



## NSW Legal Needs Survey in Disadvantaged Areas: South Sydney

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*Justice made to measure: NSW legal needs survey in disadvantaged areas (2006) is the report of a large-scale quantitative study of the legal needs of disadvantaged people in six local government Areas of New South Wales. More than 2400 residents across the regions were interviewed about their legal needs. This report was preceded by an initial study Quantitative legal needs survey: Bega Valley (pilot) (2003). There now follows a series of papers in the Justice Issues imprint. Six individual papers will describe how disadvantaged people deal with legal problems, detailing the responses from one of the regions surveyed: Campbelltown, Fairfield, Nambucca, Newcastle, South Sydney and Walgett.*

### INTRODUCTION

The broad aim of the research reported here was to provide a quantitative assessment of the legal needs of disadvantaged communities in New South Wales. This study was the most comprehensive quantitative investigation of legal needs undertaken in Australia for 30 years. The survey questioned a sample of residents in six disadvantaged local government areas (LGAs) across New South Wales, including urban, regional and rural/remote areas. Within these disadvantaged communities, the study examined the incidence and type of legal events people experienced as well as their approaches to such events, including the use of legal and non-legal assistance, and the outcomes achieved.

A full report of the overall findings of the survey across the six LGAs has been published previously (Coumarelos, Wei & Zhou 2006). The present document aims to provide detailed descriptive information on the main indices for the South Sydney LGA. The objective is to give service providers an overview of the findings within this LGA to assist them with planning local services and formulating policy. Where appropriate, contrasts with the overall group are provided to demonstrate how the South Sydney LGA fares in comparison to the sample overall. However, it should be noted that the overall sample is not representative of New South Wales but consists of people living in a selected number of geographically diverse regions that rated highly on indicators of socioeconomic disadvantage. Although this limits the degree to which the results can be generalised to other areas of New South Wales, the data elucidate the issues facing people living in these areas and perhaps point to barriers to accessing justice among disadvantaged populations more generally.

## STRUCTURE OF REPORT

This report will give a brief overview of the study methods and a profile of the six LGAs sampled for the survey. This will be followed by background information regarding the level and types of expressed legal need in South Sydney LGA, as shown by calls to LawAccess and contact with the Legal Aid service. The report will then provide details of the findings from the survey for South Sydney with respect to:

- the incidence of legal events
- the distribution of the events across the broad areas of law (civil, criminal and family)
- major legal events type (e.g. business, accident/injury or housing)
- what the survey participants did about their legal issues
- type of help sought
- problems encountered when seeking assistance
- satisfaction with help received.

## SURVEY METHOD

### Sampling

The six LGAs included in the survey were selected based on the following considerations:

1. socioeconomic disadvantage
2. cultural and linguistic diversity
3. geographic diversity.<sup>1</sup>

For details of how these considerations shaped the selection of the final six LGAs, see Appendix 1. The sample included three suburban LGAs within Sydney (South Sydney, Fairfield and Campbelltown), a major regional centre (Newcastle) and rural/remote (Nambucca and Walgett) LGAs in New South Wales. Together, these LGAs exhibit relatively high socioeconomic disadvantage, include an area that is culturally and linguistically diverse (Fairfield) and an area with a relatively high Indigenous population (Walgett). They also reflect geographic diversity in terms of urbanisation as well as in terms of inland versus coastal regions of New South Wales.

### Sample size

Table 1 shows the size of the population in each LGA and the proportion of the population surveyed.

The total sample size was 2431, with approximately 400 residents drawn from each LGA. On average,

the sample drawn from each LGA represented approximately 0.5 per cent of the LGA population aged 15 years or over. However, the samples from Nambucca and Walgett LGAs represented somewhat larger proportions of their total populations (2.8% and 6.2% respectively) as these are less populous areas when compared with the other LGAs.

TABLE 1: SAMPLE AND POPULATION SIZE OF EACH LGA, 2003

STATISTICAL DIVISION	LGA	POPULATION (15+ YEARS) <sup>a</sup>	SAMPLE SIZE	SAMPLE AS % OF POPULATION OF LGA
Sydney	South Sydney	55 840	406	0.7
Sydney	Fairfield	147 960	401	0.3
Sydney	Campbelltown	113 459	402	0.4
Hunter	Newcastle	119 481	408	0.3
Mid-North Coast	Nambucca	14 529	414	2.8
North Western	Walgett	6 477	400	6.2
<b>Total</b>		<b>457 746</b>	<b>2431</b>	<b>0.5</b>

<sup>a</sup> Source: Coumarelos et al. (2006). Based on Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) estimated resident population data at 30 June 2003.

### Procedure

The survey was administered via telephone interviews in the six selected areas during September and October 2003 to 2431 residents aged 15 years or over. Random sampling from the electronic *White Pages* was used to draw a pool of potential participants from the six areas. Quota controls were employed to achieve a gender and age profile that reflected the population profile in these areas. The estimated survey response rate ranged between 23.9 and 34.1 per cent.<sup>2</sup>

### Survey instrument

A copy of the survey instrument can be found in the full report of the study (Coumarelos et al. 2006). Briefly, the survey examined the sample's experience of a total of 101 different events that have *the potential for legal resolution*. These events are detailed in Appendix 1, Table A1. They include:

- 76 civil law events categorised into 11 groups — accident/injury, business, consumer, credit/debt, education, employment, government, health, housing, human rights and wills/estates
- 16 criminal law events categorised into three groups — domestic violence, general crime and traffic offences
- one group of nine family law events (e.g. residence/contact arrangements for children, child support, divorce/separation).

The survey measured:

- the incidence of different types of legal events during the 12 months prior to the survey
- participants' responses to legal events, including the use of legal services
- satisfaction with the assistance received for legal events
- the resolution of legal events
- satisfaction with the outcome of legal events.

The following findings represent a small subset of the overall set of analyses undertaken on the entire sample. As mentioned above, the results presented here are designed to inform service providers about expressed and unexpressed local legal need across a broad range of legal issues. Further, people's responses to their legal issues are also explored. It is hoped that such indices may contribute to more informed planning by local legal and non-legal service providers that come into contact with people who have legal needs.

## Analysis

The main statistical tests undertaken for this report involved standard and mixed-effects logistic regression (for further detail on these techniques see Appendix 2). The  $p$ -value for statistical significance was set at  $p = .05$ . Deviation contrasts were used for comparisons between South Sydney and the overall sample. That is, the rate observed in the South Sydney sub-sample was compared to the average rate across all regions.

## SELECTED INDICES FROM THE OVERALL SAMPLE

### Demographic profile

The demographic characteristics of the survey sample in each LGA are shown in Table 2.

Note that for each LGA, the gender and age profile in the sample was proportionate to that in the population.<sup>3</sup> As Table 2 shows, there are quite

**TABLE 2: DISTRIBUTION OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF OVERALL SAMPLE BY LGA, 2003**

VARIABLE	SOUTH SYDNEY %	FAIRFIELD %	CAMPBELLTOWN %	NEWCASTLE %	NAMBUCCA %	WALGETT %
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	54.4	48.1	47.0	48.3	48.8	56.0
Female	45.6	51.9	53.0	51.7	51.2	44.0
<b>Age (years)</b>						
15–24	15.6	20.8	21.9	18.4	11.6	11.5
25–34	31.4	18.8	19.5	17.9	9.9	17.3
35–44	21.5	21.8	20.4	18.9	16.9	19.5
45–54	13.6	17.8	20.2	18.4	21.3	20.0
55–64	9.1	10.8	9.7	11.8	15.5	17.0
65+	8.9	10.3	8.2	14.7	24.9	14.8
<b>Indigenous status</b>	0.6	0.3	1.7	2.1	3.6	13.2
<b>Country of birth</b>	16.5	45.8	18.0	2.9	3.4	4.5
<b>Disability</b>	18.3	16.2	20.0	19.9	27.5	23.7
<b>Personal income (\$/week)</b>						
\$0–199	11.7	28.8	22.5	19.4	23.3	25.7
\$200–499	22.8	34.6	34.5	36.6	47.6	43.2
\$500–999	38.9	30.5	31.8	34.2	25.4	23.8
\$1000+	26.6	6.0	11.1	9.8	3.7	7.3
<b>Education level</b>						
Didn't finish/at school	2.5	13.6	10.0	8.7	15.0	17.3
Year 10/equivalent	8.0	24.7	32.9	26.2	35.0	38.3
Year 12/equivalent	19.9	28.7	21.9	17.1	17.2	20.8
Certificate/diploma	15.9	17.6	20.7	18.3	18.4	10.5
University degree	53.7	15.4	14.5	29.7	14.3	13.0

**Notes:** All regions,  $n = 2431$  participants. Not all percentages add to 100 per cent within strata due to rounding.

Indigenous status shows proportion of sample identifying as Indigenous.

Country of birth shows proportion born outside Australia. Disability status shows proportion with a disability, including physical disabilities, mental illness and chronic disease.

striking differences between the regions in their demographic make-up.<sup>4</sup> For example, Nambucca LGA had the highest proportion for the oldest age group (approximately 25% compared with 8–15% in the other areas), and the lowest proportion aged 44 years or younger (approximately 39% compared with 49–69% in the remaining areas). Nambucca LGA also had the highest proportion reporting a disability (27.5%) which may partly reflect the greater proportion of older citizens. On the other hand, nearly 70 per cent of the South Sydney LGA sample was aged younger than 44 years, only 8.9 per cent aged 65 and over, and 18.3 per cent reporting some kind of disability. Such differences between LGAs are significant in terms of planning for legal services, as age and disability are important factors in determining which and how many legal problems people experience (Coumarelos et al. 2006).

The Sydney LGAs of Fairfield, Campbelltown and South Sydney showed a greater number of participants born in a non-English speaking country (approximately 17–46% compared with 3–5% for non-Sydney LGAs). The finding for Fairfield is not surprising given that one reason for including this LGA in the sample was that it is an area culturally and linguistically diverse, and that quota sampling of Vietnamese, Chinese (Cantonese) and Spanish cultural/linguistic groups was used to yield numbers proportionate to population for these groups. Walgett LGA had the highest proportion of Indigenous residents (25.1% in 2001) compared with the other LGAs (South Sydney 2.5%, Fairfield 0.7%, Campbelltown 2.7%, Newcastle 1.7% and Nambucca 5.9%) (ABS 2006). The sampling technique also accounts for this higher proportion of Indigenous participants in Walgett LGA (13.2%) compared with the other LGAs (0.3–3.6%). Another notable difference among the six LGAs is that South Sydney appears to be relatively more advantaged in terms of income and education. Over half of the respondents

from South Sydney LGA reported having a university degree (compared with approximately 29% or less in the other LGAs) and almost 27 per cent reported a weekly income of \$1000 or more (compared with approximately 11% or less from the other LGAs). For further details comparing the population and sample demographic profiles for each LGA, see Coumarelos et al. (2006).

## Incidence of legal events

Table 3 shows the distribution of reported legal events by broad area of law (civil, criminal and family). Note that the spread of legal events between these areas of law is likely to partly reflect the survey's focus on civil law events rather than criminal or family law events. Thus, the large proportion of civil events reported is consistent with the high number of questions contained in the survey pertaining to these types of legal events.

Table 3 shows that there was variation across the regions in the incidence of at least one legal event. South Sydney LGA had a significantly higher proportion of people saying they had experienced at least one legal event in the past 12 months (76.4%),<sup>5</sup> while Fairfield LGA had a significantly lower proportion (61.3%),<sup>6</sup> compared with the average rate overall. These results are likely driven by the reporting patterns for civil events where South Sydney LGA had the highest (71.2%)<sup>7</sup> and Fairfield LGA had the lowest (56.1%)<sup>8</sup> proportions of people reporting these types of legal events. Reporting of criminal events was also higher than average in the South Sydney (36.5%) and Walgett LGAs (35.5%) and lower than average in Nambucca LGA (23.4%).<sup>9</sup> Nambucca LGA registered a marginally higher than average rate for family events (12.6%).<sup>10</sup>

These findings indicate that the LGAs that constitute the sample for this survey are not homogeneous either demographically or in terms of legal need.

**TABLE 3: DISTRIBUTION ACROSS RESPONDENTS OF REPORTING AT LEAST ONE LEGAL EVENT UNDER THE BROAD AREAS OF LAW FOR SIX LGAs, 2003 — % of LGA (number)**

Broad area of law	SOUTH SYDNEY		FAIRFIELD		CAMPBELLTOWN		NEWCASTLE		NAMBUCCA		WALGETT	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Civil Law	289	71.2*	225	56.1*	253	62.9	151	63.0	253	61.1	241	60.3
Criminal Law	148	36.5*	104	25.9	123	30.6	119	29.2	97	23.4*	142	35.5*
Family Law	25	6.2	27	6.7	40	10.0	34	8.3	52	12.6*	28	7.0
All areas of law		76.4*		61.3*		69.6		65.9		71.9		69.2

\* Statistically significantly different from average over all regions at .01 level.

**Notes:** South Sydney  $n = 406$  participants (data missing for one participant on family events), Fairfield  $n = 401$ , Campbelltown  $n = 402$ , Newcastle  $n = 408$ , Nambucca  $n = 414$ , Walgett  $n = 400$ . Note that respondents could report more than one type of event.

The differences suggest that it would be helpful to practitioners working in these (and perhaps demographically similar) areas to be able to access the results of the survey at the local level. This report is one of a series of six that considers a selection of the main indices from the survey on legal need separately for each LGA. This particular report describes the results for the LGA of South Sydney. Where appropriate, the results for South Sydney will be displayed along with the corresponding result from the total sample so that comparisons may be facilitated.

## SOUTH SYDNEY LGA

South Sydney LGA is a 14.3 square kilometres area within the inner city of Sydney that stretches from Woolloomooloo in the north to just beyond Beaconsfield in the south (ABS 2006). In 2003, the ABS estimated the population in the South Sydney LGA to be 61 382, approximately a 10 per cent increase on the 1999 estimate. The population density had increased from 3886.3 per square kilometre in 1999, to 4288.5 in 2003, compared with only 8.4 persons per square kilometre for New South Wales. Hence, South Sydney appears to be an area steadily growing in population. The unemployment rate in 2003 was 6.1 per cent, compared with 6 per cent for New South Wales, and 13 685 people were receiving income support<sup>11</sup> in the South Sydney LGA (22.3%) compared with 22.2 per cent for New South Wales (ABS 2006). The average taxable income in this area in 2003 was \$49 381, higher than the state average of \$43 649.

## EXPRESSED LEGAL NEED IN SOUTH SYDNEY

The Law and Justice Foundation of New South Wales collects data annually from a number of legal service providers, to provide an indication of the level of expressed legal need in New South Wales. ‘Expressed legal need’ refers to those legal needs which are ‘expressed’ through accessing a legal service, by requesting information or advice, seeking a legal referral or gaining legal representation. The number of inquiries for the 12 months to September 2003 (the period covered in the survey) for LawAccess<sup>12</sup> and three different service types provided by Legal Aid in the South Sydney LGA are shown in Table 4.

**TABLE 4: INQUIRIES TO LAWACCESS AND LEGAL AID SERVICES BY BROAD AREA OF LAW, SOUTH SYDNEY, OCTOBER 2002 TO SEPTEMBER 2003**

SERVICE	CIVIL	CRIMINAL	FAMILY	TOTAL
LawAccess	656	140	186	982
Legal Aid				
– advice	312	249	351	912
– info/referral	251	175	322	748
– duty solicitor	466	2784	192	3442

Table 4 shows that most of the inquiries to LawAccess from the South Sydney area concerned civil issues, but for Legal Aid, the pattern of inquiries across broad area of law differs according to the type of service provided. For example, the overwhelming majority of duty solicitor services, as one might expect, come under criminal law, because duty solicitor services are most commonly provided for criminal matters. Inquiries to the Advice Service and the Information and Referral Service are more evenly spread among civil, criminal and family law areas. However, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions regarding the distribution across services as there is no information regarding the independence of inquiries to each service in these data. For example, a person may approach a service a number of times in relation to the same issue, or may make inquiries that fall under different areas in law in relation to a complex issue. Equally, people may seek assistance from other legal services not listed here, such as private lawyers or community legal centres. Inquiry data can, however, provide a broad brush stroke picture of the level of legal service usage in an area. In the South Sydney LGA, there seems to be a reasonable rate of use of these services for the population size (approximately 6000 service events for a population around 61 300 people). The survey results, however, will help clarify the picture of legal need in the area by giving an indication of not only expressed legal need, but also unexpressed legal need where no assistance is obtained.

## SURVEY RESULTS<sup>13</sup>

### Incidence of legal events

For the Law and Justice Foundation’s 2003 survey, 406 participants were drawn from the South Sydney LGA, who reported a total of 1203 legal events. Table 5 displays the number of legal events reported per participant. The corresponding proportions for all regions are also shown.

**TABLE 5: NUMBER OF LEGAL EVENTS PER PARTICIPANT, FOR SOUTH SYDNEY AND ALL REGIONS, 2003**

NUMBER OF LEGAL EVENTS	South Sydney		All regions
	No.	%	%
0	96	23.6	30.9
1	78	19.2	22.3
2	56	13.8	13.9
3 or more	176	43.4	32.9

**Note:** All regions,  $n = 2431$ , and for South Sydney  $n = 406$  participants.

Table 5 shows that less than a quarter of South Sydney participants reported they did not experience any legal events in the past 12 months. Further, the South Sydney subgroup had a slightly different distribution in the frequency of legal events reported in the reference period compared with the overall survey sample. In detail, South Sydney had significantly more participants reporting at least one legal event compared with the total sample (76.4% vs 69.1% respectively).<sup>14</sup> Further, South Sydney LGA had similar rates for reporting one or two events compared with the average over all regions (33.0% vs 36.2% respectively),<sup>15</sup> but again a significantly greater proportion of respondents from this LGA reported three or more problems (43.4% vs 32.9% respectively) compared with the sample overall.<sup>16</sup>

In fact, of the six LGAs surveyed, South Sydney LGA had the highest proportion of participants reporting at least one legal event (range 61–72% for other regions) and three or more legal events (range 29–32% for other regions).

## Areas of law

Figure 1 displays the broad areas of law in which respondents reported legal issues. The bars show the proportion of respondents who reported at least one of these types of issues (civil, criminal, or family) in the last 12 months.

As Figure 1 shows, the most commonly reported area of law in the past 12 months among participants in South Sydney LGA was civil law (71.2%). This was not surprising given the survey questionnaire predominantly covered civil legal issues. The proportion of the South Sydney sub-sample reporting a civil issue was significantly higher than for the sample overall (62.4%).<sup>17</sup> The proportion of South Sydney participants reporting criminal matters (domestic violence, general crime and traffic offences) was also significantly higher (36.5%) compared with all regions (30.2%).<sup>18</sup> This is consistent with the finding described above that a greater proportion

**TABLE 6: INCIDENCE OF LEGAL EVENTS BY BROAD AREA OF LAW AND LEGAL EVENT GROUP, FOR SOUTH SYDNEY AND ALL REGIONS, 2003**

AREA OF LAW	EVENT GROUP	South Sydney		All regions
		NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	% OF PARTICIPANTS	% OF PARTICIPANTS
<b>Civil</b>	Accident/injury	95	23.4	19.2
	Business <sup>a</sup>	32	7.9	5.0
	Consumer	106	26.1	22.0
	Credit/debt	58	14.3	12.0
	Education <sup>b</sup>	21	5.2	7.4
	Employment <sup>c</sup>	60	14.8	12.1
	Government	102	25.1	19.5
	Health <sup>d</sup>	11	2.7	3.2
	Housing	146	36.0	22.6
	Human rights	28	6.9	5.8
	Wills/estates	83	20.4	14.6
<b>Criminal</b>	Domestic violence	11	2.7	3.9
	General crime	136	33.5	26.6
	Traffic offences	14	3.4	3.2
<b>Family</b>	Family	25	6.2	8.5

<sup>a</sup> 110 South Sydney participants and 562 overall owned a small business. Of these, 32 (29.1%) and 122 (21.7%) respectively reported at least one business event.

<sup>b</sup> 149 South Sydney (16.8%) respectively reported at least one education event.

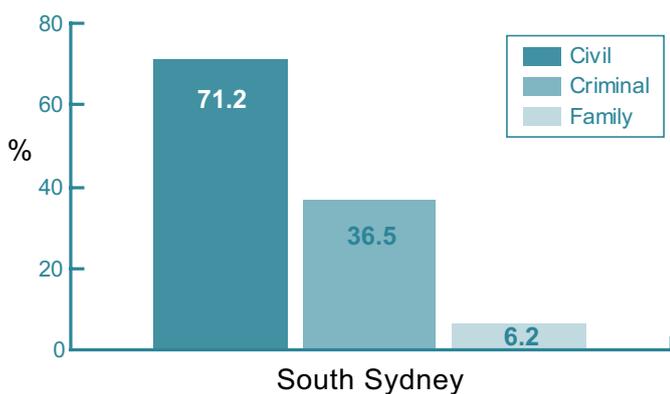
<sup>c</sup> 280 South Sydney and 293 (20.7%) respectively reported at least one employment event.

<sup>d</sup> 113 South Sydney disability or an elderly person. Of these, 11 (9.7%) and 77 (10.0%) respectively reported at least one health event.

**Notes:** All regions,  $n = 2431$ , and for South Sydney  $n = 406$  participants, data missing for 1 participant for family events. Some participants reported multiple legal events (within or across legal event groups). As a result, proportions reporting each event will not total 100 per cent.

of this sub-sample reported having a legal problem of any type than in the overall sample (see the section on Incidence of Legal Events). In fact, of the six LGAs surveyed, South Sydney LGA had the highest proportion of participants reporting civil matters (range 56–63% for other regions) and criminal matters (range 23–35% for other regions). Only a small number of South Sydney respondents (6.2%) reported at least one family law issue and this percentage was not significantly different from the percentage for all regions (8.5%).<sup>19</sup>

**FIGURE 1: INCIDENCE OF LEGAL EVENTS BY BROAD AREA OF LAW, SOUTH SYDNEY, 2003**



**Note:** South Sydney,  $n = 405$  participants (of which 310 participants reported 1 or more legal events), data missing for 1 participant for family events.

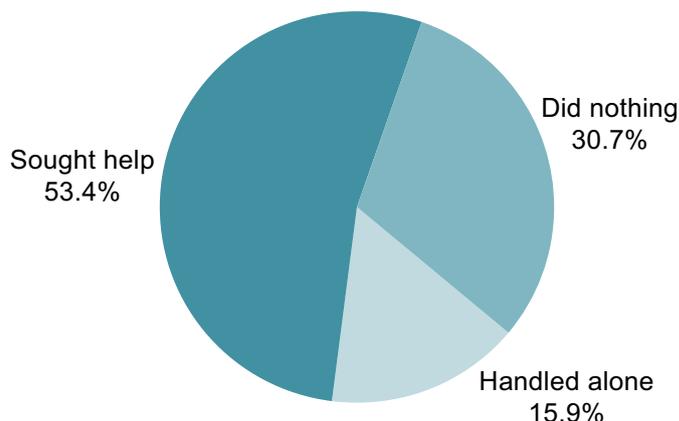
Table 6 shows the proportion of the South Sydney sub-sample and the overall sample reporting at least one of each type of legal event. As may be expected from the data presented earlier, the South Sydney sub-sample reported experiencing events at a statistically significantly higher rate than the general sample within almost every legal event group. Results that were highly statistically significant (i.e.  $p < .01$ ) were: government legal problems (25.1% vs 19.5%);<sup>20</sup> housing (36.0% vs 22.6%);<sup>21</sup> wills and estates (20.4% vs 14.6%);<sup>22</sup> and general crime (33.5% vs 26.6%).<sup>23</sup> Business, consumer and accident/personal injury legal events were also experienced among the South Sydney sub-sample at a significantly higher rate than the average for all regions.<sup>24</sup> There was no legal event that South Sydney residents experienced at significantly lower rates than the overall sample.<sup>25</sup>

## Response to legal problems

As noted earlier, respondents in South Sydney reported a total of 1203 legal events (range 1 to 20, median = 1 event). Further details about how participants responded to the most recent events (up to a maximum of three) were obtained. The

following data are based on the 591 most recent events for the South Sydney sub-sample.

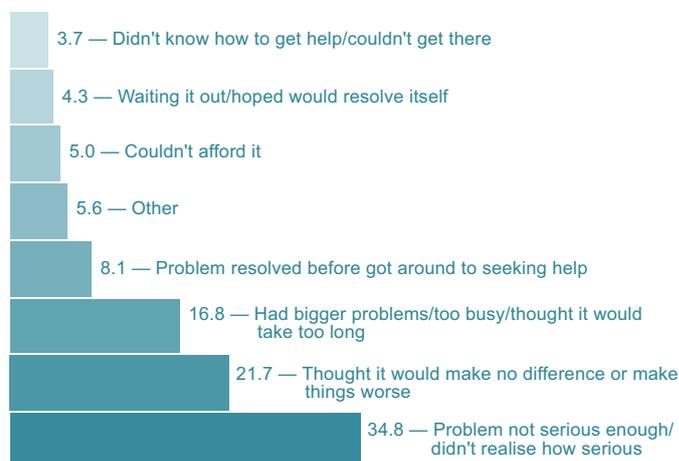
**FIGURE 2: ACTION TAKEN IN RESPONSE TO LEGAL EVENTS, SOUTH SYDNEY, 2003**



**Note:**  $n = 566$  events, data missing for 25 events.

Figure 2 shows that help was sought for approximately 53 per cent of the ‘most recent’ events experienced. In almost 16 per cent of cases, the respondent dealt with the issue themselves. A sizeable minority, however, did not take any action (30.7%). These rates were not statistically different to those for the overall sample (51.2%, 16.0% and 32.8% respectively).<sup>26</sup>

**FIGURE 3: MOST IMPORTANT REASON FOR DOING NOTHING IN RESPONSE TO LEGAL EVENTS, SOUTH SYDNEY, 2003**

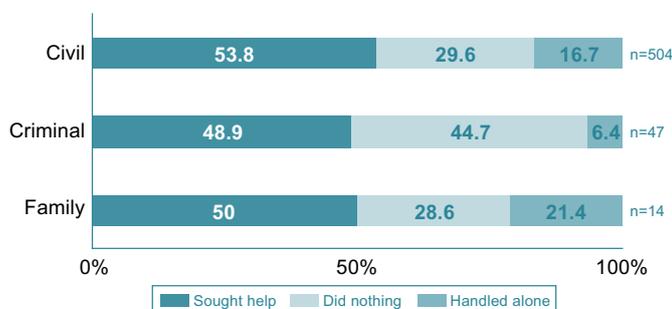


**Notes:** South Sydney,  $n = 161$  events, data missing for 13 events. Those grouped into the ‘other’ category ( $n = 9$ ) did not seek help because they were too embarrassed or did not trust anyone, thought the problem was their faults or had no internet access.

When the reasons for ‘doing nothing’ among the South Sydney sub-sample were further examined (see Figure 3), three main explanations emerged. In the 34.8 per cent of events where the respondent did nothing, the respondent felt the issue was not serious or did not know how serious the event was. In 21.7 per cent of events where the respondent did nothing, it was because they felt that action either would not

make any difference or would make things worse. In almost 16.8 per cent of events, the respondent had bigger problems, was too busy or thought the issue would take too long to address. Only a small proportion mentioned cost as a reason for not seeking help (5.0%).<sup>27</sup>

**FIGURE 4: ACTION TAKEN IN RESPONSE TO LEGAL EVENTS BY BROAD AREA OF LAW, SOUTH SYDNEY, 2003**



**Notes:** South Sydney,  $n = 565$  events, data missing for 26 events. Totals for each broad area of law are total events for which information was provided on action taken in response.

Figure 4 displays what the South Sydney sub-sample did in response to their three most recent legal events, broken down by broad area of law. Help was sought for 53.8 per cent of civil matters, and similar proportions were observed for criminal (48.9%) and family events (50.0%). These response patterns were not statistically different to those for all regions (51.4%, 46.7% and 55.4% respectively).<sup>28</sup> Thus, there appears to be some consistency in the South Sydney sub-sample in the frequency with which help was sought for legal events, irrespective of whether they are civil, criminal or family type matters. There is, however, some suggestion that for criminal matters, compared with family or civil matters, a greater proportion of those who did not seek help did nothing about their matter rather than dealing with it themselves. However, statistical tests only reached marginal significance for criminal matters compared with civil matters.<sup>29</sup>

### Type of adviser

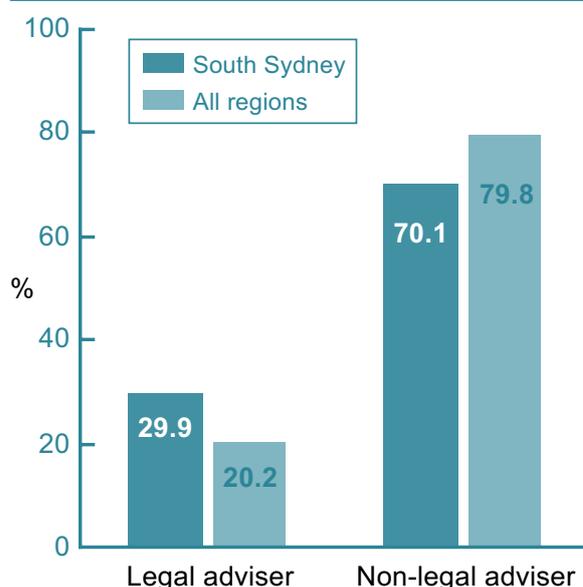
Although it appears that there are considerable differences in the types of advisers people go to for different types of events (Coumarelos et al. 2006), it is still useful to look at overall patterns in help seeking.

As previously indicated in Figure 2, help with a legal issue was sought in response to approximately half of the most recent events experienced by the South Sydney sub-sample. In 75 per cent of the cases where help was sought, only one source was approached for help. This figure was 78 per cent for all regions

(Coumarelos et al. 2006). The following data relate to the first (or only) adviser consulted for each event.

The types of advisers from whom South Sydney participants sought help could be roughly divided into two groups: legal and non-legal. Legal advisers included traditional legal advisers (i.e. a private solicitor or barrister, local court, Legal Aid NSW, LawAccess, NSW Aboriginal legal services, a community legal centre) as well as less formal legal advisers such as a friend or relative who is a lawyer and published sources (i.e. the internet and self-help sources). Non-legal advisers included a friend or relative who was not a lawyer, a member of parliament, local council, non-legal community group or organisation, library, trade union/professional body, employer, school/school counsellor/teacher, insurance company/broker, industry complaint handling body, police, or other professional (such as doctor) or private agency/organisation. Figure 5 displays the types of adviser approached by the South Sydney LGA sample and across all regions.

**FIGURE 5: TYPE OF (FIRST OR SOLE) ADVISER USED, FOR SOUTH SYDNEY AND ALL REGIONS, 2003**



**Note:** All regions,  $n = 1455$  events, data missing for 41 events and for South Sydney,  $n = 294$ , data missing on 8 events.

It appears that for the South Sydney LGA sub-sample, the first (or sole) source of advice was more likely to be to a non-legal source rather than a legal source (70.1% vs 29.9% respectively). This is consistent with the overall sample. However, the rate of seeking help from a legal adviser was higher among the South Sydney sub-sample than in the overall sample.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, of all the regions, South Sydney had the highest proportion of events for

which legal (as opposed to non-legal) sources were approached in the first instance (range 15–22% for the other regions).

Respondents who sought help from more than one adviser for the same event were asked to nominate the adviser they found most useful. The following section relates to the adviser judged to be the most useful (if more than one adviser was used) or the sole adviser if the respondent used only one source.

## Pathways to advisers

It is important for practitioners to be aware of the pathways through which people find assistance for their legal problems. Table 7 displays the channels through which people found their sole or most useful adviser (legal or non-legal), for both the South Sydney sub-sample and the overall sample.

**TABLE 7: SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT SOLE OR MOST USEFUL ADVISER, FOR SOUTH SYDNEY AND ALL REGIONS, 2003**

SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ADVISER	South Sydney		All regions
	No.	%	%
General knowledge	87	29.7	30.2
Adviser was a friend or relative	70	23.9	16.7
Referral by another agency/person <sup>a</sup>	38	13.0	14.5
Used the service before	28	9.6	17.7
Referral from a friend or relative	21	7.2	8.7
Internet	15	5.1	2.1
Pamphlet/Poster	11	3.8	2.3
Media	9	3.1	1.8
Telephone book	6	2.0	3.0
Community Legal Centre referral	3	1.0	1.1
Adviser approached them	3	1.0	< 1.0
Walked in off the street	2	< 1.0	1.1
Other	0	-	< 1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<sup>a</sup> Referral from another person or agency includes, but is not limited to, referrals by private business, mental health agencies, insurance companies, local council, police, Workcover, Skillshare, doctor, accountant, psychologist, counsellor, financial counsellor, financial adviser, or loan broker.

**Note:** All regions,  $n = 1447$ , data missing for 49 events, and for South Sydney  $n = 293$ , data missing for 9 events for which help was sought.

Table 7 shows that South Sydney participants were generally similar to all participants in terms of the channels they used to source their advisers. Similar to all participants, those from South Sydney frequently found their adviser by using their own personal knowledge and personal networks (e.g. 29.7% used their general knowledge, 9.6% had used the adviser

before, in 23.9% of cases the adviser was a friend/relative and in 7.2% of cases the adviser was referred from a friend/relative).

However, when compared with all participants, South Sydney participants were even more likely than average to use an adviser who was a friend or a relative (23.9% vs 16.7% respectively),<sup>31</sup> but less likely than average to use an adviser they had used before (9.6% vs 17.7% respectively).<sup>32</sup> These were the only apparent differences between South Sydney participants and those from all regions in terms of the channels used to source advisers.

As with the overall sample, South Sydney participants were also often referred to their adviser by another agency or someone other than a friend/relative (13.0%). Also similar to the overall sample, Fairfield participants used sources such as the telephone book, a pamphlet/poster, the media and the internet relatively infrequently to source their advisers (2.0% to 5.1%).

## Barriers to assistance

When considering the issue of access to legal assistance it is important to elucidate what may hinder somebody receiving assistance once they have decided to get help.

**TABLE 8: BARRIERS TO OBTAINING ASSISTANCE FROM ANY ADVISERS, FOR SOUTH SYDNEY AND ALL REGIONS, 2003**

TYPE OF BARRIERS	South Sydney		All regions
	No.	%	%
No problem	179	67.0	61.8
Delay in getting response	48	18.0	17.0
Telephone engaged/on hold too long	41	15.4	18.4
Difficulty getting an appointment	21	7.9	11.0
Problem with opening hours	15	5.6	7.6
Difficulty in affording it	15	5.6	6.0
Lack of local services/couldn't get there	12	4.5	8.1
Difficulty understanding advice/information	10	3.7	4.7
Other problems	9	3.4	4.8
Embarrassed to be seen using services	3	1.1	1.8
No ability to access the Internet	2	< 1.0	2.4
English language problems	1	< 1.0	1.5

**Notes:** All regions,  $n = 1246$ , data missing for 250 events, and for South Sydney  $n = 267$ , data missing for 35 events where help was sought.

Percentages do not add to 100 per cent because multiple barriers were sometimes reported for the same event.

The category of 'Other problems' included issues such as receiving inadequate or incorrect advice, refusing to assist or the problem was beyond the area covered by the service contacted.

Table 8 shows the barriers South Sydney participants reported experiencing when they sought help for their legal problems.

South Sydney participants experienced barriers to receiving assistance in approximately one-third of events where help was sought. The types of barriers experienced by the South Sydney participants appear similar to those for the overall sample, despite the differences in the type of adviser used noted in Figure 5. The main barriers reported were associated with attending or speaking with a service (either in person or by telephone) or a delay getting a response back from an adviser. In only a small proportion of events did people report not being able to afford an adviser (5.6%). In light of this information, services may need to reflect on their communication means and the procedures they have in place from when clients make initial contact to when they receive a response to their inquiry. There is evidence that people, especially vulnerable or marginalised groups, may abandon pursuit of legal assistance if such aspects of a legal service break down (Forell, McCarron & Schetzer 2005). For more than half the events reported in the current study, however, no problems were reported with the assistance sought.

### Distance travelled for assistance

The distance a person has to travel to obtain help may affect their willingness to access legal help. Table 9 shows the distance South Sydney participants travelled to obtain help from the sole or most useful adviser.

In the majority of events reported in the South Sydney sub-sample (54.3%), people did not have to travel to access assistance. Of the six regions surveyed, South Sydney LGA had a higher proportion of events than the average across all regions where obtaining assistance involved no travel (range 35–46% for other

regions).<sup>33</sup> From the data displayed in Table 9, it appears that when South Sydney participants did have to travel to obtain assistance, they travelled smaller distances than participants overall. Indeed, no South Sydney participants reported travelling more than 40 kilometres to obtain help for any event, compared with 8 per cent of all the regions. Not surprisingly, those interviewed for this study who resided in metropolitan areas such as South Sydney had, in general, closer access to advice than those in regional and rural or remote areas (Coumarelos et al. 2006).

**TABLE 9: DISTANCE TRAVELLED TO OBTAIN ASSISTANCE FROM SOLE OR MOST USEFUL ADVISER, FOR SOUTH SYDNEY AND ALL REGIONS, 2003**

DISTANCE TRAVELLED (KILOMETRES)	South Sydney		All regions
	No.	%	%
Didn't need to travel	140	54.3	44.0
< 3	64	24.8	19.6
4–10	35	13.6	15.8
11–20	12	4.7	8.2
21–40	7	2.7	4.5
41+	0	-	8.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Note:** All regions,  $n = 1249$ , missing data on 247 events, and for South Sydney  $n = 258$ , data missing for 44 events.

### Type of assistance

It would be reasonable to assume that when people are asked whether they sought assistance for their legal problem, they were seeking legal help. However, it appears that legal advice, information or referral may not be the sole type of assistance they receive for events that have legal implications. Table 10 displays the type of assistance the participants in the current survey said they received as help for their legal event.

In Table 10, it is worth noting how advisers are actually used by people experiencing legal problems. Examples of legal help include assistance with legal

**TABLE 10: TYPE OF HELP FROM SOLE OR MOST USEFUL ADVISER FOR THREE MOST RECENT EVENTS, FOR SOUTH SYDNEY AND ALL REGIONS, 2003**

TYPE OF ADVICE	South Sydney				All regions	
	LEGAL ADVISER		NON-LEGAL ADVISER		LEGAL ADVISER	NON-LEGAL ADVISER
	No.	%	No.	%	%	%
No help received	7	7.8	13	7.5	5.5	9.1
Legal	49	54.4	31	17.9	63.9	15.0
Non-legal	6	6.7	52	30.1	5.8	34.1
Legal vs non-legal help not specified	32	35.6	77	44.5	29.2	42.2

**Notes:** All regions,  $n = 1243$ , data missing for 253 events, and for South Sydney,  $n = 263$ , data missing for 39 events.

The percentages represent

and/or non-specific help was received for sole or most useful adviser.

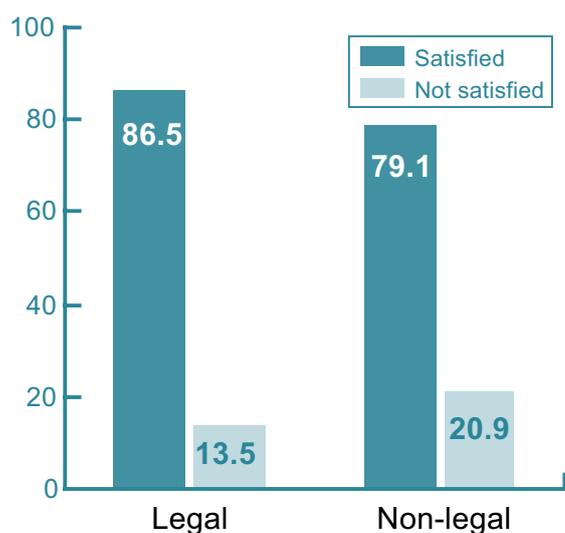
Multiple types of help could be reported, therefore percentage do not total 100.

documents, preparation for court proceedings or advice about the legal implications of a course of action. Examples of non-legal advice include medical advice, advice about financial options and counselling and support. Unsurprisingly, in the majority of events where assistance was sought from a legal source, the help received was legal in nature (54.4%). In 17.9 per cent of events where a non-legal adviser was consulted, help of a legal nature was received and in 30.1 per cent, the help was non-legal. This seems to indicate that people's needs when experiencing a legal event are multiple and include non-legal matters. In some cases, these needs may constitute supporting evidence or assistance with the original problem that gave rise to the legal event (e.g. a medical condition). However, there are also other roles played by advisers such as moral support, housing or financial support (Coumarelos et al. 2006). It is unfortunate that there was also a sizeable minority for whom the type of help was not specified and therefore the issue of type of help received needs to be further clarified in future research.

### Satisfaction with assistance

The moderate rate at which barriers were encountered when obtaining assistance described in Table 8 may have contributed to the high levels of satisfaction that South Sydney survey participants felt with their sole or most useful adviser. Figure 6 shows the rate of satisfaction, broken down by type of adviser.

**FIGURE 6: SATISFACTION WITH ASSISTANCE FROM SOLE OR MOST USEFUL ADVISER BY TYPE OF ADVISER, SOUTH SYDNEY, 2003**



**Notes:** South Sydney,  $n = 261$  events, missing data for 41 events for which help was sought.

The 'not satisfied' category includes those who reported being dissatisfied with help received as well as those that were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with help received.

It appears from Figure 6 that in the majority of events, respondents were satisfied with the assistance they received from their sole or most useful adviser, with satisfaction expressed in greater than 75 per cent of events. There was no statistical difference between the levels of satisfaction with legal or non-legal advisers (86.5% vs 79.1% respectively), even though non-legal advisers were more commonly approached by South Sydney participants.<sup>34</sup> Finally, South Sydney participants had similar levels of satisfaction to the overall sample (86.5% vs 85.8% respectively for legal advisers<sup>35</sup> and 79.1% vs 76.3% respectively for non-legal advisers).<sup>36</sup>

### SUMMARY

In summary, the South Sydney sub-sample was similar in many ways to the overall sample interviewed for this survey on legal need. Respondents living in the South Sydney LGA had a high level of legal needs in the 12 months preceding the survey, as did participants from the other regions. While most respondents reported only one issue, many had multiple issues across the broad areas of law of civil, criminal and family law. By far the most common type of legal event experienced in the past 12 months was civil law, although this was somewhat a function of the structure of the questionnaire. For half of the legal events reported, help was sought, although mainly from non-legal advisers such as friends, family or non-legal professionals. In general, people experienced no problems with their advisers, with most of the barriers to obtaining assistance centring on getting in contact or making appointments with their advisers. Correspondingly, satisfaction was high for the sole or most useful adviser with over 81 per cent satisfied with the help they received. Among the 30% or so who did not take action for a legal problem, the main reasons given for doing so were that the problem did not seem serious enough, or they thought seeking help would make no difference or make the problem worse.

There were however, a few points of difference between the South Sydney sub-sample and all regions. South Sydney participants were marginally more likely than the sample overall to report experiencing at least one legal event, and significantly more South Sydney respondents reported three or more events. Specifically, the South Sydney participants were significantly more likely than the general sample to have experienced 'government', 'housing', 'wills and estates' and 'general crime' legal events in the past 12 months.

Although participants from South Sydney sought help at similar rates to the sample in all regions, there did appear to be a difference in the type of legal help sought by the two groups. For example, while both the South Sydney sub-sample and the overall sample used non-legal advisers more frequently than legal advisers, the proportion using legal advisers in South Sydney was significantly greater than the corresponding proportion for all regions. South Sydney participants did not have to travel far for their assistance – in no event did they report travelling over 40 kilometres for assistance. They therefore seemed to be somewhat closer to their legal assistance provider than the average over the six areas included in the survey.

Thus, South Sydney LGA is an area where people experience a high rate of legal events, and where people use legal services to help them with their legal problems. Similar to other regions, South Sydney participants most often source their help through their own personal knowledge and personal networks. However, when compared with all participants, South Sydney participants were even more likely to use an adviser who was a friend or a relative, but less likely to use an adviser they had used before. The data presented here also suggest that their needs are diverse in terms of the kind of assistance they will receive from their advisers. That is, people often receive non-legal assistance when trying to resolve events that have legal implications as well as, or even without, legal advice. However, among those who do seek help, there seems to be a high level of satisfaction with whatever help they obtain. Thus, addressing legal events may require more than just legal advice or representation, but to some degree these needs may be being met in the South Sydney area.

The above findings and those from the overall report (Coumarelos et al. 2006) suggest a range of strategies may be required to promote justice through legal services. The substantial rates of people doing nothing for their legal problems, because of a view that seeking help would make no difference or make things worse, show the importance of enhancing the general knowledge about how legal processes could assist them to resolve issues. This could be achieved through proactive information and education to increase public awareness about their legal needs and the available pathways for legal resolution. The observation that people go to non-legal advisers when they have legal problems suggests there may be

benefits in raising the general level of legal literacy among the community at large, to enable the use of non-legal professionals as effective gateways to available legal services (Coumarelos et al. 2006). Finally, difficulty getting through to an adviser on the telephone may indicate the need to improve the accessibility of legal services through more resources and extended availability of services. This may ensure that legal services can react quickly and effectively to resolve legal problems.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

#### Details of sample selection

To identify LGAs with relatively high rates of socioeconomic disadvantage, we used the risk score for cumulative socioeconomic disadvantage provided by Vinson (1999). This score is based on a range of socioeconomic indicators including proportions of unemployed persons, low income households, confirmed incidences of child abuse, people who left school before 15 years of age, households receiving emergency assistance, convicted persons, child injuries, long-term unemployment and unskilled workers.<sup>37</sup> Among the three Sydney LGAs used in the survey, South Sydney and Campbelltown were chosen because they were the only two of the 45 LGAs in the Sydney area that featured postcodes among the 50 most disadvantaged postcodes for the New South Wales area. Fairfield LGA was also chosen as it too had a relatively high cumulative disadvantage risk score, but also, because it has a highly culturally and linguistically diverse population. According to the census, a language other than English is spoken in 70.9 per cent of households, with Vietnamese (15.5%), Chinese languages (10.2%) and Spanish (4.9%) being the most common non-English languages. Accordingly, the survey instrument was translated into Vietnamese, Cantonese and Spanish and interviewers speaking these languages were made available for people who preferred to be interviewed in one of these languages (ABS 2001).

The three non-Sydney LGAs (Newcastle, Nambucca and Walgett) selected all featured at least three postcodes among the 50 most disadvantaged postcodes in New South Wales according to the cumulative disadvantage risk score. Further, Walgett and Nambucca LGAs also had relatively high Indigenous populations (21.5% and 5.4% respectively) compared with the New South Wales average (1.9%) and at such population levels, Indigenous people generally have poor outcomes on measures of social justice (ABS 1995; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commission 2002). For further details about the methodology and the survey see Coumarelos et al. (2006).

**TABLE A1: CLASSIFICATION OF LEGAL EVENTS IN SURVEY OF LEGAL NEED, 2003**

AREA OF LAW (NO. OF ITEMS)	SURVEY QUESTION NO.	LEGAL EVENT GROUP (NO. OF ITEMS) LEGAL EVENT	AREA OF LAW (NO. OF ITEMS)	SURVEY QUESTION NO.	LEGAL EVENT GROUP (NO. OF ITEMS) LEGAL EVENT
<b>CIVIL (76)</b>		<b>Accident/injury (4)</b>	<b>CIVIL cont. (76)</b>		<b>Housing (11)</b>
	19	Car accident – property damage		10A	Bought/sold home
	39A	Car accident – personal injury		10B	Dispute with neighbour
	39B	Injury at work		10C	Homelessness
	39C	Other personal injury		12	Tenancy problem
		<b>Business (2)</b>		14	Home ownership problem
	7	Problem as landlord		16A	Strata title problem
	9	Problem re own business		16B	Problem re caravan/home estate
		<b>Consumer (5)</b>		16C	Problem re boarding house/hostel
	20F	Problem re superannuation		16D	Problem re retirement home/village
	21	Problem re goods/services		31A	Nursing home problem – carer of disabled/elderly
	22	Dispute with financial institution		43C	Nursing home problem as disabled person
	23	Problem re insurance			<b>Human rights<sup>a</sup> (8)</b>
	56	Complaint about lawyer		24A	Discrimination – marital status
		<b>Credit/debt (5)</b>		24B	Discrimination – age
	20A	Problem paying bill/debt		24C	Discrimination – gender
	20B	Dispute re credit rating		24D	Discrimination – religion
	20C	Problem re money owed to you		24E	Discrimination – sexuality
	20D	Problem as guarantor		24F	Discrimination – ethnicity
	20E	Bankruptcy		24G	Discrimination – disability
		<b>Education (6)</b>		31H*	Discrimination – carer of disabled/elderly
	35A	Unfair exclusion from education			<b>Wills/estates (4)</b>
	35B	HECS issue		32A	Make/alter will
	35C	School bullying/harassment		32B	Executor of estate
	37A	Unfair exclusion from education – parent		32C	Dispute over will/estate
	37B	HECS issue – parent		32D	Power of attorney
	37C	School bullying/harassment – parent			<b>CRIMINAL (16)</b>
		<b>Employment (5)</b>			<b>Domestic violence (3)</b>
	2A	Dispute re employment conditions		47A	Victim of domestic violence by family member
	2B	Unfair termination of employment		47B	Victim of domestic violence by household member
	2C	Workplace harassment/mistreatment		48	Domestic violence allegation against you
	2D	Workplace discrimination			<b>General crime (11)</b>
	2E*	Other problem re employment		46A	Unfair treatment by police
		<b>Government (15)</b>		46B	Criminal charge
	5	Problem re gov. pension/benefit		46C	Problem re bail/remand
	31C	Problem re gov. services – carer of disabled/elderly		46D	Police failing to investigate crime
	43A	Problem re gov. disability/community services		47C	Assault victim
	44A	Dispute re taxation/debt		49	Property stolen/vandalised
	43E*	Other problem re gov. services as disabled person		53A	Problem re medical treatment – prison/juvenile detention
	44B	Problem re freedom of information request		53B	Problem re legal advice – prison/juvenile detention
	44C	Immigration problem		53C	Safety threats – prison/juvenile detention
	44D	Local council problem		53D	Harassment/abuse by staff – prison/juvenile detention
	51	Non-traffic fines you challenged		53E	Problem re release – prison/juvenile detention
	53A	Problem re medical treatment – immigration detention			<b>Traffic offences (2)</b>
	53B	Problem re legal advice – immigration detention		50A	Loss of driver's licence
	53C	Safety threats – immigration detention		50B	Other traffic fine/offence you challenged
	53D	Harassment/abuse by staff – immigration detention			<b>FAMILY (9)</b>
	53E	Problem re release – immigration detention			<b>Family (9)</b>
	57B*	Problem re legal system		25A	Problem re residence/contact for child
		<b>Health (11)</b>		25B	Problem re residence/contact for grandchild
31B	Involuntary psychiatric hospitalisation – carer	27A	Problem re child support payments		
31F*	Problem re quality of medical treatment – carer	27B	Child protection issue		
31G*	Problem re disability facilities – carer	27C	Fostering/adoption/guardianship issue		
42A/52	Involuntary psychiatric hospitalisation	29A	Divorce/separation		
42B	Other mental health care issue	29B	Dispute re matrimonial property		
43B	Problem re non-government disability services	31D	Guardianship problem – carer of disabled/elderly		
53A	Problem re medical treatment – psychiatric ward	57A*	Other family law problem		
53B	Problem re legal advice – psychiatric ward		<b>Unclassified (3)</b>		
53C	Safety threats – psychiatric ward	31E	Other problem – carer of disabled/elderly		
53D	Harassment/abuse by staff – psychiatric ward	43D	Other problem re disability		
53E	Problem re release – psychiatric ward	57	Other problem		

a Human rights events are not related to employment.

\* Legal events marked by an asterisk were not specifically asked about in the survey, but were identified by post-coding.

While the question number listed for each of these events in the table does not appear on the survey, it indicates the survey question from which the event was post-coded. For example, the legal event numbered '43E' was post-coded from question 43.

## Appendix 2

The main statistical technique used to test differences among regions was logistic regression. Logistic regression is an appropriate form of multivariate analysis when the outcome variable is discrete rather than continuous. Like other forms of regression, it examines the relationship of an outcome variable (e.g. whether someone has experienced a legal event or not) to one or more potential predictor variables (e.g. geographical region). In the regressions performed for this report, deviation contrasts were used to determine whether this region was different from the average of all regions to a statistically significant degree. Standard logistic regressions were used for all data where respondent was the unit of analysis (up to Figure 2 in the main body of the report). For the analyses where legal event was the unit of analysis (Figure 2 onwards in the main body of the report), mixed effects binary logistic regression was used (Hedeker 1999, 2002). While standard logistic regression assumes the independence of observations, mixed effects logistics regression allows for observations to be correlated. In detail, in the current study, where participants were the unit of analysis, there was only one observation per participant. However, where legal event was the unit of analysis, legal events were clustered within participants. That is, the one participant could have multiple legal events and therefore legal events were not independent of each other. The mixed effects logistic regression technique adjusts the statistical analyses appropriately for this clustering effect.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Only LGAs with a population of 5000 or greater were considered for this study.
- <sup>2</sup> The estimated survey response rate gave rise to this range because the rate quoted is dependent upon the assumptions underlying which elements denote the potential population from which the sample is drawn and constitute the denominator. For further details on the calculation methods, please see Coumarelos et al. (2006).
- <sup>3</sup> Although there were significant 'age by gender' interactions in the tests examining sample distribution versus population distribution, suggesting that there were some departures from proportionality of age groups within each gender group.
- <sup>4</sup> Note that none of these differences were formally statistically tested and are only discussed here for descriptive purposes.
- <sup>5</sup> OR = 1.43,  $p = .001$ .
- <sup>6</sup> OR = 0.70,  $p < .001$ .
- <sup>7</sup> OR = 1.48,  $p < .001$ .
- <sup>8</sup> OR = 0.77,  $p < .01$ .
- <sup>9</sup> OR = 1.34,  $p = .002$ ; OR = 1.29,  $p = .009$ ; OR = 0.72,  $p = .001$  respectively.
- <sup>10</sup> OR = 1.60,  $p = .001$ .
- <sup>11</sup> This figure is based on the selected income streams comprising: the Age Pension, Disability Support Pension, Newstart Allowance, Parent Payment (single), Youth Allowance, Other pensions and allowances (ABS 2006).

- <sup>12</sup> LawAccess is a free telephone information advice service that operates under the auspices of the NSW Attorney General's Department.
- <sup>13</sup> All statistical comparisons between individual LGAs and the overall sample were performed by logistic regression using deviation contrast (see Appendix 2).  
OR = 1.43,  $p = .001$ .
- <sup>14</sup>  $p > .05$ .
- <sup>15</sup> OR = 1.57,  $p < .001$ .
- <sup>16</sup> OR = 1.48,  $p < .001$ .
- <sup>17</sup> OR = 1.34,  $p = .004$ .
- <sup>18</sup>  $p > .05$ .
- <sup>19</sup> OR = 1.40,  $p = .002$ .
- <sup>20</sup> OR = 1.98,  $p < .001$ .
- <sup>21</sup> OR = 1.57,  $p < .001$ .
- <sup>22</sup> OR = 1.41,  $p < .001$ .
- <sup>23</sup> Business: OR = 1.57,  $p < .05$ ; Consumer: OR = 1.26,  $p < .05$ ; Accident/Injury: OR = 1.3,  $p < .05$ .
- <sup>24</sup>  $p > .05$ .
- <sup>25</sup> Logistic regression adjusted for clustering,  $p > .05$ .
- <sup>26</sup> Note that it is possible that those who dealt with the problem themselves could have done so because of cost (or level of seriousness, or they did not know where to go for help). However, data was only collected on why respondents chose not to seek any help, not why they chose to deal with it themselves.
- <sup>27</sup> Logistic regression adjusted for clustering,  $p > .05$  for civil and criminal matters. The number of family events ( $n = 14$ ) was too small for mixed effects analysis.
- <sup>28</sup> Logistic regression adjusted for clustering, marginal result for did nothing vs handled alone and sought help combined for criminal matters vs civil,  $p > .05$ .
- <sup>29</sup> Logistic regression adjusted for clustering, OR = 2.03,  $p < .001$ .
- <sup>30</sup> Logistic regression adjusted for clustering, OR = 2.01,  $p = .001$ .
- <sup>31</sup> Logistic regression adjusted fir clustering, OR = 0.39,  $p < .001$ .
- <sup>32</sup> Logistic regression adjusted for clustering, OR = 0.428,  $p < .001$ .
- <sup>33</sup> Logistic regression adjusted for clustering,  $p > .05$ .
- <sup>34</sup> The sample size was too small to conduct a logistic regression adjusted for clustering. However, standard logistic regression showed region not to be a significant predictor.
- <sup>35</sup> Logistic regression adjusted for clustering,  $p > .05$ .
- <sup>36</sup> Partial use was also made of mortality rates in the risk scores for New South Wales postcodes.

# The Access to Justice and Legal Needs Program

The Law and Justice Foundation of NSW has undertaken the Access to Justice and Legal Needs (A2JLN) Research Program to identify the access to justice and legal needs of disadvantaged people in NSW. The objectives of the program are to examine the ability of disadvantaged people to:

- obtain legal assistance (including legal information, advice, assistance and representation),
- participate effectively in the legal system,
- obtain assistance from non-legal advocacy and support,
- participate effectively in law reform processes.

The program employs three methodological streams to address these objectives:

- the analysis of legal service usage data, giving particular insight into expressed legal need;
- original quantitative legal need surveys, giving insight into expressed and unexpressed/unmet legal need;
- in-depth qualitative research into the needs of particular disadvantaged groups.

Specific research published as part of this program to date includes:

**Public consultations:** a summary of the submissions received from organisations and individuals as part of the initial consultation process for the A2JLN Research Program.

**The Data Digest:** The Data Digest is a database for examining expressed legal need as identified through inquiries handled by public legal services. It currently includes legal inquiries to the Legal Aid Commission of NSW, LawAccess NSW, and community legal centres in NSW. The inaugural Data Digest report, published in 2004, presents service usage data from 1999–2002. A number of reports produced using the Data Digest are available on the Foundation's website [www.lawfoundation.net.au](http://www.lawfoundation.net.au). It is planned for public legal services to have secure access to a number of interactive online Data Digest tools.

**Justice made to measure: NSW legal needs survey in disadvantaged areas:** a quantitative survey of legal needs in six 'disadvantaged' regions of NSW, measuring a wide range of legal events, including those where help is sought from legal or non-legal advisers (expressed legal need), those handled without outside help and events where no action is taken (unmet legal need).

**The Bega Valley pilot survey:** a quantitative survey of the legal needs of 306 people conducted via telephone in Bega Valley. This was the pilot survey undertaken for the survey reported in *Justice Made to Measure*.

**The legal needs of older people in NSW:** a qualitative study into the legal issues commonly experienced by older people in NSW and the barriers faced by older people in accessing services to resolve legal issues.

**No home, no justice? The legal needs of homeless people in NSW:** a qualitative study into the capacity of homeless people in NSW to obtain legal assistance, participate effectively in the legal system and obtain assistance from non-legal advocacy and support agencies. The study also details the legal issues commonly experienced by homeless people.

**On the edge of justice: The legal needs of people with a mental illness in NSW:** a qualitative study into the legal issues faced by people with a mental illness in NSW, their capacity to obtain legal assistance, participate effectively in the legal system and obtain assistance from non-legal advocacy and support agencies.

**Taking justice into custody: the legal needs of prisoners:** a qualitative study of the legal and access to justice needs of prisoners and ex-prisoners. The study identifies the range of criminal, civil and family law issues prisoners face at different stages of incarceration, and the opportunities and barriers they face to addressing these issues.



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