

# Building evidence of outcomes & what works

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# Acknowledgment of country



# Overview

## **Access to Justice and Legal Needs**

- What we know
- Why outcomes are critical
- Building evidence of what works
- Research and policy context

# What we know

Over last 20 years research in Australia and overseas provides a good picture of A2JLN across the community:

- Who experiences legal problems (and what type)
- What different people do (or don't do) in response
- Who tries to make use the law and the justice system (and who doesn't)
- Who makes use of legal information, lawyers and other advisers (and who doesn't)
- What outcomes (e.g. matter finalisation, matter satisfaction) people achieve

# What we know

We know from empirical research:

1. Legal problems are common and widespread
2. Inequality in experience and response to legal problems
3. Inequality is linked to disadvantage
4. Legal problem & demographic characteristics drive behaviour and outcomes
5. Legal problems don't exist in isolation – clusters of legal and related problems

# What we know

Inequity of need points to benefits from services that are:

- **People-focused, based on more holistic approaches** – that mirror behaviour across the community
- **Targeted** to reach those with the highest legal need and lowest capability to effectively self-manage
- **Joined** with others to address complex circumstances
- **Accessible and timely** to minimise the impact of problems and maximise utility of assistance
- **Tailored and responsive** to the needs and capabilities of diverse communities and users.

# What we know



**Insight:** Diversity in legal need and capability across community suggests variation in ‘what works’

- No one-size-fits all solutions
- Multi-faceted strategies needed
- Variation by legal matter and population cohorts
- Benefits of triage to ‘what works’

Client-centred approaches based on need and capability broadly reflected in national legal assistance policy.

# — National Strategic Framework for Legal Assistance

## **Sets out 6 principles:**

1. Focus service delivery on people facing disadvantage
2. Client centred and appropriate services
3. Collaboration and integrated approaches
4. Appropriately timed responses and preventative action
5. Empowerment and resilience
6. Continuous learning and improvement



# What we know



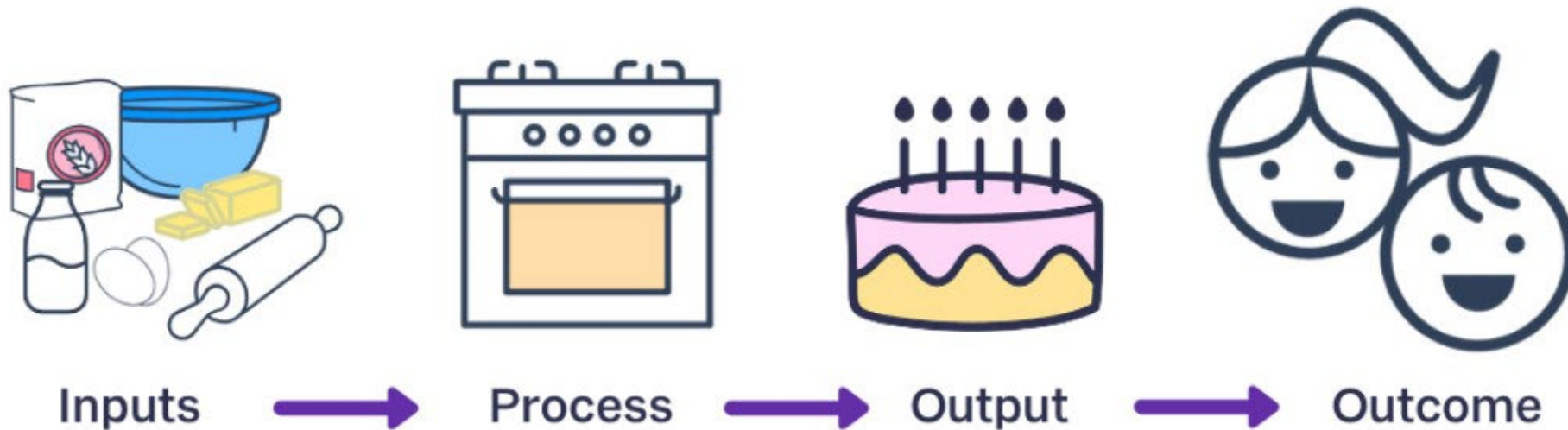
**Insight:** We think such approaches works better, but we don't really know

We currently know much more about legal and related needs than 'what works' to best meet those needs





Learning more about client outcomes is especially critical to learning what works (or works better, and what doesn't work well)

# Why outcomes are critical

- Outcomes are what you want and plan to achieve
- They are purpose and objective of what you do
- They are the results of a service, programme, intervention etc., produced by the inputs, process activities and outputs.
- The outcome you want is the happy child, not the birthday cake.



# Why outcomes are critical

- Outcomes are a **new frontier** for legal assistance service design and policy - for learning 'what works' and closing knowledge gaps
- We have pretty **thick** evidence on legal need  
- But pretty **thin** evidence of what works to meet that need  
- Unfortunately, other than casework we just don't do enough to measure and learn about client outcomes

# Why outcomes are critical

- Growing global interest in legal assistance outcomes and outcomes measurement.
- Momentum also building from new technology offering new ways to collect outcome information
- Electronic based outcome measures common in many other sectors, and are starting to be employed for legal assistance  
E.g. automated outcomes measurement by SMS for residential tenancy advice in US

# Why outcomes are critical

Policy: What does the **standard 20min legal advice** appointment achieve?

Me: Don't know.

Policy: Why is it 20min? Does it work?

Me: Don't know, often probably does, but not always. Probably scope for better service provision, with some shorter and longer appointments relative to need, which is what happens in practice, but isn't really counted like that.

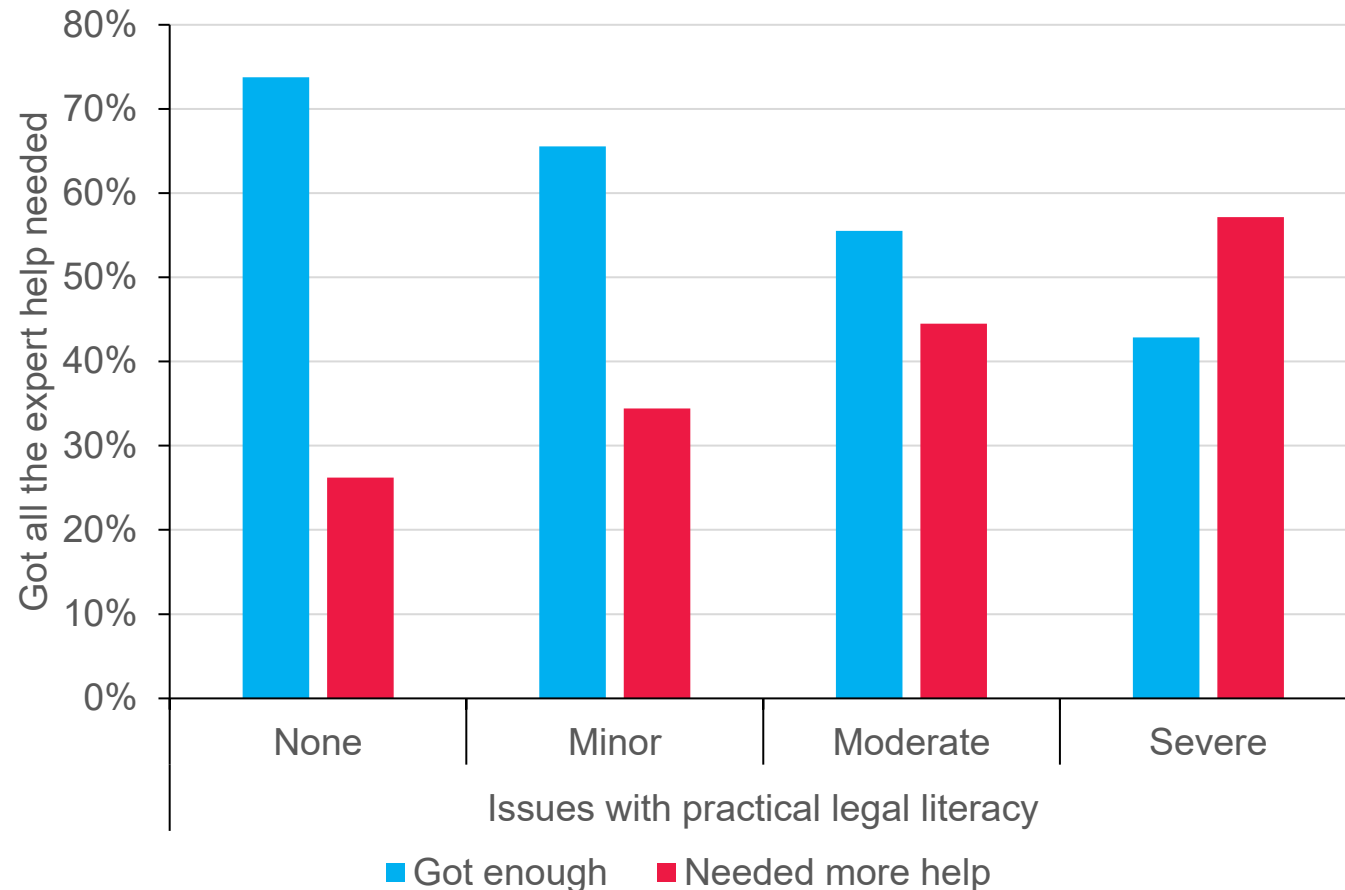


# One early findings our PULS in Victoria

*Public Understanding of Law Survey in Victoria, representative, face-to-face, n=6,000 Victorians aged 18+*

## When we ask if people got the advice they needed?

- Legal capability really matters
- Less practical legal literacy means less useful assistance
- Mismatch between what some people need and what they are getting



# Research and policy context

Outcomes are increasingly fashionable across public policy

Policy shift - governments generally want to fund/purchase 'what works'.

National Legal Assistance Partnership (NLAP) requires work on an Outcomes Framework before the current agreement expires end of June 2025

# Research and policy context

## Closing the loop by building evidence of what works

- To build the A2JLN evidence-base, need to know what works, for whom, what, and at what cost
  - To assess efficiency and effectiveness of different assistance
  - To determine cost-efficiency and cost-benefit
  - To build business cases for investment etc.
- Need to know about inputs, activities (service models), outputs AND **outcomes**

# Research and policy context

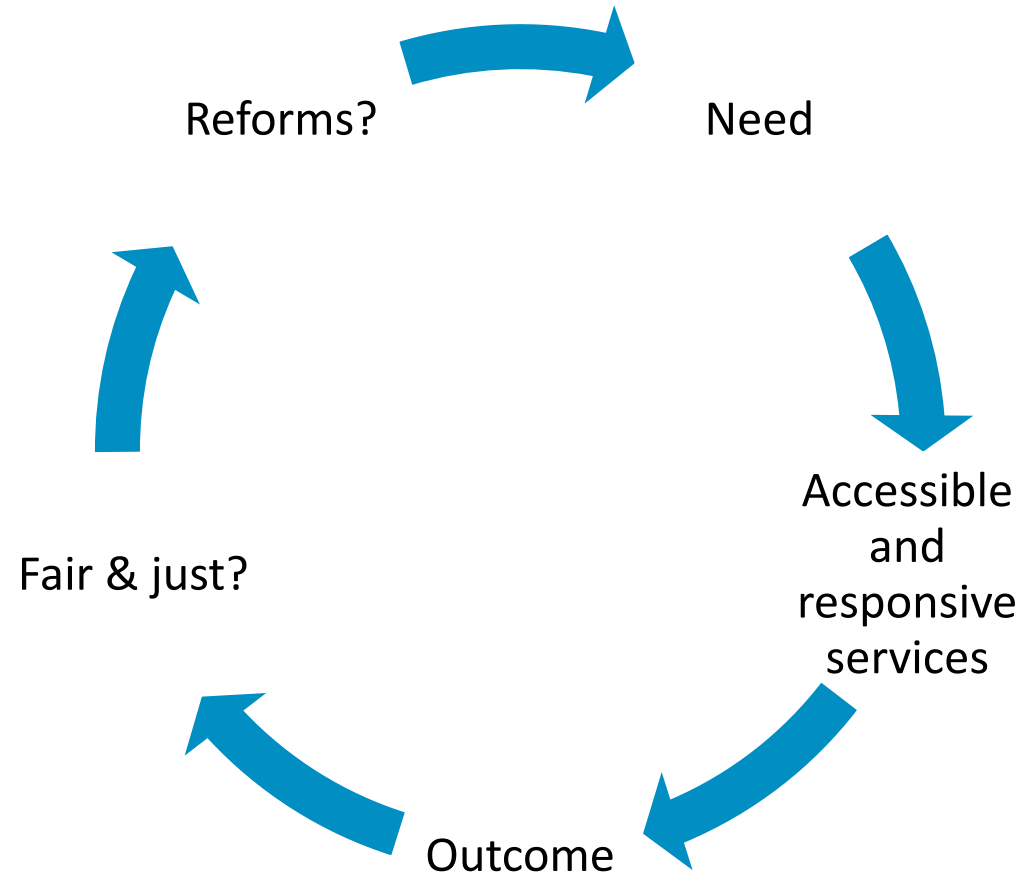
## **Closing the loop ... on what works to meet legal need**

People-centred justice data – being able to see different people, problems, places, pathways, and outcomes ... to better monitor and evaluate assistance and assess access to justice.

Outcomes measurement is part of the equation.

# Research and policy context

**Closing the loop on what works to effectively meet legal need**





# Research and policy context

However, key measurement challenges ...

- What outcomes interested in?
- What development and support required?
- How collected information?
- Where get resources to do it?

... with key leadership, collaboration, resourcing challenges.

# Research and policy context

There is a moment of opportunity right now.

Been talking about outcomes measurement for more than a decade.

Government is also becoming more interested.

New technology making measurement easier and cheaper

Lots beginning to happen as jurisdictions grapple with the challenges.

# Some references

Legal Australia-Wide Survey reports <http://www.lawfoundation.net.au/publications>  
<http://www.lawfoundation.net.au/ljf/app/&id=FC6F890AA7D0835ACA257A90008300DB>

*Reshaping legal assistance services* discussion paper  
<http://www.lawfoundation.net.au/ljf/app/&id=D76E53BB842CB7B1CA257D7B000D5173>

Reshaping legal assistance services summary  
[http://www.lawfoundation.net.au/ljf/site/templates/UpdatingJustice/\\$file/UJ\\_43\\_Reshaping\\_legal\\_assistance\\_services.pdf](http://www.lawfoundation.net.au/ljf/site/templates/UpdatingJustice/$file/UJ_43_Reshaping_legal_assistance_services.pdf)

## **OECD People-centred justice**

<https://www.oecd.org/publications/oecd-framework-and-good-practice-principles-for-people-centred-justice-cdc3bde7-en.htm>

## **VLF Research reports**

<https://victorialawfoundation.org.au/research/research-reports/>

## **VLF Data Mapping Project**

<https://victorialawfoundation.org.au/research/our-research-plan/mapping-justice/>

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