



2018 COLLABORATIVE PLANNING RESOURCE

CPR LAW Survey Prevalence data

The best available measure of the extent of legal problems at state/territory level is the LAW Survey.¹ The survey also identifies the personal characteristics that increase the chance of experiencing a legal problem. About half of Australian residents will experience a legal problem every year. Some people, due to their personal circumstances, are at increased risk of experiencing a problem, such as single parents, people with a disability and the unemployed. Having more than one type of disadvantage increases the risk significantly.

However, because it is a survey of only a sample of the population, the number of people interviewed in smaller geographic areas, such as LGAs, is generally insufficient to provide robust measures. There have been previous attempts to estimate the prevalence of legal problems in LGAs using information about the extent to which people with particular characteristics experience problems and applying to this the population profile of an LGA. However, these estimates are likely to have a wide margin of error and, therefore, may not be useful for distinguishing between areas.

The table below shows the average percentage of each priority group that experienced at least one legal problem in a year. These figures from the LAW Survey are for groups that in some cases vary from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census definitions used in the 2018 CPR.

		15+ population	Financially disadvantaged - personal income (15+)	People with low education (15+)	Unemployed people (15+)	Single parents (15+)	Children and youth (15-24)	People 65 and over	People with a disability (15+)	Indigenous Australians (15+)	CALD people (15+)	Outer regional/remote 15+
Percentage of people experiencing legal problems (Law Survey 2012)	ACT	49	45	44	59	65	51	32	62	47	41	n/a
	NSW	50	46	44	64	72	53	28	62	55	42	47
	NT	55	58	51	64	66	60	45	69	53	47	55
	QLD	50	46	44	69	68	51	31	59	52	49	46
	SA	47	45	42	66	71	49	30	60	54	43	41
	TAS	48	44	42	58	69	50	31	58	56	58	45
	VIC	48	46	41	61	65	50	31	60	62	42	44
	WA	52	48	45	60	74	50	38	65	55	42	47
	AUSTRALIA	50	46	43	64	69	51	31	61	54	43	50

Given that the experience of legal problems is so widespread, and not everyone will require or prefer a legal response, an alternative approach to service planning is to focus on identifying who is most likely to need access to legal assistance services once a problem has been experienced. That is, focusing on those people who are least likely to have the personal or financial resources to manage their own problems and are most likely to be eligible for legal assistance services. To facilitate this alternative approach to service planning, the LJF developed the concept of the NLAS indicator.²

The Foundation developed the Collaborative Planning Resource (CPR) in support of the 2015 National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services (NPA) between the Commonwealth of Australia and the states/territories. This brought together information on service design and data to support planning and monitoring of legal assistance services and includes data for the CPR NLAS indicators and CPR priority groups. Further information is available at www.lawfoundation.net.au/reports/aboutcpr.

¹ Coumarelos, C, Macourt, D, People, J, McDonald, HM, Wei, Z, Iriana, R & Ramsey, S 2012, *Legal Australia-Wide Survey: legal need in Australia*, Law and Justice Foundation of NSW, Sydney.

² Mirrlees-Black, C and Randell, SA 2017, *Need for legal assistance services: developing a measure for Australia*, Justice issues paper 26, Law and Justice Foundation of NSW, Sydney.