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'Going Deeper'- The Invisible Hurdles Stage III Research Evaluation Final Report

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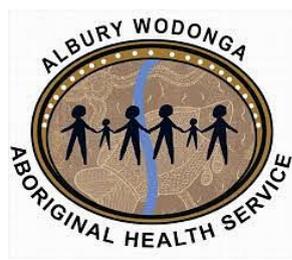
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If it wasn't for the Invisible Hurdles Project, she would have been unlikely to talk to a lawyer. This young person has shared issues around the age of consent and what is and isn't appropriate with other young people. By arming her with this sort of information it has had a huge ripple effect. (Extract from in-depth interview with trusted intermediary staff, 2022)

This young woman ... would have never sought legal service from an independent or private or legal aid lawyer. She understands the issues better, she knows what her rights are as a 16-year-old. Where she was previously controlled by her family, she now looks after herself. She has an exit plan, and she can now frame things that are acceptable and not acceptable around family violence and know that it's OK to question and say no. (Extract from in-depth interview with trusted intermediary staff, 2022)

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Partners: Hume Riverina Community Legal Service
Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service
North-East Support & Action for Youth
Wodonga Flexible Learning Centre



The authors acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands, including the Dhudhuroa, Wavereoo, Wiradjuri and Yorta Yorta people. We pay our respects to their elders, past, present, and emerging. We acknowledge that the research for this report and the program to which it relates was undertaken on stolen land where sovereignty was never ceded.

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Disclaimer: It is noted that at the relevant time of the conduct of the field research and analysis, Dr Curran was not in the employ of NTU. All relevant ethics approval processes were followed at the time of these as were relevant prior to and on the conduct of the field research (detailed in this report). This report was refined and finalised from 6 June 2022 and onwards while in the employ of NTU providing further scaffolding for future research. Accordingly, NTU is not liable for any claim arising out of the work undertaken prior to Dr Curran's fulltime employment.

Terminology and Abbreviations

Aboriginal	The term used throughout this report to represent both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
ANU	The Australian National University
AWAHS	Albury Wodonga ABORIGINAL Health Service
DETV	Department of Education and Training Victoria
HRCLS	Hume Riverina Community Legal Service
IH	Invisible Hurdles
LANSW	Legal Aid New South Wales
Lawyer 3	The term used throughout this report to represent the lawyer who regularly attended WFLC and NESAY until Dec 2021 and attends AWAHS from Jan 2022.
Lawyer 5	The term used throughout this report to represent the lawyer who regularly attended AWAHS from August 2018 to July 2020.
Lawyer 6	The term used throughout this report to represent the lawyer who has attended AWAHS since August 2020. She is also the Legal Project Worker in all three projects.
Lawyer 7	The term used throughout this report to represent the lawyer who regularly attends WFLC and NESAY from Jan 2022
MAC	Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation
NESAY	Northeast Support and Action for Youth
SC	Secondary Consultations
Trusted Intermediary Staff	Frontline workers who help and support clients and act as intermediaries to support them gain legal help with legal problem
DJCS	Victorian Department of Justice and Community Services
VLA	Victoria Legal Aid
VLSB	Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner
WFLC	Wodonga Flexible Learning Centre
YP	Young person
YC	Yarning Circle

For the purpose of this research, the term Aboriginal will be acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, First Nations, and First Peoples.

Executive Summary

It seems fitting, to no longer describe the Invisible Hurdles initiative as a 'project', as it has now been operating since 2015. For this reason, in this report, the third research evaluation report for the program, entitled, '*Going Deeper*' -*The Invisible Hurdles Stage III Research and Evaluation Final Report (2022)* it will be described as the 'Invisible Hurdles Program'.

Due to the length of time that the project has been funded, inroads have been made into the proxies or benchmarks developed in 2015, recalibrated from time to time and improved on but remaining consistent measures over the past seven years of the Invisible Hurdles program's (IHP); its impact, reach and effectiveness. This has been borne out by the data across the different tools that have been used to cross reference and verify each other. These benchmarks include: the **reach** by overcoming hurdles young people experience that hinder access to legal help; levels of **engagement** by the program by young people, organisations that are a part of a partnership, and the staff of those organisations; increased capability and **capacity** of young people and their trusted staff with whom the program has engaged; increased **empowerment** of the program's participants including awareness of options, ability to make next steps and hope; and finally, the move to improved **collaboration** that has actually shifted further along the spectrum to be able to be assessed as genuine partnerships both between each of the partner agencies and across all of the four partners.

Findings

1. The program is efficient and effective in reaching young people who would not otherwise have been reached. The data from the research reveals that the IHP staff demonstrated empathy, compassion, and humility in their relationships with young people and staff. In this iteration of the IHP program multidisciplinary and integrated service delivery was seamless and a 'way we do business'. A long relationship of trust being sustained has enabled the partnership to weather change and challenges such as the COVID pandemic and border closures.
2. The resolution of legal problems through the IHP helps keep young people in school, out of debt, enables them to find safety, has reunified family members, has prevented homelessness, eviction and helped young people identify when they are experiencing unlawful activity and led them to take avertive action. The IHP has empowered young people to feel they can engage in civil society and to share information with their peers.
3. The provision of ongoing, secure, and stable funding to this program has enabled inroads to be made, lessons to be learned and program recalibration to make it more effective. The provision of continuous, secure funding has been instrumental in the program's ability to make inroads into access to justice and support to enable the social determinant of health needs of young people in the region. HRCLS' ability to combine funding from various sources over the past 7 years has enabled the IHP to continue, enabling lessons to be learned and the program to be recalibrated to make it more effective.
4. The impact data collected for this Stage III of the Invisible Hurdles Program (IHP) is suggestive of improvements over the life of the program since 2015 in health, prosperity, enriched lives, and a way of working that addresses some of challenges for young people at risk of family violence.
5. All aspects of the program connect well. That is, secondary consultations are leading to referrals, which leads to casework, which leads to further secondary consultations and then to systemic action. Community Development is leading to casework and Community Development is also leading to systemic work.
6. Management is committed to the IHP and are well briefed on what happens in the program. Management is also utilising the learnings from the program to shape and inform their own service delivery. In this Stage III study, the data also reflected transformations not just for the participants in the IHP individually but

transformations in the way the partner agencies are doing business and respond in other areas in which they do service delivery beyond the IHP.

7. The data suggests that the program has been effective in making inroads in responding to family violence occurring in the lives of young people and their families. This is attributable to its longitudinal nature; its ability over time to build an understanding of family violence and its manifestations. The IHP has an ability to provide service pathways both to young people and their trusted intermediaries such as teachers, health professionals and other social services.
8. The data from Stage III of the research evaluation, is suggestive that the program is not only having an impact on justice outcomes but is also flowing through to effect issues around recovery, hope, improved informed decision making, and improvements in income, housing, and social and service connection (namely the social determinants of health).
9. The Community Development delivery has been structured, deliberate and flexible allowing for scaffolding (there are examples in the data of where the confidence and skills of the young people grew).
10. The Community Development program at WFLC has increased democratic engagement of the young people who participated. For example, the 'Raise the Age', Consent and Voting Programs delivered by the program team. (See Appendixes to this report).
11. Secondary Consultations are easily available and have become routine in practice, meaning practitioners don't even hesitate to use them. Despite the limitations of running the program during the COVID pandemic, secondary consultations increased, and these have been continuous in the post pandemic phases in 2022. Keeping the online option developed during COVID will supplement the face-to-face, visible attendance at each of the partner sites which is still needed.
12. The program has achieved integration and its seven years of operation have enabled traction, trust, and an embedding of the approach across the four partners, achieving seamless delivery in the new expanded realm of Community Development work since 2020 at NESAY and WFLC. Further inroads are being made into AWASH since the lockdowns. Post lockdown community engagement is starting to return to pre-COVID levels (though it is not achievable to have the same level with less staff/funding).
13. There is a high level of mutual trust and understanding between the individual agencies and the Invisible Hurdles' lawyers. This has also meant that when there are low level misunderstandings or missteps, staff are prepared to push through these as they value the benefit and overall impact and inroads that the program has made. This could only have occurred because the program has a track record overtime and is highly valued by partners and staff alike. In the most recent Stage III data, the young people themselves, who have utilised the program, have also developed these high levels of mutual trust in the program lawyers and in the Hume Riverina Community Legal Service which has been significant since the last Stage II report.
14. HRCLS is committed to continually improving its staff's understanding of and appreciation for Aboriginal history and culture and this commitment has directly related to service delivery to Aboriginal Invisible Hurdles' clients.
15. In line with the recommendations in the Final Report on Stage II (acknowledging my co-author of the first two reports Pamela Taylor-Barnett), the focus (now that restrictions are easing) is on building new connections to enable a broader range of young people to participate in community development and policy work. The IHP team continue to engage and adapt. This is challenging work, and the program team has shown tenacity, and made further inroads into building the trust and engagement with all three partner agencies. This includes recognising that the mode of engagement needs to be varied and adapted for the different exigencies of the three partner agencies. In relation to the Flexible Learning Centre, students are on site for most of the day and so exploiting this onsite availability has enabled the ongoing building of relationships, visibility through an effective community development using humour, variation, and fun activities. This has made it easier for the program to engage at WFLC. At NESAY, the young people often engage on a one-on-one level with their

counsellors, social workers, and other supports. The program team has adapted their mode of delivery to suit this mode of service delivery at NESAY enabling them to work with the professionals outside of their on-site attendance through secondary consultations, attendance at the Youth Advisory Council meetings in the evening, the use of 'Cuppa dates' to provide additional legal support and discussion forums (although there was some initial adaptation required for the hybrid model of home and office work post the pandemic). Being available and responsive on their mobile phones and via email has been a hallmark of this engagement. At AWHS the program team are linking up with a range of community members including young Aboriginal people and working to improve trust. At AWHS cultural safety and the space to improve trust require the allowance for time. This is to overcome cynicism and the often-engrained disappointment due to issues of colonisation, distrust, and the often-poor sources of information that many young people First Nations people have come to rely on.

16. Emerging in the data collected in Stage III of the research, is that many young people have had poor negative experiences of lawyers previously, or their family members have had poor previous experiences of lawyers and or the legal system. It has been noted in the data that the lawyers on this program because of their approachability, empathy, and visibility are breaking through these negative stereotypes which is 'closing the gap'.
17. Professional Development has exceeded goals set, has been accessible, engaging, and relevant. This was an area for improvement and growth at AWHS as noted in the last report and inroads have been made here.
18. The referral process continues to be clear and operationalised well in all organisations. New successes have been made at AWHS, with a significant increase in referrals and secondary consultations reported from health professionals and reflected in the aggregated service data contained in this report.
19. There is a high level of reflective practice skills in the lawyers involved in the program and by the program partner management team and changes in practice are supported by management.
20. The proxies (used in this evaluation as indicators to measure impact) have been met, namely: reach, capacity, engagement, empowerment, reciprocity, and collaboration.
21. The lawyers in the Invisible Hurdles team worked closely together and delivered some outstanding Community Legal Education programs.
22. The lawyers in the Invisible Hurdles team co-ordinated systemic work giving voice to young people and became a 'go-to' source of legal help for many young people.
23. Over Stage II and the beginning of Stage III, in contrast to the first year of the program in Stage I, there has been a continuity of staff with the two lawyers remaining in their lawyer roles. At the end of 2021 and beginning of 2022 due to maternity leave there was a transition of staff, however this change-over was almost seamless by comparison to previous staff turnover and transitions. The IHP team worked closely together, mentoring new staff and introducing them to each partner and one staff member was already familiar to AWHS meaning that trust was established early.
24. Comments made by staff in the in-depth interviews and manager interviews is that the program has moved beyond trusting staff to also including trust in the agency, namely the Hume Riverina Community Legal Service. This has contributed to the seamless and continuous service delivery, and to the relationships being built with staff and clients.
25. The ongoing nature of the program, the relationships established and the awareness and visibility of the program and its staff and their availability to help is increasing. This is enabling this program to continue to gain traction and to reach more young people than previously would have been the case, without the Invisible Hurdles Program.

26. There was a marked improvement in moving from working together for service delivery to working together on policy trends in this service delivery, for greater impact indicates a more sophisticated approach in the Stage III of the program with further areas for focus being identified (see the recommendations).
27. Over seven years of funding from multiple sources, the Invisible Hurdles team has delivered what can, on the data collected, be assessed against the benchmarks as 'integrated' and holistic legal practice.
28. Over the life of the program, with the consistency of lawyers in more recent times, the lawyers had been able to develop specialist knowledge of ways of working in the young person's space using a 'growth mindset'. This has also enabled ways of engaging with bureaucracy and decision makers enabling them to defeat, in some instances, the hurdles and barriers that are presented for young people in trying to secure their legal rights and protections. An illustration of this has been the work with the lawyers have done overtime to secure birth certificates for young people. Feedback from trusted intermediary staff in the data suggests this work is directly linked to enabling the young people to secure income, housing, health services, driver's licences, and social supports for themselves and in some cases their young children (see case studies).
29. The participants in this research have reflected on the value of having had an embedded research evaluation with the same independent research evaluators over the period of this longitudinal study. The data revealed that the success of the IHP in terms of its impact on the lives of its clients, practitioners from different disciplines and the community and the continuance of its funding is partly due to the growth of the evidence-based approaches in this process. This it was noted, subjected the IHP to rigor and testing through research over seven years (Interview with Managers, Reflective Practice Meeting with Managers, In-depth Interviews with Trusted Intermediary Staff). This has enhanced and enabled the further impact of the IHP. It is noted in the data that, expanded reach has also been a result of having an ongoing research evaluation with the insight from the research provided to the partners and staff around what works and why and what changes might be necessary directly influencing changes in practice. An example is the improvements to the delivery of community development between the interim report for Stage II and the growth and changes in practice by the IHP team in this area since then. This need for change was identified and suggestions for improvement implemented along the way, based on the evidence gathered in the research. The research participants also reflected the ability of the IHP to receive, unusual ongoing funding in this sector, because of having an evidence-based series of reports at each stage of the program which has leveraged this further funding and continues to make a case for its continuance and the funding of replicable models for service delivery in the sector.
30. Five of the participants in this research for Field Trip 8 in May 2022 had active COVID at the time of their participation in this research. The fact that the program management of the team were able to quickly pivot from the planned face-to-face field work to online Teams interviews and reflective practice meetings and debriefs within 24 hours of the diagnosis of many of the potential participants, demonstrates the agility and flexibility of the partnership and its management and staff as well as their commitment to this research evaluation process.

Recommendations

1. **The Invisible Hurdles Program continues its shift to explore more ways of engaging with AWAHS and NESAY considering the difficulties in engagement with Aboriginal young people and a service site where young people tend to be drop-ins or seek one to one support from NESAY.**

The Invisible Hurdles Program has come to recognise that each of the partners requires a different tailored and flexible responses given the nature of how young people engage with services and the young people's complex needs and advice seeking behaviours. It is encouraging to see in this study that dialogues are occurring with agencies as to what engaging and effective collaboration with young people looks like. The shift is occurring, and much more can be done. This includes the reinstatement of the 'Cuppa dates' informal Teams

sessions with NESAY, now that the pandemic restrictions have eased to work around the new hybrid model of working patterns at NESAY.

- 2. That Invisible Hurdles be given long-term funding. At the time of writing his report, there was considerable uncertainty as to whether one of the program lawyers would continue to be funded beyond September 2022. This uncertainty and instability in funding has been an ongoing theme of the previous two reports on the program. Although it is rare for a program such as this to have been funded for seven years, the funding remains piecemeal and places burdens on the administrators to keep seeking further project funding. Despite IHP being a cross border program, funding is currently solely Victorian based.**
- 3. Over seven years of funding from multiple sources, the Invisible Hurdles team has delivered a first-class, fully integrated legal practice despite threats to its funding presented by short term funding from time to time. This uncertainty makes it hard to reassure partners and young people that the service is there for the long haul and to retain staff as was highlighted in Stage 1.**

The extensions of funding for Stage 2 saw a more consistent staff that enabled traction. Longer term funding certainty should be a priority to ensure the program's significant gains are not lost and momentum continues to build. Such long term 5–8-year funding (with evaluation to ensure and test ongoing effectiveness) should form part of governments' stated commitments to family violence, regional people, to closing the gap and to breaking the cycle of poverty.

- 4. That Invisible Hurdles continues the momentum of giving voice to young people in systemic work**

The Invisible Hurdles team has made excellent contributions to systemic work by young people. The most important advancement about this work is that some of the young people involved have started to use their voice to self-advocate. The author would like to see this aspect of the program to continue. Collaboration in systemic advocacy that enables multiple voices, varied agency expertise across disciplines and perspective to occur in such partnerships (based on the outcomes of other evaluative studies and in the research literature) is especially rare and as this research highlights takes a long time to develop the readiness that is now possible. The program has the capacity to be an authoritative advocate for the needs of regional youth.

- 5. Regular leadership meetings like the reflective practise meetings across the partnership management team on a quarterly basis.**
- 6. An area of focus for the Invisible Hurdles Program beyond June 2022 has been identified by the participants in this research evaluation for its service delivery, community development and law reform work. Namely examining the impacts for residential-care, out of home care, kinship care and foster care of transitions to adult hood where the State has removed children from families and moved them into State 'care'.**

This is in recognition of the difficulties for young people transitioning out of residential care the fact that often this is the only home and that they do not have the ongoing supports that other young people have and the cause of the likely high levels of trauma.

- 7. That the cuppa date model be extended to AWAHS staff**

Cuppa dates could be offered to staff at AWAHS, on an opt-in basis, and perhaps in an even more condensed way (e.g., 15 minutes) to entice time-poor professionals. This would ease pressure on the need to fit in

information in staff meetings, which already have a full agenda. This is not necessarily to replace Lawyer 6's slot on the agenda in staff meetings, but rather to complement that slot.

8. That a focus on Young Aboriginal Community member be cornerstone of future stages of Invisible Hurdles

There is a risk that Aboriginal young people may shy away from seeking legal advice about family violence from the Invisible Hurdles' lawyer because they could perceive the lawyer to be aligned with someone who is a perpetrator, or at least someone who is friends with a perpetrator. This is a risk, given the research on perpetrators often being known to the victim and in intimate family violence, creates an impediment to young people reaching out for independent advice and it also risks conflict of interest or appearance of bias.

It is recommended that HRCLS consider how best to engage more Aboriginal young people. It has made huge strides in this area in the first half of 2022.

9. That a Young Aboriginal community member sit on the Advisory group

A young Aboriginal community member should be invited to join the Advisory Group to enable the program's goals of reaching young Aboriginal people. It is not culturally respectful or appropriate to be endeavouring to reach Aboriginal young people without such participation and cultural advice.

Our Aboriginal adviser in 2021 said 'There's obviously [young Aboriginal] leaders in there, they're just not visible.' The author suggests that it be a goal of this program to find those emerging leaders and include them. This view was endorsed in the Reflective Practice Meeting and AWAS indicated some moves to recruit two representatives to its Board.

10. That a young person sits on the Advisory group

The Advisory Group would benefit from a young person's engagement on the group. Alternatively, the Invisible Hurdles team might consider setting up an Advisory group of young people specifically for the program, similar to the YAC model at NESAY. It would be appropriate for this group to be paid for their time.

11. That community development be prioritised through NESAY

The community development opportunities and plans with WFLC have been commendable. This work can now be tailored and adapted with NESAY whose community development focus was only partly able to be brought to fruition due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Although many changed practices continue due to COVID-19, the data indicates that the Invisible Hurdles team have been flexible and adaptable. Therefore, we suggest that building up a program of community development work with NESAY and AWAHS be prioritised in 2022-2023.

More Broadly

12. Funders and those involved in developing government policies need to recognise that collaborations and partnerships need to be adequately supported and funded on an ongoing basis rather than a short-term basis or fragmented funding model.

This is in recognition of the findings of this study the trust needs to be sustained. That once trust is tested and has been built up overtime, in this case seven years of the program, it enables the relationships to traverse and overcome difficulties together.

13. This research evaluation highlights that if given secure and stable funding overtime and if the partners in the endeavour have similar values, add including the focus on client-centred and holistic service provision, then it can overcome hurdles and barriers, reach more people in need, and start on the trajectory to consider the policy implications of the experience of people on the ground and together build a collective voice for changing unfair, inequitable or unjust laws and policies.

14. Research evaluations that are embedded from service start up that include and incorporate in their model participatory, iterative, and reflective opportunities are immensely invaluable for enabling services to think about what they are doing, how they are doing it, what is effective and what measures are required to make an impact. This evidence can then assess impact and can shape, inform and enable services to recalibrate, reassess and adapt their service delivery models so that they can be more effective and have a greater impact.

The participants in this research have reflected on the value of having had an embedded research evaluation with the same independent research evaluators over the period of this longitudinal study. The data revealed that the success of the project in terms of its impact on the lives of its clients, practitioners from different disciplines and the community has been enhanced and enabled further impact and reach because of having an ongoing and embedded research evaluation. The research participants also reflect all the ability of the Invisible Hurdles Program to receive, because of having an evidence-based series of reports at each stage of the program. This independent, evidence-based research has leveraged the further funding and made a case for its continuance.

15. That the Invisible Hurdles model be rolled out in other schools around Australia

The Invisible Hurdles services one school and two other agencies. Its success at the school is outstanding. It is an integrated justice model with some important and sophisticated developments, practices and effective approaches that can inform other school lawyer models. The model should be

thoroughly documented and replicated in other schools. Especially in schools that have 'at risk' cohorts as a priority, given the early intervention opportunities that the data demonstrates are a consequence of such interventions.

16. That the legal profession more broadly takes up the opportunity to hear from Aboriginal community

HRCLS is ideally positioned with its volunteer lawyer service to make introductions between AWAHS and the local lawyers' network groups. Already they hold AWAHS Wills Day co-ordinated by HRCLS but staffed by local volunteer lawyers. Such work can be instrumental in building on new networks given the difficulty in accessing legal assistance services. HRCLS and AWAHS could also jointly train other lawyers to ensure they become more culturally competent.

17. That university ethics committees and ethics committees of government departments and other agencies consider the audience for their information sheets and consent forms. The feedback from the young people in the pilot yarning circle was that consent cannot be truly informed if the forms are incomprehensible and are written in a language that is academic and complex.

In Field Trip 8 of this Stage III evaluation, based on this feedback from young people, the information sheets were simplified whilst keeping intact salient information required by ethics committees.

Conclusion:

The connections between the Invisible Hurdles Program and the agencies are vital to the communities they serve. Without the program, many Aboriginal young people would experience reduced access to justice, the gaps would grow even wider, and many young people would continue to experience the complications of their ongoing, complex legal problems. This leads to poor social determinant of health outcomes, as evidenced in the data and case studies in this report. However, integrated and multidisciplinary practice when done well, can change lives and have a positive impact.

When applying the collaborative measurement tool, the evaluator found full integration by the Invisible Hurdles Program and the individual agencies. There is evidence of continuing collaboration despite some the setbacks of COVID-19 and in fact there has been a shift from collaboration to partnership on the measures for the benchmarks. The long-term nature of the program enabled it to use the trust and relationships already established to ride the COVID-19 storm and not only continue service but make necessary adaptations, innovate, and continuously reach young people and their supports. Many other agencies may also take some lessons from the elements discussed in this report, evidenced in the data that enabled the Invisible Hurdles Program to go from strength to strength and build responsive service delivery models. This was despite all the challenges presented to the partner agencies.

The legal and trusted intermediaries work seamlessly to identify and assist clients, referral pathways are clear and functional, and a high level of reflective practice is occurring. They demonstrated innovation, changed their practice and were flexible and available continuing to build relationships of trust and finding 'work arounds' when confronted with problems.

The evaluator commends the Invisible Hurdles model to other services hoping to find an effective model that could be replicated. However integrated service partnerships and multi-disciplinary practice is not easy, and relationships must be organic, have common values and shared focus. Dialogue and trust are key. The research participants also note part of the success of the Invisible Hurdles Program has not only been the nature of the service but its use of research to ensure all decisions and practice flow from a solid evidence base. Multiple participants told us that they could not imagine the service not being there – it is now so integrated it would do harm if it were pulled apart through a lack of or inadequate funding.



Source: Clipart library

REPORT TO YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE RESULTS OF THE INVISIBLE HURDLES PROGRAM RESEARCH EVALUATION 2022

This study examines the effectiveness of the Invisible Hurdles Program which places lawyers that are free, with three agencies.

Many people don't understand the sorts of problems that might have a legal solution or that lawyers can help by providing other options that might not be known. The Invisible Hurdles Program was set up to assist young people by going to the places where young people are likely to turn to for help. In this case the Wodonga Flexible Learning Centre (WFLC), the Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service (AWAHS) and Northeast Support and Action for Youth Inc. (NESAY).

For this study, the researcher, Dr Liz Curran from Nottingham Law School at Nottingham Trent University, met with young people, their teachers, counsellors, doctors, nurses, financial counsellors, drug and alcohol workers, psychologists and other people who work with young people. She also gathered feedback from the lawyers on the program and the managers who run each of the services mentioned.

The findings of the study highlighted:

- The effectiveness of the Invisible Hurdles Program helping young people who would otherwise not have turned to lawyers.
- It did this by making connections with young people's supports.
- Because the lawyers were 'cool', young people learned to trust the lawyers.
- This trust was important to reaching young people, as well as showing respect, being approachable and involving young people in decision making.
- While young people wanted to know their legal position, they also wanted to understand what their rights were and what their options were. When they did, often positive outcomes occurred for them.
- The study highlights that by involving lawyers in sorting out problems alongside other support people, significant inroads can be made into improving the lives of young people. For example, young people got support with housing, and prevented eviction, got out of irresponsible loans, understood their rights in terms of family violence, and found pathways to employment through understanding their legal position by having the lawyers negotiate in tricky situations.

Thank you to those who participated in this research for enabling us to do this study and to learn about ways in which young people can be better supported.

Often, as the research shows, young people have complicated and complex lives and have little voice in decisions that are made about them. The Invisible Hurdles Program, according to the evidence gathered in the study of over seven years, is not only helping young people solve all sorts of different problems including debts, police involvement, unfair contracts, tenancy arrangements, obtaining birth certificates, securing income support and a whole lot of other issues. It is involving young people in activities that build their capability, empower and ensure that their voices heard by decision makers who have power over the lives of young people.

There is a more detailed report available on the website of the Hume Riverina Community Legal Service that you are most welcome to read.



Source: Clipart library



Invisible Hurdle's Lawyer Outside WFLC in February 2022 (photo taken by Liz Curran)

Part A Introduction

The Invisible Hurdles Program is an integrated justice program and a multidisciplinary practice (MDP) that has been forged between four partner organisations in the Hume Riverina region of Victoria and New South Wales, led by the Hume Riverina Community Legal Service (HRCLS). The services, by being multidisciplinary in nature, not only able to address justice needs but through this multidisciplinary and holistic approach to client problems are able to also make inroads into the social determinants of health outcomes. Frontline workers who help and support clients in programs such as this one act as intermediaries or 'trusted intermediaries' to support them gain legal help with legal problems.¹ These trusted intermediaries are critical to reaching young people with multiple and often cascading legal problems before these problems escalate so that early intervention and prevention can occur and if possible open pathways which would otherwise not have been open to these young people without legal help.

This research impact evaluation has been embedded since 2015 and now stands as one of the longest, continuous longitudinal research evaluations by an independent evaluator of a legal assistance service program in Australian history.

This research evaluation for Stage III has endeavoured to go deeper with additional questions that seek to illicit and explore the flow and effects of gaining help with legal problems for the other social and health needs of clients and what the impact has been on client lives. This can be interrogated further because the program has now been going on for seven years, allowing changes to be observed overtime.

1. How the program works

HRCLS places a lawyer one day per week in each of the three other partner organisations. Each lawyer is then available to the organisations by phone and email for two further days, as they are working on casework from the HRCLS office. That is, the lawyers are accessible five days per week either by phone or in-person, for each of the partner agencies and their clients.

Additionally, from April 2019 a project worker spread their time across the three organisations delivering community legal education, community development activities and working on systemic reform activities. Since August 2020, the project worker has simultaneously held the role of lawyer at one of the partners, the Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service (AWAHS). From January 2022 the roles of lawyer and project worker have been combined.

1. Geographical location in Australia and issues

The program operates in part agencies located on each side of the Murray River that separates New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria, the twin cities referred to as Albury-Wodonga, have long operated as one community and one economy. AWAHS is based in Albury but has clients in Wodonga and Wangaratta. WFLC along with HRCLS is based in Wodonga. Many of their 100,000 residents cross the border to travel to work and school. Businesses also operate on both sides of the river. Albury-Wodonga Communities share the same hospital system, with campuses located in Albury NSW and Wodonga Victoria but operates under the standards and guidelines of the Victoria's Department of Health. During COVID people from Victoria were banned from entering NSW, but exemptions are made for some purposes, specialists and professions, including cross-border residents in settlements like Albury-

¹ Curran L (2017) 'Lawyer Secondary Consultations: improving access to justice and human rights: reaching clients otherwise excluded through professional support in a multi-disciplinary practice' *8(1) Journal of Social Inclusion*. <https://josi.journals.griffith.edu.au/index.php/inclusion/article/view/817>; Cohl K, Lassonde J Mathews J, C Smith C, G Thomson G (2018) 'Trusted Help: The role of community workers as trusted intermediaries who help people with legal problems', Part 2 Report, The Law Foundation of Ontario. & Crystal Resolution Inc.

Wodonga. The regulations and rules were complex and there was considerable confusion and initial rigidity of application until some issues were ironed out such as staff and patients and students and teachers being able to do their work. Wangaratta is 42.9 miles from Wodonga and is where NESAY is based.

2. Chronology and Issues of funding

The program has been funded by grants from the *Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner (VLSB)*, the *Victorian Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS)*, *Legal Aid New South Wales (LANSW)* and *Victoria Legal Aid (VLA)*. Funding (from DJCS) commenced on 6 June 2018 and VLSB funding commenced on 1 January 2019. From 1 July 2017 to 31 July 2020, LANSW funded a Lawyer 0.6 at AWAHS. Funding has also been provided by *Victoria Legal Aid (VLA)* at various points during the program while waiting for funding to be allocated or where grant funding has not fully met the requirements of the program. VLA also funded the program for the period 6 June to 30 June 2020 which was an unfunded gap period. An extension due to COVID-19 from the VLSB meant that funding concluded on 1 April 2021 and the DJCS funding has likewise been extended until 30 June 2021. A further grant of funding was received from VLSB until 31st August 2022 for one of the positions and by DJCS for the other position, until the end of June 2023.

The program ran in pilot form from December 2015 to May 2018 with funding from the *Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner (VLSB)*. This pilot was evaluated by the authors of this report and a final report was published in 2018 and is publicly available.² A second and linked program provides a lawyer at the Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service (AWAHS) focussing on family law and family violence. Funding from Legal Aid NSW (Commonwealth family law/family violence funding) provided a lawyer at Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service (AWAHS) for 2 days per week until July 2020, when the AWAHS lawyer retired. The same lawyer attends AWAHS for the Invisible Hurdles program as for that service. This funding is described in the below chronology, provided to the author by the HRCLS.

Further Stage 3 funding has been provided for the Invisible Hurdles program for the years 2021-2023. VLSB has funded the program since its beginning. This ongoing funding support for this program has enabled the development of an evidence base through supporting evaluation.³ This has shaped and informed programs beyond the Invisible Hurdles Program as to how to deliver and reach groups of people who are socially excluded and to explore the value of integrated and multidisciplinary partnerships in overcoming barriers.⁴ Due to the program's effectiveness the funding has continued for longer than was ever anticipated.

The problem with this mode of split and multiple funding, is that the whole of funding is not provided by the one entity. This is problematic where the funding does not overlap, there are gaps or where one funder of part of an integrated funding program withdraws its funding. This now risks splitting the 'integrated' program in two thus contracting the nature of 'integration' and undermining the integrated nature of the program. This point was underlined in the interviews with managers from the four IH partner agencies. Observations were made consistently across the research data and in the different tools that the IHP has become so engrained and a part of the way that their organisations do business, that they would find it extremely difficult to unpick the integrated nature of the operations. They observed that this

² Curran L and Taylor-Barnett P (2018) 'Overcoming the Invisible Hurdles to Justice for Young People: A Final Research and Evaluation Report of the Invisible Hurdles Project (Health Justice Partnership) November 2018. http://www.hrcls.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/DESIGNED_Full-final-Report_October_20181102.pdf

³ Ball S, Wong C (Victorian Legal Service Board (LSB)) L Curran L (2016) Facilitator and Adviser for Health Justice Partnerships for LSB, 'Health Justice Partnerships Development Report'. http://www.lsb.vic.gov.au/documents/Report-Health_Justice_Partnership_Development-2016.PDF

⁴ See Health Justice Australia (2020), <https://www.healthjustice.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Health-justice-partnership-evaluations-May-2020-Health-Justice-Australia.pdf>

could have devastating effects on young people who had now come to see the legal service as part of a service response to their complex and multiple needs.

All the managers and some trusted intermediary staff in their interviews and in the reflective Practice Meeting indicated that were any part of the program to be under funded or unfunded it could have downstream implications for young people and for the responsiveness of their services. At the time of writing, efforts are being made to secure additional and stable funding for all the project team.

This situation gives rise to a system wide issue and one of the problems with multiple sources of funding for the one program. Often funders claim overall outcomes or impact of a project when they have only funded them in part. Claiming the entire project outcomes without distilling what proportion of funding they have provided and these multiple sources of funding that combined are needed to lead to project outcomes and impacts is problematic. Taking credit for the overall project or program outcomes and having expectations that with only a proportion of funding it has led to those outcomes can lead to a distortion perception as to how the whole of the program funding needed and what contributes, and the levels of funding required to gain these outputs, outcomes, and impacts.

Table A1 -Funding Table with COVID Events

DATE	EVENT	
1 October 2015	HRCLS receives Grant funding from VLSB for Invisible Hurdles (Stage 1) - <i>(1 October 2015 – 30 September 2017) – extended to 31 May 2018 due to delay in initial recruiting and staff changes throughout the term of the program.</i>	
7 December 2015	Commencement of employment - Lawyer 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commenced with HRCLS on 7/12/2015. 	4 day/week lawyer working with all partners
4 April 2016	Finish date of Lawyer 1	<i>(Lawyer worked full-time due to also working one day/week providing family violence duty lawyer services – funded by another funder)</i>
4 July 2016	Commencement of employment - Lawyer 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commenced with HRCLS on 4/7/2016 	
4 August 2017	Finish date of Lawyer 2	
1 July 2017	HRCLS receives funding from Legal Aid NSW for Family Law / Family Violence (Cth) <i>(1 July 2017 – 30 June 2020 with expected rollover for a further 3-5 years) Lawyer 4 was present at AWAHS on a 0.6 fraction up to 11 October</i>	
		3 day/week lawyer to partner with AWAHS
14 August 2017	Commencement of employment - Lawyer 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commenced with HRCLS on 14/8/2017 	4 day/week lawyer to focus on WFLC & NESAY partnerships <i>(Lawyer worked full-time due to also working one day/week providing family violence duty lawyer services – funded by another funder)</i>
2 March 2018	Finish date of Lawyer 3 - maternity leave <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No replacement or backfill arranged as the program was due to end 31 May 2018 and there had been no confirmation received regarding funding for Stage 2 HRCLS Lawyers on staff provided support to NESAY & WFLC as best they could 	
6 June 2018	HRCLS receives funding from Department of Justice <i>(6 June 2018 – 5 June 2020)</i>	

6 July 2018	Finish date of Lawyer 4 - retired	
13 August 2018	Commencement date of Lawyer 5 to replace Lawyer 4 and continue the partnership with AWAHS	
20 August 2018	Recommencement of Lawyer 3 – <i>(employed through DCJS funding)</i>	4 day/week lawyer worked across 5 days to focus on WFLC & NESAY partnerships
1 January 2019	HRCLS receives grant funding from VLSB for Invisible Hurdles (Stage 2) - <i>(1 January 2019 – 1 January 2021)</i>	Adding 5 day/week Legal Program Work to work with all partners on legal education and reform work
15 April 2019	Legal Project Worker for IH (Stage 2) Lawyer 6 commenced as Legal Project Worker – <i>(employed through LSB funding)</i>	
23 March 2020	COVID-19 pandemic. Invisible Hurdles/ HRCLS staff commenced working from home.	
13 April 2020	Legal Project Worker role changed- Lawyer 6 commenced as NSW Outreach lawyer <i>(13 April 2020- 23 August 2020)</i>	3 days p/w at LPW and 2 days p/w as NSW Generalist lawyer = 2 days not IH related
31 July 2020	Finish date of Lawyer 5 – retired	
12 August 2020	HRCLS receives rollover funding for 4 months (1 July 2020 – 31 October 2020) from DCJS	
24 August 2020	Legal Project Worker role changed- Lawyer 6 ceased as NSW Outreach lawyer and commenced as AWAHS Lawyer <i>(23 August 2020)</i>	3 days p/w as LPW and 2 days p/w as AWAHS lawyer
17 December 2020	Further extension of DCJS funding (to 30 June 2021)	
4 January 2021	Transition/return to office- Invisible Hurdles/ HRCLS staff hybrid model of working from home and working in HRCLS office	
1 April 2021	Invisible Hurdles funding ceases (from VLSB)	
21 May 2021	Victoria's fourth lockdown.	
3 June 2021	Lockdown measures ease in regional Victoria	
15 July 2021	Victoria's fifth lockdown.	

27 July 2021	Victoria's fifth lockdown ends
5 August 2021	Victoria's sixth lockdown
10 August 2021	Invisible Hurdles funding renewed (from DCJS) until 30 June 2023 (Stage 3)
31 August 2021	Invisible Hurdles funding extended (from VLSB) until 31 August 2022
22 September 2021	Lockdown orders for regional NSW towns Albury and Lismore lifted for residents from midnight
21 October 2021	Melbourne exits its sixth lockdown, after 263 cumulative days. Some regional areas ended lockdown in the fortnight previous. Restrictions still in place.
23 January 2022	Restrictions in place but slowly easing in Victoria & NSW. Commencement Lawyer 7 (maternity replacement of Lawyer 6) at Flexi/NESAY. Move of Lawyer 3 from NESAY to AWAHS role.
February 2022	Restrictions in place and a slow return to the office with some operations such as NESAY operating using a hybrid model where is some staff work from home on certain days and work in the office on others

3. Who Invisible Hurdles helps

The Invisible Hurdles Program is focussed on providing legal advice, assistance and legal empowerment to young people aged 12 to 25 years old who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing family violence. The partner agencies are ideally placed to connect young people with HRCLS' legal expertise through their pre-established relationships with young people experiencing disadvantage. Numerous hurdles get in the way of young people receiving legal assistance, particularly where they face disadvantage in other forms such as poverty, family violence, drug or alcohol issues, care and protection issues and insecure housing. Research, including from the first iteration of the program shows that young people are reluctant to trust legal professionals and to seek help, relying instead on family and friends' advice or failing to address their legal problems at all.⁵

Legal problems cause anxiety and fear for young people and this itself can be disabling for them to act. Young people experiencing disadvantage have financial impediments to seeking legal assistance too, both in terms of transportation to legal centres and the ability to pay for a lawyer - they may not qualify for legal aid and may lack the skills and knowledge to seek out help from appropriate agencies. In stage three of the program evaluation the issues around care and protection and young people and residential care placements were also provided as a barrier to young people. The program intends to overcome these hurdles by bringing legal help and information directly to where the young person visits; by building trust from an initial borrowed-trust introduction, from trusted intermediaries such as social workers and teachers who the young person respects, by re-thinking the ways legal information needs to be passed

⁵ Above note 2, p.9.

on and utilising the concept of 'legal secondary consultations'⁶; and by utilising a network of organisations to activate for change on issues that continually affect the young people they all service.

The partner organisations



Three Partner Managers in Meet-up Reflection in February 2020: David Noonan (AWAHS) Leah Waring (NESAY), Deb Fisher (HRCLS) Kristy Shaddock (WFLC was on-line)

Hume Riverina Community Legal Service (HRCLS)

HRCLS is based in Wodonga and has a regular presence in Wangaratta, as well as various outreaches, servicing people in 17 municipalities across Northeast Victoria and the Southern Riverina of New South Wales – in 2018-19, the HRCLS lawyers travelled 17012km.⁷ HRCLS relies upon funding from grants and Commonwealth and State Government sources. The service began in 1999, founded by local lawyers, and is one of the few cross-border community legal centres in Australia.

HRCLS offers a generalist advice and casework service, staffed by both permanent and volunteer lawyers and with a focus on providing holistic and wrap-around, holistic service for the most disadvantaged in the community. As well as the Invisible Hurdles Program, HRCLS places a lawyer at the Centre Against Violence (CAV) in Wangaratta and Wodonga; runs an outreach service to the Women's Centre for Health and Wellbeing in Albury as well as other locations and partnerships. It also provides community legal education through sessions (delivered to 678 participants in 2018/19) and written information, for example, 'Bring your Bills days', Wills Clinics and Legal Health Checks and more.⁸

⁶ Curran L (2017) 'Lawyer Secondary Consultations: improving access to justice and human rights: reaching clients otherwise excluded through professional support in a multi-disciplinary practice' 8(1) *Journal of Social Inclusion* <https://josi.journals.griffith.edu.au/index.php/inclusion/article/view/8>

⁷ Hume Riverina Community Legal Service (HRCLS), Annual Report 2018/19 <https://www.hrcls.org.au/hrcls-publications/>

⁸ Ibid.

Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service (AWAHS)⁹

AWAHS is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (ACCHO) and is fully funded by the Department of Health (Commonwealth), Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and Department of Health (NSW). The organisation's vision is to 'Provide and improve health outcomes for our local Aboriginal community with a range of culturally appropriate, flexible, reliable, professional and viable health and wellbeing services, to strengthen, nurture, enhance and maintain the overall quality of life of our community members.'¹⁰ It was founded in 2009 after research and lobbying since the 1990s from the Mungabareena, Wandoo and Woomera Aboriginal Corporations about the need to address the gaps in Aboriginal health.

The services provided by AWAHS span medical, nursing, social and emotional wellbeing, dental, optometry, psychology, dietician, diabetes education, podiatry, occupational therapy, speech pathology, social work, child and family health, chronic disease support, drug and alcohol support, health promotion, stolen generation support, men's Shed and transport. These services are provided free to Aboriginal people, who in this region come from 50 different Traditional Owner Nations/language groups. From 2018-2019, 2680 community members were seen at AWAHS' main locations or outreaches across Albury, Wodonga, Wangaratta, Bright and Benalla.¹¹ Our cultural advisers have noted that although local Aboriginal people come from 50 different language groups and many families, young Aboriginal people do not focus on these differences. There is some overlap between AWAHS services and that of the Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation (MAC) but the two organisations have different directions and objectives. There is a Memorandum of Understanding between the two organisations which has routinely been revised.

Northeast Support and Action for Youth Inc. (NESAY)

Founded in 2012, NESAY is a leading agency supporting young people and their families in Northeast Victoria, servicing a vast region of seven municipalities. It has a community Board of Governance and is funded by State and Commonwealth departments, grants, and other funding opportunities. Its mission is 'Supporting young people and their families in our community to achieve their goals and aspirations.'¹²

The scope of NESAY's work is in early intervention and support for young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, independent living skills, a learner driver program, a healthy eating and living program, support leaving care, a school focused youth service to help vulnerable or disengaged young people, school counselling, support for young people at risk of entering child protection, support transitioning from residential care and a fair feed meal program with local cafes.¹³

Wodonga Flexible Learning Centre (WFLC)

The Wodonga Flexible Learning Centre (WFLC) is a campus of the Wodonga Senior Secondary College. The alternative education centre was established in 2014 by the Victorian Education Department and subsequently expanded to three other regional locations. The Invisible Hurdles lawyer only services the WFLC although the data suggests in Stage III the IHP through its connection with NESAY has also reached other alternative education centres in another region as part of this IHP.

⁹ Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service (AWAHS), <https://www.awahs.com.au/>

¹⁰ AWAHS Vision Statement, <https://www.awahs.com.au/about/vision/>

¹¹ AWAHS Annual Report 2019, CEO Report.

¹² Northeast Support and Action for Youth Inc. (NESAY), <https://nesay.com.au/>

¹³ NESAY, Programs <https://nesay.com.au/nesay-programs/>

The WFLC program aims, among other things, to 'reconnect young people with learning inside and outside the Centre by connecting them to their community, to assist the young person to develop a positive image of themselves, [and] to work with the young person to understand possible pathways to future learning and employment.'¹⁴ The school services students aged 15-19, all of whom have individual reasons that prevent them from attending regular school. Up to 140 students are enrolled (with 94 being enrolled in 2020) and each is provided with personalised learning plans which set individual goals, program plans, timetables, and attendance. The students include young parents, students with mental health issues, learning difficulties, home schoolers and students with social and behavioural issues.¹⁵

4. History of the Invisible Hurdles Program

The Invisible Hurdles Program was first funded by the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner, from December 2015 to June 2018. From the program's inception, HRCLS contracted the Australian National University (ANU), with initially two researchers, Liz Curran and Pamela Taylor- Barnett as key personnel, to conduct an embedded action-research evaluation of the program from service start-up. An interim evaluation report was delivered in March 2017, as well as a final evaluation report in May 2018 with a public launch in November 2018. A further research evaluation was conducted from 2019- 2020 with a second report in mid-2021. Due to the disbanding of the ANU School of Legal Practice by ANU and its phasing out, the researchers continued to conduct Stage II research in honorary capacities for ANU and pro bono. In 2021 Liz Curran was commissioned to conduct this Stage III of the research evaluation first as a consultant and then in her role as Associate Professor at Nottingham Law School (NLS) at Nottingham Trent University.

The Invisible Hurdles Program places a lawyer in each of the partner organisations for up to one day per week, with advice readily available on the other four weekdays by phone. In the IHP the lawyers are tasked firstly with providing legal advice and casework assistance to young clients under 25 years old, usually referred to them by trusted intermediary staff in the partner organisations. Secondly, the lawyers provide 'legal secondary consultations' to trusted intermediaries, which is defined as where a lawyer provides legal information or advice to a staff member of the partner organisation which may, where relevant, be relayed back to the client by the staff member. Thirdly, the lawyers are to initiate systemic law reform action on issues that affect the client groups. Fourthly, the model allowed for the lawyer to increase engagement of young people with legal help and information, either through community legal education activities or community development activities. Finally, complimenting the secondary consultations the lawyers provided professional development to each of the partners and more recently across the partnership.

As an integrated justice program, the Invisible Hurdles Program aims through educational and health/social service/justice agencies to target vulnerable young people. It was a key feature of this multidisciplinary practice model that a lawyer is embedded as a part of the partner organisation, thus differentiating the model from an 'outreach'. That is, that the lawyer is on the team as a staff member (including attending staff meetings and joining in on events) at the partner agencies and interacts with their staff to build relationships and trust.

Such trust and rapport building, it has been established in the previous IHP Research Evaluation reports, enables legal secondary consultations to take place more easily as the lawyer is visible and approachable and as they are on site, accessible in a timely way for support and advice. This also enables joined- up services that reach people and engage effectively across service disciplines. This is what categorises a program as 'integrated'. Often this term is used loosely and does not necessarily exist. This research evaluation therefore as a key feature sets out to, through applying data against pre-set benchmarks determined by research, measure if integration in fact occurs and establish the circumstances that facilitate its occurrence if this is indicated. Another feature of this integrated model is that the partner organisations come to know one another, particularly from a management perspective so that they collaborate for better outcomes for young people.

¹⁴ WFLC, Program aims <http://www.nefln.vic.edu.au/wodonga/program-aims/>

¹⁵ Wodonga Flexible Learning Centre (FLC), <http://www.nefln.vic.edu.au/wodonga/program-aims/>

One example in the data of how this took place in the first stage was that AWAHS (main centre in Glenroy, NSW) partnered with NESAY (main centre in Wangaratta, Vic) to place an AWAHS outreach van at NESAY once a week. More recently in 2022, NESAY and AWAHS have partnered again to share a site in Benalla and in funding enterprises.

Some initial challenges of Stage 1 included transitioning lawyering styles into best practice integrated justice practice methods, increasing the time spent at each organisation, building organisational trust, and the gradual uptake of secondary consultations. The HRCLS team and the partners were committed to overcoming these challenges though and the first iteration of the Invisible Hurdles Program finished on a strong high note. The final evaluation report found that the model, an integrated justice practice, was effective in reaching the vulnerable young people who were the target group and in achieving breakthrough outcomes for these clients.¹⁶ Further, the report found that the model enhanced decision-making and responsiveness in the organisation due to the secondary consultations. Key findings are in the two previous reports and so are not replicated/duplicated here. See for further details:

(2021) *Pathways to empowerment and justice: The Invisible Hurdles Stage II Research and Evaluation Final Report* Produced for the Hume Riverina Community Legal Service; Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service; Northeast Support & Action for Youth & Wodonga Flexible Learning Centre, ANU. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3867295

'Overcoming the Invisible Hurdles to Justice for Young People: A Final Research and Evaluation Report of the Invisible Hurdles Project (Health Justice Partnership) with Pamela Taylor Barnett, November 2018. http://www.hrcls.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/DESIGNED_Full-final-Report_October_20181102.pdf

COVID 19 Pandemic

This program must be contextualised considering the COVID-19 pandemic. In Australia, governments applied strict restrictions and lock downs to suppress and eliminate virus transmission. It was noted in the Stage II research evaluation report that COVID had not really been significant in regional areas. This changed in 2021 and early 2022 with COVID cases being reported in indigenous and non-indigenous communities. At one point, it forced the closure of one of the partner agencies, AWAHS, that had managed to be open throughout the COVID pandemic. At all other times, these areas were still subject to strict restrictions that included working from home requirements, and sometimes more severe lockdown rules. This meant that the lawyers were unable to engage with clients and workers in the traditional sense.¹⁷ Further, because this program is situated on the border of New South Wales and Victoria, there were severe border restrictions in place that prevented New South Wales people from travelling into Victoria for many months, and then vice versa for a period. The lawyers became a crucial source of interpretation of these ever-changing rules, but they also had to navigate how to connect with the vulnerable and disadvantaged clients whom they had always been able to arrange to meet, in person.

On top of the changes to work practices and movement restrictions, regional people experienced an influx of city-dwellers seeking to relocate to the country, with work from home rules enabling remote work. In Stage 2 for example, the evaluators were told of a young single mother trying to find a rental house and being faced with competing with hundreds of applicants from the city, with higher incomes and longer rental records to their name. The complexity of issues facing regional Victorians during the pandemic cannot be understated. This highlights how agile and nimble each of the services had to be due to changing circumstances, but as the data reveals (see aggregated service data below and the summary of the results of the in-depth Interviews

¹⁶ Above, n 1, p. 11

¹⁷ Curran L (2021) 'From Fragmented to Holistic: Starting the evidence base the client centred practice through a navigator.' A report on the research evaluation of the Hammersmith Fulham Law Centre's, 'Women's Crisis Navigator Service Project' Pilot, Curran Consulting: Enhancing Justice and Human Rights (SSRN, July 2021). This report explores service implications on family violence victim survivors of COVID-19 restrictions.

with trusted intermediary staff across the partnership and lawyer interviews and professional journal responses) for Stage III of the research evaluation, services were still retained and trusted intermediary staff remained engaged with the IHP team.

5. Aboriginal cultural learning

6. Evaluation advisers

The author appreciates the guidance provided by Ms Judith McDonald of Watnanda Consulting in Stage III. Ms McDonald is an Aboriginal elder who provided pro bono cultural advice in Stage I of the program on the research evaluation tools and instruments and reports, which accorded with ethics approval. Ms Coysh is a respected person and emerging leader in the Albury/Wodonga area and provided advice in Stage II.

'Advisory Group' Members of the committee include the AWHS CEO, the NESAY CEO, a senior teacher or Principal of WFLC and the HRCLS Invisible Hurdles supervising lawyer or the HRCLS Manager. Lawyers on IHP sometimes attend part of the group meetings as well to provide data, reports and case studies and updates but in line with legal professional client confidentiality requirements.

7. Methodology for this research evaluation

8. Ethics approval

This research has approval from the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee (Protocol 2016/136). The Department of Education and Training Victoria have also approved this research (Application 2019_004219). The Board of AWHS has previously approved this research (see Stage I, Stage II & Stage III) and the NESAY CEO has been apprised of and approved of all tools utilised and confirmed ethics approval from these agencies for Stages I, II and III.

Ethics approval had been already obtained for most of the tools used in Stage III from all of the partner agencies and through the previous university approval process of the Australian National University.

The author in Stage III sought to integrate the suggestions, of our Aboriginal advisers, that due to time constraints was not possible in the final field trip in December 2020 for Stage II. These were adopted for Stage III to examine whether the IHP are developing the connections necessary to reach these alternate Aboriginal cohorts in the region as well as look more closely at impacts beyond justice for young people to explore other program impacts including the social determinant of health outcomes. This a priority for Stage III, given the research's longevity and hence the capacity to look at changes over time.

The IH research evaluation's new tools build on the SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) data collection underpinning the evaluation and were introduced for Stage III to 'go in deeper' to explore the complexities, impacts, and outcomes in the lives of young people and their professional supports as well as organisationally. These included two new tools. These included: **Yarning Circles** for young people with consistent guiding questions across the three partner agencies, **Reflective Practise Meetings** with the managers of the four partner agencies. These tools are informed by the *First Nations Cultural Safety Framework* of the Australian Evaluation Framework (October 2021) and the *Indigenous Evaluation Strategy* of the Productivity Commission (October 2020). Additionally, further questions to guide participants in the professional journals of the lawyers and additional questions on file closure were incorporated into the Stage III research evaluation. Ethics approval was sought for the variations and additional tools from the Department of Education in Victoria, and the three partner agencies. In addition, as part of this process feedback from the young people about the cumbersome and difficult to comprehend information sheets that accompanied the

consent forms, were also put through an ethics process and modified so that they were accessible and used plain and simple English.

A face-to-face field trip was conducted 16-18 February 2022 by the author. This was largely to explore and test the new methodologies which had all been given ethics approval by the partner agency processes and the Victorian Department of Education. These were grafted onto the previous methodology to enable comparison data to be consistent and to ensure they were not burdensome on participants or the partner agencies.

The Yarning Circle was piloted with a group of five young people from the WFLC. The ideas for the further field trip to build on the insights around social determinants of health were also discussed with the managers of the four partner agencies and their input on the design was also sought. These adjustments and recalibrations were implemented in the ethics approval process and in the design of the tools with adjustments to questions and information and consent forms to reflect these new additions.

The plan was to conduct the second field trip in the week of 2 May 2022 as a face-to-face field trip. A number of participants tested positive with COVID in the days preceding the field trip. An emergency meeting was called on the evening of Tuesday the 26 of April 2022. It was decided the risk of bringing participants together for the study, considering rising COVID cases posed risk to participants. It was decided to pivot to an online field trip which also would enable those participants diagnosed with COVID to participate through online interactions. Five of the participants in Field Trip 8 were interviewed whilst they had COVID.

9. Research Approach

Participatory action research has been described as a reflective process¹⁸ of progressive problem solving (led by individuals working as part of a 'community of practice' to improve the way they address issues and solve problems.¹⁹ Other studies suggest that changes in practice are impacts as well.²⁰ Using a participatory action research approach means not only using literature informing the project but also collaboration in design by participants, including service users and professionals. This also keeps it relevant and connected to the endeavours and aims of the program, the clientele and the practitioners. Accordingly, there is collaboration in the design with those who provide the services within a model of continuous learning, development, and improvement.²¹

In line with this participatory action research approach an Evaluation and Impact Research Framework was settled in April 2016 in consultation with the authors and the four partner agencies and incorporating the outcomes containing in a LSB Project Plan and previous Background Intellectual Property which has been developed and refined by Dr Curran in over time, informed by the national and international literature.

Before venturing into Stage III, a meeting was held with the partner agencies by way of a check-in to see if they were still happy with the methodology and whether it needed any tweaking. This was particularly important, in light of some of the recommendations in the Final Report Stage II mentioned above and the post- COVID

¹⁸ Leering M (2014) 'Conceptualizing reflective practice for legal professionals.' *Journal of Law and Social Policy*, 23, 83–106.

¹⁹ Dick B (2009/2011) 'Action research and action learning for community and organisational change'. <http://www.aral.com.au/>.

²⁰ World Health Organization (WHO) and Commission on Social Determinants of Health (2008), *Closing the gap in a generation: health equity through action on social determinants of health*. Retrieved from http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2008/9789241563703_eng.pdf?ua=1; Triado T, White J, & Brown A (2013) *Community health quality health improvement initiatives* [presentation]. Retrieved from Australian Centre for Healthcare Governance website: <http://www.healthcaregovernance.org.au/docs/forum-1-quality-in-vic.pdf>; Tobin-Tyler E (2012) Aligning public health, health care, law, and policy: medical-legal partnership as a multilevel response to the social determinants of health. 8 *Journal of Health & Biomedical Law*, 211–47.

²¹ Jayatilleke N & Mackie A, (2013) 'Reflection as part of continuous professional development for public health professionals: a literature review' 35 (2) *Journal of Public Health*, 308–312.

lockdown restrictions being eased with a return to face to face and hybrid working arrangements in 2022. The four partners indicated that they were happy to proceed using the existing methodology, but a decision was made to 'deepen' the reflective practise aspect of the study. Further adjustments, specifically the reflective practise meetings were adopted as part of the evaluation.

This included continuing to use the proxies/benchmarks that had been used in the previous seven years of the longitudinal study. Proxies are benchmarks that if present are suggestive of a positive outcome and impact of the service. Proxies as measures/indicators of effectiveness and impact of the IHP were agreed (based on Dr Curran's previous work and her literature reviews for such work).

This research evaluation has never just been limited to an evaluation looking at the effectiveness of the Invisible Hurdle's Integrated Justice Partnership or MDP. The partners also asked that the research look at broader research questions exploring issues that are barriers and that limit access for youth, and to examine the advice-seeking behaviours of youth and elements that improve engagement with children/young people experiencing disadvantage and social exclusion. It is also a critical aim to explore, in this context, what works well and why, and what does not work so well and what the elements are that are required to have a positive impact on the lives of young people. The Evaluation – Collaboration Measurement of Progress Tool (ECMoPT) is also used as a set of benchmarks in the research to measure the collaboration and partnership and to monitor its progress and impact with a set of questions and tools designed to elicit the data necessary to assess where on the ECMoPT scale the partnership sits and why. All of these approaches seek to establish program effectiveness and impacts of the intervention/s. The ECMoPT tool examines stages that an Integrated Justice Program may move through, towards genuine integration and the tools Dr Curran has designed include further indicators that indicate (or serve as proxies) that, if demonstrated as present, suggest integration and effective collaboration has occurred.

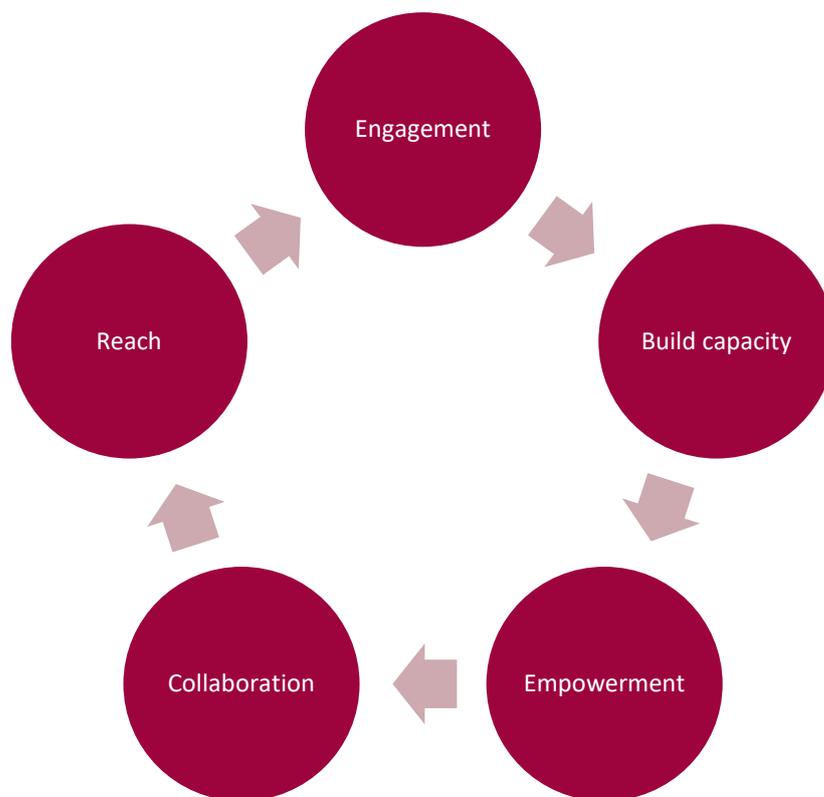
The authors used the data to examine whether indicators of positive service delivery and impact were present. In this, the authors looked for signs of five key benchmarks (proxies)

There are four in this study:

- Engagement - client/patient/professional, staff and organisation
- Collaboration - client/patient/professional, staff and organisation
- Capacity - client/patient/professional, staff and organisation
- Empowerment - client/patient/professional, staff and organisation – it includes giving voice for client/patient/professional and staff and improved advocacy for client/patient/professional towards systemic change.
- Reach of the IH

For the purpose of this research, the term Aboriginal will be acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, First Nations, and First Peoples.

TABLE A2



Other areas included for are as follows:

- Reciprocity of the partners and the staff – growth in respect and trust
- Previous exposure to lawyers/legal system of youth or family members
- Levels of stress and anxiety
- Levels of hope
- Breakthroughs of the HJP and why
- Legal secondary consultation
- Reciprocity between services of their expertise sharing and referral
- What works and does not work and why
- Impact of service intervention
- Early intervention and prevention of problem escalation
- Changes in practice
- Organisation transformation
- Improved decision-making of young people, professional staff, organisations
- Case studies

Going in deeper - using the tools, questions, and the analysis in Stage III

Additional areas for deeper exploration were identified by program partners but using the same questions and tools to drill down further to explore whether social determinant of health outcomes that flow from the young people receiving legal support and help and what this looks like. This includes the impacts of earlier intervention, community development work, policy, and law reform. Also, levels of inclusion of the voices of young people through the program will be measured especially in the policy and law reform work, specifically, in relation to the young people's engagement and levels of empowerment. A key and significant and recurring theme in the research evaluations of Stage I and Stage II data has been the critical role of trust in building

relationships. Repeatedly the word 'trust' appears in all the data analysis as a critical precondition for the proxies of engagement, capacity building, reach, collaboration, and empowerment. In each of the research reports for the Invisible Hurdles Program it has been continuously reiterated that building trust is not easy, it can easily be lost, and that it requires sustained effort and time to develop. Trust, as the data has shown, is predicated on a certain quality service, reliability, honesty, and approachability for it to be established and built. For this Stage III research evaluation, the lens of looking at what has occurred to build this trust to better understand what makes for effective collaboration and partnership both across and between the partner agencies is examined.

Another key aspect of Stage III, considering the longevity of the program, was to use the existing reflective question structure, to look at the program and the changes overtime from the beginning of the project until the time of Field Trip 8 in May 2022. If funding for the whole integrated program continues beyond September 2022 with monies available to continue this research evaluation this longitudinal study of impact will allow even further time for changes in behaviour, changes in practice, exploration of factors critical to reaching young people to be noted and observed, all of which take time.

In addition, using the extant methodology, this research evaluation in Stage III closely examines the nature of the collaboration and what elements overtime have led to the program being able to sustain itself throughout the pandemic and forge further enterprises across and within the partnerships (see interview data and Reflective Meeting data below). This research evaluation drills down further to examine the impact of the Invisible Hurdles Program on the making of informed decisions and the flow-on effect of this for individuals, staff, an organisationally.

10. Summary of the Tools for Extracting Data in this Research Evaluation

For Field Trip 8 in the week 2 May- 5 May 2022, five participants had active cases of COVID but nonetheless participated in the on-line interviews. Eight of the participants in the research had been involved with the IHP since its commencement in 2015 and so were able to provide insights into shifts and progress along the ECMoPT.

The following data was considered:

1. The overall *aggregated de-identified service data* routinely collected by HRCLS provided to the author by the team at HRCLS for the IH Program. These include:
 - i. number of clients seen
 - ii. the nature and number of client matters
 - iii. referrals to and from the services of the IH program (including the date, a brief description, and the professional role e.g., nurse and agency)
 - iv. secondary consultations (including the number, nature of the query, date, a brief description and the professional role and agency)
 - v. collection of additional data on social determinants of health and client needs on file closure for Stage 3
 - vi. case studies
2. *Yarning Circles with young people* from the WFLC, AWASH and NESAY (February May 2022 respectively). One was planned for June 2022 but cancelled at the last minute due to participant unavailability. It is noted that this tool has been informed by the *First Nations Cultural Safety Framework* of the Australian Evaluation Framework (October 2021) and the *Indigenous Evaluation Strategy* of the Productivity Commission (October 2020). A *yarning circle* is a harmonious, creative, and collaborative way of communicating in the form of a free-flowing dialogue that encourages responsible, respectful, and honest interactions between participants, building trusting relationships in a safe place so they can be heard and respond or not as they wish. Yarning Circles are designed to allow all participants to have their

say in a safe space without judgement. The Yarning Circles were facilitated by Dr Liz Curran. (New tool Stage III)

3. *Monthly Guided Professional Journals* kept by the lawyers for each project throughout 2019, 2020 and 2021. The lawyer/s used some guiding questions as a framework and reflected on relationship building with and between the three services and young people; trust; barriers; breakthroughs; complexities of clients; and systemic issues (de-identified).
4. *Evaluation – Collaboration Measurement of Progress Tool*
5. A 45-minute *in-depth interview with 3 trusted intermediary staff members* from each of the partner agencies, conducted in the week of 2-5 May 2022 (9 participants)
6. A 30-minute *interview with the program lawyers* conducted in the week of 2-5 May 2022 (2 participants)
7. A 30-minute *interview with managers of the four partner agencies* and the HRCLS Supervising Lawyer, conducted in the week of 2-5 May 2022 (4 participants)
8. A *Reflective Practice Meeting with managers across the four partners*. This type of Reflective Practice Meeting has become a tool in recent evaluation literature.²² A Reflective Practice Meeting draws out the valuable knowledge and experience that resides in people's heads that can often be missed in other data collection or information systems. It opens a space for participants to pause and reflect on a range of evaluative elements that can be tailored to the needs of the program/program, e.g., achievements and underlying success factors, challenges, and areas for improvement, what's working for whom in what circumstances and why, unexpected outcomes, lessons learned, growth and insight etc. This Reflective Practice Meeting was prepared using the proxies and benchmarks that underpin this study (New tool Stage III).

²² Dawber C and O'Brien T (2013) 'A Longitudinal, Comparative Evaluation of Reflective Practice Groups for Nurses Working in Intensive Care and Oncology' 3(1) *J Nurs Care*. DOI: 10.4172/2167-1168.1000138. ISSN: 2167-1168 JNC.

Number of interviews/ Yarning Circles/ Reflective Practice Meetings conducted	
February 2022	May 2022
1 Yarning Circle WFLC – 5 Participants	1 Yarning Circle (1 from AWAHS)
	9 In-depth interviews with trusted intermediary staff
Debrief with HRCLS staff	Interviews with 4 Managers (1 from each partner)
Meeting with Managers of 4 Agencies to tweak project design for Stage III	Interview with 2 Lawyers
	Reflective Practice Meeting with 5 Managers of 4 Agencies facilitated by the author.
	Debrief with HRCLS staff

The research evaluator estimates that approximately 21 hours' worth of interviews/meeting and is grateful for the time of all the participants.

Part B Summary of Data

2.1 Case Studies – Drawn from Interviews

a. Case Studies from Reflections from Trusted Intermediary Staff on Clients they have worked with over the life of the IH Program since 2015

Case Study 1 – Seema

The IH lawyer assisted Seema in getting a birth certificate. There were different names on the father and their child's documents. The young person had no identification. She was 16 years old and did not have a birth certificate. Seema's mother was a perpetrator of family violence. Seema had been trying to apply for a birth certificate and had been unable to do so for some time. Without the birth certificate Seema could not get any entitlements to income support, Medicare, access to housing, a much-needed driving licence so that she could attend critical appointments as a young mother. Seema was increasingly frustrated and anxious as she could not get a response from the Registry Office to her queries about how to get a birth certificate. As a 16-year-old she did not know how to navigate the computer systems. There was no phone number she could call and when she finally found the number she could not get through. She spent many hours try to navigate the system unsuccessfully. The system was confounding her. Through the IHP she was linked up to the IH lawyer. The IH lawyer encountered the same sorts of barriers that the 16-year-old mother did initially. This included a lack of responsiveness from the Registry Office. Eventually the lawyer, through persistence, managed to secure the phone number of a supervisory manager. Once she was able to explain the young person's predicament and advocate on by her behalf, a birth certificate was quickly reissued.

A year to the day after Seema had been issued with the birth certificate, she lost it largely due to having to move due to unstable housing. 'What was brilliant was that this time the young person reached out directly to the IH lawyer for help'. Previously, Seema had not reached out because she did not trust any adults in her life. Through working with the intermediary, she was linked up to the IH lawyer and now trusted the lawyer and knew that she would get a response. Again, the lawyer was able to secure the reissue of the birth certificate.

Case Study 2 - Tahlia

Tahlia is a young client who was pursuing assistance for compensation for mistreatment in foster care. As a result of the intervention of the IH lawyer, she was awarded a large compensation payout in response

to her abuse claim. Were it not for the IHP, this young woman would not have known she was entitled to make a claim. Prior to her successful claim Tahlia had felt worthless. This compensation payout has been critical to her having enough income to be able to move forward in her life. Also, the compensation has been critical as acknowledgment of the harm that was caused to her in care and that her treatment was not OK.

Case Study 3 - Cassie

Cassie was being underpaid and mistreated by her manager. As a result of the IH lawyer taking her through her rights, she was able to advocate on her own behalf to the manager. The manager then started to act responsibly and did not drop her wages as he had indicated he had planned to do. The effect on Cassie was to realise that she could speak up and that people in authorities who did the wrong thing could be challenged by knowledge of legal rights and their responsibilities.

Case Study 4 - Fabio

Over the life of the IHP, Fabio has had interactions with the Invisible Hurdle's lawyers since start-up in 2015. He has started to ask questions and participate in discussions about relevant issues in young people's lives. Fabio clearly feels safe in the sessions that are offered by the lawyers. Fabio has grown increasingly in confidence and has been willing to share his ideas and experiences. This case study was noted by the trusted intermediary demonstrating that the long-term engagement of the lawyers with the students has in some cases seen them feel safer and prepared to disclose and consider options that they would have otherwise not done were it not for the IHP.

Case Study 5 - Jen

Jen was being abused by her stepfather. He was also abusing her mother. Neither Jen nor her mother understood that what was occurring was family violence. The stepfather had also been claiming her mother's disability payment. The mother and the daughter were denied access to their bank accounts, and all their entitlements were going into the stepfather's account. The mother and daughter were struggling to survive in this situation. Jen, on discovering the nature of family violence and rights and methods in attaining safety through the IHP community development sessions and later legal support explained to her mother their rights in relation to the finances and the family violence situation. The stepfather had also isolated the daughter and her mother from all their friends and family and they had no support base for two years. Over time, and with further help and support from the IHP and the partner IH agency, the mother and daughter were able to leave the family home and move interstate.

Case Study 6 - Michaela

Michaela is a young person who experiences mental health problems and has engaged with Invisible Hurdles since 2015. In the early days of the Invisible Hurdles Program this student would not leave her teacher's side. This student now interacts with the lawyers and is thoughtful in all Invisible Hurdles discussions. She is enthusiastic and has lots of questions about feeling safe. This young person has been a parent for a long time and knowing her rights has enabled them to find answers to questions around her entitlements to benefits and to ensure that she can navigate her child- parent obligations. Her mental health has become increasingly stable are the period of engagement with IHP lawyers.

Case Study 7 - Kindra

Kindra, prior to her engagement with the IHP, was quiet and now speaks up most of the time. Kindra feels comfortable to chat after class about her personal issues and questions about the law. This program has built her confidence and Kindra has been able to confide in the lawyers and disclose issues that would never have been the case had it not been for this trusted relationship she has built with the IH team. Kindra has benefited from the IHP 'physically, mentally and in terms of clarifying rights and navigating complex relationships within the family and with the friendship network and beyond'.

Case Study 8 - Jonathan

Jonathan's father bashed him and had broken parts of his face. Instead of charging the father with assault the police charged the young person. As a result, Jonathan became homeless and had no income. The

IH lawyer was able to speak to the police and attended the police interview. The IH lawyer also assisted Jonathan to obtain his birth certificate. The police charges were later reviewed after the lawyer's intercession and because of having this police matter resolved and gaining his birth certificate Jonathan then went on to be able to secure income and housing. The rights of a young person to their birth certificate is pivotal in their being able to re-establish themselves, have enough income to support themselves, to have access to health services and to prevent homelessness.

Case Study 9 - Britta

Britta thought that she had been sexually assaulted due to her age but was unsure. She was referred to the IHP lawyer through secondary consultation. Both the trusted intermediary staff member and Britta were unclear as to the age of consent. After having a conversation with the IHP lawyer, the trusted intermediary staff member was able to establish that there was an issue around the age of the young person and that she had in fact been sexually assaulted. This staff member was able to then have confidential and careful discussions with Britta. Britta then sought the assistance of the IH lawyer directly. Britta was able to avail herself of the information she needed and to have frank conversations in a safe environment. It took Britta time to absorb the information but with the support of both her trusted intermediary and the IH lawyer, in time, she was able to leave the relationship and get further ongoing support. 'If it wasn't for the IHP she would have been unlikely to talk to a lawyer. This young person has shared issues around the age of consent and what is and isn't appropriate with other young people. By arming her with this sort of information it has had a huge ripple effect.'

Case Study 9 - Community Development

Identifying from casework that young people needed more information about the age of consent the IHP ran a series of workshops for young girls about this issue. During one of these sessions the young girls expressed concern that a 12-year-old could consent. They felt that this was too young. The girls wanted to know what they could do to change this. As a result of this the IH lawyers assisted the young girls to draft a letter to the government. In this letter the young girls indicated to the government that they felt that 12 years old was too young for a young woman to consent to sex. This exercise enabled the young girls to always have a voice in the process and they felt facilitated by the IHP. Separate workshops were run on how to write a letter, why you need to formulate the letter in a certain way and the girls' input was taken. Once the letter was drafted, the letter was returned to the young girls for their consent and any recalibration. 'The young girls we're very happy about themselves and indicated that they would feel more comfortable in future engaging in such policy initiatives. One of the young girls said that she felt like a 'real advocate''. The young women received a letter back from the government saying that their input was thoughtful and thanking them for putting their position in writing.

Case Study 10 – Carla

Carla had significant housing issues because of family violence. By working closely with the IH lawyer, she was able to seek legal support about her rights to leave home and to get connected to Centrelink. This was not a simple family violence situation (if they are ever simple). Carla felt safe with the lawyer, asking about what she could and could not do. She felt supported. Her support person asked her how her legal matter was going. Carla indicated there were no gaps in the IH lawyer's help and that the IH lawyer 'had taken it all on'. Carla said that 'she felt that she had a voice in the way that her matter was being determined'. She's now looking for housing and other supports she did not know about previously. She now feels that leaving a family violence situation is a possibility. 'This young woman she would have never sought legal service from an independent or private or legal aid lawyer. She understands the issues better, she knows what her rights are as a 16-year-old, where she was previously controlled by her family, she now looks after herself. She has an exit plan, and she can now frame things that are acceptable and not acceptable around family violence and know that it's OK to question and say no'.

Case Study 11 - Aaliyah

Aaliyah had a significant bank debt. The debt was acquired through a domestic violence relationship. Her partner had obtained the loan despite her having no fixed address and no income. All of Aaliyah's youth allowance went into paying the debt. All the money would come out sometimes leaving her with as little

as three cents at the beginning of every fortnight. To have enough money to live on, Aaliyah's coping strategy was to exploit herself for other people so she could earn an income to support herself. One of Aaliyah's other strategies was to walk to the bank at midnight and withdraw her Centrelink money before it was used to pay the debt. The IH lawyer became involved through referral from the trusted intermediary staff member. This lawyer worked with the IH partner and a financial counsellor. All Aaliyah's financial documents were obtained and there was a breakthrough because of the unlawful way in which the contracts had been offered. The lawyers assessed the loan and debt because of irresponsible lending. As a result of this complaint and the lawyer's negotiations, the debt was waived and Aaliyah 'grew wings'. It has given her hope. The flow on effects were that Aaliyah secured employment, housing and was able to financially sustain housing over a longer period than would have ordinarily been the case because of further support and advice around this issue. "My observation" (the trusted intermediary staff interview) "is that Aaliyah presented so much better after debt had been waived. 'Their clothing improved; they were able to get a mobile phone. Over four years of this matter dominating their life they 'experienced sheer relief' when it was resolved. For us workers, we could now set her up in a house, assist her in formulating savings. had their Centrelink debt reimbursed and her benefit reinstated. This has also set her up further for more secure and stable housing into the future."

Case Study 12 - Ciara

Ciara lives in a country area and has a young baby. Due to family violence, Ciara had to move from place to place as she tried to escape the perpetrator of family violence. In trying to access a number of government support agencies, Ciara was told they could no longer help her because she moved across the border. She also had older children. The Department of Care and Protection got involved. The baby ended up in hospital and the police thought because the child was blue that there must have been child abuse, despite medical documentation indicating the contrary.

Child Protection removed all her children, even though Ciara had been acting on doctor's orders they felt that she should have acted differently. As a result of the involvement of the IHP Ciara was given her older children back who were traumatised by being separated from their young mother. The IH lawyer scrutinised the paperwork and held the Department to account highlighting they were making drastic decisions without any evidence, in fact with evidence to the contrary. The IH lawyer's ability to scrutinise the evidence had a real impact on Ciara and her children. 'Often with care and protection our clients just say yes as they are so scared of challenging what they're told. There is a fear of reprisal. This is why seeking their rights can be tricky. For this reason, the young people need advocates like we've had with these IH lawyers. Now as the worker, I am also legally informed on where they stand. The downstream impacts of this are huge. We can ring on the spot when it's time critical and this comes in really handy. Overtime what's starting to happen is we might see a change in how systems operate, and I want to be involved in this.'

b. Case Studies from last 14-months – Source: IH Lawyers

Case Study 13 - Wynona

Wynona was referred to IHP by a teacher. Wynona was not far from turning 18 and she wanted to start looking for work. She told the teacher that her birth certificate was destroyed in a house fire when she was young, and her mother had not replaced it.

The teacher referred her to the IHP as they identified that she would need some support to get her document, as she was also the carer for her mother.

The IHP helped Wynona in completing the application to obtain a copy of her birth certificate from Births, Deaths and Marriages and applied for a fee waiver because she was on a Centrelink benefit.

During the time the IHP lawyer was helping Wynona, it was discovered that she did not have her own Medicare card, did not have a tax file number and did not have a bank account. Wynona also mentioned that without her birth certificate and Tax File Number (TFN) her Centrelink payment would be cut.

After Wynona eventually got her birth certificate, the IH lawyer helped her complete the Medicare card application and spoke to Wynona about how she can apply for a bank card and what type of bank account she could open. Wynona was then able to apply for the bank card on her own and completed the ATO TFN application with her teacher, and the activity was countered towards her VCAL outcomes.

The IH lawyer then supported Wynona in completing the steps required in order to complete the ATO proof of identity requirements at the Post Office to get her TFN.

During all this, the IH lawyer spoke to her Centrelink social worker and explained the assistance that was being provided so that they were aware Wynona was trying to do everything she could do avoid her payment being cut.

There was a delay in the TFN application being processed, so the IH lawyer and Wynona called the ATO together to explain the urgency in processing her application. Several phone calls later, one to a person who was obstructive, and another person who was really helpful, the TFN application was located, processed and number issued.

Wynona was ecstatic when she got her own identity documents. She told the IH lawyer that she would not have been able to do any of it on her own as she would not have been able to complete the forms and would have been overwhelmed by the red tape and different processes. Wynona explained that she has medical conditions, suffers from poor mental health and is also the career for mother. She mentioned that she did not think her mother would have been able to help her.

Case Study - 14 Jill

Jill was referred to the IHP by a teacher. Jill is a young mum and has a baby girl, Nina. Jill found out that that Nina's father, Chase, is currently in jail for criminal offences relating to his ex-partner.

Jill has an Intervention Order against Chase for family violence offences he committed against her. Chase's family is pressuring Jill to allow him to contact her so they can talk about Nina as this will help Chase's mental health while he is in prison.

Jill does not know what she should do. She said that she does not want to get in trouble from the Police if she speaks to him. She was worried about breaching the Intervention Order.

The IHP lawyer got a copy of the Intervention Order and went through the order with Jill, giving her advice about what it means and that she can't get in trouble. Jill said she had a better understanding of the order now. The IHP lawyer then gave advice to Jill about family law and child contacts. The IHP lawyer could tell that Jill did not want to talk to Chase and did not want to blur the lines but was not sure how to deal with the pressure from his family. The IHP lawyer told Jill that she is not obliged to do anything, that in actual fact it is up to Chase to get his own legal advice and find out his options. The IHP lawyer recorded "I told Jill to tell his family that she got legal advice and that Chase should get his own and leave it at that. Jill was so relieved that she did not have to change anything and that the ball is in his Court."

Case Study 15 - Scott

Scott was referred to the IHP by a worker at a local youth support agency. Scott was transient, living between his mother's house and with his girlfriend's family. Scott was receiving support to address his housing situation, improve his life goals and participate in the community.

Scott was referred to the IHP as his case practitioner discovered that Scott had some fines and that the stress in dealing with these fines were having a detrimental effect on his mental health.

Scott spoke to the lawyer about the fines and during this appointment, also mentioned that he was being pursued by debt collectors for a motor vehicle accident that he was involved in.

The IHP lawyer lodged an application with Fines Victoria for one of the fines to be withdrawn through the Family Violence Scheme. On the basis of the submissions and supporting evidence supplied, the application was successful, and fine was withdrawn. Scott had another fine and he wanted to deal with this fine through a Work & Development Permit, however, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the reduction of sponsors, and an appropriate sponsor could not be found. Scott had no other option but to pay off the fine by instalments using his Centrelink benefit.

IHP also agreed to assist Scott with his motor vehicle accident and negotiating with the debt collector/insurer. The IHP lawyer wrote to the insurer requesting a waiver on the basis of financial hardship and personal circumstances. This matter is still on foot.

During this time, Scott was involved in another motor vehicle accident. The Police investigated the accident and interviewed Scott. As HRCLS does not have expertise in criminal law, a warm/facilitated referral was made to Youthlaw (a Youth specialist community legal centre) so that Scott could obtain advice and assistance in relation to the interview. Scott informed the IHP lawyer that Police were intending to pursue charges but that the lawyer from Youthlaw had agreed to help him. This is also an example of the IHP reaching out to work with a specialist CLC to obtain a better outcome for the young person.

Case Study - 16 Emily

Emily was referred to IHP by a NESAY worker. Emily is now 21 years old. When she was 14 years old, she was the victim of a series of sexual assaults. While the perpetrator was being held on remand, a letter from him was intercepted and he was attempting to solicit someone to murder Emily. Emily has since lived a relatively secluded life and struggles with anxiety. Emily is now a single mother of 2 young children. Emily wants to change her name as a safety measure but cannot afford the cost involved. The NESAY worker reached out to see if IHP knew of any financial assistance that Emily could access to cover the cost, or if there were any other options available.

During the initial appointment, Emily discloses several other complex issues. She is struggling with her mental health, physical health and is being swallowed by enormous amounts of debt. The IHP lawyer wrote to BDM on Emily's behalf and requested a change of name and a waiver of any fees.

IHP also advised Emily that she had options for dealing with the multiple debts in her name. IHP were able to write on Emily's behalf and let the debtors know that she was judgment proof and requested waivers on compassionate grounds.

Qualitative Data

2.2 Aggregated Service Data

Data period: 1/3/21 – 29/2/22* + 1/3/22 – 30/4/22** = 14 months

* Closed during period

Total number of Clients & Services by Partner Location

PARTNER	No Of Client			No Of Service		
	1/3/21 – 29/2/22	1/3/22 – 30/4/22	14-month total	1/3/21 – 29/2/22	1/3/22 – 30/4/22	14-month total
Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service	58	15	73	91	21	112
Flexible Learning Centre	12	2	14	28	3	31
NESAY	34	6	40	73	14	87
Grand Total		127		230		

Total Number: Legal Advice & Legal Tasks by Partner Location

Partner Service	Legal Advice			Legal Task		
	1/3/21 – 29/2/22	1/3/22 – 30/4/22	14-month total	1/3/21 – 29/2/22	1/3/22 – 30/4/22	14-month total
Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service	64	18	82	23	3	26
Flexible Learning Centre	16	2	18	10	1	11
NESAY	40	4	44	23	10	33
Grand Total		144		70		

Total Advice & Casework cross the three Partners (FC, NESAY & AWAHS) = 553

214 for March 2021- 30 April 2022 (allowing gaps in funding)

15 for Jan - Feb 2021

148 for Jan 2020 - Dec 2020

176 for Jan 2019 - Dec 2019

Total Number of Cases Opened during period

Partner Service			
	1/3/21 – 29/2/22	1/3/22 – 30/4/22	14-month total
Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service	3	0	3
Flexible Learning Centre	3	0	3
NESAY	8	3	11
Grand Total	14	3	17

Total number of Cases

Partner Service	1/3/21 – 29/2/22	1/3/22 – 30/4/22	14-month total
Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service	4	0	4
Flexible Learning Centre	2	0	2
NESAY	10	0	10
Grand Total	16	0	16

Analysis Comment: For a 14-month period in 201-2022, allowing for gaps in funding, there has been a significant jump in the numbers of advice work and case work undertaken by the IHP in 2021-2022 by comparison with those undertaking in 2020 and 2019. The numbers were probably down in 2020 from 2019 due to the impacts of COVID-19 and reduction in face-to-face service delivery both on the part of the partners and of the legal service team. However, even despite the restrictions in early 2021 there has been an increase and considerable delivery of caseworker advice to young people through the IHP.

Total Number of Clients by Family Violence Indicator* (CLASS data = linked to problem type)

Partner Service	1/3/21 – 29/2/22	1/3/22 – 30/4/22	14-month total	14-month %
Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service Total	51/91	10/21	61/112	54.46%
Flexible Learning Centre Total	18/28	1/3	19/31	61.29%
NESAY Total	48/73	8/14	56/87	64.36%
Grand Total	117/192	19/38	136/230	59.13%

Total Number of Clients by Family Violence Indicator* (Manual data)

Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service Total	28/45	8/16	36/61	59.02%
Flexible Learning Centre Total	17/19	1/2	18/21	85.71%
NESAY Total	33/43	1/2	34/45	75.56%
Grand Total	78/107	10/20	88/127	69.29%

AWAHS Total Number of Young People (u25) by Family Violence Indicator

AWAHS	Young people (U25)	YP & FV	Percentage
1/3/21 – 29/2/22	7	5	71%
1/2/22 – 30/4/22	2	2	100%

Analysis comment:

The Program has met its overall aim, namely, to reach young people experiencing family violence. Over time the number of clients with an issue involving family violence has increased dramatically, from Stage II and III.

Average Number of Vulnerabilities per client (CLASS data) 14 months

Outreach Service Vulnerabilities				% per client	
	1/3/21 – 29/2/22	1/3/22 – 30/4/22 1/3/22 – 30/4/22	14 month total	14 month %	
AWAHS	268 vulnerabilities 58 clients = 4.62	70 vulnerabilities 15 clients = 4.67	338/73	4.63	
Flexible Learning Centre	62 vulnerabilities 12 clients = 5.17	7 Vulnerabilities 2 clients = 3.5	69/14	4.9	
NESAY	194 vulnerabilities 34 clients = 5.70	38 vulnerabilities 6 clients = 6	232/40	5.9	

Additional Vulnerability Data

*Vulnerabilities = Regional disadvantage (RA3), Under 25 (or over 65) years of age, CALD, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Status, COVID Affected, Bushfire Affected, Disability/Mental Health, Family Violence, Financial Disadvantage, Homelessness, Single Parent

Analysis Comment: The data above, around vulnerability, suggests that the majority of clients that the Invisible Hurdles Program is reaching are experiencing high levels of disadvantage and vulnerability, well beyond for example, youth and low income.

Consistent with other research about vulnerable populations, the data is suggestive that many of the young people seeking the help of the Invisible Hurdles program come with multiple and often cascading problems²³ and therefore are likely to have complex needs.

This data is also suggestive of the fact that the IHP is reaching young people experiencing family violence. This is significant as it is one of the key objectives and criteria for success of the program listed in the funding agreements between the Department of Justice, Victoria, and the LSB & CV.

The qualitative data that has been collected for Stage III (see below) in this research evaluation sheds some light on this complexity and impacts on the lives of young people. However, further research is still needed.

The recommendations to this report indicate these vulnerabilities and how they are impacted by legal problems require further policy, administrative and funding settings to ensure young people who experienced multiple vulnerabilities are better addressed at a systems level. The issue of difficulty in obtaining birth certificates discussed above is an example of one such area in need of reform. The Invisible Hurdles Program, although it is making significant inroads and these inroads are increasing overtime since the program's commencement in 2015, cannot address these systems issues alone. Such issues cause inequity and loss of opportunities for young people and their families especially young parents. Recent research in the public health sphere has found that young pupils affected by domestic and/or relationship violence had significantly worse outcomes and experiences than non-affected peers. Emergent ratios demonstrated higher risks of being lonely, being bullied or having deliberately self-harmed. They were also more likely to report sustained health conditions, poorer health practices and worse access to and experiences of health services.²⁴ The study concludes that exposure to violence in domestic and/or relationships is detrimental to children and young people's mental health, wellbeing, and compromise safety. This study similarly calls for renewed strategic policy-level consideration in the design and delivery of young peoples' services

Manual data:

1 March 2021 to 30 April 2022				
Partner	AWAHS	NESAY	FLC	Total
Referrals	184	50	20	254
Secondary Consultations (SC)*	87	81	38	206

Note: This manual data has been averaged as there were gaps in recording due to funding ceasing at various times.

Total Referrals Across the three Partners (FC, NESAY & AWAHS) = 788

46 for Jan 2021 - Feb 2021

²³ Pleasence P, Balmer N, Buck A, O'Grady A, Genn H (2004b) 'Multiple Justiciable Problems: Common clusters and their social and demographic indicators', 1 (2), *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies*, 301–29, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1740-1461.2004.00009.x>

²⁴ Clarke A, Olive P, Akooji N, Whittaker K (2020) 'Violence exposure and young people's vulnerability, mental and physical health' 65 *International Journal of Public Health*, 357-366.

225 for Jan 2020 - Dec 2020
263 for Jan 2019 - Dec 2019
254 for March 2021- 30 April 2022 (allowing gaps in funding)

Total SCs Across the three Partners (FC, NESAY & AWAHS) = 480

206 for March 2021- 30 April 2022 (87 AWAHS; 81 NESAY, 38 WFLC)
(Allowing gaps in funding)
32 for 1 Jan- Feb 2021 (21 AWAHS, 7 NESAY, 4 WFLC)
186 for 1 Jan - Dec 2020 (65 AWAHS, 87 NESAY, 34 WFLC)
56 for 1 Jan - Dec 2019 (across all 3 partners)

Analysis Comparison of SCs for 2020 and 2021- 2022

AWAHS 108 – increase from 21 in 2020
NESAY 88 – marginal increase from 87 in 2020
WFLC 42 – increase from 34 in 2020
(Allowing gaps in funding).

Analysis Comments: In examining the Secondary Consultations in variations between 2020 and 2020 to 2021, there is an overall significant increase in the number of Secondary Consultations undertaken by the three partner agencies through the Invisible Hurdles Program. This statement is made with the qualification, noting that care needs to be taken given the observations in the Stage II report on impacts of the COVID 19 pandemic, where at NESAY there was a heavy reliance and take-up of Secondary Consultations due to the lack of face-to-face nature of service delivery in 2020. However, in early 2021 there were also lockdowns and restrictions. The need to address young people's problems by using the trusted intermediary staff is evidenced by this increase in SC and suggestive of greater uptake.

Irrespective of these qualifications, it appears that significant inroads have been made into the delivery of Secondary Consultations to First Nations people at the AWAHS site with an increase over 14 months to 81 secondary consultations in 2021-2022 from 21 in 2020.

Pre and Post Professional Development Survey Analysis

Legal Issues Survey Xmas 2021 - joint session with partner agencies

Pre PD-Survey

*See below in the appendixes

For Stage III of the research evaluation, we decided in February 2022 to omit question two in the survey, however the question was asked when the tools administered by the service as the survey predated this decision.

Post PD Survey

*See below in the appendixes

The response rate increased from 2020 from 3 participants to 11 participants

Analysis Comment on Comparisons Pre and Post Professional Development (PD) Data: There is a marked shift after the training in questions 1-5 which are the questions pertaining to awareness or capacity and capability. There is a shift from neutral responses to agree, and from agree to strongly agree in the post PD Survey. This indicates that the PD was effective in building skills, awareness and confidence in using legal information and identifying legal issues in their work more than they would have otherwise done so before the training will stop.

Questions 6-7 pertain mainly to the role of lawyers in assisting in the advocacy of young people, the responses to these were consistently strongly agree or agree. A couple of responses shifted after the PD from agree to strongly agree.

Qualitative Research Data

Qualitative Responses to Post PD Survey Feedback Summary

In interpreting some of the more fulsome data contained in the Appendix, some of the neutral responses are clarified by the qualitative feedback. For example, participants indicated that they weren't using *more* Secondary Consultations as they were *already* utilising them quite extensively and so they noted their usage had not increased. The data could be misleading and imply neutrality however, it is clear that those who are familiar with the IHP are utilising Secondary Consultations extensively and as part of their ongoing approach to practise.

Summarising some of the comments extracted from the PD Surveys:

In relation to question 8 on the utility of the training:

- *very practical tips for supporting young people*
- *engaging presentation*
- *helpful clear and succinct*
- *I'm always learning from the team something knew. It's also a great confirmation of my wonderings*

In relation to question 9 on whether the trusted intermediary staff would utilise the legal information learned. Comments included:

- *now I will encourage young people to explore other options*
- *I already have conversations now with colleagues encouraging them to explore legal issues but now with its training it will be even more at the forefront of my mind*
- *I am more aware now of how to identify legal issues*

In relation to question 10 and 11 on whether the training has changed practise and implementation of new knowledge and skills:

- *I will now be seeking advice*
- *I will be changing my workplace practice*
- *I will design programs for young people that identify legal issues now. This means I will be doing things differently.*
- *I'm already doing it but it's reaffirming.*
- *I will now be thinking about underlying factors including legal issues now, I will be more proactive in discussing legal issues with young people and my colleagues*
- *More advocacy will be encouraged.*
- *Will utilise this new legal knowledge to reach out to more services to see if there are further opportunities to increase reach to young people*
- *I can now advocate with the assistance of understanding how to use the legal language*

Other relevant comments to the research evaluation benchmarks emerging from the survey responses include:

- *This ongoing collaboration with this program is excellent. I realise now how many issues are legal in nature that are impacting on our clients and that we could seek help for*

- *I realise that by listening more actively we can encourage young people to get this legal support as legal issues will now emerge. Because of the training, I will be able to identify them. Partnerships like this are key to success with young people.*
- *This program is a great way to empower young people. After this training I will now consult not just on service but on policy issues.*
- *I aim to keep supporting Invisible Hurdles program. I rely on it. I want to strengthen this collaboration as it empowers the young people and gives them collective voice.*

Analysis Comment: This survey data taken from a Professional Development program from the trusted intermediaries of the partners is suggestive of training that is effective, relevant, practical, and succinct.

The data also suggests that the approach to Professional Development undertaken builds confidence, is engaging and empowers the trusted intermediaries in their work with young people. It appears that what they learn in training will be transferred into their operational work with young people. The legal issues workshop has increased the awareness of how legal issues can play out in the young people's lives and how support people can leverage more assistance with legal support and problems through this greater awareness.

Yarning Circles Summary

3 Yarning Circles Total of 5 + 1 + participants

To further de-identify the participants in the Yarning Circles (YC) the feedback has been aggregated. There were two yarning circles held with young people in Albury, and Wodonga. A further was planned in June 2022 but had to be cancelled at the last minute due to lack of availability of young people. The first was run as a pilot in February 2022 at the WFLC. A further yarning circle was held in May 2022. The questions asked and scenario used are contained in the Annexures to this report.

Question 1 - This young person has a number of issues that are legal in nature. Should they get help and support? Yes/No. Why? Why not? Where do you think they could go?

100% of YC participants felt legal problems could impact upon other issues for example, payment of bills, fines, payment plans especially for single parents.

They said that the '*first thing they do was talk to the agency*' (AWAHS, WFLC, NESAY) in the IHP. They said that '*for most of young the young people it was not obvious who they would talk to and go for help.*' They noted that '*right here where you go and you trust people would be front of mind, convenient*' and they could also ask their supports who to get in touch with and find out who would be the best person to contact.

Quotes from YP:

'It is not always clear what is legal and what is not and what issues might need to be addressed.' It is therefore critical to have a legal background available to young people especially as the law is so complex.

They made a comparison with mainstream schools. They said 'the teachers in mainstream schools are not like here at WFLC and so those students would probably not know where to go or get a direct or quick contact with supports'.

If the IH lawyer wasn't here and if they didn't get along with the lawyer, the implications of not getting this help could be critical. Housing, enough food, stress anxiety, and not having access to educational paths would all be flow on effects for young people in Tahlia's situation (Tahlia in this instance was the character in the fictitious scenario used in the YC).

Question 2 – Type of lawyer & key to engagement of young people - Do you think getting legal assistance can help? Yes/ No. How? Why?

YP said that the key elements in making them engage was '*kindness*', that '*the person was professional*' and that they would '*not be judged by them*'.

They indicated that they get anxious about a new person, questions can cross their mind like '*will we get along?*' '*will I be treated as stupid?*'.

Other comments included that:

"I have trouble concentrating for long periods of time, so bite size or else being able to find out the information later from the other students can be really helpful".

'I can be shy and afraid. Sometimes allow people to write things down because that might feel better.'

They said that for them to engage particularly with a lawyer, it was important that they '*not use big words*' and '*keep it simple*'. They wanted someone who '*doesn't rush into things and explains things and breaks them down*'. They want someone who's prepared to '*have a go and find work arounds*'.

Takes time to gain their trust and doesn't push them down or doesn't make them feel stressful.

They said they '*wanted to know what the options were and have support in different areas not just in law so they could understand step by step and understand implications of taking different these options*'. They said that they '*want honesty not trickery*'. They want options explained in terms of what the '*insights and practical implications and what would they need to do next and to show them other available resources*'.

Building trust & Engaging with Young People

They want a lawyer who '*opens up about who they are*' and who you are. They want the connection and the relationship, as they are going to be sharing personal stuff and if they don't feel a relationship they will be less inclined to do this.

Trust is critically important: '*we won't do something if we don't trust people*'.

"To trust someone, you need not to judge them or what's happening in their life. These are all preconditions for us seeking help".

The person needs to be '*genuinely interested*'.

Question 3 - Is having a justice service alongside/visible and approachable a good service to have? Yes/No. Why or why not?

"Checking in regularly in case something was going on is important it also means that overtime you might open up about other stuff. Sometimes it's important to just have a chat from time to time."

The person needs to be reliable and visible. They observe from face-to-face interactions with the lawyer and with other people whether they're OK or not. That *'includes body language as well as what they say and how they relate with other staff and other young people.'*

Question 4 - What is your opinion on the impact of getting legal help early on and before a problem might escalate to solve it?

'You do not know what you do not know so it's useless unless you get explained things and it's interactive and explained overtime; it's critical.'

'Things need to be explained in more than one session and you need to build on people's knowledge because sometimes, it can be traumatic and it's hard to take the information on.'

'Young people talk about things so if they've got a really good source of information that's right and correct, then, they can actually help each other out to and spread the word.'

'Young people in general, and particularly First Nations young people, are not really aware of their rights. Often their source of information is other young people or people who have gotten into trouble previously. This might give them the wrong information and get them into further trouble. Therefore, this access to a lawyer in community and working with other trusted supports is a good way of working.'

Increasing depression leads the young person to overthink things. This means that they can end up in *'a loop where they get stuck and take bad possibilities and this prevents them'* from taking avertive action and early intervention. This can *'escalate their problems'*.

Question 5 - Do you think legal issues can impact on other aspects of life for example housing, employability, financial security, safety, health and well-being, family unity? Can you explain you answer in the context of young people in general?

'Coming to where you are at or in the situation in which you're likely to be is really important and sharing information there.' *'No life, if you have no car and no work it helps you get to a place; it can be really stressful.'*

'Issues like an eviction can be challenged if it's not being done legally. If you're being cut off your utility bills it means you can't heat your house, cook, or have light and sometimes the lawyers know how to work around this and find other ways. The IH lawyer/s is our direct contact. Sometimes there's so much going on and having the lawyer here to help with housing can connect things up.'

'You miss school and if you miss school, you don't have time to talk and catch up and so things like having to get a car or getting a licence that lawyer might be able to help with a really important.'

'Other schools don't have access to this sort of legal help. Young people particularly after the age of 16 don't feel comfortable talking to their parents anymore.'

Get anxious about a new person - questions can cross *our* mind like will we get along, will I be treated as stupid.

Question 6 - What can be done to improve things?

'Court stresses you out and yet it doesn't seem to connect. *Need joined up service*. Joined up services are really important for children if they're going through *something*'. Also, 'if a lawyer knows other professionals, then this helps get trust and then they can get through some obstacles working together and also makes connecting up easier.'

'In these justice workshops the personnel need to be visible, approachable, work holistically, have relationships with other services that First Nations young people relate to'.

'Services, to be effective, need to recognise that young people are hard to engage with, full stop'.

'The language in law is designed to reason, it's designed to keep people out. So, people need awareness to get through the door. Reaching young people means they have to trust you, and this can often mean engaging with community members and going to where they are. The first thing is you need to explain to young people that it's important. Trust is key - in First Nations community that comes to working with people in the community. As a young person and professional support, I want to work at who is approachable and who's prepared to be confronted and challenged. If the person is a lawyer then, you need the same person every time to meet you to share flaws including that they acknowledge that they don't know things and to make an effort to find out. This is so key to trust building.'

Community development - really being useful in 'getting to know the lawyers out of the legal advice realm'. Through the community development 'we get to know them, they get to have a laugh, they get to feel relaxed, they feel safe'.

Community development helps some familiarise themselves with the lawyer; it makes them understand what issues might be legal or not and that overtime they think it might influence a young person on feeling a bit more comfortable going to see a lawyer. A lot of young people go to see a counsellor but they wouldn't ever think of going to see a lawyer.

Police

'It's awful getting a lawyer when you are with the police; it's pretty scary'. 'Welcome place where we have and will get help and if we've got a problem with the police we might actually tend to go to the lawyer'. 'Trusting police can be an issue. More recently with IH organising police visits we've seen some police come into the school with the lawyer and that might make a difference but there are still issues of trust of police'.

Policy and law reform that involves young people having a say- 'ha that's funny! No one ever asks us, no one listened to us ... through the Invisible Hurdles we can find out what's going on and we can be involved in decisions that affect us'.

'A kid can lie for years just to cover up but when they feel confident then they will speak up and so this takes a long time, it might be a lie when they say what happened initially, but sometimes over time the lie becomes their reality'.

Concern with young people if people do listen, they won't make change happen, and that's what we want to see!

Mainstream Schools

'Every school should have a lawyer, a lawyer who can go to assembly and explain things and explain them in simple words and then they know when they can get help what they can get help for and they know their legal rights. This is a big issue in mainstream schools.'

'Even in mainstream schools, if they [*the lawyers*] had their cards and had visibility *through visits* twice a month, at least they'd be more front and centre at the mind and people would know they could get legal *help*'.

Question 7 - What are your thoughts that would work best to reach young people and get them legal help at the right time and early on?

'If you can't understand they simplify it *more*'

'Never leave it in the *dust*'.

'Don't make it daunting even if it causes anxiety - make us feel part of *it*'

'Let us have a say in the topics -sometimes you can speak up and others don't- this is really hard if you're *traumatised*'

'Sometimes when someone asks a question, it's really good to get the information because others of us might not be prepared to ask the question, but through someone else doing it we learn that we can be confident and ask or we can actually get the answers without having to speak *up*'.

'Safety is so important if we're going open-*up* and say *things*'.

'*More legal workshops with the young mob about leasing, signing contracts, insurance, phone plans how to get themselves out of trouble or avoid trouble, issues around credits-just generally information about life*'.

IH - what it means?

'...*through the Invisible Hurdles we can find out what's going on and we can be involved in decisions that affect us*'.

'When we went to the on an excursion, we found out about options we didn't know about.'

'*The great thing is you get follow up not just only by the lawyer in isolation but with other professionals and supports who are helping with non-legal problems. This helps people get access to housing and understand their rights. It helps them live safely and improves their health. The law can trip you up and being aware of it would otherwise not have happened but for this project*'.

'Even if you're over 18 these are the sorts of services you come back to because you've had a good experience with *them*'.

'If it does affect you can leave the room, and then you're happy to talk to them afterwards. *This* is a really important thing for some young people. *They* follow up *and* don't leave it hanging.'

'Going to the Hume Riverina Legal Service excursion was good it helped us see how they help people and it also helped us see that people are anxious and might get comfort by going and learning about how to approach a phone call or sit at a desk or what receptionists do and why they need the *information*'.

'If it weren't for having the lawyers at this school, we would never ever have probably seen that we had legal problems or known how to get help or that in fact we have *options*'.

'Help with things like getting a bank card it took ages, without help we wouldn't have got it. '

'Good to have a lawyer not just once a week but all the time and *visible*'

'For lawyers explain it well do it well and don't be dull.'

'Make us laugh -Invisible Hurdles is done well. '

'Great I love the random photos of the lawyer making funny faces. She is brilliant and knew a lot. The Invisible Hurdles stuff is interesting'.

'Invisible Hurdles project enables us to have conversations and those conversations lead to new conversations and new ideas and it makes us explore new options'.

'We realised through the Invisible Hurdles Project that the lawyers don't need to be scary and that sometimes although the law is scary you can actually work your way through it.'

'It's fun but it's educational.'

'It's correct information'.

'They talk about the right things.'

'It's hard stuff and they simplify it and make it understandable. All these things are important for any other program'.

'If you don't get it right, then they admit it and ask how you can improve – we'll give you ideas!'

'Without the help of Invisible Hurdles project or a multidisciplinary practise such as this one young people would have to find the person and then that person would have to find another person. This would make it really hard to find yourself and not just be passed from person to person and not have to share your story over and over again. You would feel that you weren't getting anywhere and then you just give up'.

'They don't make us feel stupid'.

'The lawyers are cool'

'What's good about this program is you get quick clarity and there's no formal process. This means you can communicate easily. It's practical and pragmatic and what the lawyer does is translate things to the next steps in the options and what can happen. This process also gives autonomy which is so important to Aboriginal youth.'

In-depth Interviews with Trusted Intermediary Staff

This section will summarise some of the key comments made in the 9 depth-interviews with trusted intermediary staff (3 from each of the three partners in health, educational and family & child services). These comments are categorised under the key benchmarks that are being used to measure whether the program is effective and having an impact.

Reach to young people

"This program overtime has extended its reach to young people through its use of the trusted relationships that we workers have with young people. They trust us, they see us interacting with the lawyers and this changes their mind set and willingness to approach the lawyer. The lawyers in the IHP have changed their negative stereotypes of lawyers as they are approachable in this program."

"I'd like to see more focus on residential care kids and kids who are in the care and protection system. They need a safe space. They need help transitioning. There are whole range of issues around safety, having roof over their head and they need to know that it's safe to ask 'is it OK?' Often, they won't do this for fear of losing relationships. Oddly, they lose the only home they have known just because they come of age. They don't speak up about their

rights. For instance, their rights in care, foster care, kinship care and in residential care. Some of the situations these kids end up in while in care of the State, are horrific. They need more legal support to manage this as 'they carry a lot of trauma'. Also, what happens in friendship circles when they share legal information from the IH lawyers could help as they share incorrect information with each other currently which gets them even further entrenched in disadvantage and is problematical.'

'Breaking down the stigma attached to lawyers for the in- State care young people. They have often had negative experiences of the care and protection system and the lawyers and the legal system particularly legal aid. Often, they're in foster care and the police have removed them so they don't trust anyone including the agencies you would think they could turn to for the help they need.'

'One young person was told by the police when they removed her, that she would be going back to her mum. Despite promises, the care and protection system refused to reunite this young person with her mother. This left her with an incredible distrust of lawyers as the lawyers had been involved in the decision to place her in permanent care. If this young person had been able to avail themselves of the IHP which was not possible as she was in a different region, this might have prevented her situation and she might have trusted lawyers. Having access to the IHP might have had a difference. She would have been given more opportunities and then she would have been able to move forward in her life'.

Reach of the partnership

'By working together in this way in this MDP as different professionals, we are reaching more young people. The secondary consultations are critical to the referral system. The referral system is easy to follow, quick and streamlined. We often do a quick consultation prior and then we link the young people up because they then feel confident to have a chat. Also, we can have a chat with the lawyer without using names so that we don't identify the client and get quick input. This earns the respect of the young people and it's a process of encouraging the young people through.²⁵ This combination of secondary consultations and then referrals are the process that's working. It would be really difficult to get young people referred if there wasn't this preliminary relationship building phase. In this, the Legal Health Check has also been implemented. This issue identification tool developed by the IHP helps us identify problems that young people have so that we can make these referrals and extend the reach to young people.'

'They trust me as their case practitioner. Even if they don't access the lawyer individually, they will often ask me to ask the lawyer.'

Engagement with young people

'The IH Team are flexible. They know that some students need to leave the room sometimes with the information to be too traumatic or they have problems concentrating. But they know that's OK now because the IH team understands this. The value of lollies in enticing the young people into their sessions cannot be underrated. It gets a lot of commentary from the young people.'

'Another feature of reaching young people has been the IHP's involvement in community development of the young people. The legal issues affect their schooling, and they can disengage and not concentrate. Through the community development they see the lawyers in informal settings and can have good conversations and questions in the group. They then say the lawyers aren't so frightening and will eventually make their way to the lawyers individually and disclose their problem. This highlights that the community development is also linked to the referral system and the engagement with young people to help them with their legal problems.'

²⁵ The Federation of Community Legal Centres (Vic.) (2018) 'Integrated Practice Tool Kit: A Guide to Help Understand Privilege and Mandatory Reporting in Integrated Practices'. https://www.fclc.org.au/integrated_practice_toolkit

'The lawyers are getting young people to work with them directly. There were still some young people who asked me to talk to the lawyer first and then after that they have the confidence to. More and more young people now go directly to the lawyers. The young people know that they are available, they know their mobile and they know that they will respond. This takes time but it's now happening'.

'It's also good role modelling for the young people and it makes them feel they aren't being let down as so often they are'.

Engagement of the partnership

'The Invisible Hurdles lawyers have the knowledge in the contacts. They have been able to make huge changes for young people in their lives. Their lives would have been different. They are able to phone the police and to exchange information and this all expands what we can do as a partnership to support our young people.'

'If the lawyers don't have the answers they try and find the answers for us. They admit when they're not sure, but they always come back to us'.

Capacity and capability of trusted intermediary staff

'It has reinforced my own knowledge and understanding of laws, rights etc. that's the value to me of secondary consultations. Secondary Consultations and their availability enhance outcomes significantly. It's integral to the collaboration and helps me and my agency to advocate for young people and make informed choices with options laid out both myself and the young people.'

'The professional development has taken place often at staff meetings and other informal settings. This is sensible as we are time poor. I include the role of secondary consultation as a form of training in this too. I've had some training on family violence and intervention orders. The lawyers present really good information. They use realistic case studies.'

'The interesting thing for me recently, has been seeing these case studies because the lawyers see the people in the context of their families, not just what we see, which is the young people out of this context. This presents a broader perspective or a wider perspective for us and gives us deeper insight as to what is going on in the young people's lives, where their family is caught up in family law or other legal issues. We really need to see the legal side and what the implications are across families. This is really informative. The value of different perspectives is really critical bringing law, education, social, cultural and health together'.

'From the point of view of us as trusted intermediaries, the IH lawyers' communication is accessible, clear, and reliable. This is important for me'.

Empowerment of young people

'There was a young girl who was upset because of the way she was being treated by managers and how her managers in the workplace were treating all the staff. The IH lawyer was involved and talked with the young girl. She was empowered and glad she asked questions. She passed this information on to other workmates. She said: 'I felt so good as I spoke to the lawyer about it. It gave me confidence and I could see that everything that the manager was doing was not right. This had a huge impact on me and my peers.'

'The young people can compare their conversations with other students and now, they say that their decisions, by being informed of their legal position and their choices, are improved by comparison to when they did not have the IH lawyer.'

'Often legal issues have results. Getting interventions in a legal way can help with addictions. It also can help the client accept change will stop. Sometimes it's the unknowing that makes them stressed. Clients are weary. Even if it's bad news, seeing the lawyer enables them to understand where they stand. It may not always be great to hear but knowing this helps them. It empowers.'

'The young people felt they had a voice in the process, and this was facilitated by the IHP. There in separate workshops to make the letter happen and instructed the students in how to put their thoughts and ideas in a coherent form'.

'The community development work and the policy involvement are getting students involved in the topics. For example, the work that the program has done around voting has helped the young people engage in laws, local governance. It encourages them to participate and to feel they have the ability, and they can have a voice. They are learning how they can have that voice.'

Empowerment of trusted intermediary staff

'Sometimes, we are given advice by others in authority that just doesn't seem to be correct. Often departments have made decisions and we see how they approach our young people, and it doesn't feel correct. All we have to do now, due to the IHP, is have a quick word with the lawyers and see where we can take it. This opens-up pathways'.

Collaboration with young people

'More and more the IHP is asking the young people what they think and engaging them in participating in activities. An example of this is, the policy work that students have been engaged in. I know they've done a lot of this at WFLC. It would be great if they could do more of it with the young people who the other two agencies in the partnership work with. I know COVID has made this challenging. They are starting to do this and proffering support to get young people involved from the other partners now by linking in more with workers and groups, which is encouraging'.

'My only concern is that sometimes they are so dedicated if not too dedicated. They give out so much of their time and sometimes I'm concerned it goes beyond and above the call of duty. They know that these are vulnerable kids. They are prepared to chat with the kids informally, check in with the kids and see signs as to their progress. They see their trauma and they want to help them'.

Collaboration of the partnership

'The 'cuppa dates' are great. We are time poor. The young people we work with are often in crisis. We need to respond quickly so, this form of catching up was really great. It fitted in with our daily catch ups. It was a space where we could ask impromptu questions and spread the knowledge. There were great quizzes on what we know and this helped share information in a form that was interactive. I'd like to see these 'cuppa dates' reinstated. It would be great to have this happen again. It helps us navigate where young people might be, and how they can engage in and navigate the legal system. For example, we did sessions on informed consent. The practitioner could take the lead without breaching any confidentiality and we could talk in general terms but learn along the way; it was great'.

Collaboration with trusted intermediary staff

'You have chosen the perfect people in this program. The relationship with lawyers is awesome. We collaborate, discuss, and bounce ideas off each other around education and the law. They also include the kids. It's just been amazing'.

Social determinants of health

'If you have no birth certificate -you can't get a bank account, you can't get access to income, you can't seek employment and can't be independent. The work that the IHP has done with so many of our young people to get their birth certificates has managed to alleviate the stress of the young people immensely.'

'It's had a huge impact. The young people can move forward. Without birth certificates they wouldn't get funding and this affects so much of their future things such as housing, income, security. They can get support for their child, and they can get work. It's purely administrative but lives depend on it. There's a bigger picture here for minority groups and the impact of silly decisions on young people's lives, their lifelong opportunities. There's legal implications and policy on this and the IHP are doing work in this space which is fabulous'.

'Resolving legal problems helps with young people's recovery and has therapeutic value. The young people often carry with them a legal query for a long time. This can have an isolating effect and harm their mental health. They try to navigate it on their own. I don't know who they can go to and where they stand. Sometimes they will just Google and that will misdirect them. They think that lawyers charge as they're only used to seeing things on TV. Not now with the IHP'.

'Legal matters add enormous stress to individuals and family circumstances. Without legal assistance they risk maladaptation, poor coping mechanisms that can include alcohol and drug abuse. Often, they come from circumstances with poor communication in their own family and themselves'.

'Often young people don't understand the rules. This could impact on them ... disengaging from school, getting stressed out about their problems when they don't know what to do or how to improve their situation. Their personal safety can be at risk. They don't know about the age of consent in personal relationships. All of these things can have flow on effects in their lives. They don't know their legal rights in employment and in identifying sexual assault i.e. understanding of their personal rights. This has instantly improved by their engagement with the IHP.'

'People don't understand what the importance of a birth certificate is for today's young people. The IHP has enabled young people to know their rights with custody, to transition - to changing their name, to getting a birth certificate. Without a birth certificate they don't have an income, can't get a job, can't access Medicare, can't get the support as young parents. They can't access proper housing. Yet it seems to have been such a problem for so many young people. Secondary consultations have been key in finding out more about birth certificates and fixing them.'

Secondary consultations

'A lot of the workers are helped by secondary consultations. Things in the legal domain are not always clear and it's hard to determine what is legal and what is not and what needs to be addressed, when and how. Secondary consultations have become critical in clarifying how the law can be used for those without a legal background and especially as the law is so complex.'

'I will always ring the lawyers and without identifying the client straight up. I'm getting better at identifying what's a legal issue but, even if I'm not sure I will still feel free to make contact with the lawyer. The IH service we get is pretty helpful. On a basic level the lawyers are always available, even if they are not on site that day. We have their phone number and if they're not there they will always ring back or will send an email. We are fortunate to be able to get this assistance. It's a critical linkage for us to knowledge.'

'Secondary consultations enable quick clarity and because of the way the program operates without a formal process. It means it can be timely and this advice because it's done quickly is practical, pragmatic. The lawyer translates complex concepts that also explains next steps and options.'

'Secondary consultations have value because they've been here so long but over time, they've built relationships. The fact that they're also on site helps and it makes the connection personal. It's intellectual and helpful all the way.'

'Short, quick talks across the range of areas specific to me or my team. Availability of short talks across the whole organisation. This secondary consultation is a form of training for all staff. It's useful it's focused. Often, they are care and protection matters, and criminal law matters and so we need intense focused advice. It is most welcome.'

'Secondary consultations have immense value. They help build rapport and trust. It gives us confidence. It is hard to approach people, particularly young people experiencing lots of different problems. By having the interaction first with the lawyer, as a worker, we can then ask the relevant questions. Then we can gently explain these issues to the client and let them know that they have come from a lawyer. It is this introduction through secondary consultations that shows that the lawyer does not disrespect them. The client gets the information and then this leads to informed decision making and often their willingness to engage with the lawyer to get the legal help that they need.'

'Secondary consultations are timely and visible. We know during the course of the day we can connect with lawyer and that they will be available to connect via phone. It is this availability particularly in medical emergencies that makes our own responses more effective. It gives us a clue of where to go next.'

'Secondary consultations are of massive value. It takes the pressure of me to understand everything and every issue. It gives me confidence in talking to young people about their rights. Some services that young people have to deal with are good people but, sometimes there is a benefit for us knowing the lawyer is there. When young people grapple with issues with services in government departments, we can get clarification.'

Holistic service (seamless and embedded nature of working together on client multiple & complex issues – legal and non-legal)

'By having a foot in both camps, legal and non-legal you can also find work arounds to help the client. Different perspectives by working across the disciplines is really helpful. This model of MDP definitely provides more options for health outcomes. The dialogue presented by different perspectives working together sharpens our ability to have better outcomes and be client centred. The lawyers are given opportunities to see how other professionals operates. For example, considering safety just not the legal 'ins and outs'.

'Since the IHP started in 2015 I've used and value the service in a number of different roles. The young people have got used to having the lawyers around and know that it's free and accessible now.'

'I have only been here a short time but it's lovely to have a lawyer and a non-lawyer around helping each other. To be involved in workshops and brainstorming what an effective workshop looks like for the young people has also added different perspectives for me.'

'The referrals are working really well. Staff know it now. They know the lawyers are responsive and will get back to them in a timely way. The referrals are in fact seamless.'

'The legal team are very inclusive. They're giving us a direct voice in what's going on. Initially I didn't know that I could see them. Now I don't hesitate.'

'My observation having witnessed this program is that it's pretty seamless. If they're not in the office, we get in contact by phone, we can leave messages and they get back to us in time. It's reciprocal. We also often grab each other in a room or hallway.'

'You can ask quick questions and getting early clarification and checking things is really helpful. The care and protection rules are often misapplied and there is nuance in how to comprehend them. We can ask 'is it this or is it that? is this right or is this wrong? what do the unification orders mean versus the reporting limitations and clarify the excesses sometimes we observe of the department's behaviour.'

Overall reflections on five years of the impacts (intended and unintended, anticipated and unanticipated) all the program on what would have happened without the Invisible Hurdles program's intervention

Changes in practice

'The 'legal health check' at intake is really helpful as a prompt to ensure that we're thinking about the legal aspect as well as the health and social aspect in young people's lives. It's become so ingrained that I don't even remember that we do it unless I'm prompted like I was today.'

'I have done many of these interviews over the years for your research. What I find is you slow me down and help me unpack things about how we work and what works. This gives me insights that then also shape and change what I do in practice for the good.' It might seem out of place but it's not just the IHP itself that is the marvel and what it does with young people 'but it's the way you come in here too, with your research and questions and ask us to really make an assessment and speak aloud about our work. You also make us unpack what goes on for the young people we work with.' Embedded ongoing sessions are really a great tool to encourage reflective practice for us, so the way the evaluation keeps happening also keeps us on our toes, thinking and adapting.'

'Having the confidence now, to refer and know the client will be treated in a culturally respectful, respectful manner is really critical. This takes time to develop but we've now got it. Secondary consultation advice gives our clients an introduction to the lawyer and now they're able to see a lawyer and don't feel so scared by the interaction. This increases the clients' responsiveness and ability to get in early and prevent problems and seek guidance and legal help.'

'I was here in the beginning in 2015 when the project started. The young people don't trust adults but 'with the magic of the Invisible Hurdles team' they have built that trust. The young people 'want to chat to the lawyers'. They run a Tuesday session and unlike other things, most of the young people turn up. It's full. This week part of it was cancelled due to COVID. The students were actually upset that COVID prevented them attending.'

'There is a connection. Even the new person gets it. There was a time in this project where there were problems with new staff and staff shifts and changes, but we've all learned, and we've recalibrated. Now everybody asks each other for ideas on how we can deliver content. For example, there's a YouTube clip with funny pictures - humour works with young people. The lawyers mix up the presentation - it's just not lectures and PowerPoints like it was in the beginning. They cut things up, they use visual learning.'

'The lawyers have now got the ability to read the room. The lawyers have changed their teaching practice. They respect our expertise as teachers and now we can all inform each other, and we produce more engaging materials and presentations. Now the information resonates and lasts in the young person's mind.'

'If we didn't have the IHP we would be stuck. A lot of things would have stayed the same or worse and there would be no change happening without this collaboration and our kids would not have seen things they have now found out as a result of this relationship.'

Changes in behaviour

'The young people remember that lawyers are not scary people. The IHP has changed the young people's view of lawyers and they say that they are not scary. This contradicts their or their family's whole previous experience. They feel better able to approach the IH lawyers and this will translate into their behaviours in future as they will know they can seek help.'

'Over the life of the program, the students now know that something can be done, and support is there. This can be very helpful as it means they now know where to go to for help and it sets them up in future and if they have problems as they move into adulthood to know where to go and where to redirect other people in their friendship circle.'

'The program has enabled us to have supportive conversations with middle year students. They can use the information about what's right and what's not right to feel safer at home; it shapes their own relationships with girls and boys. This group of students has trouble keeping healthy relationships.'

'The program has facilitated the younger people in having conversations that they would not otherwise have an opportunity to have. Through knowing the legal context it's helped them help their peers. They know that they are in a better situation than they would otherwise be with their housing and in terms of family violence. This is changed many of their relationships because they have this knowledge.'

'The young people were quiet and reserved at the start of the IHP. Those young people who know the program and have engaged with it, feel safe in sessions, they have relationships with lawyers. It's seeing an increase in their confidence and a willingness to share ideas and experiences.'

Changes in lives

'The work that the program has been doing has enabled young people to start experiencing what it's like to speak up and have a voice. This will make them want to have a try in our democracy.'

Changes in social determinants of health and hope

'There was a situation with one client where it improved so much the client increased their access to their children in care, to their housing and is now even saving for their own house with a payment of compensation that the lawyers secured that resulted from their poor treatment. The relationship with the lawyer also increased their

income and gave them further reserves. This has given them hope. This person looks like a different person and their relationships with their extended family have been able to happen.'

'The IHP is absolutely helping with non-legal problems. By clarifying housing rights like the right to a home, the right to live safely, the right to health and the right to life, which can all trip you up if you're not aware of the legal implications. Being able to get such legal help in the places where young people are, this critical. Without this intervention things would be worse. Financial problems lead to poor diet, family violence keeps going.'

'I frequently talk to the lawyer. It helps me deal with the primary needs that are governing the young person's behaviour. The pressure they are often under due to the legal system, for example getting facts from the government, managing pathways, getting timely responses. This all puts incredible pressure on their mental health. Often because they're not able to comprehend things, it increases their anxiety and their stress levels. Having the IH lawyer involved and working alongside us gives the young people confidence. It helps them understand process as the lawyers break down things into component parts. They are able to comprehend and understand better what is going on. These things alleviate their mental health conditions and anxiety.'

'Therapy and psychological treatment can only do so much. The fallout and stresses of the legal situation can be significant. This sort of intervention can start to address some of the high levels of substance abuse and the avoidance techniques that they often engage in which means they stop meeting deadlines in their legal battles. This behaviour also exacerbates their mental health and makes it more acute. The anxious reactions often also expose them to potential for family violence and also young children can be exposed to more family violence.'

Enhanced decision-making

'Secondary consultations are the reassurance I need. It can be quite stressful not knowing whether you're on the right track. This ability to have a secondary consultation means that I can know I'm on the right pathway for the young person. A lot of the young people we work with have a lot of police involvement which is not positive and said I had to navigate this. I'm able to see if legally the police are doing what they're supposed to be doing. This is reassuring and we can call the police to account.'

'Secondary consultations enhance my own decision making. I know that the support and the information is correct, so I know that I am a more solid ground.'

'By having access to this legal information and quick legal advice it enhances all of our decision making and by that, I mean myself as professional and the young people.'

Changes in justice outcomes

'The impact of this IHP is significant. The law affects everybody and if voices are not heard then wise decisions are not made. This project is having an impact and could continue to have an impact as it continues to involve young people. Having this knowledge about the lawyer and their legal rights may not affect them in the near future but it will one day. It will give them confidence and builds trust so they feel they can have a voice and flex their own muscles. Currently, they are not heard, and they are not asked. This project is helping them find a voice.'

'The work that IHP did on the age of consent has been really incredible. IHP helped girls write a letter to the government and articulated the girls' thoughts. They said to government that they didn't think that a 12-year-old could consent to sex. IH made it happen. It was really lovely, and the girls were happy about themselves. I think they'd feel comfortable about doing something like this in the future now'

Transformation in service delivery and organisational approaches and ways of working

'Secondary consultation is an integral part of how we work. The more we've been building this co- location since 2015, the better we've got at it. It's good, it's quick, it's seamless and it makes such a difference to our responsiveness.'

'There's a young people's group called community and family services team have been involved in. The IHP has presented a range of workshops to these kids on online bullying and cyber space. This is a school where the students are in the school because they're disengaged. It helped them learn what was and was not appropriate. As a result of the IHP the school also adjusted its own approach. Now the students themselves not only benefited by learning about bullying and harassment but the school has changed the way it interacts and manages these problems. The thing I like about the IH lawyers is they hear what the young people have to say.'

'Over the years there have been so many breakthroughs that I find it hard to recall them all on the spot here today. This program is really making a difference to the lives of young people. It's changed the way we all work. Once upon a time, we wouldn't have thought about legal issues in our repertoire of things we needed to identify and respond to. Now, because the lawyers are on site and easy to access, approachable and they care, we have really been able to change the way we do business. It's been quite a transformation over the years. It takes time to develop the relationships of trust but now I can safely say that we're in a good place and it's a great program.'

'Overall, IHP is highly valued. It gets better each year. We did learn how to do things better especially now the young people are having a voice. There's been such a lot of growth in the young people and within the staff itself. Its increasing number of discussions involving the role of law and what it can do and its limitations and possibilities since 2015. It seems now to be a well setup program that also facilitates cultural awareness. I would not like to see it change too much or expand too much and risk what it has achieved. You have to be very careful not to over stretch yourselves and compromise what's good.'

'If we didn't have the IH service, it will be greatly missed, and young people would be worse off. This is a pretty rare project and makes a huge impact on young people's lives. I have incredible respect for the IHP but now the young people also do as well.'

Future Work

'We have to work more in future on systems reform. An example of this is the interaction between young people and the police. I know the situation where the IHP intervened for a young person and all the most serious issues were resolved. This was because the lawyers explained the situation to the police and the young person got a caution. The consequences for this young person if they had not received legal help would have been dire for their mental health.'

'Residential-care and foster kids, kinship needs to be an area of work for IH. The State is a poor parent and often leaves them at risk or high and dry.'

Interviews with Lawyers

This section will summarise some of the key comments made in the interviews with the two current IH lawyers. These comments are categorised under the key benchmarks that are being used to measure whether the program is effective and having an impact.

Reach to young people

'The IHP team doesn't just sit in offices. We come out and we are visible, and we try to break stereotypes.'

'Many of these young people are so traumatised and have huge barriers. We don't sit across from them, we don't sit in an office, otherwise they wouldn't come to us.'

'The secondary consultations mean that if they're not ready to speak to us, then they know they can talk to their worker and they can get answers that way. Then, if and when, the young people are ready they do tend to come to us.'

'After a community development session sometimes, young people will come afterwards and ask questions and that's when we can also help them with some case work and advice. This is extremely valuable for the young people.'

Reach to trusted intermediary staff

'The secondary consultation process builds on the partnership and the relationships. The workers are often in a better position to help the clients. Since starting in this program, I see that relationships of established trust are key to us reaching out to young people who would otherwise not see or talk to a lawyer or even know that their matter is legal or part legal in nature. We can assist them in this as the staff have the established relationship with the young person.'

Engagement with young people

'COVID made it really hard because there was not so much face-to-face contact. It's really tricky to get in and see what's happening. It's really important therefore, to have the worker involved and find work arounds. By building the relationship with the rest of the staff it's really important to being able to engage effectively especially if you can't actually see the young person. You can still help them through their worker'

Engagement of the partnership

'Relationships the clients have with their professionals are what we will use to leverage the help that person needs. It's how we reach them and it's beneficial as the workers can also spot the problems particularly where young people don't ordinarily feel comfortable talking to a lawyer. It also interacts with secondary consultations, my community development work and the professional development sessions. These are all about linking into workers and helping them be able to identify problems and give referrals. If they can't get us, they can ring us and I will follow up.'

Empowerment of young people

'It's important that the people facing the issues are provided with a voice. They are best placed to provide solutions and should be valued as contributing members of society. If something in society is not working, then there should be something we can do about it. Young people should have a voice in all this.'

Collaboration of the partnership

'What I am learning is that each partner relationship is different. We have to have conversations with each partner and do our research around what works with young people and with them. At WFLC the young people are on site. At NESAY they may drop in for an appointment or they work, and they go to where the young people want to meet-up, so it's really hard to be as visible and installed there like we are at WFLC. Therefore, we need to work differently. At the health service there are issues around trust, intergenerational trauma and culture. Relationships are key. I'm planning on revisiting making some of these connections and going to restart the 'Cuppa Dates' as soon as I can arrange it.'

'We have to remember that there is also a staff turnover. There is a lot of new staff. We need to make sure that we're doing professional development on a routine basis so that everybody is across the program and can utilise it for the young people.'

Overall reflections on five years of the impacts (Intended and unintended, anticipated and unanticipated) all the program on what would have happened without the Invisible Hurdles program's intervention

Changes in practice

'Involvement with these partners has broadened my scope and horizons. I have developed such a passion for working with young people. I feel overtime that trust is developing and so a lot more young people are opening up

about what's going on with them. There is give and take on both sides of the partnership. For this reason, I feel more open as a result. I do what lawyers often do not do - I talk about how I feel and where I lack confidence and what I need to know'.

'This whole program is different to what I thought a lawyer was and what a lawyer should be. Through being involved in the IHP, I am far more flexible in my approach. Lawyers are often focused on legal outcomes, but they ignore the process and what it is like for the individual. They often ignore what the clients' needs are.'

'As a person and being relatively new to practice, I'm learning a lot. I'm not taking things so seriously. What I mean is - I'm professional but I'm able to be more creative and have a laugh. In this role, by contrast to my other roles in as a lawyer, I am actually looking forward to the casework and the creativity. I'm enjoying interacting with other professionals. I learn so much from them. I learn a lot out of just listening not just to the other professionals but to the young people. I'm learning how they think and it's interesting and I think it's going to make me more open ended and questioning. It's actually a lot of fun. I never thought as a lawyer it could be fun and not just be sitting behind a computer screen. They are coming to me, we talk and help them with legal information, options and next steps. It's amazing.'

'We are being exposed to learning about culture; this is a whole new and exciting area to delve into'.

'With the border closures during the pandemic, it was really hard for the workers to know what they were required to do. We had to be able to talk to them about what they could or couldn't do as teachers or workers crossing over the border. We had to help enable classrooms to be held for young people so that they could attend school. We had to understand the rules so that health workers could come to and from across the border. It was a process of circumnavigation. The policy remit was too narrow initially and too remote from the day-to-day problems for people. What we did was, we found some work arounds. By equipping people with knowledge on what the rules said we were able to help them work through some of the issues.'

'Working in a MDP is different to a normal practise of law. It's now so seamless. All of the agencies are different. They have to have different ways of working. NESAY for example, you have to pinpoint who the worker is and the right team and engage with them because often the young people aren't on site so that can be challenging. AWHS is bigger and has a large staff and a large offering of services. Connecting with them can be somewhat overwhelming. What we're trying to do is target different teams for example the social and wellbeing team and build that trust and respect'.

'We work with the social workers and learn about who and where we need to be. Systems are different. For instance, AWHS is a medical and social model of care and so this takes a lot more time. Building trust is really critical especially with Aboriginal community members. We're working now with the doctor on intervention orders and building trust with him and of course the maternal and child health nurse team. We need to go in deeper and we're trying to work through this. WFLC again is different and perhaps in some ways easier because the young people are on site during the day and so we can be visible on our days there. What we're trying to do is to tailor the way we operate to the different services in that what the services need rather than a one size fits all model. It's taken us awhile to realise this, but I think we really trying to tackle it'.

Changes in lives

'Birth certificates. I assisted a client to get a birth certificate. There were different names on the father and child's documents will stop there was no identification. For 16 years this young person had no birth certificate. The mother was a perpetrator of family violence. A year to the day this same young person came back to me when she lost her birth certificate. She called me on my mobile. She reached out to me I thought this was awesome. She knew that she could come back to me and further help.

A birth certificate was not registered I tried for 12 months to get her and her son registered. She and her partner could not get work without registering. They had no trusted adult to work out what they needed. I became that trusted adult. I encountered the same impossible things they had to navigate. There was a breakthrough. I made

contact with someone senior in the office of the Registry who gave me her number and told me I could call her if I had any further problems, when I explained the difficulties for this client. I now can use this number time and time again to ensure that people get birth certificates. It's absolutely critical they have a certificate for their income, their housing, employment, to get a driver's licence and so many other aspects of their lives. How is a 16-year-old mum going to do it on her own especially one who is disadvantaged?' In this case the IHP directly impacted twice on these people's lives. They could get Medicare for the child, Centrelink and enrol the child in day-care. You cannot get a licence to drive without a birth certificate.

Interviews with Managers

This section will summarise some of the key comments made in the separate interviews with each of the four managers of the IH partnership organisations. These comments are categorised under the key benchmarks that are being used to measure whether the program is effective and having an impact.

Reach to young people

'The clients have access to legal services and knowledge that they would have not had but for this IHP. They know now where to come and to get access. They have built relationships and they now trust the lawyers and will actually go to them directly.'

'The First Nations community are getting their legal needs met. Young people are able to access resources, get guidance and support then they would have been able to do in the past or previously. This is a group of young people who would not have sought help. Their ability to seek this help has prevented problems with escalating.'

Reach of the partnership

'It's the relationships that are most important. Educators and professionals are helping young people meet with lawyers'

'We are accessing young people and reaching vulnerable young people in a safe space for them. We are working with people they trust and it's a privilege to be working with these agencies.'

Empowerment of young people

'Young people are being seen, heard which ... is empowering. We're seeing drastic change in our young people with the lawyers shaping and changing how they go forward in their lives and intergenerational transference is effectively happening with the children. It's not just in service delivery that it's happening but also with their voice in the way they see their futures.'

'The young people are inclined to ask more questions and don't feel as exposed as they would to go into an external agency. They can be more open and trust the advice that is given. Interestingly there was being a recent transition of a staff member but that hasn't really affected the young people they still seem to find it easy to open-up. This would not have been the case a few years ago.'

'The young people have got benefits from this partnership. They can access and reach into legal services that they would not otherwise get access to.'

'Over seven years so many of these young people would not have gotten the help without this project. In the vast majority of cases, these young people have had the law do something to them and often cause them harm. So, what we are seeing is empowerment. This was highlighted when the young people visited the HRCLS office on an excursion. They role-played, they learned how to make appointments, they learned how to talk to a lawyer. They interacted with adults. The feedback they gave was how they now learned what's appropriate. They reflected on how amazing things can be if they can engage with legal services when they need, or their friends need help.'

Empowerment of the partnership

'I realise that getting involvement on systemic issues couldn't really happen until these relationships are built up overtime. It goes hand in hand with community legal education. People need to understand the law and its role

(particularly in civil law problems). When relationships across the partnership and between the staff are built that's when we can start to do the policy work. Now that the project's been going the seven years, we're ready and doing this policy work".

"The openness of the other organisations to allow us to enter into a partnership, not just by opening their physical doors and working alongside us, but by also increasingly exploring what we can do together. We value this and the different perspectives from the disparate service delivery responses and we have a critical lens to how we tackle things. What we've seen recently is, how all the partners value the relationships and the partnership itself. They're being committed to helping us; they are committed to helping our lawyers learn and grow.'

Collaboration of the partnership

'Organisationally the service has become more embedded in the ideology and values across the partners. Now things are seamless.'

'Even with the recent transition of staff the conversations and the common practise and the way people talk means that IH is embedded in all services.'

'The longer the project goes on the less people see it as something separate but it's just a part of a normal process. Whereas once I would have said there were things that could enhanced about the project, I now can't answer this question anymore. The program is getting outcomes. Previously when I answered this question, I would have said we needed more of the lawyer and for them to be more embedded, but we now have it. It needs to be permanent.'

'The approach to funding is a real problem it takes energy to be constantly trying to get more funding. It needs to be made self-reliant rather than looking for funding and from different pots and different sources and being fragmented with multiple accountabilities.'

'I'd like to see more of a move by the other partners in owning the program. I'd like to see them all just as invested and not having most of the power reside in a legal service. I think there's a true partnership which I think we've become. Now moving forward, we are in a space where we can have basic conversations about the problems young people face and the joint responses required. I think together and through the advisory we can really make a difference particularly in the policy realm and doing this as a collective I think will have much more power and sway.'

'What is significant for us now, is that the service is so intertwined, in fact, so intertwined that if anyone was to pull the funding or to pull it apart, I don't know what would happen. It would do such harm to the community, absolute harm if any part of it was pulled out or not funded; it's intertwined, it's integrated and it's the way we now do business. To just stop any part of it would have huge ramifications for First Nations people in our community.'

Collaboration with trusted intermediary staff

'COVID showed all of our services that relationships are important and that when there is trust there and no face-to-face services we were able to still have good results. This is testament to the relationship'.

'It's not reactive; the service flows.'

Social determinants of health

'Students have no mobile phones, they may have a disability, they're often homeless while they're at school or they may be drug affected They may have court cases. They may be unsure of what's happening and panic. Some of them are going through care and protection issues with their families while they themselves are young parents in school. It is all so easily escalated. One young person was told that they might be going to gaol. He told the IH lawyer that he was really troubled by what the private barrister had said. The IH lawyer translated the young

person's concern to this barrister and conveyed some of the young person's context. After this the barrister changed their approach and they were jointly able to support this young person'

'Young people have to buy their first car they have to get their L and P plates. There's been huge issues about crossing the border and issues around family violence. They have poor housing, no housing or trying to get housing. All these issues can now be addressed through IHP.'

'Having a voice, being able to get help quickly and easily affects their wellbeing and their mental health. We are seeing young people as a result of the IHP who are less anxious. They are getting on with the next steps of their lives they are getting their identity. We never knew that the project would have these flow on effects for our young people'

Secondary consultations

'The availability through the IHP of secondary consultations helps de-escalate a situation. Often the worker needs immediate advice before the young person makes a mistake. The information that is provided by the legal team is powerful information and thought provoking. We can ask questions, not just in secondary consultation but we're also finding that when the community development sessions are run by the lawyers, we too have questions which we can ask in front of the young people. This makes it really like a dialogue.'

'Secondary consultations are good if you're unsure about a direction to take and how to deal with the situation. I can think of instances where having a secondary consultation has defused a situation involving family violence. This is one of the really biggest factors in our student cohort. The students often don't know or recognise that their experience is family violence or what to do about it. So, having the lawyer here so they can check in and find out more information can slowly empower them and when and if the time is right, they will and have taken action'

'Some students can only sit for short periods of time because the training can be a little bit overwhelming. The lawyers recognise this and allow for it which is fabulous. There's also an opportunity for follow up later with the students and sometimes these conversations, I am sure lead to further legal help.'

Changes in Practice that make a difference to young people

'I understand the challenges of lawyering on a day-to-day basis, yet I can also see the bigger picture. Integrated practise means we achieve more than a strict legal outcome. It's key to help the lawyers understand this. I want to see this program decrease stress and anxiety of people. I want people to see the power of the law and see how they can understand it, access and use it to better understand the system, to know how to access it and help families and friends to do it. I want to see this over and over again. At the legal service in general due to this IHP we have the flow on effects as we are seeing increasing numbers of young people and their broader networks. We are starting to see friends and partners and families coming.'

'I'm excited about the changes for young people that we can see across all the partners. If we can get in early, we can stop problems. We can also stop them escalating. We can do it together and we are doing it together'

'By solving legal problems, we are helping with the non-legal needs of clients. The lawyers are now trying to lookout for non-legal issues and the trusted intermediary staff are looking out for legal issues. We are all looking beyond just legal problems to problems in general. We know that by solving legal problems it is enabling young people to find safety and financial security. They are now aware of payday lending and predatory borrowing practises.'

'By reason of the IHP young people through direct legal help and community development work are building healthier relationships. For example, a girl in an unsafe relationship with no birth certificate can be placed in a safe space, get a birth certificate and this can have far reaching effects on her chances to leave the relationship. This is because she can get access to income housing and employment'

'Secondary consultations are motivating staff in understanding legal issues. Before this project they would not have had that knowledge. As a result, they are able to support their clients in a much more holistic manner.'

Overall reflections on five years of the impacts (intended and unintended, anticipated, and unanticipated) of the program, including what would have happened without the Invisible Hurdles program's intervention

Changes in practice

'I have to say, what has been critical and unique to this project, is this embedded research evaluation. It gives us evidence as to what's working and why, if it's not working, we learn and we try new things. The way in which we debrief, and we revisit what we're doing and what can change and what we can build on has been a part of the whole success for this venture.'

'I can't say enough the value of an integrated model where you have service delivery and the research happening at the same time, informing and shaping the way we operate. This is what has made a transformation, all because the data you are collecting is absolutely pivotal in informing and shaping how we run our services across the four partners. It's helped us make a real impact in the lives of young people with the way in which we can learn along the way and change what we do and how we practise. It's incredibly powerful.'

'Now, with the passage of time seven years of relationships being built and the trust has been created, there is sustainable work that we are now doing. We can see our trends with clients. I overhear many staff and manager conversation about things that are happening for clients.'

'This sort of program should be in every school. It could be a blueprint on how successful people can be with the belief in a program. It's amazing we need to understand what works and why as this research shows us so that we can show others how to build it.'

Changes in behaviour

'Because the service is wrap around, we've seen an increase in self-esteem and confidence. Significant problems have been solved. In the last year it's been around birth certificates, increasing their income and their independence. These young people are often disenfranchised, and the program is stopping this. The other thing is the case workers have pride in themselves because they can see outcomes as well for their clients. They can make an offer like, 'I've got lawyers, what else can we do?' and they can hold their heads high.' 'Also, being able to say you've had legal advice, often makes a government department listen.'

Changes in lives

'We're also starting to see some self-seeking behaviours in young people which is a great gift as these young people we see have previously not been able to do this. They've learned about the IHP, and they feel comfortable seeking help. The big thing is they'll probably do this in future.'

'The IHP brings about a confidence which is so important for the young people's futures in stepping forward. It's not just about what to do while they're here at the school but when they go into the community, they learn how they can access help they need. It's also further than that - it's what they can do about it. Finally, young people have never been a part of a forum or being asked their opinion or voice on topics.'

'Young people here because of this involvement with IHP have more confidence, they feel they matter, they feel their voices matter. They look differently at life - they see they have a role in community. The young people have an ability to take the next steps but also future steps. The young people as a result of IHP are seeing that they have a role in society. This is going to be critical if people feel judged then things won't change and if things are judgmental then they won't participate.'

'This program brings compassion and perspective. It brings the young people and ability to feel they can have a voice, it empowers them it gives their capacity to speak up in a safe space and more recently, it's giving them a voice in the shaping of policies and decisions that are made about them.'

'Being able to get in earlier- the young people have the information and so I'm pretty certain they're getting into less trouble and they're helping each other out will stop the informal conversations and peer relationships is really important to young people. So having correct information can only lead to less people having problems.'

Transformation in service delivery and organisational approaches and ways of working

'There has been a transformation not just within our service but across the partnership. The problem however, is the disjointed funding. Different funders put in money to the pot and then claim their proportion of money is funding the entire project outcomes and its positive impacts. This is not reflective of the dollar value that it costs when the dollars claimed are not the exchange of the dollars put in.'

'The IHP has become so ingrained. We don't have to give the time we used to nurturing. I'm not saying we don't have to keep building relationships and nurturing them in that sense, but what I guess I'm trying to say is generally it takes a long time. Normally schools are not welcoming of outsiders. Here they [the lawyers] part of the landscape.'

'Key in transforming our service delivery has been this research and the embedding of the evaluation. By asking questions, it's really helpful. It enables us to think and to share ideas. It's a good way of working - you've got the research and then you've got the on-ground lawyers and the community development. It's all such an organic flow between the agencies.'

'A real sign of transformation is, that if I was to leave now there are enough staff that utilised the program who have built strong relationships and would still run with the program without me.'

'The four agencies are working together now and sometimes if someone is not there, they can refer to the other two agencies.'

Collaboration to Partnership (Evaluation – Collaboration Measurement of Progress Tool)

'The program has seeped into our psyches. We also know that we're not dependent on one or two players. In fact, we built relationships, not just between the partner's but across the partners. We're all learning from each other and as a result we've been able to build on our own service delivery models. So, this project, just goes beyond the individual partners to being all co-dependent now across the four partners - it's amazing.'

'Can we have more Reflective Practice Meetings that you do as part of the evaluation, say quarterly, rather than, just during the field trip? When we get together in a facilitated way, like the recent 'reflective practice meeting' it gives us more ideas, gives us cause to think and opportunities to explore joint partnership opportunities.'

'The three partners, aside from the legal partner, are reaching out to each other. We have discovered how we can actually help each other to reach into and beyond communities that we are familiar with. We're giving each other help and insights. We are sharing our knowledge and therefore not only is IHP able to reach more young people but through this three-way partnership as well we will also be able to help and reach more young people.'

'We pivot from one to the other and we evolve. What we realise we need at the time can change too depending on situation'

Future

'I wouldn't want to tamper or change the model too much. I'm concerned that if we add an extra layer, it will weaken what happens now. Funding should be ongoing stable and secure funding is important'

'In my view, nothing needs juggling there's a 'beautiful rhythm about it.' I can pick up the phone and a student knows I'm being active and then they're amazing at getting back in touch and sorting things out for that young person.'

'The young people's advisory circle is important place for the lawyers to look and we want to invest in this more. This goes just beyond collaboration it'll enables us all to offer more and to do more for young people and this can be a leverage point by involving the young people and exploring their voice.'

Reflective Practice Meeting with Managers of the Four Partners

This section will summarise some of the key comments made in the Reflective Practice Meeting with 5 Managers (2 from HRCLS including the Operations Manager) across the Four Partners. These comments are categorised under the key benchmarks that are being used to measure whether the program is effective and having an impact.

Changing lives

WFLC – *'A few years ago young Aboriginal male who had done repeated offending. This was normalised in the family that stole cars. Through the IHP, this young person was put on a caution. The IHP linked him to the barrister in the program. Now this young person has a certificate. He mentors other Aboriginal children. He is now about to go to the United States of America to do further studies. He's still in contact with the school even though he's in his early 20s so this is how we know the difference the IHP made in his life'.*

NESAY- *'bright young people often have no supports in their lives other than us. Often there is no adult in their lives who stop them getting into debt. While having IHP we've had a number of young people who have had debts expunged. The presence of the program has expanded our team's vision of what is illegal. It is also expanded their view on what staff can do to get helpful material'.*

AWAHS – *'in the early stages of the IHP there was some communication with elders and others in the community. As a result, they got young people to connect. This was by word of mouth. Overtime, it means that the young people find out about the lawyers and that they can be trusted via the First Nations Grapevine. Knowledge transfers but over time trust is being built. It does take time to build this - a long time. We can now say they will just go and see the lawyer. Previously many of these people have had poor advice from well-meaning friends and they would act on it.'*

WFLC – *'IH lawyers bridge a gap between law enforcement. The police are seen as the enemy and young people can't stand up to them or use them to get help. The IH team got the police in and did a Q & A where students asked them questions - that's helpful.'*

AWAHS – *'the IHP and HRCLS has helped us identify issues like the Aboriginal funeral rorts and predatory conduct where Aboriginals were being taken advantage of and their meagre funds were being taken. It also identified issues around the stolen generation scheme and together we've been able to work together more effectively then, we would have been on our own. They bought it up with us as partners. We will support each other in doing something to change this. We can't do everything as a sole agency, so it's great to have the legal help. Before the legal service we couldn't get help and write the letter.'*

AWAHS – *'there is critical work being done in different fields. What is rare is to get information from a legal service. We wouldn't have known what we could do about certain things without the lawyers being on site. We've done joint policy now. For example, we signed a letter run by Choice and the Consumer Action Law Centre.'*

'The transference of information from the legal service into the partners is helping bridge awareness. This is helping awareness and cultural and other issues. Normally barriers exist in the legal arena, but the trust is being built, so when they're ready, the community will come and talk. Without this IHP these relationships would not have happened, and people would not be aware.'

'Information is now out there, and community thinks not only about the health service but also about the legal service being on their side. This further builds trust'

WFLC – 'young people experience messy contracts and they also experience family violence. They now have an awareness. They know it's OK to talk about these matters. They also know it's often not their fault and that they're not being silly. IHP has talked about the bigger picture and the systemic problems. That is that there is actual predatory behaviour. For example, mobile phone contracts. IH lawyers have deconstructed how these predators play on the most vulnerable. This means young people are now aware that they are being targeted and manipulated. This removes the stigma, but it also means that they can take informed choices in future.'

'A young person went into Centrelink to get income support. They went with the lawyer and teacher. Prior to this the teacher had gone into Centrelink and they had been extremely unhelpful. With the lawyer and the teacher present Centrelink was much more helpful. It was good for the young person to see the difference'

'Young people are now taking the next step. A young parent with family violence has realised that they are in a family violence situation. They now ask questions. Because she asked questions in one of the group sessions run by the IHP others heard the answers to her question. This young person moved forward and learned so much. However, another young person is also now taking the next steps by hearing what was said in the session.'

WFLC – 'Excursion to HRCLS was a great event for young people. They learned how to make an appointment, how to ask for details, they knew why that these details are being asked for and they helped to role-play in different scenarios. This was a powerful way of engaging young people and it really made them more aware.'

Future Work for the Partnership

NESAY – 'Now COVID has eased we can now have visitors on site again. There is a huge challenge in out of home care and access to information, for example, around getting a birth certificate. Our clients feel that all of this is their fault. We are working to show that it's the system. They need this information for their own identity. They are often exiting care with no birth certificate and no income, no housing. I'd like to see IHP more with this group of out of home care kids in raising their awareness and working on issues. I think we should do it across the four partnerships'. Note: Agreement amongst the managers of all four agencies.

Discussion around the use Advisory Committee and the involvement of young people in developing a youth strategy. It was noted there was an impact of voices combined and a sense of achievement in advocacy up until the end of 2021 that had not been there previously.

Bite size and achievable parameters for young people in a safe environment where they can learn leadership and advocacy skills.

'AWAHS has just advertised seeking 2 youth board positions. These had never been filled before and that's a way that we hoped build leaders of the future as a community-controlled organisation. We need young people to leave and move us forward. It's a step-by-step process in strengthening self-identity and encouraging them to become and learn how to become leaders of the future. AWAHS is happy to help the other partners in this.'

FLC – 'agrees that out of home care students are often a target. When in residential care they are OK until 17 years and then suddenly it's all over. They are often traumatised and the whole experience is re-traumatising with the uncertainty. They've got a lot going on leaving school and they're losing their wraparound supports. This would be a really important area of work to the partnership in the future'

NESAY- 'More work in the care and protection support of young people. We want young people to be more independent, but they may not be ready if they've been in foster care since they were four. There's an expectation by government that they can look after themselves. They haven't got the supports that the normal kid will. Often the only place, it's their home and they're being taken from it. Foster care ends at 18 years of age.'

'Helen Haines MP has a youth group, which is another platform.'

Organisational Transformation due to the IH Program

HRCLS – *'the data we see internally is that greater number of youth are accessing us than before IHP'*

There was some discussion about having a more localised use voice and perhaps doing something across all the partners as well.

Organizationally, HRCLS has learned a lot since 2015. They changed the way they do business. They now take more time to touch base and reflect on what they're doing and how to do it. They are therefore working better with the community and with individuals. HRCLS learned so much from the partners and how they work with young people and the different perspectives. This has had a flow on effect. For example, how to listen and learn and be culturally sensitive. *'I learn in different ways of operating that different professionals have imparted.'*

HRCLS – *'all the richer for it. ~~The flow on effects of this IHP had been in funding.~~ The value of the research evaluation is that the evidence base and research platform has led to further funding. Because it's built an evidence base over time, it has been able to demonstrate the project's impact and influence in shaping and changing lives for the better.'*

'The program just tends to continue to enhance and build. The lawyers want to do more and to build more things. The lawyers are more involved in reflection and evolution. It's so helpful, it helps us in how we tackle our other projects. We now know more about what partnership really looks like and what it entails. 'Learning more about integrated care and how it works.'

AWAHS – *'Each partner has a different approach with the IHP. This is why just dropping a MDP in the mainstream doesn't work. Success is result of flexibility and tailoring to communities and organisations. It's not for the legal service to make a legal assessment - it's how they need to work with and for us. The partners all have established individual relationships with the legal service'*

'Now the partners are also dual locating in two locations in Wangaratta and Benalla. This dual location between two of the other partners would not have been possible without the IHP. It means that we're able to reach more young people in more regions now - it's fantastic.'

'Recently we got \$1,100,000 for a venue in Wangaratta, and it wouldn't have happened without the connection to the IHP because we were able to advance a new partnership'

FLC- *'Adaptability and flexibility with young people is needed and a different approach. What's great about the IHP it is that it adapts to today's needs. E.g. COVID'*

NESAY – *'The wonderful thing about the community development and professional development is it's delivered in a 'bite size way'. The program has achievable parameters for safety and learning that promotes leadership and advocacy skills.'*

Collaboration to Partnership & Trust (Evaluation – Collaboration Measurement of Progress Tool)

All four partners reflected on how the recent transition of staff by comparison to earlier phases of the project was relatively seamless. They noted that, increasingly the relationships aren't about the individuals that it had become about the agency. They indicated that previously the relationships were largely held between individuals and that when a staff member left the program it caused disruption. This has shifted and now the agencies and the staff of agencies have trust in each other as agencies. They noted this sort of trust takes time to build.

They also noted that during the pandemic, secondary consultations increased as did a lot of the professional development sessions. They highlighted that the reason that they were able to do this was because of relationships of trust that have been built over the seven years of the project between and across the partnership.

NESAY - also agreed there had been different people since 2015. It acknowledged that as an agency it is very protective of its young people. And that they as an agency had to work through and break through their own reticence and resistance. They indicated that over time there has been an incredible transference of trust. This didn't stop during the pandemic. It was noted that the trust and mutual respect through all the partnership has been engaged and connected. It was noted that the partners all helped each other out through the difficult time of Covid. It was indicated that workers can confidently now refer their young people. *'It's more organisational rather than just about individuals.'*

They noted that the research evaluation has not just looked at effectiveness of service probably because its built-in reflection and evaluation and recalibration along the way has been incredibly helpful for the partnership. This model of embedded evaluation in research has informed how the four partners tackle other projects, what the projects look like and how they need to all work differently when they are working in an integrated care model. *'We know it works.'*

AWAHS – *'each partner has a different approach, and a mainstream way does not work when you're trying to reach people who experience disadvantage such as the young people in this project. The success of the project is a result of this flexibility and ability to tailor the program to community and to the different organisations. The legal service is not just making a legal assessment they're looking at how it needs to work for us as the partners in for our clients. This is why it's been a success.'*

'The partners all have their individual relationships with HRCLS but now as a result of this project, we all now have a relationship with others in the partnership.'

WFLC – *'I agree it's the program flexibility and adaptability and its responsiveness to young people and their needs. There is a requirement for different approaches and the Invisible Hurdles Project adapts to these needs with professionalism, expertise and works practically by inviting the young people in.'*

'Schools are focused on educational outcomes. We traditionally feel that other services are over there and we don't have the time to make the links. These reflective practise meetings are fabulous. The research evaluation by facilitating these conversations means we can engage in reflective practise sessions where we share common stories and learn along the way what each other is doing. This means we know about other services and the IHP has brought us all together to enable this. It is allowing us access and preparing us to get more rounded programs. It also positions us and has positioned us to get more funding depending on the different agency's perspective through this program. We would have been further along but for COVID but now we're ready to regroup and we can do so much moving forward. If it wasn't for the Invisible Hurdles Project running through the COVID pandemic I don't know where we would be'. The other two partners, NESAY and AWAHS agreed with this comment from WFLC.

Future Work for the Partnership

There was consensus across three of the partner agencies that it was important to look at young people who are arriving at 18 years of age and are coming out of residential care. They noted the significant transitional aspects for them of finishing school and leaving care at the same time. They wanted to see some emerging work from the partnership in this space.

'Another area that I'd like to see focused on is the care and protection young people and those in foster care.' They indicated that although they want young people to be independent sometimes, they have not been prepared or are ready and they do not have the supports of other people.

All four partners noted a concern about the effects of funding. They said that all of the partners were the richer for the program and were the funding to be split or continued to be fragmented this would inhibit the building of more things.

Guided Professional Journals of Lawyers

2 Participants

Lawyer Seven in this program is relatively new. Her journal reflections highlight how challenging this new way of working in partnership with non-legal agencies is, that it can be a cause of apprehension, with some reticence about meeting new people and a fear of not being up to scratch. This is especially when the lawyer is aware that their predecessors had established strong relationships with the partnership including staff of each apartment agencies.

'I was apprehensive about the partnership aspect. I knew that (previous lawyers) had really strong relationships with the partners and the young people. Relationships that are this far developed can be difficult to insert yourself in, or replicate... I was incredibly apprehensive.'

BUT OVER TIME

I've been able to build relationships with both Flexi and NESAY staff- there is definitely room for me to improve my relationship with NESAY and I will focus on ways that I can do this in the near future.

I have struggled with the limitations that are imposed by my role as a lawyer. The young people that come through IH are often facing more than just the legal issue that I can assist with- they often require more support than what I can provide. This has been a big adjustment from my previous role as 'just a lawyer'. I feel as though there are clients where my role as a lawyer has been blurred as a quasi-social worker? I could learn to rely on or collaborate with the partner professionals a little more given their expertise in providing case management support. I think it's important that there is reciprocity in partners referring to us, but also referring back to them. Working together from a legal and social point of view ensures that our practice remains client focussed, and we can address client needs'.

Difficulties for Clients and Challenges where compounding & Complex Needs

Multiple and complex needs, client mental health- *'Client M was disempowered. He felt that he was not being heard by anyone involved in his matter. He was feeling frustrated with the system and the lack of legal options available to him. M and I had an initial appointment and I explained what I would do next and that this would take some time, as I was on leave the following week. M left the appointment and was experiencing heightened anxiety and frustration about the issue. NESAY referrer asked if I could talk to M further and put him at ease. I put my other planned work aside and continued appointment with M. I then started the next steps on the spot to help empower M. I think it was important for M to feel empowered in his situation- there were lots of services involved but no one really in a position to give M a voice.'*

'There is also the added complexity of COVID still being a current issue. HRCLS have returned to face-to-face work, our partners have not.'

'...we would benefit from having a social worker background to assist young people. This is where we benefit from the expertise of partner professionals, and they can provide that social and emotional support'.

'During the appointment, Client L was quite heightened and emotional. I spent much longer than I typically would, just talking to Client L to find out what other issues she was facing. Client L disclosed a number of complex issues she was struggling with physical health, mental health, being a single parent, and a substantial amount of debt. Following the appointment, I found myself feeling quite emotional. It was overwhelming to be confronted with all of the obstacles that Client L was facing and being limited in my role as a lawyer.'

'This was an extremely difficult case. The YP had interactions with many different professionals including youth worker, lawyer, child protection, Police, various teachers, mental health practitioners, social workers, psychologists'.

'The YP was receiving conflicting information due to the involvement of many professionals (taking into account their mandatory reporting obligations). The YP was a victim of FV and it was really hard to explain that to the YP- there was an underlying need of the YP to see her father (who was the perpetrator of FV and very skilled at manipulation and coercive control).'

'I glanced at my phone over the weekend and saw that I had multiple emails from L about the case open letter. She saw the word 'court' and panicked. The emails were a series of her explaining that she would need to sell everything she owned. I felt awful that my letter had caused unnecessary stress for L. I sent her a text message immediately and apologised, I explained what my letter meant and told her that I would call her the second I got back into the office on Monday.'

Lawyer Flexibility

'I was headed out of the office at 5pm, when client B called to talk about their employment issue. The difficulty with the interaction with B, was the tension between being responsive to young people's needs, and work constraints (9-5 working day). This is especially difficult with the additional barriers for B. B was referred to me through NESAY and attends a school that does not have a school lawyer program. This makes it hard for B and other young people to access legal services. Client engagement! My decision to spend an extra 30 minutes at work, meant that the client was heard, and could engage with the legal process through telling her story and getting advice. For clients this young, it is difficult for them to talk to lawyers during typical working hours. This project requires us to be flexible with our time.'

'Walking alongside the YP and providing advice on how their legal options and how to enforce their legal rights might be at odds with what social services might believe is in her best interest. This was a real conflict as the YP was expressing a strong desire to return to her father, and this went directly against what all the other services thought was in her best interests. The YP was the AFM in an IVO and I assisted her in obtaining her own independent legal representation so that her direct wishes could be expressed in the IVO. Lawyers, in this case, will act on the instructions of the client, which is very different to acting in what is in her best interests'

Role of Secondary Consultations in Partnership Engagement

'NESAY worker initially reached out to Lawyer for a secondary consultation. After discussion about the issue, it was decided that we could assist B and a referral was made'

'NESAY worker reached out for a secondary consult on options for L, after discussion it was decided that L could be referred for assistance.'

Young People Engagement

'I took the opportunity to get direct feedback from some of the quieter students (Young Mums). I went to their room and sat in for their last lesson. I thought that participating in something with them might be a good ice breaker. It allowed me an opportunity to connect with them. After the lesson I asked for their thoughts on today's session and what I could do to make sure they were feeling heard. Student F let me know that she was not comfortable talking in a large group.

You need to go beyond just providing CLE sessions and casework. You need to show these young people who you are, they need to get to know you and that they can trust you. Building a relationship, building a rapport is the building block to that, and this can happen formally through CLE, but most importantly, through informal events, such as attending excursions, doing puzzles, having conversations over lunch, showing an interest in the young person and what they enjoy doing. This new student loved art and a few weeks later took me to the art room to show me some of her pieces- what a win and what a breakthrough.'

'We received a request from school counsellor asking whether we can develop/assisting to develop a resource that clearly (yet simply) distinguishes the differences in law between Vic/NSW for teenagers. She acknowledges

difficulties that students who live in border towns face and wants to provide them with a simple resource that enables them to know their rights - things such as age of consent, when they are able to leave school/home, get social media etc. Some of the students had worked on the worksheet the previous week so we decided to go through the answers...The students were really engaged in answering the questions on the worksheet. Some of the students had only seen the worksheet that day and were willing to have a go at answering it. Really good discussion on some of the questions' We took this idea to the WFLC students and asked for their input in whether a resource would be a good idea. We put together a worksheet where we asked the students to find the answers to the law in Victoria as opposed to the law in NSW.

The students gave the following ideas:

- Wallet card
- Booklet
- Poster
- App (storage issues)
- Billboard
- Tiktok

We also spoke about how to get feedback from the students in relation to the sessions and also after they have had a legal appointment with the lawyer. The teacher came up with the idea of creating a survey than can be sent to the student and will have 3-4 simple questions with easy answers (bearing in mind the varying degree of comprehension and literacy at the school).'

Empowerment

'Some insightful conversation about why an educated person's voice matters more than someone who is uneducated. Knowing the barriers that these students face, is this indicative of feeling as though their voices don't matter? This is something that I intend to keep in mind when working with them on upcoming sessions. It is important that we ensure they feel heard, valued, and empowered'.

'During this appointment, I utilised the drafted social determinants of health survey to keep L talking. I felt that it was important to focus on relationship building, so that she might feel more comfortable with receiving assistance with her other legal issues. L explained that she did not like asking for help. We had a discussion about my job as a lawyer and that my role is to help people- she wasn't asking, I was offering. I told L that we would only deal with what she wanted, I believe it's important to give young people like L a sense of control over their situation. L can dictate what issue we deal with and when. I don't see benefit in overwhelming her. I think that this approach has made her empowered. She has an active role in the legal process, and I have been able to make sure that her voice is heard'.

Afterpay: 'Lawyer 6 led a really good discussion on the negative effects of Afterpay and similar credit facilities. Students were able to describe what Afterpay is (student B described it as a loan). Lawyer 6 likened Afterpay as a 'gateway drug' for debt and student B said that Afterpay is the 'dark path of debt'. This led to a discussion on how to get loans to pay off a fridge- avoid SACC and go for Centrelink loan and NILS.'

Partnership Engagement, Reciprocity & Outcomes

'Collaboration with NESAY staff, direct referral, and ongoing consultation throughout client matter. In this situation, the legal options were incredibly limited and could potentially take more time than M would like. NESAY worker was able to agitate with child protection [the government agency]. This led to a positive outcome for M. This situation goes to show that assistance from partner professionals can lead to better outcomes than what we may have been able to achieve through a legal solution.'

'It is awesome how integrated the IH program is. Both partners share the load, walk together and help support each other when challenges arise. There is a united front and willing to split the work that needs to be done so that

we get to the outcome quicker, easier and TOGETHER! WFLC teachers are as invested in the program as the IH lawyers.'

'The feedback (PD Session) was all very positive. I had some follow up conversation, during which they let me know that they were landlords and did not know about the family violence legislation changes in tenancy laws. They also didn't know that VOCAT existed. I heard a few comments about potential referrals for VOCAT assistance. This is great to know for future PD planning and to know that there are students that could benefit from VOCAT, who otherwise would not be referred for legal advice! In working to build the capacity and knowledge of partner staff, we are able to increase the number of referrals into IH. IH project is working!!!'

'Close collaboration with NESAY to provide legal and emotional/support to the YP. Reciprocity as I felt out of my depth in how to respond to YP threats to self-harm and relied on the expertise of the partner.'

'Teachers unsure how to interpret the rules around the border closures so contacted HRCLS for assistance/advice. Strengthens relationships between IH partners, builds capacity of teachers.'

'NESAY worker reached out to schedule a time to discuss an upcoming program they want to run for young people wanting to rent. We discussed the current plan, and I provided some tips that I've picked up through Flexi CLE sessions. It is very exciting and reassuring that this was initiated by NESAY staff. The discussion sounded promising, and the program is set to occur later in May. This is a great opportunity to work on capacity building and engagement for young people and partner professionals involved. Young people don't necessarily think that renting issues are something they can talk to a lawyer about.'

'Collaboration with 3 IH partners- NESAY had the idea, HRCLS took it further with WFLC ...Build capacity and knowledge of young people...Extend reach so that young people can pass knowledge on to their friends.'

'The COVID border restrictions rules were really hard to find in Victoria. Unlike NSW who had a page dedicated to the many updates and changes to the rules when they closed the border, Victoria did not have their legislation set out this way and you had to read the gazettes to find out the rules. I found it really hard, I can just imagine how the teachers felt when trying to find it and understand it. Collaborating and seeking assistance directly from VicPol contact allowed for the answer to be found quickly. This would not have been achieved but for the groundwork in the relationship building by bring in external speakers to the WFLC CLE program. It was a reciprocal relationship...'

'We reached out to the Koori Engagement Support Officer (KESO) to provide us with cultural advice in delivering the Aboriginal Rights Unit, as well as being culturally aware and sensitive in which local Elder we could approach for the visit. We were hoping to approach an Elder that has connections to AWAHS...The KESO spoke to us about being culturally sensitive in putting the presentation together and provided us with resources to base the content on. The KESO also explained that there is a dispute as to who the Traditional Owners of the land in our region and that we had to be careful not to invite someone from a different land. She explained that there are different mobs in this local region Wiradjuri, Waveroo and Dhudhuroa people.'

'Received a phone call from the Borinya case practitioner (via NESAY) who asked if I would involve in the Triple L program and deliver a session to female students at Borinya.'

'Great collaboration between project partners. Given the nature of the work done by NESAY staff, most of the interaction with YP is one on one. Borinya is similar to WFLC in that it's a school for disengaged youth. An added bonus is that there is a NESAY staff member dedicated to that school so any assistance given to the YP can involve both legal and social/emotional support.'

'Collaboration with HRCLS and WFLC on creating and delivering the sessions. Reciprocity- as the teachers were sharing their expertise in lesson planning with the lawyers.'

Young Person Engagement and the link between Community Development and Casework to enable Reach

'Student D came to discuss further issues after the session- massive breakthrough in the young people engaging with me.'

'The idea for the topic came from a co-design-based session with the students and teachers. We asked what they were interested in learning about. It's important to involve the students in the planning of the sessions, so that it's relevant and hopefully will keep them engaged. It was suggested that more life-skill type topics would be useful because the students may not get this from their current home environment'

'Breakthrough with one student who shared the type of lolly they liked and came up to talk to us. Lawyer 6 and I to buy this lolly to keep YP engaged.'

'...attended the excursion as I wanted to get to know the young people better. There are new students at Flexi and we have not been able to get to know them as well due to the COVID restrictions. I wanted to breakdown the barrier that lawyers are intimidating and wanted to show a different side. I wanted to show them who I am as a person and that I am more than a lawyer and that they can trust me... a new student who recently enrolled at WFLC. She was a little apprehensive as to who I was but she asked questions during the car trip there. The teachers and other students vouched for me- showing I was okay and the student could trust me.'

'The students were very engaged and had great ideas about the topics. For example, in the Aboriginal rights topic they wanted to know Aboriginal history, what is dreamtime, what the stolen generation is and wanted an Elder to visit. For the CLC topic they wanted a Criminal defence lawyer to visit, wanted to know why some people go to jail and others don't. There was even a suggestion of a 'walk through' of a crime from beginning to end and involved the Police, lawyers, Court etc.'

Amount of Work & Dedication & Recalibration

'The teachers were shocked to hear how many hours go into developing the presentations each week. Lawyers spend a lot of time trying to find resources, pulling the presentation together and trying to make it funny and engaging'

'This session is about building capacity and empowering young people in choosing to have sex and not be pressured. Could think about co-delivering this session with the School Nurse to look into how Respectful Relationship program teaches this topic. This would allow for further collaboration with school staff.'

'Had a discussion with the teachers about changing the way that we run the presentations. Rather than a new topic every week, we decided to cover one topic across a number of weeks. We wanted a way to ensure that the students were retaining the information we were covering. The teachers developed a series of review questions and reflective questions for the students to complete after each session.'

'I will keep in mind that small groups seem to work'

'The teachers (WFLC) could see that we are passionate about the CLE and want to make it as fun, engaging and informative as possible, but they didn't want us to spend so much time developing the presentations. The teachers helped us come up with a plan on how to be effective but spend less time on the actual presentations.'

Reflective Practice & Improvement

'...need to consider bringing back 2021 cuppa dates to ensure engagement with the partner staff. It's so vital that we are front of mind for staff and reaching young people through referrals to IH. I will reach out to NESAY CEO or managers to see if they have other ideas on the best way to engage with NESAY staff with their change in workplace model. NESAY staff are in the best position to tell me what they would like or need.'

'Being culturally sensitive and culturally aware is always at the back of my mind when discussing Aboriginal history, speaking to Aboriginal people and assisting Aboriginal clients. I do not want to be responsible for causing more

hurt and pain, even if it's unintentional. I do not want to come across as being culturally insensitive and thinking that I know how to teach and explain Australian and Aboriginal History. It was a humbling experience to delve into the history so that I could pass on my learnings to the students'.

'Unfortunately, due to the border closure and COVID restrictions, we could not arrange for an Elder to attend the school for NAIDOC week, but we plan to do this again in 2022. I know from personal experience from the visit from Uncle Tunny to HRCLS how enriching it was to hear his story (in both a positive and eye-opening way). It encouraged the person to be reflective, on their life, on their opinions, on their biases (both conscious and unconscious) and I am excited to expose the students to the self-reflective journey!'

'Despite my excitement, I was apprehensive about my lack of cultural competency in working with Aboriginal Communities. I was (and still am) scared that I would say something that would be offensive or insensitive (even if this was not my intention). I was also really worried about using words such as mob, community, 'Aunty', 'Uncle' and 'let's have a yarn' because I did not want to get this out of context. In order to change this, I completed the VLA eLearning modules on 'Other ways of knowing: Aboriginal culture eLearning course' and 'Working inclusively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.' Whilst this was a good start, I felt like this was not enough and I wanted to do more and understand the local nuances.'

BUT THEN

'I had been at AWAHS in person a few times and sat down to have lunch with 2 staff members. We had started to build a rapport and I wanted to learn more, so I had an honest and frank conversation with them. I explained that I was really worried about saying the wrong thing and offending someone and using the wrong wording and asked if they would help me become more culturally aware, sensitive and conscious. The AWAHS staff were ... fantastic! There was no judgment from them, and they were willing to help me learn and shape my knowledge and understanding to become a better lawyer and a better person. I was encouraged to not make assumptions and to ask if I was unsure. So, the next time I see the cultural advisors, I will ask them outright if I can call them by their first name or with Aunty or Uncle in front of it. I also said that I wanted to increase my knowledge of cultural heritage in our region. A staff member mentioned that new AWAHS staff are given the opportunity to learn important cultural sites locally from the cultural advisors. What she described was amazing and she encouraged me to contact the AWAHS program manager to see if it's something that I can attend.'

'I always have found reflection hard. This evaluation makes me slow down and think about what's happening and why. This helps me move forward and gives me ideas and makes me want to continuously improve. I know reflection is important but it's hard.'

'It makes sense to ask the partner with expertise to provide training to us- ticks the reciprocity, reach, collaboration, capacity building, empowerment, and engagement boxes!!'

Part C Findings

Findings

1. The program is efficient and effective in reaching young people who would not otherwise have been reached. The data from the research reveals that the IHP staff demonstrated empathy, compassion, and humility in their relationships with young people and staff. In this iteration of the IHP program multidisciplinary and integrated service delivery was seamless and a 'way we do business'. A long relationship of trust being sustained has enabled the partnership to weather change and challenges such as the COVID pandemic and border closures.

2. The resolution of legal problems through the IHP helps keep young people in school, out of debt, enables them to find safety, has reunified family members, has prevented homelessness, eviction and helped young people identify when they are experiencing unlawful activity and led them to take avertive action. The IHP has empowered young people to feel they can engage in civil society and to share information with their peers.
3. The provision of ongoing, secure, and stable funding to this program has enabled inroads to be made, lessons to be learned and program recalibration to make it more effective. The provision of continuous, secure funding has been instrumental in the program's ability to make inroads into access to justice and support to enable the social determinant of health needs of young people in the region. HRCLS' ability to combine funding from various sources over the past 7 years has enabled the IHP to continue, enabling lessons to be learned and the program to be recalibrated to make it more effective.
4. The impact data collected for this Stage III of the Invisible Hurdles Program (IHP) is suggestive of improvements over the life of the program since 2015 in health, prosperity, enriched lives, and a way of working that addresses some of challenges for young people at risk of family violence.
5. All aspects of the program connect well. That is, secondary consultations are leading to referrals, which leads to casework, which leads to further secondary consultations and then to systemic action. Community Development is leading to casework and Community Development is also leading to systemic work.
6. Management is committed to the IHP and are well briefed on what happens in the program. Management is also utilising the learnings from the program to shape and inform their own service delivery. In this Stage III study, the data also reflected transformations not just for the participants in the IHP individually but transformations in the way the partner agencies are doing business and respond in other areas in which they do service delivery beyond the IHP.
7. The data suggests that the program has been effective in making inroads in responding to family violence occurring in the lives of young people and their families. This is attributable to its longitudinal nature; its ability over time to build an understanding of family violence and its manifestations. The IHP has an ability to provide service pathways both to young people and their trusted intermediaries such as teachers, health professionals and other social services.
8. The data from Stage III of the research evaluation, is suggestive that the program is not only having an impact on justice outcomes but is also flowing through to effect issues around recovery, hope,

improved informed decision making, and improvements in income, housing, and social and service connection (namely the social determinants of health).

9. The Community Development delivery has been structured, deliberate and flexible allowing for scaffolding (there are examples in the data of where the confidence and skills of the young people grew).
10. The Community Development program at WFLC has increased democratic engagement of the young people who participated. For example, the 'Raise the Age', Consent and Voting Programs delivered by the program team. (See Appendixes to this report).
11. Secondary Consultations are easily available and have become routine in practice, meaning practitioners don't even hesitate to use them. Despite the limitations of running the program during the COVID pandemic, secondary consultations increased, and these have been continuous in the post pandemic phases in 2022. Keeping the online option developed during COVID will supplement the face-to-face, visible attendance at each of the partner sites which is still needed.
12. The program has achieved integration and its seven years of operation have enabled traction, trust, and an embedding of the approach across the four partners, achieving seamless delivery in the new expanded realm of Community Development work since 2020 at NESAY and WFLC. Further inroads are being made into AWAHS since the lockdowns. Post lockdown community engagement is starting to return to pre-COVID levels (though it is not achievable to have the same level with less staff/funding).
13. There is a high level of mutual trust and understanding between the individual agencies and the Invisible Hurdles' lawyers. This has also meant that when there are low level misunderstandings or missteps, staff are prepared to push through these as they value the benefit and overall impact and inroads that the program has made. This could only have occurred because the program has a track record overtime and is highly valued by partners and staff alike. In the most recent Stage III data, the young people themselves, who have utilised the program, have also developed these high levels of mutual trust in the program lawyers and in the Hume Riverina Community Legal Service which has been significant since the last Stage II report.
14. HRCLS is committed to continually improving its staff's understanding of and appreciation for Aboriginal history and culture and this commitment has directly related to service delivery to Aboriginal Invisible Hurdles' clients.

15. In line with the recommendations in the Final Report on Stage II (acknowledging my co-author of the first two reports Pamela Taylor-Barnett), the focus (now that restrictions are easing) is on building new connections to enable a broader range of young people to participate in community development and policy work. The IHP team continue to engage and adapt. This is challenging work, and the program team has shown tenacity, and made further inroads into building the trust and engagement with all three partner agencies. This includes recognising that the mode of engagement needs to be varied and adapted for the different exigencies of the three partner agencies. In relation to the Flexible Learning Centre, students are on site for most of the day and so exploiting this onsite availability has enabled the ongoing building of relationships, visibility through an effective community development using humour, variation, and fun activities. This has made it easier for the program to engage at WFLC. At NESAY, the young people often engage on a one-on-one level with their counsellors, social workers, and other supports. The program team has adapted their mode of delivery to suit this mode of service delivery at NESAY enabling them to work with the professionals outside of their on-site attendance through secondary consultations, attendance at the Youth Advisory Council meetings in the evening, the use of 'Cuppa dates' to provide additional legal support and discussion forums (although there was some initial adaptation required for the hybrid model of home and office work post the pandemic). Being available and responsive on their mobile phones and via email has been a hallmark of this engagement. At AWAHS the program team are linking up with a range of community members including young Aboriginal people and working to improve trust. At AWAHS cultural safety and the space to improve trust require the allowance for time. This is to overcome cynicism and the often-engrained disappointment due to issues of colonisation, distrust, and the often-poor sources of information that many young people First Nations people have come to rely on.

16. Emerging in the data collected in Stage III of the research, is that many young people have had poor negative experiences of lawyers previously, or their family members have had poor previous experiences of lawyers and or the legal system. It has been noted in the data that the lawyers on this program because of their approachability, empathy, and visibility are breaking through these negative stereotypes which is 'closing the gap'.

17. Professional Development has exceeded goals set, has been accessible, engaging, and relevant. This was an area for improvement and growth at AWAHS as noted in the last report and inroads have been made here.

18. The referral process continues to be clear and operationalised well in all organisations. New successes have been made at AWAHS, with a significant increase in referrals and secondary consultations reported from health professionals and reflected in the aggregated service data contained in this report.

19. There is a high level of reflective practice skills in the lawyers involved in the program and by the program partner management team and changes in practice are supported by management.

20. The proxies (used in this evaluation as indicators to measure impact) have been met, namely: reach, capacity, engagement, empowerment, reciprocity, and collaboration.
21. The lawyers in the Invisible Hurdles team worked closely together and delivered some outstanding Community Legal Education programs.
22. The lawyers in the Invisible Hurdles team co-ordinated systemic work giving voice to young people and became a 'go-to' source of legal help for many young people.
23. Over Stage II and the beginning of Stage III, in contrast to the first year of the program in Stage I, there has been a continuity of staff with the two lawyers remaining in their lawyer roles. At the end of 2021 and beginning of 2022 due to maternity leave there was a transition of staff, however this change-over was almost seamless by comparison to previous staff turnover and transitions. The IHP team worked closely together, mentoring new staff and introducing them to each partner and one staff member was already familiar to AWHS meaning that trust was established early.
24. Comments made by staff in the in-depth interviews and manager interviews is that the program has moved beyond trusting staff to also including trust in the agency, namely the Hume Riverina Community Legal Service. This has contributed to the seamless and continuous service delivery, and to the relationships being built with staff and clients.
25. The ongoing nature of the program, the relationships established and the awareness and visibility of the program and its staff and their availability to help is increasing. This is enabling this program to continue to gain traction and to reach more young people than previously would have been the case, without the Invisible Hurdles Program.
26. There was a marked improvement in moving from working together for service delivery to working together on policy trends in this service delivery, for greater impact indicates a more sophisticated approach in the Stage III of the program with further areas for focus being identified (see the recommendations).
27. Over seven years of funding from multiple sources, the Invisible Hurdles team has delivered what can, on the data collected, be assessed against the benchmarks as 'integrated' and holistic legal practice.

28. Over the life of the program, with the consistency of lawyers in more recent times, the lawyers had been able to develop specialist knowledge of ways of working in the young person's space using a 'growth mindset'. This has also enabled ways of engaging with bureaucracy and decision makers enabling them to defeat, in some instances, the hurdles and barriers that are presented for young people in trying to secure their legal rights and protections. An illustration of this has been the work with the lawyers have done overtime to secure birth certificates for young people. Feedback from trusted intermediary staff in the data suggests this work is directly linked to enabling the young people to secure income, housing, health services, driver's licences, and social supports for themselves and in some cases their young children (see case studies).

29. The participants in this research have reflected on the value of having had an embedded research evaluation with the same independent research evaluators over the period of this longitudinal study. The data revealed that the success of the IHP in terms of its impact on the lives of its clients, practitioners from different disciplines and the community and the continuance of its funding is partly due to the growth of the evidence-based approaches in this process. This it was noted, subjected the IHP to rigor and testing through research over seven years (Interview with Managers, Reflective Practice Meeting with Managers, In-depth Interviews with Trusted Intermediary Staff). This has enhanced and enabled the further impact of the IHP. It is noted in the data that, expanded reach has also been a result of having an ongoing research evaluation with the insight from the research provided to the partners and staff around what works and why and what changes might be necessary directly influencing changes in practice. An example is the improvements to the delivery of community development between the interim report for Stage II and the growth and changes in practice by the IHP team in this area since then. This need for change was identified and suggestions for improvement implemented along the way, based on the evidence gathered in the research. The research participants also reflected the ability of the IHP to receive, unusual ongoing funding in this sector, because of having an evidence-based series of reports at each stage of the program which has leveraged this further funding and continues to make a case for its continuance and the funding of replicable models for service delivery in the sector.

30. Five of the participants in this research for Field Trip 8 in May 2022 had active COVID at the time of their participation in this research. The fact that the program management of the team were able to quickly pivot from the planned face-to-face field work to online Teams interviews and reflective practice meetings and debriefs within 24 hours of the diagnosis of many of the potential participants, demonstrates the agility and flexibility of the partnership and its management and staff as well as their commitment to this research evaluation process.

Part D Recommendations

1. **The Invisible Hurdles Program continues its shift to explore more ways of engaging with AWAHS and NESAY considering the difficulties in engagement with Aboriginal young people and a service site where young people tend to be drop-ins or seek one to one support from NESAY.**

The Invisible Hurdles Program has come to recognise that each of the partners requires a different tailored and flexible responses given the nature of how young people engage with services and the young people's complex needs and advice seeking behaviours. It is encouraging to see in this study that dialogues are occurring with agencies as to what engaging and effective collaboration with young people looks like. The shift is occurring, and much more can be done. This includes the reinstatement of the 'Cuppa dates' informal Teams sessions with NESAY, now that the pandemic restrictions have eased to work around the new hybrid model of working patterns at NESAY.

2. **That Invisible Hurdles be given long-term funding. At the time of writing his report, there was considerable uncertainty as to whether one of the program lawyers would continue to be funded beyond September 2022. This uncertainty and instability in funding has been an ongoing theme of the previous two reports on the program. Although it is rare for a program such as this to have been funded for seven years, the funding remains piecemeal and places burdens on the administrators to keep seeking further project funding. Despite IHP being a cross border program, funding is currently solely Victorian based.**
3. **Over seven years of funding from multiple sources, the Invisible Hurdles team has delivered a first-class, fully integrated legal practice despite threats to its funding presented by short term funding from time to time. This uncertainty makes it hard to reassure partners and young people that the service is there for the long haul and to retain staff as was highlighted in Stage 1.**

The extensions of funding for Stage 2 saw a more consistent staff that enabled traction. Longer term funding certainty should be a priority to ensure the program's significant gains are not lost and momentum continues to build. Such long term 5–8-year funding (with evaluation to ensure and test ongoing effectiveness) should form part of governments' stated commitments to family violence, regional people, to closing the gap and to breaking the cycle of poverty.

4. **That Invisible Hurdles continues the momentum of giving voice to young people in systemic work**

The Invisible Hurdles team has made excellent contributions to systemic work by young people. The most important advancement about this work is that some of the young people involved have started to use their voice to self-advocate. The author would like to see this aspect of the program to continue. Collaboration in systemic advocacy that enables multiple voices, varied agency expertise across disciplines and perspective to occur in such partnerships (based on the outcomes of other evaluative studies and in the research literature) is especially rare and as this research highlights takes a long time to develop the readiness that is now possible. The program has the capacity to be an authoritative advocate for the needs of regional youth.

5. **Regular leadership meetings like the reflective practise meetings across the partnership management team on a quarterly basis.**
6. **An area of focus for the Invisible Hurdles Program beyond June 2022 has been identified by the participants in this research evaluation for its service delivery, community development and law reform work. Namely examining the impacts for residential-care, out of home care, kinship care and foster care of transitions to adult hood where the State has removed children from families and moved them into State 'care'.**

This is in recognition of the difficulties for young people transitioning out of residential care the fact that often this is the only home and that they do not have the ongoing supports that other young people have and the cause of the likely high levels of trauma.

7. **That the cuppa date model be extended to AWAHS staff**

Cuppa dates could be offered to staff at AWAHS, on an opt-in basis, and perhaps in an even more condensed way (e.g., 15 minutes) to entice time-poor professionals. This would ease pressure on the need to fit in information in staff meetings, which already have a full agenda. This is not necessarily to replace Lawyer 6's slot on the agenda in staff meetings, but rather to complement that slot.

8. That a focus on Young Aboriginal Community member be cornerstone of future stages of Invisible Hurdles

There is a risk that Aboriginal young people may shy away from seeking legal advice about family violence from the Invisible Hurdles' lawyer because they could perceive the lawyer to be aligned with someone who is a perpetrator, or at least someone who is friends with a perpetrator. This is a risk, given the research on perpetrators often being known to the victim and in intimate family violence, creates an impediment to young people reaching out for independent advice and it also risks conflict of interest or appearance of bias.

It is recommended that HRCLS consider how best to engage more Aboriginal young people. It has made huge strides in this area in the first half of 2022.

9. That a Young Aboriginal community member sit on the Advisory group

A young Aboriginal community member should be invited to join the Advisory Group to enable the program's goals of reaching young Aboriginal people. It is not culturally respectful or appropriate to be endeavouring to reach Aboriginal young people without such participation and cultural advice.

Our Aboriginal adviser in 2021 said 'There's obviously [young Aboriginal] leaders in there, they're just not visible.' The author suggests that it be a goal of this program to find those emerging leaders and include them. This view was endorsed in the Reflective Practice Meeting and AWAHS indicated some moves to recruit two representatives to its Board.

10. That a young person sits on the Advisory group

The Advisory Group would benefit from a young person's engagement on the group. Alternatively, the Invisible Hurdles team might consider setting up an Advisory group of young people specifically for the program, similar to the YAC model at NESAY. It would be appropriate for this group to be paid for their time.

11. That community development be prioritised through NESAY

The community development opportunities and plans with WFLC have been commendable. This work can now be tailored and adapted with NESAY whose community development focus was only partly able to be brought to fruition due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Although many changed practices continue due to COVID-19, the data indicates that the Invisible Hurdles team have been flexible and adaptable. Therefore, we suggest that building up a program of community development work with NESAY and AWHS be prioritised in 2022-2023.

More Broadly

12. Funders and those involved in developing government policies need to recognise that collaborations and partnerships need to be adequately supported and funded on an ongoing basis rather than a short-term basis or fragmented funding model.

This is in recognition of the findings of this study the trust needs to be sustained. That once trust is tested and has been built up overtime, in this case seven years of the program, it enables the relationships to traverse and overcome difficulties together.

13. This research evaluation highlights that if given secure and stable funding overtime and if the partners in the endeavour have similar values, add including the focus on client-centred and holistic service provision, then it can overcome hurdles and barriers, reach more people in need, and start on the trajectory to consider the policy implications of the experience of people on the ground and together build a collective voice for changing unfair, inequitable or unjust laws and policies.

14. Research evaluations that are embedded from service start up that include and incorporate in their model participatory, iterative, and reflective opportunities are immensely invaluable for enabling services to think about what they are doing, how they are doing it, what is effective and what measures are required to make an impact. This evidence can then assess impact and can shape, inform and enable services to recalibrate, reassess and adapt their service delivery models so that they can be more effective and have a greater impact.

The participants in this research have reflected on the value of having had an embedded research evaluation with the same independent research evaluators over the period of this longitudinal study. The data revealed that the success of the project in terms of its impact on the lives of its clients, practitioners from different disciplines and the community has been enhanced and enabled further impact and reach because of having an ongoing and embedded research evaluation. The research participants also reflect all the ability of the Invisible Hurdles Program to receive, because of having an evidence-based series of reports at each stage of the program. This independent, evidence-based research has leveraged the further funding and made a case for its continuance.

15. That the Invisible Hurdles model be rolled out in other schools around Australia

The Invisible Hurdles services one school and two other agencies. Its success at the school is outstanding. It is an integrated justice model with some important and sophisticated developments, practices and effective approaches that can inform other school lawyer models. The model should be thoroughly documented and replicated in other schools. Especially in schools that have 'at risk' cohorts as a priority, given the early

intervention opportunities that the data demonstrates are a consequence of such interventions.

16. That the legal profession more broadly takes up the opportunity to hear from Aboriginal community

HRCLS is ideally positioned with its volunteer lawyer service to make introductions between AWAHS and the local lawyers' network groups. Already they hold AWAHS Wills Day co-ordinated by HRCLS but staffed by local volunteer lawyers. Such work can be instrumental in building on new networks given the difficulty in accessing legal assistance services. HRCLS and AWAHS could also jointly train other lawyers to ensure they become more culturally competent.

17. That university ethics committees and ethics committees of government departments and other agencies consider the audience for their information sheets and consent forms. The feedback from the young people in the pilot yarning circle was that consent cannot be truly informed if the forms are incomprehensible and are written in a language that is academic and complex.

In Field Trip 8 of this Stage III evaluation, based on this feedback from young people, the information sheets were simplified whilst keeping intact salient information required by ethics committees.

Conclusion

The connections between the Invisible Hurdles Program and the agencies are vital to the communities they serve. Without the program, many Aboriginal young people would experience reduced access to justice, the gaps would grow even wider, and many young people would continue to experience the complications of their ongoing, complex legal problems. This leads to poor social determinant of health outcomes, as evidenced in the data and case studies in this report. However, integrated, and multidisciplinary practice when done well, can change lives and have a positive impact.

When applying the collaborative measurement tool, the evaluator found full integration by the Invisible Hurdles Program and the individual agencies. There is evidence of continuing collaboration despite some the setbacks of COVID-19 and in fact there has been a shift from collaboration to partnership on the measures for the benchmarks. The long-term nature of the program enabled it to use the trust and relationships already established to ride the COVID-19 storm and not only continue service but make necessary adaptations, innovate, and continuously reach young people and their supports. Many other agencies may also take some lessons from the elements discussed in this report, evidenced in the data that enabled the Invisible Hurdles Program to go from strength to strength and build built the service responsive service delivery models. This was despite all the challenges presented to the partner agencies.

The legal and trusted intermediaries work seamlessly to identify and assist clients, referral pathways are clear and functional, and a high level of reflective practice is occurring. They demonstrated innovation, changed their practice and were flexible and available continuing to build relationships of trust and finding 'work arounds' when confronted with problems.

The evaluator commends the Invisible Hurdles model to other services hoping to find an effective model that could be replicated. However integrated service partnerships and multi-disciplinary practice is not easy, and relationships must be organic, have common values and shared focus. Dialogue and trust are key. The research participants also note part of the success of the Invisible Hurdles Program has not only been the nature of the

service but its use of research to ensure all decisions and practice flow from a solid evidence base. Multiple participants told us that they could not imagine the service not being there – it is now so integrated it would do harm if it were pulled apart through a lack of or inadequate funding.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1: Yarning Circle

Yarning Circles

To further de-identify the participants in the Yarning Circles (YC) the feedback has been aggregated. There were two yarning circles held with young people in Albury and Wodonga (with the one in Wangaratta cancelled at the last minute due to lack of participant availability). The first was run as a pilot in February 2022 at the WFLC. The further yarning circle was held in May 2022.

Question 1 - This young person has a number of issues that are legal in nature. Should they get help and support? Yes/No. Why? Why not? Where do you think they could go?

100% of YC participants felt legal problems could impact upon other issues for example, payment of bills, fines, payment plans especially for single parents.

They noted that being banned from a Plaza raised issues around how the person shop. Being barred from shopping centre seemed to them to be quite an *extreme response*. I also *wondered why these things around ability to shop, seek work etc. had not been thought about prior to the ban being imposed by the court/police.*

They said that the *first thing they do was talk to the agency (AWAHS, WFLC, NESAY) in the IH Partnership*. They said that *for most of young the young people it was not obvious who they would talk to and go for help*. They noted that *right here where you go and you trust people would be front of mind, convenience* and they could also ask permission their supports who to get in touch with and find out who would be the best person to contact.

They made a comparison with mainstream schools. They said the teachers in mainstream schools are not like here at WFLC and so those students would probably not know where to go or get a direct or quick contact with supports.

If the IH lawyer wasn't here and if they didn't get along with the lawyer, the implications of not getting this help could be critical. Housing, enough food, stress anxiety, and not having access to educational paths would all be flow on effects for young people in Tahlia's situation.

Question 2 – Type of lawyer & key to engagement of young people - Do you think getting legal assistance can help? Yes/ No. How? Why?

They said that the key elements in making them engage was *kindness that the person was professional* and that they would *not be judged by them*.

Have trouble concentrating for long periods of time, so bite size or else being able to find out the information later from the other students can be really helpful.

Can be shy and afraid. Sometimes allow people to write things down because that might feel better.

They said that for them to engage particularly with a lawyer, it was important that they *not use big words and keep it simple*. In the first yarning circle, the young people participating commented on the complexity and incomprehensible wording of the information sheets that accompanied the consent form. They said that how could consent be informed if it took their teacher and the researcher a lot of attempts to translate it into plain English. They said that universities an ethics bodies should be aware of the audience and that information sheets should not be there to service ethics committees and university ethics sports but rather be suited to the end audience, in this case young people. They recommended that before the next YC this information sheet be simplified and put into plain English with all the relevant information being retained that was required.

They said because they are teenagers this doesn't mean that you assume they can't comprehend things it's just that it needs to be simply explained so that they understand it. For example, they used the actual information sheet for this research as an example of a form that was quote 'dumb'. they said it had a lot of information but was incomprehensible. They noted there are different levels at which things can be translated.

They said they *wanted to know what the options were and have support in different areas not just in law so they could understand step by step and understand implications of taking different these options*. They said that they *want honesty not trickery*. They want options explained in terms of what the *insights and practical implications* and *what would they need to do next and to show them other available resources*.

To be kind to them not to be an asshole.

Humour that's great.

To not be aggressive or scary as hell.

Doesn't rush into things and explains things and breaks them down.

They want someone who's prepared to *have a go and find work arounds*.

Takes time to gain their trust and doesn't push them down or doesn't make them feel stressful

Building trust & Engaging with Young People.

They want a lawyer who *opens up about who they are* and who you are. They want the connection and the relationship as they are going to be sharing personal stuff and then if they don't feel a relationship there will be less inclined to do this.

Trust is critically important *we won't do something if we don't trust people*

To be trustworthy you need to be reliable this includes not spreading things around keeping confidentially and privacy.

To trust someone you need not to judge them or what's happening in their life. These are all preconditions for us seeking help.

The person needs to be *genuinely interested*.

They *don't want people who are 'shitty' or doesn't say thank you*.

Can go to the lawyer when and as they need help and at the right time as far as they're concerned all these elements lead to good service.

If you don't understand or know what the answer is, then let us know and let us know when you find out the answer or that you're doing research so that we know something's being done and that you've listened and heard us this gives us confidence and makes us feel less upset.

Question 3 - Is having a justice service alongside/visible and approachable a good service to have? Yes/No. Why or why not?

Want understanding and for the person to understand what they're going through and to check in from time to time and sure what's going on.

Issues like an eviction can be challenged if it's not being done legally. If you're being cut off your utility bills it means you can't heat your house, cook, or have light and sometimes the lawyers know how to work around this and find other ways. The invisible hurdles project is our direct contact. Sometimes there's so much going on and having the lawyer here to help with housing can connect things up.

Checking in regularly in case something was going on is important it also means that overtime you might open up about other stuff. Sometimes it's important to just have a chat from time to time.

The person needs to be reliable and visible this means visible understanding, face to face they observe from interactions with the lawyer with other people whether they're OK or not that's *includes body language as well as what they say and how they relate with other staff and other young people.*

It will take time so that when they're ready they'll be eased into initiate.

Question 4 - What is your opinion on the impact of getting legal help early on and before a problem might escalate to solve it?

You do not know what you do not know so it's unless you get explained things to and it's interactive an explained overtime it's critical.

Things need to be explained in more than one session and you need to build on people's knowledge because sometimes, it can be traumatic and it's hard to take the information on.

Young people talk about things so if they've got a really good source of information that's right and correct, then, they can actually help each other out to and spread the word.

Important to get advice earlier and that not getting advice early can take a toll on people's lives. For example, they used the situation of Tahlia in the Plaza that she couldn't get into the Plaza so she would have lost her job or not being able to get a job. *If she had got earlier advice and perhaps got intervention earlier maybe it wouldn't have been put there as a barrier and she could have sought help from others so that she didn't end up in a situation where she couldn't get to the Plaza and she felt anxious and increasingly fearful about what was going on with her parents and what it meant.*

Increasing depression leads the young person to overthink things. This means that they can end up in a *loop where they get stuck and take bad possibilities and this prevents them from taking avertive action and early intervention. This can escalate their problems.*

Question 5 - Do you think legal issues can impact on other aspects of life for example housing, employability, financial security, safety, health and well-being, family unity? Can you explain your answer in the context of young people in general?

Coming to where you at or in the situation in which you're likely to be is really important and sharing information there. No life, if you have no car and no work it helps you get to a place it can be really stressful.

You miss school and if you miss school, you don't have time to talk and catch up and so things like having to get a car or getting a licence that lawyer might be able to help with a really important.

Other schools don't have access to this sort of legal help. Young people particularly after the age of 16 don't feel comfortable talking to their parents anymore.

Get anxious about a new person - questions can cross their mind like will we get along, will I be treated as stupid.

Get anxious about a new person - questions can cross their mind like will we get along, will I be treated as stupid.

Question 6 - What can be done to improve things?

Court stresses you out and yet it doesn't seem to connect. *Need joined up service.* Joined up services are really important for children if they're going through something. Also, *if a lawyer knows other professionals, then this helps get trust and then they can get through some obstacles working together and also makes connecting up easier.*

Without the help of Invisible Hurdles project or a multidisciplinary practise such as this one young people would have to find the person and then that person would have to find another person. This would make it really hard to find yourself and not just be passed from person to person and not have to share your story over and over again. You would feel that you weren't getting anywhere and then you just give up.

Young people in general particularly First Nations young people are really aware of their rights. More legal workshops with the young mob about leasing, signing contracts, insurance, phone plans how to get themselves out of trouble or avoid trouble, issues around credits-just generally information about life.

In these justice workshops the personnel need to be visible approachable, work holistically, have relationships with other services that First Nations young people relate to.

Services to be effective need to recognise that young people hard to engage with full stop.

The language in law is designed to reason, it's designed to keep people out. So, people need awareness to get through the door. Reaching young people means they have to trust you, and this can often mean engaging with community members and going to where they are. The first thing is you need to explain to young people that it's important. Trust is key - in First Nations community that comes to working with people in the community. As a young person and professional support, I want to work at who is approachable and who's prepared to be confronted and challenged. If the person is a lawyer then, you need the same person every time to meet you to share flaws including that they acknowledge that they don't know things and to make an effort to find out. This is so key to trust building.

Without the help of Invisible Hurdles project or a multidisciplinary practise such as this one young people would have to find the person and then that person would have to find another person. This would make it really hard to find yourself and not just be passed from person to person and not have to share your story over and over again. You would feel that you weren't getting anywhere and then you just give up.

Young people in general, and particularly First Nations young people, are not really aware of their rights. Often their source of information is other young people or people have gotten into trouble previously. This might give them the wrong information and get them into further trouble. Therefore, this access to a lawyer in community and working with other trusted supports is a good way of working.

Community development - really being useful in *getting to know the lawyers out of the legal advice realm.* Through the community development we get to know them they get to have a laugh they get to feel relaxed they feel safe.

How without learning it's a legal problem if it happens to you do you know you can get help. Community development helps some familiarise themselves with the lawyer it makes them understand what issues might be legal or not and that overtime they think it might influence a young person on feeling a bit more comfortable going to see a lawyer. A lot of young people go to see a counsellor, but they wouldn't ever think of going to see a lawyer.

Want professionals to get in touch with you and who also prepared to make home visits. This is key if it's safe.

Police

It's awful getting a lawyer when you are with the police it's pretty scary. Welcome place where we have and will get help and if we've got a problem with the police we might actually tend to go to the lawyer. Trusting police can be an issue. More recently with IH organising police visits we've seen some police come into the school with the lawyer and that might make a difference but there are still issues of trust of police.

Policy and law reform that involves young people having a say- ha that's funny no one ever asks us no one listened to us ... through the Invisible Hurdles we can find out what's going on and we can be involved in decisions that affect us.

A kid can lie for years just to cover up but when they feel confident then they will speak up and so this takes a long time, it might be a lie when they say what happened initially, but sometimes over time the lie becomes their reality.

Concern with young people if people do listen, they won't make change happen, and that's what we want to see!

Mainstream Schools

Every school should have a lawyer a lawyer who can go to assembly and explain things an explain them in simple words and then they know when they can get help what they can get help for and they know their legal rights. *This is a big issue in mainstream schools.*

Put calling cards in schools - have phone numbers in mainstream schools like they do here where they can contact lawyers out of school. Posters too.

Even in mainstream schools if they had their cards and had visibility through visits twice a month at least they'd be more front and centre at the mind and people would know they could get legal help.

Suggestions for improvement included a question box with an option that you can leave your number and then get people to call you back this means you don't have to say that you need legal help on other issues in front of other students knew line what we've actually learned too. Knowing even if there's no problem at the time, we know that later on if there is a problem we can come to this place and we can see the lawyer this is a really important thing so that we can identify and learn about an issue but then later if we need help, we can actually know where to go

Make sure that when you help a kid you try and stay in touch.

Question 7 - What are your thoughts that would work best to reach young people and get them legal help at the right time and early on?

If you can't understand they simplify it more

Never leave it in the dust.

Don't make it daunting even if it causes anxiety - make us feel part of it

Let us have a say in the topics -sometimes you can speak up and others don't- this is really hard if you're traumatised

Sometimes when someone asks a question, it's really good to get the information because others of us might not be prepared to ask the question, but through someone else doing it we learn that we can be confident and ask or we can actually get the answers without having to speak up.

Safety is so important if we're going open up and say things.

IH what it means?

...through the Invisible Hurdles we can find out what's going on and we can be involved in decisions that affect us.

When we went to the on an excursion, we found out about options we didn't know about.

Even if you're over 18 these are the sorts of services you come back to because you've had a good experience with them.

If it does affect you can leave the room, and then you're happy to talk to them afterwards this is a really important thing for some young people. They follow up and don't leave it hanging.

Going to the Hume Riverina Legal Service excursion was good it helped us see how they help people and it also helped us see that people are anxious and might get comfort by going and learning about how to approach a phone call or sit at a desk or what receptionists do and why they need the information.

If it weren't for having the lawyers at this school, we would never ever have probably seen that we had legal problems or known how to get help or that in fact we have options.

Help with things like getting a bank card it took ages, without help we wouldn't have got it.

Good to have a lawyer not just once a week but all the time and visible

For lawyers explain it well do it well and don't be dull

Make us laugh -Invisible Hurdles is done well.

Great I love the random photos of the lawyer making funny face sis is brilliant knew lot the invisible hurdle stuff is interesting knew line invisible hurdles project enables us to have conversations and those conversations lead to new conversations and new ideas and it makes us explore new options

We realised through the Invisible hurdles Project that the lawyers don't need to be scary and that sometimes over although the law is scary you can actually work your way through it

It's fun but it's educational

It's correct information

They talk about the right things

It's hard stuff and they simplify it and make it understandable all these things are important for any other program.

If you don't get it right, then they admit it and ask how you can improve – we'll give you ideas!

Get lollies – and they don't make us feel stupid

Cool lawyers

APPENDIX 2: CLE and CD activities

CLE activities (1/3/2021 to 30/4/2022)

Date delivered	Partner	Topic
21/4/2021	WFLC	Consent
28/4/2021	WFLC	Introduction to drugs and the law
5/5/2021	WFLC	Viewing of "You can't ask that" episodes
12/5/2021	WFLC	Drug and alcohol offences (presented by VicPol Youth Resource Officer)
24/5/2021	NESAY/Borinya	Cyberbullying, consent and age of consent
26/5/2021	WFLC	Pill testing & KWL worksheet
2/6/2021	WFLC	No session due to COVID lockdown
7/6/2021	WFLC	No session due to COVID lockdown
16/6/2021	WFLC	Alcohol, drunk driving and road rules (presented by VicPol Youth Resource Officer)
23/6/2021	WFLC	What is NAIDOC Week
14/7/2021	WFLC	Introduction to topics for term 3- Aboriginal Legal Rights/ Cyber safety and visit to HRCLS
21/7/2021	WFLC	No session due to COVID lockdown
28/7/2021	WFLC	No session due to COVID lockdown
4/8/2021	WFLC	Aboriginal Legal Rights Part I: Introduction
11/8/2021	WFLC	Aboriginal Legal Rights Part II: Significant events & dates
14/8/2021	WFLC	Aboriginal Legal Rights Part III: Action Day
25/8/2021	WFLC	No session due to COVID lockdown
1/9/2021	WFLC	Lockdown discussion (session via Microsoft Teams due to lockdown)
8/9/2021	WFLC	Recap and quiz (session via Microsoft Teams due to lockdown)
15/9/2021	WFLC	International Day of Democracy (session via Microsoft Teams due to restrictions)
6/10/2021	WFLC	Aboriginal Legal Rights and Raise the Age Campaign (session via Microsoft Teams due to restrictions)
13/10/2021	WFLC	Raise the Age Action Day (session via Microsoft Teams due to restrictions)
20/10/2021	WFLC	Workshop to create Cross border resource for Young People (session via Microsoft Teams due to restrictions)
3/11/2021	WFLC	Cross border resource for Young People- worksheet
8/11/2021	NESAY/Borinya	Raise the Age of consent and letter writing
9/11/2021	NESAY/ Marian College	Consent, cyberbullying and sexting
17/11/2021	WFLC	Cross border resource for Young People (session via Microsoft Teams due to restrictions)
24/11/2012	WFLC	16 Days of Activism

1/12/2021	WFLC	Visit to HRCLS office
8/12/2021	WFLC	Wrap up, farewell lawyer 6 and introduce lawyer 7
8/2/2022	WFLC	Introduction and what is law?
15/2/2022	WFLC	Introduction to Australian Politics
22/2/2022	WFLC	Poly-what? Politics
8/3/2022	WFLC	Politics: Reflections and recaps
15/3/2022	WFLC	From Bill to Law- should school hours be changed?
22/3/2022	WFLC	Cars, cars, cars: getting your licence
29/3/2022	WFLC	Cars, cars, cars: Buying a car
5/4/2022	WFLC	Cars, cars, cars: Insurance

Community Development Work

CLE & Workshop: Raise the Age of Criminal Responsibility		November 2021
Not included as young people are named		
DESCRIPTION / FORMAT/ STRUCTURE / WHAT IS IT	Raise the Age of Criminal Responsibility Campaign	
DETAIL	Community Legal Education sessions and subsequent workshop to allow students to 'take action' on this issue	
AIMS / OBJECTIVES (of the activity itself or of my attendance / involvement)	Empowerment, building capacity, getting young people involved in issues that directly affect them	
HOW THE ACTIVITY HAS BEEN SHAPED (the activity itself or of my attendance / involvement)	We asked the students for topics they wanted to learn about- request for legal information sessions on Aboriginal Rights. We delivered 4 sessions on Aboriginal legal history and tied this into NAIDOC week and the school NAIDOC events. There was national media attention for states to increase the age of criminal responsibility in Australia. Closely tied to this is that Aboriginal young people was disproportionately affected. We wanted students to be well-informed of this issue	
CD PRINCIPLES / WHAT GOOD PRACTICE IN CD HAS SHAPED THIS ACTIVITY / MY ATTENDANCE / MY INVOLVEMENT	Building capacity and knowledge- we wanted the students to be well-informed of this issue and address many of the myths surrounding this issue, empowerment of young people to voice their own views and opinions heard, co-design- students expressed their views and we incorporated them into the program on this, encouragement of young people to participate in democratic processes, build capacity to be effective in reform engagement and use of humour- Becky and I used photos of ourselves when we were 10.	
THOUGHTS/REFLECTIONS	<p>Becky and I did 4 CLE sessions to students on Aboriginal Legal Rights (addressing Australian history, Colonialization, Stolen Generations, NAIDOC week). We then did 2 sessions on Raise the Age of Criminal Responsibility. Becky and I also attended Forums to learn about this issue and that instead of addressing it from a criminal/legal perspective, we should move to a health perspective.</p> <p>Breakthrough moment with one student previously opposed to raising the age (on the basis that kids should know right from wrong); she shared a story about a young person who got involved in stealing cars aged 12, ended up in juvenile detention, now aged 25 and significantly traumatised from his time in detention. Student now thinks this person should have received support and intervention rather than being put into custody.</p> <p>I believe that we changed several students views from 'they should know right from wrong and deserve it' to more needs to be done to support the student or young person. When we gave examples of young people being locked up for stealing food, this tested the students opinion that children were only being locked up for committing serious crimes.</p> <p>We then did a 'jamboard' to record the students views/ideas/opinions so these could form the basis of a letter to Politicians</p>	
LEARNINGS/OUTCOME (FUTURE AMENDMENTS)	It was really important to cover this important topic over several weeks so that the information could be repeated and consolidated in the students minds.	

ATTACHMENTS

- Letter sent to the Honourable Daniel Andrews, the Honourable Jacyn Symes, the Honourable Domonic Perrottet, the Honourable Mark Speakman, the Honourable Helen Haines and the Victorian Cross-border Commissioner.
- Received a response from the Honourable Helen Haines
- CLE presentation x 2
Jamboard notes

5/20/2021

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Community Legal Service



Linking the community with the law



Linking the community with the law

17

Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme NSW	February 2022

Closing soon

Applications to the Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme close on **30 June 2022.**

To find out more visit the Stolen Generations page at aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au



Aboriginal Affairs



NSW Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme and Funeral Assistance Fund

Fact Sheet 1 – Overview

DESCRIPTION / FORMAT/ STRUCTURE / WHAT IS IT	Letter to NSW Government Minister to request extension to Stolen Generations Reparation Scheme
DETAIL	Scheme is due to close on 30 June 2022 and there has been low-up take in our region
AIMS / OBJECTIVES (of the activity itself or of my attendance / involvement)	Collaboration and strengthening relationship with AWAHS, advocacy to address impact of closure of scheme
HOW THE ACTIVITY HAS BEEN SHAPED (the activity itself or of my attendance / involvement)	I attended a training session from Legal Aid NSW Civil Law Service for Aboriginal Communities (CLSAC) about the Reparations Scheme. I was informed that there was a very low-uptake in the Scheme in southern Riverina of NSW. Community engagement events to potential clients have been close to impossible to hold due to COVID-19. From these learnings, I then delivered a mini-professional development session during AWAHS staff meeting. I explained the scheme but also explained it is due to close on 30 June 2022. From this presentation, I had 3 referrals for legal advice. We raised our concerns about the ending of the scheme with David, AWAHS CEO, and asked if he would co-sign a letter calling for a 12 month extension- he readily agreed.
CD PRINCIPLES / WHAT GOOD PRACTICE IN CD HAS SHAPED THIS ACTIVITY / MY ATTENDANCE / MY INVOLVEMENT	Collaboration and advocacy with IH partner, building capacity of partner staff to be aware of the Scheme and its impending closure, reach- through promotion at staff meeting, this led to 3 referrals
THOUGHTS/REFLECTIONS	Whilst this piece of advocacy does not directly relate to young people, it was still important to be aware of it, and be responsive to the detrimental impact this will have on Aboriginal people more generally. It allowed for IH partners to work together and collaborate on important systemic and law reform work. It is utterly unbelievable that the government would not consider the extension of the Scheme given the COVID-19 pandemic that has crippled Australia and the world for 2 years. Aboriginal communities are extremely vulnerable to begin with, and COVID has really hampered any sort of community development/information campaign to get the word out. By granting a 12 month extension, this will allow as many people as possible have a chance to apply. Any systemic work in which IH partners can collaborate and co-sign is a win for the project and a win for the legal issue!

LEARNINGS/OUTCOME (FUTURE AMENDMENTS)	
ATTACHMENTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter sent to the Honourable Ben Franklin and the Honourable Helen Dalton. Received a response from the Honourable Ben Franklin and the Honourable Helen Dalton Honourable Helen Dalton	

Email before WFLC Excursion to staff:

So I can madly hear you all asking what is going to happen... well I am here to give you the low-down on all the fun that will be happening, including tours and activities.

So to make things less confronting for the students and allow things to run smoothly the office will be shut from 11am to 12pm. Yes Leadership Team has approved this. Therefore, this means no walk-ins and the phones will be switched over.

The plan then is:

- **11am to 11:20am-** students arrive, Lawyer and Teacher welcome the students and conduct a tour of the office.
 - For those of you who are unavailable or can't meet with the students when we walk around, can you please have your door closed. If the door is closed, we will know that you are busy and won't enter.
 - Also, can you make sure that you don't have any client information on your desk or in your office during the visit J
- **11:20am to 12pm-** this is where the fun begins and the activities commence. Students will be broken up into 3 groups and rotate through the 3 activities (5-10 minutes for each activity):
 - 1) **Students make an appointment in person-** the students will be given 2 scenarios, they will come to the front desk and Lyn will ask them all the normal questions in order to make an appointment to see a lawyer.
 - 2) **Students make an appointment over the phone-** the students will be given 2 scenarios, they will call Meaghan on the phone and Meaghan will ask them all the normal questions in order to make an appointment to see a lawyer.
 - **Spoiler alert:** there are 4 scenarios which will cover can make an appointment, no appointment due to conflict of interest, no appointment due to outside of catchment and no appointment due to not being able to advise on area of law.
 - - I will give you guys the scenarios hopefully before the end of the day.
 - 3) **Mock advice appointment-** lawyers will be involved in a mock advice appointment. H is the lawyer and Y is the client. We have written the scenario and will give this to you once it's been finalised.

The plan is for Lawyer X & Y and I to 'run' each activity so we can be there to answer any questions and keep the kids on task.

For those involved in the excursion, I will send a more detailed email once everything has been finalised.

We expect to be wrapped up around 12pm when the office can reopen J

We are mindful that staff still have clinics and other appointments and are sorry for the inconvenience, but we are super stoked that we can finally do this excursion as this has been on our radar since late 2019/ early 2020!

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to lawyer X or Y.

A big thank you to everyone who is involved. We are super grateful!



Excursion to HRCLS Worksheet

Welcome to the Hume Riverina Community Legal Service. We are excited that you are able to visit our office and see where we work.

We are going to show you around the office, show you our workspace and introduce you to all of our friendly workmates.

After that, we are going to run through some activities:

- **ACTIVITY ONE:** make an appointment in person
- **ACTIVITY TWO:** make an appointment over the phone (call 02 6055 8078)
- **ACTIVITY THREE:** watching how a legal advice appointment happens

You will need this worksheet in order to complete the activities and there are some questions in each activity for you to answer too.

NAME:		DATE:	
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ACTIVITIES ONE and TWO SCENARIOS

SCENARIO 1	
CLIENT NAME:	Tessie Bessie
LIVES IN:	in Wodonga
DATE OF BIRTH	15/9/1995
OTHER PARTY:	Jordan Bonkers
DATE OF BIRTH:	I can't remember his date of birth but he is about 24 years old.
ISSUE/SITUATION:	I live with my boyfriend. I get my Centrelink money paid into my account but he won't let me have my bank card. He says that my money is his money and he can spend it how he likes. I have no money to buy food. Can I make an appointment?
QUESTIONS:	<p><i>What is Tessie's legal problem?</i></p> <p>Family Violence (economic abuse)</p> <p><i>When is Tessie's legal advice appointment? (Date and time)</i></p> <p>Tuesday 7 December at 10am</p> <p><i>What should Tessie bring to the appointment?</i></p> <p>Bank statements??</p>

SCENARIO 2	
CLIENT NAME:	Preggers McGinty
LIVES IN:	in Albury
DATE OF BIRTH	1/10/2002
OTHER PARTY:	Doondy McGinty
DATE OF BIRTH:	5/6/2002
ISSUE/SITUATION:	I have separated from my husband. We have 1 kid but I am also pregnant. We are fighting over who gets to spend Christmas with our son Cha-cha Bangs McGinty
QUESTIONS:	<p><i>What is Preggers' legal problem?</i></p> <p>Family law/ child contacts</p> <p><i>What is the reason why Preggers' can't make an appointment?</i></p> <p>Conflict of interest</p> <p><i>What other service were you referred to?</i></p> <p>Albury Legal Aid Office</p> <p><i>What is the service's phone number?</i></p> <p>(02) 6020 7200</p>

SCENARIO 3	
CLIENT NAME:	Chris Teo
LIVES IN:	in Beechworth
DATE OF BIRTH	3/2/1999
OTHER PARTY:	Meat Pies Galore Bakery
DATE OF BIRTH:	Not required
ISSUE/SITUATION:	I work at Meat Pies Galore Bakery. I am paid \$9.00 an hour. I am 22 years old. I have had a look on the website and my wage should be higher so what should I do?
QUESTIONS:	<p><i>What is Chris' legal problem?</i></p> <p>Employment law</p> <p><i>What is the reason why Chris can't make an appointment?</i></p> <p>Outside of area of expertise</p> <p><i>What other service was Chris referred to?</i></p> <p>Jobwatch</p> <p><i>What is the service's phone number?</i></p> <p>1800 331 617</p>

SCENARIO 4	
CLIENT NAME:	Fringey McFringe
LIVES IN:	Shepparton
DATE OF BIRTH:	12/4/2000
OTHER PARTY:	Afterpay

DATE OF BIRTH:	Not required
ISSUE/SITUATION:	I owe \$600 to Afterpay. I lost my job and I can't pay it. I live in Shepparton. Can you please help me?
QUESTIONS:	<p><i>What is Fringey's legal problem?</i></p> <p>Debt matter</p> <p><i>What is the reason why Fringey can't make an appointment?</i></p> <p>Outside of catchment</p> <p><i>What other service was Fringey referred to?</i></p> <p>Goulburn Valley Community Legal Service</p> <p><i>What is the service's phone number?</i></p> <p>(03) 5831 0900</p>

ACTIVITY THREE

For this activity, you are going to watch a legal advice appointment in action. You need to watch and listen and write down answers to the following questions:

SCENARIO 4	
CLIENT NAME:	Francesca Selium
LIVES IN:	Baranduda
DATE OF BIRTH:	6/8/2005
OTHER PARTY:	Afterpay
DATE OF BIRTH:	Not required
ISSUE/SITUATION:	I broke up with my boyfriend on the weekend. He has sent me 200 text messages and called me 30 times. He also left presents at the front my house. I work at McDonald's and he turned up there and made a scene (demanded to see me, I was out the back, he yelled at my boss and my boss had to make him leave).
ADVICE:	<p>Harley complete advice sheet in front of audience- only ask the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name, DOB, address and phone # • Concerns for safety • Bushfire affected • Aboriginality • Risk of homelessness • Income source and scale • COVID affected <p>Lawyer: needs to ask why lawyer is asking about COVID or bushfire Harley, can you please give advice on Intervention Order (explain what FV is, report to Police and see if they can apply, apply for IVO themselves)</p>
ACTORS:	Lawyer- Francesca-

Students need to answer the following questions so can you please factor these into the information/ answers

CLIENT NAME:	Francesca Selium
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LIVES IN:	Baranduda
OTHER PARTY:	Shane Weaton
QUESTIONS:	<i>What is Francesca's legal problem?</i> <i>Intervention Order advice</i> <i>What legal options does Francesca have?</i> <i>Report incidents to Police</i> <i>Apply for an IVO- Police do it or Francesca does it herself.</i> <i>What local service(s) did Harley tell Francesca to get help from?</i> <i>Wodonga Police and Centre Against Violence</i>

Remember that if you have any questions, or if you need legal advice, contact:...

Well done & thank you!!! 😊😊😊

NAIDOC Week	21 June 2021
<p>Hi all,</p> <p>This is the plan for this Wednesday's celebration of NAIDOC Week. I have managed to catch up with most of those concerned (apologies if I missed anyone and you have found a 'surprise' down below-see me if you need to)</p> <p>If you have any other suggestions/offerings please let me know.</p> <p>What: NAIDOC Week 'Heal Country' Where: Wodonga Flexible Learning Centre When: 11.00-1.00</p> <p>9.00am Damper in campfire [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] to provide campfire oven. Vic Curriculum students (and any other students who may be interested) will make the damper.</p> <p>11.00am Acknowledgement to Country: [REDACTED] Guest Speaker: Liam [REDACTED] is a proud Wiradjuri and Gamilaroi man and a past Flexi student. [REDACTED] is here today as a guest to talk about his experiences as a young Aboriginal student and the importance of Culture. As we are celebrating NAIDOC Week [REDACTED] will also talk to us about this year's NAIDOC theme "Heal Country"</p> <p>11.15am Tammy to introduce/explain the activities on offer: Face painting Story Rocks and/or Paperbark painting. Everyone (staff and students) are asked to do at least one of these. Once completed, they will be arranged into a frame to create our own 'Flex' story board. Bead Making</p> <p>12.00pm Lunch (BBQ and tastings provided by VCAL Cooking students with [REDACTED]) to be held around a yarning circle (students to set up the circle)</p> <p>12.30/1.00 Closing</p> <p>Notes: [REDACTED] will provide Lemon Myrtle Cup cakes [REDACTED] will provide: mini Wattle Seed cheesecakes; emu as a taster (if available); some rocks</p>	
DESCRIPTION / FORMAT/ STRUCTURE / WHAT IS IT	NAIDOC Week activities
DETAIL	Schedule/Plan of activities for students and teachers at WFLC to celebrate NAIDOC week
AIMS / OBJECTIVES (of the activity itself or of my attendance / involvement)	Lawyer 3 & 6 wanted to participate in NAIDOC week activities so that we could get to know the students better, build stronger relationships, breakdown the barriers of distrust between lawyers and young people
HOW THE ACTIVITY WAS SHAPED (the activity itself or my involvement)	At the request of the students to do CLE on Aboriginal Rights, we delivered 4 sessions on Aboriginal legal history and tied this into NAIDOC week and the school NAIDOC events. Becky and I got involved in all of the events organised by the school. We had our faces painted by the Koori Engagement Support Officer, we painted rocks and created jewellery, we ate the amazing breads and cupcakes, we listening to the moving acknowledgement of country

	delivered by an ex-student. Oh and we ate yummy yummy BBQ lunch that had kangaroo and crocodile tastings.
CD PRINCIPLES / WHAT GOOD PRACTICE IN CD HAS SHAPED THIS ACTIVITY / MY ATTENDANCE / MY INVOLVEMENT	Building capacity and knowledge- we wanted the students to be well-informed of this issue and address many of the myths out there, building relationships of trust and breaking down barriers, engage with students in a different way, not just through CLE but doing other fun activities.
THOUGHTS/REFLECTIONS	This was such a great day. It was so much fun to be involved, to be present and to show the students a different side to being just the 'school lawyer'. Delivering the CLE sessions is just as important as taking time to do community development events as this is where you can build rapport, can to know students and learn about them and their lives. Lawyer 3 & 6 spent some time in the art room creating the bracelet and ring and we got to know 3 students who were not regulars at the IH sessions. Whilst we didn't discover the meaning of life, or solve world peace, we got to speak to new students, hopefully show that we are approachable, friendly and nice and start to break down the barriers and build trust.
LEARNINGS/OUTCOME (FUTURE AMENDMENTS)	At the next NAIDOC event, it would be good if we could be more hands on in organising an activity or maybe even bring colleagues along so that the students are exposed to other lawyers from our office.

ATTACHMENTS



16 days of activism	24 November 2021
<p style="text-align: center;">16 days of Activism</p>  <p>The illustration shows a diverse group of people of various ages, ethnicities, and abilities. They are holding up large letters on sticks that spell out 'RESPECT IS'. The letters are in black and orange. The people include a woman in a wheelchair, a young girl in a red dress, a woman with a cane, a man with a beard, a woman with a headscarf, and a man with a cane. The background is white.</p>	
DESCRIPTION / FORMAT/ STRUCTURE / WHAT IS IT	16 days of Activism plans from IH perspective
DETAIL	Plan of the 16 days activities to promote to IH partners
AIMS / OBJECTIVES (of the activity itself or of my attendance / involvement)	<p>We wanted to be involved in the international campaign and 'do our own bit'/ to lend our voice to such an important issue. At the heart of the Invisible Hurdles project is family violence and we wanted to capitalise on the awareness that this international campaign brings.</p> <p>In terms of the IH project, our aim was to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poster/flyer in AWAHS newsletter about what 16 days is • CLE for students next week about what 16 days is, plus activity to complete a "respect is..." statement (using campaign resource)) and take a group photo either holding the posters or with posters on a pinboard etc (photo to be posted to social media) • Email to NESAY staff about 16 days and including some resources
HOW THE ACTIVITY WAS SHAPED (the activity itself or my involvement)	<p>Lawyer 3 and 6 held our own session to plan how we can promote this day with all of the partners. We know that each partner has their own promotion of this day from previous social media posts, but we thought it would be important to share our vision with our partners.</p> <p>In the past, we have done joint promotion on this issue with our partners (e.g., I had a photo with NESAY staff with a poster 'respect women, call it out'. Unfortunately, due to COVID restrictions, we could not be onsite with all of our partners.</p> <p>Lawyer 3 and 6 were fortunate enough to be able to attend WFLC in person where we put together a presentation what the 16 days of activism stood for</p>

	and delved into the statistic around family violence in the Australian community.
CD PRINCIPLES / WHAT GOOD PRACTICE IN CD HAS SHAPED THIS ACTIVITY / MY ATTENDANCE / MY INVOLVEMENT	Empowerment, building capacity, getting young people involved in issues that directly affect them, engagement across all partners
THOUGHTS/REFLECTIONS	<p>One of the statistics that was a real talking point was the estimated cost of violence against women and children to the Australian economy in 2015-16. We asked the students to guess the cost before we told them. Most guesses was around the \$1 million to \$20 million mark. The students were STUNNED that it was closer to \$22 billion! We unpacked this more by guessing where the cost comes from e.g., FV support services, FV support packages, wages of these employees, health costs, police, courts, lawyers, counselling etc. When asked what this money could be better spent on if we could address and reduce FV, the students said 'to reduce poverty and climate change'.</p> <p>FV and gender-based violence is a really hard topic to discuss, talk about, present on but it's a topic that must not be shied away from and must be taught and spoken about. The presentation covered statistics mainly but the benefit of this was that it opened discussions topics and allowed the students to ask questions and expand their knowledge.</p> <p>Lawyer 3 and 6 also did the activity with the students and asked them to fill out a card and answer 'respect is...' We did take a photo of their statements, but we lost the photo!</p>
LEARNINGS/OUTCOME (FUTURE AMENDMENTS)	<p>Make sure to save the photos of things done with students to the M drive!</p> <p>Must redo/reuse this session every year but hopefully the figures and stats are more current/up to date</p>

WFLC excursion to HRCLS		8 November 2021
<h2 style="color: orange;">Visit to HRCLS</h2> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making an appointment in person 2. Making an appointment over the phone 3. Watching a client appointment <div style="display: flex; justify-content: flex-end; align-items: center; gap: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> </div>		
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>		
DESCRIPTION / FORMAT/ STRUCTURE / WHAT IS IT	WFLC student excursion to HRCLS	
DETAIL	Visit to HRCLS to see where the school lawyers work.	
AIMS / OBJECTIVES (of the activity itself or of my attendance / involvement)	This will allow students to know where they can go to get help once they leave school and no longer have access to the IH project. This will also give the students to see the space where lawyers work, especially at most students interactions with lawyers are often at Court.	
HOW THE ACTIVITY WAS SHAPED (the activity itself or my involvement)	<p>The WFLC Principal first floated the idea with Becky and I in 2019. He was passionate about the IH project, about breakdown down barriers between young people and lawyers and also about teaching young people life skills. He wanted to make sure that the students had an idea of where to go for free legal advice. Becky and I loved the idea and were keen to put it into action... but then COVID hit and life changed as we knew it.</p> <p>Once the COVID restrictions eased, Becky and I put the plan into action and we were absolutely 100% committed to making this excursion happen! We decided to hold three activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making an appointment in person 2. Making an appointment over the phone 3. Observing a mock interview <p>We closed the office so that reception staff could assist in activities 1 & 2 and we roped in 2 colleagues to hold a mock advice appointment.</p>	

	When the students arrived did a welcome, gave them a goody bag and did a tour of the office. We then split them into 3 groups and started the activities.
CD PRINCIPLES / WHAT GOOD PRACTICE IN CD HAS SHAPED THIS ACTIVITY / MY ATTENDANCE / MY INVOLVEMENT	Empowerment, building capacity of young people, engaging with the legal system to reduce the fear and mistrust, promotion of service, strengthening our relationship with WFLC and students
THOUGHTS/REFLECTIONS	<p>Lawyer 3 and 6 etc got together after the activity and did a reflective meeting, noting the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students seemed comfortable walking into the office. • It was a lot of work in the lead up to come up with a plan and create the activities • 1 student was really excited to do the phone call • We didn't give enough time to do each activity, nor did we explain it very well at the beginning, • We underestimated the amount of time to get through each activity as each student wanted to have a go. • We had 7 students which we thought was low but turned out to be a good thing given the mismanaged time. • There was not enough time at the end of each activity to debrief • Each activity needed to go for at least 15-20 minutes • Really positive feedback from the students and teachers- enjoyed seeing our space, the activities were funny and fun • Students likes being exposed to tother HRCLS lawyers, it would have been good to have time to speak to their lawyer and they could talk to why they become a lawyer • Initial intro/welcome good: done outside, set the scene • Show bags/goody bags were a bit hit (include business cards next time) • Some of the students found it difficult to spell the person's name (when making an appointment, reception will often ask how to spell a name so ensure they have the right spelling for conflict check purposes)
LEARNINGS/OUTCOME (FUTURE AMENDMENTS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We did a spontaneous debrief at the end- must add this in when we do the next excursion • IDEA: bring a HRCLS to WFLC as special guest • Do a survey/ ask for feedback from students/teachers- include on worksheet? • MUST DO THIS ACTIVITY AGAIN EVERY YEAR!!
<u>ATTACHMENTS</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See email to staff which includes the run sheet/plan for the day • See the Excursion to HRCLS worksheet for activities for students complete 	

AWAHS: Engaging with Aboriginal Young People, Youth Day and Youth cultural excursion		March & April 2022
*Deleted Picture as identifying information		
DESCRIPTION / FORMAT/ STRUCTURE / WHAT IS IT	Engagement with Aboriginal Young People through events	
DETAIL	Targeted effort to engage with Aboriginal Young People	
AIMS / OBJECTIVES (of the activity itself or of my attendance / involvement)	Build capacity and stronger connections with the AWAHS Youth worker to increase referrals and secondary consultations, promotion of service, strengthening our relationship with AWAHS,	
HOW THE ACTIVITY HAS BEEN SHAPED (the activity itself or of my attendance / involvement)	<p>Before Lawyer 6 went on maternity leave, she built a strong relationship with X, the Wodonga Koori Youth Network and Youth Program Development Coordinator (WKYN Coordinator). I wanted to build upon this relationship and start creating connections so that we could reach out and engage with Aboriginal Young People who attend AWAHS.</p> <p>Lawyer 3 made an effort to speak to X and explained to her that wanted to develop a closer relationship with Aboriginal Young People but I was unsure the best way to go about it. X spoke to me about WKYN and suggested that we could build up to me attending some of the meetings so I could get to know the young people and start building connections and relationships.</p> <p>also mentioned that she was trying to organise a Youth Health Day and suggested that I be involved in that. She told me it was a focus on Alcohol and drugs, Health checks, cultural healing and sexual health. Lawyer 3 told her that we could do a 'legal health check' with the young people and then be around for yarning in the afternoon. Legal topics to cover- birth certificates, identity documents, renting, Medicare, ambulance cover, medical records. Have a show bag of sorts with free merchandise, lollies, HRCLS brochure etc.</p> <p>Unfortunately, due to time constraints, the proposal for the event was not endorsed for the date it was scheduled, but there are plans to hold a similar event later on in 2022.</p> <p>As this event did not go ahead, X invited me to attend the Youth Cultural Excursion so I could start to get to know the Young People and they could get to know me.</p> <p>Lawyer 3 attended the Youth Cultural Excursion on 14 April (see pictures below). Lawyer 3 got to sample some delicious pumpkin and damper made by the Young people. I spoke to a whole bunch of AWAHS staff that I had not interacted with. P taught me how to weave (see picture below). I spoke with young people whilst they were weaving or painting or creating various art works. Lawyer 3 wanted them to know who I was but did not expect them to want to talk to me about any legal problems. This visit was all about getting to know staff, young people and clients and building connections</p>	
CD PRINCIPLES / WHAT GOOD PRACTICE IN CD HAS SHAPED THIS ACTIVITY / MY ATTENDANCE / MY INVOLVEMENT	Strengthening relationship with AWAHS, increasing reach to other AWAHS staff, clients and young people, engaging with AWAHS staff, promotion of IH project and HRCLS	
THOUGHTS/REFLECTIONS	Lawyer 3 was a little apprehensive about attending the event as I was not sure what to expect, but the AWAHS staff are always lovely and inviting and genuinely happy to have me involved. There is no pressure, no expectations,	

	<p>just a calming environment to just be in the moment, to talk to people, to learn by observing, to learning from participating, to learn just being present!</p> <p>Lawyer 3 really enjoyed learning to weave. Y, the Health Promotions Officer, was really gracious in her time teaching and showing, as was z, the podiatrist. There was also a staff member who I went to both Primary and High School with. It was great to reconnect with her, and I got the sense from her that she would be a support/ a champion for me in gaining trust in the community.</p>
LEARNINGS/OUTCOME (FUTURE AMENDMENTS)	<p>Be flexible as to when events occur. Jump in and give things a go.</p>

AWAHS: Birth certificate event		June 2022
*Deleted picture a sidentifying information		
DESCRIPTION / FORMAT / STRUCTURE / WHAT IS IT	Free NSW Birth Certificate event	
DETAIL	CLSD was given an allocation for free birth certificates in NSW and we are organising a day at AWAHS for community to get a birth certificate	
AIMS / OBJECTIVES (of the activity itself or of my attendance / involvement)	We know that for Aboriginal Communities, it can be difficult to get birth certificates. This is due to poor literacy (can't complete the form) to not having the required proof of identity documents to get a certificate. There is also fear is getting fined or in trouble for not registering births.	
HOW THE ACTIVITY HAS BEEN SHAPED (the activity itself or of my attendance / involvement)	<p>Simon, the CLSD Coordinator, said that he had access to certain number of birth certificates. We had originally planned to try and hold this event at the Youth Health Day, however, as that event did not go ahead, we decided to organise our own birth certificate event at AWAHS.</p> <p>I reached out to X, the Youth/WKYN coordinator, and P, the Health Promotions Officer, to see if they thought community would benefit from this service. It was a resounding yes!</p> <p>Whilst we wanted to target young people, we are aware that this brings along its own challenges in terms of proof of identity documentation.</p> <p>I have promoted this event at the AWAHS staff meeting and with specific staff and encouraged them to enquire with their patients/clients if they need a birth certificate. We will also promote to community through posters and social media posts.</p>	
CD PRINCIPLES / WHAT GOOD PRACTICE IN CD HAS SHAPED THIS ACTIVITY / MY ATTENDANCE / MY INVOLVEMENT	Promotion of service to increase referrals and secondary consultations, strengthening our relationship with AWAHS, engagement with AWAHS patients to lead to referrals, co-design and collaboration with AWAHS staff,	
THOUGHTS/REFLECTIONS	<p>This event is still in the 'organising' phase as it's due to occur on Thursday 2 June.</p> <p>P and X have been very passionate about the event and see it as something that will be important to community and will help break down barriers for some members of the community. It has been a godsend in working with these guys as they are planning the day with me but are also involved in promoting it and taking appointments. I believe this will be a successful event because of the buy-in from them. For example, Brittany has agreed to record the names, triage the clients, and organise transport. There is no way that we could do this from or by HRCLS admin.</p> <p>P and X have so much passion for community and doing things for the benefit of community. The level of integration and collaboration between the three of us will be a strong building block for the project. I can foresee the more we work together, the better integration and the more seamless collaboration.</p>	
LEARNINGS/OUTCOME (FUTURE AMENDMENTS)		

APPENDIX 3: Professional Development

Professional Development

NESAY: PD session		2 March 2022
DESCRIPTION / FORMAT/ STRUCTURE / WHAT IS IT	PD session with NESAY staff	
DETAIL	TSS reached out to NESAY team leaders to organise a professional development session with NESAY staff.	
AIMS / OBJECTIVES (of the activity itself or of my attendance / involvement)	Strengthening relationship with NESAY capacity building, collaboration and reaching young people needing legal assistance.	
HOW THE ACTIVITY WAS SHAPED (the activity itself or my involvement)	Lawyer reached out to NESAY team leaders and let them know that Lawyer was wanting to run a PD session. Lawyer asked if they had any preference for topics and provided a few that I Lawyer have previously run that were well received. Not been able to lock in a time to do this just yet.	
CD PRINCIPLES / WHAT GOOD PRACTICE IN CD HAS SHAPED THIS ACTIVITY / MY ATTENDANCE / MY INVOLVEMENT	Co-design with partner professionals on what legal education they would like/benefit from. Build partner professional capacity and engage with NESAY staff.	
THOUGHTS/REFLECTIONS	Lawyer plans to follow this up and make sure that offer Teams/Zoom sessions to meet NESAY's current workplace model.	
LEARNINGS/OUTCOME (FUTURE AMENDMENTS)	-	
ATTACHMENTS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 		

Professional development activity

WFLC: Family violence and related legal issues		22 March 2022
DESCRIPTION / FORMAT/ STRUCTURE / WHAT IS IT	PD session with Flexi staff on Family Violence and related legal issues that victims may face.	
DETAIL	TSS ran a professional development session on the types of legal issues family violence victims may face.	
AIMS / OBJECTIVES (of the activity itself or of my attendance / involvement)	Strengthening relationship with Flexi, capacity building, collaboration and reaching young people needing legal assistance.	
HOW THE ACTIVITY WAS SHAPED (the activity itself or my involvement)	Lawyer reached out to Flexi staff and let them know that Lawyer was wanting to run a PD session. Lawyer asked if they had any preference for topics and provided a few that I have previously run that were well received. Flexi picked the topic family violence and related legal issues.	

CD PRINCIPLES / WHAT GOOD PRACTICE IN CD HAS SHAPED THIS ACTIVITY / MY ATTENDANCE / MY INVOLVEMENT	Co-design with partner professionals on what legal education they would like/benefit from. Build partner professional capacity and engage with Flexi staff.
THOUGHTS/REFLECTIONS	<p>Lawyer was feeling very nervous prior to the session. The teachers had made a comment about mentally marking us a student teachers. Talk about pressure! Lawyer feels as though the presentation went well. The feedback was all very positive. I had some follow up conversation, during which they let me know that they were landlords and did not know about the family violence legislation changes in tenancy laws. They also didn't know that VOCAT existed. Lawyer heard a few comments about potential referrals for VOCAT assistance. This is great to know for future PD planning and to know that there are students that could benefit from VOCAT, who otherwise would not be referred for legal advice! In working to build the capacity and knowledge of partner staff, we are able to increase the number of referrals into IH. IH project is working!!!</p> <p>Lawyer will also add that all staff completed the surveys with really positive feedback. And K gave a little speech to say thank you for coming out to see the students as often as we do, and to know that they appreciate it even when they don't tell us.</p>
LEARNINGS/OUTCOME (FUTURE AMENDMENTS)	Offer more PD sessions!
ATTACHMENTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff completed pre training surveys • Staff completed post training surveys 	

2021 PD session: "Christmas Legal Issues" (issue-spotting only; not in-depth law)

- 30 min session for each partner – individual sessions
- = 3 PD sessions
- Done as part of partner's existing staff/team meeting
- Schedule for early Dec
- Do pre and post surveys for each
- AG and BMS to wear santa hats!
- Topics:
 - Debts including Afterpay (everyone buying xmas presents)
 - Consumer issues (buying gifts that are cheap/break easily)
 - Family violence (often an escalation of violence during holiday period)
 - Parenting arrangements (who has kids at Christmas etc)
- Also plug 2022 PD program

PD program for 2022

- General design: lunchtime sessions, 30 mins only, 3 sessions between Jan and Sept 2022 (Feb, April & July), all partners to be invited (not individual sessions)
- 1st session for year should be LHC training
- Survey: opportunity for staff to have input into design of program

- Questions (5 max.)
 - What times suit
 - What days suit
 - What topics (FV, debts, fines, WDP/WDO, HRCLS v LA, family law, wills, renting, MVAs, insurance, sexting, police powers, money, tax, credit and debt etc)
 - How long
 - Recorded?
 - What resources?
- Needs to be sent early Dec 2021
- Draft of survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8C5KDYR>

Email to AWAHS from IH Lawyer

Dear AWAHS team,

Some quick updates from the Legal Service:

New AWAHS Lawyer

As most of you know, Lawyer 6 is having a baby (any minute now!) and she will be on parental leave for most of 2022. Her last day as the AWAHS lawyer was yesterday, Wednesday 15 December 2021 and I will be stepping into the role and trying to fill the void- I have some very big shoes to fill! Lawyer 6 has developed a strong partnership and I am looking forward to continuing this on!

Training package- Christmas Legal Issues

With Christmas fast approaching, we have put together a 30-minute training session designed for staff at agencies within the Invisible Hurdles Project (AWAHS, NESAY and Wodonga Flexible Learning Centre). This training will help staff to identify if their client, patient or student is experiencing a legal issue (especially those that crop up at Christmas time), outline what the Invisible Hurdles lawyer might be able to do to assist and explain the referral process.

These issues will cover:

- Debt problems to pay for Christmas presents including Afterpay, Zippay, Humm etc
- Family / domestic violence (there is often an escalation in violence during the holiday period)
- Consumer issues (buying Christmas gifts that end up being faulty)
- Parenting arrangements (who has the kids at Christmas etc)

You can view the pre-recorded training session at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6zgXDW9zn0>.

As part of the training session, we would also ask that you please complete the pre and post training surveys. The results of the surveys will be given to the Evaluators of the Invisible Project to assist in the actual evaluation and improvement of the project:

- Pre-survey: * link provided
- Post-survey: * link provided

Christmas closure and 2022 plans

Our last Legal Service appointments at AWAHS will be today, **Thursday 16 December 2021**.

Our office will be closed from **5pm on Thursday 23 December 2021** and will reopen at **9am on Monday 10 January 2022**. I am also taking a little bit more time off and will be returning at 9am on 17 January 2022.

During the closure of our office (24 Dec to 10 Jan), if urgent legal matters arise, please direct clients to contact one of the following services:

Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service: 1800 064 865

Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW)

Police/court matters: 1800 765 767

Child protection & family matters: 1800 733 233

Victoria Legal Aid: 1300 792 387

Law Access NSW: 1300 888 529

While I won't be taking appointments between **17 Dec 2021 and 17 Jan 2022**, I am available during that time for urgent matters and/or to speak to staff about their patients/clients on lawyer 3 **except for 23 Dec 2021 to 10 Jan 2022** when our office is closed.

Legal Service appointments at AWAHS won't formally recommence on **Thursday 3 February 2022**- but again you can reach out to me before then.

As lawyer 6 is going on maternity leave, there has been some shuffling with the Invisible Hurdles lawyer roles. I will become the new AWAHS lawyer, with my colleague, lawyer 7, moving into my old role of supporting NESAY and the Wodonga Flexible Learning Centre. Whilst I will be your first point of contact, if you can't reach me (especially between **10 and 17 Jan 2022**) please reach out to Taylor. Our contacts details for 2022 are:

Lawyer details x 2

2022 PD survey

The Invisible Hurdles team from the Hume Riverina Community Legal Service would love to provide you some training during 2022 about legal issues. We are planning to run 4 sessions over the year. Please complete this survey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8C5KDYR>) so we can make this training program as useful to you as possible!

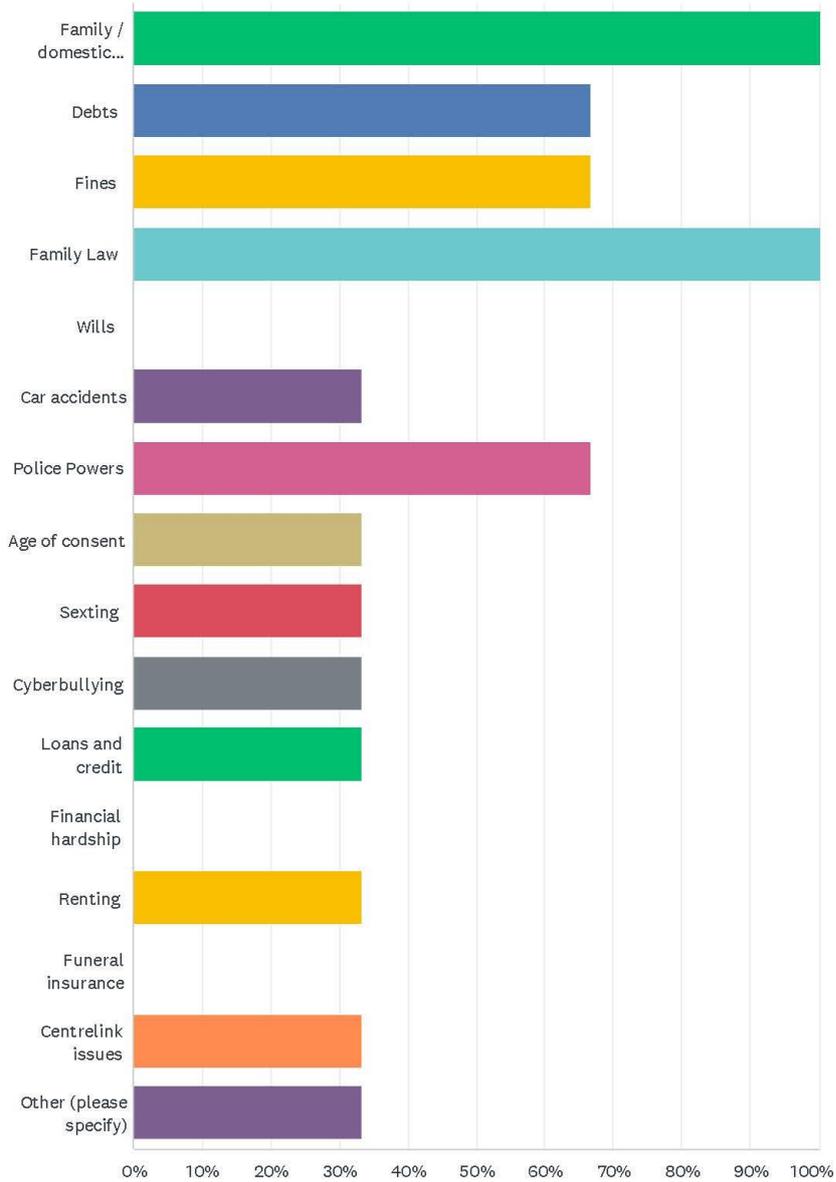
I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy and safe Christmas and a spectacular New Year!!

Example of IH Request for PD Topic Input from Staff Survey

Legal information sessions for 2022

Q4 What legal issues would you like to learn about? (Select as many as you like!)

Answered: 3 Skipped: 0



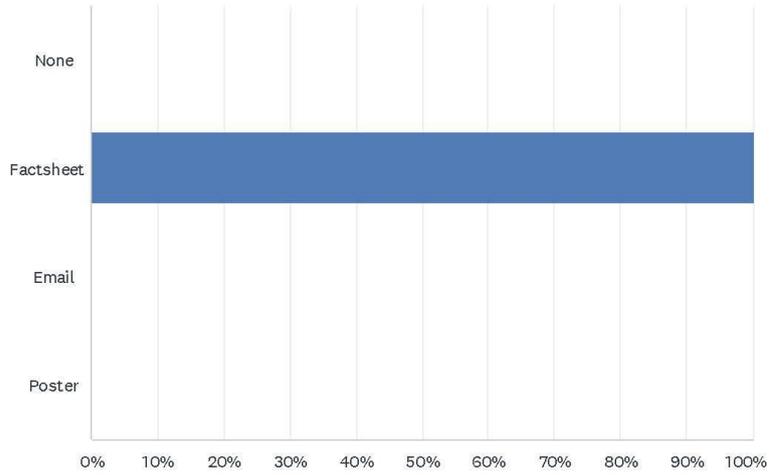
Legal information sessions for 2022

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Family / domestic violence	100.00%	3
Debts	66.67%	2
Fines	66.67%	2
Family Law	100.00%	3
Wills	0.00%	0
Car accidents	33.33%	1
Police Powers	66.67%	2
Age of consent	33.33%	1
Sexting	33.33%	1
Cyberbullying	33.33%	1
Loans and credit	33.33%	1
Financial hardship	0.00%	0
Renting	33.33%	1
Funeral insurance	0.00%	0
Centrelink issues	33.33%	1
Other (please specify)	33.33%	1
Total Respondents: 3		

Legal information sessions for 2022

Q5 What resources would you like following the session

Answered: 3 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None	0.00%	0
Factsheet	100.00%	3
Email	0.00%	0
Poster	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 3		

APPENDIX 4: Professional Development survey feedback

Survey Feedback from Participants- Professional Development Sessions December 2021 Pre-and Post-training

Pre-survey results Joint Training Identifying Legal Issues

11 Responses (note response rate increased by 8 from 2020)

1. I am aware of the Invisible Hurdles (IH) and how it relates to my role.	2. I have a good understanding of the differences and similarities in ethical obligations of lawyers and ethical obligations of other professionals	3. An important part of my role at is to identify social, economic or legal issues that impact on a client's health and wellbeing	4. I am confident in my knowledge and awareness of how legal problems impact on the health and wellbeing of clients	5. I believe I have the required skills and knowledge to effectively identify legal issues experienced by clients	6. Lawyers have an important role to play in ensuring better health outcomes for clients	7. The Professional Development session that I am being trained in will be practically useful to my work
Strongly Agree 8	5	8	4	3	8	9
Agree 2	3	2	4	4	5	2
Neutral 1	3	1	1	2		
Disagree				1		
Strongly Disagree						

After Training (join partner) Results

11 Responses (note response rate increased by 8 from 2020)

Your role (e.g nurse, teacher, doctor, social worker etc.)		
Date:		
Facilitator/Trainer:		
1. I am aware of the Invisible Hurdles (IH) and how it relates to my role.	Strongly Agree 10	Agree 1
2. I have a good understanding of the differences and similarities in ethical obligations of lawyers and ethical obligations of other professionals	Strongly Agree 8	Agree 3

3. An important part of my role at is to identify social, economic or legal issues that impact on a client's health and wellbeing	Strongly Agree 7	Agree 4
4. I am confident in my knowledge and awareness of how legal problems impact on the health and wellbeing of clients	Strongly Agree 7	Agree 2 Neutral 1
5. I believe I have the required skills and knowledge to effectively identify legal issues experienced by clients	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 6
6. Lawyers have an important role to play in ensuring better health outcomes for clients	Strongly Agree 9	Agree 3
7. The Professional Development session that I am being trained in will be practically useful to my work	Strongly Agree 10	Agree 1
8. As a result of the Professional Development training of this session/s I think I will be able to better assist my clients	Yes 11 No 0	
9. As a result of what you have learned in Professional Development (PD), do you think you will know how to take the next steps to implement your learnings with clients? If so, what will you do next to operationalise your learnings in practice? If not, why not?	Yes 10 No 1	
10. As a result of what you have learned in PD will it change in any way how you intend to work/practice/engage with your clients?	Yes 10 No 1	
If the answer is Yes, explain in what way.	Yes 11 No 0	
11. As a result of what you have learned in training/PD will it change in any way how you intend to work/practice/engage with you with other services/agencies?	Yes 10 No 1	
If the answer is Yes, explain in what way.	See discussion in Comments above	
12. As a result of what you have learned in PD will it change in any way how you intend to work/practice/engage in advocacy on behalf of clients/patients?	Yes 9 No 2	
If the answer is Yes, explain in what way.		

13. As a result of what you have learned in PD will it change in any way how you intend to work/practice/engage in collaborations with IH to make systems change by way of letters, submissions, involvement in legal cases or strategic problem solving to bring about reforms and improvements to the system?	Yes 10 No 1	
If the answer is Yes, explain in what way.	See discussion in Comments above	

Appendix 5: Policy & Law Reform

Borinya: Raise the Age of Consent Workshop & Letter		8 November 2021
Removed as young peoples names appear on the letter		
DESCRIPTION / FORMAT/ STRUCTURE / WHAT IS IT	Workshop and letter to Victorian Government Ministers from Borinya students to raise their concerns about the minimum legal age to have sex in Victoria.	
DETAIL	Re-visiting students after a previous age of consent CLE wherein students expressed interest in writing a letter about raising the age of consent	
AIMS / OBJECTIVES (of the activity itself or of my attendance / involvement)	Empowerment of young people (their voice heard), promotion of service, strengthening our relationship with NESAY, collaborating with NESAY developing our relationship with Borinya (for the benefit of the AMPLIFY Project)	
HOW THE ACTIVITY WAS SHAPED (the activity itself or my involvement)	Lawyer was invited by N from NESAY to deliver a presentation to students in the Triple L program Borinya on Cyberbullying, Consent and Age of Consent. The session was conducted in May 2021 and the students expressed their concerns about the minimum age of have sex. Lawyer offered to help them write a letter to Vic Gov Ministers to raise these concerns. Met with students in November 2021 (COVID impacts) and did recap session and ask students to explain their concerns	
CD PRINCIPLES / WHAT GOOD PRACTICE IN CD HAS SHAPED THIS ACTIVITY / MY ATTENDANCE / MY INVOLVEMENT	Empowerment of young people (voice heard), co-design- students expressed their concerns and we wrote the letter based on this, encouragement of young people to participate in democratic processes, build their own capacity to be engaged in law reform,	
THOUGHTS/REFLECTIONS	Great session with lots of engagement by students. 5 students present and they all contributed. Lawyer felt like we had built instant rapport - which was likely assisted by the fact N was present (whom they clearly all have a great relationship with). The trust TI has with the students was passed on to the two lawyers when delivering the session. It was a surprise that students of this age (average 15 yrs old) thought that 12 was too young as they did not think they had to capacity to make such a decision. I also liked hearing their solutions to fixing this issue- I felt they enjoyed being asked and coming up with ideas in how to fix it	

LEARNINGS/OUTCOME (FUTURE AMENDMENTS)	Need to take a whiteboard marker with us! Take more pictures of the whole process- photos of the workshop occurring, use of whiteboard.
<u>ATTACHMENTS</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Letter sent to the Honourable Daniel Andrews, the Honourable Jacyn Symes, the Honourable Ros Spence, the Honourable Helen Haines and the Victorian Cross-border Commissioner.• Received a response from both the Honourable Helen Haines and the Victorian Cross-border Commissioner• CLE presentation	



15 February 2022

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
The Hon. Ben Franklin, MLC
GPO Box 5341
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Minister,

RE: Request for 12-month extension to Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme to support rural and regional Aboriginal community members

I write on behalf of Hume Riverina Community Legal Service (HRCLS) and the Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service (AWAHS) seeking your support to extend the Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme (SGRS). The Scheme is due to close on 30 June 2022 and our services are concerned local Aboriginal people who are eligible for a payment will miss out because they are unaware of the SGRS.

It is our understanding there has been a very low take-up of the Scheme in the southern Riverina of NSW. With the demolition of settlements in Deniliquin, referenced in the interim Stolen Generations Report, there could be people living locally who are eligible but are unaware of the SGRS, or may have applied in the early years, been declined, but are now eligible due to changes in the Scheme.

Since March 2020, COVID-19 has severely hampered in-person community engagement efforts. These types of events are crucial for sharing information on government initiatives. Rural and regional communities are already disadvantaged compared to the access their city counterparts receive through face-to-face initiatives. They are typically the last to receive visits by community engagement roadshows or miss out entirely, and are largely reliant on services supplying the information to them.

An extension would allow further community engagement on the SGRS which has not been able to occur in the past two years. We ask you to kindly reconsider the decision to close the SGRS applications on 30 June 2022 and extend this to 30 June 2023 in fairness to those who may miss out on compensation they deserve.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Debi Fisher'.

Debi Fisher
Acting Principal Lawyer
HRCLS

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Noonan'.

David Noonan
CEO
AWAHS

1800 918 377 or
(02) 6055 8090

cls@umfc.com.au

27-29 Stanley Street, Wodonga 3690

(02) 6055 8079

www.hrcls.org.au

PO Box 31, Wodonga VIC 3689

umfc
Upper Murray Family Care

This service is auspiced by UMFC and funded by the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, Victoria Legal Aid and Legal Aid NSW.
ABN 99 081 624 768 Reg No: A5357 ARBN 081 624 768



The Hon. Ben Franklin MLC

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Minister for the Arts
Minister for Regional Youth

Ref: A5331850
Your ref: HD3534

Mrs Helen Dalton MP
Member for Murray

By email: murray@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mrs Dalton

Thank you for your correspondence of 1 March 2022 on behalf of Ms Debi Fisher, A/Principal Lawyer, Hume Riverina Community Legal Service and Mr David Noonan, CEO, Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service regarding their request for consideration of an extension to the end date of the NSW Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme, due to close on 30 June 2022.

I have also received a copy of their letter directly. I can advise the Head of Aboriginal Affairs is responding to Ms Fisher and Mr Noonan, acknowledging the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and informing them that a proposal to extend the SGRS is currently under consideration.

The restrictions on movement, the sudden shift to working from home, and the need for Aboriginal medical services, aged care centres and other partner agencies to prioritise public health concerns are among the issues that impeded plans to implement important aspects of the Scheme in 2020-21. Despite this, \$15.2 million in reparations and \$1.2 million in funeral assistance were paid to survivors during this period.

Should you, your staff or your constituents require any assistance or further information about the Scheme, please contact the Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme Unit at Aboriginal Affairs NSW on 1800 109 998 or via email on stolen.generations@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au.

I thank you for your interest in the Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme, and welcome your support for the Scheme.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ben Franklin', written over a faint circular stamp.

The Hon. Ben Franklin MLC
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Minister for the Arts
Minister for Regional Youth

DATE:

6/4/22



Ref: A5323158

Ms Debi Fisher,
A/Principal Lawyer, Hume Riverina Community Legal Service

Mr David Noonan,
CEO, Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service

By email: scrase@umfc.com.au

Dear Ms Fisher and Mr Noonan

I refer to your letter of 15 February 2022 to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, requesting that he consider extending the NSW Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme (SGRS) for an additional 12 months. The Minister has referred your letter to me and asked that I respond on his behalf.

I thank you for your letter and for your continued interest in the SGRS. I also acknowledge the challenges you raise around community engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly for rural and regional communities.

With respect to your concerns about engagement by potential applicants from the southern Riverina, while there is always room for improvement, there have been several successful claims from survivors from the region.

The government is conscious of the impact COVID-19 disruptions have had on service delivery, particularly in border regions. I can advise that an extension to the end date of the SGRS is currently under consideration.

Thank you for taking the time to write to the Minister on this matter. Your ongoing assistance in encouraging Survivors to come forward is greatly appreciated. In this regard, please contact Aboriginal Affairs NSW on 1800 019 998 or enquiries@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely

Lil Gordon
Head of Aboriginal Affairs

DATE: 21 March 2022

Dharawal

Njunaliin ngaralanga dharawalwulawala ngurachanhay ngaliya

We respect Aboriginal peoples as the first peoples and custodians of NSW

Aboriginal Affairs (Central Office) | Department of Premier and Cabinet ABN 34 945 244 274
Address Level 6, 201 Coward Street, Mascot NSW 2020 | **Postal address** PO Box 207, Mascot NSW 1460
Tel 1800 019 998 | **Email** enquiries@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au | www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au

Wodonga Flexible Learning Centre
4 Bowman Court
WODONGA VIC 3690

The Hon. Daniel Andrews MP
1 Treasury Place
MELBOURNE VIC 3002
daniel.andrews@parliament.vic.gov.au

The Hon. Dominic Perrottet MP
52 Martin Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000
epping@parliament.nsw.gov.au

The Hon. Jaclyn Symes MP
Level 26, 121 Exhibition Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000
jaclyn.symes@parliament.vic.gov.au

The Hon. Mark Speakman MP
52 Martin Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000
cronulla@parliament.nsw.gov.au

By email only to all addressees

13 October 2021

Dear Premier Andrews, Premier Perrottet, Attorney-General Symes and Attorney-General Speakman,

RE: Raising the age of criminal responsibility

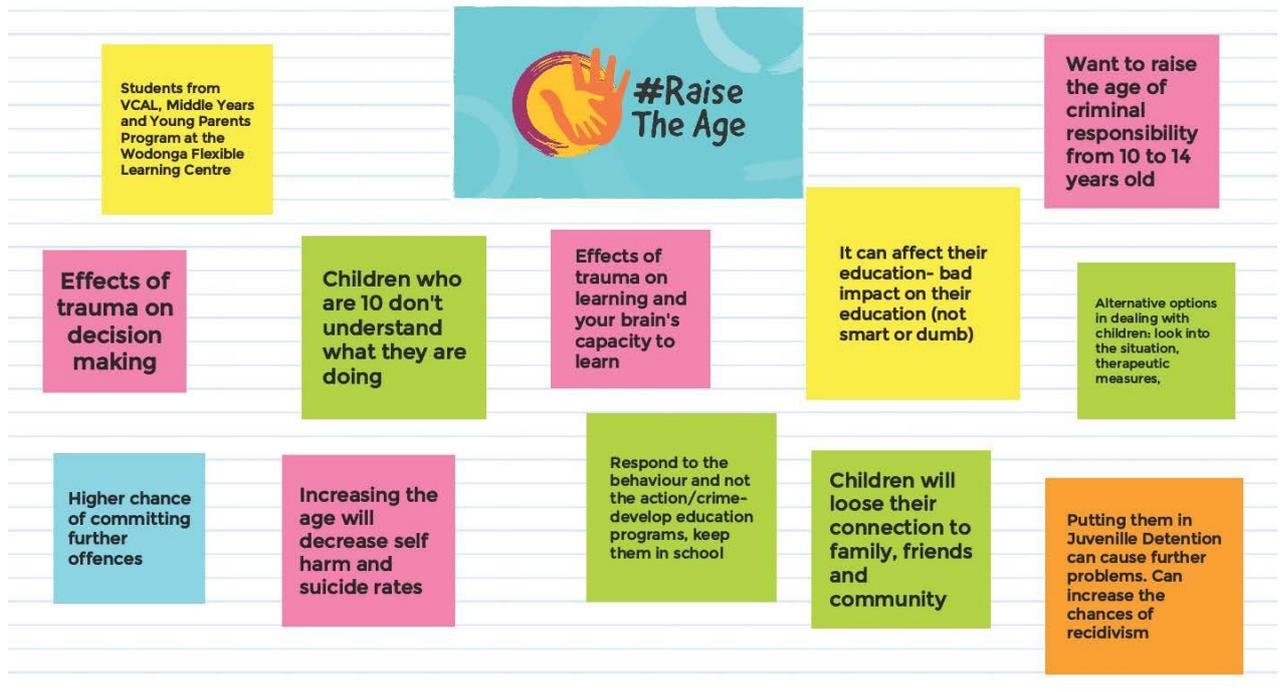
We are students from the VCAL, Middle Years and Young Parents' classes at the Wodonga Flexible Learning Centre ('WFLC'). The WFLC is an alternate model high school. It is located on the border between Victoria and NSW which is why we are writing to all of you; some of us live in Victoria and some live in NSW.

We are writing to ask you to take action to raise the age of criminal responsibility.

We have learnt about this issue through a program called *Overcoming the Invisible Hurdles to Justice for Young People* ('Invisible Hurdles') which is run by lawyers from the Hume Riverina Community Legal Service ('HRCLS').

We are worried that kids as young as 10 are going to jail. We think this is bad because kids aged 10 don't understand what they are doing. We have heard stories about people in our community who were jailed at a young age, and were so traumatised they ended up with drug problems. We also know the statistics that kids who go to jail when they are young have a very high rate of repeat offending. When kids are put in jail they lose their connection to family, friends, mob and community. This is also very worrying. We also believe there is a direct connection between incarceration, and self-harm. All of these problems could be fixed by raising the age of criminal responsibility to at least 14.

We don't want kids getting away with bad behavior without consequence but finding out what is going on to make kids act like they do that would help understand the situation. We think kids should



**CROSS
BORDER
COMMISSIONER**

PO Box 1332
Wodonga, Victoria 3689
crossborder.vic.gov.au

[REDACTED]
Students
Borinya Wangaratta Community Partnership
C/- Ms Andrea Georgiou
Lawyer
Hume Riverina Community Legal Service
E: ageorgiou@umfc.com.au

Dear [REDACTED]

YOUR LETTER REGARDING RAISING THE AGE OF CONSENT

Thank you for providing me with a copy of your letter of 24 November 2021 addressed to the Victoria's Premier, Attorney General and Minister for Youth. I have received the copy from Ms Andrea Georgiou of the Hume Riverina Community Legal Service.

Your letter raises an important question about yet another border anomaly, the age of consent differences between Victoria and NSW. Thank you for bringing this issue to my attention. It is when people speak up, as you have, that we can try to get change.

Now that you have raised this with me, several actions will occur on my part. The issue becomes part of my register of border anomalies. I then raise this with Victoria's Department of Justice and Community Safety for advice and to discuss what action is possible. I will also raise the matter with my NSW counterpart. In addition, I can now report this to the Minister for Regional Development and ultimately to cabinet. That means all ministers see the issue, whether they expected to or not. So, by writing to the Premier and Ministers in your letter, and letting me know, we can all have a go at getting some attention and change. I can't promise what that might be, but I can promise to have a good go at it with you.

I would like to congratulate you on your letter and your participation in *Overcoming the Invisible Hurdles to Justice for Young People* project. By taking an active social stance and bringing the matter to the attention of the State's leaders, you contribute to the government's border reform program.

Please do not hesitate to contact me further if you would like to further discuss your participation in *Overcoming the Invisible Hurdles to Justice for Young People* project or if you have any other ideas on making our border areas better places to live.

Yours sincerely



Luke Wilson
Cross Border Commissioner

14/12/2021

Helen
Haines MP



Wodonga Flexible Learning Centre Students
c/- Hume Riverina Community Legal Service (HRCLS)
PO Box 31
WODONGA VIC 3690

Dear students

Re: Raising the Age of Criminal Responsibility

Thank you for your letter sent to my office dated 13 October 2021 regarding the above issue.

It is important for the Government to understand the concerns of the constituents of Indi and especially of young adults like yourselves and I congratulate you all on writing this letter.

This is an issue that is governed by the state government and I see that you have sent your letter to the correct state government ministers, so well done.

It makes me very proud when I see groups of young people in our community standing up for what they believe in and taking such positive and smart action.

Again, thank you for bringing your action to my attention and keep up the great work!

For more information on my current work and to sign up for my Indi Cockatoo newsletter, please visit my website <https://www.helenhaines.org>

Yours sincerely

Dr Helen Haines MP
Independent Federal Member for Indi

16 December 2021
Ref: HH331788/CT

Dr Helen Haines MP
117 Murphy Street
Wangaratta VIC 3677
T 03 5721 7077
E helen.haines.mp@aph.gov.au
W helenhaines.org

   @helenhainesindi

INDEPENDENT FEDERAL MEMBER FOR INDI

Borinya Wangaratta Community Partnership
30 College Street
WANGARATTA VIC 3677

The Hon. Daniel Andrews MP
1/2 Treasury Place
MELBOURNE VIC 3002
daniel.andrews@parliament.vic.gov.au

The Hon. Jaclyn Symes MP
Level 26, 121 Exhibition Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000
jaclyn.symes@parliament.vic.gov.au

The Hon. Ros Spence MP
1/2 Treasury Place
MELBOURNE VIC 3002
ros.spence@parliament.vic.gov.au

24 November 2021

Dear Premier Andrews, Attorney-General Symes and Minister Spence,

RE: RAISING THE AGE OF CONSENT

We are students from Borinya Wangaratta Community Partnership ('Borinya'). Borinya is an alternate model high school that is located in the North East of Victoria.

We are writing to you to raise our concerns of about the minimum legal age for young people to have sex in Victoria.

We have learnt about this issue through a program called *Overcoming the Invisible Hurdles to Justice for Young People* ('Invisible Hurdles') which is run by lawyers from the Hume Riverina Community Legal Service ('HRCLS').

We are worried that kids as young as 12 are not mature enough to make the decision to have sex. We are also worried that they might not fully understand what the risks and consequences of having sex could be at such a young age.

When we went through primary school and were given 'sex education' we were taught about the anatomy of boys and girls. We were not really taught about sex and what it means to have sex until year 8, that is, when a boy and girl is 14. So, kids younger than 14 aren't being taught about sex and consent but are still legally allowed to have sex -- this doesn't make sense; how can they agree to something they don't fully understand?

If the law says that kids as young as 12 can have sex, then we think it's really important for kids to be taught about sex, the act of sex and the consequences of sex, as well as, consenting to sex, at this age.

Appendix 6: Partnership Work in the Region by the IH Program to Build Responsiveness and Reach to Young People March 2021 – April 2022 (allowing for gaps in funding)

Promotion of Service

Date	Event/Activity	WHO
17/6/2021	Presentation on consent, age of consent and sexting	Ovens and Murray teachers (Vic Education Department)
1/09/2021	Presentation by BMS on Evaluation learnings from Stage 2	Impact & Evaluation Community Of Practice
25/10/2021	What is Invisible Hurdles Presentation	Ovens & Murray FV Operations network meeting
30/11/2021	Presentation by BMS on Evaluation learnings from Stage 2	Consumer Action Law Centre
1/12/2021	Presentation by BMS on Evaluation learnings from Stage 2	Integrated Services Community Of Practice
22/11/2021	Findings of IH Stage 2 report presentation	Victoria HJP Network
26/12/2022	Invisible Hurdles Project Evaluation presentation	FCLC Community Development and Community Legal Education Working Group Forum

Other notable activities

- AWAHS staff meetings- fortnightly attendance
- AWAHS newsletter- regular contributions
- WLFC- weekly meetings with teachers to discuss IH program, plan CLE sessions for the term, receive feedback about sessions
- NESAY- 'cuppa dates'
- Emails to partners about activities/events of interest, for example:
 - AWAHS: about Youth Action NSW employment roundtable
 - FLC: Youth Leadership and Development Program and NSW Youth Advisory Council 2021
 - NESAY: Hearing from Young People study and Vic Commissioner for Youth & Children COVID-19 Youth Survey
- 4/5/2021: Meeting with Sussan Ley MP (Farrer electorate) about IH funding
- 3/8/2021: Invited to attend small group consultation for the VLRC Stalking Consultation review- to specifically address young people and stalking

Network Meeting/ Working Groups

- Youth Advocacy Network (NSW)
- School Lawyer Reference Group
- NSW Health Justice Partnership
- VIC Health Justice Partnership
- COVID Fines Working Group
- CLC Youth Lawyers Network (Victoria)
- Infringement Working Group
- Integrated Services Community of Practice
- Consumer Action Law Centre Consumer Champs meetings

APPENDIX 7: Quantitative Data Extracted from In-Depth Interviews with Trusted Intermediary Staff – Field Trip 8 Week of 2 May – 5 May 2022

There were nine total participants. it should be noted that one of these was a relatively new staff member and so their responses were either neutral, no answer or no. another staff member in their responses two questions related to their own personal and professional experiences in question 22 indicated that they were familiar with the service and so many of that individuals' responses were 'stayed the same' as this individual said that they were already engaged and continued to engage.

In light of these two reasons 4 responses the data is suggestive all favourable feedback about the various interventions of the invisible hurdles program that the questions relate to. it is therefore noted that one should be careful in extrapolating any of the negative responses below, in light of the fact that one staff member was relatively new and the other staff member was already engaged and, hence, her responses were that she stayed same.

If I were to make these statements in relation to the IH how would you respond?

- (1a) I can confidently and positively refer (please circle)
Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral 11.11% (1/9) Agree Strongly Agree 89% (8/9)
 - (1b) The referral process to and from clearly understood
Strongly Disagree Disagree 11.11% (1/9) Neutral Agree 22.22% (2/9) Strongly Agree 66.66% (2/9)
 - (1c) There is a high level of mutual understanding and trust between you and the IH
Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree 11.11% (1/9) Strongly Agree 89% (8/9)
 - (1d) Question deleted Field Trip 8 but kept numbering to enable comparison data.
~~Through IH I have gained an understanding of other professions ethics and boundaries~~
~~Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree~~
 - (1e) The staff involved in the IH Project (i.e., the lawyer) recognise and utilise the professional expertise of other staff.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree 11.11% (1/9) Strongly Agree 89% (8/9)
 - (1f) The lawyer/s are responsive to client need.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree 100% (9/9)
- I not only examine the individual client's problems but look to change the systemic causes of problems including the laws and how they are administered.
Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree 22.2% (2/9) Strongly Agree (77.77%)

(4) Have you participated in training offered by the IH team?

Yes 77.77% (7/9) No 22.22% (2/9)

(5) Has this enhanced your ability to assist clients with their non-legal needs?

Yes 77.77% (7/9) No 22.22% (2/9)

(8) In your view based on observations does the IH with its collaborative, multi-disciplinary approach to problem solving does it make an effective in improving social & health outcomes for individuals?

Yes 100% (9/9) No

(11) Have your received secondary consultations assistance from the lawyer?

Yes 100% (9/9) No

(14) Do you wish to comment whether you believe secondary consultations are an integral part of the collaboration with YOUR AGENCY and the ability of professionals/staff at your agency to advocate for their clients?

Yes 100% (9/9) No

(15) Through the IH have you collaborated on advocating for systemic reform as a joint action by IH & your agency and IH (or the Hume Riverina Community legal Service via the IH)? (E.g. submissions to government or a statutory body, test case, letter arguing for a change on practice, the law or its administration, document articulating client/patient experience of the system and requesting a change).

Yes 55.5% (5/9) No 44.44% (4/9)

(16) Do you think this has an impact?

Yes 88.88% (8/9) No 11.1% (1/9)

(17) Is it important to take such action, in your view to better support your client?

Yes 100% (9/9) No

(18) Is it important to take such action, in your view to better support young people in general?

Yes 100% (9/9) No

(19) From a client point of view have you seen any benefits/ detriments from the IH intervention?

No Detriments -100% (9/9)

(20) As a result of the IH have you seen any 'breakthroughs' for your client?

Yes 88.88% (8/9) No 11.1 (1/9) – No = new staff member

Social Determinants of Health Questions

New questions of non-legal and legal professionals since 2019.

Reflecting on the life of this project since it started, can you answer the following questions:

In relation to clients: 'Think of one client through the IH project and could you answer the following in relation to that specific client'

New questions since 2019 – Note in Field Trip 8, May 2022 once participant was new and so the participant response rate to this question is 8 participants (/8).

One participant's clients had significant mental health issues and so some of her answers are 'stayed the same'

As inroads would be extremely difficult after these interactions.

Number 21. Have you noticed any of the following improvements in the client since the involvement of the lawyer/s in the inter-disciplinary team of the HJP with the involvement of the lawyer, in any of the following areas:

(a) Stress.
been reduced 100% (8/8)
stayed the same
increased

(b) Resilience
been reduced
stayed the same
increased 100% (8/8)

(c) Anxiety
been reduced 87.5% (7/8)
stayed the same 12.5% (1/8)
increased

(d) Trust
been reduced
stayed the same
increased 100% (8/8)

(e) Responsiveness
been reduced
stayed the same 12.5% (1/8)
increased 87.5% (7/8)

(f) Engagement
been reduced
stayed the same
increased 100% (8/8)

(g) Confidence in engaging with the services
been reduced
stayed the same
increased 100% (8/8)

(h) Knowledge of their rights and responsibilities and the rights and responsibilities of others
been reduced
stayed the same
increased 100% (8/8)

(i) Clients more knowledgeable about where to go for services
Yes 100% (8/8)
No

(j) Clients more knowledgeable about their options and more skilled over time
Yes 100% (8/8)
No

(k) Flow on effects for family members of any of the above-mentioned.
Yes 100% (8/8)
No

- (l) Client's sense of hope
been reduced
stayed the same
increased 100% (8/8)

Explain,

22. In relation to yourself personally and professionally:

Note: One participant had been involved in the program since 1015 and 'active' and so says her levels 'remain the same' but are not.

And so are 'not indicative of anything negative but being truthful'. Response rate (/9).

Have you noticed any of the following improvements in your own practice since the involvement with this client & of the lawyer/s in the inter-disciplinary team of the HJP in any of the following areas:

- (a) Stress.
been reduced 88.8% (8/9)
stayed the same 11.1% (1/9)
increased
- (b) Resilience
been reduced
stayed the same 11.1% (1/9)
increased 88.8% (8/9)
- (c) Anxiety
been reduced 88.8% (8/9)
stayed the same 11.1% (1/9)
increased
- (d) Trust
been reduced
stayed the same 11.1% (1/9) 'been with the program since 2015 so my trust is already high -off the radar'
increased 88.8% (8/9)
- (e) Responsiveness
been reduced
stayed the same
increased 100% (9/9)
- (f) Engagement
been reduced
stayed the same 22.22% (2/9) 'I was already engaged to the max', 'couldn't get more engaged than I was, it's awesome'
increased 77.77% (7/9)
- (g) Confidence in engaging with the legal service lawyer/s
been reduced
stayed the same 11.1% (1/9)
increased 88.8% (8/9)
- (h) Knowledge of their rights and responsibilities and the rights and responsibilities of others
been reduced
stayed the same

increased 100% (9/9)

- (i) Sense of hope
been reduced
stayed the same
increased 100% (9/9)
- (j) Confidence in knowing when to seek and seeking legal help
been reduced
stayed the same 11.1% (1/9)
increased 88.8% (8/9)

NB: New question 22-24 integrated from ANU & Edu/NESAY/AWAHS Ethics Variation October 2019 Stage 2)

23. Have you participated in training offered the IH?

- (a) Have you been involved as a worker in or arranging community development, training and legal education offerings by the IH Community Development Worker/lawyer with NSEAY, AWAHS and or FLC?
Yes 88.88% (8/9) No 11.11% (1/9)
- (b) If so, can you recall what it was about?
Yes 88.88% (8/9) No 11.11% (1/9)
- (c) Were you involved in any way in shaping the topic?
Yes 55.5% No (due to No response above)
- (d) If Community Development, were young people actively involved in shaping the training?
Yes 55.5% No (due to No responses above)

24. I have participated with IH partners to improve the law, systems, policies, or their administration

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral 11.11% (1/9) Agree Strongly Agree 77.77% (7/9)
 No answer provided 11.1% (1/9)

25. Young People were involved in IH endeavours to improve the law, systems, policies, or their administration

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral 11.11% (1/9) Agree Strongly Agree 77.77%
 No answer provided 11.1% (1/9)

Appendix 6

**Interview with Managers – Quantitative Data Only
 Participants 4/4**

- vii. Have you participated in training offered the IH? Yes 75% (3/4) No 25% (1/4)
- ix. In your view based on observations does the IH with its collaborative, multi-disciplinary approach to problem solving make an effective in improving social & health outcomes for individuals?
 Yes 100% (4/4) No
- x. If I were to make these statements in relation to IH how would you respond?
 - a. Can confidently and positively refer
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree 100% (4/4)
 - b. Referral process to and fro clearly understood
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree 100% (4/4)
 - c. High level of mutual understanding and trust between the IH and my agency
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree 100% (4/4)
 - d. The staff involved in the IH recognise and utilise the professional expertise of other staff.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree 100% (4/4)
 - e. The lawyer/s are responsive to client need.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree 25% (1/4) 'new lawyer -time will tell'
 Strongly Agree 75% (3/4)
 - f. We not only examine the individual clients' problems but look to change the systemic causes of problems including the laws and how they are administered.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree 25% (1/4) Strongly Agree 75% (3/4)
 - g. My agency has participated with IH partners to improve the law, systems, policies, or their administration
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree Yes 100% (4/4)
 - h. Young People were involved in IH endeavours to improve the law, systems, policies, or their administration
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree 25% (1/4) Strongly Agree 75% (3/4)
- xii. Would you like to see the Invisible Hurdles Project continue to be funded?
 Yes 100% (4/4) No