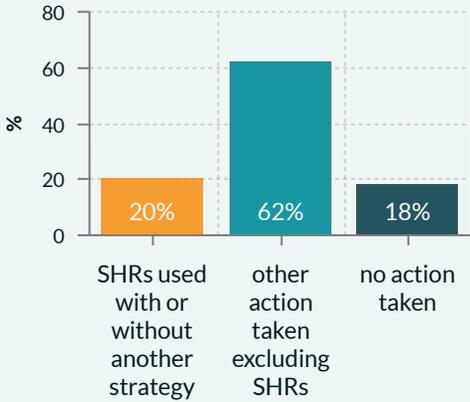**LAW AND JUSTICE FOUNDATION** OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Uptake of legal self-help resources (SHRs)

This paper reports new analysis of the national *Legal Australia-Wide (LAW) Survey* dataset, examining respondents' use of *self-help resources* for legal problems. Self-help resources were shown to be typically one of a number of strategies people used to resolve legal problems, suggesting they are a complementary rather than an alternative, stand-alone strategy. The use of self-help resources was associated with increased use of formal advisers. But many people in the community are less capable of using self-help resources effectively and don't find them helpful. The access to justice impact must be monitored in light of evidence suggesting self-help resources are better suited to the 'missing middle'.

SHRs were only used in response to 20% of legal problems

	SHRs used with or without another strategy	other action taken excluding SHRs	no action taken
%	20%	62%	18%

Who used self-help resources?

25-34 year olds were the most likely of any age group

people who had **post-school qualifications** were twice as likely as those who had not completed Year 12

people with **disabilities** were 1.3 times as likely as others

64%

two-thirds of respondents who used a self-help resource also sought help from a **professional adviser** *e.g. legal, financial, government or health and welfare adviser*

How **helpful** did respondents find self-help resources?

of the 20% of legal problems for which SHRs were used:

respondents found SHRs *not helpful* for **40%** of these problems

40% **60%**

respondents found SHRs *helpful* for **60%** of these problems

for instance: when used for **severe** legal problems they were *1.5 times less likely* to be helpful

for example: **single parents** were *1.3 times more likely* to find them helpful

Better outcomes?

respondents who found self-help resources **helpful** had a higher likelihood of:

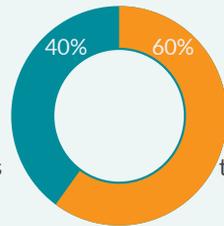- resolving their legal problem
- achieving a favourable outcome
- satisfaction with the outcome

How can self-help resources be more **useful** for legal problems?

ongoing monitoring of the *helpfulness* and *effectiveness* of self-help resources for different **groups of people** and different **types of legal problems** is vital to improve their utility and impact

monitor resource helpfulness

better **design** and **targeting**

increased **uptake** and **utility**