



NSW Legal Needs Survey in Disadvantaged Areas: Walgett

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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 Walgett 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 Walgett 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 levels and types of expressed legal need in Walgett 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 Walgett LGA 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.¹

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 the 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) ^a	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
Total		457 746	2431	0.5

^a 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.²

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 Walgett and the overall sample. That is, the rate observed in the Walgett 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.³ As Table 2 shows, there are quite striking differences between the regions in their

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

VARIABLE	SOUTH SYDNEY %	FAIRFIELD %	CAMPBELLTOWN %	NEWCASTLE %	NAMBUCCA %	WALGETT %
Gender						
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
Age (years)						
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
Indigenous status	0.6	0.3	1.7	2.1	3.6	13.2
Country of birth	16.5	45.8	18.0	2.9	3.4	4.5
Disability	18.3	16.2	20.0	19.9	27.5	23.7
Personal income (\$/week)						
\$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
Education level						
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.

demographic make-up.⁴ 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%),⁵ while Fairfield LGA had a significantly lower proportion (61.3%),⁶ 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%)⁷ and Fairfield LGA had the lowest (56.1%)⁸ 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%).⁹ Nambucca LGA registered a marginally higher than average rate for family events (12.6%).¹⁰

These findings indicate that the LGAs that constitute the sample for this survey are not homogeneous, either demographically or in terms of legal need. The differences suggest that it would be helpful

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.

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 consider a selection of the main indices from the survey on legal needs, separately for each LGA. This particular report describes the results for the LGA of Walgett. Where appropriate, the results for Walgett LGA will be displayed along with the corresponding result from the total sample such that comparisons may be facilitated.

WALGETT LGA

Walgett LGA is a 22 336 square kilometres area, located in the North-Western region of New South Wales, 690 kilometres from Sydney. It stretches from Brewarrina in the east to Moree Plains in the west (ABS 2006). In 2003, the ABS estimated the population in the Walgett LGA to be 8201, approximately a 3 per cent decrease on the 2000 estimate. The population density as of June 2004 was 0.4 per square kilometre, compared with 8.4 persons per square kilometre for New South Wales.¹¹ The unemployment rate in 2003 was 12.3 per cent, compared with 6 percent for New South Wales, and 2856 people were receiving income support¹² (34.8% of total population) compared with 22.2 per cent of New South Wales (ABS 2006). The average taxable income in this area in 2003 was \$32 939, much lower than the state average of \$43 649. In combination, these figures indicate that Walgett LGA was, in 2003, an area of relative disadvantage.

EXPRESSED LEGAL NEED IN WALGETT

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 LawAccess¹³ and three different service types provided by Legal Aid in the Walgett LGA are shown in Table 4.

Table 4 shows that although the number of inquiries to these services are small overall, there are some patterns in the use of these services that are worth

noting. Most of the inquiries coming into LawAccess from the Walgett area concerned civil issues, but for Legal Aid, the distribution of inquiries across broad areas of law differs according to the type of service provided.

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

SERVICE	CIVIL	CRIMINAL	FAMILY	TOTAL
LawAccess	51	15	36	102
Legal Aid				
– advice	1	3	20	24
– info/referral	5	10	18	33
– duty solicitor	7	23	1	31

For example, the majority of duty solicitor services, as one might expect, come under criminal law, because duty solicitor services are most commonly provided for criminal matters. It should also be noted that the Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS) provides a service for criminal matters in this geographical area. Therefore, given the high Indigenous population in this area (and therefore perhaps a preference for the ALS rather than these other services) the statistics shown here may not fully reflect the use of free legal services in Walgett. Most inquiries to both the Advice Service and the Information and Referral concerned 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 of law in relation to a complex issue. Further, people may seek assistance from other legal services, such as the ALS, 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 case of Walgett LGA, there was approximately 2 per cent rate of use of these two types of services for the population size (approximately 190 service events for a population around 8201 people). In fact, of the six LGAs surveyed, Walgett had the lowest rate of use of these services (range 5–10% for other regions). It is unclear what this low rate might indicate (lower need or less access to service). However, the survey results 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 RESULTS¹⁴

Incidence of legal events

For the Law and Justice Foundation's 2003 survey, 400 participants were drawn from the Walgett LGA, who reported a total of 910 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 WALGETT AND ALL REGIONS, 2003

NUMBER OF LEGAL EVENTS	Walgett		All regions
	No.	%	%
0	123	30.8	30.9
1	98	24.5	22.3
2	52	13.0	13.9
3 or more	127	31.7	32.9

Note: All regions, $n = 2431$, and for Walgett, $n = 400$ participants.

Table 5 shows that almost 31 per cent of Walgett participants reported that they did not experience any legal events in the past 12 months. The remaining 69 per cent reported experiencing at least one legal event. This proportion was almost identical with that for the total sample (69.1%). Further, it appears that the Walgett subgroup had a similar distribution to the overall survey sample in the frequency of legal events reported during the reference period. In detail, Walgett LGA had very similar rates for reporting one or two events (37.5% vs 36.2% respectively), and three or more events (31.7% vs 32.9% respectively) compared with the average over all regions.¹⁵

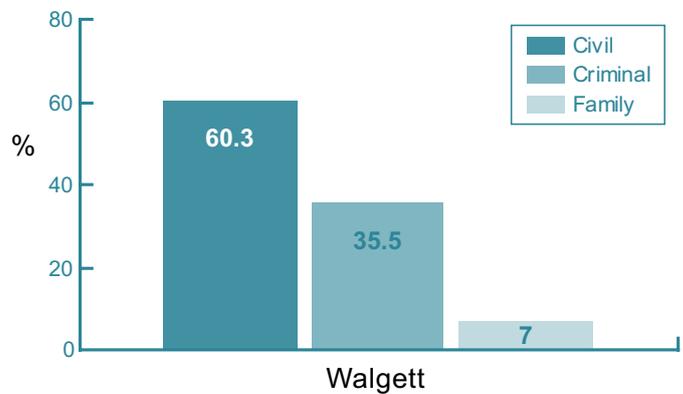
Areas of law

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 Walgett LGA was civil law (60.3%). This was not surprising given the survey questionnaire predominantly covered civil legal issues. The proportion of the Walgett sub-sample reporting civil issues was not significantly different to the sample overall (62.4%).¹⁶ However, although Walgett participants reported experiencing one or more legal events of any type at a similar rate to the overall sample (see section on incidence of legal events), the proportion for reporting criminal matters (domestic violence, general crime and traffic offences) was

significantly higher (35.5%) compared with all regions (30.2%).¹⁷ For family matters, only a small proportion of Walgett participants (7.0%) reported at least one family law issue, which was not significantly different from the percentage for all regions (8.5%).¹⁸

FIGURE 1: INCIDENCE OF LEGAL EVENTS BY BROAD AREA OF LAW, WALGETT, 2003



Note: Walgett, $n = 400$ participants (of which 277 participants reported 1 or more legal events).

Details of the incidence of the different event types under each of these broad areas of law (civil, criminal and family) for both Walgett LGA and all regions are shown in Table 6. Civil matters listed in this table include: accident/injury, business, consumer, credit/debt, education, employment, government, health, housing, human rights, and wills and estates. Within civil law, the legal event reported most often by Walgett participants was consumer (19.8%).

Walgett participants reported experiencing a number of events within civil law at different rates than the overall sample: Walgett respondents reported significantly less accident/injury (15.0% vs 19.2% respectively)¹⁹ and housing events (15.8% vs 22.6% respectively)²⁰ than the overall sample. On the other hand, education and wills and estates events were reported at significantly higher rates than overall (8.5% vs 7.4% and 16.3% vs 14.6% respectively).²¹ Credit/debt events were also reported at a significantly higher rate than the overall sample (16.8% vs 12.0% respectively)²² which may be because this region had a high proportion of Indigenous respondents: The analysis for the overall survey indicated that Indigenous participants had twice the likelihood of non-Indigenous people of reporting such problems (Coumarelos et al. 2006).

For criminal law, further to the result in the previous section that Walgett participants reported higher rates of experiencing criminal law events compared to the overall sample, Table 6 suggests that it is events under the general crime group specifically that were

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

AREA OF LAW	EVENT GROUP	Walgett		All regions
		NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	% OF PARTICIPANTS	% OF PARTICIPANTS
Civil	Accident/injury	60	15.0	19.2
	Business ^a	25	6.3	5.0
	Consumer	79	19.8	22.0
	Credit/debt	67	16.8	12.0
	Education ^b	34	8.5	7.4
	Employment ^c	40	10.0	12.1
	Government	67	16.8	19.5
	Health ^d	19	4.8	3.2
	Housing	63	15.8	22.6
	Human rights	25	6.3	5.8
	Wills/estates	65	16.3	14.6
Criminal	Domestic violence	15	3.8	3.9
	General crime	128	32.0	26.6
	Traffic offences	11	2.8	3.2
Family	Family	28	7.0	8.5

^a 115 Walgett business event.

^b 153 Walgett participants respectively reported at least one education event.

^c 193 Walgett participants (20.7%) respectively reported at least one employment event.

^d 135 Walgett participants an elderly person. Of these, 19 (14.1%) and 77 (10.0%) respectively reported at least one health event.

Notes: All regions, $n = 2431$, and for Walgett, $n = 400$ participants. 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.

significantly higher than the overall sample (32.0% vs 26.6% respectively).²³

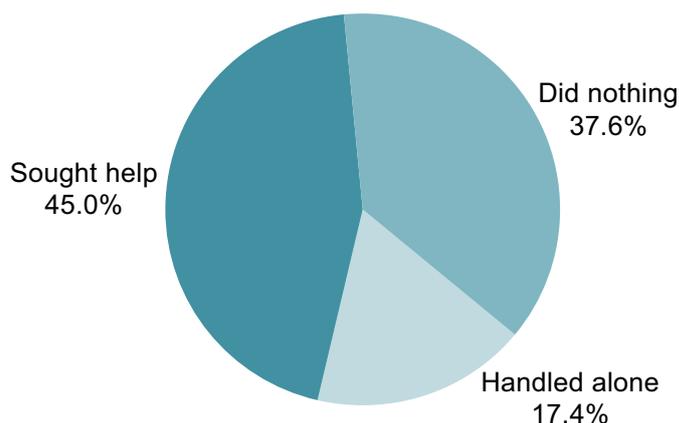
Response to legal problems

As noted earlier, respondents in Walgett LGA reported a total of 910 legal events (range 1 to 15, 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 474 most recent events for the Walgett sub-sample.

Figure 2 shows that help was sought for 45 per cent of ‘most recent’ legal events experienced. In approximately 17 per cent of legal events, the respondents dealt with the issue themselves. A sizeable minority, however, did not take any action (37.6%). Compared to those for the overall sample (51.2%, 16.0% and 32.8% respectively), Walgett LGA had a lower proportion of participants reporting they sought help²⁴ and a higher proportion reporting they did nothing in response to their legal problems.²⁵ In fact, of the six LGAs surveyed, at 45 per cent Walgett participants reported the lowest proportion of legal events for which help was sought (range 50–54% for other regions) and the highest proportion of legal

events for which they did nothing in response to their legal problems (37.6%, range for other regions 30–35% for other regions).

FIGURE 2: ACTION TAKEN IN RESPONSE TO LEGAL EVENTS, WALGETT, 2003

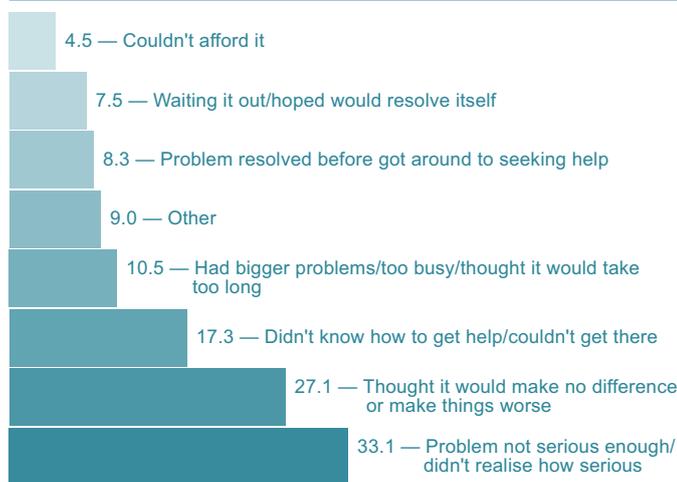


Note: $n = 460$ events, data missing for 14 events.

When the reasons for ‘doing nothing’ in response to legal events among the Walgett sub-sample were further examined (see Figure 3), two main explanations emerged. In approximately 33 per cent of legal events where the respondent did nothing, it was because the respondent felt the issue was not

serious or did not know how serious the event was. In approximately 27 per cent of legal events, the respondent felt that action either would not make any difference or would make things worse. These were also the two most common reasons for taking no action in all regions. The other main reasons for Walgett respondents taking no action were that the respondent did not know how to get help or could not get there (in approximately 17% of legal events) and the respondent had bigger problems, was too busy, or thought the issue would take too long to address (in 10.5% of legal events). Only a small proportion mentioned cost as a reason for not seeking help (4.5%).²⁶

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

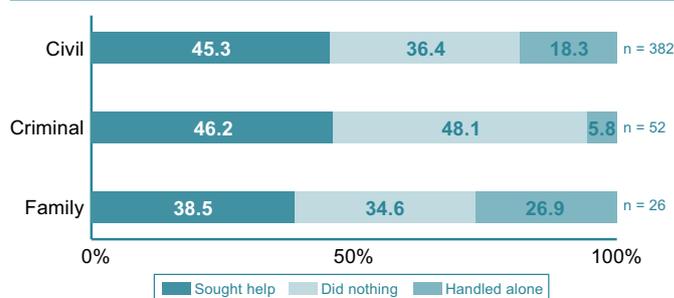


Notes: Walgett, $n = 156$ events, data missing for 17 events. Those grouped into the 'other' category ($n = 12$) did not seek help because they were too embarrassed or did not trust anyone, thought the problem was their faults or had no internet access.

Figure 4 displays what Walgett respondents did in response to their three most recent legal events, broken down by broad area of law. Looking at the results overall, compared with civil matters and family matters, there is some suggestion that a greater proportion of those who did not seek help did nothing about their criminal matters rather than dealing with it themselves. However, the differences were not statistically significant.²⁷ Help was sought in approximately 45 per cent of civil legal events, lower than the rate over all regions (51.4%).²⁸ Indeed, of the six LGAs surveyed, Walgett LGA had the lowest proportion of participants reporting they sought help for civil matters (range 49–54% for other regions). Further, help was sought in approximately 46 per cent of criminal legal events, almost identical with that for all regions (46.7%).²⁹ However, for family matters, again, there was a lower proportion of Walgett respondents reporting they sought help

(38.5% vs 55.4% respectively).³⁰ Given the result in the previous section (Response to Legal Problem) that Walgett participants reported they sought help at a lower rate than that for all regions, these findings suggest that less help was sought for civil and family matters, rather than criminal matters.

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



Notes: Walgett, $n = 460$ events, data missing for 14 events. Totals for each broad area of law are total events for which information was provided on action taken in response.

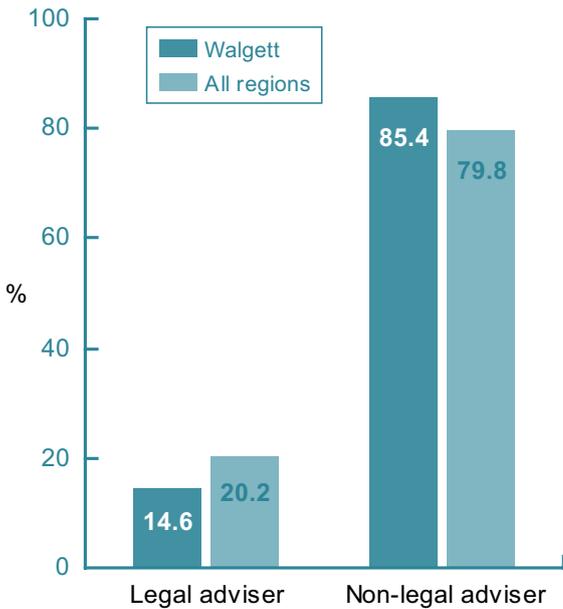
Type of adviser

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 45 per cent of the most recent events experienced by the Walgett sub-sample. In 82 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 Walgett 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 Walgett LGA sample and across all regions.

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



Note: All regions, $n = 1455$, data missing for 41 events and for Walgett, $n = 199$, data missing on 8 events.

It appears that for the Walgett sub-sample, the first (or sole) source of advice was more likely to be to a non-legal source rather than a legal source (85.4% vs 14.6% respectively). Seeking help from non-legal more often than legal advisers was also observed in the overall sample. Specifically, a non-legal adviser was sought in the first instance in 79.8 per cent of legal events and a legal adviser in only 20.2 per cent over all regions. Of all the regions, Walgett LGA had the lowest proportion of events for which legal (as opposed to non-legal) sources were approached in the first instance (14.6%, range 16–30% for other regions). However, this difference did not reach statistical significance.³¹

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 their sole adviser, if they 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 Walgett sub-sample and the overall sample.

Table 7 shows that Walgett participants were generally similar to all participants in terms of the channels

they used to source their advisers. Similar to all participants, those from Walgett frequently found their adviser by using their own personal knowledge and personal networks (e.g. 30.2% used their general knowledge, 26.6% had used the adviser before, in 8.5% of cases the adviser was a friend/relative and in 9.0% of cases the adviser was referred from a friend/relative). However, when compared with all participants, Walgett participants were even more likely than average to use an adviser from a service they had used before (26.6% vs 17.7% respectively).³² This was the only apparent difference between Walgett participants and those from all regions in terms of the channels used to source advisers.

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

SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ADVISER	Walgett		All regions
	No.	%	%
General knowledge	60	30.2	30.2
Used the service before	53	26.6	17.7
Referral by another agency/person ^a	29	14.6	14.5
Referral from a friend or relative	18	9.0	8.7
Adviser was a friend or relative	17	8.5	16.7
Pamphlet/Poster	7	3.5	2.3
Telephone book	5	2.5	3.0
Internet	3	1.5	2.1
Walked in off the street	3	1.5	1.1
Media	1	< 1.0	1.8
Community Legal Centre referral	1	< 1.0	1.1
Adviser approached them	1	< 1.0	< 1.0
Other	1	< 1.0	< 1.0
Total	199	100.0	100.0

^a 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 Walgett $n = 199$, data missing for 8 events for which help was sought.

As with the overall sample, Walgett participants were also often referred to their adviser by another agency or someone other than a friend/relative (14.6%). Also similar to the overall sample, Walgett participants used sources such as the telephone book, a pamphlet/poster, the media and the internet relatively infrequently to source their advisers (<1.0% to 3.5%).

Barriers to assistance

When considering the issue of access to legal assistance, it is important to elucidate what may hinder somebody receiving that assistance once they

have decided to get help. Table 8 shows the barriers experienced by Walgett participants when they sought help for their legal problems.

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

TYPE OF BARRIERS	Walgett		All regions
	No.	%	%
No problem	98	57.6	61.8
Delay in getting response	38	22.4	17.0
Lack of local services/ couldn't get there	35	20.6	8.1
Difficulty getting an appointment	31	18.2	11.0
Telephone engaged/on hold too long	27	15.9	18.4
Problem with opening hours	15	8.8	7.6
Other problem	11	6.5	4.8
No ability to access the Internet	10	5.9	2.4
Difficulty understanding advice/information	8	4.7	4.7
Difficulty in affording it	7	4.1	6.0
Embarrassed to be seen using services	4	2.4	1.8
English language problems	2	1.2	1.5

Notes: All regions, $n = 1246$, data missing for 250 events, and for Walgett, $n = 170$, data missing for 37 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.

Walgett participant experienced barriers to receiving assistance in almost 42 per cent of legal events where help was sought, slightly higher than for all regions (38.2%). However, the most common types of barriers experienced by the Walgett participants appear similar to those for the overall sample. The barriers reported were mainly associated with delay in getting a response back from an adviser (22.4%), lack of local services (20.6%), difficulty getting an appointment (18.2%) and difficulty getting through to an adviser on the telephone (15.9%), the latter being the most common barrier to obtaining assistance over all regions. Further, the problem of lack of local services was experienced by Walgett participants at a higher rate than for all regions (20.6% vs 8.1% respectively).³³ This is not unexpected, given the isolation and size of this locality. However, it highlights a significant barrier for legal service provision in remote areas. In only a small proportion of legal events did people report not being able to afford an adviser (4.1%). 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 of legal 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 Walgett participants travelled to obtain help from the sole or most useful adviser.

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

DISTANCE TRAVELLED (KILOMETRES)	Walgett		All regions
	No.	%	%
Didn't need to travel	67	39.2	44.0
< 3	34	19.9	19.6
4–10	10	5.8	15.8
11–20	4	2.3	8.2
21–40	3	1.8	4.5
41+	53	31.0	8.0
Total	171	100.0	100.0

Note: All regions, $n = 1249$, missing data on 247 events, and for Walgett, $n = 171$, data missing for 36 events.

Among the Walgett sub-sample of most recent events, approximately 39 per cent of legal events where help was sought involved no travel to access assistance compared with 67 per cent over all regions. In general, it appears from Table 9 that Walgett participants had to travel much further to obtain assistance than did participants overall. Indeed, as one might expect for a remote area, Walgett participants reported travelling over 20 kilometres to obtain help for almost 33 per cent of legal events, a highly significant difference compared with only 12.5 per cent for all regions.³⁴ This is consistent with the result reported in the previous section (Barriers to Assistance), which indicated a reasonable proportion of participants reported a lack of local services in the Walgett area. Not surprisingly, those residing in metropolitan areas interviewed for this survey had, in general, closer access to advice than those in regional and rural or remote areas (Coumarelos et al. 2006).

Type of assistance

It would be reasonable to assume that when people are asked whether they sought assistance for their

legal problems, 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 events.

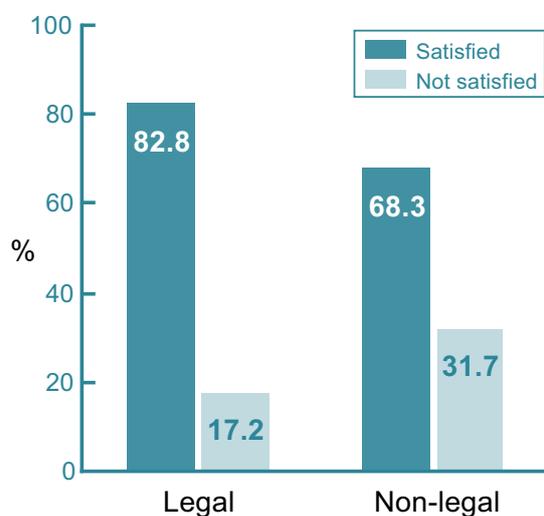
In Table 10, although the number of legal events is small overall, it is worth noting how advisers are actually used by people experiencing legal problems. Examples of legal help include assistance with legal documents, preparation for court proceedings or advice about the legal implications of a course of action. Examples of non-legal advice include medical advice, advice about financial options and counselling and support. Unsurprisingly, in the majority of legal events where assistance was sought from a legal source, the help received was legal in nature (60.7%). Interestingly, help of a legal nature was also received from a non-legal adviser in 21.4 per cent of events. In 30.7 per cent of cases, 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 Walgett respondents 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, WALGETT, 2003



Notes: Walgett, *n* = 168 events, missing data for 39 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 great majority of legal events, respondents were satisfied with the assistance they received from their sole or most useful adviser. Although it appears that the level of satisfaction is higher for the help received from legal than non-legal advisers (82.8% vs 68.3% respectively), this difference did not reach statistical significance.³⁵ Compared with the overall sample, Walgett participants had a similar level of satisfaction (82.8% vs 85.8% respectively) for legal advisers³⁶ but a much lower level of satisfaction (68.3% vs 76.3% respectively) for non-legal advisers.³⁷ In fact, of the six regions surveyed, the level of satisfaction for non-legal advisers was reported the lowest by Walgett participants (range 73–80% for other regions).

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

TYPE OF ADVICE	Walgett				All regions	
	LEGAL ADVISER		NON-LEGAL ADVISER		LEGAL ADVISER	NON-LEGAL ADVISER
	No.	%	No.	%	%	%
No help received	1	3.6	15	10.7	5.5	9.1
Legal	17	60.7	30	21.4	63.9	15.0
Non-legal	3	10.7	43	30.7	5.8	34.1
Legal vs non-legal help not specified	9	32.1	53	37.9	29.2	42.2

Notes: All regions, *n* = 1243, data missing for 253 events, and for Walgett, *n* = 168, 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.

SUMMARY

In summary, the Walgett sub-sample was similar in some ways to the overall sample interviewed for this survey on legal need, but there are several points of difference between the sub-sample and all regions. It is important to note that Walgett LGA is a remote area and also has a relatively high Indigenous population, and these could be factors contributing to those differences identified.

As with the other regions surveyed in this study, Walgett LGA is an area where people experienced a reasonably high incidence of legal events over a one-year period. Approximately 69 per cent of Walgett participants reported experiencing one or more legal events in the previous 12 months, with almost 32 per cent reported experiencing three or more legal events. The incidence of legal events for Walgett LGA was statistically comparable to that reported for the other regions.

The legal events experienced among the Walgett sub-sample related to a broad range of civil, criminal and family law issues. As with the overall sample, of the legal events reported by Walgett participants, the majority fell under the broad heading of civil law, although this was somewhat a function of the structure of the questionnaire. Walgett participants reported civil and family matters at similar rates to the overall sample, although credit/debt issues were more prevalent among this sub-sample than the overall group. One factor that may explain this finding is that Indigenous people were more likely to report credit/debt issues in general in this study (Coumarelos et al, 2006). Therefore, as the Walgett sub-sample had 13.2% of respondents who identified as Indigenous (compared with between 0.3% and 3.6% for the other regions), this may have increased the rate of credit/debt issues reported. Criminal matters were also reported at a significantly higher rate than the overall sample.

When respondents took some action about their legal problems, help from an adviser was sought for approximately 45 per cent of the legal events reported, generally from only one source. However, of the six LGAs surveyed, Walgett LGA had the lowest proportion of participants reporting they sought help with their legal problem. Among the Walgett respondents who took no action for their legal problems, the most important reason provided was the respondent felt the issue was not serious (or did not know how serious the event was). A previous study on legal service provision in rural communities

indicated that lack of privacy and confidentiality, embarrassment/fear of public scrutiny and service providers' conflict of interest issue may deter people living in small communities such as Walgett from obtaining legal help (Gidding, Hook and Nielsen 2001). Similar to other regions, Walgett participants most often source their help through their own personal knowledge and personal networks. However, when compared with all participants, they were more likely to use an adviser from a service they had used before, which may partly be the result of a limited choice of advisers in the local area. In the majority of cases, the participants tended to use non-legal advisers such as friends, relatives or non-legal professionals compared with legal advisers. Thus, unsurprisingly, for a large proportion it was non-legal advice that was received.

In general, Walgett participants experienced few difficulties with getting assistance with their legal problems. Although in the minority, a number of Walgett residents participating in the current survey reported experiencing some delay in getting a response back from an adviser and also reported the lack of local services. This may explain why the majority of Walgett participants had to travel much further for their legal assistance — in one-third of legal events they reported travelling over 20 kilometres for assistance, considerably further than survey participants from other regions. Despite this, almost 70 per cent of Walgett participants were satisfied with the help they received. However, levels of satisfaction for non-legal advisers were reported the lowest among the six regions surveyed.

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 in remote areas. 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 benefit in raising the general level of legal literacy among the community at large, to enable the use of non-legal professionals as effective gateways into available legal services (Coumarelos et al. 2006).

Finally, delay in getting a response back from an adviser and the lack of local services may indicate the need to improve the accessibility of legal services through more resources, extended availability of services and additional legal services for special groups including Indigenous people. For Indigenous participants, their language and cultural barriers and lack of cultural awareness among service providers could be reasons for not seeking help from mainstream legal services (Australian Parliament House 2004). Some new initiatives targeting these needs have been implemented, such as the establishment of centres to provide culturally sensitive and accessible legal services to Indigenous families (Ralph 2006) and special assistance for Indigenous women in family law matters (Song 2006).

Communication and information technologies (hotlines, video conferencing facilities and internet websites) may also reduce the barriers of distance to improve access to legal services in remote areas. However, limited access to telephone/computer/internet, poor English language skills and poor literacy rates among people living in remote areas are barriers that must be considered to ensure that legal services can react quickly and effectively to resolve legal problems in remote areas (Fowler, 2003).

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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.³⁸ 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
CIVIL (76)		Accident/injury (4)	CIVIL cont. (76)		Housing (11)
	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
		Business (2)		14	Home ownership problem
	7	Problem as landlord		16A	Strata title problem
	9	Problem re own business		16B	Problem re caravan/home estate
		Consumer (5)		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			Human rights^a (8)
	56	Complaint about lawyer		24A	Discrimination – marital status
		Credit/debt (5)		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
		Education (6)		31H*	Discrimination – carer of disabled/elderly
	35A	Unfair exclusion from education			Wills/estates (4)
	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			CRIMINAL (16)
		Employment (5)			Domestic violence (3)
	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			General crime (11)
	2E*	Other problem re employment		46A	Unfair treatment by police
		Government (15)		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			Traffic offences (2)
	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			FAMILY (9)
	53E	Problem re release – immigration detention			Family (9)
	57B*	Problem re legal system		25A	Problem re residence/contact for child
		Health (11)		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		Unclassified (3)		
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

- ¹ Only LGAs with a population of 5000 or greater were considered for this study.
- ² 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).
- ³ 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.
- ⁴ Note that none of these differences were formally statistically tested and are only discussed here for descriptive purposes.
- ⁵ OR = 1.43, $p = .001$.
- ⁶ OR = 0.70, $p < .001$.
- ⁷ OR = 1.48, $p < .001$.
- ⁸ OR = 0.77, $p < .01$.
- ⁹ OR = 1.34, $p < .01$; OR = 1.29, $p < .01$; OR = 0.72, $p = .001$ respectively.
- ¹⁰ OR = 1.60, $p = .001$.
- ¹¹ 2003 data were not available.
- ¹² 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).

- ¹³ LawAccess is a free telephone information service that operates under the auspices of the NSW Attorney General's Department.
- ¹⁴ All statistical comparisons between individual LGAs and the overall sample were performed by logistic regression using deviation contrasts (see Appendix 2).
- ¹⁵ No comparisons are statistically significant at $p = .05$.
- ¹⁶ Not statistically significant at $p = .05$.
- ¹⁷ OR = 1.29, $p < .01$.
- ¹⁸ Not statistically significant at $p = .05$.
- ¹⁹ OR = 0.75, $p < .05$.
- ²⁰ OR = 0.66, $p = .001$.
- ²¹ Education: OR = 1.45, $p < .05$; Wills and estates, OR = 1.31, $p < .05$.
- ²² OR = 1.50, $p = .001$.
- ²³ OR = 1.32, $p = .005$.
- ²⁴ Logistic regression adjusted for clustering, OR = 0.76, $p > .01$.
- ²⁵ Logistic regression adjusted for clustering, OR = 1.25, $p < .05$.
- ²⁶ 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 didn't 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.
- ²⁷ Logistic regression adjusted for clustering, did nothing vs handled alone and sought help combined for criminal matters vs civil, $p > .05$, criminal matters vs family matters, $p > .05$.
- ²⁸ Logistic regression adjusted for clustering, OR = 0.76, $p < .05$.
- ²⁹ Logistic regression adjusted for clustering, $p > .05$.
- ³⁰ The number of family events ($n = 26$) was too small for mixed effects analysis.
- ³¹ Logistic regression adjusted for clustering, $p > .05$.
- ³² Logistic regression adjusted for clustering, OR = 2.13, $p < .01$.
- ³³ Not formally statistically tested.
- ³⁴ Logistic regression adjusted for clustering, OR = 9.47, $p < .001$.
- ³⁵ Logistic regression adjusted for clustering, $p > .05$.
- ³⁶ 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.
- ³⁷ Logistic regression adjusted for clustering, OR = 0.66, $p < .05$.
- ³⁸ 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. 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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