indicated it was through the website and for 10.1% it was through previous use of the service.

During FY22, Justice Connect will continue to develop measures to better understand and enhance this outcome.

7.4. Legal problems prevented and resolved

7.4.1. Fines withdrawn

Numerous case stories showed how Justice Connect’s Homeless Law program helped clients experiencing or at risk of homelessness, resolve significant fines incurred due to their housing insecurity, including in the context of orders made by the Victorian Chief Health Officer during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁴⁹ Successful applications for enforcement review were made on the basis of vulnerable special

⁴⁶ See section 6.2.1.

⁴⁷ See section 5.2.

⁴⁸ With a better understanding of elder abuse, staff at health partner organisations are better equipped to identify elder abuse on behalf of older people and refer them for help.

⁴⁹ Homeless Law provided integrated, ongoing legal representation and social work supports to clients experiencing or at risk of homelessness who faced COVID-19-specific fines.

circumstances (i.e. homelessness), relieving these clients of the unfair burden of sizeable fines (e.g. one client had over \$15,000 in fines and infringements for public space offences incurred while sleeping rough).

One case story described how wrap-around legal and social work assistance provided to an Aboriginal single-mother of four, who was a family violence victim-survivor with diagnosed mental health issues and a history of homelessness, led to waiver of a long list of fines that had been incurred when her violent ex-partner stole her car.

In a sample study of 10 matters handled by the Homeless Law team, the total amount of fines dealt with was \$91,848.32. Fines related mainly to public space offences or parking or vehicle registration violations when people were sleeping in their cars. These matters were resolved through the Magistrates' Court (discharged or subject to adjourned undertakings), withdrawal by enforcement agencies, or via Family Violence Scheme or Work and Development Permit applications. All 10 clients were in challenging and vulnerable situations – all were experiencing primary homelessness⁵⁰, 7 had been experiencing mental health issues, 6 disclosed substance dependence and 3 had been experiencing family violence.

7.4.2. Settlement – unfair dismissal

Several case stories described the experience and outcomes of clients who were referred to pro bono lawyers through Justice Connect's Access Program, who represented them in unfair dismissal conciliation at the Fair Work Commission. One client was also claiming unpaid wages and another had been receiving intimidating messages from her employer leading up to the conciliation. Pro bono representatives of these clients helped them reach settlement and achieve positive outcomes, including repayment of unpaid wages.

Our experience with [the lawyers] from [the law firm] was incredible throughout. The enthusiasm, perseverance and dedication displayed by the team reinstated our faith in humanity. Their authenticity and ability to empathise will forever be appreciated. We are so very grateful. (Client)

7.4.3. Debts resolved

A number of case stories showed how Justice Connect helped clients have debts waived where they had arisen because of family violence or elder abuse. For example, a HJP lawyer advocated on behalf of an elderly victim-survivor of family violence who was being pursued by a debt collector for \$10,000 for a purchase that may have been made by her violent ex-partner. The debt collector agreed not to pursue the debt and the client's credit rating was preserved. Another elderly client was helped by Seniors Law to complete a hardship application and gather and submit the many documents required to substantiate a claim to have \$3,000 of hotel quarantine fees waived on the grounds of elder abuse. Homeless Law lawyers successfully undertook extensive, tailored negotiations with the Director of Housing to resolve a \$5,500 debt that a client was facing that was the result of property damage caused by her violent ex-partner. Close to \$20,000 in debt for highly vulnerable clients, was cleared across these three matters alone.

⁵⁰ Particularly sleeping rough, including in cars; or secondary homelessness (either in crisis accommodation or couch surfing).

7.4.4. Legal authority for future decision making and preventing elder abuse

Justice Connect's Seniors Law program supported many clients to take control of their affairs and prevent future abuse occurring, by helping them understand and execute documents such as enduring powers of attorney (POA). During FY21, Seniors Law supported completion of:

- 76 Power of Attorney appointments (NSW & Victoria)
- 69 Enduring Guardian (NSW) / Medical Treatment Decision Maker (Victoria) appointments

Several case stories also described how Seniors Law helped clients to revoke POAs that were being used to perpetrate abuse.

7.4.5. Criminal charges resolved

This year's case stories included examples of Justice Connect assisting clients in highly vulnerable circumstances with their criminal charges. Several stories showed how Homeless Law advocated for clients so that courts considered their criminal charges in the context of the complex circumstances those clients were facing (e.g. family violence, substance dependence, homelessness), resulting in charges being withdrawn or otherwise positively resolved. Homeless Law further advocated for the reporting and curfew conditions of one client's bail to be removed due to the risk those conditions posed to the client at the time when COVID-19 was rapidly spreading in Melbourne.

7.4.6. Continued engagement with legal processes

Numerous case stories showed how Justice Connect provided wrap-around legal and social support which helped clients remain engaged with their legal matters through to conclusion. Intensive support provided by the Homeless Persons Liaison Officer for example, working in collaboration with Homeless Law lawyers, helped deepen the team's understanding of the client and build the client's trust. Many clients were linked in with other support services to help address some of the challenges that contributed to their current legal issues, which may help prevent the same issues arising in future. Other clients were able to exit the justice system completely, having been supported to see their legal matters through to their resolution.

7.4.7. Evictions prevented

During FY21 Homeless Law prevented 181 evictions into homelessness (a 19% increase from 152 in FY20) and its tenancy sustainment practice had a 90% success rate, its highest to date. Homeless Law estimates that these achievements generated \$5.3 million in cost savings through avoiding increased health, justice and welfare services costs.

7.5. More people understand the law, and legal system

Among all the case stories, the most common outcome experienced by clients who received legal help from Justice Connect, was an improved understanding of their legal rights and the options available to them. Clients were advised about their rights in relation to a range of issues including criminal charges, intervention orders, apprehended violence orders, tenancy, debt, and compensation, and then supported to follow their chosen course to address their legal problems.

Case stories this year also demonstrated instances of clients being advised and assisted to understand processes so they could apply for entitlements or attend court knowing what to expect, for example. Other clients were referred to pro bono lawyers for advice on the merits of their claims.

7.5.1. Client and trainee feedback

Not-for-profit Law received feedback from 934 people who participated in training delivered by the program during FY21. Training topics included governance, managing volunteers, privacy and data laws, social enterprise, employment, social media, disputes and conflicts, safety, insurance and risk, and working with other organisations. Participants rated the training highly:

- 92% rated the training overall as “excellent” (54%) or “very good” (37%)
- 90% agreed that after the training they felt more confident to address legal issues (covered by the training) in their organisation
- 96% agreed that their knowledge about the training topic increased as a result of the training
- Training participants were also asked “how likely are you to recommend NFP Law training to a friend?” Responses gave a Net Promoter Score of 65⁵¹.

Not-for-profit Law also received 84 survey responses from clients in FY21.⁵²

- 88% reported an increase in understanding and 94% reported an increase in confidence

7.6. Stronger and more effective community organisations

Not-for-profit Law provides practical legal help to community organisations and social enterprises to help them improve their efficiency and effectiveness in delivering positive outcomes for the community.

7.6.1. Understanding and complying with relevant laws

All of the case stories from Not-for-profit Law demonstrated that assistance helped community organisations understand and comply with the laws relevant to their operations (e.g. associations law, employment law). This knowledge enabled organisations to do a range of things including change legal structures, hold Special General Meetings during COVID-19 restrictions, update their constitutions, engage volunteers and in one instance, wind up an incorporated association after operations became untenable.

[Receiving advice from Not-for-profit Law] meant that we could hold our heads up in the community, knowing we were acting diligently and within the law. (Not-for-profit Law client)

They have been quick to respond to our requests and provided really helpful information and resources that have been vital to ensuring we comply with all our legislative requirements with regards to our volunteers. I would highly recommend their services to others who are in need of some help. (Not-for-profit Law client)

7.6.2. Good governance

Not-for-profit Law’s ‘Governance Health Check’ project was highlighted again this year in the case stories as making an important contribution to the good governance of community organisations. Through this project, not-for-profit organisations received a comprehensive review of their governance and constitution, followed by advice and recommendations for improvement. The project also directed

⁵¹ A score >60 is generally considered very good (<https://www.hotjar.com/net-promoter-score/good-score-benchmarks/>).

⁵² It is not known how many clients were invited to complete a feedback survey therefore the margin of error cannot be calculated for these survey responses. These findings reflect the experience of 84 clients assisted by Not-for-profit Law, but it is not known if they are indicative of the experience of all clients.

organisations to resources and information to help them implement any recommendations arising from the assessment.

Not-for-profit Law also provided training to community organisations on ‘Governing a Not-for-profit Organisation’. One case study describes positive feedback received from board members and senior staff at an organisation who received this training.

[I] had no previous knowledge and now feel that I understand the [governance] process and obligations. (Not-for-profit Law, training participant)

[I will] use this information to better understand the obligations and role of the Governance Committee. (Not-for-profit Law, training participant)

The assistance provided by Justice Connect has meant our organisation can focus on the importance of Governance across all areas of the organisation to ensure the longevity of Carrie’s Place for those most vulnerable in our community. (Not-for-profit Law, training participant)

7.6.3. Focus on mission

Case stories from Not-for-profit Law highlighted the importance of free and low-cost legal help for community organisations who, being mission driven, endeavour to put as much of their resources as possible toward their activities that serve community. Assistance from Not-for-profit Law, available in many forms, enables community organisations to focus more of their time, energy and financial resources on fulfilling their missions (e.g. caring and working for the cultural, economic and social wellbeing of traditional owners of country, helping people affected by or at risk of homelessness and domestic violence, supporting families of premature and sick babies, assisting people with physical disabilities, etc.).

Justice Connect have been a great help to Life’s Little Treasures. Being a not for profit we would struggle to pay for legal advice. It has been wonderful to have an organisation like Justice Connect assist us for no charge with our legal questions around managing our volunteers. (Not-for-profit Law client)

7.6.4. Feedback from website users

Among the 437 Not-for-profit Law website users who provided feedback via online survey, most reported that using the website helped strengthen their community organisation and make it more effective.⁵³

- 88.2% agreed that they had a good outcome as a result of using Not-for-profit Law’s resources
- 85.6% agreed that their organisation had improved its governance practices
- 83.2% agreed that they had been able to engage more effectively with volunteers, employees, clients or beneficiaries

⁵³ This sample size provides a margin of error of 5% at the 95% confidence level. This means is 95% likely that the true value for the population (i.e. all Not-for-profit Law website users) lies within +/- 5% of the percentages reported.

7.7. Improved individual wellbeing

Justice Connect aims to address unmet legal need because the consequential impacts on the wellbeing of individuals and the community are significant and unacceptable. Research in Australia has consistently shown that legal problems and unmet legal need contribute to ill health, and as such, by assisting with the resolution and prevention of legal problems, Justice Connect contributes to the improved wellbeing of individuals.⁵⁴

7.7.1. Health

As in previous years, many of the case stories reported this year showed that legal assistance helped alleviate stress people were experiencing because of unaddressed legal problems. Several clients had been facing large fines or debt they could not pay, while others were at risk of losing their homes. One case study described a couple whose legal issue had been ongoing for 10 years, taking enormous toll on their mental and physical health.

The case stories described how numerous clients experienced relief that their matters had concluded, providing them a degree of certainty about their futures and a sense of being able to move on with their lives. Similarly, clients assisted to put measures in place to prevent future legal issues (e.g. POA and AVO) were described as gaining a greater sense of safety. Legal assistance was particularly helpful for clients with existing health issues for whom stress was an exacerbating factor.

[Homeless Law] made me feel heard [and] gave me hope to hold onto when I had just about given up, and courage to believe in myself when everything was crumbling. (Client)

7.7.2. Financial wellbeing

Many case stories this year described clients' financial wellbeing improving with the prevention or resolution of legal problems, either because they consequently received a payment or entitlement of some kind, or because a fine or debt they were otherwise liable to pay, was dismissed.

Numerous clients had fines and debts dismissed or resolved, removing what constituted a significant financial burden for clients already experiencing financial and other challenges. For example, a client who had been experiencing family violence and spent time in respite before being re-housed, incurred an \$8,000 debt for the temporary housing of her dogs by the RSPCA. The HJP lawyer was able to negotiate with the RSPCA to have this debt waived.

Several clients benefitted from brokerage assistance organised by Homeless Law's social worker to cover things such as food, phone credit and removalist and storage costs. This financial assistance helped several clients gain secure housing and restore family relationships.

Numerous clients assisted through the Access Program with claims at the Fair Work Commission, obtained fair settlement payments from former employers including repayment of unpaid wages.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Reshaping legal assistance services: building on the evidence base; Pleasence, Courmarellos, Forell & McDonald; Law and Justice Foundation of New South Wales (2014), p 121.

⁵⁵ During FY21, the Access Program's strategy included a focus on financial matters.

7.7.3. Safe, secure housing

Among this year's case stories were several examples of legal assistance, especially from Homeless Law, having helped clients achieve more safe and secure housing. Legal representation helped some clients avoid eviction, while others were helped by the Homeless Law social worker to find and move into safer and/or longer-term housing. A combination of assistance from a HJP lawyer and pro bono representation led to one client gaining the security of having their home transferred into their name and their mortgage discharged after fraudulent activity by family members had put their home at risk.

7.8. Case stories – examples of impact

One case story has been selected from each program to illustrate in more detail the types of impact experienced by Justice Connect clients. Each chosen story has been included to give the reader a sense of the breadth and importance of outcomes achieved for clients. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the privacy of clients.⁵⁶

Oscar

Access Program

Oscar went out with some friends to a restaurant. When he arrived, he saw there were a number of stairs and no alternative way in. This was an issue for Oscar as he has a disability and requires the use of a mobility aide. To attend the restaurant, Oscar's friends had to help him slide down the stairs and carry his mobility aide.

Shortly after arriving, the manager of the restaurant came over to Oscar and said he had to leave. He said he shouldn't have entered the building because if there was a fire, he would not be able to get out without help. Oscar's friends helped him to leave the restaurant, but he was very upset.

He filed a disability discrimination complaint with the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), not only for the accessibility issue but the way he was treated. The matter failed to settle at the AHRC, so Oscar sought assistance from the Justice Connect to pursue his matter in the Federal Circuit Court.

He was provided with appointments to help him file and progress to mediation, at which point he was referred to a barrister for merits advice. The Access Program then also referred Oscar to a member firm, who helped him settle the matter at mediation.

⁵⁶ The case story from Not-for-profit Law includes the name of the organisation involved, who gave permission to be identified.

Mary is an Aboriginal single-mother of four, who is a family violence victim-survivor with diagnosed mental health issues. Mary has a history of homelessness, and when she first spoke with Homeless Law, she was couch surfing with her baby daughter during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mary asked for help with a Director of Housing debt of \$5,500 from a previous public housing property, which related to damage caused by her violent ex-partner. Homeless Law's lawyers advised Mary about her legal rights and options, entering into tailored and extensive negotiations with the Director of Housing to resolve the debt. Mary also told our integrated Women's Homelessness Prevention Project (WHPP) social worker that she had a long list of fines, which had been incurred by her violent ex-partner stealing her car. The social worker linked her to representation from Homeless Law's specialised lawyers to remove the unfair burden of these fines for Mary. Through the trust built by Homeless Law, Mary also disclosed that she had a large Centrelink debt, which had been caused by an incorrect report about her children's care arrangements, so the social worker linked her with expert social security rights assistance to address this debt.

Due to this wrap-around legal and social work assistance, Mary was empowered to secure a safe, long-term private rental property. Justice Connect's social worker also secured financial brokerage to cover removalist costs, so Mary could move her belongings out of storage into her new house. Since achieving this crucial housing security, Mary has regained the care of her three older children, and she and her reunited family are looking forward to a better future in the COVID-19 recovery phase.

The Physical Disability Council of NSW (**PDCN**) is the State peak representative organisation of and for people with physical disabilities. PDCN has a significant number of people with physical disabilities among its membership, board and employees. PDCN assists people with a physical disability to live ordinary lives as contributing members of the community by providing opportunities for individuals to gain the information, knowledge and skills necessary to manage their own lives.

Earlier this year, PDCN approached Not-for-profit Law for assistance with the set up and delivery of an equipment loan scheme. Not-for-profit Law were able to provide them with a referral to a law firm to receive pro bono legal advice about the agreements needed.

Serena Ovens, the CEO of PDCN said:

As a new service, with expensive mobility equipment, PDCN had no expertise in the legal requirements and insurance implications of delivering this new service, and have benefitted greatly from the pro bono legal advice sourced for us. This is still in progress, but to date the development of a proforma contract, assistance with our own liability and risk issues, the review of our current insurances, as well as advice on additional insurance needed to run the program has been invaluable – and saved us significant cost, that we would otherwise have struggled to meet!

Chan is a 70-year-old Cantonese speaking woman who has been the victim of elder abuse at the hands of her carer Kim. Chan is a Buddhist woman who is a refugee from China. She speaks very little English and is very socially isolated.

Chan was a patient of one of our health partners. The health partner did a capacity assessment of Chan. During the assessment Chan disclosed very serious allegations of abuse by her carer Kim.

Chan said that Kim physically assaulted her daily, often beating her until she was unconscious. Kim received the carers pension as Chan's carer but instead of caring for her he abused her. Kim had often threatened to also harm her three chihuahuas. One of the reasons Chan did not want to report the abuse was her fear that Kim would hurt her dogs.

Chan was extremely fearful and did not wish to report the abuse to the police. The social worker and psychologist from the health partner were obliged to report the violence due to mandatory reporting obligations.

As a result of the report to police, Kim was charged with assault and an interim AVO was put in place to protect Chan. The HJP lawyer visited Chan and explained the AVO to ensure that that she understood it and knew she could call the police if Kim breached it. The HJP lawyer attended court with Chan on the day of the assault hearing and ensured that Chan was supported and informed about the process. Prior to the court hearing the HJP lawyer explained to Chan what would happen on the day. The HJP lawyer also ensured that the court process was explained to the health partner's staff who attended on the day of the hearing to give evidence.

Kim was convicted of the assault and a final AVO was put in place to protect Chan. Chan is now safely living in a new unit. During the period of being rehoused Chan went to stay in respite and her dogs needed to be housed by an animal shelter at a cost of \$8000. The HJP lawyer was able to negotiate with the shelter to have this debt waived.

Chan's scenario is a great example of a health justice partnership in action. In working together, we achieved a great outcome for Chan.

8. Strategic engagement for better systems, laws and policies

8.1. Context and approach

For Justice Connect, it's not enough to work to help people in a broken system. It must also work to fix the system. Justice Connect uses its insights to drive systems-level change to benefit many, based on the experiences of the people it helps.

This year, Justice Connect continued to shape policy debates with strategic and sustained communications strategies on its key issue areas including preventing the criminalisation of homelessness, establishing a single national scheme to #FixFundraising, and introducing safeguards to address and prevent the abuse of older people.

8.2. Strategic Engagement Program

In December 2020, Justice Connect established a Strategic Engagement Program which piloted how a more coordinated and supported cross-organisational approach could increase the amount and impact of strategic engagement work. Led by the Engagement and Communications team, the Strategic Engagement Program established four key objectives for the pilot:

- Raise the profile of access to justice as an issue of political and community concern
- Advocate for and achieve better laws and policies
- Advocate for better legal service and system design
- Ensure that addressing the underlying drivers of unmet legal need is a key priority politically and across the community

The Strategic Engagement Program primarily focuses on public-facing advocacy and campaigning. It sits alongside each program's advocacy work which includes building coalitions and relationships, participating in forums and peak body networks and providing policy advice.

Activities undertaken through the Strategic Engagement Program involved daily media and advocacy sweeps open to the whole organisation, fortnightly meetings with teams across the organisation, updated and published issue-based [campaign pages](#) that serve as hubs for submissions, articles, and actions and a newly developed Advocacy app that tracks working groups, projects, campaigns, media lists and activities.

8.3. Contributing to Better Laws and Policies

Over the last financial year, Justice Connect produced 6 submissions to state and federal governments, building on expertise from its casework and client insights:

1. Submission to the PAEC Inquiry into the Victorian Government's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic (July 2020)
2. Submission to the Charities Crisis Cabinet on Justice Connect's campaign to Fix Fundraising (November 2020)
3. Submission to the New South Wales Government on the proposed Charitable Fundraising Regulation 2020 (NSW) (September 2020)
4. Submission to the Federal Treasury's exposure draft of the ACNC Amendment (2021 Measures No. 2) Regulations 2021 (March 2021)

5. Fundraising Survey 2021 in consultation with the Charities Crisis Cabinet (May 2021)
6. Submission to the New South Wales Government's Department of Communities and Justice's remote witnessing consultation paper (June 2021)

Justice Connect also saw these key campaign moments:

- December 2020: The Federal Government put fundraising law reform on the National Federation Reform Council (NFRC)'s agenda.
- March 2021: Housing a welcome focus in Victorian Government's Mental Health Royal Commission.
- March 2021: Victoria made digital witnessing of legal documents permanent.
- April 2021: Victorian Government's final report on their Inquiry into Homelessness in Victoria reflected the evidence Justice Connect gave during its public hearing and in its final submission.
- April 2021: Bolstering the sector's response to the ACNC Amendment Regulations 2021 and the proposed changes to Governance Standard 3 regarding illegal activities.
- April 2021: Launch of Joining Up Justice website, mapping the journey of a help-seeker attempting to get legal help, and the organisation attempting to help.
- May 2021: Launch of #FixFundraising Survey report.

These campaign moments and submissions were supported by clear web campaign pages, rigorous research and the production of media releases, reports, blog posts and social media content. Through consistent and clear campaign messaging, underpinned by strong relationships, diligent research and insights garnered through casework, Justice Connect has been influential in creating better laws and policies for its priority cohorts: people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, older people, those impacted by natural disasters and crises, community organisations and social enterprises.

Four examples are highlighted below to give further insight into how Justice Connect contributed to systems-level change during FY21.

8.3.1. Inquiry into Homelessness

On 4 March 2021, the Victorian Government tabled the Final Report from Victoria's first-ever Inquiry into Homelessness. This report provides 51 recommendations, many of which directly reflected Homeless Law's [own recommendations](#) on how to prevent the criminalisation of homelessness

Homeless Law's longstanding work with Victorians experiencing or at risk of homelessness directly informed their [submission to the Inquiry into Homelessness](#), which shared stories and insights from 47 former clients. Homeless Law were pleased that three of their key recommendations in relation to people exiting prison were endorsed in the Final Report, particularly the need for integrated legal support both before and after release to assist people to access and maintain stable, long-term housing.

8.3.2. Release of Seeking Help Online Report

This year, Justice Connect released the [Seeking Legal Help Online](#) report, which has provided human-centred design insights into the user experience of accessing legal services and support online. The report informs how Justice Connect can better design online resources for help-seekers engaging with them. By making the findings publicly available, Justice Connect is contributing to capacity building in the sector with the adoption of best practice in the design of online resources by other organisations. The report, led by consultants Jo Szczepanska and Emma Blomkamp, has been praised in networks as one of the must-read reports of 2020 and was entered into the 2021 [Australian Good Design Awards](#).

8.3.3. #FixFundraising

Advocacy around our #FixFundraising campaign has continued to build momentum and in December 2020, the Treasurer Josh Frydenberg and Senator Zed Seselja announced that the Council on Federal Financial Relations had agreed to establish a new cross-border recognition model, harmonising charitable fundraising laws and providing a national single registration point for charities and community organisations.

In May 2021, a [survey report](#) of over 600 charities and community organisations co-published by Justice Connect's #FixFundraising coalition and the Charities Crisis Cabinet revealed that the majority of organisations surveyed were significantly impacted by complicated and outdated fundraising laws.

The findings of the report have been used to help Justice Connect continue to advocate for a single national scheme for the regulation of charitable fundraising, as recommended by the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements.

A full timeline of campaign actions and milestones can be found [here](#).

8.3.4. Digital witnessing of legal documents

Older people's legal matters often involve important documents like Enduring Power of Attorney and Appointment of Enduring Guardian, and if put in place, these documents can play a role in enshrining someone's agency and safety. Making and revoking these legal documents forms an integral part of the work the Seniors Law program performs to prevent and respond to elder abuse. Often, the law requires solicitors to be physically present to witness the making or revoking of these documents. This has been made impossible by COVID-19 related restrictions that prevent lawyers from meeting with their clients physically.

For over 12 months, Seniors law advocated for the [remote witnessing of documents](#), including appropriate safeguards against misuse. In March 2021, the Victorian Parliament passed the *Justice Legislation Amendment (System Enhancements and Other Matters) Bill 2021* (Vic) which enshrines improvements such as allowing Victorian courts to continue hearing matters via videoconferencing technology rather than in-person hearings, and allow for digital and remote witnessing of important legal documents.

8.4 Increased Capacity to Create Systems-Level Change

In July 2021, a six-month evaluation was run internally with participants of the Strategic Engagement Program, where they identified the following outcomes:

- More effective and consistent allocation of communications resources across the organisation
- Improved collaboration between teams
- More coordinated and consistent multi-channel approach to our public communications
- Better transparency and understanding of each program's strategic engagement activity (through an updated CRM)
- More accessible submissions for the public (attributed to translating submissions into graphics and blog posts)

All evaluation participants agreed that the Strategic Engagement Program helped to better influence systems-level change.

From a data perspective, 17% (114) of the 667 organic social media posts in the six-month period were related to strategic engagement campaigns but contributed to 39% of impressions (453,952 impressions total), 47% of the engagements on posts (10,585 engagements total) and 47% of clicks on posts (3043 clicks total), indicating they were very high-reaching and engaging.

Looking back over a 12-month period, the total number of pageviews to campaign pages increased from 2,531 in FY19-20 to 18,983 this financial year (a 639% increase).

9. Method

This Report was designed and written through collaboration between E. Pritchard Consulting and Justice Connect. Justice Connect staff wrote sections 1 and 8, and the consultant produced sections 2 – 7 and 9.

The consultant reviewed data spreadsheets and graphs prepared by Justice Connect. These included data collected by programs throughout the year about program activities, enquiries received, responses to enquiries (e.g. type of legal assistance provided), website traffic and social media activity.

The consultant used the quantitative data⁵⁷ from across programs to produce a summary of the demand for and supply of help by Justice Connect for FY21 and where possible made comparisons with FY20.

The consultant also reviewed client stories prepared by Justice Connect programs; these described examples of program impact.

NVivo 11⁵⁸ was used by the consultant to analyse 24 client stories and identify the types of impacts experienced by Justice Connect's clients as a result of the help they received. Each story was read at least twice, and then coded using the current theory of change as an organising framework.

Program managers reviewed a draft of this report and feedback was incorporated into the final version.

9.1. Limitations

This year saw an increase in the amount of feedback collected from clients, trainees and users of online information, resources and tools, as Justice Connect continued to develop and refine its approach to evaluating impact. The feedback collected provides some valuable insights about the changes that Justice Connect's work produces and ways it can improve, however it must be noted that sample sizes were generally too small to enable generalisation of the findings to the broader group of help-seekers and trainees supported. Feedback presented within this report should therefore be considered examples of the types of experiences and benefits enjoyed by help-seekers and trainees, but it cannot be assumed representative of the views of all who have engaged with Justice Connect.

⁵⁷ The use of common metrics across programs enables quantitative data to be aggregated.

⁵⁸ Qualitative data analysis software.

Appendices

Table 3: Services delivered by Justice Connect, FY21

INTAKE AND RESPONSES		PERFORMANCE MEASURE	Access Program	Homeless Law	Not-for-profit Law	Seniors Law	TOTAL
Intake		# intake – TOTAL	Not reported at program level in FY21				8153
		- via online tools	Not reported at program level in FY21				3509
		- via phone, in-person, or email	Not reported at program level in FY21				4644
Responses ⁵⁹	Legal assistance (unbundled, one-off advices and legal tasks)	# instances of legal assistance (advice or legal task) provided to help-seekers ⁶⁰	868	82	333	177	1460
	Intensive legal assistance (Case work files both with and without representation)	# casework files closed by Justice Connect services where Justice Connect is in a lawyer-client relationship	0	338	0	205	543
	Pro bono referrals	# referrals placed with member firms, barristers and non-member firms	499	NA	364	14	877
	Legal information (no advice)	# help-seekers given legal information one-to-one	361	20	1026	52	1459
	External Legal or Non-legal referral ⁶¹	# outbound referrals to legal and non-legal services	1617	930	12	260	2819
	Secondary consultations	# secondary consultations provided by Justice Connect	12	56 ⁶²	0	768 ⁶³	836
	Non-legal assistance (Homeless Law only)	# individuals provided one-to-one non-legal assistance by the Homeless Persons Liaison Officers ⁶⁴	NA	204	NA	NA	204

⁵⁹ Figures reported in this section are based on file closures or service completions (not number opened).

⁶⁰ Justice Connect diverges from the Data Standards Manual when counting legal advices and tasks: counting only instances where a help-seeker receives advice, or the output of a task. For example, while drafting a letter may involve many smaller tasks (e.g. calling another service provider or court), Justice Connect only count one task for when the help-seeker receives the letter.

⁶¹ Legal – a service outside of Justice Connect (e.g. LIV, CLC, etc.) Non-legal – a support service that assists with non-legal issues (e.g. employment, financial planning, AOD, etc.)

⁶² This captures the information provided by Homeless Law lawyers (i.e. in-house lawyers) to external legal and non-legal workers regarding their clients' legal issues, timeframes, risks and options. This does not include secondary consults made by the Homeless Persons Liaison Officers.

⁶³ Under the Health Justice Partnership model, a health professional who recognises that a patient has a legal issue can consult a lawyer and then relay the relevant legal information (but not legal advice) to the patient.

⁶⁴ HPLO are social workers employed by Justice Connect.

Table 4: Training and education delivered by Justice Connect, FY21

TRAINING AND EDUCATION	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	Access Program	Homeless Law	Not-for-profit Law	Seniors Law	TOTAL
Training for help-seekers – individuals and not-for-profit organisations	# help-seekers attending (in person, by webinar, etc.)	99	728	5979	295	7101
	# sessions	4	21	122	25	172
Training for professionals (e.g. community workers and pro bono lawyers)	# professionals attending (in person, by webinar, etc.)	408	1004	70	837	2319
	# sessions	6	30	1	73	110

Table 5: Self-help resource access by individuals and community organisations, FY21

ONLINE SELF-HELP RESOURCES	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TOTAL
Access by individuals	# unique page views of self-help resources for individuals	409,878
	# unique users of self-help resources for individuals	289,232
Access by community organisations	# unique page views self-help resources for community organisations	348,690
	# unique users of self-help resources for community organisations	129,537