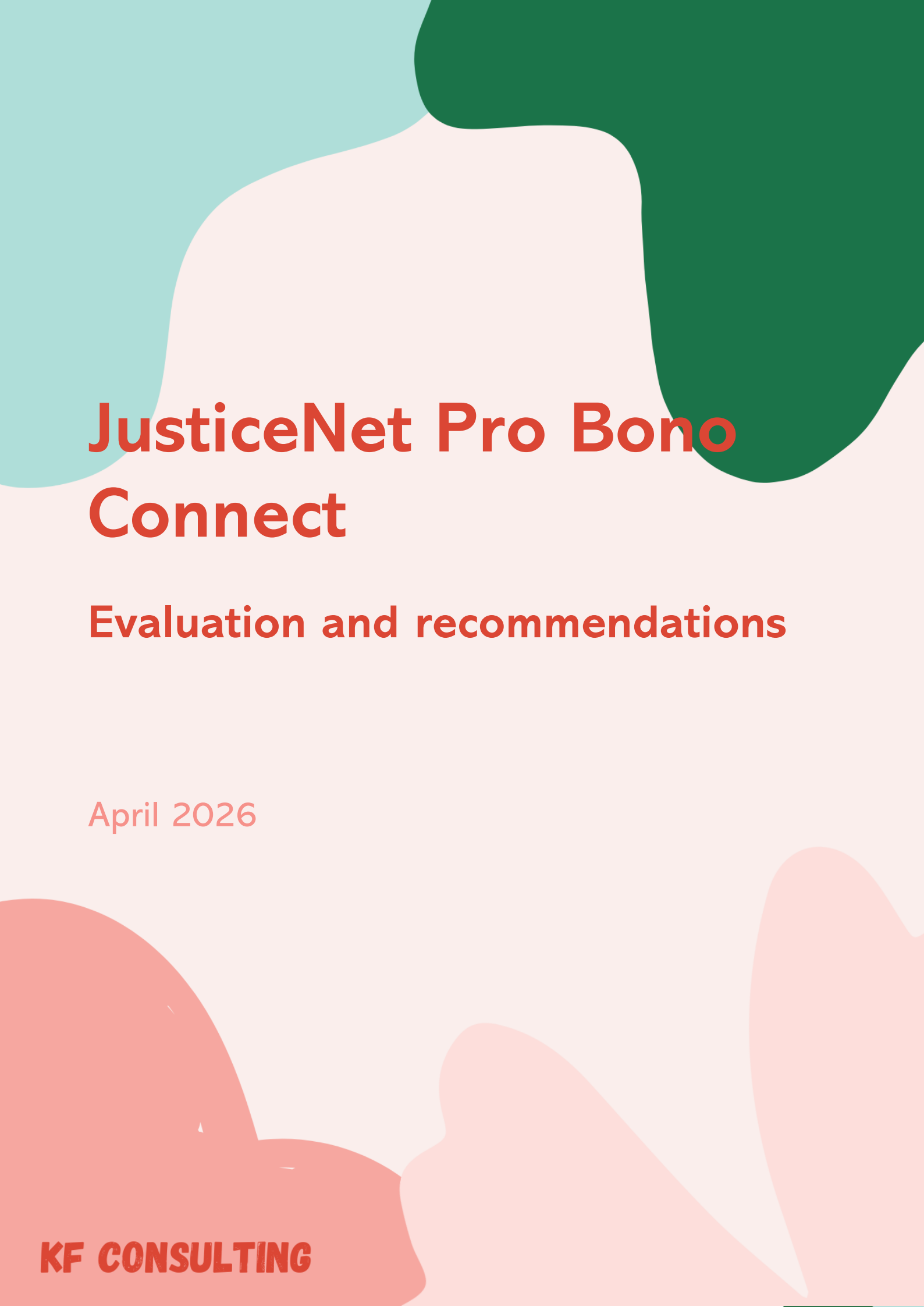




JusticeNet Pro Bono Connect

Evaluation and recommendations

April 2026

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Note that the version of this report initially published contained a calculation error with respect to the return on investment in Finding 9. This has been corrected in the report which was reissued on 10 August 2026.

Evaluation summary

Scope

Kate Fazio, Principal of Kate Fazio Consulting (**the Consultant**) was engaged to undertake an evaluation of the JusticeNet Pro Bono Connect program over the three-year period of FY 2023–FY 2025 (the Evaluation Period). The purpose of the evaluation was to quantify the program's outputs, build a picture of service outcomes for service users, pro bono lawyers, and the broader justice system, and provide reflections on the return on investment delivered by the program.

The Consultant was also engaged to provide service design and data capture and processing recommendations based on the evaluation findings and observations made in the course of conducting the evaluation.

The recommendations that flow from the evaluation findings are contained in this report. A further set of detailed recommendations has also been provided to JusticeNet, which relates in particular to the service's approach to data collection, data structure, and system configuration.

Summary of findings

Program inputs and outputs

1. Over the Evaluation Period, the Pro Bono Connect team (including the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Program, or RASP) leveraged \$476,931 of program funding to
 - handle 1,343 phone enquiries;
 - deliver 322 non-pro bono pre-referral services (e.g. referrals to other services, legal information, and assistance with completing the application form);
 - process 689 full applications for assistance; and
 - broker 379 pro bono referrals for 205 clients.
2. Over the Evaluation Period, enquiries increased, while full application submissions and pro bono referrals decreased. This shift is likely due to
 - earlier provision of lower-intensity support to enquirers (diverting enquirers who would have otherwise completed an application and been assessed as ineligible)
 - challenges with the online application form in FY 2025 (the form was not functioning for periods of time which meant that applicants had to download a PDF and complete and return it)
 - fewer referrals of migration matters due to shifts in the services landscape, reduced migration backlog, and a transition to a focus on providing migration assistance in areas where other funded services were unable to assist.
3. Pro Bono Connect delivers a large volume of 'unseen' work to deliver an ultimate output of making a pro bono referral. Over the Evaluation Period, for each successful pro bono referral, four enquiries were handled, and two to three applications were assessed.
4. Over the Evaluation Period, Pro Bono Connect delivered an increasing number of intermediate services to people making enquiries, including assisting with the completion of application forms, providing legal information, and making referrals to alternative services. These services should be considered a program output as they are substantial and measurable (despite not being clearly captured previously).
5. Among the applications initially assessed as eligible (excluding RASP), 71% ultimately received at least one pro bono referral, for 8% referral to pro bono was attempted but was unsuccessful, 8% withdrew their request for assistance or their matter evolved such that assistance was no longer required, 5% were as ineligible with further consideration, 5% were referred internally or externally, and the outcome was unclear in 3% of files. For RASP applicants, 67% received a pro bono referral, 26% were referred to the South

Australian LSC, 3% were referred to another service, and 4% either withdrew their request or lost contact with JusticeNet.

6. Many service users receive multiple referrals, often due to a referral being made to both a solicitor and a barrister or a referral being made for merits assessment and then upon delivery of a positive merits assessment, a further referral is made for ongoing legal representation.
7. Applications made to Pro Bono Connect and the resulting pro bono referrals cover diverse clients, geographies, and legal issue types. This breadth is uncommon for a community legal service, which tends to have narrower criteria. This finding reflects JusticeNet's position as a service of last resort as well as a gateway to the pro bono legal profession in South Australia in all its diversity.
8. Over the Evaluation Period, Pro Bono Connect referrals resulted in the contribution of 20,845 pro bono hours valued at AUD\$7,983,635.

Team and pro bono referral efficiency

9. The cost of running the team was minimal relative to the program outputs. For every \$1 spent on the Pro Bono Connect service (including RASP), JusticeNet leveraged 0.04 pro bono hours valued at \$16.70, delivering a substantial return on investment of 1:16.7 or \$16.7 of pro bono services for every \$1 spent.
10. Pro Bono Connect staff spend a significant amount of time on assessing applications and handling enquiries (27% of time overall), compared to 12% of time brokering pro bono referrals, preparing referrals for handover to pro bono, and managing referrals that are underway.
11. Pro Bono Connect staff spent significant time on external engagement, with 23% of their time devoted to attending external events, stakeholder engagement, and external meetings.
12. Over the three-year Evaluation Period, among all matters in which pro bono brokering was attempted, 8% were unable to be matched with a pro bono lawyer. A further 7% were not successfully referred due to the service user withdrawing the request for assistance. In some cases, withdrawal likely occurred due to the length of time being taken to place a matter with pro bono. Other withdrawal cases were due to the service user's successful efforts in seeking legal assistance elsewhere, whether paid or unpaid.
13. For those matters in which a pro bono referral occurred, the average time between the submission of an application and placement with pro bono was 40 days. (Note the detailed discussion regarding data limitations.)

Service outcomes

14. Lawyer-provided data on matter outcomes indicate that the majority of service users who received a pro bono referral experienced a positive case outcome. In 9% of closure forms a loss was reported, 11% reported that they provided a negative merits assessment (indicating to the service user that further investment in progressing their matter was not justified and/or was high-risk), 22% reported a win in a contentious setting, and 24% reported a settlement. (Note that not all closure reports clearly recorded an outcome.)
15. Further evidence of positive case outcomes is provided in pro bono lawyers' responses submitted to the pro bono lawyer survey.
16. Among the service user survey respondents who received a pro bono referral, 56% agreed or strongly agreed that assistance from their pro bono lawyer made a significant contribution to resolving their legal problem.
17. The service user survey respondents indicated that a relatively high amount of their legal needs remained unmet after their engagement with a pro bono lawyer (31.8% had some of their legal needs met and 18.8% having none of their legal needs met). This is partially explained by the fact that some pro bono referrals were for limited scope assistance and were never intended to meet the entirety of a persons' legal need.
18. Among the service user survey respondents who received a pro bono referral, 50% stated that their pro bono referral saved them time, and 68% stated that their pro bono referral saved them money.

Service user experience

19. Ratings of the overall experience of engaging with JusticeNet were strongly linked to whether or not a service user received a pro bono referral, with those who received a pro bono referral providing a strong NPS and those who did not receive a referral providing a significantly lower NPS.
20. For some respondents, disambiguating feedback on the legal system broadly from feedback on JusticeNet specifically was difficult.
21. Several service users noted that the process of applying for assistance was onerous.
22. Several service users noted that they were unsatisfied with the wait time to receive communication of the outcome of their eligibility assessment and/or the wait time between a positive eligibility assessment and placement with a pro bono lawyer.
23. The service users who received a pro bono referral provided positive feedback overall and a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of +44 (out of a possible range of –100 to +100¹, which is a good score).
24. Well over the majority of service users receiving a pro bono referral were happy with the service provided to them by their pro bono lawyer, including on issues such as responsiveness, efficiency and effectiveness, and whether or not they perceived their lawyer as caring about them and their problem.
25. The service user survey respondents who were assessed as eligible at some point in their help-seeking journey with JusticeNet rated the experience of applying for legal help 3.8 out of 5 and provided an NPS of +11 (out of a possible range of –100 to +100²). Among the survey respondents who identified as having been assessed as eligible for a pro bono referral, 83% ultimately received a pro bono referral, consistent with the service data from Actionstep.
26. The experiences of the service users who did not receive any assistance from JusticeNet were negative overall. At the time of responding to the survey, legal needs remained unmet for 77% of this group. 46% of this group had contacted more than seven legal services, indicating that they either had a legal issue not suited to any free legal service or had a legal matter that was assessed as inappropriate for free assistance based on prospects of success or issues such as expired limitation periods for action. Among this group, 50% had been looking for legal help for longer than four months, 32% for at least a year, and 21% for more than three years.

Pro bono lawyer experience

27. JusticeNet plays a critical role in facilitating opportunities for pro bono lawyers to carry out pro bono work in South Australia. Lawyers value opportunities to undertake pro bono work, and most survey respondents considered that they would do less pro bono work without JusticeNet.
28. Overall, pro bono lawyers rated JusticeNet an NPS of +44. On average, JusticeNet was rated more highly by solicitors (NPS +57) than by barristers (NPS +36) (out of a possible range of –100 to +100³).
29. Two barristers noted that managing scope creep and referral size were challenges when taking on pro bono referrals from JusticeNet.

System-level impacts

30. JusticeNet delivers several system-level impacts, including
 - increasing the amount of pro bono work that pro bono lawyers are undertaking in South Australia: 75% of the pro bono lawyer respondents agreed or strongly agreed that without JusticeNet, they would do less pro bono work;
 - providing guidance and merits assessments to help litigants make decisions about whether their claim should be pursued; and

¹ Further information on the of Net Promoter Score methodology is available at www.bain.com/consulting-services/customer-strategy-and-marketing/net-promoter-score-system/.

² Further information on the of Net Promoter Score methodology is available at www.bain.com/consulting-services/customer-strategy-and-marketing/net-promoter-score-system/.

³ Further information on the of Net Promoter Score methodology is available at www.bain.com/consulting-services/customer-strategy-and-marketing/net-promoter-score-system/.

- providing system navigation support to people seeking legal assistance such as via referrals to alternative services.

31. These system-level impacts are likely to deliver cost savings to Courts via:
 - a reduction in self-represented litigants generally, with pro bono representation provided for claims with prospects of success, and
 - a reduction in the number of self-represented litigants pursuing unmeritorious claims due to JusticeNet's advice on merits.
32. JusticeNet's contributions also likely deliver cost savings to other legal services via a reduction in the intake burden for services that do not have to field a request for assistance that has been handled by JusticeNet.
33. The availability of pro bono assistance supports the functioning of the justice system and the rule of law and provides a deterrence to parties that may be considering taking unlawful action against a disadvantaged party that would not be able to afford legal representation.

Summary of recommendations

1. Create a system to record the intermediate services provided by Pro Bono Connect, such as legal information provision and system navigation support, to ensure that this output is captured on an ongoing basis.
2. Consider implementing a strategy to assess the effectiveness of intermediate services, particularly referrals to external services. This could involve collecting email addresses and phone numbers from enquirers to facilitate a follow-up survey.
3. Create a new field in Actionstep to record that applications are initially assessed as eligible to support monitoring of conversions from eligible applications to pro bono referrals.
4. Create a new area in the service user files on Actionstep to record each pro bono referral, including the scope of referral, lawyer/firm referred to, date of referral, and referral outcome, to ensure that a full record of pro bono referrals is captured.
5. Given the proportionally high number of referrals to barristers versus solicitors and the volume of contentious matters requiring ongoing representation, JusticeNet should consider whether opportunities exist to proactively seek applications from people or organisations with advisory needs rather than ongoing representation needs. JusticeNet's pro bono network may have the capacity to take on this extra work.
6. Consider tracking the ratio of applications to the outcome of being unable to place with pro bono in its new dashboard. If this number increases, JusticeNet should consider whether trends can be observed in the matters that cannot be placed with pro bono and whether the eligibility criteria should be updated to screen out these matters earlier.
7. For those who are assessed as ineligible for assistance, keep a clear record of the decision and the reason for ineligibility.
8. Consider adopting an outcomes measurement framework for legal matters and then seek to regularly gather data against the framework from both lawyers and service users. More regular surveys of service users and pro bono lawyers can build a corpus of outcomes data to inform trend analysis on outcomes for service users.
9. Given the length and complexity of the full application form, consider whether help-seekers can complete a short application that can be used to provide quick feedback on their likelihood of being assessed as eligible, which may then be followed by completion of the longer application.
10. Consider seeking user experience feedback from applicants when the outcome of their application is communicated.
11. Consider approaches to increasing resourcing for the assessment stage and the brokering stage of pro bono referrals, which are the most likely to take time and cause delays.
12. Expectation management:
 - Consider flagging early in the application process that if a matter's merit is not immediately clear, JusticeNet may make a limited referral for a merits assessment.

- Consider communicating more clearly that even if assessed as eligible, JusticeNet needs to work to find a pro bono lawyer, and this exercise will not always result in a lawyer being appointed. If data indicating that a matter has a lower chance of being placed with pro bono is available, this should be communicated to the service user as early as possible.
- 13. Consider communicating the financial value of the pro bono service provided to the service user upon completion of their service so that service users.
- 14. Develop a process to check the status of a pro bono referral, and once the referral is complete, seek the service users' feedback on their experience of JusticeNet, their engagement with the pro bono lawyer, and the outcome of their matter.
- 15. For those who are assessed as ineligible for assistance, keep a clear record of the reason for ineligibility and carry out a follow-up survey to ascertain whether further services were contacts, legal assistance was ultimately received and/or legal needs remained unmet. Opportunities may exist to provide a clearer assessment of prospects to these help-seekers, which may support them to discontinue their search for assistance with flow-on benefits to both the help-seeker and services.
- 16. Consider whether some client or matter types have a tendency for a more contained scope of work, and consider promoting these issue types as suited for pro bono referrals with referring partners (e.g. merits assessments).
- 17. If a matter is highly complex from a legal or procedural perspective, consider whether a more advanced assessment can be initially carried out by an assessing counsel or solicitor who assists in preparing the ultimate referral brief. This advanced assessment can be considered pro bono work and form a type of limited scope assistance contemplated in the point above. This type of work is similar to a merits assessment but would be broader in its purpose, which is to assess what type and volume of legal work is likely required to advance the matter.
- 18. Consider whether more legal issues that are generalist in nature would require pro bono work, as these may be suited to solicitors.
- 19. In future, JusticeNet could consider how it might measure and monitor the broader system impacts of its work. This may require collaboration with other justice system stakeholders, such as the courts and the LSC.

About the Consultant

Kate Fazio specialises in legal innovation, technology design and delivery (including AI), service design and evaluation, social investment, organisational change and governance.

She is a trusted advisor to organisations ranging from international consumer-facing businesses and global law firms to small not-for-profits, government agencies, peak bodies and public purpose and philanthropic funds. Kate has practiced as both a corporate and community lawyer and ran an award-winning legal innovation lab for six years.

Kate holds a Bachelor of Laws (Hons I) and Bachelor of Arts (Media Communications) from the University of Melbourne, a Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice from the College of Law, a Graduate Certificate in Social Impact from the Centre for Social Impact, and a Master of Social Investment and Philanthropy from Swinburne University.

Legal products developed by Kate are used by millions of Australians and hundreds of law firms across five continents each year.

JusticeNet Pro Bono Connect evaluation introduction

1. Evaluation scope

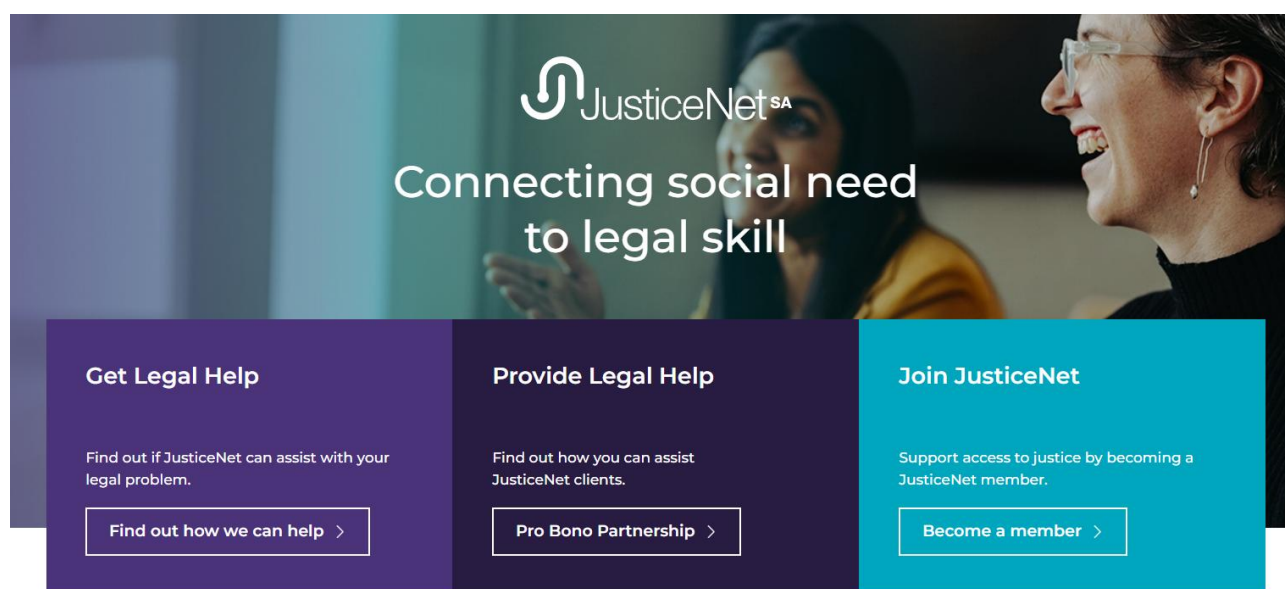
The Consultant was engaged to undertake an evaluation of the JusticeNet Pro Bono Connect program across the three-year period of FY 2023–FY 2025. The key purpose of the evaluation was to quantify the program's outputs, build a picture of service outcomes, and provide reflections on the return on investment delivered by the program.

The evaluation was focused on outcomes for service users, pro bono lawyers, and the broader justice system.

The Consultant was also engaged to provide recommendations based on the evaluation findings and observations made in the course of conducting the evaluation.

The recommendations that flow from the evaluation findings are contained in this report. A further set of detailed recommendations has also been provided to JusticeNet, which relates in particular to the service's approach to data collection, data structure, and system configuration.

2. About JusticeNet



JusticeNet SA is a South Australian not-for-profit organisation that facilitates pro bono legal assistance for people and community organisations that cannot afford a lawyer and are unable to obtain help from legal aid or community legal centres.

The organisation was established in 2008 to address gaps in access to civil legal services in South Australia and later developed a structured referral service connecting eligible clients with pro bono practitioners. JusticeNet focuses largely on civil law matters, such as tenancy, employment, debt, discrimination, and administrative disputes. (The full range of matter types is explored in Section 6.4.)

JusticeNet operates a pro bono clearing house, Pro Bono Connect, that assesses applications for assistance and refers suitable matters to member pro bono lawyers from private law firms and the South Australian Bar. In addition to Pro Bono Connect, it operates several targeted services, including a Federal Court Self-Representation Service (which provides guidance to litigants without legal representation) and Homeless Legal (which provides outreach and legal assistance to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness).

The organisation works with a network of private lawyers and barristers who volunteer their services. The organisation forms part of Australia's broader pro bono legal infrastructure and contributes to policy discussions on access to justice and the role of pro bono services in the legal system.

JusticeNet is funded by philanthropic and government grants, membership fees, and fundraising. It is registered as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission and is a registered community legal centre.

3. About Pro Bono Connect

Pro Bono Connect is JusticeNet's generalist pro bono referral scheme. Its screening and referral process fields enquiries and applications from the public and assesses matters for their suitability for pro bono referral.

Applicants must meet financial eligibility criteria and demonstrate that their legal matter has reasonable merit and a need for legal representation. JusticeNet staff review the application, conduct an initial screening of the legal issue, and determine whether the matter is suitable for pro bono referral.

If an application is assessed as eligible for placement with pro bono, JusticeNet seeks to place the case with a pro bono lawyer or law firm from its network of participating practitioners. The service acts as an expert broker by assessing and coordinating the referral and providing administrative support, while pro bono lawyers carry out the legal work on a pro bono basis.

During the Evaluation Period, in addition to its generalist service, Pro Bono Connect operated RASP, which assisted refugees and asylum seekers seeking judicial review of negative protection visa decisions, particularly as part of the legacy case load initiative. The program coordinated free legal assistance through JusticeNet's pro bono network for eligible applicants. Within the Evaluation Period, the South Australian Legal Services Commission (the South Australian provider of government legal aid services) began receiving funding to provide refugee legal services. JusticeNet's RASP program was incorporated into the broader Pro Bono Connect program, focusing on providing assistance to people otherwise unable to access free legal assistance. A long tail of enquiries continues to be made to JusticeNet, and JusticeNet either refers these enquirers on to the Legal Services Commission when they are likely to be eligible and otherwise assesses applications and where eligible brokers pro bono referrals.

4. Evaluation methodology

Until this evaluation was commissioned by JusticeNet, efforts to comprehensively assess the Pro Bono Connect service had been complicated by a lack of data and/or low data quality across the service.

To address these challenges, the Consultant recommended a two-pronged strategy:

1. Invest in data cleaning and annotation to support analysis.
2. Implement new data capture activities to provide new insights, including carrying out a time-tracking exercise, sending a survey to all service users from the Evaluation Period, and sending a survey to all pro bono lawyers engaged in the Evaluation Period.

The Consultant also provided a range of recommendations and proposed additions to the JusticeNet data structure to support future service tracking. JusticeNet accepted all of the Consultant's recommendations.

The evaluation methodology includes

- an accounting of service inputs and outputs, including the number of pro bono hours leveraged by the service, and a review of efficiency in the use of resources and return on investment;
- research and analysis to understand and describe outcomes for service users;
- research and analysis of the experience of engaging with JusticeNet for service users;
- research and analysis of the experience of engaging with JusticeNet for pro bono lawyers; and
- a brief consideration of system-level impacts observed in the data and analysis.

In developing the recommendations, the Consultant has considered return on investment, efficiency indicators, and resource allocation and applied principles of user experience and service design.

4.1 Data sources

Data source	Type of data	Use for evaluation
Actionstep	Client and matter records	Service delivery numbers, demographic information, eligibility determinations, file outcomes
Thank-you emails, summarised by JusticeNet	Pro bono referrals records	Service delivery numbers
Discrete file notes	Annotated file notes	Service delivery numbers
Pro bono lawyer closure forms	File outcomes, pro bono hours spent, value of time spent	Quantification of pro bono contributions, outcomes for service users
EOFY pro bono reporting	Pro bono hours, number of lawyers participating	Quantification of pro bono contributions
Survey of service users	Qualitative and quantitative responses from survey respondents	Service user experiences, outcomes and impacts
Survey of pro bono lawyers	Qualitative and quantitative responses from survey respondents	Program outcomes and impacts
Clockify team time recording	Time entries	Review of use of time by program staff

4.2 Surveys

The questions asked in the survey of service users and the survey of pro bono lawyers are set out in Appendix I. Service users were offered a chance to win one of two \$100 Coles vouchers as an inducement to complete the survey.

Note on evaluating legal service outcomes

No standardised approach to measuring the outcomes and impacts of free legal services exists, and there are significant challenges presented in collecting outcomes data and attributing outcomes to legal interventions.

Several efforts have sought to address the outcomes framework gap including:

- A foundational guide developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the Open Society Foundations which set out a framework for legal needs surveys built around eight primary justiciable problem categories covering problem impact, resolution behaviour, and perception of outcome.
- The US Legal Services Corporation developed its Civil Legal Outcomes Toolkit to help funded programs define, collect, and report on effectiveness metrics, although this tool kit has not been updated recently.
- the Hague Institute for the Innovation of Law (HiIL) developed a measurement system that underpins its Justice Needs and Satisfaction surveys. It proposes eight general justice outcomes that can be used to monitor service quality from the perspective of people rather than institutions. HiIL's work focused on the challenge of distinguishing between case outcomes and outcomes that track genuine changes in people's well-being and circumstances.
- In Australia, the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner piloted the Legal Understanding and Lawyer Use survey framework, which sets out approaches to measuring legal need, unmet legal need, and resolution status of legal problems.

In addition to a lack of standardised measures for outcomes and impacts of legal services, there are a range of challenges experienced collecting relevant outcomes data. Many of the most significant impacts of legal services for individuals – improved housing stability, reduced family violence, improved migration status, or restored workforce participation – manifest over years and across systems that rarely share data. Clients in crisis are difficult to follow up longitudinally, and organisations with lean resourcing have little capacity to invest in evaluation infrastructure.

Attribution presents a further layer of difficulty. Precisely isolating the contribution of legal assistance from the many other social, economic, and personal factors shaping a client's situation and the contribution of non-legal service providers is rarely possible. A client who avoids eviction may have benefited from legal advice but also from a housing worker's intervention, a change in landlord behaviour, or their own resilience and problem-solving. Attribution is even further confounded in instances of limited scope assistance, such as a brief advice session or merits assessment.

The Australian legal assistance sector would benefit greatly from investment in the development of a fit-for-purpose outcomes measurement framework that supports data collection to provide insights into the technical and legal outcomes of cases, the effect assistance has on the subjective experience of justice, and the flow-on financial, housing, health, and other life impacts of legal services.

JusticeNet's Pro Bono Connect services are broad in scope in terms of areas of law covered and types of clients assisted, vary in intensity from discrete merits assessments through to full ongoing representation, and cover both contentious and non-contentious matters. None of the frameworks referenced above can be adopted wholesale to measure the outcomes of the Pro Bono Connect service. This evaluation has drawn on elements from the approaches referenced above, particularly seeking to understand outcomes by:

- seeking client views on
 - satisfaction with the legal service
 - self-assessment of the outcome that flowed from the assistance
 - self-assessment of the level of legal need remaining after the provision of the legal service, and
 - money and time saved; and
- seeking input from case lawyers on
 - the outcome of the matter, which is generally focused on procedural outcomes rather than client well-being or circumstance outcomes, and
 - the financial value of the legal services provided for free.

A longer-term view has sought to be captured by surveying all Pro Bono Connect service users assisted in the Evaluation Period and all pro bono lawyers engaged in the Evaluation Period.

Findings and recommendations in detail

5. Service inputs

5.1 Program expenditure

Over the Evaluation Period, \$476,931 was spent running the Pro Bono Connect program. The cost base table below reflects the information provided to the Consultant by JusticeNet.

This funding was primarily used to pay for staff salaries and make a proportionate contribution to organisational overheads. The Pro Bono Connect service also benefited from time to time from contributions by staff with salaries funded via other related projects. In addition to paid staff, the service leveraged the assistance of volunteers and a wide network of pro bono lawyers.

	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
Funding applied to the program	\$155,897	\$101,017	\$220,107
	Salary and wages: \$126,709	Salary and wages \$77,846	Salary and wages \$205,450
	0.5 managing solicitor + 0.2 CEO/principal solicitor EFT*	0.4 solicitor + 0.6 managing solicitor + 0.2 CEO/principal solicitor + 0.2 operations EFT*	0.6 solicitor, 0.6 managing solicitor + 0.2 CEO/principal solicitor + 0.2 operations EFT*
Staff profile and cost			
Volunteer contributions	0.4 EFT	0.8 EFT	0.4 EFT

**Actual expenditure on salary and wages does not always equate to the resourcing applied to the service due to the flexibility in staffing at JusticeNet and regular contributions by staff from other programs.*

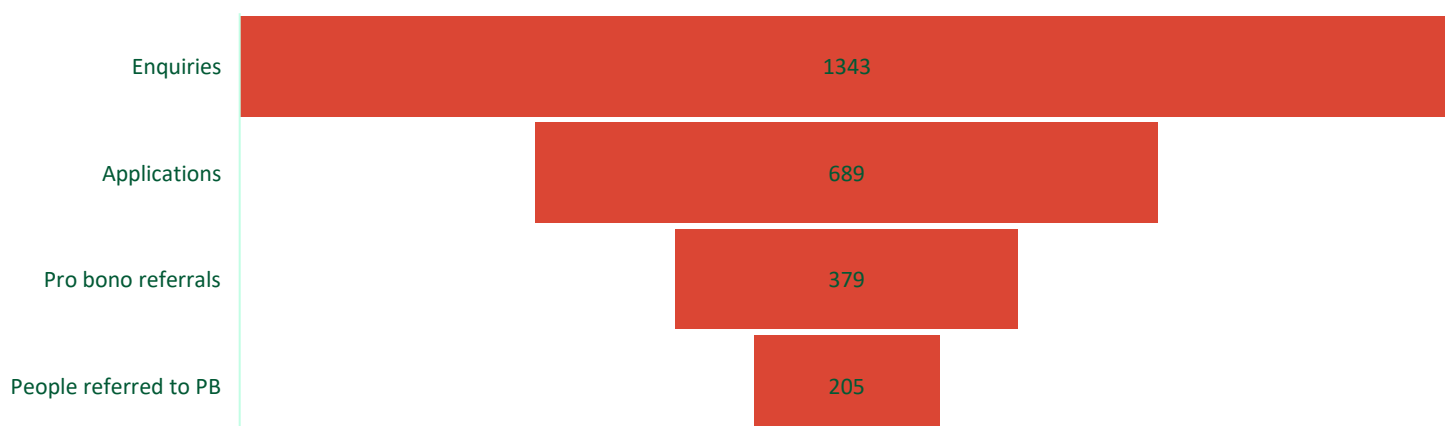
6. Service outputs

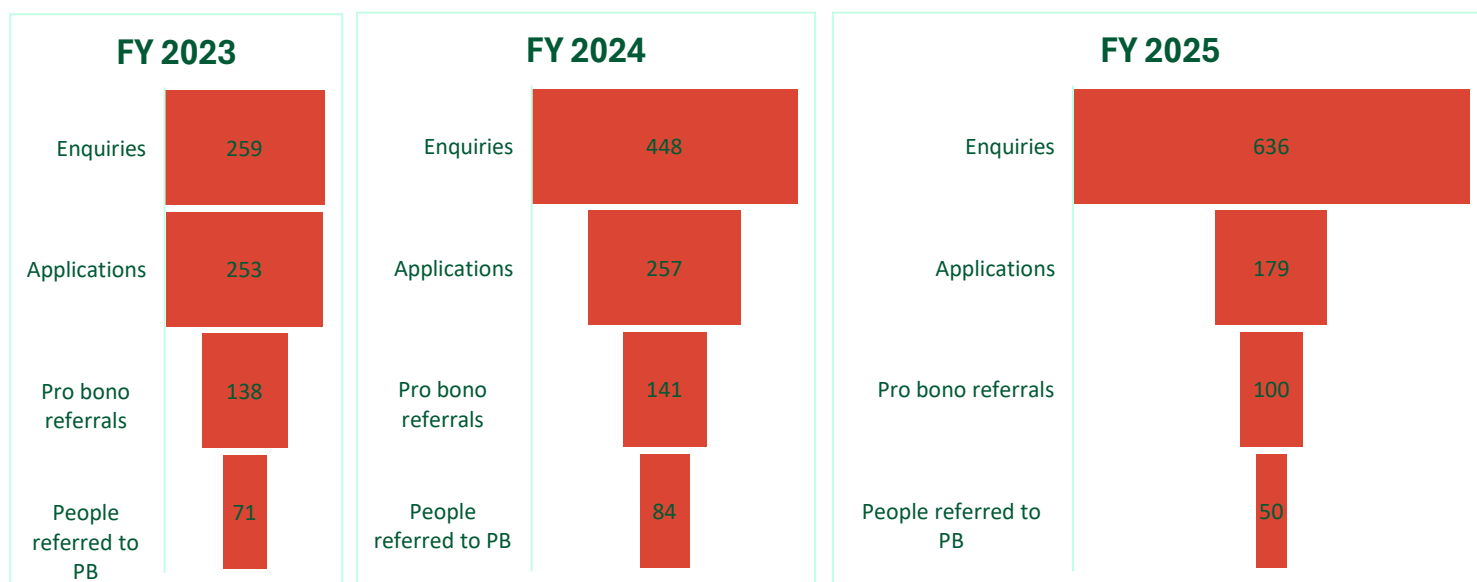
6.1 Overall

Over the Evaluation Period, the Pro Bono Connect team

- handled 1,343 enquiries;
- delivered 322 pre-referral services (e.g. external referrals and assistance with the application form);
- processed 689 full applications for assistance; and
- brokered 379 pro bono referrals for 205 clients.

TOTAL SERVICES FY 2023–FY 2025





For each successful pro bono referral, four enquiries were handled, and two to three applications were assessed. Notably, over the Evaluation Period, the number of phone enquiries handled increased substantially year on year, while the number of formal applications made and pro bono referrals brokered declined. JusticeNet points to three factors contributing to lower application numbers in FY 2025:

- An increase in enquiries and earlier engagement with service users resulted in fewer full applications that were ultimately ineligible, as some service users were diverted to other, more appropriate services.
- The online application form was not functional for a portion of FY 2025 and applicants were required to fill out an interactive PDF form.
- The RASP service to a service of last resort rather than a primary service, along with increased coverage for migration matters by other service providers in South Australia, underpins the lower numbers of applications for assistance with migration matters.

Key findings 1-3

- Across the Evaluation Period, the Pro Bono Connect team (including the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Program, or RASP) leveraged \$476,931 of program funding to
 - handle 1,343 phone enquiries;
 - deliver 322 non-pro bono pre-referral services (e.g. referrals to other services, legal information, and assistance with completing the application form);
 - process 689 full applications for assistance; and
 - broker 379 pro bono referrals for 205 clients.
- Across the Evaluation Period, enquiries increased, while full application submissions and pro bono referrals decreased. This shift is likely due to
 - earlier provision of lower-intensity support to enquirers (diverting enquirers who would have otherwise completed an application and been assessed as ineligible)
 - challenges with the online application form in FY 2025 (the form was not functioning for periods of time which meant that applicants had to download a PDF and complete and return it)
 - fewer referrals of migration matters due to shifts in the services landscape, reduced migration backlog, and a transition to a focus on providing migration assistance in areas where other funded services were unable to assist.
- Pro Bono Connect delivers a large volume of 'unseen' work to deliver an ultimate output of making a pro bono referral. Across the Evaluation Period, for each successful pro bono referral, four enquiries were handled, and two to three applications were assessed.

6.2 Enquiries

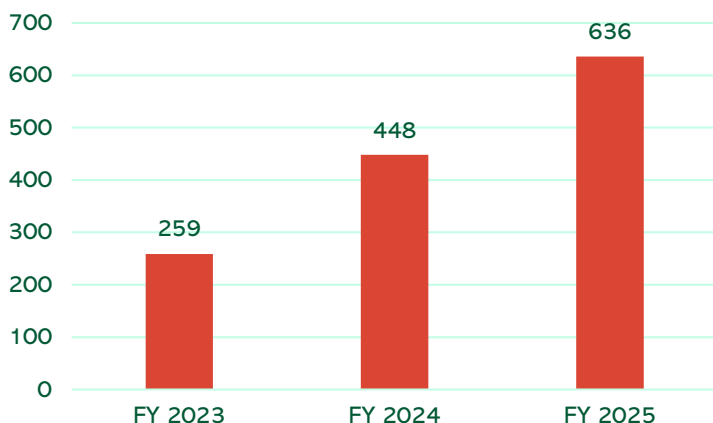
The Pro Bono Connect Services commits significant resources, both staff and volunteers, to handling enquiry callers. The number of calls has steadily increased over time. The service provides a range of assistance to callers, most of which is not recorded as a file outcome, as the enquiries are not sufficiently crystallised to warrant the creation of a record in Actionstep.

Notes from these calls are recorded as a discrete task, but a file is not made for each enquiry. The Consultant has aimed to capture both this effort and the outcomes that flowed from this work. To identify services that were provided

over the phone to people who did not have a client file with JusticeNet, a volunteer for this evaluation examined the notes from these calls. The volunteer made an annotation if a service had been provided.

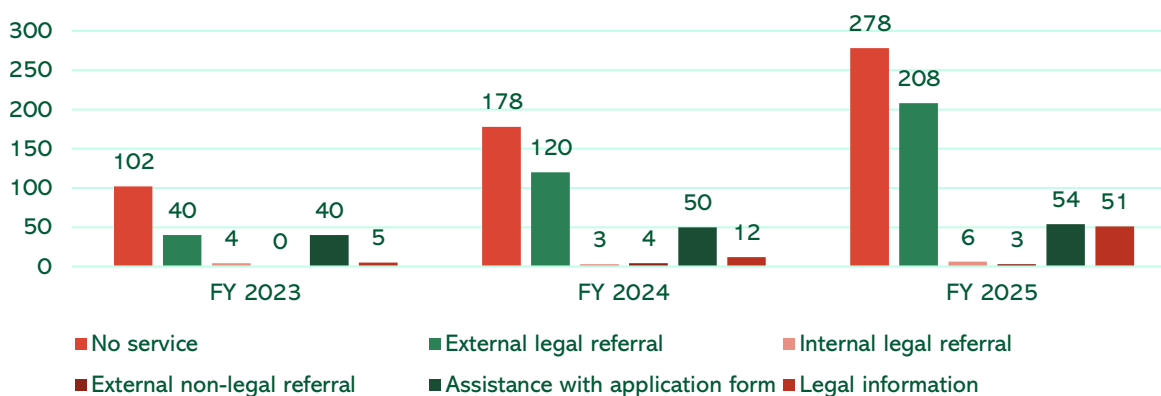
This exercise likely underreported the assistance provided to enquiry callers, as the purpose of the notes was not to record services to enquirers but to track any issues that may have required follow-up. The file note review exercise identified 322 instances of service provision, reflecting a significant amount of assistance to the public being delivered by the Pro Bono Connect team that has not previously been captured.

TOTAL ENQUIRY CALL RECORDS



	Number recorded as first service	Number recorded as second service	Total
External legal referral	202	6	208
Internal legal referral	6	0	6
Assistance with application form	53	1	54
External non-legal referral	2	1	3
Legal information	51	0	51
Total services			322

SERVICES TO ENQUIRERS



JusticeNet does not currently follow up with enquirers who have received early support to assess the outcomes of this work. At present, the only insight available is provided through service user survey comments. Some comments

indicate that referrals to other legal service providers did not result in assistance, as discussed in Section 10. Now that JusticeNet has better visibility of these early services, it can start to monitor their delivery and consider strategies for assessing their outcomes.

Key finding 4

Over the Evaluation Period, Pro Bono Connect delivered an increasing number of intermediate services to people making enquiries, including assisting with the completion of application forms, providing legal information, and making referrals to alternative services. These services should be considered a program output as they are substantial and measurable (despite not being clearly captured previously).

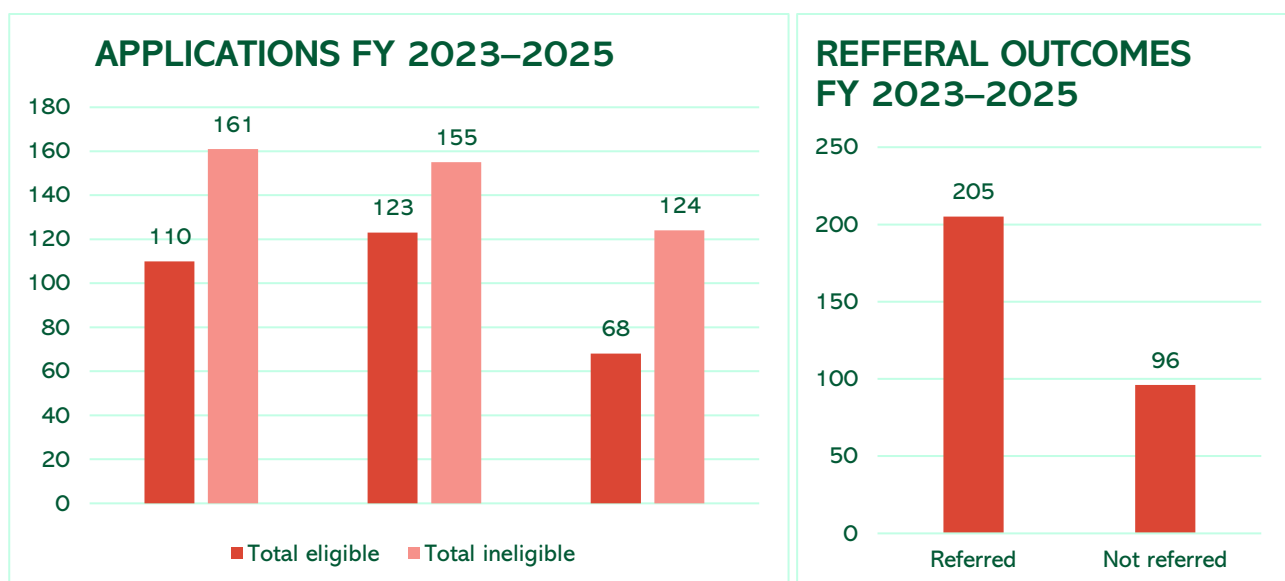
Recommendations 1, 2

- JusticeNet should create a system to record the intermediate services provided by Pro Bono Connect, such as legal information provision and system navigation support, to ensure that this output is captured on an ongoing basis.
- JusticeNet should consider implementing a strategy to assess the effectiveness of intermediate services, particularly referrals to external services. This could involve collecting email addresses and phone numbers from enquirers to facilitate a follow-up survey.

6.3 Applications

JusticeNet received a total of 689 complete applications during the Evaluation Period. Each application involved the completion of a formal request for assistance, via a downloadable PDF form at times and via an online form at other times. JusticeNet assists applicants in completing the form on request. In FY 2025, the number of formal applications decreased, as discussed in Section 6.2.

Among the applicants, 97% were based in South Australia. The top suburbs for applicants were Adelaide CBD 43 (7.6%), Salisbury North 10 (1.77%), Parafield Gardens 8 (1.41%), and Mount Gambier and Murray Bridge (1.24% each).



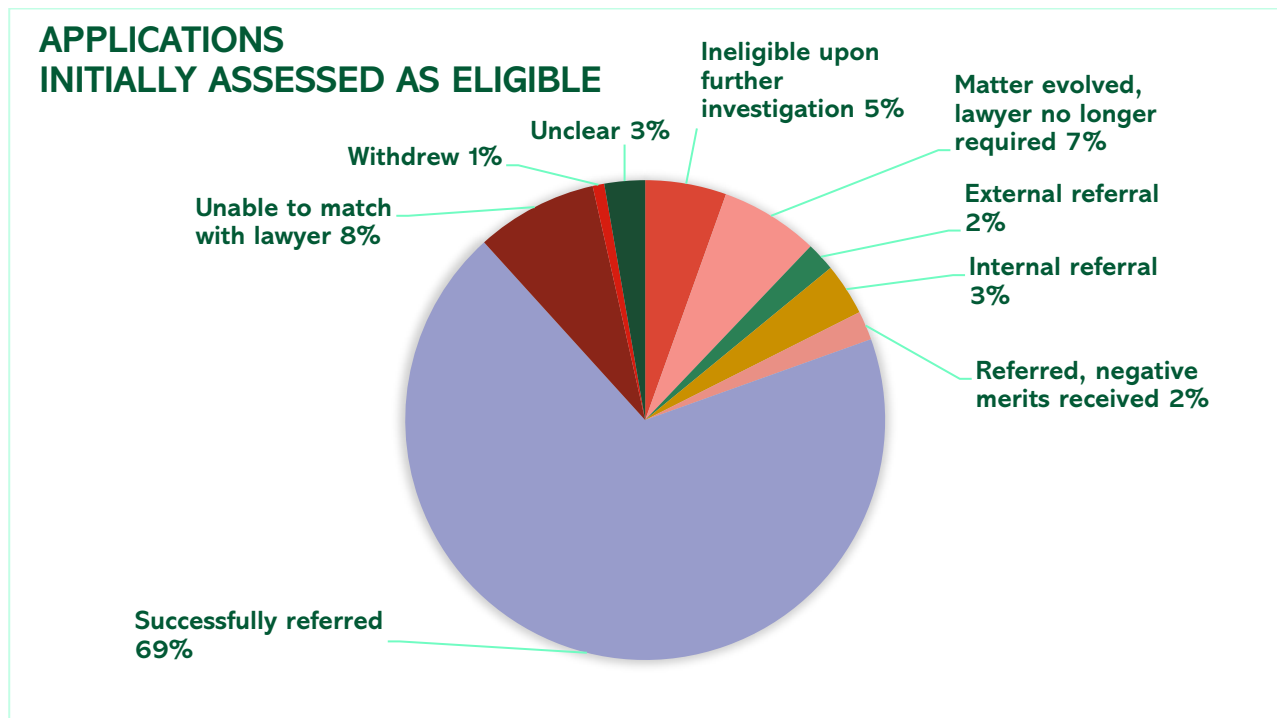
The first graph shows the outcomes of initial eligibility assessments for all PBC and RASP applications. The second graph indicates the referral outcomes for all PBC and RASP enquirers initially assessed as eligible.

Applications are initially assessed against the Pro Bono Connect eligibility criteria and assigned as eligible or ineligible. (The eligibility criteria are set out in Appendix II). Not every application initially assessed as eligible results in a pro bono referral.

Once an application is preliminarily assessed as eligible, it undergoes further investigation and assessment. The outcomes of the deeper assessment process are not clearly recorded in Actionstep. The Consultant analysed all Actionstep matters in the Evaluation Period that were initially assessed as eligible and assigned an intermediate outcome to the application stage based on the review of the file notes. Intermediate outcomes include:

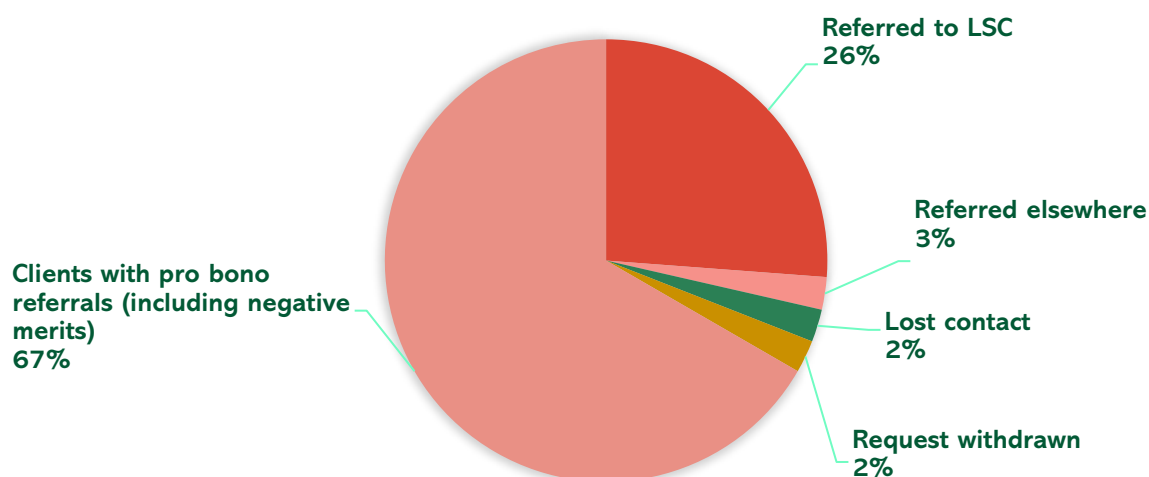
- Ineligible upon further investigation
- Matter evolved, lawyer no longer required
- Applicant withdrew
- Internal referral
- External referral
- Unable to match with a pro bono lawyer
- Referred to pro bono for merits assessment, with negative merits received
- Referred to pro bono

Among the applicants initially assessed as eligible, 71% received at least one pro bono referral (including instances where a negative merits assessment was provided by pro bono counsel). The most common intermediate outcome for those who did not receive a pro bono referral was service user withdrawal or service user no longer requiring a lawyer (in some cases, because they found free or paid legal assistance elsewhere). The eligibility assessments were revised from eligible to ineligible in 5% of the applications upon deeper assessment. In 8% of the cases in which a service user was initially assessed as eligible, Pro Bono Connect's deeper assessment confirmed their eligibility and Pro Bono Connect was unsuccessful in brokering a pro bono referral.



This graph reflects referrals in the general Pro Bono Connect practice (excluding RASP).

APPLICATIONS INITIALLY ASSESSED AS ELIGIBLE – RASP



Key finding 5

Among the applications initially assessed as eligible (excluding RASP), 71% ultimately received at least one pro bono referral, for 8% referral to pro bono was attempted but was unsuccessful, 8% withdrew their request for assistance or their matter evolved such that assistance was not longer required, 5% were as ineligible with further consideration, 5% were referred internally or externally, and the outcome was unclear in 3% of files. For RASP applicants, 67% received a pro bono referral, 26% were referred to the South Australian LSC, 3% were referred to another service, and 4% either withdrew their request or lost contact with JusticeNet.

Recommendation 3

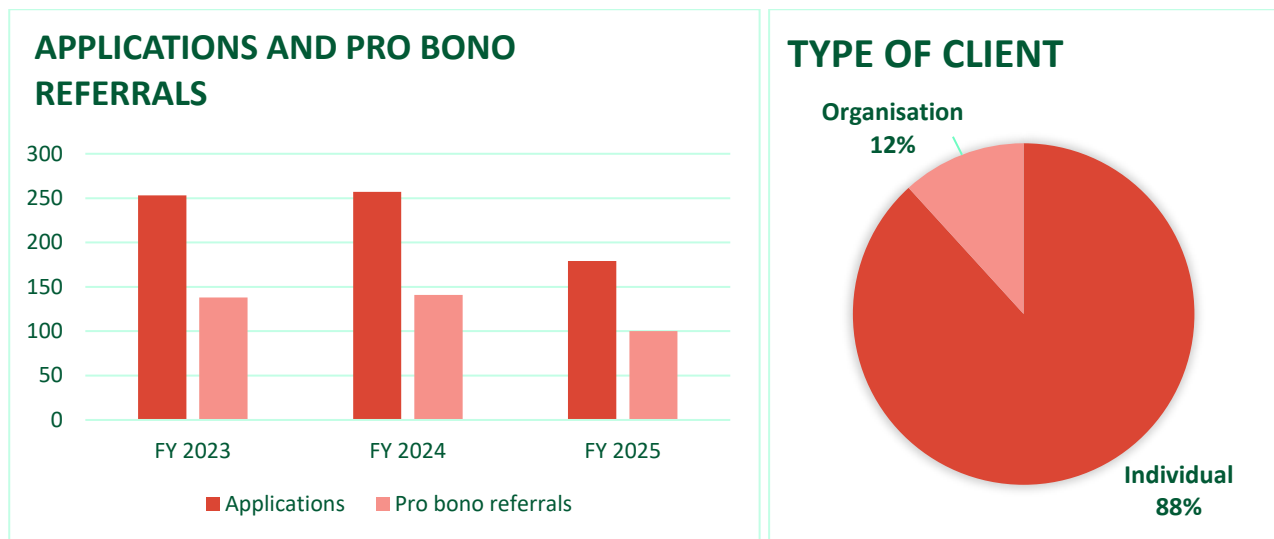
Create a new field in Actionstep to record that applications are initially assessed as eligible to support monitoring of conversions from eligible applications to pro bono referrals.

6.4 Pro bono referrals

The Actionstep data on referrals has significant limitations resulting from the configuration of steps, actions, and outcomes that limits recordkeeping to one referral per file. In many cases, more than one referral is made – for example, a referral to a solicitor or a law firm as well as a referral to a barrister. JusticeNet has experienced frustration with its technology systems, and this experience is shared by other pro bono clearinghouses due to a lack of off-the-shelf software that meets their needs.

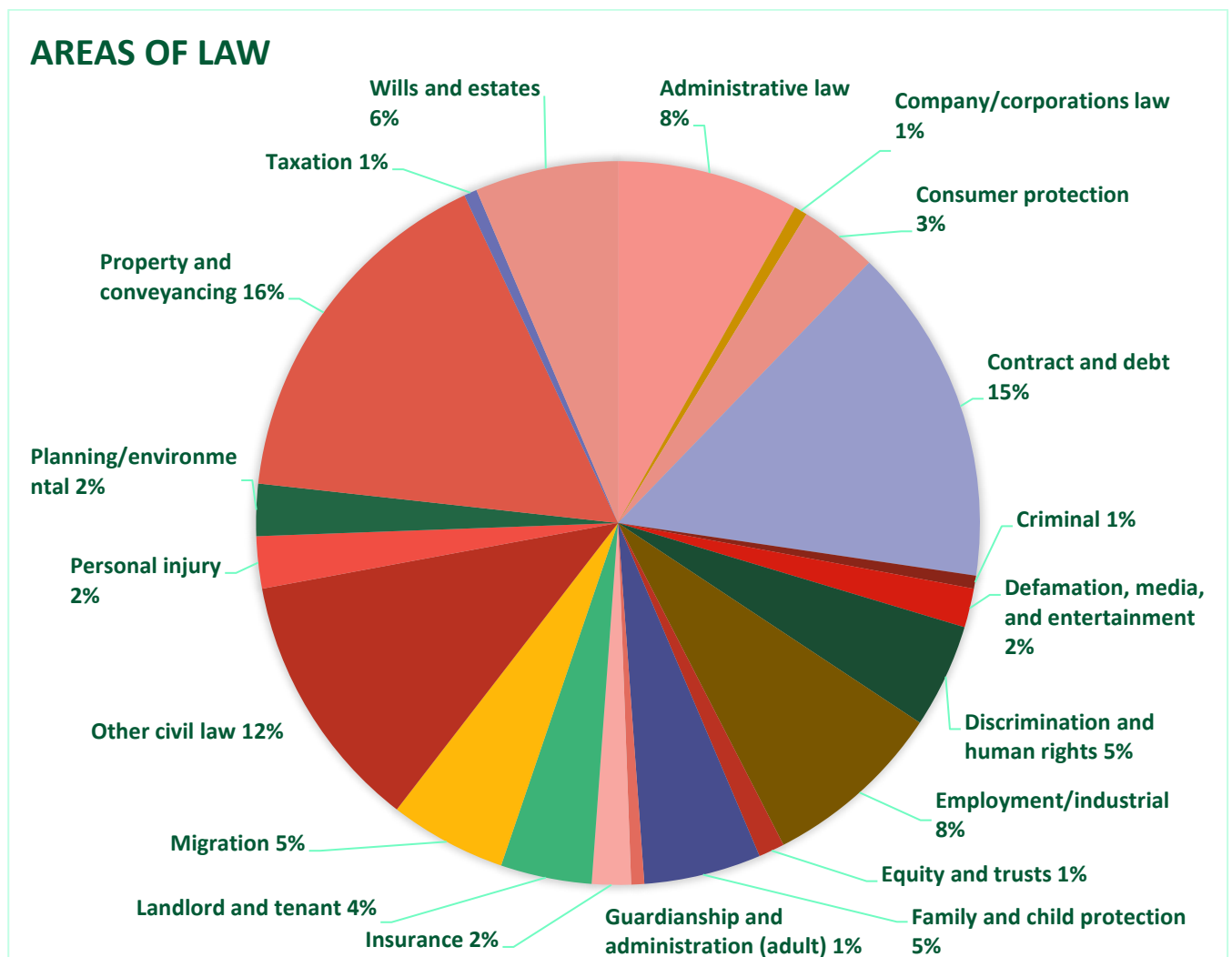
The Consultant reviewed every file with a name or contact details for a referral lawyer and counted a total of 291 pro bono referrals. JusticeNet has adopted the practice of sending a weekly thank-you email to member firms and barristers highlighting those who have accepted pro bono referrals. These emails were examined, and the number of referrals identified in the Evaluation Period was 379. Given the high confidence in the accuracy of the thank-you emails compared to the data in Actionstep, the thank-you email data was adopted as the best data source for the number of pro bono referrals. The JusticeNet team has noted that some referrals are not included in the thank-you emails, either at the request of the pro bono lawyer or due to referral sensitivities. Occasionally, a referral is brokered, and then the referral is terminated prior to work being carried out, due to issues such as conflict of interest, loss of contact with the client, or receipt of further information that impacts the ongoing eligibility for pro bono referral.

Overall, 397 pro bono referrals were made for 209 applicants. Among the applicants ultimately receiving a pro bono referral, 88% were individuals, and 12% were organisations.



The first graph reflects PBC and RASP, and the second graph is for PBC, excluding RASP.

The Actionstep data reveals that pro bono referrals cover an extremely wide range of areas of law and types of matter (e.g. advice versus representation, and contentious versus non-contentious). Actionstep was configured so that only one area of law could be selected for a matter and referral. This means that a 'primary' area of law was assigned for each referral, but in many cases, more than one area of law was likely engaged.



This graph reflects referrals in the general Pro Bono Connect practice, excluding RASP.

Key findings 6, 7

- Many service users receive multiple referrals, often due to a referral being made to both a solicitor and a barrister or a referral being made for merits assessment and then upon delivery of a positive merits assessment, a further referral is made for ongoing legal representation.
- Applications made to Pro Bono Connect and the resulting pro bono referrals cover diverse clients, geographies, and legal issue types. This breadth is uncommon for a community legal service, which tends to have narrower criteria. This finding reflects JusticeNet's position as a service of last resort as well as a gateway to the pro bono legal profession in South Australia in all its diversity.

Recommendation 4

- Create a new area in the service user files on Actionstep to record each pro bono referral, including the scope of referral, lawyer/firm referred to, date of referral, and referral outcome, to ensure that a full record of pro bono referrals is captured.

6.5 Pro bono hours contributed

Two different data sources were used to determine the average number of pro bono hours spent on a referral: first, an examination of closure report data received in FY 2024, and second, an examination of the data on hours recorded in Actionstep across matters from FY 2023 to FY 2025, which generally came via a closure form completed by a lawyer.

The closure form data shows that the total number of pro bono hours spent on average was 63 hours per matter. In the Actionstep data, the average number of pro bono hours spent on a matter was 47. The midpoint of 55 hours per matter was used for the purposes of extrapolation. As there was a group of matters in which a pro bono referral was recorded but no hours or outcomes were recorded, this number may have overstated pro bono contributions.

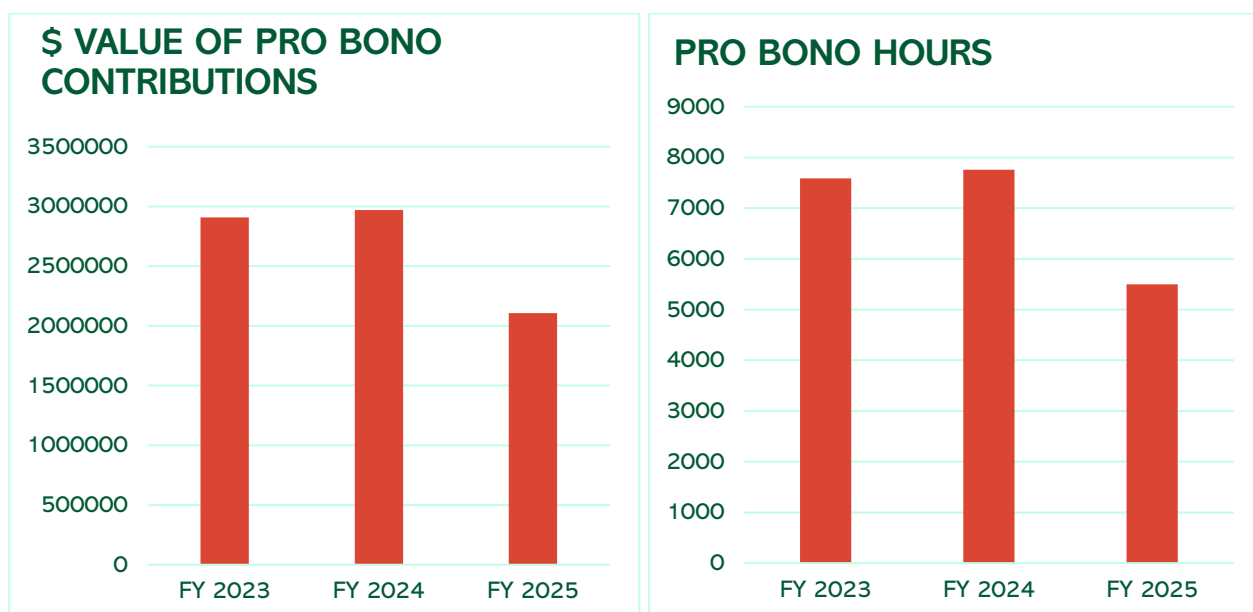
Pro bono hours – Actionstep

Total pro bono \$ (across 74 matters)	1,359,874.45
Total pro bono hours (across 78 matters)	3,639.66
Ave pro bono hours	46.66
Ave pro bono \$ per matter	18,376.68
Ave pro bono hour \$394	393.82

The pro bono closure reports also disclosed the pro bono contributions' financial value. The average hourly billing rate across the files in the closure reports was \$383. The data in Actionstep provided an average of \$393.82 per hour. The closure report figure of \$383 was used for extrapolation.

Based on the number of referrals recorded in Actionstep and the use of an average number of 55 hours per matter at a rate of \$383 per hour, the total value of pro bono contributions across FY 2023–FY 2025 was \$7,983,635.

Pro bono hours and value	# Referrals	# Hours	\$ Value
FY 2023	138	7,590	2,906,970
FY 2024	141	7,755	2,970,165
FY 2025	100	5,500	2,106,500
<i>Pro bono hours average</i>	55		
<i>Pro bono \$/hour</i>	383		
Total hours and value		20,845	7,983,635



These graphs cover both Pro Bono Connect and RASP files.

Key finding 8

Over the Evaluation Period, JusticeNet brokered 397 pro bono referrals, which resulted in a contribution of 20,845 pro bono hours, valued at \$7,983,635.

The closure report data also provided information about the types of pro bono work carried out and the number of hours spent on average by category. Of note is the significant disparity between hours required for advisory referrals (10 hours) versus ongoing representation (96 hours). Considering the feedback received via the pro bono lawyer survey, which stated that taking on referrals requiring significant hours can be challenging in the context of running a practice, opportunities may exist to actively seek out people requiring advisory services rather than representation to increase the number of smaller pro bono referrals being brokered to pro bono lawyers.

Type of referral	Number closure reports received	Total hours	Average hours
Advice	10	106.28	10.62
Advice and task	3	49.8	16.6
Ongoing representation	39	3,782.71	96.99
Prospects assessment	6	88.3	14.71
Limited scope representation/ mediation only	5	46.7	9.34
Discrete appointment	1	2.5	23.5
Task	1	2.5	2.5
Total	65	4,078.79	62.75

Recommendations 5

Given the proportionally high number of referrals to barristers versus solicitors and the volume of contentious matters requiring ongoing representation, JusticeNet should consider whether opportunities exist to proactively seek applications from people or organisations with advisory needs rather than ongoing representation needs. JusticeNet's pro bono network may have the capacity to take on this extra work.

Notes on output data limitations

In conducting the evaluation, the Consultant observed some data limitations, largely stemming from challenges that JusticeNet has faced configuring Actionstep to meet its needs as a clearinghouse.

JusticeNet sought the Consultant's recommendations regarding its data structure and data collection practices. Recommendations have been provided, and JusticeNet has accepted these, meaning most of the issues noted below are not ongoing concerns. The issues identified include the following:

- A number of useful data points were not routinely recorded on client files, such as
 - whether the application was assessed as eligible for a pro bono referral, as only the date of an assessment was recorded (versus the assessment outcome being recorded), and
 - whether a pro bono referral was made in the course of assisting the applicant (e.g. in some cases, a referral was made for merits assessment, but this was not concretely recorded as the file outcome because the file was listed as 'without merit').
- The open-text field 'File Outcome' was used inconsistently across matters and without a structured approach to outcomes recording. In some examples, the field was used to record services provided to clients as well as eligibility and other assessment outcomes. In others, it was used to record the last interactions with the client.
- Recordkeeping of non-pro bono referral services provided to applicants who were ultimately assessed as ineligible for pro bono referral was patchy due to the limitations of the Actionstep configuration and variation in user approaches.

For the purposes of the evaluation, to address the issues identified, the Consultant examined each Pro Bono Connect client file from the Evaluation Period and carried out the following analysis and categorisation:

- The Consultant reviewed the eligibility assessment dates data alongside the file outcome narrative entries to determine the initial and subsequent eligibility assessments and ultimate service outcomes. A number of files had dates recorded for both an eligible and an ineligible outcome. These files were counted as 'initially eligible' and classed as having an ineligible outcome as the intermediate file outcome.
- In some cases, the file could be interpreted as resulting in several outcomes – for example, when a pro bono lawyer was recorded on the file but the file outcome was listed as referred to the LSC. In these cases, the highest-intensity outcome was selected as the primary outcome.
- The Consultant reviewed whether a barrister or a solicitor had been recorded as working on the file to determine whether a pro bono referral was likely to have been made. If a referral barrister or a solicitor had been recorded, the file was categorised as 'successfully referred'.
- The Consultant reviewed the narrations for evidence of an external referral being made. In most examples where external referral were identified, it was unclear if any facilitation or the referral occurred. Therefore, these were grouped under the category 'external referral'.

7. Analysis of inputs to outputs

7.1 Input-to-output ratios

Over the three-year Evaluation Period, the Pro Bono Connect team (including RASP) leveraged \$476,931 to

- handle 1,343 enquiries;
- deliver 322 pre-referral services (e.g. external referrals and assistance with the application form);
- process 689 full applications for assistance;
- deliver 379 referrals pro bono referrals for 205 clients; and
- leverage 20,845 pro bono hours, valued at \$7,983,635.

Key finding 9

The cost of running the team was minimal relative to the program outputs. For every \$1 spent on the Pro Bono Connect service (including RASP), JusticeNet leveraged 0.04 pro bono hours valued at \$16.70, delivering a substantial return on investment of 1:16.7 or \$16.7 of pro bono services for every \$1 spent.

7.2 Resource efficiency

To better understand where staff effort is applied in administering the program, the Pro Bono Connect team carried out a time-recording exercise. The three staff members who worked on the program at the time (November 2025) participated in the exercise for two weeks; they included the Pro Bono Connect managing solicitor and the JusticeNet CEO.

The time-recording exercise showed that significant staff time was dedicated to fielding enquiries (5%) and assessing applications for assistance (22%). Brokering pro bono referrals, preparing referrals for handover to pro bono, and managing referrals that were underway took up 12% of staff time. These figures align with the service outputs data discussed above, demonstrating that a significant number of enquiries and assessments were carried out relative to the number of pro bono referrals ultimately brokered.

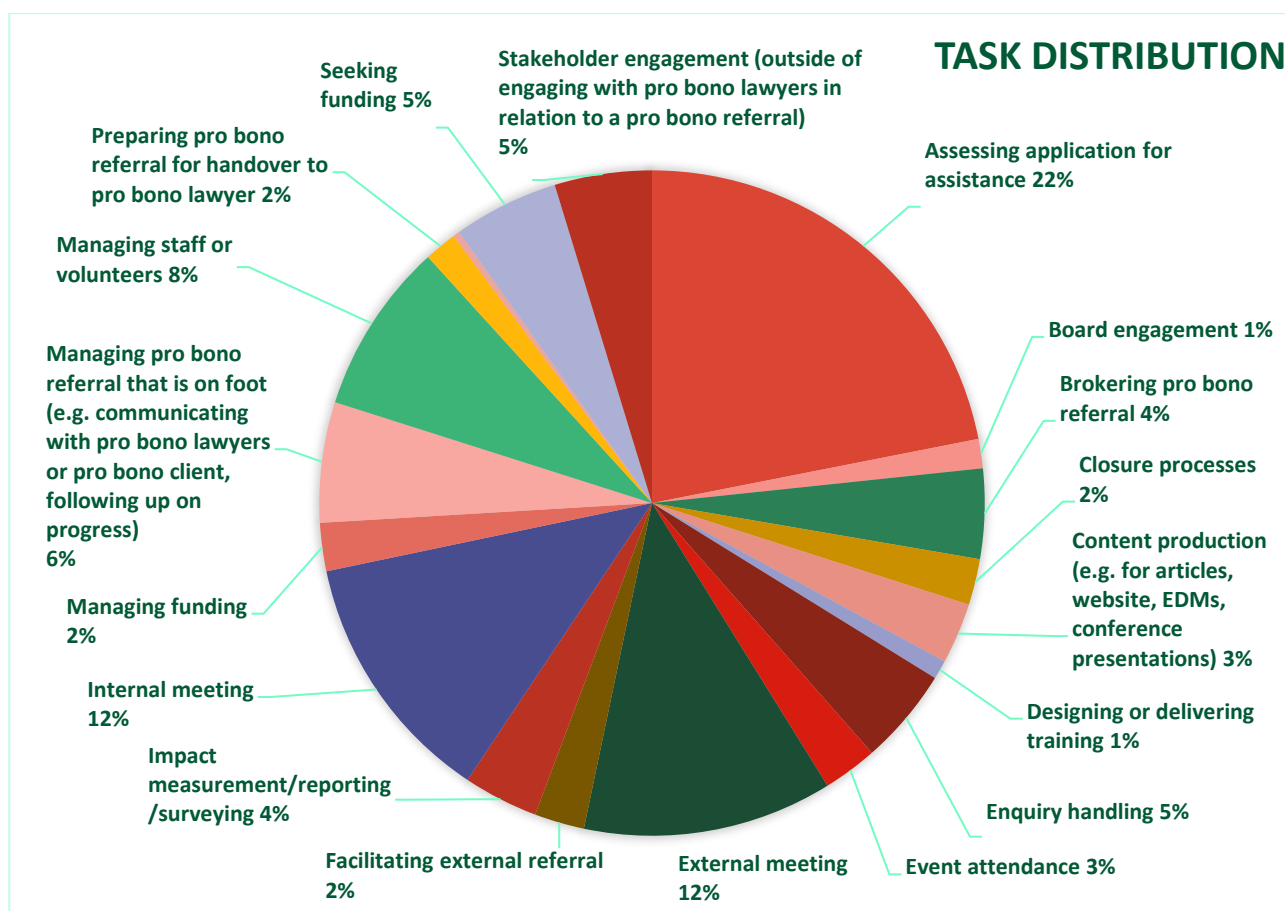
The data set out in Section 6 illustrates that many people contacting JusticeNet are not a good fit for the service. JusticeNet expends significant resources directing people to more appropriate services when these are available.

7.2.1 Program resources

The evaluation was not designed to heavily interrogate team resource management efficiency. However, the data on inputs and outputs provides some insights into team resource management:

- The cost of running the team is minimal relative to the program outputs.
- The time-keeping exercise and discrete file notes indicate that significant resources are dedicated to phone calls with enquirers and the application assessment process relative to time spent on pro bono referral brokering and support.

Overall, the team appears to be effectively leveraging a small funding packet to deliver substantial outputs. The reviewed data shows that a clear burden of handling enquiries and assessing applications, and these take up a substantial portion of the team's time. With improved technology systems, including a reconfigured Actionstep platform and new dashboards under development, the team may consider whether the current allocation of resources results in the optimal mix of outputs, outcomes, and experiences for stakeholders.



Key findings 10, 11

- Pro Bono Connect staff spend a significant amount of time on assessing applications and handling enquiries (27% of time overall), compared to 12% of time brokering pro bono referrals, preparing referrals for handover to pro bono, and managing referrals that are underway.
- Pro Bono Connect staff spent significant time on external engagement, with 23% of their time devoted to attending external events, stakeholder engagement, and external meetings.

7.2.2 Pro bono resources

Two key indicators available in the data provide insight into the efficiency of the allocation of matters to pro bono resources. The first is the rate at which eligible matters are able to be matched with pro bono. The second is the time that it takes to match with pro bono.

Over the three-year Evaluation Period, 8% of the matters assessed as eligible for pro bono referral in which brokering was undertaken were unable to be matched with a pro bono lawyer. A further 7% were not successfully referred due to the service user withdrawing the request for assistance. Based on the Consultant's review of the file notes, in some cases withdrawal occurred due to the length of time being taken to place a matter with pro bono and in others withdrawal was due successful efforts seeking legal assistance elsewhere (whether paid or unpaid).

The data on time from eligibility assessment to referral is less clear, as only 85 entries in Actionstep contained the two required data points – application date and referral date – to assess time to referral. This data is also unreliable because multiple referrals occurred for some matters, and the referred date likely referred to the most recent referral, obscuring earlier referral dates and potentially overstating the time between application and initial pro bono referral. Acknowledging these limitations, removing nine outliers with more than 200 days to place a referral, the average time to placement with pro bono was 40 days. Including these outliers, the average time to placement with pro bono was

75 days. The service user feedback provided in the service user survey indicates that many applicants considered the process slow (discussed in Section 9). Therefore, this should be an area for monitoring and improvement. Addressing this issue may require further resourcing to build capacity to spend time on referral brokering in addition to the substantial time spent on fielding enquiries and assessing applications. This may form the basis of a request for additional funding.

Key findings 12, 13

- Across the three-year Evaluation Period, among all matters in which pro bono brokering was attempted, 8% were unable to be matched with a pro bono lawyer. A further 7% were not successfully referred due to the service user withdrawing the request for assistance. In some cases, withdrawal likely occurred due to the length of time being taken to place a matter with pro bono. Other withdrawal cases were due to the service user's successful efforts in seeking legal assistance elsewhere, whether paid or unpaid.
- For those matters in which a pro bono referral occurred, the average time between the submission of an application and placement with pro bono was 40 days. (Note the detailed discussion regarding data limitations.)

Recommendations 6, 7

- Consider tracking the ratio of applications to the outcome of being unable to place with pro bono in its new dashboard. If this number increases, JusticeNet should consider whether trends can be observed in the matters that cannot be placed with pro bono and whether the eligibility criteria should be updated to screen out these matters earlier.
- JusticeNet should record and monitor the time taken from the lodgement of an application to the making of a referral to pro bono and aim to reduce the time taken.

8. Service outcomes

No standardised approach exists for evaluating outcomes and impacts that flow from the provision of legal assistance. Government-funded legal services are required to report on activities and outputs but not on standardised outcome measures. This issue is discussed at length in the Methodology section.

The focus of the outcomes analysis in the evaluation relates to the outcomes flowing from the pro bono referrals. Assessing the outcomes of other services (e.g. legal information or referrals to other service providers) is possible, but tracking of these services during the Evaluation Period was insufficient to support outcomes analysis (for example, in the discrete file notes discussed in Section 6.2, the name and contact details of the enquirer were not routinely recorded).

Due to the limitations of the Actionstep data, particularly the file outcome field data, carrying out a global analysis of referral outcomes is difficult. The primary data sources used to draw conclusions about outcomes for recipients of pro bono referrals from JusticeNet are:

- closure report file outcome data (46 entries over the relevant period) submitted by the pro bono lawyers,⁴
- responses to the service user survey sent to all people who had made applications to JusticeNet in the Evaluation Period (see Appendix II for a list of the survey questions), and

⁴ JusticeNet notes that all lawyers are requested to complete the closure form, but ensuring that lawyers complete the form faces challenges.

- commentaries from the pro bono lawyers in the pro bono lawyer survey (discussed below) on their most recent pro bono matter.

Overall, the assessment of referral outcomes data reveals a positive picture of the impact of pro bono legal assistance. Not every recipient of pro bono legal assistance experienced a 'win' outcome, but only a few cases had a discernible negative outcome. The closure form data indicates that 22% of the referrals resulted in a win in a contentious setting, and 24% resulted in a settlement in a contentious setting. The provision of pro bono legal services provides more than just a case outcome; it also helps to uphold the rule of law, deliver fairness in a legal system that can entrench power and resource imbalances, and improve community confidence in the justice system

8.1 Closure form data and pro bono lawyer survey responses

8.1.1 Closure form data

For the files running in the Evaluation Period, the pro bono lawyers completed 47 closure reports. These reports noted the file outcomes, the number of pro bono hours contributed and provided an opportunity for other feedback.

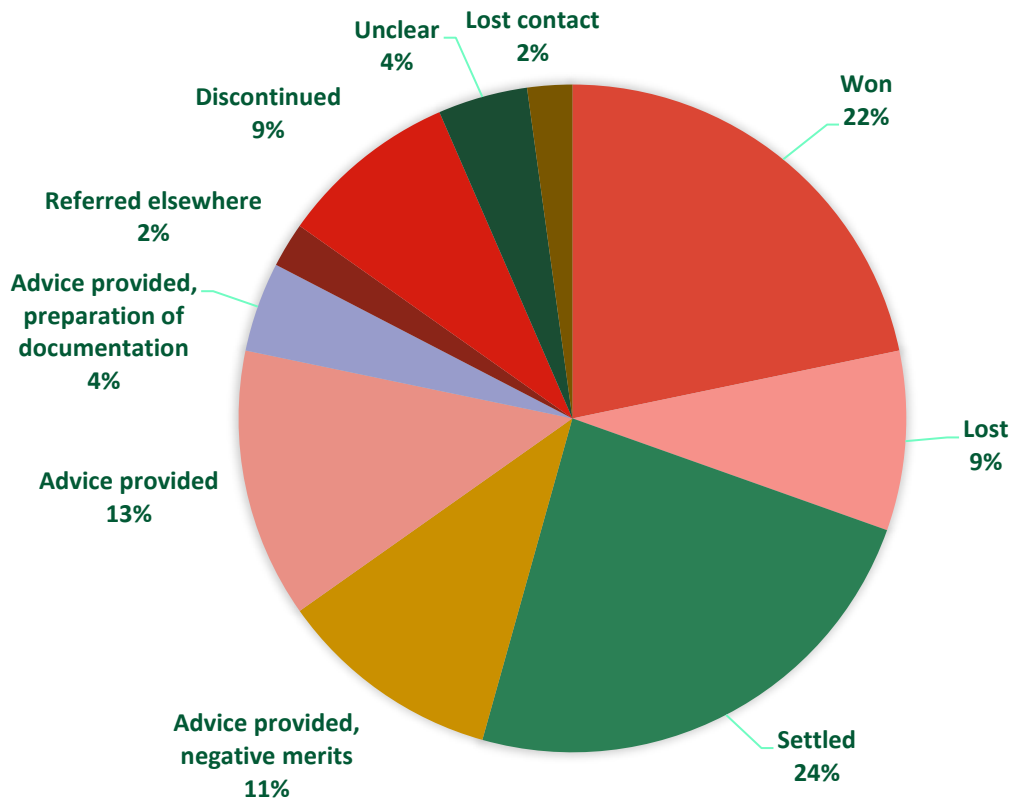
The file outcomes section of the report is free text and is completed by the lawyer who worked on the file. The free-text nature of the responses makes data analysis tricky. To address this issue, the Consultant manually reviewed the file outcomes and categorised the files into the following potential final outcomes:

- Won (applied only in contentious cases)
- Lost (applied only in contentious cases)
- Settled (applied only in contentious cases)
- Advice provided, negative merits (applied only in contentious cases)
- Advice provided
- Advice provided, preparation of documentation
- Referred elsewhere
- Discontinued
- Unclear
- Lost contact

Given the small amount of information provided in the closure forms, this exercise should be considered indicative only. While many files involved contentious matters, other files included the provision of general advice or advice plus documentation in non-contentious settings. In these examples, making an assessment of the outcome was difficult beyond identifying the fact that advice and/or documentation had been provided. Notably, while a loss in a contentious setting may be a disappointing outcome for a client, describing this as a negative outcome overall is challenging, as the purpose of pro bono referrals is not necessarily to support a 'win', but rather to ensure that a fair justice process transpires.

Across the closure report data, only 9% of the matters could be clearly identified as having a negative legal outcome (i.e. those cases in which a case was 'lost'), 22% resulted in an unambiguous win in the context of contentious litigation, and 24% recorded outcomes of settlement (although whether this settlement was considered a positive outcome for the client was not always clear). The clients provided with a merits assessment that determined no legal merit to their claim comprised 11%, while 17% of the matters did not reach a conclusion in which a file outcome could be recorded because, for example, the client elected to discontinue or contact was lost. In 17% of the files, advice was provided in a generally non-contentious setting, including at times the drafting of documentation to give effect to the advice (e.g. drafting a deed acknowledging property interests).

FINAL FILE OUTCOMES



8.1.2 Pro bono lawyer survey responses

A survey of the participating pro bono lawyers, discussed in more detail below, provides some insights into client outcomes. Commentaries on the outcomes of the most recent pro bono work carried out for JusticeNet service users include the following:

- 'the award of \$30,000 to a client'
- 'Successfully defended a claim at trial instructed by a community justice centre – a good result'
- 'The outcome was not as good as the client was hoping, but probably a reasonably good outcome in all of the circumstances'
- 'The appeal was successfully resolved out-of-court in a manner which was favourable to the JusticeNet client'
- 'a very successful result settled confidentially'

Key findings 14, 15

- Lawyer-provided data on matter outcomes indicate that the majority of service users who received a pro bono referral experienced a positive case outcome. In 9% of closure forms a loss was reported, 11% reported that they provided a negative merits assessment (indicating to the service user that further investment in progressing their matter was not justified and/or was high-risk), 22% reported a win in a contentious setting, and 24% reported a settlement. (Note that not all closure reports clearly recorded an outcome.)
- Further evidence of positive case outcomes is provided in pro bono lawyers' responses submitted to the pro bono lawyer survey.

8.2 Service user survey responses

24 recipients of pro bono referrals responded to the service user survey (out of a total of 84 responses). The survey sought subjective assessments from service users on whether their legal needs were met. The following should be noted:

- The sample size was relatively small, and the data were complicated by two people who apparently did not receive a pro bono referral self-identifying as users who did receive a referral.
- Some referrals were for merits assessments. By their nature, these do not address all of a service user's legal needs, with the expectation that a respondent may have residual legal needs.
- In some instances, the respondent conflated achieving their desired legal outcome with having their legal need met. In justice-system thinking, a legal need is met when a person receives timely and appropriate legal assistance proportionate to their legal issue, even if they ultimately receive an unfavourable legal outcome. By way of example, one service user received a referral to senior counsel for advice on the merits of their case. They disagreed with the merits advice provided by counsel and therefore considered that their legal need was not met. This may explain the lower rating of 56% agreeing or strongly agreeing that their lawyer contributed to their legal needs being met.

Can legal consumers self-assess legal outcomes?

A range of authors have explored the tensions presented by asking legal-service consumers to assess the success or outcome of their legal service. Consumers are best placed to articulate the impacts of a problem on their life and well-being and their subjective experience of the justice process, but may not be positioned to objectively assess whether their legal outcome is fair or reasonable in the circumstances considering legal frameworks in place. As the Productivity Commission notes, 'While people may understand that a problem could have substantial impact upon their lives, the substantial nature of the problem may mean that they cannot evaluate what a fair outcome is. For example, an individual may feel that a fair outcome is one that is in their favour rather than what may be a fair outcome under the law.'

Productivity Commission 2014, Access to Justice Arrangements, Inquiry Report No. 72, Canberra

Views on the outcomes of their referral were mixed: 56% agreed or strongly agreed that assistance from their pro bono lawyer made a significant contribution to resolving their legal problem, 50% had all of their needs relating to their legal problem/s met, 31.8% had some of their needs relating to their legal problem/s met, and 18.8% had none of their needs relating to their legal problem/s met.

'We thank each member of the barrister team and would highly recommend them again if we knew of someone needing such assistance.'

'Initially I found three or four solicitors couldn't help me as they had a conflict of interest, having dealt with the (repetitive) applicant. I was very grateful for the professional service offered.'

Among all the respondents who received a pro bono referral, 50% considered that their pro bono referral saved them time, with an average time saving of 20 hours reported. Most applicants interpreted this question as seeking an estimate of the amount of time that would have been spent had the respondent self-represented. Estimates ranged from 10 to 50 hours. Extrapolating 20 hours saved per pro bono referral across the full number of pro bono referrals in the Evaluation Period, a total of 4,820 hours were saved for the service users.

The respondents who considered that their pro bono referral saved them money comprised 68%. Financial estimates of dollars saved were not consistent and overall did not provide a basis for determination (e.g. one respondent answered '\$50', while another answered 'lots'). Some respondents attempted to quantify the financial impact of their legal outcome without considering the value of the free legal service provided. This indicates that service users do not have a clear sense of the value of the free services provided to them.

‘I would choose to give up if I did my case by myself because I did not know how to go ahead. Under JusticeNet assistance, I won the money the opposite owed me and this amount I think was what I saved.’

‘I’m guessing that in the long term it will save me a lot of money, but I’m not really sure. Since my case hasn’t been finalised yet and this is my first time dealing with a legal matter, I don’t have much experience with how these things work.’

Key findings 16 – 18

- Among the service user survey respondents who received a pro bono referral, 56% agreed or strongly agreed that assistance from their pro bono lawyer made a significant contribution to resolving their legal problem.
- The service user survey respondents indicated that a relatively high amount of their legal needs remained unmet after their engagement with a pro bono lawyer (31.8% had some of their legal needs met and 18.8% having none of their legal needs met). This is partially explained by the fact that some pro bono referrals were for limited scope assistance and were never intended to meet the entirety of a persons’ legal need.
- Among the service user survey respondents who received a pro bono referral, 50% stated that their pro bono referral saved them time, and 68% stated that their pro bono referral saved them money.

Recommendation 8

Consider adopting an outcomes measurement framework for legal matters and then seek to regularly gather data against the framework from both lawyers and service users. More regular surveys of service users and pro bono lawyers can build a corpus of outcomes data to inform trend analysis on outcomes for service users.

9. Experiences of service users

This evaluation sought to assess the experiences of people engaging with JusticeNet in addition to assessing inputs, outputs, and outcomes. The best data source for generating insights into the experiences of JusticeNet service users was the service user survey. While the survey provided interesting perspectives, its relatively small sample size of 84 meant that caution should be applied in extrapolating the results across JusticeNet’s services.

The responses illustrate three different sets of experiences strongly connected to whether or not the respondent ultimately accessed a pro bono referral. The three groups are

- those who received a pro bono referral,
- those who were assessed as eligible for a referral but did or did not receive a referral, and
- those who received no service from JusticeNet.

Key findings 19 – 22

- Ratings of the overall experience of engaging with JusticeNet were strongly linked to whether or not a service user received a pro bono referral, with those who received a pro bono referral providing a strong NPS and those who did not receive a referral providing a significantly lower NPS.
- For some respondents, disambiguating feedback on the legal system broadly from feedback on JusticeNet specifically was difficult.
- Several service users noted that the process of applying for assistance was onerous.
- Several service users noted that they were unsatisfied with the wait time to receive communication of the outcome of their eligibility assessment and/or the wait time between a positive eligibility assessment and placement with a pro bono lawyer.

9.1 Experiences of respondents who received a pro bono referral

A total of 25 survey respondents received a pro bono referral from JusticeNet. The NPS of JusticeNet for the respondents who received a pro bono referral was +45 (out of a possible range of –100 to +100⁵), approaching an outcome of ‘excellent’. An NPS of +20 or higher is considered favourable, and above +50 is considered excellent. The application process was rated 4.2 out of 5 by this group of respondents.

Several respondents noted that the application process was straightforward:

‘not difficult to complete’

‘[e]xpected process which gave me hope of assistance’

Some respondents noted the lengthy process involved in seeking assistance, awaiting assessment, and then awaiting allocation to a pro bono lawyer:

‘Took quite a long time to authorise and quite hard to get information from initially. I think that because the system is purely voluntary, the whole process is stressful for the workers and this leads to slow processing times.’⁶

‘They don’t reply your emails until long time...so many times you have to do follow up...’

‘No-one wanted to know me or my problem. I had to be forceful and demanding to get help’⁷

The experience of engaging with a pro bono lawyer was positive overall, with 64% agreeing or strongly agreeing that they were satisfied with the legal assistance provided by their pro bono lawyer, 64% agreeing or strongly agreeing that their pro bono lawyer provided assistance in a timely manner, 68% agreeing or strongly agreeing that their pro bono lawyer was efficient and effective, 68% agreeing or strongly agreeing that their pro bono lawyer treated them the same way they would treat a fee-paying client, and 68% agreeing or strongly agreeing that their pro bono lawyer cared about them and their problem.

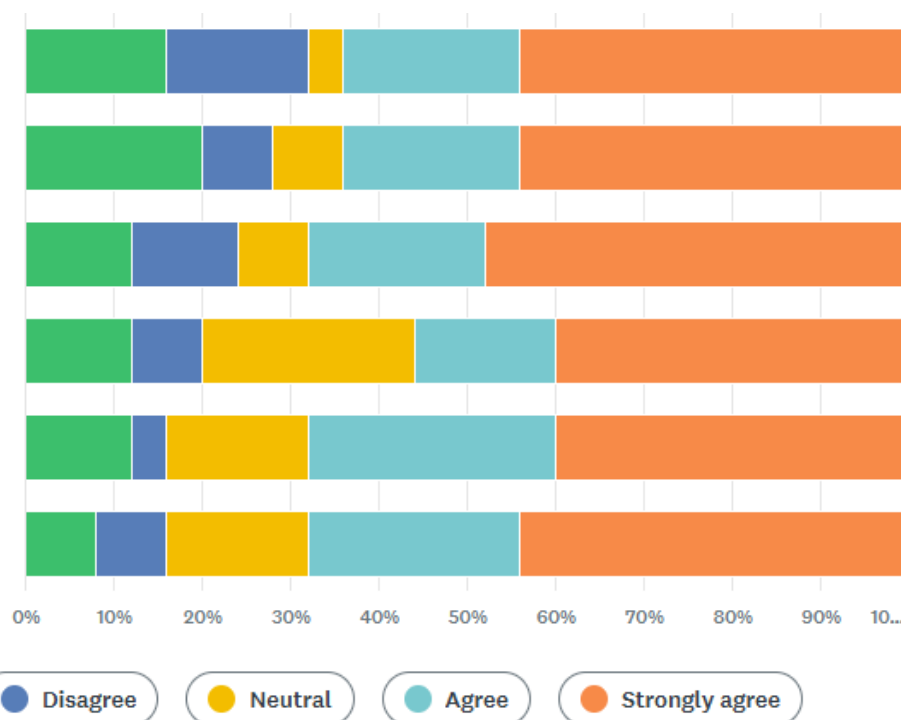
56% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that assistance from their pro bono lawyer made a significant contribution to resolving their legal problem. This was the lowest score of all the categories assessed regarding a pro bono legal team.

⁵ Further information on the Net Promoter Score methodology is available at www.bain.com/consulting-services/customer-strategy-and-marketing/net-promoter-score-system/.

⁶ Note that whether this response related to JusticeNet or the relevant pro bono lawyer is unclear.

⁷ Note that whether this response is intended to reflect on legal services generally or JusticeNet specifically is unclear.

I'm satisfied with the legal assistance that I received from my pro bono lawyer or team
 My pro bono lawyer or team provided assistance in a timely manner and were responsive
 My pro bono lawyer or legal team was efficient and effective
 Assistance from my pro bono lawyer made a significant contribution to resolving my legal problem
 I felt that my pro bono lawyer treated me the same as they would treat a fee-paying client
 My pro bono lawyer cared about me and my problem



Key findings 23, 24

- The service users who received a pro bono referral provided positive feedback overall and a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of +44 (out of a possible range of -100 to +100¹) which is a good score.
- Well over the majority of service users receiving a pro bono referral were happy with the service provided to them by their pro bono lawyer, including on issues such as responsiveness, efficiency and effectiveness, and whether or not they perceived their lawyer as caring about them and their problem.

9.2 Experiences of respondents assessed as eligible for legal assistance

This group includes all respondents assessed as eligible at some point in their help-seeking journey with JusticeNet. Not all members of this group received a pro bono referral. This group rated the experience of applying for legal help 3.8 out of 5 and provided an NPS of +11 (out of a possible range from -100 to +100⁸). Among the survey respondents who identified as having been assessed as eligible for a pro bono referral, 83% ultimately received a pro bono referral, consistent with the service data.

This group includes help-seekers who were initially assessed as eligible for pro bono assistance but did not ultimately receive a referral, either due to a revision in their assessment of eligibility or an inability to be placed with pro bono. Open-text responses indicate that this was a frustrating experience. Within the Evaluation Period, 96 help-seekers were initially assessed as eligible, attempts were made to broker a referral but these attempts were not successful.

'The application itself was easy to follow, however, the search for Pro Bono was unclear and unsuccessful. At the end I was able to obtain Low Bono representation instead of Pro Bono.'

'I was communicating with Justice Net on behalf of another man. We completed all necessary documents and we though accepted for support. No support came and communication with

⁸ Further information on the Net Promoter Score methodology is available at www.bain.com/consulting-services/customer-strategy-and-marketing/net-promoter-score-system/.

appropriate Justice net authorised people was very difficult and slow. In the end we gave up and sold property to pay for legal help. All very difficult and disappointing’

‘The process was very long. I had to drop all of the documentation into the office. I wasn’t referred to any law firm re pro bono or offered legal assistance. However, my case was perused by a QC who said my claim was fruitless.’

Key findings 25

- The service user survey respondents who were assessed as eligible at some point in their help-seeking journey with JusticeNet rated the experience of applying for legal help 3.8 out of 5 and provided an NPS of +11 (out of a possible range of –100 to +100¹). Among the survey respondents who identified as having been assessed as eligible for a pro bono referral, 83% ultimately received a pro bono referral, consistent with the service data from Actionstep.

9.3 Experiences of service users who considered that they did not receive any assistance from JusticeNet

Twenty-eight respondents indicated that they did not receive any assistance from JusticeNet.⁹ The NPS for this group was –68 (out of a possible range of –100 to +100¹⁰), with 80% of the respondents being detractors of JusticeNet. Among these respondents, 77% considered that their legal problem remained unresolved. The responses demonstrate high levels of dissatisfaction with both JusticeNet and the justice system more broadly.

At the time of completing the survey, 50% of this group had been looking for legal help for longer than four months, 32% for at least a year, and 21% for more than three years. Among this group, 46% had contacted more than seven legal services. 19 % of this group of respondents ultimately received some free assistance from another legal service comprised, while another 19% paid for legal assistance.

Common legal issues in this group included disputes in relation to family law and child custody, disputes with banks, allegations against the state – including constitutional concerns, corruption, and seeking compensation due to state decision-making – concerns about exposure to electromagnetic frequencies and pollution, and appeals against criminal convictions.

‘Im so lost’

‘I have been brushed aside and have not found any service who does pro bono legal help for a constitutional issue’

‘The application process was much harder and longer than applying for a mortgage is, or completing an application for graduate school. The service demands [r]eams of paper and evidence, which I provided, and is extremely slow to provide half baked “maybe we can help you if only do cross these extra hurdles” caveats.’

⁹ Note that this group should not include those respondents who made an application for assistance and were assessed as ineligible for assistance. However, a few responses indicate that some respondents in the group submitted an application but were determined to not be eligible for assistance.

¹⁰ Further information on the Net Promoter Score methodology is available at www.bain.com/consulting-services/customer-strategy-and-marketing/net-promoter-score-system/.

Key finding 26

The experiences of the service users who did not receive any assistance from JusticeNet were negative overall. At the time of responding to the survey, legal needs remained unmet for 77% of this group. 46% of this group had contacted more than seven legal services, indicating that they either had a legal issue not suited to any free legal service or had a legal matter that was assessed as inappropriate for free assistance based on prospects of success or issues such as expired limitation periods for action. Among this group, 50% had been looking for legal help for longer than four months, 32% for at least a year, and 21% for more than three years.

Recommendations 9 – 15

- Given the length and complexity of the full application form, consider whether help-seekers can complete a short application that can be used to provide quick feedback on their likelihood of being assessed as eligible, which may then be followed by completion of the longer application.
- Consider seeking user experience feedback from applicants when the outcome of their application is communicated.
- Consider approaches to increasing resourcing for the assessment stage and the brokering stage of pro bono referrals, which are the most likely to take time and cause delays.
- Expectation management:
 - Consider flagging early in the application process that if a matter's merit is not immediately clear, JusticeNet may make a limited referral for a merits assessment.
 - Consider communicating more clearly that even if assessed as eligible, JusticeNet needs to work to find a pro bono lawyer, and this exercise will not always result in a lawyer being appointed. If data indicating that a matter has a lower chance of being placed with pro bono is available, this should be communicated to the service user as early as possible.
- Consider communicating the financial value of the pro bono service provided to the service user upon completion of their service so that service users.
- Develop a process to check the status of a pro bono referral, and once the referral is complete, seek the service users' feedback on their experience of JusticeNet, their engagement with the pro bono lawyer, and the outcome of their matter.
- For those who are assessed as ineligible for assistance, keep a clear record of the reason for ineligibility and carry out a follow-up survey to ascertain whether further services were contacted, legal assistance was ultimately received and/or legal needs remained unmet. Opportunities may exist to provide a clearer assessment of prospects to these help-seekers, which may support them to discontinue their search for assistance with flow-on benefits to both the help-seeker and services.

10. Experiences of pro bono lawyers

In the Evaluation Period, 379 pro bono referrals were made to either a solicitor/firm or a barrister. When a referral is made to a solicitor/firm, this may involve multiple lawyers contributing to a file. A survey was sent to all the lawyers who were recorded as having worked on pro bono referrals.

Actionstep does not reliably record whether a solicitor, a barrister, or both worked on a file. Based on the available data in Actionstep, JusticeNet makes around 50% of referrals to solicitors and 50% to barristers. The Actionstep data

likely underrepresents the number of referrals to barristers, as only one barrister can be recorded on a file at a point in time.

10.1 Survey respondents

Among the survey respondents, 66.7% (18) identified as barristers and 33% (9) as solicitors. The number of solicitors surveyed was too small to be statistically significant and to form a basis for extrapolation across JusticeNet's work with solicitors. The average years of post-admission experience was high compared to the legal profession in general, with the average number of years of practice being 21–30 years.

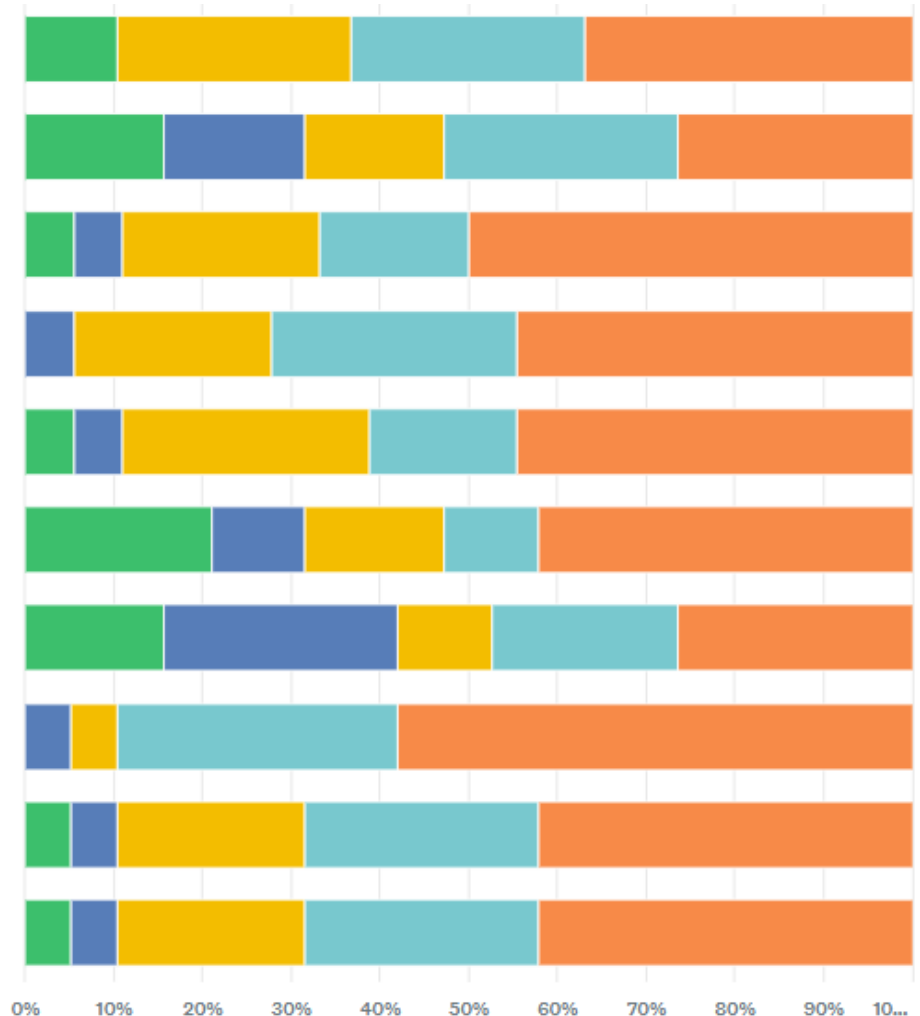
The average number of matters worked on by a lawyer since July 2022 was 4.5. Four respondents had worked on more than 10 matters. While the number of responses is small overall and the responding sample may have some bias, the responses paint a picture of experienced members of the profession carrying out, on average, a significant amount of pro bono work rather than pro bono work being evenly distributed across lawyers of different experience levels.

10.2 Work undertaken

Across the respondents, 68% had worked on ongoing representation files, 58% on limited scope representation, 53% on limited scope advice, 5% on discrete appointments or consultations, and 32% on mediation-only files.

Respondents collectively self-estimated 829 pro bono hours had been contributed since July 2022. This equates to 43.6 hours per responding lawyer.

Pro bono matters referred to me have been well screened and are appropriate clients/matters for pro bono assistance
JusticeNet describes the nature and scope of assistance required for pro bono referrals well
I was able to get in touch and keep in touch with my pro bono client/s until their issue was resolved/concluded
I felt supported by the JusticeNet team and was able to receive assistance if problems arose in the course of the matter
I believe my pro bono client/s are satisfied with their experience of working with a pro bono lawyer
Carrying out pro bono work provided me with exposure to a legal matter or a client type that I would not usually encounter in my work
I was able to expand my skills and/or experience through taking on pro bono work
I feel that I have made an important contribution to access to justice through taking on pro bono referrals
I highly value the opportunity to take on pro bono matters as part of my work
Being able to take on pro bono work as part of my job makes me feel more positively about being a lawyer



10.3 Reflections on JusticeNet and pro bono work

Overall, the lawyers agreed or strongly agreed with a range of positive statements about JusticeNet and pro



bono work around 55–70% of the time. The strongest levels of agreement were recorded for the following

statements: 'I feel that I have made an important contribution to access to justice through taking on pro bono referrals' (89.5% agreed or strongly agreed) and 'I felt supported by the JusticeNet team and was able to receive assistance if problems arose in the course of the matter', 'I highly value the opportunity to take on pro bono matters as part of my work', and 'Being able to take on pro bono work as part of my job makes me feel more positively about being a lawyer' (each 68.5% agreed or strongly agreed).

The statements with the lowest agreement included 'I was able to expand my skills and/or experience through taking on pro bono work' (48% agreed or strongly agreed), 'Carrying out pro bono work provided me with exposure to a legal matter or a client type that I would not usually encounter in my work' (53% agreed or strongly agreed), and 'JusticeNet describes the nature and scope of assistance required for pro bono referrals well' (52.6 % agreed or strongly agreed). Given the average seniority of the respondents, unsurprisingly, they did not consider that pro bono made a major contribution to diversifying their practice experience.

Key findings 27 – 29

- JusticeNet plays a critical role in facilitating opportunities for pro bono lawyers to carry out pro bono work in South Australia. Lawyers value opportunities to undertake pro bono work, and most survey respondents considered that they would do less pro bono work without JusticeNet.
- Overall, pro bono lawyers rated JusticeNet an NPS of +44. On average, JusticeNet was rated more highly by solicitors (NPS +57) than by barristers (NPS +36) (out of a possible range of -100 to +100¹).
- Two barristers noted that managing scope creep and referral size were challenges when taking on pro bono referrals from JusticeNet.

Reflections on JusticeNet broadly

Overall, the pro bono lawyers provided JusticeNet with an NPS of +44, a good result. On average, JusticeNet was rated more highly by solicitors (NPS +57) than by barristers (NPS +36). Among the lawyer respondents, 68% agreed or strongly agreed that they felt more positively about their firm or practice because of their membership in JusticeNet.

'I think the team at JusticeNet do an excellent job with limited resources and at times quite challenging clients. Well done to the team.'

'your team does a great job!'

The strongest negative feedback for JusticeNet was provided in two free-text comments provided by barristers. They noted a lack of clarity about the legal matter, particularly relating to its complexity or the nature and volume of work required.

'...[t]he existing counsel was then going on leave, and while ultimately a solicitor was found, I had to do quite a significant amount of work to understand the matter, determine a potential basis for a claim and formulate that claim before the statutory time limit expired. I did this work so that the client was not disadvantaged, but it was at a time when I was otherwise very busy and had I known the true scope of work would not have accepted the referral.'

'I accepted the brief on the basis that what was required was "Assistance Sought – Representation... to remove respondent from proceedings" when what would actually have been required... [was] a successful appeal to the Supreme Court against the decision of a Master joining her to the proceedings, and time for an appeal had already expired. I thus was of the view that the description of what was required was quite poor...'

Interesting observations shared by the solicitors include:

‘In my limited experience pro bono matters tend to be much harder than “normal” matters, in part because the clients seem to have less psychological capacity to make clear decisions and to then act consistently with them, and the pro bono arrangement provides them with commercial incentive to compromise.’

‘clinics [are a] good way for firms to get involved on regular basis as taking on the larger referrals and matters outside expertise is difficult and not useful to either party’

The distinction in commentary and NPS between barristers and solicitors has several potential explanations. Seniority did not differ significantly between the solicitors and the barristers. Senior members of the bar may have high expectations about instructions and briefs, as they are routinely instructed by senior solicitors who are experts in the area of law concerned. JusticeNet’s generalist staff cannot be expected to provide a brief of the same detail or sophistication as a specialist solicitor who has been working on the matter. However, to the extent that the barristers require briefs to be provided in a certain manner to be able to take on pro bono work and to the extent that the manner of supply of pro bono briefs might be a barrier to counsel taking on pro bono work, this should be considered further. Recommendations regarding potential approaches to addressing this issue are provided below.

Recommendations 16 – 18

- Consider whether some client or matter types have a tendency for a more contained scope of work, and consider promoting these issue types as suited for pro bono referrals with referring partners (e.g. merits assessments).
- If a matter is highly complex from a legal or procedural perspective, consider whether a more advanced assessment can be initially carried out by an assessing counsel or solicitor who assists in preparing the ultimate referral brief. This advanced assessment can be considered pro bono work and form a type of limited scope assistance contemplated in the point above. This type of work is similar to a merits assessment but would be broader in its purpose, which is to assess what type and volume of legal work is likely required to advance the matter.
- Consider whether more legal issues that are generalist in nature would require pro bono work, as these may be suited to solicitors.

11. Justice system impacts

JusticeNet has a range of important system impacts. This evaluation did not seek to comprehensively map these impacts; however, the data collected and analysed does provide some glimpses:

- JusticeNet increases the amount of pro bono work carried out in South Australia, evidenced by the finding that 75% of the pro bono lawyer respondents agreed or strongly agreed that without JusticeNet, they would do less pro bono work. The availability of pro bono assistance supports the functioning of the justice system and the rule of law and provides a deterrence to parties that may be considering taking unlawful action against a disadvantaged party that would not be able to afford legal representation.
- JusticeNet plays a critical role in engaging with people with unmeritorious claims by providing guidance and merits assessments, which then save the individual and the justice system the time and financial costs of pursuing the matter further. This role is largely unrecognised and may deliver even more benefit to South Australians than the value of the pro bono work undertaken. Further investigation into this role is recommended.
- JusticeNet functions as a system navigator by fielding an increasing number of enquiry calls, many of which never result in the submission of a formal application for assistance. These enquirers receive a range of assistance, from help in articulating their legal issue to identifying potential service providers, explaining how the legal system works, and referrals to non-legal supports. This work is largely unfunded.

Key findings 30 – 33

- JusticeNet delivers several system-level impacts, including
 - increasing the amount of pro bono work that pro bono lawyers are undertaking in South Australia: 75% of the pro bono lawyer respondents agreed or strongly agreed that without JusticeNet, they would do less pro bono work;
 - providing guidance and merits assessments to help litigants make decisions about whether their claim should be pursued; and
 - providing system navigation support to people seeking legal assistance such as via referrals to alternative services.
- These system-level impacts are likely to deliver cost savings to Courts via:
 - a reduction in self-represented litigants generally, with pro bono representation provided for claims with prospects of success, and
 - a reduction in the number of self-represented litigants pursuing unmeritorious claims due to JusticeNet's advice on merits.
- JusticeNet's contributions also likely deliver cost savings to other legal services via a reduction in the intake burden for services that do not have to field a request for assistance that has been handled by JusticeNet.
- The availability of pro bono assistance supports the functioning of the justice system and the rule of law and provides a deterrence to parties that may be considering taking unlawful action against a disadvantaged party that would not be able to afford legal representation.

Recommendation 19

In future, JusticeNet could consider how it might measure and monitor the broader system impacts of its work. This may require collaboration with other justice system stakeholders, such as the courts and the LSC.

12. JusticeNet response to evaluation findings and recommendations

This evaluation has been an overdue and valuable exercise for JusticeNet, and one the team has embraced despite the additional pressure it placed on an already substantial workload. The process has been both affirming and instructive. Many of the recommendations have already been implemented, and the benefits of these changes are being felt across the service.

The findings clearly validate what the team has long experienced: a consistently high volume of work, much of which has historically gone uncounted. In particular, the evaluation has helped make visible the significant growth in enquiries, triage, and early system navigation support. This work provides real benefit to help-seekers and to the justice system by offering clarity, managing expectations, and preventing unnecessary escalation. As legal and social pressures increase, this kind of work has become increasingly important—and remains an area where JusticeNet, and the legal assistance sector more broadly, has more to do.

It has also been heartening to see the strong positive feedback from practitioners and people who received support through JusticeNet. The negative feedback is equally valuable, reflecting frustrations that JusticeNet itself shares about the limits of what can be provided in a constrained system. A key reflection arising from the report is the role of technology. For many years JusticeNet has made do with systems that are not fit for purpose. This evaluation clearly

demonstrates both the importance of improving our technology and data management and the extraordinary return on investment delivered. JusticeNet hopes the findings will help drive further investment, particularly in technology, to improve efficiency, sustainability, and impact.

Finally, JusticeNet sincerely thanks the consultants who undertook this evaluation and developed the accompanying dashboard. The process involved many robust and enjoyable conversations, and has laid a strong foundation for continued improvement.

Rebecca Plummer, CEO, JusticeNet

APPENDIX I: Survey questions

Service User Survey

This survey was sent to all users of the Pro Bono Connect program with an email address recorded in the Evaluation Period. Survey participants were offered an opportunity to win one of two \$100 Coles vouchers.

Survey questions

Note this survey included question logic and not all questions were asked of all respondents.

Q1. Have you contacted JusticeNet's Pro Bono Connect service seeking help for a legal problem since July 2022?

Yes

No

Q2. How long did you spend looking for legal help in relation to your legal problem?

a day

a week

2-4 weeks

1-2 months

2 - 3 months

3 - 4 months

4 - 5 months

5 - 6 months

6 - 12 months

1-2 years

3 years+

Q3. While looking for legal help for your most recent legal problem, how many services did you contact?

1

2

3

4

5

6

7+

Q4. Did you receive any of the following services from JusticeNet's Pro Bono Connect (please select all that apply)?

Assistance completing the Pro Bono Connect application form

Legal information over the phone

Links to relevant legal information

A referral to a pro bono lawyer (a lawyer in JusticeNet's network who provided you with legal assistance for free)
Information about legal services likely to be able help you (including other legal service providers or alternative services at JusticeNet)

Support connecting with and applying for assistance with another legal services provider (including other legal service providers or alternative services at JusticeNet)

A referral to another non-legal services provider (e.g. a financial counsellor, advocacy service, mental health service)

I did not receive any assistance from JusticeNet

Q5. Did you submit a formal application for assistance from Pro Bono Connect at JusticeNet?

Yes

No

Q6. Rate your experience of the application process, with 1 star meaning significantly dissatisfied and 5 stars meaning highly satisfied

5 star rating

Q7. Please share any comments you have on the application process

Open text

Q9. Was JusticeNet able to refer you to a pro bono lawyer for assistance (a lawyer or legal team in JusticeNet's network that assisted you for free)?

Yes

No

Q10. You indicated that you received a referral to a pro bono lawyer. Please rate the following statements from 1 to 5, with 1 meaning strongly disagree and 5 meaning strongly agree

I'm satisfied with the legal assistance that I received from my pro bono lawyer or team

My pro bono lawyer or team provided assistance in a timely manner and were responsive

My pro bono lawyer or legal team was efficient and effective

Assistance from my pro bono lawyer made a significant contribution to resolving my legal problem

I felt that my pro bono lawyer treated me the same as they would treat a fee-paying client

My pro bono lawyer cared about me and my problem

Q11. Did the assistance JusticeNet's Pro Bono Connect service provided to you save you money?

No

Yes (please quantify)

Q12. Did the assistance that JusticeNet's Pro Bono Connect service provide you save you time?

No

Yes (please quantify)

Q13. Did you have all of your need for legal assistance in relation to your legal problem met by JusticeNet?

Yes, all of my needs were met by JusticeNet

Some of my needs were met by JusticeNet

None of my needs were met by JusticeNet

Q14. Was JusticeNet able to direct you to another service to assist you with your unmet legal need?

No

Yes (please specify the service/s)

Q15. Which of the following approaches did you use to try to resolve your legal problem in addition to contacting JusticeNet?

I received free legal assistance from another service

I paid for legal assistance
I received free assistance from a non-lawyer
I paid for assistance from a non-lawyer
I accessed a mediation or dispute resolution scheme or program
I self-helped using online resource
I used a digital legal service (e.g. a app or online service provider)
None
Other (please specify)

Q16. Was your legal issue ultimately resolved (even if not through assistance provided by JusticeNet)?

Yes resolved
Partially resolved
Not resolved

Q17. What legal need remains unmet for you?

Open text

Q18. How likely is it that you would recommend JusticeNet to a friend or colleague?

Net Promoter Score framework

Q19. Please provide us with any further feedback that you have on the assistance that you received from JusticeNet or process of engaging with JusticeNet.

Open text

Pro Bono Lawyer Survey

Survey questions

Q1. What type of legal practice do you work in?

Law firm 100+ lawyers
Law firm 50 - 100 lawyers
Law firm 20 - 50 lawyers
Law firm 5 - 20 lawyers
Law firm 2 - 5 lawyers
Sole practitioner (solicitor)
Barrister
In-house lawyer (government)
In-house lawyer (corporate)
Other (please specify)

Q2. How many years of post admission experience do you have?

1
2
3
4
5
6

- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16-20
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51+

Q3. Have you worked on a matter referred by JusticeNet since July 2022?

- Yes
- No

Q4. How many pro bono matters referred by JusticeNet have you worked on since July 2022?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10+

Q5. What types of pro bono matters have you worked on (select all that apply)?

- Ongoing representation
- Limited scope representation
- Limited scope advice
- Task
- Discrete appointment/consultation
- Mediation only
- Other (please specify)

Q6. What areas of law were covered by the matters that you worked on (select all that apply)?

- Administrative law
- Advanced care planning/POA
- Bankruptcy/insolvency
- Building disputes
- Child protection/custody
- Company/corporations Law

- Consumer protection
- Contract and Debt
- Criminal
- Defamation, media and entertainment
- Discrimination and human rights
- Elder abuse
- Employment/industrial
- Equity and trusts
- Family and child protection
- Guardianship and administration (adult)
- Insurance
- Intervention order
- Intellectual property
- Landlord and tenant
- Migration
- Native title and Aboriginal corporations
- Not for profit law
- Other civil law
- Personal injury
- Planning/environment
- Professional negligence
- Property and conveyancing
- Small business
- Taxation
- Wills and estates

Q7. How many pro bono hours have you contributed via matters referred by JusticeNet between July 2022 and June 2025 (an estimate is fine)?

Open text

Q8. Thinking about the most recent pro bono referral that you worked on from JusticeNet, tell us about your experience and the outcome for the client (please do not include confidential or identifying information in this response).

Open text

Q9. Thinking about pro bono referrals that you have worked on since July 2022 via JusticeNet, rate the following statements from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)

Pro bono matters referred to me have been well screened and are appropriate clients/matters for pro bono assistance

JusticeNet describes the nature and scope of assistance required for pro bono referrals well

I was able to get in touch and keep in touch with my pro bono client/s until their issue was resolved/concluded
I felt supported by the JusticeNet team and was able to receive assistance if problems arose in the course of the matter

I believe my pro bono client/s are satisfied with their experience of working with a pro bono lawyer
Carrying out pro bono work provided me with exposure to a legal matter or a client type that I would not usually encounter in my work

I was able to expand my skills and or experience through taking on pro bono work

I feel that I have made an important contribution to access to justice through taking on pro bono referrals

I highly value the opportunity to take on pro bono matters as part of my work

Being able to take on pro bono work as part of my job makes me feel more positively about being a lawyer

Q10. How likely is it that you would recommend working with JusticeNet to a colleague or another law firm/practice?

Open text

Q11. How satisfied are you with the amount of pro bono work that you do?

Very satisfied

Satisfied

Neutral

Unsatisfied

Very unsatisfied

Q12. Which of the following factors would increase your ability to take on pro bono work?

Recognition of pro bono work towards billable targets (if this is not already in place)

Firm/practice culture that supports taking on pro bono work

Better supervision on pro bono matters

More access to training on legal issue areas and/or client engagement relevant to pro bono work

More opportunities to take on pro bono work

Other (please specify)

Q13. Thinking about your engagement with JusticeNet broadly, rate the following statements from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)

I enjoy attending JusticeNet events (e.g. the Walk for Justice or Art for Justice)

JusticeNet's training for pro bono lawyers (e.g. the CPD intensive) is valuable to me

I feel more positively about my firm/practice because of our JusticeNet membership

Without JusticeNet, I would do less pro bono work

The existence of organisations like JusticeNet makes me feel more positive about the legal profession

Q14. Is there anything you would like to share about taking on pro bono matters from JusticeNet or working with JusticeNet more broadly?

Open text

APPENDIX II: Eligibility criteria

JusticeNet will try to find a pro bono lawyer for applicants who meet the following criteria:

- you are unable to afford essential legal services without undue hardship; and
- you are an individual or a not-for-profit organisation whose purpose(s) is primarily charitable; and
- you have a problem requiring a legal remedy for which:
 - o there are reasonable prospects of a successful outcome; and
 - o you would suffer significant injustice if not legally represented; or
 - o your matter concerns an issue of public interest; and
- you are unable to obtain the requisite services from an alternative legal services provider, particularly the Legal Services Commission, a community legal centre or the Litigation Assistance Fund / Disbursements Only Fund; and
- the matter is of such a nature that you could not reasonably be expected to self-represent; and
- JusticeNet considers in all the circumstances that the matter would be an appropriate use of available pro bono legal resources.

JusticeNet, in its absolute discretion, may also provide assistance in exceptional circumstances to applicants who do not meet the above criteria.