



MEDIA RELEASE

14 June 2017

Evaluation of summary crime services to inform future strategic and operational planning

The Adult Summary Crime Sub-program, which is the largest service delivery program run by Victoria Legal Aid, is the subject of a new study by the Law and Justice Foundation of New South Wales. [In summary: evaluation of the appropriateness and sustainability of Victoria Legal Aid's Summary Crime Program](#) examined the impact of changes made in 2012–13 on the program, which provides legal aid grants, duty lawyer services and legal advice to clients based on their legal problem and their capability.

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the appropriateness and sustainability of Victoria Legal Aid's summary crime services. The evaluation involved quantitative analysis of data on legal aid grants and duty lawyer services. Qualitative research included focus groups, interviews and an online survey.

Lead author Dr Hugh McDonald said: "The Law and Justice Foundation has been engaged by Victoria Legal Aid to help build the evidence base to support policy making and practice. We drew on the views and experiences of more than 300 clients, staff, stakeholders and advisers as well as 4½ years of administrative service data. The findings demonstrate that while Victoria Legal Aid can take various actions to improve services, increased demand is affecting the whole summary crime system and a system-wide response is required."

The report contains 23 recommendations, spanning the operation the Duty Lawyer Service and the Grant Guidelines, through to the smarter use of data and additional evaluation to learn 'what works' in summary crime services.

Data in [In summary: evaluation of the appropriateness and sustainability of Victoria Legal Aid's Summary Crime Program](#) have been sourced from Victoria Legal Aid. The report can be downloaded from www.lawfoundation.net.au

About the Law and Justice Foundation of New South Wales

The Law and Justice Foundation of New South Wales is an independent, statutory, not-for-profit organisation established in 1967 to advance the fairness and equity of the justice system, and to improve access to justice for socially and economically disadvantaged people. Through our research, the Foundation identifies legal need, and what strategies work to address that legal need, to support the planning and delivery of the most effective legal assistance services.

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