



Legal  
Aid For  
Tasmanians

# Client Satisfaction Survey

Summary Report | March 2022



## Executive Summary: Administration and results of the TLA Client Satisfaction Survey

### Background

The Tasmania Legal Aid (TLA) Client Satisfaction Survey 2021 was commissioned as part of the TLA's Strategic Plan 2020- 2023. The survey, to be conducted every two years, is a key performance indicator on TLA's goal to improve client service experience. It is also a requirement of TLA's Commonwealth funding agreement under the National Legal Assistance Partnership (NLAP). This is the first comprehensive, independent client survey conducted by TLA.

### Methodology

- The survey was conducted between 15 September – 15 October 2021
- It was promoted by emailing all TLA clients since December 2018 and posted on the TLA website
- Information sheets were displayed in reception and provided by TLA lawyers;
- 202 clients completed the 28 question online survey, with a small number interviewed
- Almost half of the respondents wrote detailed additional comments
- All survey responses are anonymous and confidential
- Independent consultant, Julia Curtis, conducted the survey and reported on the results.

### Key Findings Snapshot

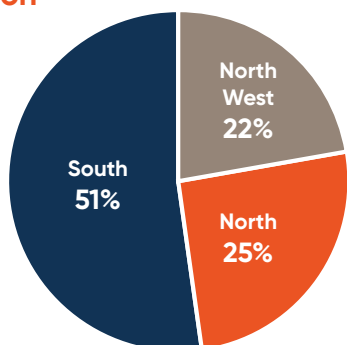
- There is a high level of client satisfaction with TLA services, with almost two-thirds of respondents agreeing they were satisfied or very satisfied
- Approximately 83 % of clients agreed TLA staff and lawyers were polite and respectful; 80% agreed their lawyer listened to them, and 74 % felt the advice they received was helpful
- Around 66 % agreed TLA's service met their expectations
- Good communication is the key to client satisfaction – where information is clear, consistent and timely clients felt respected, supported, and safe; where communication is poor and not client-centred, clients are more likely to be dissatisfied with their service
- Almost 10% of clients who wrote additional comments referred to family violence, positive and negative, highlighting this as an area for further attention
- The number of respondents and the detail of their feedback demonstrates that our clients are willing to help us improve our services.



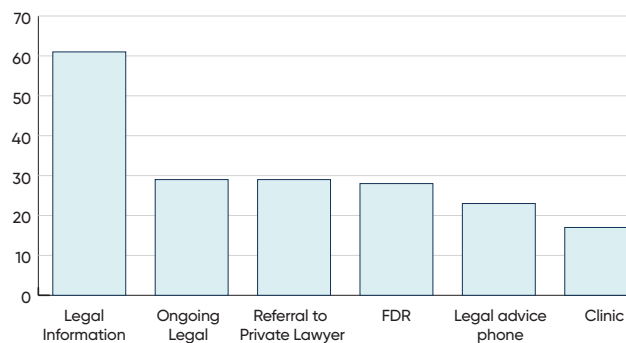
## Demographics

The clients who completed the survey are broadly representative of TLA's client demographic profile and distribution.

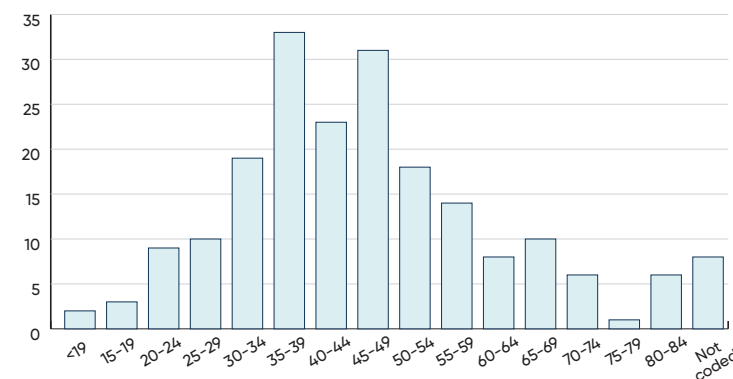
### Region



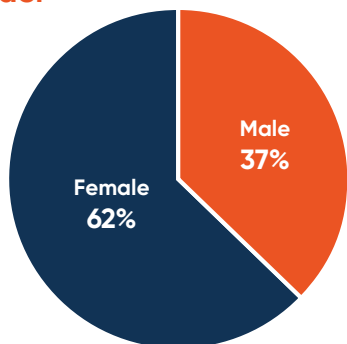
### Service Type



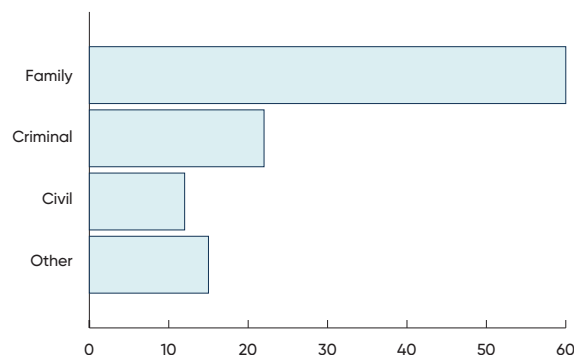
### Age Range



### Gender



### Law Type



- Approximately 8 per cent of respondents identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- 12 per cent were homelessness or at risk of homelessness
- Approximately 4 per cent did not speak English at home
- 6 per cent reported they had a disability
- 3 per cent were in custody and/or prisoners.



## What TLA did well

- Most clients felt more positive after their contact with TLA, with around 70% reporting that they felt hopeful, better informed, calmer, and relieved
- Three out of four clients found the advice provided by TLA staff and lawyers to be helpful and two-thirds (66%) reported that TLA had given them the confidence to deal with their legal problem
- Asked if TLA explained what help they could give, 80% of clients agreed or strongly agreed
- Around 70% of clients were able to contact their TLA lawyer through their legal service.

*I walked into  
Legal Aid a bit  
of a wreck...  
Walked out with  
some certainty  
and a process to  
follow.*

*Everyone I  
dealt with was  
understanding,  
helpful and very  
knowledgeable.  
I didn't feel  
judged at all.*

*First person who  
actually listened to  
myself and my child.  
And treated us both  
with respect. And  
my child was given  
a voice.*

*TLA has been a  
safe and respectful  
place to visit at any  
time that I needed  
their help.*



## What could TLA do better?

- Of the clients who were not satisfied with their service from TLA, most identified poor communication as the main reason
- A number of clients were dissatisfied because they had not received the service they expected. Some were told they were not eligible for legal aid and TLA couldn't help them. While TLA's capacity to change the eligibility criteria is limited, changing the way the information is communicated will enable the person to better understand, and help to improve their experience
- Other communication issues raised include timeliness, staff attitudes, and clarity and consistency of information
- While a number of clients described TLA's family violence service as professional, compassionate, and caring, several found TLA's responses to their experience of family violence in other service areas to be unsatisfactory. This points to the need to build the skills and capabilities of all TLA staff to better recognise and respond to family violence.

*I found the people at reception aloof and distant. Not a friendly smile or greeting. As the first point of contact this was extremely disappointing. It made me feel more afraid than I already was. The lawyer was polite.*

*The initial consult, in person, was overwhelming, rushed. I felt like a bother. Not helpful and left me feeling defeated. Over the phone with the actual lawyer was great, super helpful.*

*I was referred to a lawyer by TLA but not told that I was not eligible for the trial program and spent \$1000 on legal advice to find out I could not afford to pursue the case further. If I had been properly informed prior to engaging a recommended lawyer, I would have accepted the outcome and saved on unnecessary legal fees.*



## Next Steps

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TLA will use the survey findings to inform and improve our services.

We are working on ways to improve our clients' experiences. For example, our new Client Engagement Strategy ensures that our clients' voices are part of all the work we do at TLA. We have introduced a Client Safety Framework and training. We are developing new Independent Children's Lawyers' practice standards and guidelines to improve children's experiences of the legal system. Our new Digital Strategy will help to make all our services more accessible to our clients.