Characteristics of legally aided respondents charged with breaches of family violence intervention orders

MOST OF OUR CLIENTS DO NOT RETURN ON A SECOND BREACH CHARGE

- 77% received a single grant of aid
- 23% received multiple grants of aid

CHARACTERISTICS OF CLIENTS CHARGED WITH MORE THAN ONE BREACH

- 90% were male
- 10% were female
- 3 out of 10 were aged between 25 and 34 years
- 5% identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, this group makes up less than 1% of Victorians

HIGH LEVELS OF DISADVANTAGE AND DISABILITY AMONG MULTIPLE CHARGE CLIENTS

- 9 out of 10 were unemployed
- 3 out of 10 reported a disability
- A multiple charge client is 2x more likely to have an acquired brain injury
- 38% of female clients on a support benefit received the Disability Support Pension
- 26% of male clients on a support benefit received the Disability Support Pension

PRIOR HISTORY OF LEGAL PROBLEMS

- 98% of multiple charge clients experienced a legal problem before their first family violence breach grant
- 2 out of 3 of these matters involved allegations of threatening or violent offences (crimes against the person)

1 Our clients generally must demonstrate disadvantage to qualify for assistance.
This research examined data taken over seven years to 2015 to reveal the common characteristics of more than 15,000 clients charged with breaching family violence intervention orders. It was undertaken with the aim of helping Victoria Legal Aid and other services dealing with family violence to identify those more likely to keep using family violence, respond more effectively to reduce the risk of it continuing, and better promote victim safety.

RESPONDING TO DEMAND IN FAMILY VIOLENCE

- In 2014–15, VLA and community legal centres provided more than 21,100 duty lawyer services for family violence intervention orders. However, between VLA and community legal centres, lawyers were only able to assist 39 per cent of people who were eligible for help.
- Over the last five years there has been a 24 per cent increase in family violence duty lawyer services and a 173 per cent increase in duty lawyer services for breaches of intervention orders.
- Family violence calls to our Legal Help phone line almost doubled over four years.

Data related to clients receiving legal advice, duty lawyer services or a grant of aid.