

Invisible Hurdles Stage II report findings/summary

Key findings

- **effective in making inroads in responding to family violence** occurring in the lives of young people and their families
- **efficient** and **effective** in reaching young people who would not otherwise have been reached
- **increased democratic engagement** of the young people involved in the Project
- Secondary Consultations are **easily available and routine**
- high level of **mutual trust and understanding** between the individual agencies and the Invisible Hurdles' lawyers
- Professional Development **has exceeded goals set**, has been **accessible, engaging and relevant**
- The referral process continues to be **clear and operationalised well** in all organisations
- **Outstanding Community Legal Education programs** were delivered
- co-ordinated systemic work **gave a voice to young people**
- The Project lawyers became a **'go-to' source** of legal help for many young people

Recommendations snapshot

- ☑ **That Invisible Hurdles be given long-term funding**
- ☑ **That the Invisible Hurdles model be rolled out in other schools around Australia**
- ☑ **That a focus on Aboriginal youth be the cornerstone of future stages of Invisible Hurdles**
- ☑ **That Invisible Hurdles continues the momentum of giving a voice to young people through systemic work**

"I've been doing Invisible Hurdles with Andrea and Becky for almost a year now, and they've helped me heaps....teaching my rights and getting me out of a bad situation I was in. They were really helpful because I wouldn't have been able to find that information or do it myself. I was feeling scared and confused, and I didn't know where to seek the information... and moving forward me and my baby are safe."

Wodonga Flexible Learning Centre student

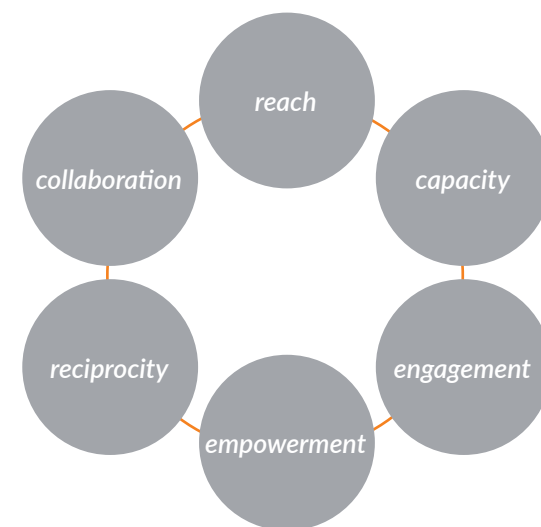
Summary

Overall the proxies (used in this evaluation as indicators to measure impact) have been met or on the trajectory of being met, namely:

*"Over five years of funding from multiple sources, the Invisible Hurdles team has delivered what can be assessed against the benchmarks as **'integrated' and holistic legal practice.**"*

The evaluators recommend the Invisible Hurdles model to other services hoping to find an effective model that could be replicated. Multiple participants told us [the evaluators] that they could not imagine the service not being there – it is now, to coin a COVID term, an 'essential service.'"

(Final Report, p 99)



A person in a dark athletic outfit is captured mid-jump over a hurdle on a track. The background shows a line of trees under a clear sky. The entire image has an orange tint.

Data January 2019 – February 2021

534 referrals

100% agreed that they can confidently and positively refer

339 advices

100% agreed that the lawyers are responsive to client need.

273 secondary consults

100% agreed there is huge value in assisting patients/clients due to secondary consultations with the lawyers

43% sought advice

where family violence impacted their legal problem and nearly **60% of young people seen were impacted in some way by family violence**

164 cases

32 CLE/Community development sessions

with over 300 total attendees (*most attendees attended multiple sessions)

100 professional development/staff meetings/“cuppa dates” attended

"Becky Smith in the role of the Invisible Hurdles legal project worker has been a highly valued and exceptional team member of the wider WFLC community. Becky has developed a wonderful connection to our students and has engaged them with her 'down to earth' and easy going personality. Becky has developed and presented engaging and interactive sessions for the students where they have been able to take on the information presented to them in a way they can understand easily. She has been an asset to WFLC for both students and staff and we are looking forward to continuing this fantastic partnership!"

(Kristy Shaddock, Leading Teacher,
Wodonga Flexible Learning Centre)

'The service had to be provided here for the 'social connector'. Having the lawyer on-site and using the facilities, already a barrier is broken down. [For clients they think] "You're there, in a place I feel comfortable enough to come." It shows that the organisation trusts that person. If we [clients] trust that organisation, then an element of trust is transferred...it provides equity for the community. Having someone attend here, people are more likely to want to come.'

(Final Report, p 41)

'Invisible Hurdles has been very important to me as a teacher, but extremely important to some of my vulnerable students. For example, it could be something as minor as a birth certificate that the lawyers have been able to assist or it could be something as big as the rights of the unborn child with a student who's about to have a baby, who is in the DHS system. So the fact that both...lawyers...have been able to help and advise these students and me as their teacher, it's been absolutely wonderful.'

(Final Report, p 37)

'So to have [the lawyers] on hand to speak with the young person, to liaise with the parents... She has this really beautiful, supportive working relationship with this mum. They just have a way of making the kids and the parents feel safe and supported. So I think that relational trust and that knowledge base are two really key aspects in our relationship.'

(Final Report, p 89)

