

Legal Information Fair Townsville Correctional Centres

19 – 22 February 2024



Purpose

To provide prisoners in Townsville Correctional Centre (TCC) with a **holistic opportunity to connect with different legal services** to address their short and long-term legal needs.

By bringing service providers into prison, the project **removed barriers** faced by prisoners to obtaining legal assistance and **encouraged collaboration** to meet prisoners' intersecting legal needs.

The project was coordinated by Prisoners' Legal Service (PLS) in collaboration with members of the North Queensland Regional Legal Assistance Forum (NQRLAF) with funding from the Department of Justice and Attorney General.



Service providers



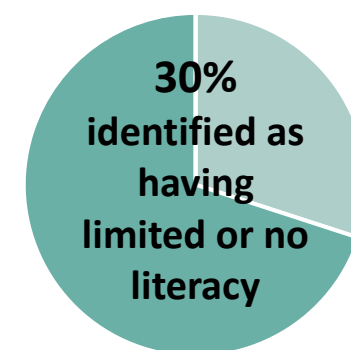
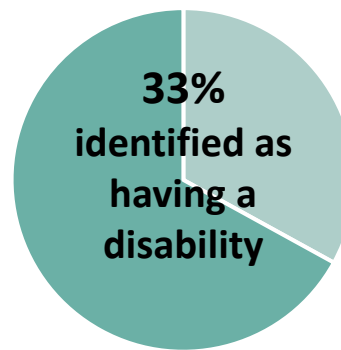
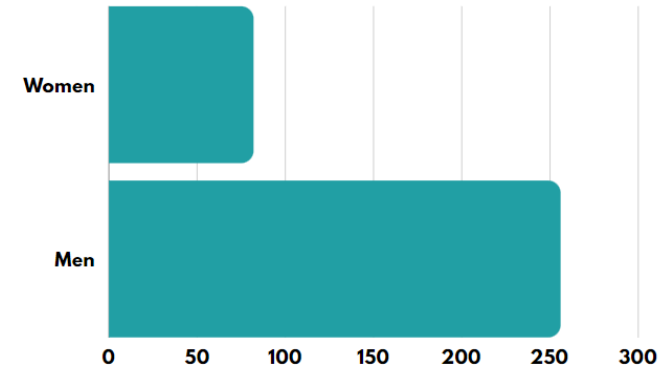
Planning

- Schedule
- Location
- Advertising



Attendees

338 ATTENDEES - ONE THIRD OF THE TCC PRISON POPULATION



Overcoming barriers



DERICK'S STORY

Derick is an Aboriginal man in his 30s. He attended the LIF but did not approach any service providers. He was standing in the central hub area chatting informally to other prisoners and the PLS representative. Derick initially indicated to PLS that he didn't need to see a legal service and had just come along to see what the event was about.

After chatting to the PLS representative about non-legal issues for about 20 minutes, Derick disclosed that he was interested in learning about institutional abuse claims. PLS provided him with information about the options available to consider. Derick then indicated he was keen to receive advice about these options and the PLS representative accompanied him to the appropriate service provider stall so that he could receive further assistance with this issue.



Prisoner Feedback

The feedback received from prisoners about the LIF was **overwhelmingly positive**. All feedback from prisoners rated the assistance provided to them as *"useful"* or *"very useful"*.

Prisoners identified that the *"variety and options"* of service providers was a positive aspect of the LIF. One prisoner commented that the event had *"provided an opportunity to find information relevant to my needs."*

Prisoners also indicated that the LIF had allowed them to obtain legal assistance for issues they had been struggling to address. One person commented *"Finally getting help. Feeling better."*

Another said it was *"Good to access lawyers easily, very helpful. It is hard to get through to lawyers on the phone"*.

A common suggestion from prisoners was that **the event be held more often**.

Some prisoners suggested that the event could have been better advertised. One prisoner commented that *"more prison related marketing"* could have improved the event.

Several prisoner feedback forms indicated that they had learnt about the LIF from a *"call out in the unit"* on the day of the event.

Service provider feedback

Attendees also indicated that the LIF allowed them to **connect with disadvantaged people who otherwise may not have accessed their service.**

Responses to the survey indicating this included:

"It became apparent during the LIF that very high numbers of inmates are not able to access the phones due to codes, lockdowns, disproportionate inmate to phone ratios etc."

"We were able to connect with a good number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who approached us as a First Nations organisation who are not from Townsville so may not have been aware of our service."

"Not a lot of people had heard of our service prior to the LIF."

Some service providers suggested that other types of services attendance at the event would have been valuable. It was suggested that the focus of the event could be **broadened beyond legal services** to include other more generalist support services

Thank you!

