IMPACT EVALUATION REPORT

Outreach – Networking – Empowerment
A Targeted Domestic Violence Program
2022-2025

Hume Riverina Community Legal Service

hume riverina community legal service

July 2025

orange compass

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to those who shared their time and insights with us; particularly the clients who were willing to share their deeply personal stories and experience of the program.

Our sincere thanks to:

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- Michelle Conroy (Carer Advocate - One Door Mental Health - Murrumbidgee)
- Wendy Howard (Registrar – Assistant Coroner - Albury Local Court)

ONE Program Clients (please note: all clients are using pseudonyms for confidentiality reasons)

- Elizabeth
- Lisa
- Jenny
- Mary

We would also like to acknowledge the support of the HRCLS team and their generosity in facilitating access to data and opportunities to meet with key stakeholders, including interviews with program clients. HRCLS must be commended for the quality of record keeping and ongoing data collection for the ONE Program, which has provided a range of valuable inputs and added to the depth of evidence available for the evaluation.

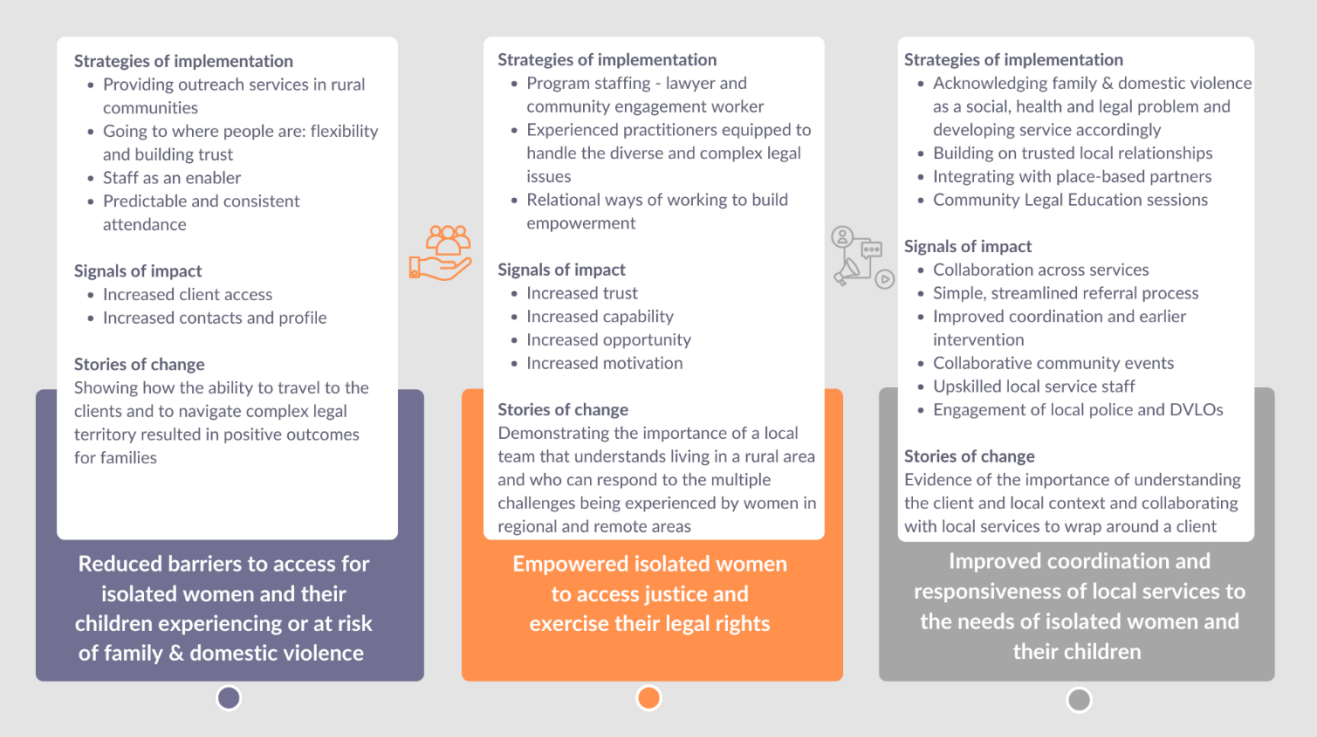
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Positive impacts for a targeted cohort

Our findings indicate that overall, the program has achieved positive impacts; effectively reducing barriers to access to justice for women and their children experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, family and domestic violence: vulnerability that is compounded by geographic isolation; and filling a significant service gap.

There is evidence of engagement by the target cohort of women and a corresponding increase in access to justice, safety and security; as well as evidence of greater (and growing) coordination and responsiveness from the local social service system – particularly in terms of proactive support for women accessing legal services and the benefits to safety and security.

The program design and implementation approach have underpinned the program's impact. The evidence indicates that the design hypothesis was correct - that it would take action on the first two key elements Outreach and Networking to change the current patterns and behaviour of potential clients, services and the wider system, to achieve the third element - Empowerment. HRCLS' implementation approach, incorporating ongoing flexibility and adaptation, enabled the team to be innovative and responsive in *meeting clients where they're at* (literally and figuratively), supporting the overall effectiveness of the program. The following provides a visual summary of findings.



ABOUT THIS REPORT

Purpose

Hume Riverina Community Legal Service received funding under the National Legal Assistance Partnership administered by Legal Aid NSW on behalf of the Commonwealth for the delivery of dedicated legal assistance services to women experiencing, or at risk of domestic and family violence to deliver the "ONE Program" in the Southern Riverina of New South Wales (NSW). Orange Compass was engaged by Hume Riverina Community Legal Service to undertake an independent evaluation of the impact of the ONE program. Key objectives were to:

- support end of program reporting
- provide insights into the effectiveness of the program
- develop recommendations for the future.

Report Structure

This report is divided into the following sections:

- Program context
- The ONE program
- Evaluation design and methodology
- Evaluation findings
- Conclusion
- Appendices
- References

Under Evaluation Findings:

The content is framed around three key questions:

1. To what extent has the ONE Program reduced barriers to access for isolated women (and their children) experiencing (or at risk of) Family and Domestic Violence?
2. How effectively has the ONE Program empowered isolated women to access justice and exercise their legal rights?
3. How effective has the ONE Program been in improving the coordination and responsiveness of local services to the needs of isolated women (and their children) experiencing (or at risk of) Family and Domestic Violence?

Answers to these key questions are organised into the following categories:

- Strategies of Implementation
- Stories of Impact
- Stories of Change
- Barriers and Challenges
- Implications and Recommendations

PROGRAM CONTEXT

Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia

Family, domestic and sexual violence is a major health and welfare issue in Australia, occurring across all socioeconomic and demographic groups, but predominantly affecting women and children. These types of violence can have a serious impact on individuals, families and communities and can inflict physical injury, psychological trauma and emotional suffering. These effects can be long-lasting and can affect future generations.

The ABS Personal Safety Survey (PSS) provides an estimate of the number of Australians who have been victim survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence. While every experience of family, domestic and sexual violence is very personal and different, it is most common for this type of violence to be perpetrated against women, by men. There is currently no national data on the proportion of Australians who have perpetrated family, domestic and sexual violence.

The most recent PSS was conducted between March 2021 and May 2022 during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the ABS PSS, in 2021–22:

- **1 in 6 women** had experienced **physical and/or sexual violence** by a current or previous cohabiting partner since the age of 15
- **1 in 5 women** had experienced **sexual violence** since the age of 15
- **1 in 4 women** had experienced **emotional abuse** by a current or previous cohabiting partner since the age of 15
- **1 in 6 women** had experienced **economic abuse** by a current or previous cohabiting partner since the age of 15

Governments across Australia came together in 2009 to establish the *National Plan to reduce violence against women and their children 2010 – 2022*. Many achievements have flowed from the National Plan, including the creation of Our Watch, the *Stop it at the Start* awareness campaign, and national support services such as 1800RESPECT.

Family, domestic and sexual violence in rural, regional and remote Australia

For those living in rural, regional and remote areas of Australia, their experiences with domestic or family violence are very different to those in urban areas. Living in these areas, they are more likely to experience family and domestic violence that those living in urban areas.

- The National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032 identified that women living in regional and remote areas experience significantly higher rates of intimate partner violence than women based in capital cities (Rates from age 15 years old are: 21% in regional and remote areas, 15% in capital cities).

Those experiencing domestic and family violence in regional, rural and remote areas of Australia experience a unique set of barriers that make leaving an abusive relationship difficult. Victim survivors living in regional, remote, and rural parts of Australia can face (Breaking the Silence, 2020, p5-7):

- **Complex financial arrangements**: complex financial arrangements, financial dependency and limited access to employment opportunities are often a significant barrier for victim survivors of family and domestic violence in regional, remote, and rural Australia wanting to leave an abusive relationship. In agricultural industry dependent communities, money is often tied up in assets such as the family farm
- **Geographical isolation**: victim survivors of domestic and family violence are often geographically isolated which can be a significant barrier to victim survivors accessing support
- **Limited services**: there are limited and a lack of services to assist with family and domestic violence support such as crisis accommodation, family and domestic violence legal advice, counselling, emergency relief to name a few.
- **Anonymity concerns**: people experiencing domestic and family violence often struggle to identify someone they can disclose to.
- **Impacts of natural disasters**: which can exacerbate domestic and family violence due to factors such as trauma, stress, financial loss, unemployment and the use of coping mechanisms such as alcohol and drugs.

The road to Deniliquin

THE *ONE* PROGRAM

Focus of HRCLS

For more than 25 years, the HRCLS has provided free legal assistance services for people experiencing barriers to justice, in communities of North East Victoria and Southern Riverina region in NSW. Women experiencing, and at risk of, family and domestic violence are a priority group for HRCLS. At the time of the grant funding, in 2021, 69% of HRCLS clients were women, and 68% experienced domestic violence. Domestic violence was the second highest problem type in the same period.

HRCLS works across 7 NSW and 10 Victorian local government areas. The scale of HRCLS geographical footprint creates several complexities. The first is that it is not only serving a large regional centre (Albury/Wodonga), but also numerous small rural and remote communities dispersed over a wide area. Additional complexity is created by working across the NSW and Victorian border and in both States. The jurisdictions of NSW and Victoria respond very differently in the family and domestic violence space. For example, there are different approaches to supporting victim survivors in Victoria compared to NSW. Victoria has a continuity of care model and greater access to duty lawyers for family and domestic violence order representation for both victim survivors and defendants, HRCLS funding does not extend to deliver duty lawyer services in NSW. It is also not a given that both parties will receive legal representation. With it being common for clients to move across the border in this region, HRCLS needs legal expertise in both jurisdictions to be able to provide the high quality services that clients require.

HRCLS has provided legal assistance to women (especially women experiencing domestic violence), on both sides of the border for more than 20 years. This has included outreach services in isolated communities. It has also included the full spectrum of legal assistance – legal information, referral, legal advice, duty lawyer work, casework and representation services.

The ONE Program

Program Funding

In 2021, HRCLS sought additional funding through the NSW National Legal Assistance Partnership (NLAP) Legal Assistance Funding – Women's stream (four year grant), to establish the ONE (Outreach Networking Empowerment) program. HRCLS was already travelling to these locations delivering legal services of a generalist nature but based on the BOSCAR (*Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research*) data and conversations with service providers and community, HRCLS identified the need to add to their presence in the region focusing on family and domestic violence supports.

The program sought to deliver dedicated legal assistance services to women at risk of, or experiencing domestic and family violence, in targeted rural communities in the HRCLS catchment. The program was created because, while published BOSCAR data showed very high, and increasing, rates of domestic violence and safety related crime, there was not a corresponding increase in demand for *legal assistance services*. This suggested that women were not accessing legal assistance, despite the increase in need.

It is important to note that , while intended for four years of funding, approval (and provision) of funding did not occur until the third quarter of the 2021/2022 financial year. This means that the program has only been fully operational for three years (rather than four) by the end of the funding period.

The Response

The ONE Program was specifically designed to respond to the unique challenges posed to victim survivors living in rural locations by directing specific resources to Outreach, Networking and Empowerment (ONE). Following consultation with the local social services networks, HRCLS identified key barriers to access and designed the ONE program, with a multi-pronged approach to overcoming those barriers. By overcoming these barriers to access, the program sought to empower women in disclosure and help-seeking decisions.

Key pillars of this work included:

- Acknowledging domestic violence as a social, health and legal problem and developing the service accordingly
- Building on trusted local relationships
- Integrating with place-based social service partners
- Providing outreach services (including advice, casework, partnered secondary consultations) to women experiencing or at risk of domestic violence in targeted rural communities: Deniliquin (Edward River Shire), Corowa (Federation Shire) and Finley (Berrigan Shire).
- Creating a dual staffing structure employing a legal practitioner and a community engagement worker

This approach is evidence based, with studies showing that community engagement and outreach work are vital elements of domestic and family violence service provision. This is because they enable specialist agencies to reach and support women across large distances as well as to influence local informal networks. The necessity of this work in providing locally appropriate responses to bring about community change cannot be underestimated (Wendt et al., 2017). Each element is explained in more detail in the findings below on strategies of implementation. As the response was developed, the HRCLS identified the following challenges in service delivery:

- Numbers of clients are hard to predict because, as experience shows, cases can be complex, involving a number of legal issues and requiring multiple services
- The nature of the ONE project involved meeting clients in their communities, resulting in a great deal of travel for HRCLS staff. For instance, return trips to Deniliquin are 5 hours, Finley 3 ½ hours, and Corowa 1 ½ hours.
- The time required to travel impacted the ability to offer on-the-ground services
- Traditionally, clients in these isolated communities have been difficult to reach, especially where those clients are experiencing numerous complexities, including trauma. It was important to frame this program as building the foundation, and to be realistic as to what could be achieved during the funding period.
- Experience indicates that working in partnership takes time, but the benefits are far reaching and provide better client outcomes.

These areas will also be further explored through the evaluation findings.

Client Cohort

In addition to the access issues outlined above, many of the clients have other significant complexities impacting their lives. HRCLS collects client data on impacting factors including:

- Age (Person under 25 or over 65/over 50 if Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)
- Remoteness (Outer Regional or Remote)
- Cultural Identity (Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)
- Family Violence Indicator (Yes, affected by family violence, or At Risk of being affected by family violence

- Language other than English
- Disability Status
- Homelessness Indicator (Yes, homeless or At Risk of becoming homeless)
- Sole Parent family

Over 80 percent of the ONE Program clients identified as experiencing three or more impacting factors, potentially compounding challenges around service access (see Figure 1 below).

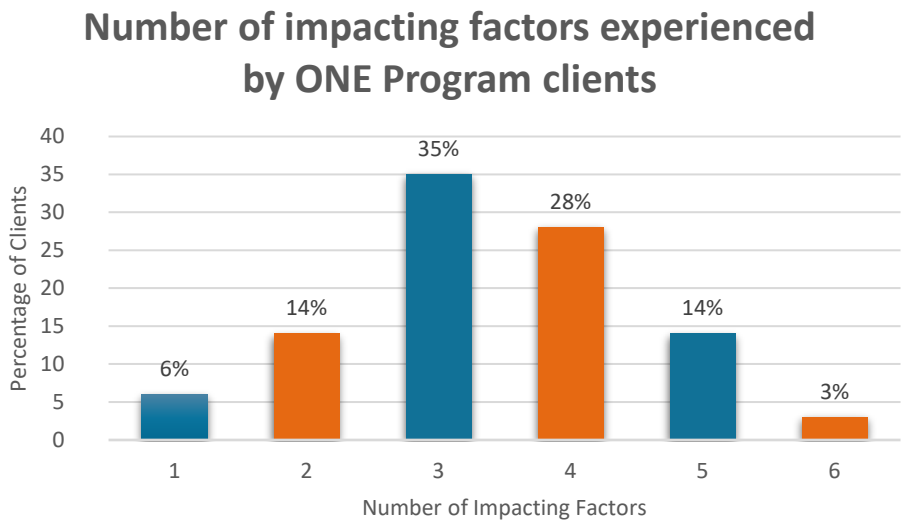


Figure 1: Number of impacting factors for clients

EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Evaluation Questions and Theory of Change

The evaluation framework was designed in consultation with the HRCLS team. The design was informed by the program's Theory of Change (see Table 1 2 below) and outcomes.

OUR BIG VISION	**The people and communities of the Hume Riverina region have improved wellbeing -** *stable housing, job security, financial stability, improved safety, more connections, reduced stress, better mental health and healthy relationships.*			
IMPACT AREAS	**Reducing the barriers for women experiencing (or at risk of) F&DV to engagement with legal assistance services and access to justice**	**Empowering women experiencing (or at risk of) F&DV to make informed decisions about their legal options and to exercise their legal rights**	**Improving the responsiveness and coordination of local services to better meet the needs of isolated women & their children experiencing (or at risk of) F&DV**	**Influencing the local justice system (police/ courts) to prioritise the safety and security of women & their children experiencing (or at risk of) F&DV, in practice**
END OF PROGRAM OUTCOMES (4 + years)	Isolated women and children experiencing (or at risk of) family and domestic violence in the Hume Riverina region are safe, secure and well; empowered by responsive legal and wrap around services; and prioritised by the local justice system.			
SHORT-MEDIUM TERM OUTCOMES (1-3 Years)	More isolated women experiencing (at risk of) F&DV are engaging with legal assistance services, to access justice for themselves and their children	More isolated women experiencing (at risk of) F&DV feel well-informed and supported to exercise their legal rights	Local services are responding in more coordinated and effective ways to the needs of isolated women & their children experiencing (or at risk of) F&DV	The local justice system has greater awareness and is shifting practices to better protect the safety & security of women & their children experiencing (or at risk of) F&DV

Table 1: The ONE Program Theory of Change

Key evaluation questions were developed in order to understand both the barriers and enablers of implementation to inform future programs and program delivery, and the program outcomes. These were:

- Key evaluation question 1: To what extent has HRCLS' ONE Program **increased access to justice, and the safety and security, of isolated women and** children who have experienced (or are at risk of experiencing) Family and Domestic Violence (F&DV) in the NSW Southern Riverina region (particularly in the **Finley, Corowa, Deniliquin** communities)?

- Key evaluation question 2: To what extent has the HRCLS' **program design and implementation** of the ONE Program enabled positive impacts for isolated women (and their children) experiencing (or at risk of) Family and Domestic Violence (F&DV)?

The design was further strengthened by inclusion of key elements of the COM-B behaviour change model as a framework to inform the data collection approach, sense-making and analysis. The COM-B model (Figure 2) was developed by Susan Michie, Maartje van Stralen, and Robert West in 2011 (Social Change UK, 2019). It is a conceptual framework with a focus on three key components that influence behaviour: Capability, Opportunity,

and Motivation. We have applied the model to understand participant and service provider level impact in the evaluation.

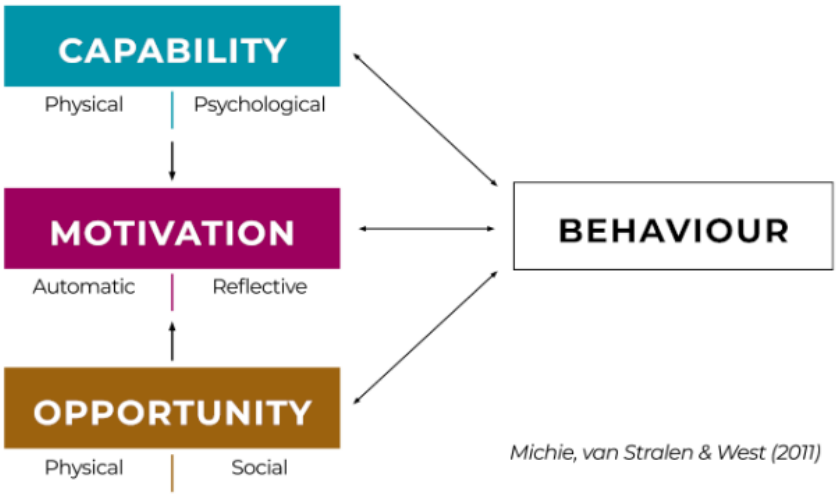


Figure 2: The COM-B Model of Behaviour Change (Social Change UK, 2019)

Data collection approach

We used a "mixed methods" approach to data collection, using both quantitative and qualitative data gathered from a range of sources, including key informant interviews, internal program documentation, program data collection, informal interviews and anecdotal feedback.

Due to the sensitive nature of the content and challenges around access to technology and the internet, it was decided that client information and feedback would be gathered exclusively through 1:1 interviews. While online surveys and questionnaires may have allowed for larger sample sizes and additional quantitative data, an in-person qualitative approach was selected as more appropriate for the context. The data gathered has been complemented by the qualitative data gathered by the HRCLS team in program delivery.

The evaluation team spent two days with the ONE team, meeting with key staff from HRCLS. During the two days, we visited key partners in Albury, conducted client interviews and met with community partners. One full day was spent accompanying the ONE team Lawyer and Community Engagement Worker on an outreach day – travelling to Deniliquin and Finley, attending Deniliquin Court, and visiting Vinnies, Intereach and Riverina Foodshare - Finley. This allowed us to experience first-hand the time it takes and distances the team travel each month to deliver the ONE program. It also helped us to better understand the geographical and service challenges for women the ONE Program aims to support.

In preparing this report, we chose to combine our findings for the two key evaluation questions. We found that the program design and implementation were tightly entwined with the signals of impact and stories of change, and we wanted to show their interwoven dimensions. Below, we share the evidence and insights about the impacts of the ONE Program using three sub questions as the framing:

1. To what extent has the ONE Program **reduced barriers to access** for isolated women (and their children) experiencing (or at risk of) Family and Domestic Violence?
2. How effectively has the ONE Program **empowered isolated women to access justice and exercise their legal rights**?
3. How effective has the ONE Program been **in improving the coordination and responsiveness of local services to the needs of** isolated women (and their children) experiencing (or at risk of) Family and Domestic Violence?

Under each question, content is organised into five sections:

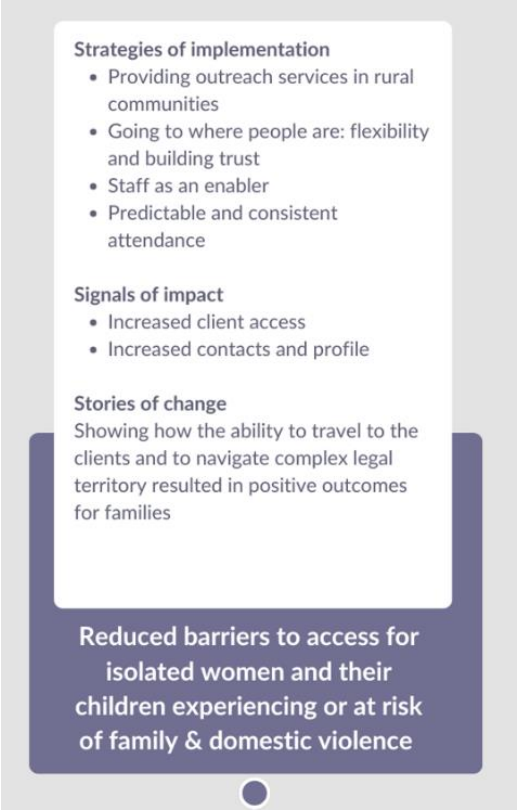
1. **Strategies of implementation**
2. **Signals of impact**
3. **Stories of change**
4. **Barriers and Challenges**
5. **Implications and Recommendations**

The section on 'strategies of implementation' addresses program design and implementation. The section on 'signals of impact' and 'stories of change' explores how effectively has the ONE Program increased access to justice, and the safety and security, of isolated women and children who have experienced (or are at risk of experiencing) family and domestic violence in the Hume Riverina region.

We note that we have made evaluative judgements based on the data available to us. Whilst we sought to gather data from a wide but targeted range of sources, we acknowledge that this data will not be fully representative of all views or experiences.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

To what extent has the ONE Program reduced barriers to access for isolated women (and their children) experiencing, or at risk of, family and domestic violence?



Strategies of implementation

The ONE Program pursued multiple strategies to reduce barriers to access. These strategies ranged from relational strategies, such as building strong relations with service providers and clients to carefully considered geographical locations of ONE Program staff.

Providing outreach services (including advice, casework, partnered secondary consultations) to women experiencing, or at risk of, domestic violence in targeted rural communities: Deniliquin (Edward River Shire), Corowa (Federation Shire) and Finley (Berrigan Shire).

The ONE Program targets engagement and service delivery to the regional communities of Deniliquin, Corowa and Finley, beyond the main regional centre of Albury. The service delivery model of the ONE Program prioritises accessibility and responsiveness, engaging with clients where they are and within the context of their lived experience.

Riverina Food Share Finley

Going to where people are: flexibility and building trust

The ONE Program's commitment to go where clients are was an important part of the program, and their ability to 'test and try' different locations, was also a strength. Part of this was the flexibility of their approach. They did not provide standard outreach clinics, but instead tried unique approaches such as being present in the Deniliquin courtroom when Family Violence matters were heard or attending the Riverina Food Share - Finley (see case study: Riverina Food Share - Finley). In other examples of flexibility, when clients were not attending the open sessions offered at Intereach, The ONE Program moved to Vinnies offices, directly opposite the Deniliquin Court and experienced far higher engagement.

Staff as an enabler

Recruitment for the ONE Program was undertaken carefully by HRCLS to ensure alignment and connection with program goals and the target community, which appears to have had a positive relationship on the program. Whilst change cannot be attributed to individuals, careful and successful recruitment of the right staff appears to have had a positive impact on program delivery. This was evident in reports from both organisations and clients.

Predictable and consistent attendance

Consistency in turning up as promised on days and times as scheduled was important in both building trust with service providers and community, and the more practical operational aspect, of people being able to seek them out as needed.

The predictable nature of the ONE team's attendance, including at court, has led to stronger relationships and warm referral pathways. The ONE Program operates and attends regularly at the following locations, with the following frequencies (see Table 2 below):

Table 2 - ONE teams attendance

Location	Frequency
Deniliquin Court	Monthly
Finley Court	Monthly
Corowa Court	Monthly
Vinnies Deniliquin	Monthly
Riverina Foodshare-Finley	Monthly
Intereach Deniliquin	On average on a monthly basis
Intereach Finley	On average on a monthly basis
Intereach Corowa	On average on a monthly basis
WDVCAS-Albury	Fortnightly (alternating with telephone advice)
Telephone clinics and advice	Fortnightly (alternating with WDVCAS)

In addition, they provide additional legal education sessions, organise and support community events, and engage with services and clients outside these clinics (See below and Appendix 1 and 2 for details).

Many of the referrals entail 'facilitated referrals', where a practitioner known to the client will suggest they consult a member of the ONE team, and introduce them. As ONE team members sit in locations across their catchment areas, practitioners from other organisations are able to bring women across for appointments and introductions in environments that are familiar and comfortable.

As an example, the ONE team attend the local courts every Apprehended Domestic Violence Order (ADVO) court day. The predictable nature of their attendance means that referrers such as Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (WDVCAS) connect with them to identify victim survivors who are not in attendance at court but may need assistance down the track from the ONE Program. The addition of a Family and Domestic Violence service near the Court in Deniliquin allows for face to face and fluid 'facilitated referrals" across service providers.

The ONE Program's regular attendance at Vinnies, across from the Deniliquin courthouse further supports this approach.

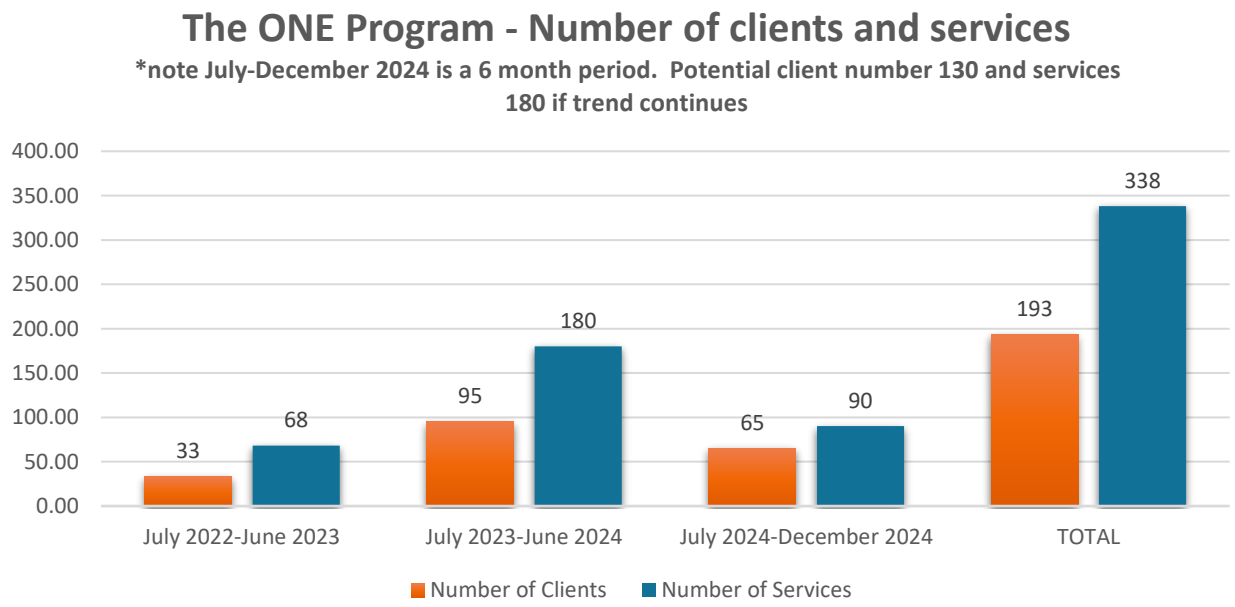
Trends show that client access has increased. From July 2022 to December 2024, 193 clients accessed the service, with numbers increasing year on year.

Signals of Impact

Increased client access and referrals

The table below indicates the number of clients and services provided through the ONE Program. Though overall client numbers (see Figure 3) have not reached the project outcomes of 130 clients in 2023-2024 and 150 the following year, delays in the commencement of the program explain lower initial numbers. Since then, there has been an upward trajectory in the number of clients accessing the service year on year. There has also been an increase over time in the number of services accessed.

Figure 3: Number of Clients and Services



There was a significant jump in number of services provided between the 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial year. This is particularly evident at Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (WDVCAS) and in the number of telephone consultations.

Table 3: Services by location

Services provided by outreach location	July 2022-June 2023	July 2023-June 2024	July 2024-December 2024* *(*note: this is a six month period. Others are 12 months)*	TOTAL
Telephone	8	22	1	**31**
Corowa – Intereach	2	4	-	**6**
Deniliquin – Intereach	4	5	-	**9**
Deniliquin - Vinnies	-	1	7	**8**
Finley – Intereach	3	3	-	**6**
WDVCAS	46	129	78	**253**
Women's Centre	3	7	1	**11**
Gateway Health-Wangaratta	2	-		**2**
YES Unlimited (The Hub) – Albury	-	-	1	**1**
Centre against Violence – Wodonga	-	8	1	**9**
Bushfire-LBT	-	2		**2**
				338

As noted in Table 2 above, clients were located both in the towns and surrounding areas. Some clients are more than 300km from Albury, their closest regional centre, and almost 100km to Deniliquin, their closest major town (See Figure 4). These areas previously did not have access locally or with familiar, safe faces, to the services provided by The ONE Program. They would instead have had to access services in Albury, which is often impossible due to life commitments and limited access to and cost of transport. While the numbers may appear low, every woman supported in a small country town can have a large impact.

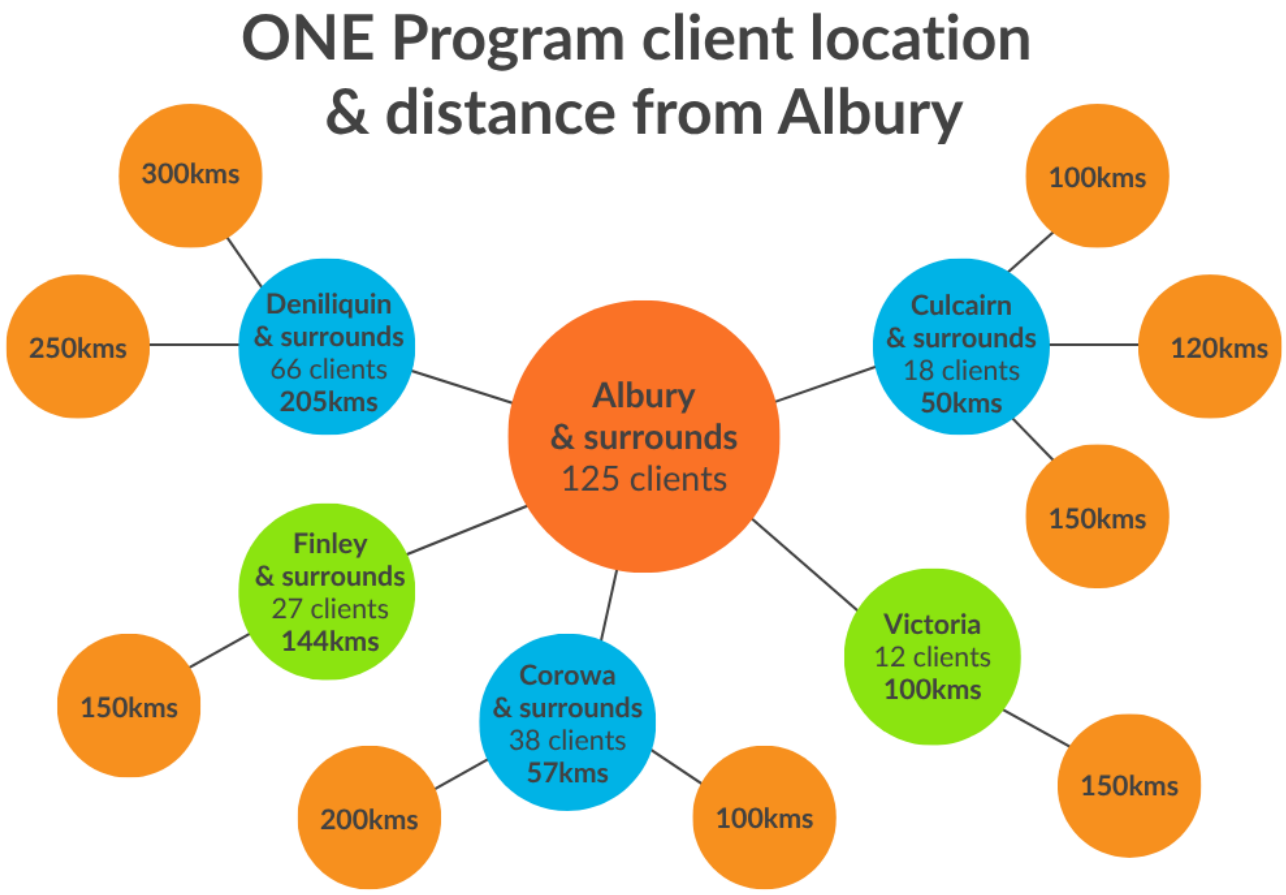
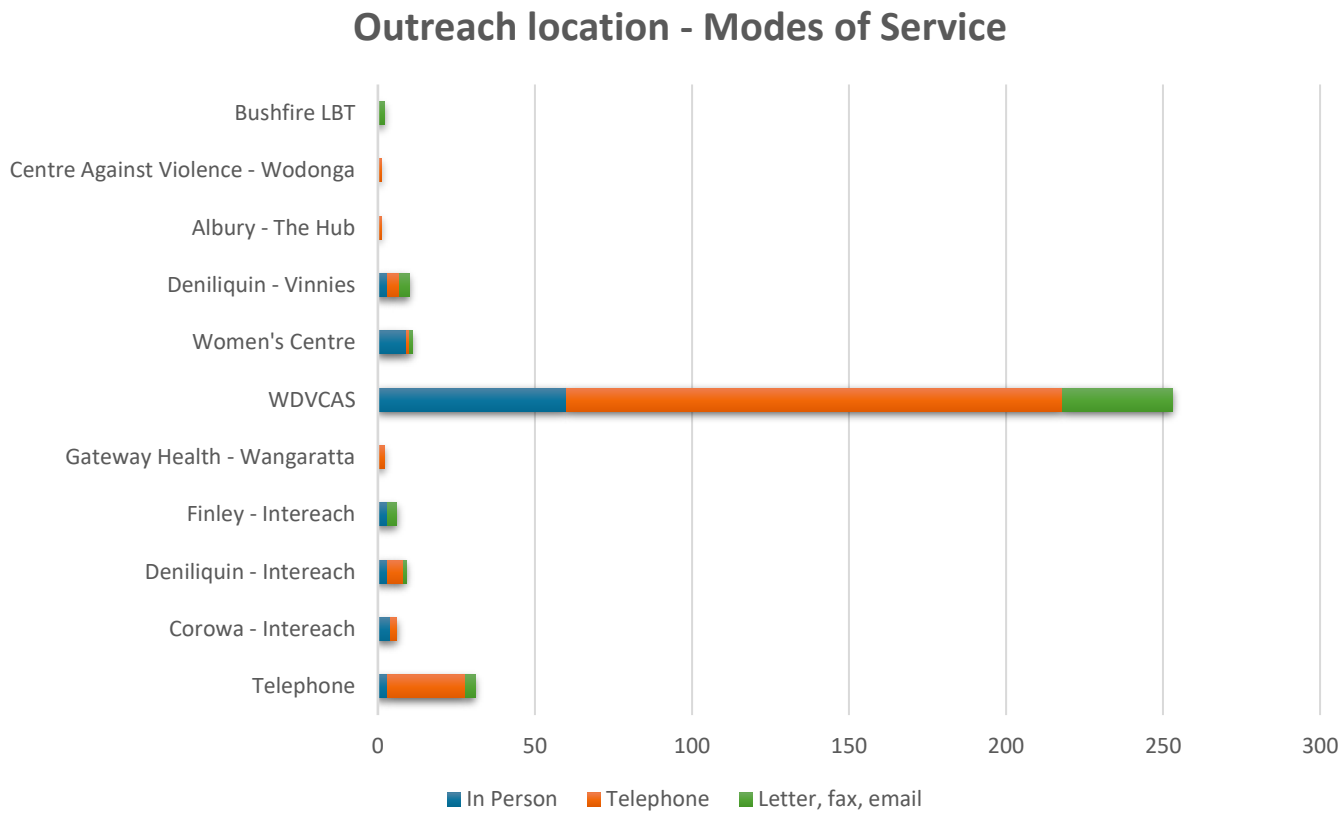


Figure 4 : Map of Client Locations (exact locations deidentified for confidentiality)

At all of the locations, a significant proportion of the outreach is conducted via telephone contact (see Table 4). HRCLS staff indicated that once clients are comfortable with the service provider and have met them in person (e.g. at Riverina Foodshare - Finley), they are then generally more comfortable moving to a telephone consultation. In other words, initial contact needs to be face to face. Subsequent contact can be via telephone, once rapport and trust has been developed.

As figure 5 indicates, there are various locations where services are provided. By telephone refers to a service that is provided by telephone outside of a specific clinic. If a service was provided by telephone but within a scheduled clinic, it will show in both areas.

Figure 5: Modes of service



As Figure 6 indicates, there are a number of key referrers, where referral numbers appear to be growing steadily, assuming the pattern for July 2024-December 2024 continues into 2025. The same pattern may be observed in Figure 7, Clients by referral source. Of particular note is the growth in the 'Self, friend, relative, neighbour', potentially indicating that as The ONE Program provides support, word of mouth and community referrals are an important mechanism for growing client base. It is also possible that some of these referrals were originally made through partnerships.

Figure 6: Clients By Referral Source

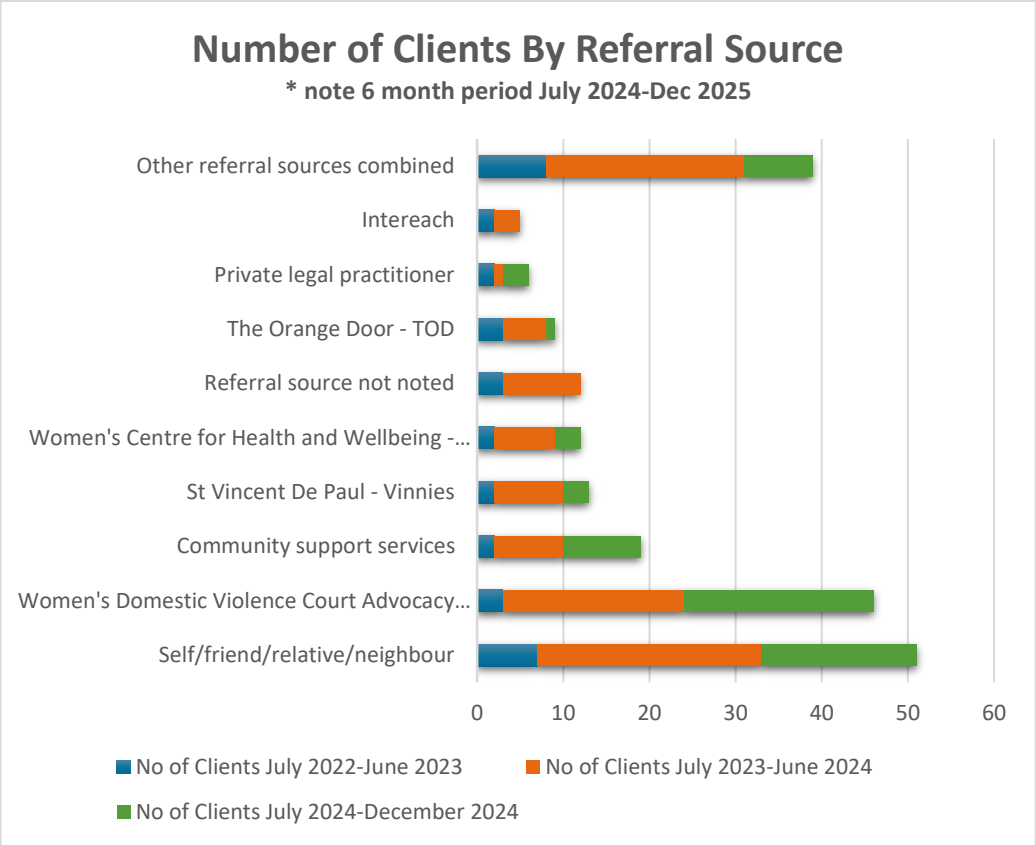
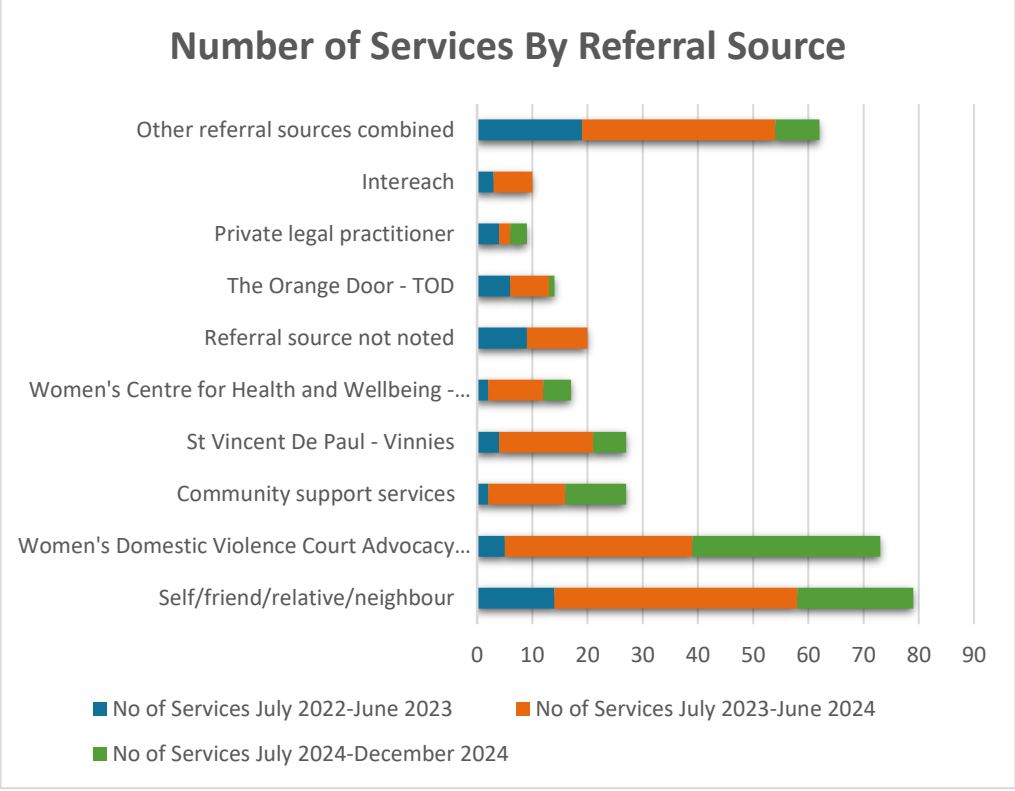
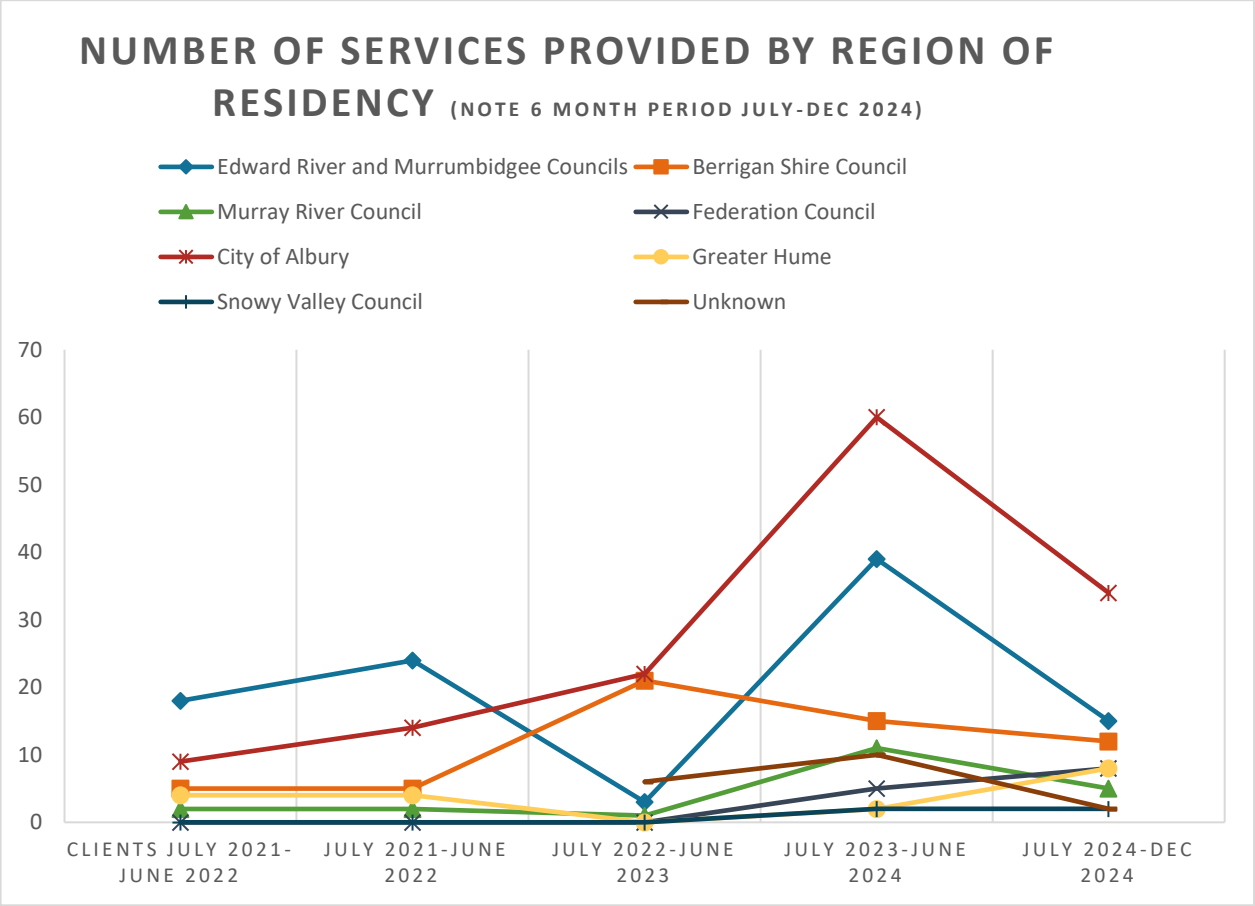


Figure 7: Services By Referral Source



As Figure 8 demonstrates, during the ONE Program, there has been a shift in the number of services provided by the region in which Women reside. Of particular note is the increase in women from the Edward River and Murrumbidgee areas, where Deniliquin and Finley are located.

Figure 8: Services By Region



Increased contacts and profile

When the program was developed, it was anticipated that many more women would attend Court. That is not the case. Though there have only been five referrals, THE ONE Program team have continued to attend court. They report that attendance strengthens and supports the partnership HRCLS has with WDVCAS in their role of supporting and advocating for victim survivors who have matters before the Court. The HRCLS team report that attendance has also created and strengthened relations with court staff across the region, local police, support services and the local police Domestic Violence Liaison Officers (DVLO's) who attend court. This promotes future referrals and relationships. Court attendance also allows the ONE team to actively engage with ~~and~~ local lawyers and better understand their practice areas and skills, making it easier for the ONE Program team to refer work locally. Given the low number of referrals from court, The ONE program team are open to alternative locations and modes of service delivery to increase referrals (see Table 4).

Table 4: Number of court attendances (to end December 2024)

Number Court Attendances	Actual matters Listed at Court	Referrals	Organisational Connections Made
20	369	5	3 Regional Courts 6 Local Organisations

Stories of change

It was evident through many conversations that HRCLS has been successful in reducing barriers to access for those needing legal support. The following example shows how the ONE Program team's ability to travel to the clients, and the ability to navigate complex legal territory, resulted in positive outcomes for the family.

Mary * not her real name

In 2024, HRLCS was contacted by Mary, a primary carer for her grandchildren. Mary contacted HRCLS for support with custody and access issues. Due to the father's known history of family violence and alcohol and other drug use, she had some concerns around the children's safety and wellbeing following the children's biological father's request for time with his children. She had previously sought help unsuccessfully.

"Everywhere we turned, there was no help available. And as lay people, we had no idea or comprehension of the legalities – we didn't know what to ask for."

The clients learned about the One Program through a personal referral and reached out for support. They initially had low expectations, based on previous unsuccessful attempts to access help.

"I thought this would just be a waste of time because everywhere else we'd turned there was no help available, but she (the lawyer) was just amazing. We were in a real state of flux and it was so comforting to have her support."

The One Program arranged to meet the couple locally as there were significant logistical and financial barriers to accessing help.

"They travelled to meet us and that let us go as a couple, because I was in no state to do it on my own. So we didn't have to travel, which would have been a big cost to us."

Though this was outside the ONE Program's core work, given the family's circumstances and the children's vulnerability, they picked up the case.

During the meeting, the lawyer provided guidance on how the legal process worked and explained the steps required to respond to the father's request for time.

She later drafted correspondence to the father's legal representative outlining the clients' concerns and position.

"The letter was amazing. And when there was no response, she explained that we would pause action. Now the boys are settling down and are doing well at school."

She also connected the family with support services that could assist with supervised visits and post-visit welfare checks for the children.

"Her knowledge of the system – things to be aware of, what we could ask for to make sure the children were safe... and her knowledge of the local area and the services available who could attend the visits, talk to the children afterwards and make sure they were safe."

Mary emphasised the value of a local service

"Living in country towns is great until you need some type of specialist service and can't get it... the accessibility is critical – it was all foreign to us – and without her support I don't know what would have happened."

"The service was invaluable, so comforting and we're really grateful for the support they gave us – when they didn't have to."

Barriers and Challenges

HRCLS initially anticipated that they would gain significant client engagement through attendance at court. This has not transpired with only five referrals up to December 2024. For a multitude of reasons, clients are often discouraged from presenting at court by the police officer in charge of the matter. Attendance is not compulsory and the Deniliquin and Corowa Courts are older buildings and challenging to modify to meet current needs. Although there are existing legal directives around ensuring safe spaces for victim survivors, this is unable to be enacted to ensure client's safety and security due to the physical constraints of the courthouse. For example, the court safe rooms are located where clients must walk through the building past perpetrators to access bathrooms.

The Road to Finley

There have also been some challenges regarding staff recruitment for the program. Given the nature of the roles, it was important to find the right staff, a challenge which is compounded in regional and rural areas. Staff turnover has also impacted the program. The initial community engagement worker and lawyer both started and left at different times. Having one role filled while the other was vacant created expertise and access issues; the engagement officer could not provide client advice or run legal education, limiting immediate advice options and the lawyer was unable to fulfil the networking role of the community engagement worker, which was required to grow the program. Another significant issues is the large amount of travel required to attend outlying destinations.

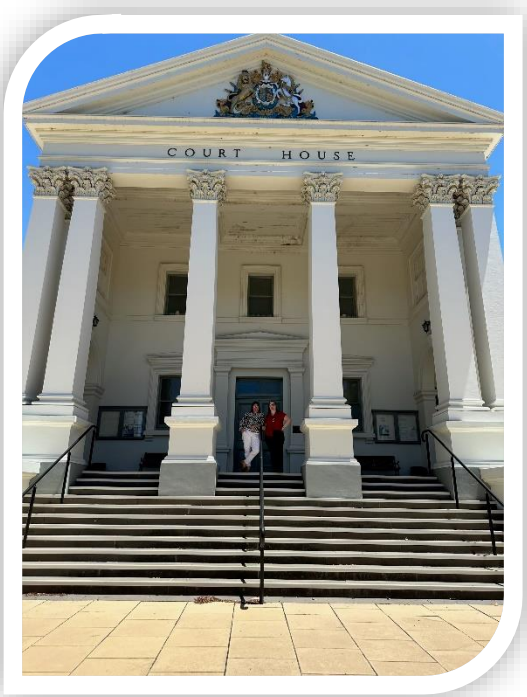
These challenges are relevant in the context of this evaluation, as it was expected (and has proven to be so) that the program would take some time to get traction with local services and clients, and the data shows that the level of access by the target group has increased over the program's operation.

Implications and recommendations

Though referral numbers remain smaller than anticipated, this must be contextualised. For example, in Deniliquin and surrounds, 66 referrals from a population of approximately 7000 (including Deniliquin and surrounds) of which approximately 3,000 are women aged 15 or over (ABS, 2021) comprises 2.5% of women in the area. While there are higher rates of family and domestic violence in regional areas, there are also acknowledged challenges to accessing support in regional areas, particularly geographical isolation, anonymity concerns, and lack of existing local services.

Upskilling local staff in areas such as legal health checks appears to have given community services confidence to identify any legal concerns and refer onwards to The ONE Program.

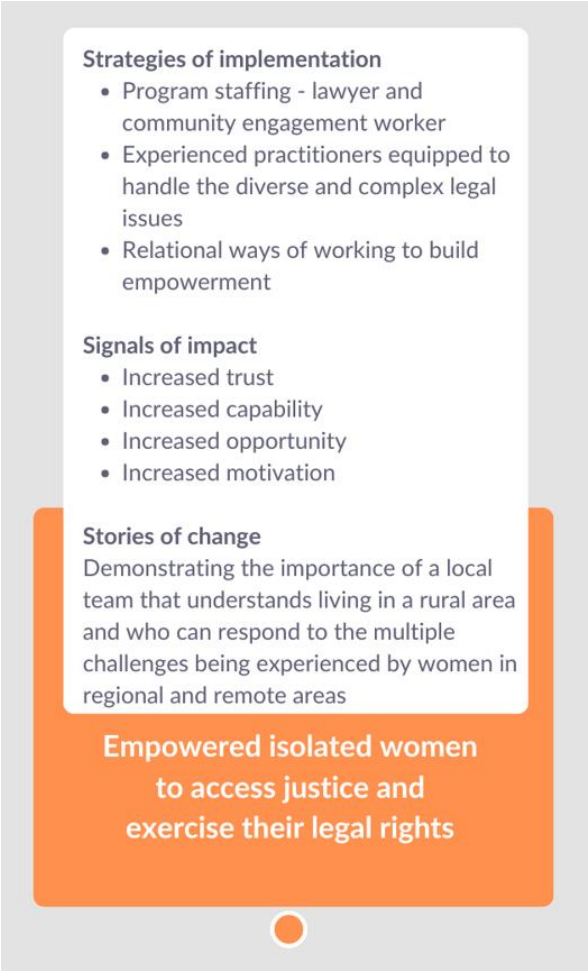
Attendance at court has been trialled for a significant period of time by the HRCLS team and though they report improved relations and awareness of the service, there is not direct evidence this has translated into increased client numbers. It is therefore timely to reconsider how engagement is designed and potentially trial engagement via alternate means. This might include identifying other potential avenues for client engagement as hypotheses and utilising an 'assumptions testing' roadmap to implement a structured 'test and learn' methodology to support rapid iteration of the engagement approach. For example, if it is assumed that ongoing attendance at court is critical, given that the relationships are now established, this could be trialled on a less frequent basis with clear avenues of communication identified and distributed for 'non attendance' sessions. It may be worthwhile considering additional online sessions, where victims survivors are supported by a community worker to attend appointments with The ONE Program staff.



Deniliquin Courthouse

The ONE Program is fulfilling an important role and has the potential to further improve and grow service delivery and coordination. It starts from humble beginnings, but it is important to remember this is a service for a population who did not previously have access to local services and works to create greater equity in the system.

How effectively has the ONE Program empowered isolated women to access justice and exercise their legal rights?



Strategies of implementation

Creating a dual staffing structure employing a legal practitioner and a community engagement worker

The ONE Program delivery model includes a dual staffing structure employing a legal practitioner and a community engagement worker. The community engagement worker leads on both client and stakeholder engagement, and as a conduit to support legal service provision tailored to individual needs.

The ONE Program is currently staffed by one full time Lawyer and a Community Engagement Worker whose role is part time (four days/week) on the ONE Program and part time as Cooperative Legal Service Delivery (CLSD) Coordinator for the Greater Albury region. The purpose of the CLSD partnership is to build and nurture a network of legal assistance and community services to increase access to justice and improve legal and social outcomes for people experiencing social or economic disadvantage or dislocation. These roles therefore have strong alignment of objectives and work well to complement one another. The two programs have shared events, with CLSD providing funding for events and the ONE Program the human resourcing. In some instances, it is therefore the collaborative nature of the work that has contributed to outcomes.

Experienced practitioners equipped to handle the diverse and complex legal issues

The wider legal team supporting the program consists of experienced practitioners equipped to handle the diverse and complex legal issues that frequently arise in these areas. These lawyers also play a critical role in supporting sector partners through secondary consultations, training sessions, and the implementation of tools such as Legal Health Checks. This ensures that frontline staff are empowered to identify legal needs early and make appropriate referrals.

'While I'm still struggling, I know that there'll be an end to it – I was expecting to have to deal with him for the rest of my life..... And [in future] I won't have to deal with him and my son won't be stuck in the middle.'

Client

Relational ways of working to build empowerment

There is evidence from other sectors such as health and social care and community development that relational ways of working build and support empowerment (Haigh, R., Benefield, N., 2023). One of the key themes that were identified through interviews was the importance of the way The ONE Program team engaged with clients.

Clients felt listened to and well supported by the team and could relate to them as, though not from their town, they lived locally.

'Because for those people like me who are hesitant to take the next step & need someone in their corner, the support has been beneficial and I'd like to see it help the next person.

Client

Signals of impact

Across all of the case studies, it was evident that the women were empowered and supported, made aware of pathways they had no knowledge of, or did not know how to access.

Qualitative data was gathered to support understanding of whether the ONE Program empowered women to access justice and exercise their legal rights.

Increased trust

Having a rural background increased trust with clients - ONE team members are not from immediate local communities in which they work. This has advantages in small towns where everyone is known to one another. The ONE team members lived locally enough that it was not felt they were 'outsiders' or people who had come in from the city to then leave.

'It felt like I wasn't fobbed off to people in the city who might not understand what it was like to live rurally. I had never heard of CLC before and my girlfriend told me about it and said they were amazing. Great, professional, local.

'Client

Increased capability

The ONE Program also supported the capability of clients, through working with them during and after court appearances; explaining the process, options available and potential outcomes which allowed victim survivors to make more informed decision for their future and the options available to them.

Clients noted that practitioners took the time to clearly explain processes to them and provide them with autonomy and choices to make their own decisions. The ONE team tailored their approach, meeting online, on the phone or in person, depending upon what best suited and when there were multiple issues, clients felt the team walked them through ~~them~~ and supported them.

'She would recommend a preferred option if I asked, but ultimately left the decisions to me and what I felt comfortable with'.

Client

'I felt like I can ask all the questions, and she explains it all to me – she told me to call or email and she'll respond. I don't feel like I'm sitting back, wondering and anxious anymore – I have stepped away from the merry-go-round / the roller coaster.'

Client

'This has helped me with understanding it all. They will walk me through "lawyer" terms in everyday terms and say 'these are your options – I'm not going to lie to you – this might be hard'.

Client

Increased opportunity

The ONE Program provided women with the opportunity to access justice. This was through providing these services in regional and rural areas that were otherwise not adequately serviced. More specifically, it deliberately brought services to locations where women were already attending, such as the Riverina Food Share - Finley. Through creating pathways to access for women who would not otherwise have accessed legal services, this allowed them an entry point.

Through working to build relationships and capability in local services such as Vinnies, this created greater awareness in service providers of both the ONE Program's offering and legal challenges women face. Referrals into the ONE Program as a result of this work increased women's opportunity to access legal support.

'Hume Legal have been her one stop shop through all the legal (still going). That's one that really stands out. She was so isolated so being able to bring the services into her worked really well - the face-to-face.'

Local Service Provider

Increased motivation

Many of the women interviewed were either unaware of their legal rights or daunted by the legal system and unsure how to access services. Trust in the ONE team shown by other support services and the warm referral process used to support women whilst referring them into the ONE Program helped to increase motivation to engage with and stay engaged with the ONE Program.

They also made them safer and more familiar, potentially enhancing client motivation to access services. Clients reported that they felt supported by the ONE team and how it worked collaboratively with other support services.

It's like you get a bear hug – one arm is the law and the other arm is the other pieces you need – food and supports – then it's one less thing, two less things, and you feel like 'you've got this'.

Client

Stories of change

This case study demonstrates the importance of having a local team that understands the challenges of living in a regional and remote area. It also demonstrates the multiple challenges being experienced by women in regional and remote areas and how a service such as the ONE Program was able to support and advise across these areas.

Elizabeth *not her real name

In early 2024, Elizabeth, who had experienced verbal and psychological abuse in her relationship was initially referred to Vinnies by WDVCAS following a police incident in early 2024. Elizabeth's case worker at Vinnies, whom she trusted, recommended and referred her to the ONE Program. Due to the distance and-Elizabeth's circumstances, early interactions were remote. Initial contact was via email, followed by a combination of phone and email communication. However, the ONE Program Lawyer travelled to meet Elizabeth on other occasions, such as for mediation. As the mediation in relation to parenting was ultimately unsuccessful, Elizabeth needed to consider the next step of initiating court proceedings.

Throughout the legal process, the ONE Program lawyer provided advice and assistance on several key issues including:

- **Recovery of property**: Assistance in lodging court documents to retrieve personal belongings from a co-owned property.
- **Parenting matters**: Guidance on children's arrangements, school-related issues, and medical needs.
- **Housing and financial challenges**: Elizabeth had been couch surfing after leaving the shared home and was navigating housing instability. She still co-owned the family home and found it difficult to pay the mortgage.
- **Property settlement:** It was important that Elizabeth's -financial arrangements with her ex partner were severed to enable her to move forward with independence.

Elizabeth reported that having a local legal support team was particularly beneficial. She felt the advice she received was grounded in an understanding of the regional context and more accessible than services based in metropolitan areas.

"It did make a big difference. I wasn't referred to someone in the city who might not understand what it's like to live rurally."

She was also reassured by the ONE Program lawyer's commitment and knowledge of the system:

"It made me feel a lot more positive that the person was active in the anti-domestic violence space, not just a lawyer-someone who had seen what goes on in the space against women and was active ensuring women were looked after, cared for, heard. So for me that was a really comforting feeling".

"It really helps you know the background of the people assisting you. Not only are they in the local area but you really know where they are coming from…these people are passionate about protecting and helping women. It was very comforting when it was so hectic and it helped make sense of so many pieces of the puzzle".

Elizabeth felt the legal advice she received was clear and practical. She consistently presented options and explained the consequences but ultimately supported Elizabeth to make her own decisions**.** The ONE Program lawyer was also responsive to emails and communicated consistently, which Elizabeth reported was different to previous contact with the legal system.

"She would say 'These are the options' and if I asked , she'd say' I'd recommend this but it's still up to you and your level of comfort".

Elizabeth also valued ONE Program lawyer's responsiveness and accessibility, particularly in contrast to other legal services she had encountered.

Barriers and Challenges

Though women may feel empowered to access justice, and further opportunities were created for women to access justice in locations they already attend and closer to home, the logistical barriers of distance remain. In order to complete face to face contacts, in some areas it is a six hour round trip for HRCLS staff. Internet and telephone service still remains inconsistent for some clients.

Data in this area was also a challenge (See Implications and Recommendations below). The elements of behaviour change: capability, opportunity and motivation, have been used as signals of increased empowerment for women in access to justice.

Implications and Recommendations

Once the client's contact with HRCLS concludes, as their legal issues are closed, HRCLS has limited ongoing contact. It is therefore difficult to measure longer term outcomes. When the program commenced, empowerment was not specifically measured as an outcome and further work is required to understand and identify what empowerment looks like, what supports empowerment and desired outcomes. Qualitative data from interviews was analysed to consider signals of empowerment, however in future program iterations, it is important to consider how this data can be collected.

How effective has the ONE Program been in improving the coordination and responsiveness of local services to the needs of isolated women (and their children) experiencing, or at risk of family and domestic violence?

Strategies of implementation

Acknowledging family and domestic violence as a social, health and legal problem and developing services accordingly

The ONE Program recognises that legal issues faced by women affected by family and domestic violence are multi-faceted. These frequently include, but are not limited to, family law parenting and property, Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders (ADVOs), victim survivor support and compensation, housing matters, infringements, consumer complaints, credit and debt issues, as well as concerns arising from mental health and disability.

Through education and capacity building, the ONE Program support partner agencies in recognising the breadth of legal implications associated with domestic violence and understanding the pathways to further support.

Legal assistance is embedded within a broader framework that seeks to recognise and address the full range of legal challenges women may face when experiencing domestic and family violence and support women across a breadth of legal issues they may face.

The ONE Program team and WDVCAS team at a networking event

Building on trusted local relationships

An essential component of the ONE Program is intensive networking, relationship building and partnership development—represented by the "N" in ONE. This was based on the recognition of the importance of understanding and responding to community-specific needs. The importance of ensuring services are tailored to be locally relevant was seen as critical. Long term, sustained relationship building with local organisations was designed to foster client trust and enable the delivery of accessible, consistent and trusted services.

Inherent in their strategy, was an acknowledgement that the team needed to build trust and relationships with service providers. The ONE Program was deliberate and structured in the way they approached engagement and relationship building. In order to build these relationships, they identified referral partners of varying tiers (see Figure 10 below). The ONE Program team identified a number of key relationships where they would focus and developed a tiered system to structure this engagement.

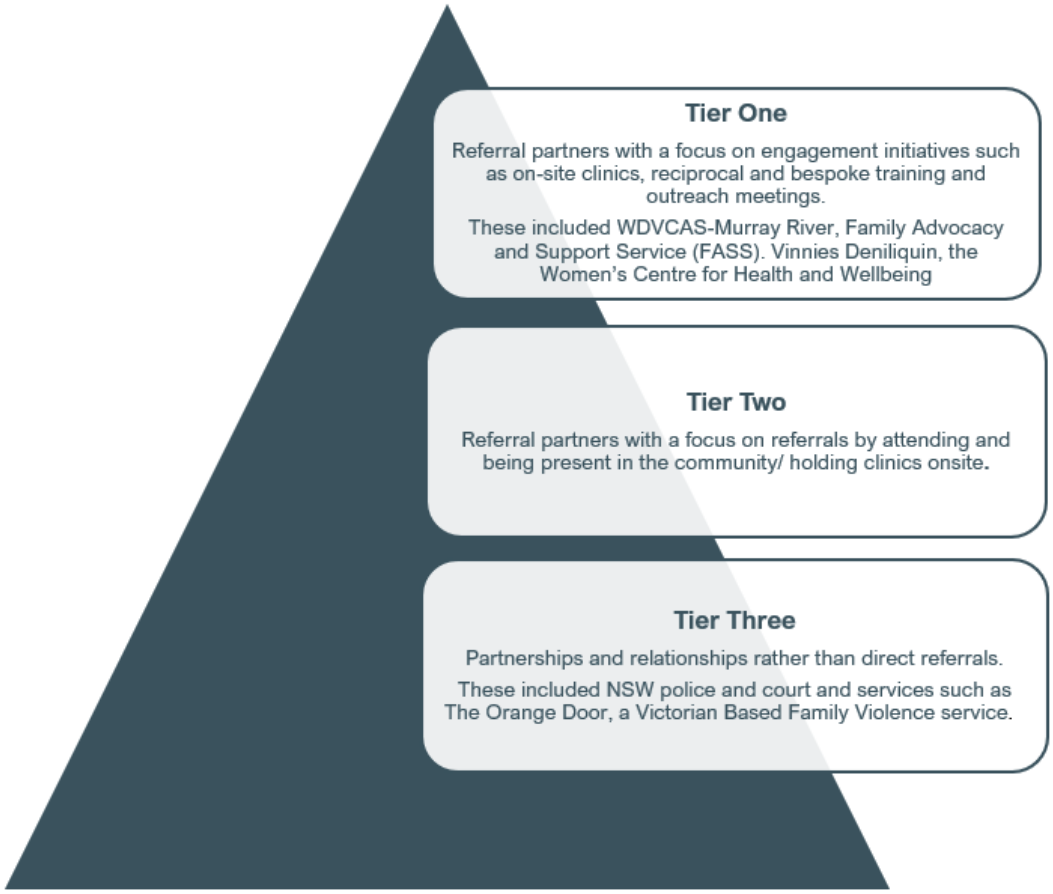


Figure 10: Referral Tiers

Integrating with place-based partners

The ONE Program was designed to integrate with place-based social service partners to provide holistic services on clients' terms and meeting them where they are at, as early in their journey as possible. The ONE Program sought to work collaboratively with partner agencies to reframe traditional service delivery models. This included working with service partners to design and deliver a new approach to reaching and supporting women who may not be currently engaging with traditional service delivery through available services.

Events run in collaboration with the CLSD role, such as 'speed dating' between services and the Law Week Breakfast have brought together and connected local services, creating greater awareness of the remit, skills and availability of service in the region.

Community Legal Education sessions

The ONE Program has worked to upskill local services in understanding and responding to legal needs. Community Legal Education sessions have been run by the ONE Program since 2022. Table 5 indicates the number of events run. No events were run in the first year due to funding and recruitment delays.

Table 5: Number of CLE (Community Legal Education) sessions run

Time Period	Number of Community Legal Education (CLE) sessions run	Number of participants	Number of events anticipated in funding proposal for 12 month period.
1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023	0	0	5
1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024	4	21	5
1 July 2024 to 31 December 2024 (note 6-month period only)	5	40	6

Signals of impact

The ONE Program's work has led to improved coordination and responsiveness. It has also enabled sustained behaviour change of local services.

From relationship building through to collaboration across services

An aspect of this program that was unique in delivery, and requires articulation is the significant amount of work by the ONE Program team to build relationships with service providers. This entailed not only meeting with them 1:1 and discussing the ONE Program, but attending community based events and professional development sessions.

Coffee and Cake 'Organisation Speed Dating' event

In 2023, the ONE Program staff attended 118 meetings and stakeholder engagement events with potential partners and 37 professional development events whilst working to establish the ONE Program and integrate it into the existing landscape.

As the ONE Program team developed relationships, such as that with Vinnies Deniliquin, this created a level of trust and informal communications that enhanced collaborative working. For example, Vinnies

Deniliquin articulated that they now refer everyone within reason, even just for advice if not going to court. This allows women to access legal advice, where previously it may not have been available to them.

Simple, streamlined referral process

The ONE Program has created a process where an email is sufficient to initiate the referral. Practitioners interviewed identified that this encourages them to refer and is less daunting for clients. Other legal services have lengthy referral forms that may be daunting for clients and referrers.

> ***'The referral process is so easy. I send an email. Before ONE I would hardly refer.'***
>
> **Local service provider**

> ***'I put referral through to [ONE team member] and she does her thing. She's our 'one stop shop' and I refer a lot more now too.'***
>
> **Local service provider, Deniliquin**

Improved coordination and earlier intervention

Organisations have also enacted processes that support improved coordination and earlier intervention. For example, WDVCAS now have at the forefront of mind during their intake process what appropriate referral would be best suited to HRCLS so that early intervention of legal issues can be explored with the client in a timely manner. Through inclusion on their client template, they also ensure they continue to check to see if clients require any further legal support. HRCLS and WDVCAS have further strengthened their relationship by co locating in office space 4 times a month. This has promoted the opportunity to further build relationships and understanding of the work each service does, resulting in better and more targeted referrals to one another and other support services. –

The ONE Program also referred out to many other programs and services, further supporting the coordination of services. They made referrals to programs and services including: Counselling services, family relationship services, other legal services (E.g. Legal aid and private practitioners), community support services, The Orange Door and WDVCAS. The number of referrals made appear to be increasing year on year.

Table 6: Number of referrals

Time Period	Number of simple referrals (i.e. non facilitated)	Number of facilitated referrals	Total
1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023	15	23	38
1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024	62	12	74
1 July 2024 to 31 December 2024 (note 6-month period only)	48	8	56 (note: if referral rate continues for next 6 months, project 112)

Collaborative events within the community

The Community Engagement Worker's ability to engage and connect with both service providers and clients was flagged as an enabler on multiple occasions. Similarly, her commitment to running events to get people together and ensure they connect was also highlighted by many service providers. There were a number of community events that have been a shared endeavour between CLSD and ONE Program, with CLSD providing resources and ONE Program team staffing the event. This included activities such as the Deniliquin Birth Certificate Event, where birth certificates were arranged for 37 people who had previously been unable to obtain one. Three successful Birth Certificate Events have been held, two at Deniliquin and one at Yarkuwa Aboriginal Centre.

There are many barriers to accessing justice and the ONE Program is really supporting the community relations piece.

Local service provider

The Community Engagement Worker is the key builder of relationships with orgs and women.

Local Service Provider

Upskilled local services

The ONE Program's focus on upskilling local services in processes such as Legal Health Checks has enabled practitioners to screen for any concerns and support their clients to gain legal advice. This has meant that when women accessed services such as Vinnie's, team members were immediately considering their legal needs, along with social and practical supports.

'Last year we used [ONE Program team] to run training programs….This has been great for our team to hear about client rights… There is training 5-6 times/year and always offered. Really good training. When the law changed for coercive control, realistic and practical training-what would the lawyer need?'

WDVCAS

Engagement of local police and Domestic Violence Liaison Officers (DVLOs)

One area where the ONE Program has had influence is engagement of local police and Domestic Violence Liaison Officers (DVLOs). This has been variable across the target areas and has been impacted upon by factors such as;

- Mindset and culture around Family Violence and its occurrence
- Relationships within a small town where perpetrators and police are known to one another socially
- Employment challenges

Some positive changes have been noted, such as attendance of DVLOs in court and warm referral of women to the ONE Program through the DVLOs in the courtroom.

'I recommend keeping the program because it has been beneficial for people like me who are hesitant to take the next step and need someone in their corner. The support from the lawyer has been invaluable, and I hope it can help others in the future. '

The ONE Program client

Stories of change

This case study demonstrates the importance of engaging with the local community and bringing services to locations where women and children attend in their day to day lives. Through attending Riverina Food Share based in Finley regularly and building relations with the team, the ONE Program is now engaged with and receiving referrals for women in Finley and surrounds.

Riverina Food Share - Finley

Riverina Food Share - Working with community to support women

Riverina Food Share is part of the Moira Foodshare network and is located in Finley, NSW, a small town of approximately 2,400 people located in Berrigan Shire. The Food Share opens its doors on Thursday mornings from 10.30-11.30am and estimates it provides around 150 food packages/week. It is staffed by Katie Ngatokoa, Manager, and a number of volunteers.

When the Community Engagement Worker in the ONE Program was considering how best to reach women and children in the community, she approached the manager of Riverina Food Share about regularly attending.

Working together, they have developed a model where the ONE Program team members attend monthly. They have gradually built trust with volunteers through attending their weekly coffee sessions before the doors open and supporting community members and volunteers with tasks such as bringing packages to and from cars and selecting groceries from the shelves and being another friendly face for those that come through the door to interact with.

The manager of Riverina Food Share has recently commenced as a Councillor for Berrigan Shire and noted that her experience managing the service has been eye-opening.

"I thought of it [family violence] as not something that happens in Finley. CLS have certainly filled a gap I didn't realise was there"

Katie Ngatokoa-Manager, Riverina Food Share

Riverina Food Share credits the informal approach and regular attendance with supporting the referral process. The familiarity and low-pressure engagement approach have helped build trust among attendees. People know and recognise them and, if they are not comfortable approaching initially, they know they will be there next time.

"It's more endearing people to speak up because it's not the first time they've seen them. And that pressure of 'I have to do it now' is taken off because they will be back next month".

Katie Ngatokoa-Manager, Riverina Food Share

While other organisations refer clients to Food Share, such as employment services like APM, the HRCLS is currently the only external service providing regular face-to-face engagement on-site.

"Face to face plays a big part. There are people who don't understand or don't have access to technology..... so actually having someone here takes out the admin side of things and brings that personal touch back in"

Katie Ngatokoa-Manager, Riverina Food Share

This case study demonstrates the importance of understanding the client and local context and collaborating with local services to wrap around a client. It also demonstrates the value of services in more remote areas.

Lisa *not her real name

Lisa relocated to NSW to escape domestic violence. After leaving, her abuser continued to contact her and she contacted WDVCAS seeking assistance. WDVCAS referred her to The ONE Program.

"I called WDVCAS crying my eyes out and they said *"we know the perfect girls for you and we wouldn't send you there if we didn't trust them. Less than 24 hours later I was talking with* *[ONE team member]"*.

Lisa identifies the importance of the ONE Program's coordinated approach, suggesting she go to a foodshare site to source food to address one of her immediate needs.

"I can't tell you how many things** [ONE team member] **has done, beyond the law .. my husband wasn't paying child support and when I talked to her, she told me to go to Food Share. I went to xx Food Share and [Community Engagement Worker] hugs me. These are the most incredible people".

The compassionate, honest approach is also valued.

It has helped with understanding it all ...will walk me through "lawyer" terms in everyday terms and says "these are your options. I'm not going to lie to you. This might be hard".

If I email – she will call straight back ... if I'm struggling, she will explain it from the legal aspect and if I'm heightened remind me to link in with services.

She's understanding and supporting. We met in person to swear and sign paperwork. When she books in time to meet in person and without me asking she says 'you'll be back in time for picking up the kids".

Lisa's experience with other services had been challenging due to geographical constraints, however she has not experienced this through the ONE Program

"The [Agency] said its too hard, too far – it's not like that with** [ONE team member] **- this was the first time I was not knocked back".

Lisa has remained connected with WDVCAS and is also supported by FASS, who advocate on her behalf.

'These girls are one of the reasons that I've stayed away. This is the third time I've fled and it's the longest – because they've been there, they tell me "you're not crazy, it's written here, and look how far you've come" I don't know how to thank them.'

Barriers and Challenges

As the program has progressed, despite strong relationships with existing community service providers, client referrals and the number of clients accessing services were not representative of rate of family violence in the region.

This required the ONE team to reconsider who they engaged with and where they were located, resulting in adaptations to program design. This was further compounded by slower than anticipated establishment of relationships with local service providers.

HRCLS staff referenced the importance of having early conversations with other legal service providers to outline the nature of services to be provided and how the ONE Program would compliment existing services. Any questions were overcome with conversations, time and building of trust.

Implications and recommendations

The One Program's approach of developing a service that does not only look at legal challenges in isolation, but also considers the health and social context has proven critical. So too has building on trusted local relationships and integrating with and upskilling placed-based partners. This strategy has supported establishment of referral pathways and collaboration between services in place.

As the program evolves, it may be worthwhile to consider further adaptations in the place-based delivery model, including additional opportunities for collaboration and partnership. For example, in the health sector, Maternal and Child Health nurses and community nurses often support specialist medical consultations in remote and telehealth settings. Enhancing the model through additional service partnering might help to strengthen ongoing relationships with existing clients.

CONCLUSION

The ONE program utilised multiple 'strategies of implementation' that supported the overarching program outcomes including:

- Acknowledgement and consideration of the social, environmental and health constraints surrounding Family and Domestic Violence in a regional context
- Provision of outreach services
- Targeted engagement
- Going to where the community are
- Staff who act as an enabler and ensuring skilled practitioners
- Predictable and consistent attendance
- A dual staffing structure encompassing community engagement and legal practitioner
- Relational ways of working
- Building on trusted relationships
- Integrating with place based partners
- supporting partners through education sessions.

This approach led to promising signals of impact around:

- Increased client access
- Increased referrals
- Increased trust, capability, opportunity and motivation for clients

- Collaboration across services
- Streamlined and facilitated referral processes
- Upskilled local services
- Engagement of local police and DVLOs

It is important that these strategies of implementation inform the design considerations for future program delivery. Challenges around engagement of services as partners, optimal locations of services, recruitment of team members and travel required should also inform future program design.

In order to continue to develop and improve this project, it is recommended that various methods of program delivery are 'tested and trialled' utilising an assumptions testing roadmap. The program has a number of critical assumptions embedded in it design. Many of these assumptions have proven true, for example – initial face-to-face contact is important. However, the delivery aspect of this can still be further refined. For example, face-to-face contact may happen in different locations or frequencies depending on the need and context.

To better understand which aspects of the program are working and understand in greater depth the outcomes of the programs for services and participants, data collection should also be adjusted. This includes gathering additional data around:

- Numbers and types of engagements (e.g. face to face, telephone, with a community organisation present) required in order to engage clients
- Both qualitative and quantitative outcomes for participants

A number of future directions for further exploration were also identified through interviews and data collection:

- Given program funding was delayed by twelve months and there have been a number of staff vacancies in The ONE Program service delivery, continuation of the existing program utilising a 'test and trial' approach would support The ONE program to build upon its foundations
- There has been a sharp increase in the number of ADVOs in the Moama. After working extensively with the ONE Program team, WDVCAS has highlighted the need for a service similar to The ONE Program in the Southern Riverina of NSW. There is scope to work in collaboration with WDVCAS and tailor new services to the local place and population.
- As highlighted in the report, the importance of being 'present' consistently and working in a relational way were both identified and reinforced by both service providers and clients. Multiple interviewees have flagged an unmet need for this service approach in the Albury Local Court. This requires further exploration in the context of existing local service delivery and whether it involves additional resourcing or consideration of ways of working.
- One of the potential future directions discussed by the ONE Program team is to become further embedded in the local system as part of the duty roster. Team members identified some potential disadvantages of this approach, in particular time constraints and the risk of being drawn away from the core intention of the one program. Given this may create resourcing and workload issues , it needs to be considered by HRCLS in greater detail.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Events and CLE offered as part of the ONE program

The ONE Program has delivered the following Professional Development Sessions

DATE	PARTICIPATING ORGANISATION	SESSION CONTENT
3.5.2023	WDVCAS	Family Law and Parenting Community Legal Education ("CLE")
18.5.2023	CLE - sponsored by NELA, ADLS, CLSD, Guest speaker Sally McLaughlin - Magistrate. Gaye Pattison MC. Attendees included: Intereach, AWAHS, Gateway Health, The Women's Centre for Health and Wellbeing, WDVCAS along with Solicitors, Govt agencies - Networking and education opportunity	Women In Law Breakfast Event
23.5.2023	HRCLS, NSW Legal Aid, Intereach, - Deniliquin	Free Birth Certificate & Legal Health Check ("LHC") Day Deniliquin
19.10.2023	HRCLS WDVCAS	Corowa Community Expo - Stall
20.9.2023	WDVCAS	Bite Size Law - Introduction to Child Protection CLE
23.10.2023	WDVCAS, YES Unlimited, Albury Police, Service NSW, Zonta Albury	Cut It Out Forum - Albury.
15.11.2023	HRCLS , NSW Legal Aid Greater Albury CLSD, AWAHS	AWAHS Birth Certificate Event
24.3.2024	Federation Council Ageing Well Festival	Staying Sharp Presentation – Scams and Elder Abuse CLE
26.3.2024	One Door Mental Health	LHC CLE
10.4.2024	FASS / WDVCAS	Responding to Affidavits CLE

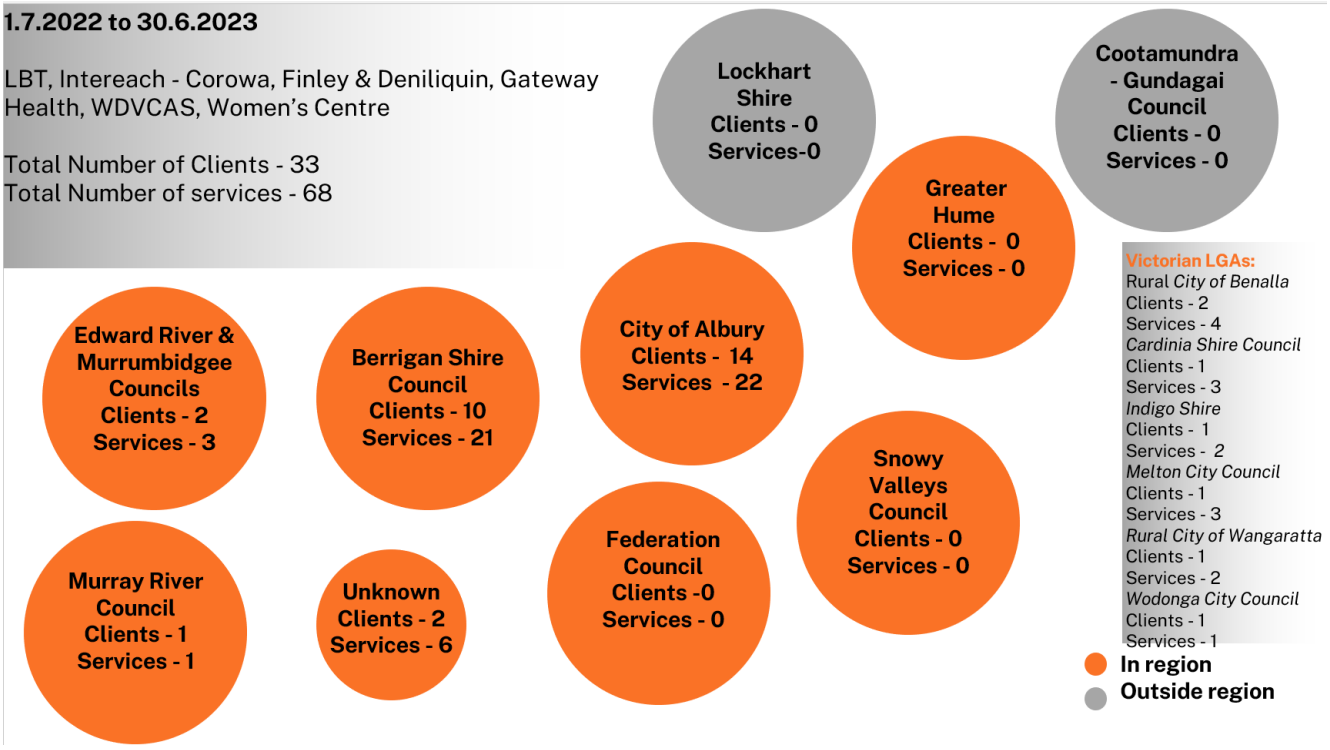
17.4.2025	WDVCAS	New Family Law legislation CLE
22.5.2024	WDVCAS	LHC – all staff - CLE
26.6.2024	WDVCAS	Victim Impact Statements NSW & Vic CLE
13.8.2024	Vinnies - Deniliquin	Victim Impact Statements – NSW CLE and Resource
4.12.2025	Murrumbidgee LHD – Deniliquin Hospital - Mental Health Practitioners	LHC CLE
4.12.2025	Intereach, Vinnies, NSW LA, Murrumbidgee LHD, Services NSW, Services Aust , NSW Police, VERTO, WDVCAS, FASS,	Birth certificate Event, Planning Ahead CLE, Expo, Coffee and Cake Services Date
10.12.2024	Vinnies – Deniliquin	ADVOs and the Court process – NSW and Vic CLE
16.3.2025	Time of Your Life – Seniors Expo	Staying Sharp Presentation – Scams and Elder Abuse CLE & Stall
15.4.2025	Intereach Deniliquin	LHC CLE
5.5.2025	Intereach Hay	LHC CLE – One on One
7.5.2025	Multicultural Support Expo – Finley	Stall
14.5.2025	WDVCAS	Juries CLE

Appendix 2: Community organisations The ONE Program has engaged and collaborated with

Community organisations that The ONE Program has engaged and collaborated with include:

- Intereach-across the region
- One Door Mental Health
- Vinnies Deniliquin
- Murray River WDVCAS Women's Legal Service
- Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre
- Albury Local & District Court Deniliquin Court
- NSW Police – with significant engagement with DVLO in Deniliquin, Finley, Albury,
- YES Unlimited
- Riverina Foodshare - Finley
- Murrumbidgee Local Health District
- Verto
- The Orange Door
- Magistrates Court of Victoria
- Border Domestic Violence Network
- Southern Riverina Wellbeing Committee
- Yarra Mul Community Network
- Berrigan and Jerilderie Community Network
- Federation and Surrounds Interagency Network

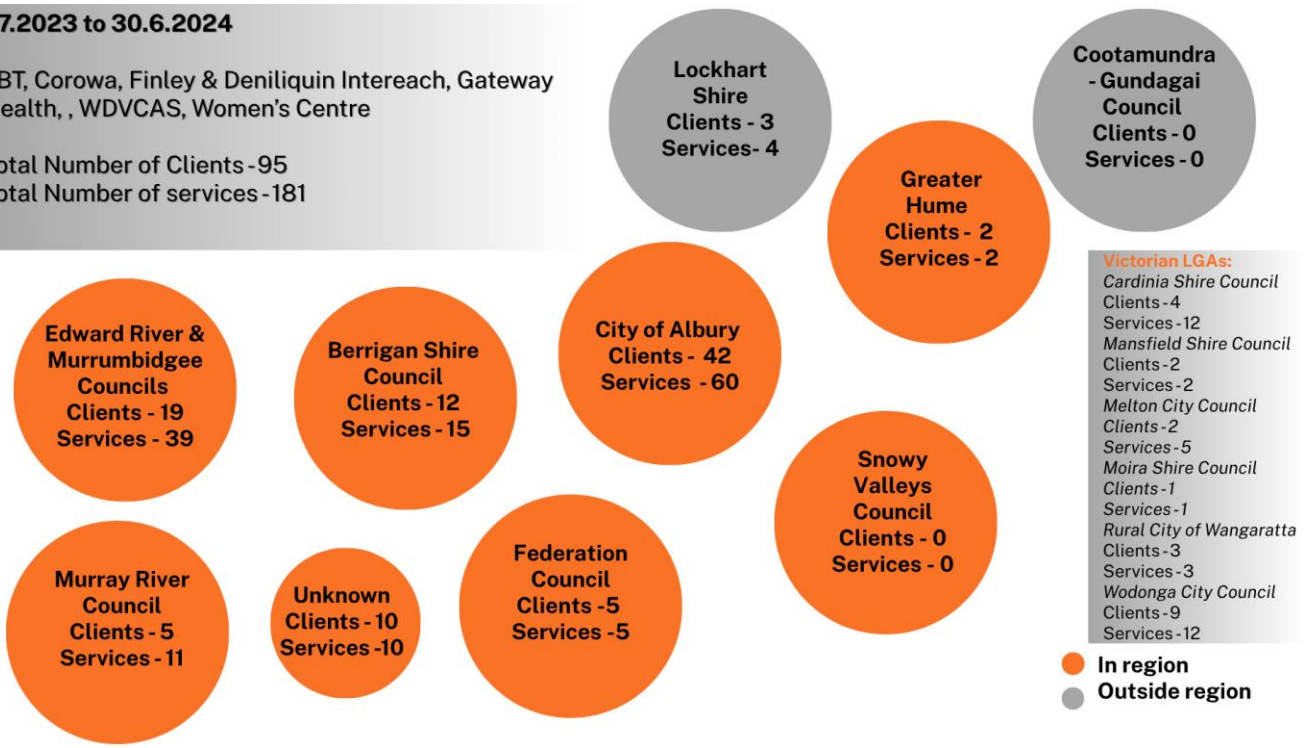
Appendix Detailed: Breakdown of Clients By LGA by year



1.7.2023 to 30.6.2024

LBT, Corowa, Finley & Deniliquin Intereach, Gateway Health, , WDVCAS, Women's Centre

Total Number of Clients - 95
Total Number of services - 181



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