



Why Australia needs a new legal needs survey

- Legal needs surveys (LNS) are the only way to get a *representative* assessment, from the citizen's perspective, of the legal needs of the community.
- Importantly, an LNS therefore provides the means for governments to approach law reform *from the people's perspective* rather than just the "system's" perspective.
- Published in 2012, the LAW Survey remains the most comprehensive quantitative assessment of legal needs conducted to date in Australia. More than 20,000 people across all states and territories were interviewed about the legal problems they experience, where they go for advice and the outcomes they achieve.
- The LAW Survey revealed, for example, that the experience of legal problems is inequitable: 9% of people in our community experience two-thirds of the legal problems.
- The Productivity Commission recommended the conduct of an LNS very five years in its 2014 report *Access to Justice arrangements*.
- The important *Justice Project* incorporated the knowledge gained from the LAW Survey to underpin its community-focused approach to improve access to justice.
- Since the LAW Survey was conducted, Australia has experienced substantial demographic changes, including population growth of more than 4 million people, and has undergone a digital transformation.



What do we hope to learn from a new legal needs survey?

- What legal problems people have experienced, including new and emerging problems?
- What is the experience of priority groups in the community, such as victims of domestic violence, and what are the appropriate pathways to help?
- What are the direct and indirect costs of legal problems, and the pathways to resolve them?
- Where do people go to get assistance, when and why?
- How is technology used to get assistance and resolve legal problems?
- What are the life events that increase individual vulnerabilities?
- How and where are legal problems being finalised now?

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