



Victoria Legal Aid |

Client Experience Research, 2020 - 2021

Executive  
Summary



## Executive summary: Administration and results of the VLA Client Experience Survey.

### Background.

- Kantar Public has conducted client satisfaction research for VLA since 2011 on a periodic basis every 18 months. VLA wants to report on client satisfaction metrics on a more regular basis, but on a smaller scale than the periodic client satisfaction survey. In order to do this, VLA commissioned Kantar Public to conduct a pilot study which involved a survey of clients from several program areas across the organisation.

### Methodology.

- This pilot study targeted clients who had received legal advice, a duty lawyer, or casework from VLA. Six program areas were involved in this research: Parenting Disputes, Mental Health Disability Law, Family Violence Specialist Court Legal Service (Ballarat and Shepparton), Family Violence (Geelong), Summary Crime (Dandenong) and Youth Crime
- Surveys were administered via email, SMS or Casework letters. Clients also had the option to complete the survey via telephone, in English or a LOTE.
- In total, 137 invites were sent out to VLA clients, and 36 surveys were completed.
- Fieldwork ran over ~12 weeks, from November 2019 to February 2020.

### Key Learnings – Technical Review.

- Surveys sent via SMS had a stronger rate of completion than email (38% vs 10% conversion). Telephone surveys had the strongest response rate overall (80%), however are a more costly survey channel.
- Different program areas had different rates of survey invitations sent out, and surveys completed. Likewise, they had different experiences in survey administration, and faced unique challenges (e.g. reduced face to face services due to COVID, workload pressures; change in nature and number of cases for some program areas, etc).

- The program areas that incorporated survey administration into their triage or admin processes were most successful in sending survey invitations.

### Research Findings.

- Clients reported very high levels of satisfaction with the service they had received from VLA. 34 out of 36 (94%) rated their service as 'good' or 'very good'. **This is a very small sample size, and these results should be interpreted with caution.**
- Nine out of 10 clients (94%) agreed that they felt their lawyer treated them with respect, helped them to understand what was going to happen with their case (92%), gave them information that was easy to understand (92%), and that they felt comfortable asking questions (92%).
- Around two thirds (64%) of these clients believed that COVID-19 had at least a slight impact on the service they received, with the biggest effect being that clients found it harder to explain their situation (48%).

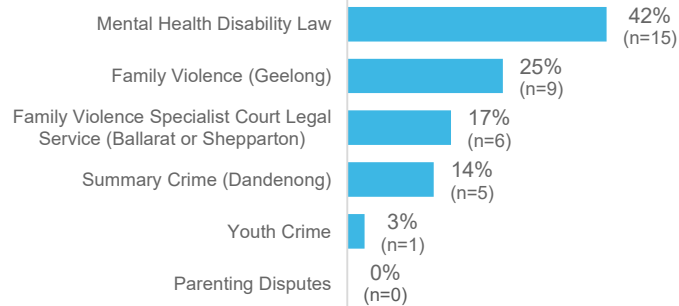
### Limitations.

- COVID-19 and the related restrictions meant that the nature and frequency of cases were impacted. This also led to the move to remote service provision, which had an impact on survey administration, and encouraging clients to complete the survey at the point of service.
- There was a low frequency of survey invitations being sent out, and subsequently completed. This was due to workload demands, and lawyers being unable to administer the survey in certain circumstances.
- It is imagined that lawyers were more likely to invite clients with whom they had stronger rapport, or that clients with a more positive case outcome would have agreed to participate, which could have led to selection bias. Research findings should be interpreted with caution.

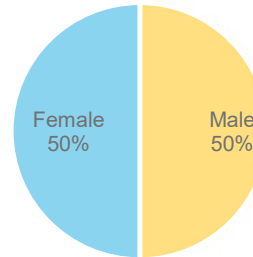


## Demographic profile of the sample.

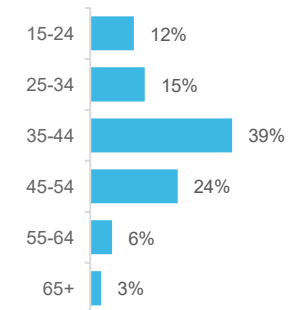
### Service Area



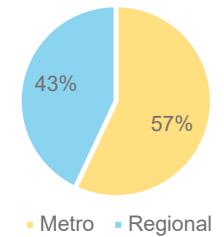
### Gender



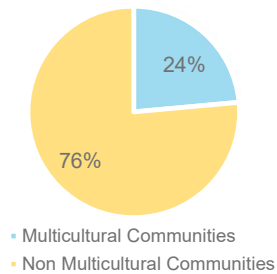
### Age



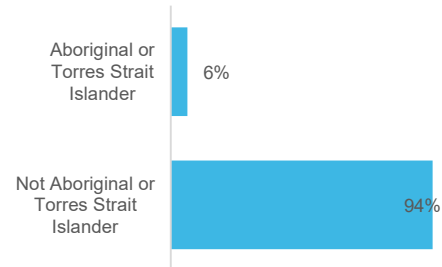
### Location



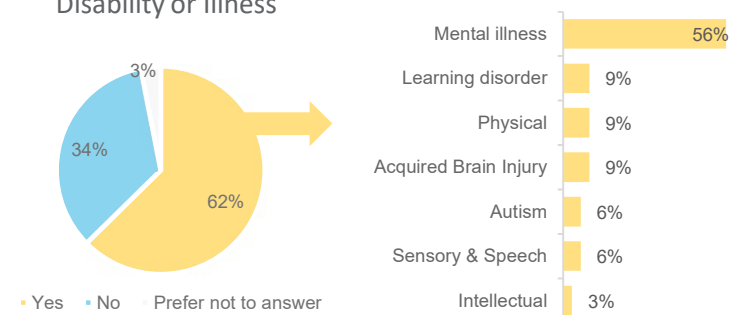
### Multicultural Communities



### Indigenous Background



### Disability or Illness





## Clients felt they were listened to, understood, and were well-informed by their lawyer.

### What did VLA do well?

- Clients often reported that their VLA lawyer did well in listening to them, without judgement.
- Several clients believed they provided a good amount of information; in a way that was easy to understand, and they took the time to explain things.
- There were also a couple of mentions about lawyers being thorough.

“They totally explained what the case was all about, and how I can get help with the situation.”

“Helpful in every way. Not judgmental.”

“They do their job well. They provided me with contact and listened to my side of the story. They were very helpful.”

“Made the information easy to understand and not quite so scary.”

“They made it easy for me - they took the burden from my [shoulder] and solved my problem and I was happy.”



Most clients did not have suggestions for improvements and were satisfied with their experience.

### What could VLA do better?

- A majority of clients reported that they had a mostly positive experience with VLA, and did not have any recommendations on how to improve.
- Contacting the client sooner, or issues with getting in touch with VLA in the first place, were noted by a couple of clients.
- There were also a couple of comments about the preference for face-to-face consultations (over remote consultation), which were unable to occur during this period.

“I don't think I could name a bad thing about my experience”

“Send a person face to face in contrast to having to deal with someone over the phone. Face to face would have helped immensely.”

“Help people feel more comfortable as they are dealing with more powerful people and sometimes that is scary.”

“Actually, I got treated pretty well, she helped me out as much as she could. They did a really good job.”

“Maybe contact clients sooner..?”

“Finding the right place was difficult - I had to do a lot of searching before I found Victoria Legal Aid. VLA did not always answer their phones. But once I found the right place it was great.”



VLA will use the pilot findings to inform and improve the design of future surveys.

For more information or a copy of the full report contact [research@vla.vic.gov.au](mailto:research@vla.vic.gov.au)