



LawRight
Access | Justice

Legal Outreach

Best Practice Guide:

Consultation Report



LawRight

LawRight improves the lives of vulnerable people by increasing access to justice through strategic partnerships with pro bono lawyers.

30,000 pro bono hours are donated annually by over 800 lawyers from 65 law firms, 170 barristers and 140 law students. By connecting to clients at community, health and civic organisations LawRight increases their access to housing, income and legal rights and improves their health and well-being.

LawRight is an independent not-for-profit community legal centre. Our Patron is the Chief Justice of Queensland, the Honourable Catherine Holmes.

lawright.org.au

Contents

Introduction	4
List of associated resources:	4
Defining Legal Outreach	4
Why do outreach?	6
Provide access for vulnerable clients	6
Tailor legal service to a chosen demographic	6
Be where your clients are	7
Fill an unmet legal need	8
Intervene before a legal problem escalates	8
Intervene before a personal problem escalates	8
Meet the needs of remote communities	9
Resourcing and travel costs	9
Rapport-building	9
A high level of legal need	9
Privacy and confidentiality	9
How to do outreach	10
Understand the importance of collaboration	10
Value multi-disciplinary, holistic support	11
Co-location of services enables holistic support.	11
Address multiple, intersecting legal need	11
Value the experience of non-legal professionals	12
Value the contribution of non-legal professionals	12
Create referral pathways to and from the partner agency	13
Train the partner agency	14
Integrate with partner agencies	15
Think about technology	17
Pro bono outreach	17
Train pro bono lawyers	18
Build community trust	18
The Outreach Lawyer	20
Understand relevant areas of law.	20
Understand multiple and compounding disadvantage	20
Understand your clients' capability	21
Be flexible	21
Manage resignation	22
Anticipate frustration	22
Build autonomy	23
Communicate legal concepts carefully	23
Be culturally sensitive	24
Be trauma-informed	24
Reflect on your practice	25
Acknowledgment	26

Introduction

The Best Practice Guide to Legal Outreach is delivered by LawRight on behalf of the Queensland Legal Assistance Forum.

The Outreach Best Practices were developed in consultation with 18 legal assistance services, and reflect Queensland practices and service delivery models.

List of associated resources:

This report forms part of the Best Practice Guide to Legal Outreach suite of resources, comprised of:

- Outreach Best Practices
- Consultation Report
- Research Report

Defining Legal Outreach

For the purpose of this consultation, outreach legal services are defined as services which:

- make a proactive attempt to reach clients, rather than waiting for clients to come to them;
- deliver legal advice and assistance outside of a provider's primary office;
- enhance accessibility to the target client group; and which
- collaborate with non-legal health, housing and social support services.

"The best way to connect clients to your service is all the face-to-face stuff. If you're going down on the ground, in person, with a staff member every week, then that results in those community connections and those relationships, which will result in a better uptake of people accessing your service".

- Regional to womens services

Eighteen consultations were conducted, mostly with community legal centres in Queensland. The table below describes the centre profile and target outreach groups for all organisations consulted.

Table 1: Consultation participants

	Centre profile					Outreach target							
	Queensland-based	Community Legal Centre	Uses pro bono	Located in metro area	Located in regional area	Rural and remote	Homeless-ness service	Health service	Youth service	General community centre	Family violence service	First Peoples Service	Refugee service
1													
2													
3													
4													
5													
6													
7													
8													
9													
10													
11													
12													
13													
14													
15													
16													
17													
18													

Why do outreach?

Provide access for vulnerable clients

Engage with clients who would otherwise not have the knowledge, resources or capacity to seek out legal advice.

“My clients are really not capable of going out and finding legal advice, and trying to navigate the legal system when they have no knowledge of it. I think a lot more people would fall through the cracks without us”.

- Metro to refugee and asylum-seeker support service

Meet the needs of marginalised or isolated cohorts.

“Outreach is very important, because it’s about accessibility for vulnerable people. It’s about acknowledging that it’s not always possible for vulnerable people to access central locations. I think it’s important to go to places where people feel comfortable, and that is accessible to them, instead of assuming that they’re able to come to some sort of central location”.

- Metro to youth service

Outreach services are often the only avenue for vulnerable people to access justice, particularly during a time of personal crisis.

“Our role is to resolve the client’s issues , in the circumstance where the system isn’t well-designed for someone who’s homeless, or who doesn’t have the documents that the government thinks they should have, or for someone who’s been taken advantage of by someone who’s in a significantly more powerful position”

- Metro to homelessness service

Vulnerable clients are often unable to recognise the legal dimension of a personal problem, so outreach allows for opportunistic engagements.

“My clients are linking in with those services for particular support. They’re not going there for legal advice – usually what happens is the support worker identifies that they need legal advice, and then they bring them to our agency”.

- Regional to women’s service

Tailor legal service to a chosen demographic

When developing an outreach service, it’s important that your practice is informed by a thorough knowledge of:

- your clients’ legal and non-legal issues;
- your clients’ level of legal capability, literacy, and personal capacity;
- barriers which might prevent clients from accessing your service;
- the referral pathways which might lead clients to your service;
- local geography, and existing social support infrastructure;
- cultural considerations which might impact your approach to service delivery.

“It’s not a one-size-fits-all model, and I know that’s such a cliché but it’s really not”

- Metro to homelessness service

“We took a lot of time, and reached out really respectfully. I did a lot of consultation with community elders, to get their blessing, but that’s because I understand how culture works... But, for best-practice working with our mob, you need to do more than a half-a-day cultural induction training”.

- Regional to First Nations communities

Be where your clients are

Legal outreach services should be located in the services that your clients already access, and the spaces that they already visit.

“Our approach is based around providing legal services in settings where our clients are accessing housing, and health services, and social and financial support, so those are the locations that we have our outreach clinics”.

- Metro to homelessness service

“The most successful form of outreach is being in the same community that the client’s coming from, being on the ground, with and for that community, whoever it is that you’re trying to reach. That can be a challenge for the way our organisations are set up. As much as possible we need to be more embedded in our communities, in the assistance sector, where the clients are coming from”.

- Regional to First Nations health service

“You need to start by identifying the client group, then you need to go where that trust and loyalty already exists, and then piggyback off of that”.

- Regional health-justice partnership

“We agreed that it would be easier to communicate with those clients, to communicate those complex topics and areas of law with those individuals face to face”.

- Regional to mental health service

“We try to make sure that there are various access points, and that no one’s going to be excluded just because they haven’t connected to agency x, we want to make sure that there are some services available to them”.

- Metro to homelessness services

An ongoing, active presence at these access points is crucial to ensure client engagement.

“The clients become aware of the clinic basically through the community. The service we co-locate with, people tend to go there as a point of reference, and then find out that we’re doing these clinics now”.

- Metro to refugee and asylum-seeker support service

“The community talks. People often hear that there’s a lawyer here, and they show up”.

- Regional to remote community

Additional resources

Service planning and Legal Needs Assessment

National Association of Community Legal Centres: Legal Needs Assessment Framework & Toolkit

http://www.nacclc.org.au/cb_pages/legal_needs_assessment_framework.php

The Legal Needs Assessment Toolkit (LNAT) is a resource that can be used by any CLC in Australia to develop an individualised and evidence-based strategic plan that considers both ‘met’ and ‘unmet’ legal need in their geographic and/or specialist service catchment. The Toolkit is also designed to assist centres to review how well they have done against previous plans and provide useful information for reports and funding submissions.

Law and Justice Foundation: Collaborative Planning Resource

<http://www.lawfoundation.net.au/reports/aboutcpr>

The Collaborative Planning Resource – Service Planning (CPR-SP) summarises the research evidence on legal need and access to justice and the implications for planning legal service delivery. The CPR-SP also provides useful information for designing appropriate legal services for specific priority demographic groups: ‘who’ priority clients are, ‘what’ types of services are appropriate to their legal needs and capabilities, and ‘how’ these services might be delivered.

LawRight: Legal Health Check

<http://legalhealthcheck.org.au/resources.html>

The Legal Health check enables community, health or other workers to both ‘diagnose’ a client’s multiple legal needs using structured interview questions and collaborate with legal assistance services to develop effective referral pathways to address those legal needs.

Fill an unmet legal need

Unmet legal need can be identified through the following strategies:

- Literature review and statistical analysis;
- Consultation with community groups, elders, peak bodies, and other stakeholders;
- Engagement with non-legal community agencies, support services,
- A canvassing of existing legal support services;
- A legal diagnostic tool (e.g., the Legal Health Check or Law Yarn)
- A deep understanding of your clients' cultures, histories, and lived experiences.

"We identified an area of unmet need, and we stretched ourselves to fill it".

- Regional to mental health service

"There was an analysis of statistics, which identified that there was a high proportion of need out there for our type of service. This was corroborated by advice and guidance from the services operating locally in the area".

- Regional to health service

Intervene before a legal problem escalates

Address legal matters before they become more entrenched, or before court or tribunal proceedings are imminent.

"A few years ago we looked at our evidence, at our casework, and re-evaluated our service delivery model. What that resulted in was that we decided to focus on the areas of law where we'd have the biggest impact and where we saw gaps, so we moved to a lot of early-intervention and prevention-based work".

- Metro to homelessness services

"We're looking at early intervention and prevention, we're not looking at the sausage factory approach.

We're trying to actually build relationships where the staff will say "come and chat to the lawyer", and that is such a lovely way and effective way to bring clients to us".

- Regional health-justice partnership

Intervene before a personal problem escalates

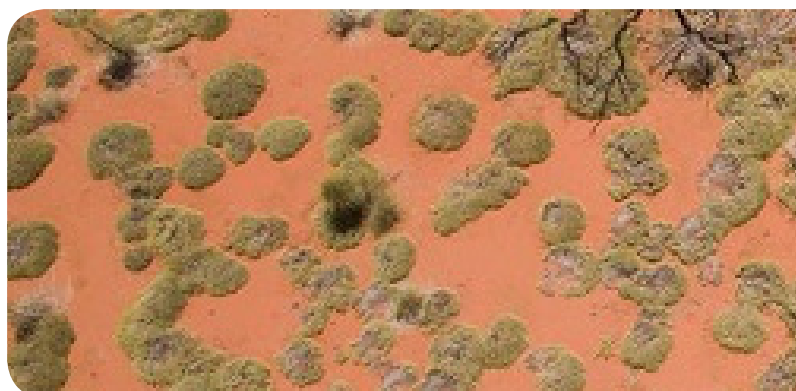
Engage with your clients before their personal issues become far more serious and difficult to resolve.

"What we try to do now is catch people before they fall off the cliff into homelessness, rather than being at the bottom of the cliff and helping people to claw people out. We still help at both points, but a lot of our work is trying to get in earlier now, so that's why we're at locations where people might not be at that same point of crisis. We're still at the access points, we still see a lot of people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping, but it's just a slightly different focus and collaboration".

- Metro to homelessness services

"One thing to keep thinking about it as 'what are you trying to achieve for the client', not 'what's the legal issue that you've identified', because ultimately those two things might not be aligned. Clients very rarely come to see us in this space to find out about their legal rights, they come to see us to get assistance to resolve an issue"

- Metro to homelessness services



Meet the needs of remote communities

The geography of Queensland poses unique challenges to legal outreach. Queensland has a low population density, and a high number of remote and isolated communities. Interstate or international service delivery models cannot be applied in a Queensland context without reflection and consideration. Similarly, metropolitan outreach models may not suit regional and remote communities.

Outreach to regional and remote communities faces the following challenges:

Resourcing and travel costs

“Another key difference is that when you talk about outreach here, the geographic distance is far greater. Particularly against the backdrop of when we were talking about the importance of face-to-face services, and the importance of attendance by staff, then that becomes a real issues. The resourcing just explodes”.

- Regional to remote communities

Rapport-building

“In small towns there are barriers to establishing relationships with stakeholders... Ultimately it’s about building trust”.

- Regional to remote communities

A high level of legal need

“What we see a lot is... there’s a big need for regional outreach. If we had all the funding that we wanted it would have been fantastic to have offices and outreach programs everywhere in the state. That’s definitely something that I could suggest, across all areas of law, there’s a need for that support regionally”.

- Metro to refugee and asylum-seeker service

Privacy and confidentiality

“Then there is also that awkwardness where something’s not strictly a personal or professional conflict, but where you recognise someone you know. If someone walks in and they’re a friend of a friend, and they have all the paperwork with them and are seeking advice about a separation, those are the more tricky [situations]. It’s not necessarily a conflict, but just with recognising people you know”.

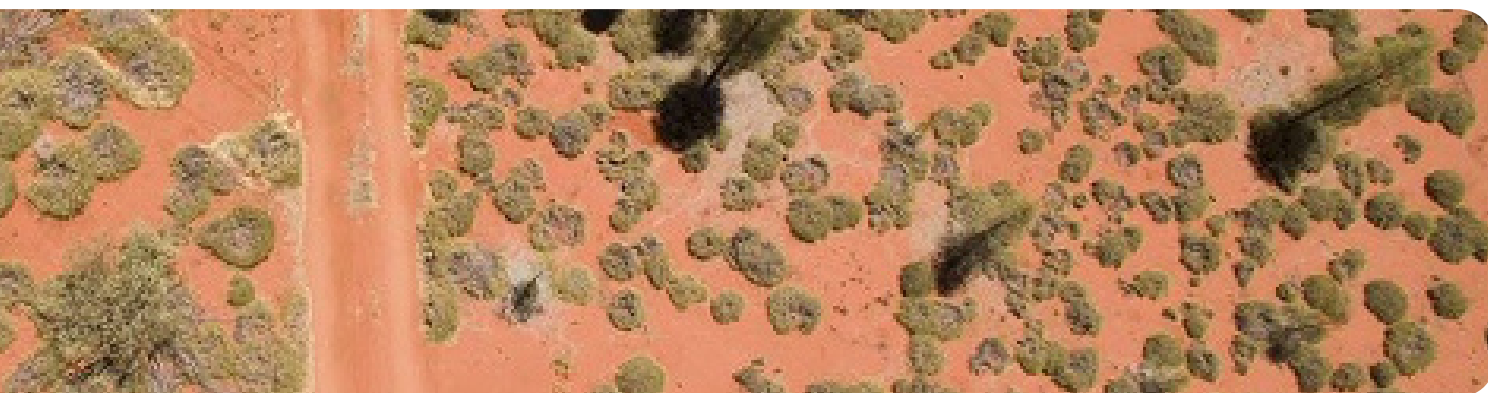
- Regional to rural community service centre

“What we realised was that, for example, the service in that town was delivered from the library, and I’m not sure what the population is, but the town was very small... what we found was that it was known in the community that the library was a venue for the legal service, and that anyone going into that room on that day of the week, it highlighted that they were getting free legal advice”.

- Regional to rural library

“There are a lot of challenges we face working in a regional area. Sometimes in small towns the other party might be aligned with the police or other authorities, or there’s the perception that they are. It can be hard to build that trust with clients, due to the nature of small towns”.

- Regional to remote community



How to do outreach



Understand the importance of collaboration

Not all collaboration with non-legal services involves outreach, however this consultation found that all legal outreach delivered in Queensland involves a physical presence and is inherently collaborative.

The following types of services are currently locations for legal outreach:

- Homelessness and housing support services
- Community kitchens
- Health services
- Community and civic centres
- Ethnic and cultural community agencies
- Women's and domestic violence services
- Youth services
- First Nations community and health services
- LGBTI advocacy and health services
- Refugee and immigration services

These services are selected for their existing connection to, their good standing with, and expert knowledge of the target client group.

Best practice outreach establishes, values, and nurtures collaboration with these non-legal services

"Many of our clients are referred by that service. If you're unable to be on the ground embedded in that service then we notice that the referrals drop off. The referrals are strongest when we're physically present on the ground - that's definitely due to the relationships you can build with those services due to your regular presence."

- Regional to neighbourhood centre

"There's so much work in building capacity. To try and do all the things we've done, there needs to be a real commitment to sitting with community, understanding what their needs are, really working in partnership... that to me is such a key part of it. Yes it's about integrating, moving into new spaces, providing outreach, providing early intervention, all the rest of it, but it's really about having a good relationship with whoever the community is that you're working with. Coming in there and just providing a service, that's not going to be sustainable long-term. No one's going to talk to you, they won't make a referral to your lawyers if they don't know you, and you don't understand them. There's a lot of work that goes into building relationships with services, with their staff members."

- Regional to First Nations communities

Value multi-disciplinary, holistic support

A vulnerable person's legal, financial, health and social problems are often complex and interconnected. A siloed approach to addressing issues may fail to make a meaningful impact on the lived experience of marginalised clients.

Best practice calls for a multidisciplinary approach, where a client's problems are approached collaboratively and holistically.

"Often just resolving the legal issue is unlikely to place the client into a significantly stronger or more stable position. Ideally how our service works in its best form is where you work collaboratively in a genuine sense with a caseworker to provide a holistic service, where we play individual roles that drive towards the outcome that the client's trying to achieve. That involves engaging with counsellors, with their caseworkers and other support people to address some of the other non-legal issues at the time that we're addressing the legal issues".

- Metro to homelessness services

"While we are lawyers and aren't social workers or psychologists or so on, I do think it's important that we have a good understanding of how those factors impact on the legal issues, and how we can help people navigate those issues. Part of the benefit I think of having an outreach service is that you're able to develop those relationships with other services in the area, who might be able to provide assistance around some of those factors which are impacting on their legal issues. That was part of the reason that we linked up with our partner agency – they had support worker or social worker roles, and could assist our clients with those skills".

- Regional to mental health service

"We do so much more than purely legal work — If we don't address the non-legal issues, they certainly become legal issues before too long".

- Regional to women's service

"Sometimes I find, particularly working with women in trauma, if you can link them in with good support services then that makes your job as a lawyer so much easier. It's really what we try to focus on".

- Regional to domestic violence service

"The support we give is not that defined, it's not purely legal work. If we don't provide some level of support across all those other areas then we get poor outcomes for our clients. If we can try to facilitate a birth certificate, or get some form of movement with Centrelink, get them linked to crisis housing, get them a phone... that just helps to take some pressure out of the kettle. I can see a lot of over-representation, particularly with mob, is because no one's putting that whole picture together — they're just doing their piece, then the client has no idea how many different services they need to get in contact with to keep themselves safe and healthy, or to keep the family together, and it just ends up with terrible outcomes".

- Regional First Nations health-justice partnership

Co-location of services enables holistic support.

"One of the key reasons we moved towards [a co-location model] is that we know that we get the best outcomes when we work holistically. We have the benefit of two in-house social workers but we also work really closely with community service professionals and health professionals, so we decided to go to locations with those professionals on the ground there with us. We wanted our legal clinics to be really integrated in those holistic services, so that we could add the legal dimension".

- Metro to homelessness services

"The community centre can offer other kinds of support that we can't offer. They offer welfare support and mental health professionals. A lot of our client's legal situation obviously has a great impact on their mental health".

- Metro to refugee and asylum-seeker centre

Address multiple, intersecting legal need

People who are vulnerable experience at least three legal problems annually and the greater their vulnerability, the more legal problems they have. Because outreach services see the most vulnerable clients they must respond to more than just the presenting legal need.

Our clients rarely come to us with only a single issue to resolve. Often it's a whole host of issues: debt, SPER, tenancy, family law, victims of crime. It's this whole mess of legal issues all tied together, and wrapped up in the client's experience of marginalisation and vulnerability.

- Metro to homelessness services

I'm working with a group who have experienced enormous injustices. Despite their numerous, complex legal issues, a lot of our clients have never engaged with a lawyer before.

- Regional to First Nations health service

Value the experience of non-legal professionals

Other professionals working in health, community, and welfare organisations often have a deep understanding of their clients' situations, histories and relationships.

"We need to acknowledge that the partner organisation are the experts. Acknowledge that we bring our legal expertise, and together with them — not, 'I'm in front and this other person is behind' — but that whole basic idea of walking together with people. We work in this space, and have learnt so many things from just being part of it. But more than that, we've learned that there are vast amounts that we don't know, but that other services might".

- Regional First Nations health-justice partnership

"As a profession we can learn a lot from non-lawyers, from the other professions around us. The good thing about working in a place like this is that the social worker professionals, the other staff, they have so many skills and it's not hard to learn from them. There's a poverty within the law profession about how to work in strength-based ways with clients, how to be self-reflective, how to be trauma-informed. There's a lot that lawyers can learn from other professions about how to assist people and make social change".

- Regional to homelessness service

Value the contribution of non-legal professionals

Caseworkers can provide logistical and administrative support when assisting clients, as well as breaking down barriers to client engagement.

"We work really closely with the caseworkers who assist our clients. We get the client's consent obviously. I think it's really important... Without the involvement of the workers on the ground we wouldn't be connecting with the people we want to help. I think that goes all the way through to outcomes".

- Metro to homelessness services

"We really can't get our clients to the tribunal or to court without the involvement of those non-legal caseworkers. It's vital, it's absolutely vital".

- Metro to homelessness services

"Normally what happens is our client has linked in with them because they've fled a domestic violence situation, or they're in a DV situation and they've gone to our partners for support or for counselling. In smaller areas those services might be the only places they can go to fill in a protection order. They're linking in with those services for particular support. They're not going there for legal advice — usually what happens is the support worker identifies that they need legal advice, and then they bring them to our agency".

- Regional to women's service


"You need to be prepared to learn and grow too. You can't walk in there saying 'I'm fully formed, here I am'".

- Regional First Nations health-justice partnership

A caseworker, social worker or psychologist can often provide insight into the complexities and nuances of their clients' circumstances.

"Sometimes people don't really have a good understanding of what's going on with their legal situation. Sometimes they don't understand the complexities of their situation. But their caseworker might have a clearer idea of whether there's a domestic violence order in place, or what the conditions are. If you can't get that information clearly from the client, then find out who else might have that information. That's often the quickest way to build a picture of someone's circumstances".

- Regional to domestic violence service



Community and welfare professionals facilitate effective communication, and can help to foster and maintain relationships with clients who often have transient or have chaotic lives.

“Caseworkers are absolutely vital to maintain contact with clients who have no-fixed address or are otherwise difficult to contact. That support is crucial in terms of maintaining contact with clients. A fine can take up to 14 months to resolve, and keeping in touch with someone who’s experiencing homelessness for fourteen months is pretty tricky. If we didn’t have the social workers and the community partners then things would be really challenging”.

- Metro to homelessness services

“We try to write in really plain English when we write to clients, but sometimes we’re working with really complex issues or addressing complex legal ideas, and caseworkers can help to interpret that or to communicate that effectively to a client. But also in terms of maintaining that engagement and managing expectations around time frames and what’s involved in a particular process, having someone that engages effectively with the person we’re assisting on a regular basis is really important”.

- Metro to homelessness services

Many caseworkers will support clients during consultations, in order to help facilitate client engagement, ease client anxiety or unease, and to provide emotional support.

“If the client wants a support worker or a social worker or an advocate to assist them then we absolutely welcome their attendance”.

- Regional to neighbourhood centre

“Often we have support workers from partner services coming in to the legal appointment with me – if you’ve got a woman with limited capacity, who’s experienced complex problems, who might be traumatised, the support worker will often be there to break down those barriers, to help facilitate”.

- Regional to domestic violence services

“It’s quite rare for me to come across a client that has help from other services. When they’ve been refused by the Immigration Assessment Authority most of their

support ceases. So if they had a caseworker it ceases at that point. Rather than a caseworker or social worker, often a person who’s involved in their particular community or in a cultural organisation or association would come along with them to support them”.

- Metro to refugee and asylum-seeker services

In some cases – particularly in outreach to hospitals and other health care services - it might not be appropriate for staff from partner agencies to attend client consultations. The need for outreach lawyers to be seen as independent to and separate from the clinical team can be critical for building trust and rapport with the client.

“I don’t recall there ever being a conference with one of the clients and a support worker from their clinical team. We wanted to establish our independence from them, and to maintain confidentiality and legal professional privilege. I think all the individuals I met out there preferred to meet one on one and privately”.

- Regional to hospital

Create referral pathways to and from the partner agency

“Where your service isn’t positioned to address other issues that clients raise, timely referrals are made to other services that are able to assist. Part of our practice was, for example, asking the individual if they’d give us consent to discuss their issues with other services, and having the ongoing information-sharing, information exchange between the two to provide a more holistic service to the individual”.

- Regional to mental health service

“If you’ve got a woman who’s coming to see you

who's homeless, her legal issues are going to be the least of her problems. The first thing you have to do for her is get housing, link her in with those homelessness support services, get a roof over her head. Come back and talk to us about the legal issues when you and your kids are safe. Safety is the number one priority... if the DV is high risk, high need, then you know straight away that safety is going to be a number one priority and you move on from there. Housing and finances can sometimes be right up there too, if there's been financial abuse and the client has no access to funds. All things can happen, so you assess it on a case-by-case basis".

- Regional to women's service

"For the particularly vulnerable clients, it might be that we just help them with everything. We take on the legal matter, but it's also integral to link them in with support services. It's absolutely integral. In our domestic violence legal service we have a social worker, so we can provide that holistic service".

- Regional to women's service

We actually have a checklist that we work through... we're not going to say "we've got this checklist that we're going to work through with you to assess your issues", that's not how it works. But we assess their safety, assess their health, we're assessing housing, employment, education, if there are any other legal issues. We find out what's going on with the kids, do you need a family intensive support program. Are you really not coping? From the moment we meet with a client that's what we're going over – you assess each client's circumstances and what support they need.

- Regional to women's service

Train the partner agency

Training the staff of partner agencies can help them to identify the legal dimension of their clients' problems, and to provide timely and appropriate referrals.

"There were a lot of things we did to try to build relationships and build that trust – we'd organise barbecues with their staff, try to find ways to break down barriers. We also offer training to the staff – we'd ask how many of their clients had issues with SPER, or stolen wages, or had problems getting identity documents. We'd try to really break it down and show how we could help, and try to show that a lot

of the issues their clients face have a legal element".

- Regional First Nations health-justice partnership

"We really heavily invest in the agencies we do partner with. We do a lot of training around legal needs, awareness-raising around rights, human rights training... we monitor our linkages, our enquiries and our referrals with our key partners, and we monitor that each year and evaluate that. It's a bit of a cliché to say 'deep and embedded partnerships' or whatever, but these partnerships are very thorough. The way we collaborate are very deep, and we really go in to bat for our community partners so to speak, and they do the same for us".

- Metro to homelessness services

"Talking to them about housing, talking about SPER – those are things that they didn't realise that lawyers can assist with".

- Regional First Nations health-justice partnership

"We often give advice to the community centres as well. Sometimes they'll describe the circumstances of one of their clients, they might not want to disclose who the client is, but they'll come to us for advice, and we'll give them general advice and information about certain legal issues".

- Regional to women's services

Regularly providing training, advice and support to partner agencies demonstrates a commitment to ongoing collaboration and integration.

"You need to give additional training and support to the staff of those services. It's about more than just skills, it's about a willingness to learn and collaborate".

- Regional to community centres

"We've been in town for a long-time, we've built really good connections. We go out to those services, we continue to make sure that we collaborate with those services. We do CLE together, we know the social workers, we know the workers in the women's services here. Most of the lawyers here know them, so you already have that relationship with them... we're on the same page, and they know we're all on the same page, and we're all just trying to help this woman as best we can".

- Regional to women's service

Partner agency staff should be trained in diagnostic tools (such as the Legal Health check) to help them to identify and refer their clients' multiple and intersecting legal problems.

"We have seen a real uptick in referrals after delivering our training on the Legal Health Check. The staff use the Health Check during their new client intake process to identify legal issues, then refer the client to us".

- Metro to Homelessness services

Cross-sector training, such as LawRight's Caseworker Training Day, builds capacity within the community sector to properly identify and refer legal issues.

"They were certainly receptive of us being out there. We were providing assistance – and training I suppose – to them, both in the form of formal training sessions and informally supporting them in their advocacy. Training in relation to how to identify legal issues, how they impact the social issues, and where to go for help. They, as non-legal advocates, didn't have a very robust understanding of the legal framework, so we were able to train them up".

- Regional to mental health services

Integrate with partner agencies

The degree of integration between legal outreach services and partner agencies exists on a spectrum, reflecting the realities of resourcing and geography.

The more integrated an outreach legal service is with its partner agency, the better the outcomes for their mutual clients.

"When we say we partner with community agencies, we really embed ourselves — we try to have these deep and genuine partnerships. We have a social worker with them at their central city site every week, we have two outreach legal clinics there every week, we sit on the operational working group, their case

management group, their senior leadership group, we run joint advocacy and consumer consultation together”.

- Metro to homelessness services

“We’ve got legal clinics, we’ve got co-located staff, we’re on working groups, we work on advocacy together, we do user-design — our services are really integrated”

- Metro to homelessness services

“That integration takes work too, but we generally try to be well integrated. We attend a lot of interagency meetings, we contact services to see if we can come to their team meetings, sometimes we invite other services to our team meetings. For example, there’s an Indigenous respite centre here and they’ll come along to our team meeting next month, and they’ll ask one of us to go along to one of their team meetings, so all of that does take time and we want to be really careful with how we engage and how we’re committed to other services. Especially with First Nations services, it’s important that warm referral process is in place. It’s really about trust as well – we really have to have the trust of their staff before their staff will refer people on to us”.

- Regional to First Nations community centre


“Co-location benefits them greatly – it’s so valuable for clients who are in crisis and really need to speak to someone immediately”.

- Metro to refugee and asylum-seeker service

“I think at first they were a bit sceptical at why lawyers were coming in to their domain. I suppose they were questioning what our role was going to be, and I suppose they might have had their walls up, in a way. I think they were unsure about why we were going into those services, and what our role was going to be, which is understandable. Fortunately a colleague had strong relationships with some of the key staff members at the hospital, and that really assisted to, I suppose, develop those relationships with other key staff members as well. It’s difficult to say how it would have worked without having those key relationships, honestly”.

- Regional to hospital

Table 2: Degrees of integration

	Less integrated		More integrated
Shared goals	Communication: Awareness of strategic goals of partner organisation	Coordination: program planning and delivery considers and incorporates the methods, materials and operations of partner organisation	Collaboration: Joint planning of program, with the aim of an integrated approach to service delivery
Shared location	Visit regularly for one to three hours	Weekly full day attendance	Full-time co-location of service
Shared case management	Partner agency refers clients Partner agency helps facilitate client communication and correspondence	Information sharing and communication between professionals in both agencies to meet client needs Legal needs assessment at intake by partner agency	Shared case management - both agency and lawyers plan coordinated response to client’s needs
Shared training	General legal needs training provided to clients and/or staff	Training delivered to non-legal professionals on specific legal needs of clients and options to address Encourage informal secondary consultations with non-legal professionals	Legal and non-legal workers share expertise Regular in-house, tailored training delivered.

Think about technology

Technology (particularly video conferencing) has been identified as a potential tool for breaking down the barriers posed by distance in regional and remote Queensland, but needs to be used with care, especially as it removes a key best-practice principle of outreach — a physical presence.

“A number of community legal centres have implemented video conferencing to supplement their outreach to remote communities, noting that it’s a relatively convenient and easy-to-learn tool. The advantage of Skype is that a staff member can easily pick it up”.

- Regional to community centres

“Video conferencing services are often unreliable, due to a lack of dependable telecommunications infrastructure in many regional and remote communities.

If you can get a staff member to provide the service that gives the best result, volunteers give probably the second-best result, then the third best as a general rule is coming via skype. That’s mainly due to the technical unreliability of providing those services via Skype. It’s just not reliable, and it drives people up the wall”.

- Regional to community centres

Video conferencing makes it difficult for practitioners to build rapport with clients and staff, and may inhibit a client’s willingness to discuss sensitive, complex or traumatic experiences.

“There’s absolutely also a difficulty in building rapport with a client. Because you’re not on the ground you lose that opportunity as well”.

- Regional to women’s services

“How do you build trust when you’re skyping in with someone? Particularly when you’ve got language barriers, no prior relationship, no cultural common ground? Why would you?”

- Regional to First Nations health service

“Dealing with highly-vulnerable clients is also usually better done face-to-face. The Skype stuff is really not ideal. I think that the technology is unreliable, so that’s one thing. If you drop out halfway through then

that manifests in a lack of trust and confidence in the service really quickly”.

- Regional to community centres

“Our partners are quite receptive to having lawyers go into their space, that’s not a hurdle we’ve had to jump. When we’ve had to move to skype though some of the services didn’t want to learn it – trying to get them to engage with the technology has been difficult. You’ve got volunteers at their end on the ground working with it and they just don’t like it. They see value when we’re physically there, that seems to be the best. It’s really just a matter of having the resourcing to be able to continue providing the service”.

- Regional to women’s services

“Being on the ground is more than just time and labour-intensive. The point that needs to be made very clear is that you need to do that to get the results that are required. There seems to be this misconception by some people that you can just cover off on this stuff via Skype. We’ve tried and tested that, and if you’re relying solely on Skype it’s problematic because you miss out on the relationship aspect of it, and secondly because of the lack of reliability of the technology people quickly lose confidence in the service as a result of that too”.

- Regional to community centres

“You need to go down on the ground to develop relationships with your supporting service providers like your neighbourhood centres”.

- Regional to remote community centres

“One of the disadvantages of using skype- or phone-based outreach is that it necessarily diminishes the relationship with those services by not being a constant presence”.

- Regional to women’s services

Pro bono outreach

Many outreach legal services make use of pro bono resources to enhance the scope and scale of service they can provide. Using volunteer lawyers allows outreach services to resolve a greater number of legal problems, but requires a significant investment of planning, resources, support and training.

“The firms are quite amazing in their willingness to engage with [outreach] programs like this. The amount of work that they do is actually quite incredible in terms of what they’re willing to do for these vulnerable clients”.

- Regional to community agencies

“Our pro bono model is where individual firms are dedicated to particular clinics, they attend the clinics then they run the legal file to completion under the our banner”.

- Metro to homelessness services

Pro bono commitments allow outreach services to reach a greater number of clients, and to cover a wider geographic area.

“The way we’re able to do it is by having such incredible generosity from the legal fraternity and the local government in the area. When the service first started we had very limited funding, we started off with just a part-time, volunteer coordinator... since then the service has grown from one volunteer solicitor to 55 volunteer lawyers”.

- Regional to community agencies

Train pro bono lawyers

Volunteer lawyers working in an outreach setting may have limited experience in working with vulnerable and marginalised clients. As such, outreach volunteers must be provided with training around client engagement skills, particularly relating to marginalisation, vulnerability and trauma-informed practice.

Additionally, volunteer lawyers should be trained in all relevant legal practice areas.

“The expertise issue – we’re asking people who are essentially commercial litigators to suddenly be doing debt waivers and fines matters and things like that, so I think lack of knowledge can sometimes be an issue in that way. The intentions are there... the intentions are always there for the lawyers to want to learn that stuff, because otherwise they wouldn’t be doing the work, but I think it’s always going to be a barrier”.

- Metro to youth service

“I think a lot of these lawyers have never engaged with vulnerable people before, and now we’re expecting them to engage on a level, to build that trust... but they just don’t think like that. They don’t think in the way that community lawyers do”.

- Regional to women’s services

“The pro bono lawyers do a really great job too, I should mention. We resource and support them very intensively to get those kind of soft skills, those client management skills, those interaction skills”.

- Metro to homelessness services

Pro bono lawyers benefit from resources and tools which support them to effectively refer and support their outreach clients.

“When a solicitor goes to each venue we’ll have a manual available – and we’ll update it pretty regularly because details can change pretty regularly – it’s an indexed guide to local community services in their area, with contact details for all sorts of things: ombudsmen, the Men’s Help Line, financial counselling, the court house, Lifeline... everything that we can think of is in that index”.

- Regional to community agencies

Build community trust

Pro bono lawyers may require support to establish standing and reputation within client communities, which is a necessary element of legal outreach.

“Because it’s a really new space for lawyers who are sitting in their own firm to then sit in a health service or a homelessness service, there is that lack of comfort. Lawyers might not be used to building relationships in these settings, but in our space it’s necessary. We’re going in to somebody else’s environment – just showing up on the day and saying “well, where’s my client”, it doesn’t work like that. You’ve got to build those relationships, build that trust as well”.

- Regional health-justice partnership

“The knowledge that sits with us doesn’t necessarily sit with a pro bono lawyer who might not be aware of what the referral pathways are, or how to access services in the community, and that’s a really big piece of the work that we do”.

- Regional to domestic violence service

“It’s quite challenging for someone from a completely different background to step into this cohort of clients. It’s very different, our clients relate very differently to us than clients might in a commercial practice”.

- Metro to refugee and immigration service

Pro bono lawyers must commit to long-term engagement and ongoing training and professional development in both legal and client management skills.

“As wonderful and generous as volunteers were with their time, it would take them a long time to get their head around the legal issue, and even just to work out who’s who and what’s what in the sector. It was a challenge”

- Regional to remote communities

“We offer an extensive training program for our pro bono lawyers. We have comprehensive induction around legal skills, but I think just as important as that, is our training around working effectively with clients in challenging circumstances, communication skills, soft skills. We’ve done specialist cultural competency training around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and LGBTIQ clients, family violence-related training, and trauma-informed practice. It’s an absolute priority for us. We run training sessions throughout the year on different topics... I think the lawyers really value it, we get really good feedback, and I think it adds a huge amount of value to our pro bono services”.

- Metro to homelessness services

“We do have a formal training program that does instruct volunteers in the practical professional skills, and also the legal skills as well. That said, we also work closely in terms of providing guidance on a one-on-one basis as a file progresses, and speaking directly to volunteer lawyers on particular matters. As a part of that we often discuss some of the practical considerations around assisting someone who has experienced trauma, or who may be going through a challenging situation, and how we can best assist them through that process. So we do try to approach it both ways”.

- Metro to homelessness services

“The struggle is how do you train people in that? How do you impart that knowledge to someone who’s never done that before, who’s never worked in the space. Can you give that experience in an hour-long training session over breakfast?”

- Regional to women’s services

Finding appropriate volunteer outreach lawyers in regional, rural and remote areas is often difficult.

“Finding a private practitioner these days who’s willing to do volunteer work across all of the necessary areas of law is incredibly difficult, especially in the regions. I don’t know what it’s like down south, but certainly up here those people are as rare as hens’ teeth”.

- Regional to remote communities

“There are not a lot of private practitioners in the regions, when you’re working with the challenges we’ve got, across all the areas of law we work in... it’s very hard to find somebody in those localities. I just don’t know how many of those people exist in the regions”.

- Regional to women’s services

“Across the board the firms here— even big national firms – their operations are much smaller than their other national offices. So there’s generally less capacity: a smaller firm, less capacity to spread the load, fewer junior lawyers to pass the work on to. But in general the firms themselves weren’t making a very strong commitment as firms... the reality had been with all of them that they weren’t able to take on the casework”.

- Regional to First Nations health service

The Outreach Lawyer

The challenges of delivering legal services to vulnerable clients are common to all lawyers working in the legal assistance sector. Lawyers must balance the competing challenges of their limited resources with the technical expertise required to deliver legal services to clients with limited capability and multiple forms of disadvantage.

However, in an outreach setting these challenges are more acute. Lawyers have less time and support, clients have a higher level of disadvantage, are less capable, and initial client engagements are more likely to be opportunistic. That is, clients may not have planned or recognised their need to see a lawyer. The outreach lawyer is simultaneously persuading and responding to the client.

Understand relevant areas of law.

“So the very first thing is, you’ve got to have technical competency across all the areas of law that are required”.

- Regional to remote communities

The areas of law in which your clients regularly experience problems should be identified during service planning, and outreach staff and volunteers require a practical knowledge of resolving or referring those types of legal matters, as well as a broad understanding of the areas of law in which vulnerable people often experience issues.

“I think you do really have to have the ability to identify urgent matters, and to manage your time effectively. [Our outreach clinic] is only for three hours, rather than the whole day, so I do only have a short amount of time to fit a lot of things in. And then you do have to be well-informed across your entire area, because anything can show up at an outreach clinic, often you have no preparation for what might walk through the door, so you do have to be across the legal area in which you’re going to be providing advice”.

- Metro to refugee and asylum-seeker service

Understand multiple and compounding disadvantage

Vulnerable client groups frequently experience multiple forms of disadvantage, and these vulnerabilities intersect and compound.

“It’s not just the DV itself that makes them vulnerable, they often have literacy issues, disabilities, they’re from low socio-economic backgrounds, they have no access to technology... they’re crippled by trauma. It’s compounding vulnerabilities, it’s not just one vulnerability, it’s everything”.

- Regional to domestic violence service

Our clients may be people experiencing mental health issues, they may have intellectual disabilities, they may have a limited educational level. Obviously our primary role is legal advice – but we try to be mindful about whatever else is going on their lives. Their legal issues are often part of a wider problem, so for example if someone comes to see us and they're seeking advice about bankruptcy, we also ask them if they're accessing counseling, financial counseling, psychological support and we'll give them the contact details for those services".

- Regional to community centre

"For a lot of vulnerable people their circumstances are a result of things that have happened to them throughout their lives, a lot of people don't even know what it means to have stable housing just because of their lived experiences. I think that those kind of things have an impact on their legal needs and the legal issues that arise out of their life experiences. People's mental health has such a massive impact on the ways that they're able to live their lives, and how they can enjoy things like stable housing and whether they accrue fines and things like that. I think that there's definitely external factors that have to be considered with this approach".

- Metro to youth service

Understand your clients' capability

Be aware that clients in a outreach setting:

- often have limited resources, personal capability, and levels of legal understanding;
- often face pessimism or resignation about legal problems due to poor past experiences or historic injustice;
- may become frustrated by the time taken to progress a legal matter;
- should be empowered to make decisions about their own lives.

Be flexible

The clients of outreach legal services often lead chaotic lives, and face barriers to engagement and capability due to illness or disability.

"With the lives that our clients have they're not always there at 9:00 in the morning on the dot".

- Regional to community agency

"I think if we're really taking into account who our clients are, and the services we collaborate with as well, I think we need to be more flexible. It's important for us to be open and helpful to see clients outside of a really strict timeframe".

- Regional First Nations health-justice partnership

"If you're flexible in the way that you approach working with the client, as well as consistent in contacting them and updating them then trust will be built".

- Metro to youth service

Clients may have had little exposure to the legal system, and may be intimidated by the prospect of meeting with lawyers.

"We'll often be in jeans and a polo shirt – we only dress up if we go to court. It's that accessibility – you need to be able to make your client feel comfortable, they're not commercial clients, and they're often not legally-savvy clients".

- Regional to women's service

Outreach lawyers must be mindful of clients' capacity to give instruction, and be clear about their professional responsibilities with regard to client capacity.

"At the mental health service they are extremely vulnerable clients. They often know that they're seeing a lawyer, but in some cases they're so heavily medicated that we can't even see them and we'll have to go back. They'll forget that they called us or they'll forget what we spoke about... so they're a very vulnerable client group".

- Regional to hospital

Manage resignation

Clients of outreach services have often experienced poor legal outcomes in the past. Additionally, many clients belong to groups who face historic and ongoing discrimination and marginalisation.

Some clients may have resigned themselves and consider their legal issues too difficult, time-consuming, or traumatic to resolve.

“An issue I’ve experienced in the past is clients that mistrust any sort of legal advice that they get, because they do feel quite hopeless at that stage”.

- Metro to refugee and immigration service

“I always try to remind clients that I’m trying to help them as well ... that we’re all wanting a good outcome”.

- Metro to homelessness service

“Because of their life experiences and their experiences in the past that one negative interaction can ruin the entire experience, the entire engagement. It is something that you have to get right, and it’s something that is not necessarily a natural instinct to some lawyers”.

- Metro to youth service

Anticipate frustration

Outreach clients may express frustration with the process, delays, or the limited scope of the legal service.

“Timeframes can be very frustrating for clients. I think an issue that they experience is really long waiting periods, with a lot of uncertainty”.

- Metro to refugee and immigration service

“I’ve never had an aggressive client, which is great. I do find though that clients can get very frustrated. It’s just a matter of acknowledging what they’ve been through and that it is very difficult. Often you get clients who want to end the appointment and want to storm out, but that’s often to do with that frustration and what they’ve been going through. Especially with this cohort, sometimes you need to assess whether it’s better to end the appointment, maybe refer them to someone they can talk to, and tell them to come back a week later. You’d then try to resume back when it’s not as emotionally charged. You do need to have some judgment on when it’s just not being helpful for the client anymore”.

- Metro to refugee and immigration service

Manage client expectations early in the engagement.

“At the end of the day we’re not miracle workers. Often a client has exhausted all of their legal options and there’s not much else we can do, so you’ve got to be able to manage those expectations”.

- Metro to community agency

“These matters don’t resolve quickly, so have those conversations early with the client, and maintain regular engagement with them so they know what you’re doing and what kind of timeframe you’re doing it in. That can help manage some of those frustrations”

- Metro to homelessness service

Non-legal professionals can defuse client frustrations, and reiterate timeframes and processes in a language that clients understand.

“Managing a client’s expectations is just such a necessary part of the work that we do, and it should be a mutual conversation between you, the client and their case worker in terms of those expectations: what information we need from them, what information they can expect from us and when, those sorts of things”.

- Metro to homelessness service

Additional resources

Legal capacity

Queensland Law Society: Queensland Handbook for Practitioners on Legal Capacity

https://www.qls.com.au/files/4422042a-7f34-404f-8df5-a49d00e5f89a/Queensland_Handbook_for_Practitioners_on_Legal_Capacity.pdf

The Handbook provides practical guidance on the legal and ethical issues relevant to competency issues for elderly clients, clients with mental illness, intellectual or cognitive impairment.

Build autonomy

Despite many clients having low levels of legal capability and understanding, outreach legal services should empower clients to make decisions about their own lives, and to resolve their issues in ways that are meaningful and satisfying.

“I think that there’s a lawyer mentality that you know best. But vulnerable people don’t have a lot of control over many aspects of their lives, and that it’s important that the lawyer acts to give them options”.

- Regional to community centre

“Be willing to be a bit flexible. Even with something like debts, don’t assume that people want them waived - it’s possible that the client actually wants to enter into a payment plan, so that they feel like they have a sense of control over some aspect of their life. It’s about giving people options, so that the law isn’t another aspect of their life where they don’t have any autonomy”.

- Metro to youth service

“Making sure they feel heard about their decisions they’re making in their lives, and that you’re not just making an assumption about what you would do in that situation”.

- Regional to women’s service

Communicate legal concepts carefully

Clients of an outreach legal service will often have limited understanding of legal concepts and jargon. Communicate in plain English, and take steps to ensure that clients understand and retain information.

“You’ve got to speak in a language that your clients will understand, and really break down complex legal processes and arguments into very simple bite-sized chunks”.

- Regional to domestic violence service

“I’ll try to give no more than four key points. I’ll go over them, and over them like a broken record, I’ll write them down, I’ll draw stuff, I’ll try to explain it to them in settings and in a language that they’re really familiar with. I’ll try to communicate in every possible way”.

- Regional First Nations health-justice partnership

Good practices include:

- asking clients to paraphrase your advice at the end of an appointment,
- regularly checking in with clients throughout the appointment to ensure their understanding.
- reiterating legal concepts,
- offering several or longer appointments,
- using resources such as factsheets and workbooks to explain complicated legal concepts.

“You’re talking about really complex and foreign issues to a lot of our clients... you really have to break it down and communicate in simple language. You have to tailor your communication to who you’re talking to – sometimes you’ll default into lawyer mode, and then you’ll see your client with a worried look on their face and you’ll think “I need to strip this back one more layer, because they aren’t understanding what I’m explaining””.

- Regional to women’s service

“The first time you see a client you can only get so far with them, so at the next appointment it’ll be about this, and then at the appointment after it’ll be about that... you need to really break it down step by step. It’ll take a lot longer with our clients than it would if you were dealing with someone more educated, or more savvy. You need to take that into account in your legal correspondence, you cater to that in the way you communicate with them. You’ll have to really break down a retainer letter for instance. They won’t necessarily understand a lot of legal concepts”.

- Regional to domestic violence service

Use resources such as factsheets and diagrams when working with vulnerable clients, to help explain complicated legal concepts and to serve as a reminder of advice given during the consultation.

“It’s very difficult as a lawyer in that situation, because you only have that one hour consultation with them, so ideally you’d like to give them as much as you possibly can in that one hour to get them to the next step. Sometimes you just have to gauge that and go slow, you need to work with the client, see how much information they’re retaining. We have really good resources – fact sheets and workbooks and things like that – that we’ll provide the clients, if they’re literate, to take away with them. We acknowledge that they probably haven’t heard everything that we’ve said, so they can take a resource away, read it in their own time and come back to us. We stress that they can come back”

- Regional to women’s service

“With outreach models with vulnerable people, it’s definitely important that they understand exactly what’s happening in their lives, and explaining things in plain English, giving them the appropriate legal information and explaining their rights in plain English so that they have an understanding of it all”.

- **Metro to youth service**

Be culturally sensitive

Practitioners should be mindful of their clients’ experiences of historic trauma, and acknowledge that many clients have little faith in support services due to previous poor outcomes.

“legal problems are generally a problem of a lack of power, that’s what it usually boils down to. Structural inequalities, and lack of power tends to congregate within specific individuals, and specific communities, as a result of Australia’s treatment of first nations people.

- **Regional to community centre**

“Even without individual racism, the structural racism is there within our institutions. There are the cultural barriers, there are language barriers... Even if the client could overcome all of those other issues, and with all the goodwill in the world, their experience is one of services promising outcomes and then disappearing”

- **Regional to First Nations health agency**

Have a thorough and genuine understanding of their clients’ culture, practices, history, and experiences. Outreach services should have a deep connection to their client cohort.

“We’ve all done cultural competency training, but it’s more important just to have experience working in a community and understanding the people you’re working with. It’s about how you engage with people, understanding what’s appropriate in their culture and what’s not”.

- **Regional to women’s service**

“In terms of cultural differences it’s a matter of having that awareness that not every client has the same background that we have, and might experience similar things very differently. So what I try to do for those obvious issues sometimes is to just take the lead from the client, for example I won’t stick my hand out to greet someone if maybe they’re from a culture where that might be seen as offensive. Often some other cultures might find it difficult communicating with a woman, that’s definitely something that I face some challenges with sometimes. But then again it’s just a matter of following the clients’ cues. Some older men don’t feel comfortable with the door closed if it’s just me and him, so then I’ll just leave the door open. Just making those little changes to make sure that the client feels comfortable”.

- **Metro to refugee and immigration service**

Be trauma-informed

Clients of outreach legal services often have a historic or ongoing experience of trauma.

Trauma may impact the way a client recollects or describes events, and lawyers must show additional care and mindfulness during client consultations.

“Trauma-informed practice is absolutely key. Training around trauma is very important, so I’d recommend that to any practitioner. You’ll often meet with clients who are befuddled, so you’ll get fragments of stories, sometimes they’re not adding up. Sometimes people are so traumatised by their experiences that having an understanding of that, having a trauma-informed approach is definitely the key”.

- **Regional to domestic violence service**

“I’m working with a group who have experienced enormous injustices, so trust is something that they don’t naturally... it’s not the first thing they’re going to feel during that initial intake”

- **Regional to First Nations health service**

“Acknowledge that the way your clients approach things isn’t necessarily the way that we might approach things, due to our different life experiences and histories of trauma. I think when you’re working with vulnerable clients it’s a matter of putting on the trauma informed hat, so to speak”.

- **Metro to youth service**

“Don’t ask questions unless you need to know the answer – you need to think about how that might trigger someone who’s experienced trauma”

- Regional to women’s service

“Clients come to us in the middle of a crisis. Because of what they’ve experienced in their home countries we have clients who experience significant mental health issues, severe panic attacks, or who are presenting during a time of mental health crisis. That’s definitely a challenge”.

- Metro to Refugee and immigration service

Outreach lawyers must be mindful of vicarious trauma and burnout when working in marginalised communities. Outreach services should provide practitioners with trauma-informed supervision, debriefing opportunities, and access to a counseling service.

“It’s very easy to say, “just keep going, keep going, keep going”, but it’s important to have someone to debrief with, some sort of supervision, someone to download to and look after your own wellbeing. You can’t help your clients if you don’t look after yourself. I think any discussion of best practice in this sector needs to include vicarious trauma training. Because it really happens, it happens to all of us”.

- Regional domestic violence service

Reflect on your practice

The outreach lawyers interviewed for this consultation consistently displayed an informed and reflective approach to their practice. They regularly made reference to scholarship and literature around legal outreach, and demonstrated a high degree of self-awareness and consideration with regard to their practice. Reference was made a number of times to the recently published Justice Project Final Report, and more than one outreach provider reflected on their practice in the context of this report’s findings.

The lawyers interviewed for this project spoke candidly about the aspects of their programs which were successful and those which might be improved; and consistently demonstrated that their legal outreach was undertaken with a high degree of mindfulness, reflection, and deliberation.

Additional resources

Trauma-informed practice

The Blue Knot Foundation: Trauma and the Law

<https://www.blueknot.org.au/Home/Front-Page-News/ID/56/Trauma-and-the-Law>

This paper introduces the core principles of trauma-informed practice with reference to the many areas of legal practice to which they relate. The evidence base for widespread application of trauma-informed practice within and across the legal system and judiciary is presented, and the many benefits of implementation of trauma informed principles to legal practice are discussed.

Knowmore: Taking Care of You

<http://knowmore.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/6.-For-Workers2.pdf>

A resource for working safely with clients who have experienced trauma, and for understanding the dual nature of vicarious trauma – that it is a normal outcome of exposure to trauma, and that resiliency needs to be developed within a trauma sensitive framework.

Acknowledgment

Thank you to the following participants to the consultation:

- Cairns Community Legal Clinic;
- Mackay Regional Community Legal Centre;
- North Queensland Women's Legal Service, Townsville;
- Queensland Advocacy Incorporated;
- Refugee and Immigration Legal Service;
- Taylor Street Community Legal Centre;
- Justice Connect;
- Fleur Hopkins;
- Tony McCarthy;
- Jo Sampford;
- Wuchopperen Community Health Service;
- Anglicare North Queensland;
- North Queensland Women's Legal Service, Cairns.

The following organisations were involved in initial planning discussions for the consultation project, or otherwise provided guidance and advice:

- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service;
- Legal Aid Queensland;
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Women's Legal Service NQ;
- Community Legal Centres Queensland.





LawRight
Access | Justice

Contact

t: 07 3846 6317
f: 07 3846 6311
e: admin@lawright.org.au

p: PO Box 12217 GEORGE STREET QLD 4003

ABN: 52 033 468 135