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Access | Justice

Guiding Principles for Effective Collaboration with Frontline Agencies

Lessons from over 20 years delivering outreach legal partnerships

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Session Outline



Reflecting on over 20 years of collaborating with frontline agencies



Defining 'legal outreach'



Benefits of embedded legal help



Establishing & improving legal partnerships with frontline agencies

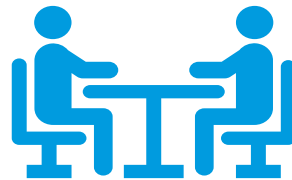


Overcoming the challenges of embedded legal help

Community & Health Justice Partnerships



Homelessness Law and Multicultural Law programs implements a best-practice, outreach-based, trauma-informed service delivery model



Staff lawyers are currently fully embedded in 8 frontline homelessness, community and health agencies in Brisbane & Cairns

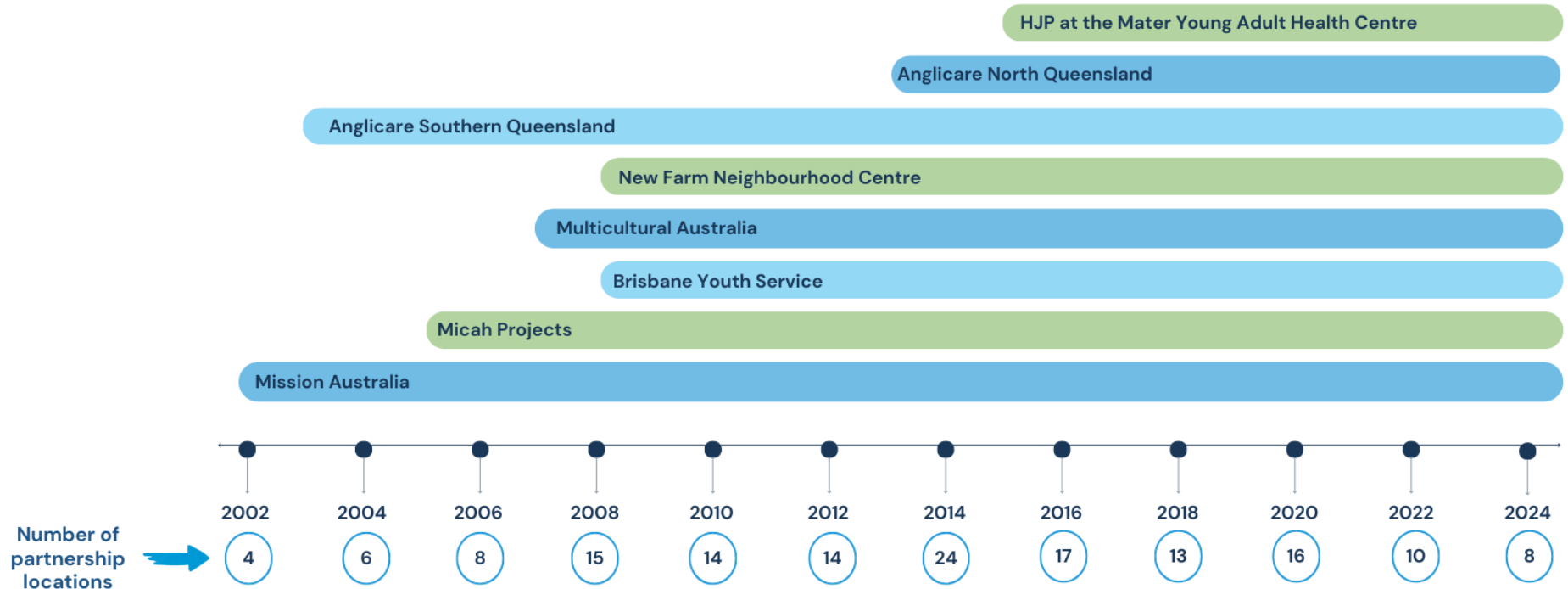


We maintain effective referral, training or advocacy partnerships with another 15+ agencies

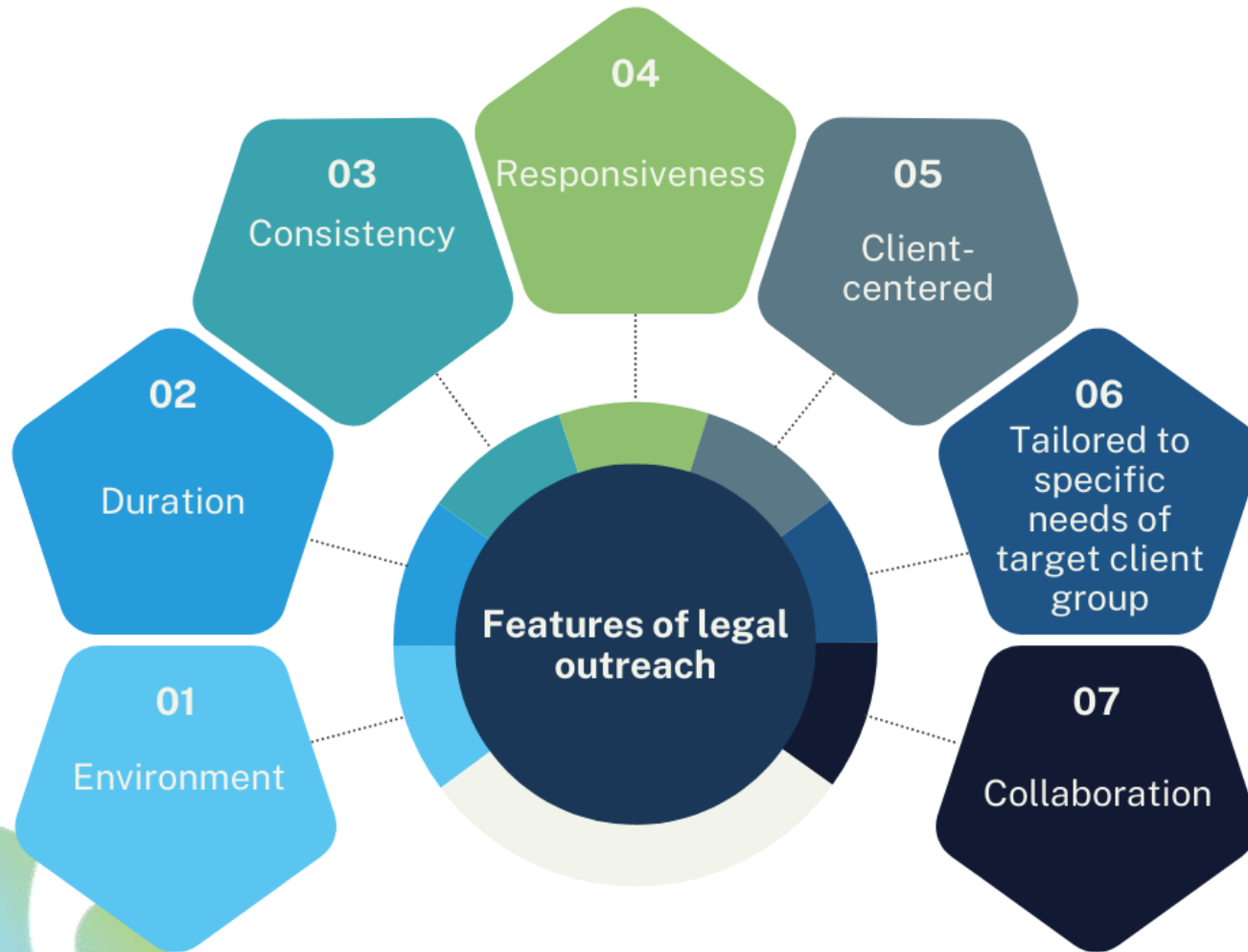


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Timeline: embedded legal help



Defining 'legal outreach'



Features of embedded legal help



Triaging clients for embedded legal help

Managing this process – partner agency or the CLC?



Structure of the legal appointments

Drop-in or pre-booked appointments?



Purpose of the initial legal appointment

Intake, advice or hybrid?



Role of the pro bono lawyers

How to effectively leverage pro bono support?

At a snapshot: benefits of embedded legal help



Increased **access to justice** for disadvantaged client cohorts, especially 'hard-to-reach' clients



Positive legal outcomes & meaningfully improving clients' circumstances, including increased efficiency



Opportunity to establish stronger long-term relationships with clients and provide **proactive support** to prevent further legal issues from surfacing



Opportunity to build legal & non-legal capability through **cross-disciplinary** training, collaboration and sharing of knowledge & expertise

Benefits of embedded legal help

	Community lawyer embedded at organisation			No community lawyer embedded		
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
I feel confident that I can identify legal problems my client is experiencing	69%	23%	9%	64%	18%	18%
I feel confident connecting a client to legal services if they have unresolved legal issues	86%	11%	3%	73%	18%	9%
When clients ask for help with legal problems, I feel that I have the appropriate knowledge, skills, resources and training to assist them	29%	26%	46%	6%	33%	61%
There are sufficient legal services in the community available to my clients	29%	34%	37%	12%	9%	79%
My clients get better outcomes when they connect to a lawyer	86%	11%	3%	73%	24%	3%
My clients' legal and non-legal problems are usually related	66%	26%	9%	58%	30%	12%

LawRight (2024) Frontline Community, Health and Homelessness Workers' Survey

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Benefits of embedded legal help

“It is so lovely to have a direct contact with a community lawyer who is happy to answer questions, and offer appointments in a location easy to access for already existing clients.”

Youth worker

“The Lawright community lawyers are so helpful and extremely fast with responding - it provides peace of mind knowing that our participants are going to receive genuine law advice and not be judged or discriminated against.”

Social Worker



*In your experience, what
are some other benefits
of embedded legal help
& close collaboration
with partner agencies?*

ESTABLISHING LEGAL OUTREACH PARTNERSHIPS

No one-size-fits-all approach

Stage 1

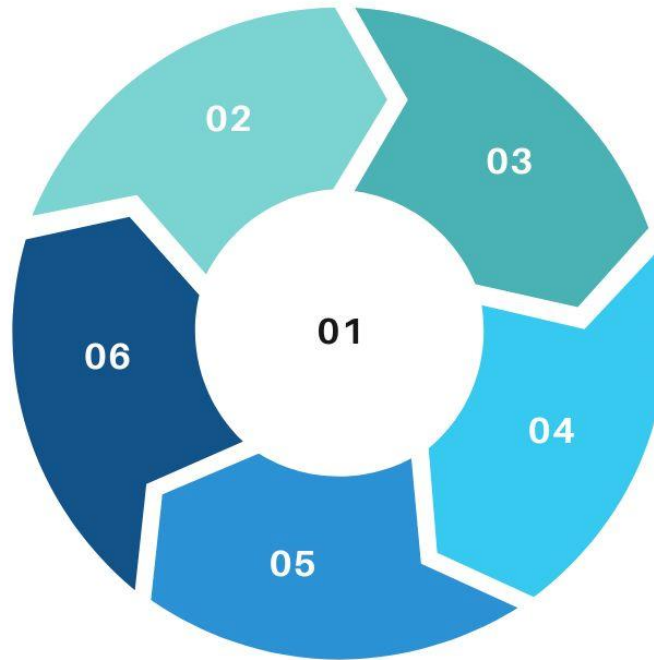
Identify the legal needs of your priority client cohorts

Stage 2

Be familiar with the existing local service infrastructure

Stage 3

The physical space & local geography



Stage 4

Raising awareness of the service to successfully engage with clients

Stage 5

Identify the desired outcomes of engagement

Stage 6

Plans for administration and sustainability

Effective embedded legal help

Structured in-person appointments

Control over intake & booking processes

Continuity in the staff member embedded at the partner agency

Openness, respect & valuing the experience & contribution of non-legal professionals & their organisations' priorities

Being accessible to the partner agency

Providing regular training to the partner agency

Regular reflection on your own individual practice & your organisation's practice



What are your insights or reflections on how to effectively embed legal help & collaborate with partner agencies?

Embedded legal help: overcoming challenges

Challenges in theory



In practice

- Be open & accessible
- Clear scope of assistance to client & boundaries with frontline worker
- Be aware of internal policies
- Reflective supervision
- Investment in embedding legal help & early intervention leads to increased efficiencies



What are your insights or reflections on the challenges to effectively embedding legal help & collaborating with partner agencies?

Takeaways



Embedded legal help benefits clients, partner agencies and legal organisations



These benefits outweigh the various challenges



Continuous re-evaluation & reflection on service delivery is required to improve the effectiveness of legal outreach partnerships

Questions



Contacting me

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