

Therapeutic Justice Project

Final Evaluation

01 June 2018

The Therapeutic Justice Project is an initiative of the Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre (a program of ARC Justice) with funding support from the Victorian Legal Services Board.



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Acronyms

AOD	Alcohol and Drugs
CCO	Community Corrections Order
CISP	Court Integrated Services Program
CP	Child Protection
CSV	Correction Services Victoria
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
GVCLC	Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre
GVLA	Goulburn Valley Law Association
IVO	Intervention Order
PCC	Primary Care Connect
SMC	Shepparton Magistrates' Court
TJ Case Manager	PCC Case Manager employed on Therapeutic Justice Project
TJ Lawyer	GVCLC Lawyer employed on Therapeutic Justice Project
TJP	Therapeutic Justice Project
VLA	Victorian Legal Aid

Executive Summary

In 2015, the Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre (GVCLC) received funding from the Victorian Legal Services Board to pilot a therapeutic justice service in Shepparton, Victoria. The Therapeutic Justice Project (TJP) was a Health-Justice Partnership (HJP) between GVCLC and Primary Care Connect (PCC), a Shepparton-based community health organisation. Unlike traditional HJPs that place a lawyer in a health setting, the TJP positioned an allied health/social worker in a legal setting, at Shepparton Magistrates' Court. By doing so, TJP aimed to extend holistic support and integrated case management to people with criminal matters and related health and social needs.

The TJP was designed to respond to the need for more holistic, coordinated and therapeutic service for clients with complex legal, health and social needs at Shepparton Magistrates' Court. Prior to the TJP, there were no coordinated therapeutic programs at Shepparton Magistrates Court to assist clients with criminal matters and interrelated health and social issues. In particular, there was an identified need to engage offenders who were not already engaged with services, and who were mandated by Correctional Services to do so.

Grounded in therapeutic jurisprudence, the broad aims of the TJP were to:

- Encourage Courts to take into account the issues underlying a person's offending;
- Assist offenders with their underlying issues at an earlier stage, to reduce the likelihood of these individuals becoming repeat or high-risk offenders;
- Encourage offenders to engage with services on a long-term basis; and
- Demonstrate that effective social interventions and supports could reduce the likelihood of a person re-offending.

A final evaluation of the TJP was conducted between April and June 2018 by ARC Justice on behalf of the GVCLC, through a small grant provided by the Victorian Legal Services Board. The final evaluation aimed to:

- Assess the outcomes of the TJP in relation to established objectives;
- Identify the factors contributing to the project's achievements; and
- Support evidence-based learning around therapeutic models of practice.

A mixed-methods approach was used to gather both quantitative and qualitative data on project outcomes. Evaluation methods included a review of project documents, stakeholder survey, key informant interviews, and client case studies.

The evaluation found that the TJP met, and in many cases exceeded, its key performance targets and intended outcomes. Feedback from stakeholders participating in the final evaluation was overwhelmingly positive and highlighted the critical role that the TJP played in improving services coordination and enabling more therapeutic responses to clients with complex needs at Shepparton Magistrates' Court. A vast majority of stakeholders considered the TJP to have made a "significant" or "essential" contribution to processes and outcomes leading to improved client wellbeing and access to and coordination of therapeutic services.

The evaluation found that:

1. The innovative HJP model adopted by the TJP improved referral pathways for health and social services at Shepparton Magistrates Court, and for legal assistance at Primary Care Connect,

increasing access to therapeutic services and early intervention support for clients with criminal matters and complex health and social needs.

2. Community Legal Education increased individual knowledge and capacity to identify the interrelated legal, health and social needs of clients, while coordination mechanism established through the TJP increased collective capacity for improved referrals, case planning and coordination.
3. The TJ Case Manager and TJ Lawyer played a critical “conduit” role, providing warm referrals and a transferral of trust to support services for clients with complex needs, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of referral processes and client engagement with support services.
4. The TJP established effective mechanisms for improved collaboration and coordination between services, breaking down silos, and enabling information, knowledge and capacity to be shared between services, with the TJ Case Manager playing a critical facilitation role.
5. By working collaboratively and building trusted relationships with services, the TJ Lawyer and TJ Case Worker were effective role models and contributed to inter-disciplinary knowledge, understanding and respect between legal, health and justice sector actors.
6. The TJP increased understanding of therapeutic justice principles and approaches and had a positive impact on the enabling environment for therapeutic justice at Shepparton Magistrates’ Court.
7. The TJP had an overwhelmingly positive impact on clients, contributing not only to improved legal and health outcomes for clients, but to their faith in and willingness to engage with support services on an ongoing basis.
8. The TJP demonstrated an effective and efficient model for increasing therapeutic support for clients with complex needs, and improving client outcomes, with potential to reduce recidivism.
9. The TJP relied heavily on relationships and processes established by the TJ Case Manager and TJ Lawyer, who played an essential facilitation role for improved referral pathways and services coordination, which may pose a risk to the long-term sustainability of project outcomes.
10. The TJP’s flexible intake criteria and capacity for early intervention are unique features of this service model which could complement or add value to other therapeutic programs such as CISP.

Evaluation results and findings presented in this report highlight the significant achievements of the TJP and its impact on access to therapeutic services and improved legal, health and wellbeing outcomes for clients with complex needs at Shepparton Magistrates Court.

Key learnings from this evaluation are of particular relevance to Community Legal Centres, community health providers, and Court Services Victoria, who are designing and implementing therapeutic justice programs and services. In particular, findings from this evaluation can usefully inform the roll-out of the CISP Program in regional Courts.

1. Introduction



“The law often intersects with people’s lives without a full knowledge of how its practices and sentences affect their overall well-being. Therapeutic justice takes a more holistic approach. It ensures that relevant information about underlying issues such as mental health, intellectual impairment, homelessness and substance abuse are put before the Court. Sentence dispositions can then be put in place that promote the offender’s engagement with appropriate health services for the long-term benefit of both the offender and the broader community. If the underlying issues that led to offending aren’t dealt with, it’s obvious that further offending will follow.”¹

In 2015, the Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre (GVCLC) received funding from the Victorian Legal Services Board to pilot a therapeutic justice service in Shepparton, Victoria. The Therapeutic Justice Project (TJP) was a Health-Justice Partnership (HJP) between GVCLC and Primary Care Connect (PCC), a Shepparton-based community health organisation. Unlike traditional HJPs that place a lawyer in a health setting, the TJP positioned an allied health/social worker in a legal setting, at Shepparton Magistrates’ Court. By doing so, TJP aimed to extend holistic support and integrated case management to people with criminal matters and related health and social needs.

Health Justice Partnerships

In Australia, one in five people will experience three or more legal issues in a given year.² Research suggests that only 12% of people with legal issues seek assistance from a lawyer.³ Vulnerable individuals in the community, including those with complex social and health issues, are particularly difficult for legal services to reach. In recent years, an increasing number of legal and health organisations in Australia have established Health-Justice Partnerships (HJP), also known as Medical Legal Partnerships (MLP). HJPs build on the trust that health professionals establish with their clients to identify legal issues, promote early intervention, and strengthen supports for individuals with complex legal and health needs. Traditionally, HJPs place a lawyer in a healthcare team, to build the capacity of health professionals to spot legal problems and to make sure that legal advice and assistance is readily accessible to clients. Working together with lawyers, health professionals can also address the social and health problems that arise from, contribute to, or are perpetuated by legal issues.

Grounded in therapeutic jurisprudence, the broad aims of the TJP were to:

- Encourage Courts to take into account the issues underlying a person’s offending;
- Assist offenders with their underlying issues at an earlier stage, to reduce the likelihood of these individuals becoming repeat or high-risk offenders;
- Encourage offenders to engage with services on a long-term basis; and
- Demonstrate that effective social interventions and supports could reduce the likelihood of a person re-offending.

Therapeutic Justice

Therapeutic Jurisprudence describes an approach to law that sees legal processes as having an impact on the physical and psychological wellbeing of the participants.⁴ *“A lawyer taking a therapeutic jurisprudence approach views the client holistically, instead of merely in terms of the facts of the case, the applicable law and*

¹ Gurney, K., 2015, “Therapeutic Justice Project”, *Press Release*, Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre.

² Health Justice Australia, “What is a Health Justice Partnership”, <https://www.healthjustice.org.au/hjp>, accessed 15 April 2018.

³ Clarke, S and Forell, S., 2007, “Pathways to Justice: the role of non-legal services”, *Justice Issues*, Paper 1: June 2007.

⁴ International Network on Therapeutic Jurisprudence, as cited in King, M., 2003, “Applying therapeutic jurisprudence from the Bench: Challenges and opportunities”, *Alternative Law Journal*, 28(4):172-175.

*the possible legal outcomes. The client's best interest is therefore widely construed, encompassing health, economic, vocational, familial, social and, for some, spiritual domains. Before or while pursuing a particular legal outcome, the client may need to address emotional and other psychological issues".*⁵ The concept of Therapeutic Jurisprudence saw the pioneering of problem-solving Courts in Victoria from 2005, with Shepparton in the Goulburn Valley becoming the location for the first Koori Court in Victoria and subsequently introducing a part-time Mental Health Court Liaison Service. In 2006 the Department of Justice and the Magistrates' Court of Victoria established the Court Integrated Services Program (CISP) providing accused persons with access to support services to reduce rates of re-offending and promote community safety. CISP provides accused persons with assistance to address health and social needs prior to sentencing and individualised case management, and aims to address the factors that contribute to offending behaviour and facilitate access to treatment and community support services.⁶ When the TJP commenced in 2015, CISP was not available in the Goulburn Valley region, despite clear need address offending where alcohol, drugs, intellectual disabilities, mental health, financial distress and housing issues were dominant factors.

Three outcome areas were identified in the project proposal:

1. **Clear referral pathways** from both health staff at Primary Care Connect and the Shepparton Magistrates Court for intensive assessment and support for target clientele, specifically those with multiple and complex health needs including among others, alcohol and other drug addictions and mental impairment.
2. **Integration of legal and health services** through the delivery of legal services by GVCLC in partnership with Primary Care Connect services in Shepparton. This will drive mutual learning opportunities on interrelated subject matters for legal and health staff. Greater collaboration between all stakeholders will improve client engagement and maximise the opportunity for fair and effective legal outcomes.
3. **Improved health and welfare outcomes** for target clientele including measures of resilience, wellbeing and engagement with support services, leading to decreased contact with the criminal law system.

While the TJP assisted people with a range of legal issues, the project's target clients were those with criminal law matters and underlying health or social issues. The project employed a specialist lawyer (TJ Lawyer) and allied health case manager (TJ Case Manager) to work at Shepparton Magistrates' Court three days per week, and from Primary Care Connect two days per week. The TJ Lawyer assisted clients with legal information, advice and representation at Court, and provided secondary consultations and legal education to workers at Primary Care Connect and local health and social services. The TJ Case Manager connected clients to appropriate support services, including health, social and cultural supports, facilitated coordination of and information sharing between these services, and monitored clients' progress.

TJP clients were supported to engage in a two-phase process designed to address their underlying needs, deal with their legal matters more effectively, and reduce the risk of re-offending. This process is described below:

Phase 1 – Resolve: The TJ Case Manager held resolve meetings with the TJP client, the TJ Lawyer or other legal representative, and relevant support workers assisting the client. During this meeting, the client was supported to identify and discuss any health or social issues they were experiencing, and to

⁵ King, M, 2008, "Restorative Justice, Therapeutic Jurisprudence, and the Rise of Emotionally Intelligent Justice", *Melbourne University Law Review*, 23:1122.

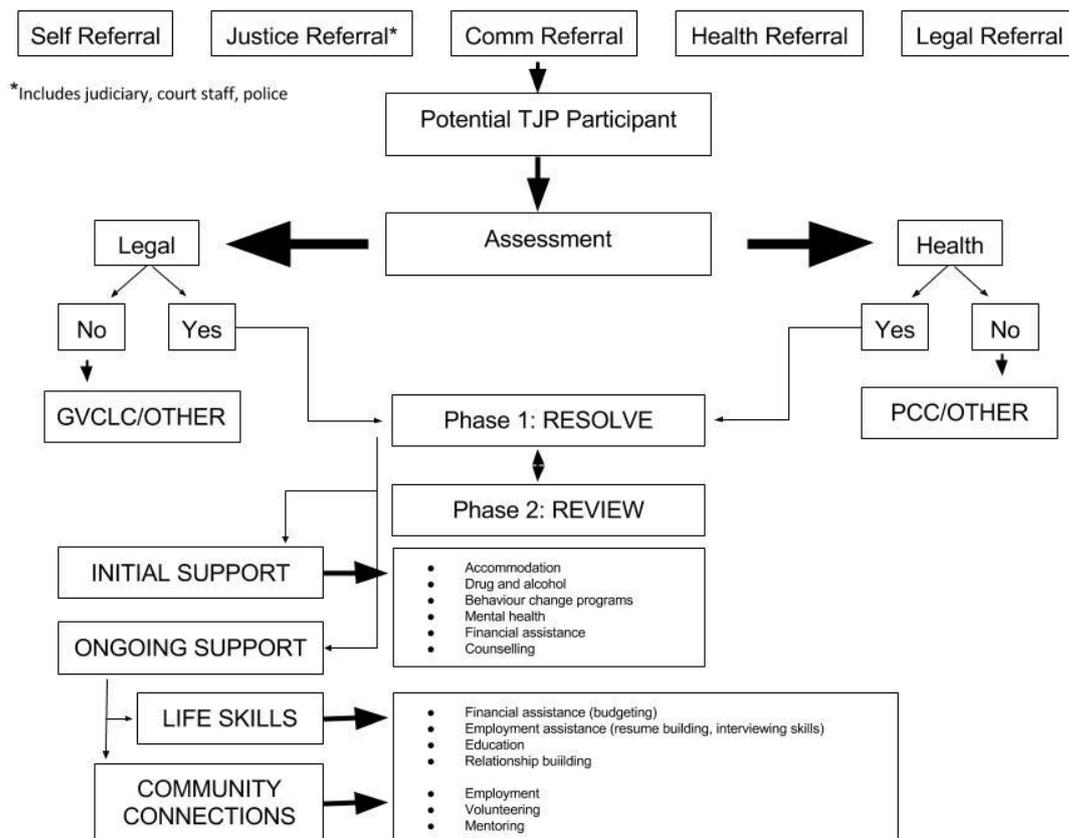
⁶ Magistrates' Court of Victoria, "Court Integrated Services Program (CISP)", <https://www.magistratesCourt.vic.gov.au/Court-support-services/Court-integrated-services-program-cisp>, accessed 30 April 2018.

develop a plan to address these issues. This “Resolve Plan” was then shared with the Magistrate to demonstrate the client’s commitment to addressing their underlying issues.

Phase 2 – Review: Review meetings were held on an as-needs basis, facilitated by the TJ Case Manager with relevant health and social professionals to review the progress of a TJP client and determine which aspects of their resolve plan are on track and where issues or barriers have emerged. If changes were made to a resolve plan, this was then discussed with the client and their agreement sought.

This process is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: TJP Intake, Assessment and Review Process



This report presents summative findings from the final evaluation of the TJP. The final evaluation was conducted between April and June 2018 by ARC Justice on behalf of the Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre, through a small grant provided by the Victorian Legal Services Board.

Within the scope of a modest evaluation budget, the final evaluation aimed to:

- 1) Assess the outcomes of the TJP in relation to established objectives;
- 2) Identify the factors contributing to the project’s achievements; and
- 3) Support evidence-based learning around therapeutic models of practice.

2. Methodology

2.1 Evaluation Design and Scope

The final evaluation was informed by principles of summative evaluation, with a focus on outcome measurement to identify the project's achievements against pre-defined outcomes and key performance indicators.

The evaluation focused on the three outcome areas identified in the original TJP project proposal and subsequent annual project plans:

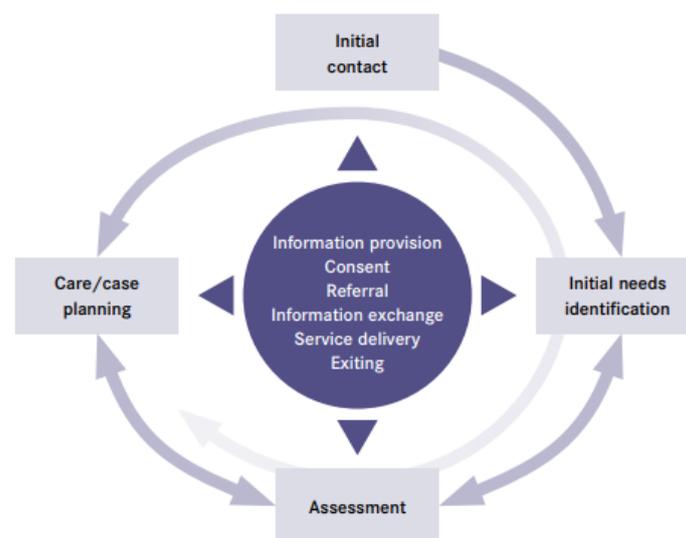
- 1) Clear referral pathways;
- 2) Service integration and coordination; and
- 3) Client health and wellbeing outcomes.

The evaluation design was structured around a set of “proxy measures” developed by Dr. Liz Curran for the evaluation of Health-Justice Partnerships (HJPs). Through Dr. Curran's research, the following proxy measures have been identified as critical features of HJPs, having a positive influence on the social determinants of health⁷:

- Capacity,
- Engagement,
- Collaboration,
- Empowerment, and
- Improved Advocacy.

The evaluation design was also informed by *VicHealth Service Coordination Framework*, which was used to identify factors that, if present, could be considered indicators of improved referral pathways, service integration and coordination. This framework is summarised in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: *VicHealth Service Coordination Framework (2012)*



⁷ Ball, S., Wong, C., and Curran, L., 2016, “Health Justice Partnership Development Report 2016”, Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner, http://www.lsbvc.vic.gov.au/documents/Report-Health_Justice_Partnership_Development-2016.PDF.

A summary of the evaluation framework, including key evaluation questions, indicators and tools is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: TJP Final Evaluation Framework

Domain	Evaluation Questions	Relevant Indicators	Tools
Capacity	How and to what extent did the TJP break down barriers and increase interdisciplinary knowledge, capacity and respect between justice and health sector actors?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased understanding of legal and health issues • Increased capacity to assess legal health • Increased capacity to identify non-legal health and wellbeing issues • Increased professional trust • Increased confidence to refer clients to legal/health services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLE records • End-line survey • Key informant interviews
Engagement (Referral Pathways)	How and to what extent did the TJP increase client engagement with services?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # clients with criminal matters before SMC assisted by TJP • % clients from target group • % clients with complex health needs • % clients who remain engaged with support services • # return clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client register
Collaboration (Service Integration)	How and to what extent did TJP contribute to improved referral pathways and service integration? What processes enabled increased collaboration between health and justice sector actors, and what were the barriers or constraints? What evidence is there of changes in professional practice and organisational processes as a result of the TJP?	<p><i>VicHealth Service Coordination Framework (2012):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of services • Clear entry points and service delivery pathways • Early identification of clients with complex cases • Common frameworks and tools for intake, assessment, case planning and management • Clear protocols for client consent and confidentiality • Referrals • Information sharing • Multi-agency case management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous snapshot data • Project documents • Key informant interviews
Empowerment (Health & Justice Outcomes)	What impact did the TJP have on health and justice outcomes for clients with complex cases? What factors enabled or constrained improved client outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % clients with complex cases who had improve health and wellbeing outcomes after engaging with TJP • % clients that received non-custodial sentence • % clients who received reduced imprisonment sentence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client register • End-line survey • Client case studies
Improved Advocacy (Systemic Change)	To what extent has the TJP contributed to a more responsive and therapeutic environment for clients with complex cases engaged in the justice system?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of TJP influencing systemic change and law reform processes • Impact of the TJP on Shepparton Court Redevelopment processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key informant interviews

2.2 Data Collection Methods and Analysis

A mixed-methods approach was used to gather both quantitative and qualitative data on project outcomes.

Document Review

The following documents were reviewed to inform the evaluation design, and to collate existing baseline and mid-term data on key indicators.

- Grant Application (2015)
- Annual Project Reports (2015, 2016 and 2017)
- Annual Project Plans (2015, 2016, and 2017)
- Client Register (project database)
- Community Legal Education pre and post evaluation surveys (completed)
- Summary of findings from interim “snapshot” evaluations (2015 and 2016)

End-line survey of key stakeholders

The end-line survey was designed to measure changes in the knowledge and professional practices of key project stakeholders over the life of the project, and to seek feedback on the perceived outcomes and achievements of the TJP.

An online questionnaire was deployed using Survey Monkey between 4 April and 3 May 2018. Respondents were recruited through a combination of purposive and snowball sampling methods. Direct invitations to complete the survey were sent to a list of key stakeholders identified by the TJ Lawyer, who were also asked to share a link to the survey with their colleagues. The respondents who received direct invitations had been actively engaged with the TJP and worked for key partner and referring organisations in the health, social and justice sectors.

To increase response rates, the evaluation team sent follow-up emails and make Courtesy calls to key stakeholders one week and one fortnight after initial invitations were sent out. While a small number of responses were received after the initial invite, the bulk of responses were received after a follow-up email or phone call had taken place.

The final sample included at least one survey response from each key partner and referring organisation, with the exception of Correctional Services. In total, 31 individuals participated in the end-line survey, representing six organisations across the legal, health and justice sectors.

Survey data was analysed using the Survey Monkey dashboard with additional analysis conducted in Microsoft Excel. Where possible, direct comparisons were made between aggregate response to the end-line survey and data from the 2015 baseline survey.

Key Informant Interviews

Key Informants Interviews were designed to collect further, in-depth feedback on project achievements and challenges from individuals who had been actively engaged with the TJP.

A list of key informants was generated by the TJ Lawyer in consultation with the Evaluation Team, including at least one representative from each key partner and referring organisation. Participants were then recruited via email and asked to participate in a 30-minute interview, conducted by a member of the Evaluation Team. Where possible, interviews were conducted face-to-face (n=3) with the remainder conducted over the phone (n=2). The interviews followed a semi-structured guide that allowed for comparison between the responses, while also affording the participant a degree of flexibility to discuss areas of interest or relevance to their sector.

In total, five individuals participated in interviews from the following organisations: Police Prosecutions, Primary Care Connect, Goulburn Valley Law Association (Private Practitioner), Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre (TJ Lawyer) and Shepparton Magistrates' Court (former TJ Case Manager, now CISP Coordinator). A representative from Victorian Legal Aid and a member of the Judiciary were also approached for interviews but were not available.

Interviews were recorded (with the participant's consent) and interview notes compiled by the interviewer. These notes were coded thematically, using the HJP proxy measures (outlined above), to identify common observations and unique experiences or perspectives shared by participants.

Client Case Studies

Client Case Studies were developed with input from the TJ Lawyer and TJ Case Manager who provided the Evaluation Team with a summary of the client's history of engagement with the project, and their legal and health outcomes. Four case studies were developed to reflect a range of client experiences and outcomes that the TJ Lawyer considered to be either typical or unique for TJP clients. These four cases were also selected on the basis of the client being willing and available to participate in an interview with a member of the Evaluation Team.

The Evaluation Team made initial contact with three of the four clients for whom case studies had been developed, however, only one was able to complete an interview between April and June 2018. As acknowledged in previous TJP project reports, seeking feedback from clients has been a consistent challenge for the TJP, given the transient nature of the client cohort. The Evaluation Team experienced similar barriers to making contact with clients, despite multiple attempts. It is thus acknowledged that client voices are under-represented in the data presented in this report, which draws more heavily on expert opinion and observation of client outcomes.

The case studies presented in this report include those prepared for the final evaluation, and others previously included in annual reports.

2.3 Limitations

The Evaluation Team acknowledges several limitations in the survey design. These are outlined below, along with the strategies that were employed to increase the rigour, legitimacy and independence of the evaluation process.

Internal evaluation and potential for bias

Due to time and budget limitations, an independent external evaluation was not achievable for the TJP. The final evaluation was therefore conducted in-house with a small grant from the Victorian Legal Services Board. External evaluations are considered gold-standard in that they ensure a degree of independence and objectivity that increases the legitimacy of the evaluation findings and recommendations. In-house evaluations benefit from the deep contextual and background knowledge of the project held by the implementing organisation, but risk being perceived as biased.

A number of steps were taken to manage this risk and reduce any natural bias in the TJP evaluation. ARC Justice employed an Evaluation Project Worker and engaged a staff member from the Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre to conduct the evaluation on behalf of GVCLC. Both individuals have extensive evaluation experience and strong understanding of and commitment to research and evaluation ethics. Prior to the evaluation commencing, the evaluation design was shared with the Victorian Legal Services Board, outlining the key performance indicators and methods. The TJ Lawyer and TJ Case Manager assisted the Evaluation Team to make contact with key informants and stakeholders, but were not involved in the data collection or analysis processes. Both the TJ Lawyer and TJ Case Manager participated in the evaluation as key informants and were interviewed using the same

semi-structured interview guide used for all key informant interviews. The evaluation was conducted in-line with the best practice standards established in the Australasian Evaluation Societies' guidelines for the ethical conduct of evaluations.

Small sample size for client and key informant interviews

Given the transient nature of the TJP client cohort, the Evaluation Team experienced challenges contacting clients to participate in interviews. One client was interviewed for the final evaluation, and provided rich information about his experience, which has been included in a case study presented in this report. In the absence of additional client interviews, the evaluation assessed client outcomes based on expert opinion (i.e. the observations of key informants and professionals, from their interactions with TJP clients) and the self-reported wellbeing data collected from individual clients over the life of the project using the "Therapeutic Star" self-assessment tool.

Five individuals completed key informant interviews for the final evaluation. This represents a small sample of individuals who were actively engaged in the TJP and therefore more likely to have a positive bias towards the project. Feedback from interviews conducted for the final evaluation was similar across the five participants, representing different sectors, was also broadly consistent with feedback gathered in interviews conducted during the first and second evaluation snapshots in 2015 and 2016. Similar themes and reflections were also captured in the end-line survey of stakeholders, which represented a larger sample of stakeholders. Through this process of data triangulation, the Evaluation Team consider the data gathered in key informant interviews for the final evaluation to be a reliable reflection of stakeholder perspectives, despite the small sample size.

3. Results

3.1 Key Performance Indicators

Key performance indicators and targets were established in the initial project proposal and subsequent Annual Project Plans submitted to the Victorian Legal Services Board.

Table 2 (below) draws on data from TJP Annual Reports and the TJP Client Register to show how the TJP performed against key indicators and targets (where quantifiable targets were identified).

Table 2: Statement of results against key performance indicators

Outcome 1: Effective Identification, Assessment and Referral	Target	Total
# clients engaged through TJP	125	271
% clients who remained engaged (developed "Resolve Plan")	-	88%
# clients receiving legal assistance from TJ Lawyer through TJP	75	106
% TJP clients from "target group" (i.e. clients with complex health needs and criminal matters before Shepparton Magistrates' Court)	-	80%
Outcome 2: Integration of legal services at PCC and in partnership with PCC at Shepparton Court	Target	Total
# PCC clients assisted through traditional HJP model with other legal matters	-	44
# secondary consultations provided by TJ Lawyer to health/social workers (N.B. data collection began in Year 2)	-	1009
# CLE sessions delivered to PCC or other health/social service staff	22	16
# health seminars attended by TJ Lawyer or delivered to GVCLC	6	6
# Governance Group meetings	6	2
Outcome 3: Improved health and welfare outcomes for target clientele	Target	Total
% TJP clients who received non-custodial sentences (N.B. data available for Year 2 and Year 3 only)	-	88%
# return clients	-	31
% clients that completed a pre and post self-assessment using Therapeutic Star Tool (as examples of client feedback)	-	67%
% clients self-reporting increase in wellbeing using Therapeutic Star Tool (n=160)	-	97%

The TJP met and exceeded all key performance targets, with the exception of the number of Community Legal Education (CLE) sessions delivered to PCC and other health or social services; and the number of Governance Group Meetings held.

- In relation to CLE, consultation with key stakeholders to identify CLE needs and priorities were held in Year 1 and annual CLE targets were subsequently met in Year 2 and Year 3. A high number of secondary consultations were also provided by the TJ Lawyer, contributing to the goal of education and capacity building in PCC and other health and social services.
- In relation to Governance Group Meetings, as reported in the 2016 TJP Annual Report, this group functioned to review progress and provide feedback on project plans on an annual basis. In this way, the Governance Group provided guidance on project planning and implementation without meeting as frequently as initially planned.

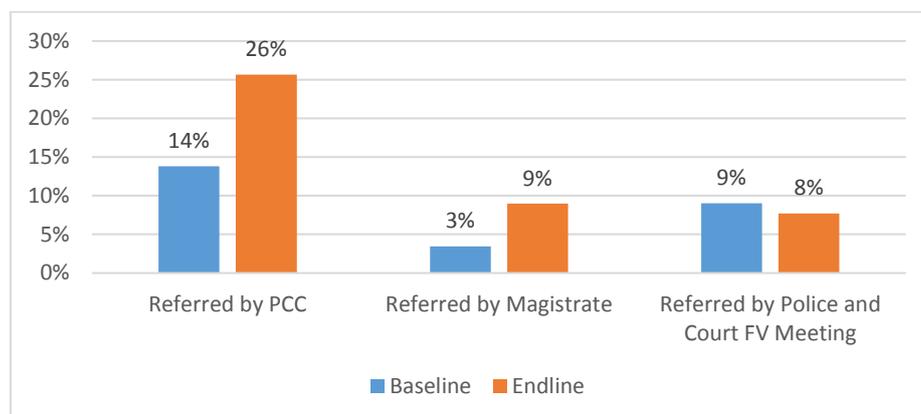
3.2 Intake Data

Over three years, the TJP assisted a total of 271 clients, 80% of whom were “target clients” with criminal matters before Shepparton Magistrates’ Court and complex underlying health issues. The other 20% of TJP clients were assisted with legal issues other than criminal matters through the traditional HJP model established between PCC and GVCLC. These clients all presented with complex health and social needs.

The project maintained a high rate of client engagement, with more than 80% of clients successfully engaging with the TJP in the first two years of the project, increasing to 90% in the final year. Of the 271 clients assisted by through the TJP, only 33 disconnected or did not consent to participate in the program, and were therefore referred out to another service/lawyer. The number of return TJP clients increased from 2015 to 2017, with six clients returning to the TJP for assisted in the first year of the project, 13 return clients in the second year, and 12 return clients in the final year.

A majority of clients were referred to TJP by private legal practitioners, GVCLC or VLA. Referral data shows an increase in referrals from key health and justice actors from 2015 (expressed as baseline data) to 2017 (expressed as end-line data). As Figure 3 shows, in the first year of the project, 14% of TJP clients were referred by PCC, increasing to 24% of clients in the final year of the project. Referrals from Magistrates also increased steadily over three years, starting at 3% of clients in 2015 and increasing to 9% by 2017. Referrals from Police and other members of the Family Violence Court Meeting were relatively consistent, around 8-9% of clients from 2015-2017, with a spike up to 13% in the project’s second year.

Figure 3: Referrals to the TJP, 2015-18



3.3 Client Register

Client legal and wellbeing outcomes were captured in the Client Register (project database) using the following indicators:

- Legal outcomes, as reported by TJ Lawyer and TJ Case Manager; and
- Social, health and wellbeing outcomes, self-assessed by clients on a scale of one to ten using the “Therapeutic Star” Tool.

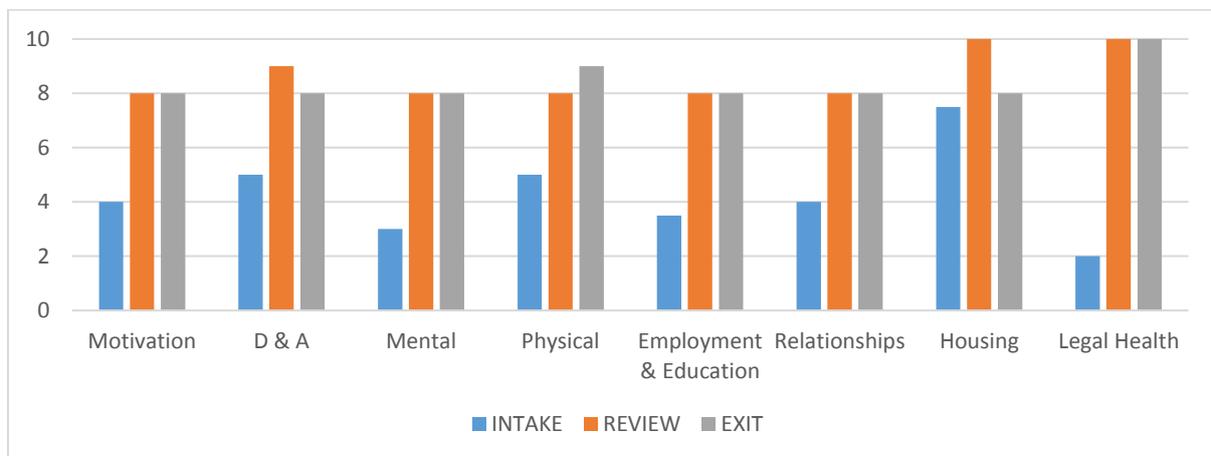
Both indicator sets show overwhelmingly positive outcomes for a vast majority of TJP clients. In 2016, 83% of TJP clients facing a term of imprisonment received a non-custodial sentence, increasing to 94% of clients in the final year of the project (2017). Using the Therapeutic Star tool, clients self-reported the following improvements in health and social wellbeing through their engagement with the TJP:

- 100% of clients that participated in a self-assessment at review and/or on exit reported improvements in their **mental health**.

- 97% of clients that participated in a self-assessment at review and/or on exit reported improvements in their **self-motivation**.
- 97% of clients that participated in a self-assessment at review and/or on exit reported improvements in their **legal health**.
- 94% of clients that participated in a self-assessment at review and/or on exit reported an improvement in their **control over alcohol and drug use**.
- 89% of clients that participated in a self-assessment at review and/or on exit reported an improvement in their family or personal **relationships**.

As Figure 4 below highlights, clients reported the largest improvements in their self-motivation, control over drug and alcohol use, mental health, relationships and legal health.

Figure 4: Self-reported client wellbeing outcomes (n=160)



3.4 Stakeholder Survey

Feedback from project stakeholders in the legal, health and justice sectors was collected via a baseline survey conducted in 2015 and repeated in 2018 to capture end-line data and measure change in knowledge and professional practices.

Survey Respondents

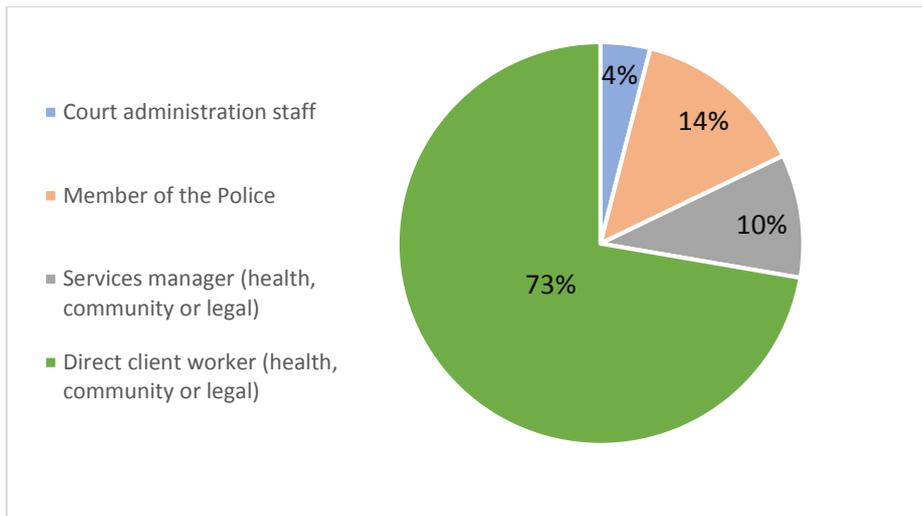
The end-line survey was completed by 31 individuals. Six organisations were represented in the final survey sample: Primary Care Connect, GV Health, Victoria Police, Shepparton Magistrates' Court, Goulburn Valley Law Association, and Victorian Legal Aid. Table 3 (below) shows the number of surveys completed by each organisation. More than half of the responses (61%) came from Primary Care Connect (Table 3).

Table 3: End-line survey respondents by organisation

Organisation	# surveys completed	% total sample
Primary Care Connect	19	61%
GV Health	1	3%
Victoria Police	4	13%
Shepparton Magistrates' Court	1	3%
Goulburn Valley Law Association	5	16%
Victorian Legal Aid	1	3%

A majority of respondents were direct or front-line client service workers (73%), including lawyers, nurses, counsellors, family violence workers, support workers and intake staff (Figure 5).

Figure 5: End-line survey respondents, by role



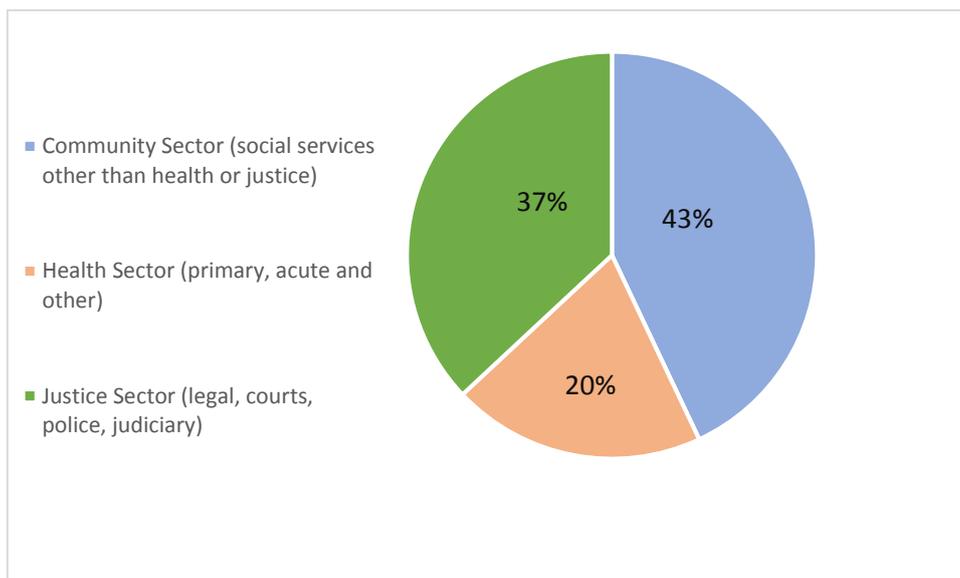
As Table 4 (below) highlights, a larger number of police participated in the end-line survey compared to the baseline. Unfortunately no responses were received from members of the judiciary, with the Coordinating Magistrate at Shepparton Magistrates’ Court on leave at the time of the survey.

Table 4: Baseline to end-line comparison of survey respondents, by role

Role	Baseline	End-line
Court staff	7%	4%
Judiciary	2%	0%
Police	2%	14%
Services manager	18%	10%
Direct client worker	71%	73%

Figure 6 (below) shows the breakdown of survey respondents by sector, with the highest response rate from the community sector (43%) followed by the justice sector (37%) and health sector (20%).

Figure 6: End-line survey respondents, by sector



While the number of end-line survey respondents (n=31) was roughly half that of the baseline (n=59), a similar sample distribution and rate of sector participation was achieved (Table 5). As such, it is reasonable to draw comparisons between the baseline and end-line survey results.

Table 5: Baseline to end-line comparison of survey respondents, by sector

Sector	Baseline	End-line
Community Sector (social services other than health or justice)	50%	43%
Health Sector (primary, acute and other)	14%	20%
Justice Sector (legal, Courts, police, judiciary)	36%	37%

Survey Results

Understanding of services

Respondents were asked to rate their understanding of the three organisations most actively involved in the Therapeutic Justice Project: Primary Care Connect (PCC), Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre (GVCLC) and Shepparton Magistrates' Court (SMC).

86% of respondents assessed their knowledge of PCC as "good" or "very good", compared to 61% for GVCLC and 68% for SMC. The high level of awareness of PCC services partly reflects the number of surveys completed by PCC staff (61% of the total sample).

Compared to the baseline survey, a higher proportion of respondents at end-line assessed their understanding of the services provided by SMC and PCC as "good" or "very good", suggesting an increase in awareness over time, while awareness of the services provided by GVCLC remained relatively unchanged (Table 6).

Table 6: Understanding of services provided by PCC, GVCLC and SMC, baseline to end-line comparison

Services provided by...	% respondents reporting "good" or "very good" understanding at baseline	% respondents reporting "good" or "very good" understanding at end-line	Change
Primary Care Connect	73%	86%	+
Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre	59%	60%	=
Shepparton Magistrates Court	58%	68%	+

Engagement with services

Respondents were asked to rate their (or their organisation's) current level of engagement with PCC, GVCLC and SMC. A large increase in the level engagement was evident across all three services when compared to the baseline (Table 7).

Table 7: Level of engagement with services, baseline to end-line comparison

Level of engagement with...	% respondents with "high" or "very high" engagement at baseline	% respondents with "high" or "very high" engagement at end-line	Change
Primary Care Connect	61%	82%	+
Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre	28%	65%	+
Shepparton Magistrates Court	38%	71%	+

Similarly, an increase in the frequency of engagement with all three services was evident, with a higher proportion of respondents indicating that they (or their organisation) engaged with each service on a weekly or monthly basis, compared to the baseline (Table 8).

Table 8: Frequency of engagement with services, baseline to end-line comparison

Frequency of engagement with...	% respondents engaging "weekly" or "monthly" at baseline	% respondents engaging "weekly" or "monthly" at end-line	Change
Primary Care Connect	81%	93%	+
Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre	57%	64%	+
Shepparton Magistrates Court	65%	75%	+

Confidence referring clients

Respondents were asked how confident they felt to refer clients to PCC, GVCLC and SMC. Three quarters (or more) of all respondents felt confident to make referrals to each service. Comparing results to the baseline, an increase in confidence to refer clients to support service is apparent (Table 9), particularly for referrals to PCC and SMC.

Table 9: Confidence referring clients to services, baseline to end-line comparison

Referrals to...	% respondents confident to make referrals at baseline	% respondents confident to make referrals at end-line	Change
Primary Care Connect	78%	96%	+
Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre	76%	79%	+
Shepparton Magistrates Court	54%	75%	+

Understanding of Therapeutic Justice

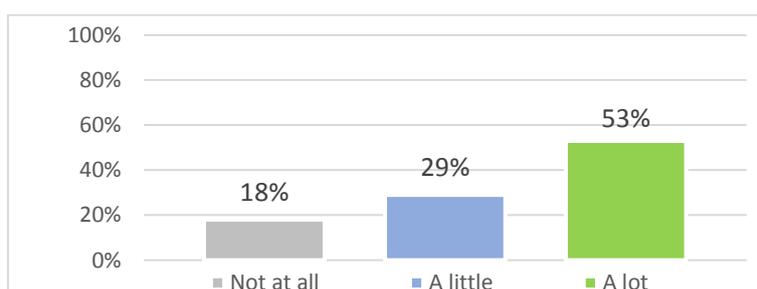
Respondents were asked to assess their understanding of the principles behind a therapeutic approach to legal assistance and the administration of justice. 61% of respondents said that they had a "good" or "very good" understanding, and a further 25% of respondents said that they had a "basic" level of understanding. Compared to the baseline, there was a decline in the proportion of respondents with a basic understanding, the proportion of respondents with a good or very good understanding increased. This indicates a general increase in the level of understanding over time (Table 7).

Table 10: Understanding of therapeutic justice, baseline to end-line comparison

Level of understanding	Baseline	End-line	Change
Good or Very Good	45%	61%	+
Basic	42%	25%	+
Poor	13%	14%	=

When asked about the degree to which their understanding of therapeutic justice had increased, more than half of all respondents said that their understanding had increased "a lot" (54%) through their engagement with the TJP, and a further 25% indicated that their awareness had increased "a little" (Figure 3).

Figure 7: Stakeholder understanding of Therapeutic Justice principles and approach



Five respondents said that their understanding of therapeutic justice had not increased. These respondents were either working in the justice sector with a good level of understanding to begin with (n=1), or working in administrative roles within the health and community sectors that had limited interaction or engagement with the TJP (n=4).

Impact

Survey respondents were asked to assess the degree to which client outcomes, system responses, and key elements of service integration had been strengthened or improved since the TJP began in 2015, and the extent of the TJPs contribution to these improvements.

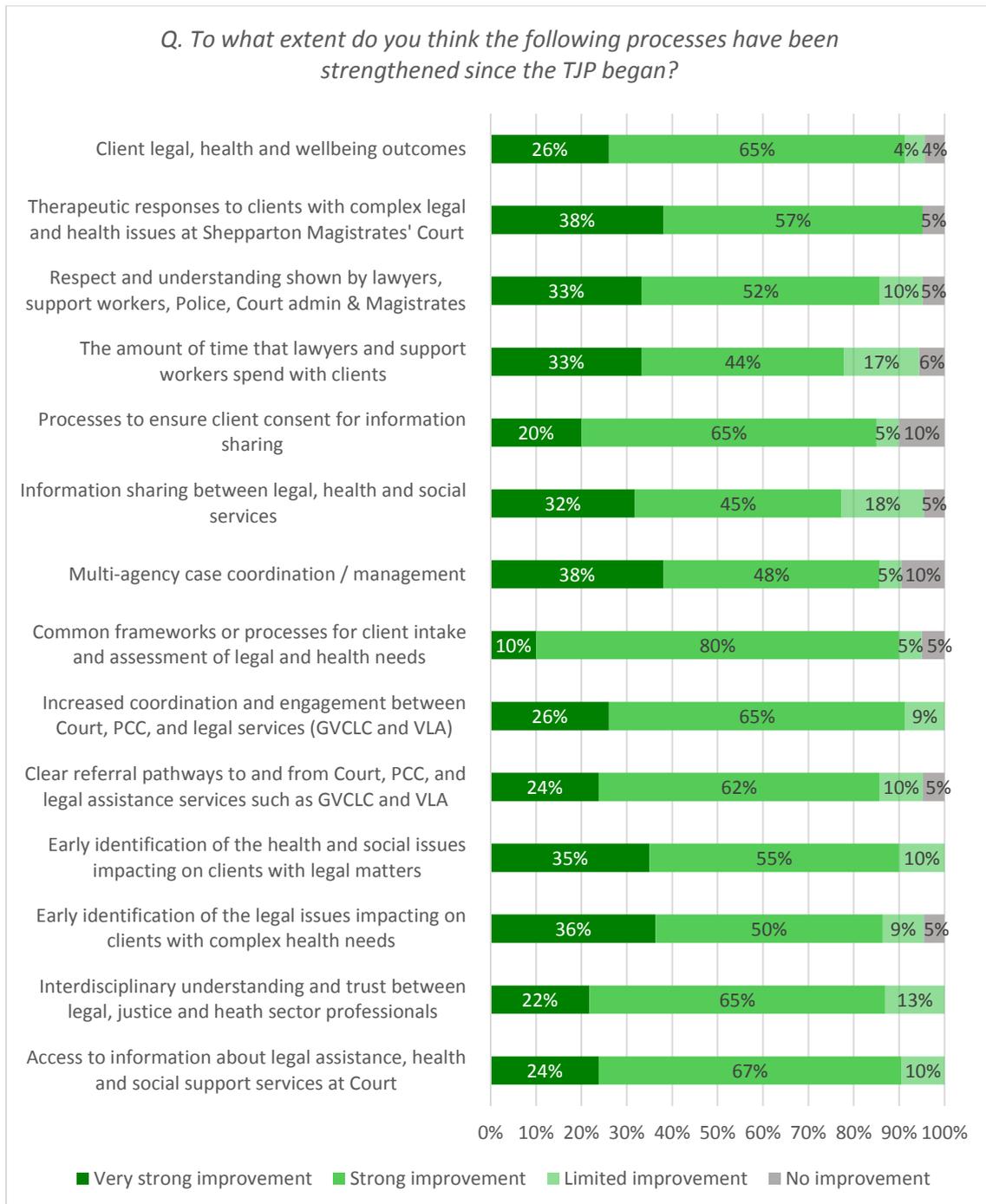
Fourteen (14) key performance measures were identified and assessed through the end-line survey. These measures were drawn from the project's outcomes statements and the VicHealth Service Coordination Framework, as described in the VicHealth Service Coordination Practice Manual.

Figure 8 (below) shows that a significant majority of survey respondents saw "strong" or "very strong" improvements in client outcomes, system responses, and service integration over the life of the TJP. More than 54% and up to 88% of all respondents reported either "strong" or "very strong" improvements across all 14 key performance measures.

The strongest improvements were reported in relation to the following area:

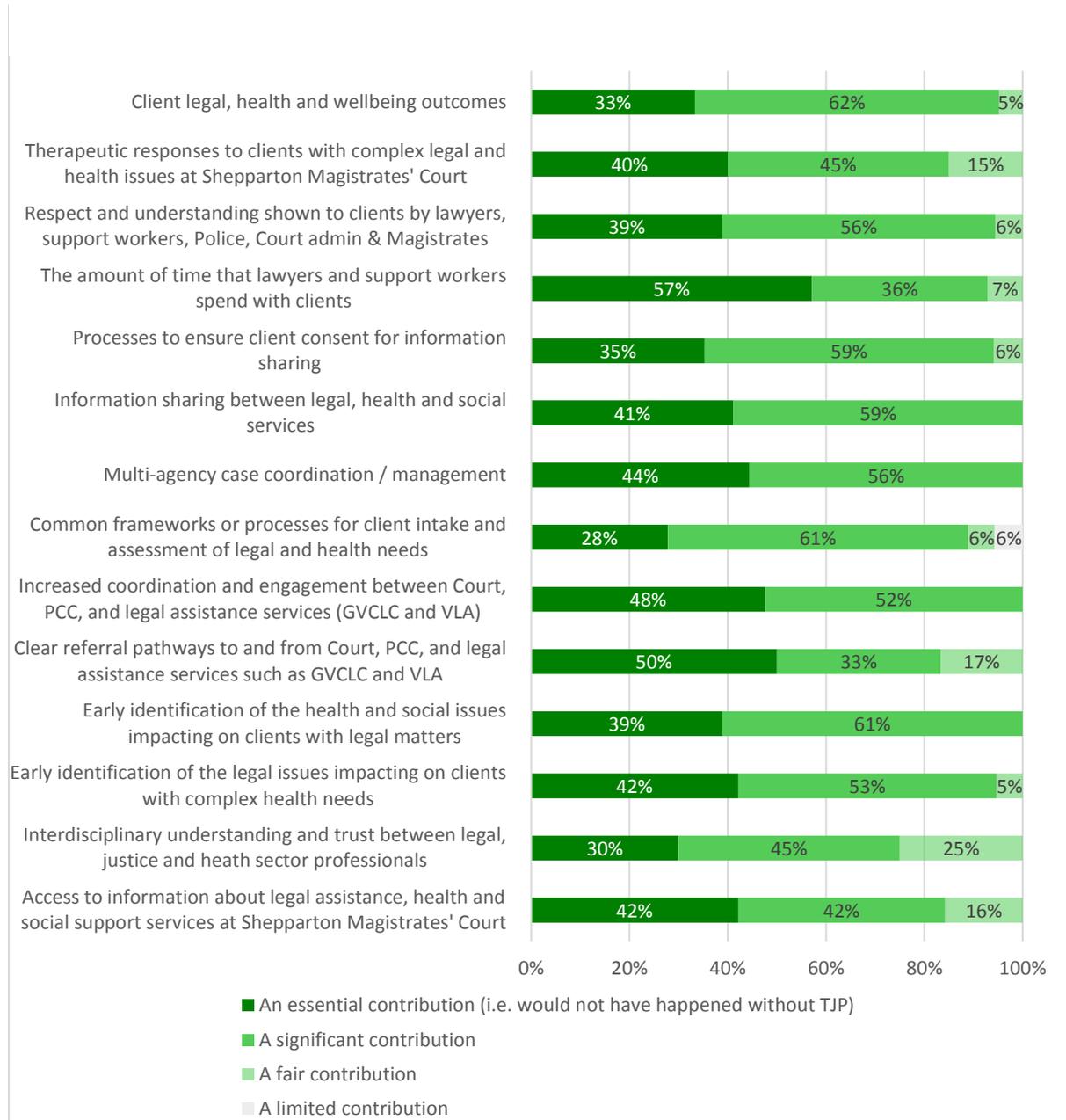
1. Therapeutic responses to clients with complex legal and health needs at SMC
2. Client legal, health and wellbeing outcomes
3. Increased coordination and engagement between PCC, legal assistance services and SMC
4. Increased inter-disciplinary knowledge and trust between legal, health and justice professionals
5. Early identification of legal issues impacting on clients with complex health needs
6. Access to information about available legal assistance, health and social services
7. Multi-agency case coordination and management

Figure 8: Observed improvements in key performance and outcome areas



When respondents were asked to assess the degree to which they thought the TJP had contributed to improvements, more than three quarters (75%) said that the TJP had made a “significant” or “essential” contribution to improvements in each of the 14 areas assessed (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Contribution of the TJP to improvements in key performance and outcome areas



100% of respondents reported that the TJP had made a “significant” or “essential” contribution in the following areas:

- Information sharing between legal, health and social services;
- Multi-agency case coordination and management;
- Increased coordination and engagement between PCC, SMC and legal assistance services; and
- Early identification of social and health issues impacting on clients with legal matters.

Over 90% of all respondents also reported that the TJP had made a “significant” or “essential” contribution in the following areas:

- Early identification of legal issues impacting on clients with complex health needs;
- Processes to ensure client consent for information sharing;
- Respect and understanding shown to clients by lawyers, support workers, police, Court

- administration staff and Magistrates; and
- Client legal, health and wellbeing outcomes.

Achievements

Respondents were asked an open-ended question to identify what they thought were the most significant achievements of the TJP. The following features of the project were most commonly identified by respondents as key achievements and success factors:

- Increased client engagement with support services, and the focus on early intervention;



“Being a hands on role the TJP workers had capacity to be at Court and meet with the clients and explain their role which made a huge difference as clients get one-on-one time with someone they know rather than a phone number that they can call for support, as we know most wouldn't make the step to engage themselves” (Respondent 11, Primary Care Connect)

- A perceived reductions in the likelihood of clients’ re-offending. Several respondents (n=5) said that they had observed a decline in recidivism, or the likelihood of individuals re-offending as a result of clients engaging with the TJP.



“Arranging for people to have counselling or to remain engaged with supports once their matter is finalised, rather than waiting to see if they re-offend.” (Respondent 7, GVLA)



“I have observed changes in clients who have presented to TJP, including identifying situations that placed the client at risk of re-offending” (Respondent 12, Primary Care Connect)



“Better outcomes for client, Court, prosecution and lawyer. Deduction [sic] in recidivism.” (Respondent 25, Prosecutions)

- The passion of the TJ Lawyer and TJ Case Manager, and rapport established with clients, colleagues and services.



“The rapport David [TJ Case Manager] and Sej [TJ Lawyer] built with the clients was great to see. David [TJ Case Manager] and Sej [TJ Lawyer] both developed strong relationships with the Courts embedding the therapeutic strategies into the legal system when the Courts deliver sentencing.” (Respondent 16, Primary Care Connect)

- Respondents also identified increased communication and strengthened relationships between services and the Court which assisted in “breaking down barriers” for clients and workers (Respondent 15, Primary Care Connect).

These themes are reflected in the Word Cloud in Figure 10 (below), generated from survey responses.

Figure 10: Most significant achievements word cloud



Sustainability

Respondents were asked to comment on the sustainability of the relationships and processes established through the project.

Several stakeholders expressed concern that client engagement and relationships and connections between services would not be maintained without the TJP and the presence of workers at Court.

While the introduction of the CISP program was welcomed by some stakeholders and identified as an opportunity to extend therapeutic services to clients in contact with the justice system, TJP was viewed as having addition benefits, particularly early intervention, case management and service alignment.



"It is anticipated the introduction of CISP will connect clients to essential therapeutic services" (Respondent 26, VLA)



"I believe there are multiple services that can cater to some of aspects of the TJP, but feel the TJP program was a one-stop-service for those entering into the justice system." (Respondent 11, PCC)



"Without the TJP there is no case worker to manager the clients and be a contact point for assistance and guidance. Also not having the case manager means there is no one to align the services and offer the best possible outcomes for the client." (Respondent 30, PCC)



"The TJP held an important role within the Court process for the client. It allowed them the opportunity to manage their own case plan and achieve goals in turn receiving a better outcome in Court. No longer having this program means that clients are left with less options and support." (Respondent 30, PCC)

Respondents also commented on the critical role played by the TJP Lawyer and Caseworker, their understanding of the community and approach with clients. Having the right individuals working on the project was clearly an important factor in its success.



"It will depend on the people involved. Good people who really care and you get great results." (Respondent 3, Prosecutions)



"The TJP Lawyer and Case Worker (Sej [TJ Lawyer]al and David [TJ Case Manager]) were a key link in maintaining those connections built" (Respondent 12, PCC)



"Sej [TJ Lawyer] and David [TJ Case Manager], formed an ideal partnership in running the program. Very professional, extremely trustworthy, very practical in achieving solutions." (Respondent 25, Prosecutions)



"TJP worker was outstanding in his commitment, any other TJP worker would need to understand the community and the clients they work with from a ground level approach otherwise engagement will not happen" (Respondent 10, PCC)

Responses also highlight, however, the risk of partnerships relying too heavily on relationships built by individual workers, and not being sufficiently institutionalised at the organisational level.



"Since the program has finished and David [TJ Case Manager] Johns no longer works for PCC, I haven't seen a worker from there attend Court" (Respondent 25, Prosecutions)



"All of a sudden with the end of the program especially within PCC now again we are disconnected." (Respondent 22, PCC)

These responses also highlight the limitations of short-term project funding for ongoing health-justice partnerships.

3.5 Community Legal Education Evaluations

CLE Evaluation Surveys

Community Legal Education (CLE) with PCC and other health and social services was identified in the project plan as an important strategy to strengthen service integration by building the understanding and capacity of health and social workers to identify legal issues early and make appropriate referrals to legal assistance services. Pre-post evaluation surveys were conducted at CLE sessions run by the TJ Lawyer and other GVCLC staff. These surveys asked participants to indicate their overall satisfaction with the CLE delivered, and to assess their level of understanding prior to and after the session. Survey data was collated in Microsoft Excel and analysed by the evaluation team.

CLE Evaluation Results

Between 2015-18, the TJP Lawyer conducted 16 CLE sessions with 140 health and social workers, with a focus on the following topics:

- Legal Services in the Goulburn Valley
- Legal Health Checks
- Family Violence
- Youth Issues
- Therapeutic Justice
- Court Processes

Pre-post evaluation data collected at these sessions shows increased understanding of legal issues amongst the health and social workers who participated.

- 100% of CLE participants were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the sessions delivered by the TJ Lawyer (Figure 11); and
- 83% reported that their understanding of the legal topic was “very good” or “excellent” following the CLE session (Figure 12).

Figure 10: Satisfaction with community legal education

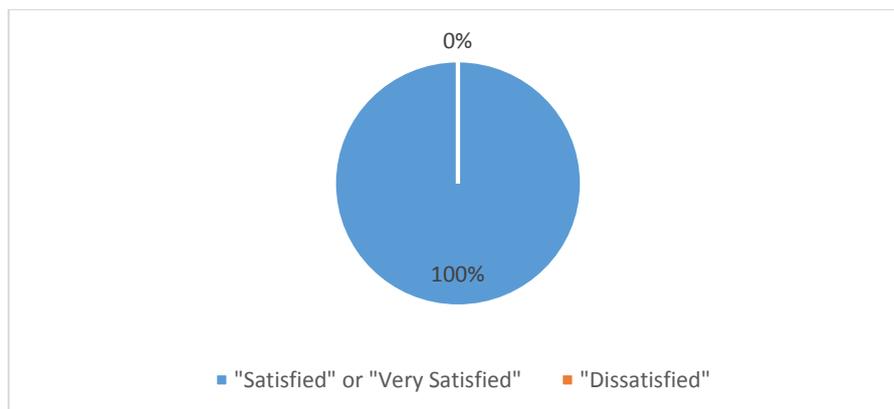
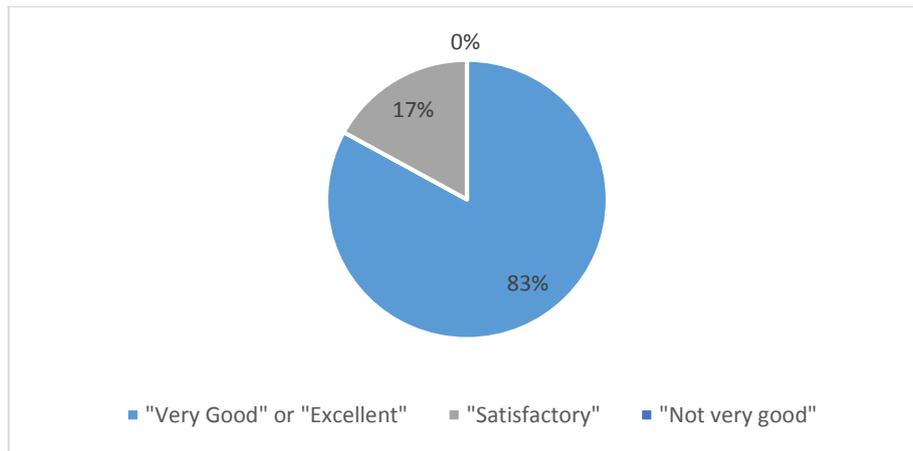


Figure 12: Understanding of legal issues following community legal education



Comparing the data from pre and post evaluation surveys, 100% of clients showed an increase in understanding as a result of the CLE session. For close to one third (31%) of these participants, improvements in understanding were particularly significant, increasing by two or more points over the course of the session (e.g. from “poor” to “very good”, or “fair” to “excellent”).

While a causal relationship between CLE and increased referrals from PCC to the TJP cannot be determined, when triangulated with intake and referral data (presented in section 3.2 above), the CLE evaluation data suggests a positive relationship between increased individual capacity for early identification of legal issues and increased referrals to TJP.

3.6 Key Informant Interviews

Interview Participants

In addition to an end-line survey of stakeholders, five key informant interviews (n=5) were conducted with legal, health and justice sector actors in Shepparton who had actively engaged with the TJP. This interview sample included one representatives from each of the following organisations:

- GVCLC
- PCC
- Shepparton Magistrates Court
- Victoria Police Prosecutions
- Goulburn Valley Law Association (Private Practitioners)

The following individuals and organisations were also approached for key informant interviews, but were unavailable during the four week data collection phase: Coordinating Magistrate, Registrar, and Victorian Legal Aid.

Data from key informant interviews was coded into the following themes for analysis:

- Capacity
- Engagement
- Collaboration
- Empowerment
- Advocacy
- Sustainability & Replicability

Interview Results

Capacity

The TJP targeted clients with criminal matters and complex underlying health and social needs. Interview participants commented that the TJP had increased recognition of the inter-connectedness of legal, health and social issues, and the need for a more holistic response. As a representative from Prosecutions commented:



“For me personally, [I have] greater awareness of multiple issues with clients...[TJP] made me more empathetic – in my job you do tend to become a bit cynical.” (Key Informant Interview, Prosecutions)

All interview participants reported that the TJP had improved not only individual capacity to identify the legal, health and social needs of their clients, but also the collective capacity of services to provide more appropriate, holistic and coordinated assistance to complex clients. The TJP was also viewed as an efficient conduit to a range of services to help client’s address underlying issues, both short-term (crisis assistance) and longer-term.

Interview participants attributed improvements in individual and collective capacity to three aspects of the TJP:

1. Community Legal Education (CLE);
2. Coordination role played by the TJ Case Manager; and
3. Mechanisms established for increased service collaboration and coordination.

Two interviewees had participated in CLE sessions run by the TJ Lawyer, and reported that these sessions had increased awareness of support services and referral pathways, and improved capacity to identify legal issues and make appropriate referrals for clients with complex health and social needs. As one Private Practitioner explained:



“CLE was based on what services are available if you are dealing with people with complex needs. Powerpoints with the referral services were good for practitioners – how to deal with difficult clients, taking instructions from clients with AOD or mental health [issues] – especially for lawyers who are starting out, helping them to make assessments.” (Key Informant Interview, Private Practitioner)

Four interview participants also identified the role played by the TJ Case Manager as critical to improving collective capacity for more appropriate and efficient referrals and service coordination. Interviewees acknowledged that clients with complex needs required additional support, beyond that of any one service, and that collaboration between services and coordinated referrals through the TJ Case Manager had enabled clients to access the range of supported they needed.

A Private Practitioner commented on the value of the coordination role played by the TJ Case Manager:



“It helped improve my awareness of certain psych services and such, but to have one person that knows all the services is of great value.” (Key Informant Interview, Private Practitioner)

A member of the local Prosecutions team further explained how collaboration between services had increased capacity to achieve more therapeutic outcomes for clients:



“We aren’t qualified to diagnose mental health issues, but with the other services involved there is the opportunity to do so. [This] gives the Magistrate a greater overview of what is going on [for an offender] so they can take that into account.” (Key Informant Interview, Prosecutions)

Interview participant also commented on the deep knowledge of local services held by both the TJ Case Worker and TJ Lawyer was considered, who were able to identify the most appropriate support services for a client and make warm referrals, increasing the likelihood of uptake, and reducing the time that private practitioners, police and others would otherwise have spent identifying and making (often multiple) referrals for clients.



“Quite often the client is in crisis, so they are not able to work their way through and don’t have the knowledge or skills to think “I need to see this person for that, that person for this”. I struggle to know – so that one person who can say “I can’t help up, but I know who can” is beneficial for support services.” (Key Informant Interview, Prosecutions)



“It was quite effective, having someone to link clients in with rather than broad referrals, having someone in that role to engage with people, having a dedicated staffer for that...For some clients it was really good as it gave someone to coordinate...Even things like, if you couldn’t find the time to chase up a counsellor, the social worker [TJ Case Manager] is there to link them in and see how they are going.” (Key Informant Interview, Private Practitioner)

All interview participants commented on what they saw as increased collective or system capacity to assist clients with complex needs. This improved systems capacity was attributed to the collaboration and coordination mechanisms established the TJP, specifically the “Resolve” and “Review” Care Team Meetings, and the weekly Family Violence Court Meeting. Two interview participants specifically referred to the impact these processes had on breaking down silos between services to improve system response.



“[A] really important part of the puzzle is pulling all agencies and sectors together. These clients usually have complex needs, so many elements, so rather than work in silos, work together for better outcomes” (Key Informant Interview, Primary Care Connect).



“[TJP] developed a lot of case team meetings – working together, getting out of silos and more of a client focused arrangement, and that just really fast-tracked outcomes and broke down barriers, connecting to support for clients.” (Key Informant Interview, TJ Case Manager/Shepparton Magistrates’ Court CISP Coordinator)

Family Violence Court Meetings we conducted weekly and brought together lawyers, support workers, police and the Family Violence Registrar for informal discussions about referrals and supports. Care Team meetings were more targeted, bringing a client together with their support workers and family members to develop and review an individual response plan with a view to prioritising the client immediate and long-term needs, and ensuring that services were on the same page, providing coordinated assistance.

Engagement

Trust emerged as a common theme in key informant interviews, in relation to both the trust and respect that the TJ Case Manager and Lawyer established with clients, and the professional trust that grew between health, legal and justice sector stakeholders. This trust was identified by interview participants as critical to effective client engagement with services, and increased collaborative engagement between services.

The TJ Case Worker and TJ Lawyer were spoken of highly by interview participants in terms of their supportive and respectful approach with clients, and collaborative and professional manner.



“We have a good professional relationship – collaborative – to get the best outcomes for all involved: prosecutions, client and the Court...Both David [TJ Case Manager] and Sej [TJ Lawyer] were brilliant...self-evident that both had the clients best interests at the forefront of their thinking. Made my job easier.” (Key Informant Interview, Prosecutions)



“They [TJ Lawyer and Case Worker] are both people that are therapeutically minded. Both really wanted to make it work.” (Key Informant Interview, Private Practitioner)

By building trust and rapport with clients, the TJ Lawyer and Case Manager were able to transfer this trust to other services via warm referrals.



“When you meet someone at Court, they are at crisis point, and you have the ability to build rapport and trust, because everything is transparent and there is nothing to hide. That trust can be transferred through warm referrals. There’s times where I would take someone to see someone, they could borrow the trust to connect with the client much more easily.” (Key Informant Interview, TJ Case Manager/Shepparton Magistrates’ Court CISP Coordinator)

Two interview participants also identified the support provided not only to individual TJP clients, but their families, as a factor that contributed to improved client engagement and outcomes. Family members were invited to Care Team Meetings, and as one client reported (see Case Study – “Brian”) the TJ Case Manager followed-up with family members to check that clients remained engaged and supported. As the former TJ Case Manager explained:



“The holistic approach – it’s not just with the client, but with their family and group. It’s a unique approach. We only have one client, but we need to support the other people around them.”

A representative from Primary Care Connect reported that the holistic approach taken by the TJP led to:



“Better support outcomes for the family unit” (Key Informant Interview, Primary Care Connect).

Being located both at Court and at PCC, the TJ Lawyer and Case Manager were more accessible not only to clients “in crisis” but those seeking early intervention assistance, and to workers for secondary consultations.



“It was really good having that service [the TJP] in our agency – good working relationship, very accessible, available, secondary consults with consent of client – [it was] beneficial having that person in the [PCC] office.” (Key Informant Interview, Primary Care Connect)

The location of the TJP Case Manager and TJP Lawyer at PCC two days a week was also considered critical to the project’s success engaging clients. With the recent introduction of the CISP Program at Shepparton Magistrates’ Court, several interview participants reflected on the differences between this program and the TJP. The TJP had capacity for earlier intervention with clients, and was described by interview participants as less intimidating, more flexible, and more accessible, with clients able to engage through a health service, and not only at Court. As one Private Practitioner noted:



“The dynamic is changed now it’s not through PCC – it’s more daunting for people to get involved now. People who haven’t been charged yet could get access – now you have to be at Court to get the help.” (Key Informant Interview, Private Practitioner).

The accessibility of the TJP was considered by interview participants to be an important factor that increased client engagement. A number of clients remained engaged with the TJP after their legal matters were resolved.



“It was easier to say, ‘hey, go to Primary Care or GV [to get TJP support],’ rather than ‘hey, go to Court.’ Accessibility was one of the key aspects, that was a big plus... people were still engaged after the Court stuff was over.” (Key Informant Interview, Private Practitioner)

Collaboration

Linked to trust, collaboration was a strong theme identified in key informant interviews. The coordination mechanisms described above – Care Team Meetings and Family Violence Court Meetings – were identified as critical factors contributing to improved collaboration.



“What I learnt is that there are fantastic services and people [in Shepparton]...A great thing was the Care Team Meetings – the value in that was amazing, not just for the individuals, but for the providers as well – knowing what other agencies were doing. It’s one of the main advantages [of the TJP] that I will be rolling over to the CISP Program” (Key Informant Interview, TJ Case Manager/Shepparton Magistrates’ Court CISP Coordinator)

Interview participants also spoke of the strong collaborative relationships built with the TJ Lawyer and Case Manager, an increase in trust between services and professions, and increased confidence in processes of collaboration to achieve more therapeutic outcomes for clients:



“We have that good working relationship... [we] can have open and honest discussions” (Key Informant Interview, Prosecutor).



“Something I never realised, prior to coming in to the space, was that there’s all these lawyers that want to have a positive impact on the community. [I thought it was] more a thing that social workers would do, amazing to see lawyers doing it. The benefits of that have certainly helped break down barriers at PCC, not just the TJP Lawyer but all the GVCLC Lawyers.” (Key Informant Interview, Key Informant Interview, TJ Case Manager/Shepparton Magistrates’ Court CISP Coordinator)



“we were successful because of the ability to build relationships, trusted relationships, with workers on the ground, and knowing the intricacies of the services – “is that person going to fit in that environment” – and the services had trust, they could come back and change the plan. Magistrates were on board with changing plans according to the TJP recommendations.” (Key Informant Interviews, TJ Case Manager/Shepparton Magistrates’ Court CISP Coordinator).



“[TJP] created a really good relationship between the Court and Court users, having a therapeutic mindset, the whole Court had a therapeutic mindset. Prosecutions weren’t really into it [therapeutic approach], but the team really came on board and saw the benefit and outcomes – people changing their lives – [they] became the best referrals. Police would come to Care Team Meetings at PCC, utilising other services.” (Key Informant Interview, TJ Case Manager/Shepparton Magistrates’ Court CISP Coordinator)

The TJ Case Manager and Lawyer made it easier for workers to share information, to know what other services the client was receiving, and to keep up to date with their progress.



“I could say to David [TJ Case Manager], ‘where are we up to with Mr Smith?’ and he’d say ‘we have an appointment, or ‘they have been linked in with this program’ or whatever else.” (Key Informant Interview, Private Practitioner)

Interview participants also reported that the TJP had contributed to efficiency gains through more appropriate referrals, better supported clients, service coordination and information sharing about client progress. Reduced risk of recidivism was also considered to free up Court time and resources.



“It ties up less time in Court if we are all coming from the same direction. It can save time [by contributing to] a lack of re-offending” (Key Informant Interview, Prosecutions)



“[Corrections] loved having a TJP client because they were already half-way there. [It was a] smooth transition for the worker [with] a care plan already up and running.” (Key Informant Interview, TJ Case Manager/Shepparton Magistrates’ Court CISP Coordinator)



“It [TJP] can intervene earlier [than other programs]... so it can be dealt with in one or two days of Court, not three or four.” (Key Informant Interview, Prosecutions)

Empowerment

All interview participants considered the TJP to have had a positive impact on client outcomes, including reduced risk of recidivism.



“There’s high value in the reduction of reoffending – how do you quantify a crime not committed? I have noticed that most of the people involved in the program, we wither don’t see them back, or [they] are able to break the downward spiral, so if they do come back, it’s generally for something not as serious.” (Key Informant Interview, Prosecutions)

Interview participants identified the TJP’s capacity for early intervention as of particular benefit to clients with complex needs. Two participants contrasted the value of the TJP’s with the newly introduced CISP Program at Shepparton Magistrates’ Court.



“CISP is a bail program – so it’s only coming in when we are trying to get them in remand, whereas TJP kicks in straight away.” (Key Informant Interview, Prosecutions)



“People who haven’t been charged yet could get access – now you have to be at the Court to get help.” (Key Informant Interview, Private Practitioner)

The TJP was also seen to have a positive impact on the decisions made by the Court, in favour of the clients.



“Magistrates have respect for it [the TJP], the Court would take it into account. People looking at fines might get bonds, people looking at doing time might get CCO’s and the CCO’s were more therapeutic than punitive.” (Key Informant Interview, Private Practitioner)

Interview participants attributed improved client outcomes to the Court having more awareness of the underlying issues experienced by clients.



“...able to build a better case based on the background, health issues, it often helped a lot... police had respect for the program, were happy to put people on bail if they were in the TJP, same as Magistrates.” (Key Informant Interview, TJ Case Manager/Shepparton Magistrates’ Court CISP Coordinator)



“It has certainly helped. Mental, drug, financial, homelessness, mortgage stress, all factors in family violence and all issues that the program helped with.” (Key Informant Interview, Prosecutor)

Benefits were not limited to the clients, either. Information sharing between service providers reportedly led to better outcomes for affected family members as well. As a representative from Primary Care Connect explained, having an understanding the services that the TJP client was engaging with enabled family violence workers to better assess the level of threat they posed. Affected family member were therefore able to get appropriate supports to increase their safety and peace of mind.



“Just good to know what is going on for the other side ... that extra level of info to keep the woman safe.”
(Key Informant Interview, Primary Care Connect)

Advocacy

The TJP benefited from strong support from the Coordinating Magistrate in Shepparton, creating an enabling environment for the program to target the most vulnerable of at-risk clients.



“There was a bit of talk originally about not working with the most difficult cases, but the Magistrate wanted us to go for that – those with multiple issues.” (Key Informant Interview, TJ Case Manager/Shepparton Magistrates’ Court CISP Coordinator)

The project appeared to have a profound effect on the professionals involved. A Police Prosecutor, for example, commented on changes in his own attitudes and awareness through engagement with the TJP. The TJ Case Manager noted that Prosecutions were not initially strong supporters of the project, perceiving it to be “soft on crime”, however, over time, individual attitudes have changed. The Prosecutor interviewed for the final evaluation acknowledged that people appearing before Shepparton Magistrates’ Court were not just criminals, but also people with complex health and social needs, and that these unmet needs were often key contributing factors driving criminal behaviour. The TJP demonstrated that it was possible to break the cycle of criminal behaviour through more targeted, holistic and appropriate support.



“...personally, yes. [I have a] Greater awareness of multiple issues with clients ... [it has] made me more empathetic – in my job you do tend to become a bit cynical. If someone lobs in here, there’s always underlying reasons. You don’t just have a drug addiction, there’s something behind it. [For example] they are homeless, so they have issues with Centrelink, so they are committing crime. And are they homeless because they are mentally unwell, or mentally unwell because they are homeless? Then they do something serious and end up here.” (Key Informant Interview, Prosecutions)



“The whole Court has that therapeutic mindset. Prosecutions weren’t really in to it, but [the] team really came on board and saw the benefits and outcomes, people changing their lives, and they became our best referral [source].” (Key Informant Interviews, TJ Case Manager/Shepparton Magistrates’ Court CISP Coordinator)

Police and private legal practitioners became regular sources of referrals for the TJP, reflecting an increased in their awareness of and appreciation of therapeutic justice principles and approaches.



“[TJP] has promoted more awareness. Easier to engage people in the therapeutic services. I’ve seen the Magistrate ask for [TJP workers] to come in to help people, and the Magistrate has identified that they need other services. The Court is actually understanding the environment.” (Key Informant Interview, Private Practitioner)

While a strong enabling environment for therapeutic justice appears to have emerged at Shepparton Magistrates Court, interview participants commented on the current push for a “crack down” on crime being driven by politicians and the media, and the impact this may have on public perceptions and the sustainability or replication of projects like the TJP.

Systemic impact and sustainability

While some interview participants felt confident that the relationships and networks established by the TJP will continue, others expressed concern at the project coming to an end.

The non-judgemental attitudes of the TJP workers meant they were looked up to by other support workers as reliable, and the kind of people that could not just link clients in with the services they required – they received specific and appropriate referrals based on a deeper understanding of the needs of the client matched to the individual skills of the support workers. This highlights one of the issues with replicating such programs – success in this case was driven, at least in part, by the personal characteristics of the staff. It is not enough to simply employ people in the roles, the staff need to be passionate, understanding and approachable to ensure the level of success seen in the Shepparton Courts.

Feedback from interview participants about the TJP was overwhelmingly positive. The only negative comments in interviews related to the capacity of the project to keep up with demand for its services. The TJ Case Manager commented that sometimes individuals were turned away due to volume and capacity issues, and that based on need alone, there could have been a three or four fold increase in the number of case managers employed on the TJP to meet demand. As one Private Practitioner noted:



“in an ideal world if you had a team of people to case manage people with those complex issues – five people even with 20 people on their books – that would be really good. [We] just need more of it – even seeing the case load David [TJ Case Manager] and Sej [TJ Lawyer] had, it was too much – more people in the role, more services.”
(Key Informant Interview, Private Practitioner)

3.4 Client Case Studies

In consultation with the TJ Lawyer, four clients were identified for qualitative interviews based on the following criteria:

- Complex legal, health and social issues (i.e. representative of “target group”).
- Typical of issues and challenges arising with TJP clients throughout engagement process.
- Readily contactable (current contact information on file).
- Willing to participate in an interview (after speaking with TJ Lawyer).

The evaluation team successfully made contact with and interviewed one of these clients, “Brian”, whose case study is presented below. The evaluation team acknowledges that this clients’ experience may not be representative of all TJP clients, however, due to the nature of the TJP cohort, contacting individual clients has proven to be challenging as their circumstances change over time, for example, moving to new accommodation, sometimes outside of Shepparton or the region, or changing telephone numbers. These challenges were also noted in previous annual reports submitted to the Victorian Legal Services Board also noted the challenges associated with the collection of feedback from TJP clients.

This report seeks to address the limited participation of clients in the evaluation processes through the triangulation of multiple sources of data (stakeholder survey data, key informant interview data, annual reports, and case studies prepared by the TJ Lawyer) to validate secondary reports on client outcomes and experiences. This report draws on client feedback gathered through a client survey conducted in 2016 (n=7).

The case studies presented below are drawn from client interviews, anecdotal reports from key informants, and case studies prepared by the TJ Lawyer and presented in previous annual project reports.

“Brian” (Final Evaluation):

Brian had a history of drug use and trafficking extending back over ten years and directly attributes his successful rehabilitation to his participation in the TJP. The trusting relationship Brian formed with the TJ Case Manager helped him to regain hope and a belief that he could change his life for the better, leaving his past offending behind. While Brian served a short sentence for his last offence, he was deeply grateful for the opportunities afforded to him by the TJP. It was only through his engagement with TJP that Brian was able to find a suitable rehabilitation centre. In his own words, Brian explained *“All me mates died, and I was gunna end up being dead myself”*. Brian had been in and out of rehab, and due to his offending, was unable to find a local rehabilitation centre that would accept him. The TJ Case Manager was able to find and facilitate his admission to a local rehabilitation program. *“[They] bent over backwards for me,”* said Brian, *“[It was a] bit of muck around to get me into rehab, [but they] found a place that would allow me to be bailed to them.”* Once engaged with an appropriate program, and with ongoing support from the TJ Case Manager who remained engaged with Brian’s mother to check that he was going well during the rehabilitation process, Brian was able to take control over his drug use and offending. Prior to his engagement with TJP, Brian had failed to complete nearly a dozen Community Corrections Orders. He directly attributes the TJP with his eventual success at completing a CCO. While he credits the rehabilitation with turning his life around, the moral support afforded by the TJP Case Manager was also instrumental. It not only provided Brian with the means to obtain treatment, but also the impetus to see the treatment through. Brian is now gainfully employed in the construction sector. After years of reoffending and breaching CCOs, Brian has no doubt that the TJP has changed his life, and enabled him to maintain a life without drugs, crime and to avoid being incarcerated again. Brian’s case highlights the valuable role that the TJP played connecting clients to the most appropriate services, and providing ongoing moral support to encourage continued engagement. Working closely with community-based organisations, both the TJ Lawyer and Case Manager had comprehensive knowledge of local services and could make targeted referrals to organisations and individual workers best placed to meet client needs.

“Angela” (Final Evaluation)

Angela was a young woman with five warrants against her when she engaged with the TJP. Her children had been removed by Child Protection, and Angela had a deep distrust of services and felt anger and resentment towards workers. Angela heard about the TJP from community members and contacted the TJ Case Manager after being beaten up by her partner. Her partner knew that Angela couldn’t call the police, due to the warrants out against her. Angela and her mother spoke to the TJ Case Manager who accompanied them to the local police station. A Prosecutions Officer told Angela not to worry about her criminal matters for now, and that her safety was their priority. Angela was released on bail conditions to stay with her mother. After numerous Care Team Meetings, the TJP supported Angela to find her own house. Angela relapsed, however, and found herself in legal trouble again, ending up in prison. The TJ Case Manager reported that although some support workers viewed this as a failure, Angela had regained a sense of faith and trust in local services through her engagement with the TJP, including the police, putting her in a better position to re-engage and seek the support she needs when released. Reflecting on this case, the TJ Case Manager commended on the nature of the TJP’s impact: *“If you have a lifetime of trauma, we aren’t going to fix that in a few months, it will take years...to measure the [impact], it’s not just recidivism...the seriousness of the re-offenses have decreased...It’s amazing the flow on effects – the community stuff, when they feel inspired to change their lives, wanting to bring a friend in [to TJP] – [it’s] a ripple effect – a positive impact on one person that can lead to warm referrals from friends.”* Angela’s case highlights the broader impact and longer-term outcomes of the TJP, increasing clients’ trust in and willingness to seek support from services when needed.

Case Study – “James” (Snapshot 2)

James is a young Aboriginal man that presented at the Shepparton Magistrates’ Courts, substance affected, admitting to using alcohol and methamphetamine. He was referred to the TJP via the Family Violence Court Liaison Officer of Victoria Police at the Tuesday morning Family Violence Meeting. The police applied for an Intervention Order against James to protect his family and charged him with assault. James’ legal issues were compounding his stress levels and escalating his substance use. He was homeless as he was excluded from the family home. He didn’t know what to do next. The situation was distressing, particularly because he was close to his family and assisted in the day-to-day running of the household and taking care of his younger siblings. However, substance abuse was an issue that he was not tackling on his own, as his family members also had alcohol abuse issues. James was determined to address his alcohol use, however he initially didn’t want to connect with the services provided by the local Aboriginal community as he was disheartened from previous

experiences and was feeling ashamed. His parents came from two different clans and he found it difficult to connect with the local community. After completing intake and assessment with the TJ Case Manager, a "Resolve Plan" was developed to help James address his offending behaviour. A referral was made for DOA services. James had a positive experience with this service, the first connection he had made, and this built his trust in the TJP. Following this, James connected with the Aboriginal Pathways Worker at Primary Care Connect. He had another positive experience, which resulted in a re-connection with the services provided by the local Aboriginal community. James' family members observed this positive relationship and they also connected with the TJP and the Aboriginal Health Service. His family were experiencing poor health and low-life expectancy. This connection has dramatically assisted his parent's lives, allowing them to connect to other services with respect to unresolved grief and loss due to a high number of deaths in the family. James and his father also decided to attend the Mens' Group every Friday for their spiritual and cultural well-being. It was identified that this was a valuable connection as his legal matters at Court concluded with James being placed on a CCO. He was able to continue his engagement with existing services and he was able to commence his community work with the Men's Group, strengthening his relationship with his father and the community.

Case Study - "Michael" (Snapshot 2)

Michael has had a long and extensive history of offending involving drugs prior to his engagement with the Therapeutic Justice Program (TJP). Prior sentences had included suspended sentences and Community Corrections Orders (CCO). Michael made a self-referral to the TJP at Court. The TJ lawyer adjourned the case for eight weeks to give Michael the opportunity to engage with the TJP. The offences that Michael was charged with were serious, including drug trafficking charges. Michael was previously placed on a CCO for similar type of offending, however was now at breach with the new offences. At the point of engagement with the TJP, Michael was fearful of the prospect of incarceration, particularly given the fact he had recently seen his son after many years at a family gathering and wanted to better himself to be a good father and see him. He was willing to engage with the program and was happy to receive any assistance he could get. Michael, the Therapeutic Case Manager and the Therapeutic Justice Lawyer discussed his various issues and devised a Resolve Plan which set out goals for him to achieve. A contributing factor to Michael's offending was that his partner was using as well and Michael found it difficult to abstain from drugs when she was still using. Therefore, one of the goals was to connect his partner to a Drug and Alcohol worker. Michael reconnected with his Drug and Alcohol (DoA) worker at Primary Care Connect (PCC). After a couple of appointments he took his partner to his appointment, which allowed the DoA to connect Michael's partner to the services of PCC. The TJP then connected Michael to a 10 week day rehabilitation program and therefore requested for Michael's matter at Court to be further adjourned to allow for him to complete the program. The police prosecutor agreed to this request and the Magistrate granted the adjournment. Michael was able to complete the program and attended his Court hearing in good spirits, clean and well dressed. Prior to going into Court, his lawyer and his Therapeutic Justice Case manager had the opportunity to meet and discuss his progress and other relevant matters with respect to his plea. The Magistrate was considering sentencing Michael a term of 6 months imprisonment. However upon hearing evidence from the Therapeutic Justice Case Manager that the change he saw in Michael was genuine as he connected his partner to services as well, the Magistrate gave Michael a fine of \$2500. The Magistrate cancelled the Community Corrections Order and gave Michael a further fine of \$500. The Magistrate made this decision as he did not think a Community Corrections Order would assist Michael as he is already connected to the services and is addressing his underlying issues. Michael is continued to engage with the day rehab program, even though he had already completed it. He stated that he enjoyed attending the program and felt like it helps him on his journey to recovery. His partner is engaged with services at PCC to address her underlying issues as well. Michael is reconnected with the TJP and sought assistance from the TJ lawyer with respect to his son.

"Ben" (Snapshot 1)

Ben is a Koori man and prior to his engagement with the TJP had an extensive history of offending, including driving offenses, family violence-related offences, assaults, drug use and possession. Ben attended the GVCLC and sought assistance for his upcoming criminal matters of driving offenses, drug possession and breach of a CCO. Ben was put on a CCO previously for similar type of offending. He was also being assisted by GVCLC for his pending family law proceedings which were causing him a lot of stress. He was also seriously assaulted, which resulted in him having an undiagnosed Acquired Brain Injury (ABI). He suffered from symptoms of short-term memory loss, headaches and faintness. At the point of engagement with the TJP, Ben was fearful of the prospect of being incarcerated and was also homeless. He was willing to engage with the program and was

happy to receive any assistance he could get. Ben, the TJ Case Manager and TJ Lawyer discussed his various issues and devised a “Resolve Plan” which set out goals for him to achieve. Ben’s plan was firstly to reconnect with his supports from Correctional Services Victoria. Even at breach, he was welcomed to reengage. Ben was then reconnected with a DOA worker at PCC and with a financial counsellor to assist him with his finances. Ben also sought help in obtaining a neuropsychological report for an ABI assessment from Centrelink. Ben was connected with Rural Housing and before his legal proceedings were concluded at Court he obtained housing. Ben also started to receive Centrelink benefits which had been an issue in the past due to him not receiving accurate payments. Ben’s main reason for changing his behaviour and addressing his underlying issues was his daughter. Ben wanted to obtain visitation rights, and with the help of his Correctional worker, he obtained free drug screens to provide to the Family Law Courts to enable him to have access to his daughter. Ben abstained from drug use and provided clean screens. The Magistrate was considering sentencing Ben to a term of imprisonment, however, given the motivation he had demonstrated in addressing his substance abuse issues and having visitation with his daughter, the Magistrate affirmed his previous CCO and ordered a new CCO. Ben re-engaged with the TJP once he received some tragic news that his current partner had been diagnosed with terminal cancer. Ben had witnessed this occurring to another loved one previously in his life, and after receiving news of his partner’s illness, resorted to self-harm and alcohol. Ben was sitting in the park, drunk, when he realised that this pattern of behaviour had previously led to offending behaviour and made the decision to re-engage with his DOA worker the next day. Ben had previously been a farmer, however, due to his ABI, Centrelink did not allow him to work. He found that doing community work through his CCO kept his mind busy and out of mischief, and therefore sought assistance in doing more community work once the hours of his CCO were completed. He also sought assistance in making a claim to the Victims of Crime Administrative Tribunal (VOCAT) for the assault he suffered. Ben’s VOCAT application was finalised in 2017. He was awarded \$18171.20 from the Tribunal. Also he participated in the Enabling Justice ABI Project conducted by RMIT University and was able to share his experiences interacting with the justice system. Ben’s case demonstrates the long-term impact the TJP had on client’s willingness and ability to engage with supports to reduce the risk of re-offending.

Case Study – “Tom” (Snapshot 1)

Tom had a long history of offending, including assaults, driving offenses, drunk and disorderly behaviour and possession of drugs, prior to his engagement with the TJP. Previous sentences had included short periods of imprisonment and CCOs, only some of which Tom had managed to complete. Tom was referred to the TJP at Court by his VLA Lawyer. His lawyer adjourned the case for eight weeks to give Tom the opportunity to engage with the TJP. Tom presented substance affected and wearing less than appropriate attire, but expressed a desire to change his behaviour. The offenses that Tom was charged with were serious, including assaults against police, driving offenses and aggravated assaults. Tom developed a “Resolve Plan” with the TJ Case Manager to identify and set goals to address underlying issues. He had recently completed a mandatory Men’s Behaviour Change program, and had attended extensive DOA counselling through an earlier CCO. A contributing factor to Tom’s offending was a volatile relationship, which had recently been rekindled. His stress levels were increased by his four children who were all struggling with behavioural issues. Tom’s main goal was to engage with supports to assist him in managing his family life. Linking in with a financial counsellor was an additional goal, as money was tight, and Tom’s debts meant that he was at risk of his utilities being cut off and losing his rental home. The TJP further assisted Tom to connect with the Mental Health Court Liaison Officer, who connected him with Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative, a community organisation with services tailored to assist the Aboriginal community. Tom and his family members were referred to the health services of Rumbalara. Tom was able to complete the programs and attended his Court hearing in good spirits, clean and well dressed. Prior to going to Court, his lawyer and TJ Case Manager met to discuss Tom’s progress and matters relevant to his plea. At Court, Tom was able to explain for the first time his early childhood trauma at the hands of his father, and the effects on his life, including his anger towards and distrust of authority figures. Tom was able to reflect on his own behaviour towards his family, the way he managed his children and the harm he was inflicting on them. Tom finished a parenting program and encouraged his partner to enrol in the next course so that they could work as a team to support their children. He expressed to the TJP that the services he and his family were referred to had a dramatic and positive impact on his children’s behaviour and had improved relationships within his family. With respect to his finances, Tom was able to access some of his superannuation money and pay his outstanding bills. He also organised a family holiday for the first time, something he never dreamed would be possible. Tom reconnected with his extended family, who provided further support, and gained part-time employment on a farm nearby his rental home. Tom received a CCO, with conditions including community work. For the first time, Tom was able to engage in a meaningful way,

even being a role model for others. Tom’s case highlights the impact that the TJP had, not only on individual client wellbeing, but on their families, relationships and connections to community. The trust that the TJP built with justice sector actors at Court, including Magistrates, enabled clients like Tom to be given the time and opportunity to engage meaningfully with appropriate support services and to effectively address the health and social issues underlying their pattern of offending behaviour.

Case Study – “Matt” (Snapshot 1)

Matt is a young, twenty-one year old Koori man with four children. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) – Child Protection – had been involved with Matt and his family for many years. Matt had an extensive history of offending, including time spent in a Juvenile Custody Centre and being on a CCO. Matt had never maintained employment for any significant period of time and was homeless when he engaged with the TJP, couch-surfing with friends. Matt was referred to the TJP at Court by his VLA Lawyer. Matt told the TJ Case Manager that he had an addiction to cannabis and alcohol. When he had enough money, Matt would use methamphetamines. Matt’s offenses ranged from theft to assaults and intervention order breaches. Matt had also been charged with breaching a CCO, when preceded the other offenses. Matt was already connected to a large range of services, but continued to offend. The TJ Case Manager held a “Resolve Meeting” with Matt and eleven agencies that he had been involved with, devising a plan with goals Matt could adhere to. The key insight from this meeting was that Matt was connected to a range of services that had not been working with him collaboratively or in a coordinated manner, and that Matt had therefore not been put in a position where he was likely to succeed working with any individual agency to address his complex and inter-related issues. At this meeting it was identified, for example, that Matt had breached his current CCO by failing to attend a meeting with his Correctional Worker, because he had been at an appointment with another support agency at the time. After the “Resolve Meeting”, all relevant agencies had a common plan, prioritising his needs, and were able to communicate with one another to make it less onerous for Matt to attend his various appointments. Matt was also engaged with a local football club, and over time became more motivated to address his substance abuse issues and attend rehab. Matt’s legal proceedings were adjourned so that he could attend rehab and focus on his recovery. After two months in rehab, Matt was informed that his mother had passed away, which led to further offending behaviour. This was a set-back for Matt, however, he continued to engage with services and maintained his motivation to improve his situation. The Magistrate affirmed Matt’s CCO and ordered a new CCO so that he could continue to work with relevant services and do further community work. Matt stopped using methamphetamines and reduced his cannabis use and alcohol intake, which enabled him to gain supervised visits with his children. Matt sought support from the TJP Lawyer in relation to the offenses that took place at the time of his mother’s passing. He was able to obtain part-time work at a caravan park and continues to engage with relevant services, putting him in better position to sustain the positive changes he had made in his life. Matt’s case highlights the critical role that the TJP played facilitating collaboration between services and improving service coordination to enable more effective and sustained engagement with clients with complex needs.

Case Study - “Adam”

Adam came from a working family in a regional area of Victoria. He started using cannabis as a youth and was convicted of trafficking in 2003. He was able to abstain from drug use for a period and had a child with his partner at the time. His relationship deteriorated, however, and Adam and his partner separated, leading to Family Court proceedings and eventually a return to drug use for Adam when he was no longer able to see his daughter. Over the next few years, Adam accrued charges including theft and possession. It was on his third charge, for possession of Ice, that he came across an alcohol and other drugs worker he was able to connect well with. This worker referred him to the TJP. With assistance from the TJ Lawyer and Case Manager, Adam avoided a more serious sentence and found the motivation to turn his life around. Adam built strong and trusting relationships with a network of support workers through his engagement with the TJP and was subsequently able to connect his current partner and his nephew to necessary supports to assist with their substance abuse and mental health issues. With support from services and his family, Adam hopes to improve his domestic situation and spend more time with his daughter. By fostering trust with individual clients and those around them, the TJP strengthened engagement with local health and social services and provided holistic support to marginalised clients and families who may otherwise not have accessed services until a “crisis point” was reached.

4. Key Findings

Key Performance Targets and Intended Outcomes

The TJP was designed to respond to the need for more holistic, coordinated and therapeutic service for clients with complex legal, health and social needs at Shepparton Magistrates' Court. Prior to the TJP, there were no coordinated therapeutic programs at Shepparton Magistrates Court to assist clients with criminal matters and interrelated health and social issues. In particular, there was an identified need to engage offenders who were not already engaged with services, and who were mandated by Correctional Services to do so.



"Prior to the project, the Court has had not ability to deal with the complexities of people's complex health needs or issues. All that could be done was to place that person on a Community Corrections Order...[and some] cannot adhere to that as a client. The project has helped to put in place services, to assist in the lead up to sentencing, therefore an offender has a better rate of success in completing a Community Corrections Order" (Interview with Member of the Judiciary, Second Evaluation Snapshot)

The evaluation found strong evidence that the TJP increased access to and improved coordination of therapeutic services, with an overwhelmingly positive impact on legal, health and wellbeing outcomes for the target group of clients with complex needs. As presented in Table 2, the TJP met and exceeded its key performance targets relating to client engagement and outcomes. Feedback from stakeholders through the end-line survey and key informant interviews conducted for the final evaluation was overwhelmingly positive and highlighted the critical role that the TJP played in improving services coordination and enabling a more therapeutic response to clients with complex needs at Shepparton Magistrates' Court. As highlighted in Figure 9, a vast majority of stakeholders considered the TJP to have made a "significant" or "essential" contribution to processes and outcomes that are indicative of improved client wellbeing and access to and coordination of therapeutic services.

Key findings in relation to each outcome area are presented below.

Outcome 1: Effective Identification, Assessment and Referral



Key evaluation questions: To what extent did TJP contribute to improved referral pathways? How, and to what extent, did the TJP increase client engagement with support services?

Finding 1: The innovative HJP model adopted by the TJP improved referral pathways for health and social services at Shepparton Magistrates Court, and for legal assistance at Primary Care Connect, increasing access to therapeutic services and early intervention support for clients with criminal matters and complex health and social needs.

The TJP was a Health-Justice Partnership with a difference, integrating a health worker into a justice setting in addition to placing a lawyer within a health service setting. The evaluation found that this innovative model improved referral pathways for target clients with criminal matters at Shepparton Magistrates Court, increasing their access to appropriate health and social support services, but also improved access to legal assistance for clients at PCC through more traditional HJP mechanisms.

Key informant interview participants saw value in being able to connect with the TJ Lawyer and TJ Case Manager at Court, enabling efficient and timely referrals and information sharing between services. They also considered it beneficial to have the option to refer clients to the TJ Case Manager and TJ Lawyer at PCC, perceived to be a less confronting environment for clients that increased their

willingness to engage. The TJP benefited from being a community-based service, and from co-location within both justice and health settings, giving clients multiple options and pathways for engagement.

The evaluation further found that the flexible intake criteria and referral policies adopted by the TJP increased access to therapeutic and legal services, not only for target clients dealing with the pointy end of their criminal legal matters, or those referred by Magistrates, but also for individuals seeking early intervention support and connection with services and community. As intake data highlights, a majority of referrals to the TJP were received from private legal practitioners, Victorian Legal Aid, and the police, who were able to connect vulnerable clients to health and social support services through the TJP, before their legal matters reached “crisis point” (Figure 3). The large number of secondary consultations (n=1009) provided by the TJ Lawyer to PCC and other health and social service staff also contributed to early intervention, and in some cases the prevention of mitigation of legal issues, by increasing access to timely legal information and encouraging PCC clients to seek assistance from the TJ Lawyer (Table 2). 20% of clients assisted through the TJP were PCC clients with non-criminal legal matters who were able to access the TJ Lawyer through the more traditional mechanisms of the HJP established between GVCLC and PCC (Table 2).

Finding 2: Community Legal Education increased individual knowledge and capacity to identify the interrelated legal, health and social needs of clients, while coordination mechanism established through the TJP increased collective capacity for improved referrals, case planning and coordination.

A comparison of data from the baseline and end-line stakeholder surveys showed that awareness of and engagement with the services provided by GVCLC, PCC and Shepparton Magistrates’ Court increased over the life of the project (Tables 6, 7 and 8). Pre-post evaluations from CLE sessions similarly showed an increase in individual’s understanding of the interrelated legal, health and social needs of clients, and available support services (Figures 10 and 11), while the end-line survey revealed a corresponding increase in confidence to refer clients to services at GVCLC, PCC and the Court (Table 9). Key informant interview participants working in the legal and justice sector reported increased personal awareness of mental health and drug and alcohol related issues, while interview participants from the health sector said that they had increased capacity to provide accurate legal information to clients and to make legal referrals.

The evaluation found that while CLE had increased individual capacity to identify interrelated legal, health and social needs (Figures 10 and 11), the TJP had also contributed to increased collective or “service system” capacity to identify and support clients with complex needs. Key informant interview participants attributed this increased capacity to the service coordination mechanisms established by the TJP, including Care Team Meetings, Resolve Plans, and Family Violence Court Meetings. These mechanisms enabled stakeholders from different sectors to share information, knowledge and capacity, to align service priorities and work towards common goals, and increased their collective capacity to provide holistic support to clients, which would have been beyond the scope of any individual organisation.

75% of stakeholders who responded to the end-line evaluation said that there had been a “strong” or “very strong” improvement in information sharing between services, while 86% observed improvements in multi-agency case management, and 91% reported improvements in coordination between PCC, Shepparton Magistrates’ Court and legal assistance services. 90% of respondents said there had been a “strong” or “very strong” improvement in the capacity of services to identify the legal issues impacting on clients’ wellbeing, while 86% reported improvements in capacity to identify underlying health and social needs (Figure 8).

Finding 3: The TJ Case Manager and TJ Lawyer played a critical “conduit” role, providing warm referrals and a transferral of trust to support services for clients with complex needs, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of referral processes and client engagement with support services.

The evaluation found that the comprehensive knowledge of local services and professional relationships built by the TJ Case Manager and TJ Lawyer enabled more appropriate and targeted referrals, and increased client engagement with support services. Legal, health and justice sector professionals interviewed for the final evaluation commented on the efficiency gains they had experienced being able to refer clients with complex needs to the TJP, who could conduct a comprehensive assessment of client needs and make the most appropriate referrals.

The TJ Case Manager and Lawyer effectively built trust with clients and were subsequently able to transfer this trust to local services. By connecting clients to the right services and facilitating warm referrals, the TJ Case Manager and TJ Lawyer increased clients’ motivation and willingness to engage. The eight case studies presented in this report each offer examples of how positive initial interactions with the TJP and appropriate referrals to local services built clients to faith in the service system and lead to more sustained and effective engagement with supports, including, in some cases, more holistic support for a client and their family.

The evaluation found that the TJP had exceeded its service targets, assisting 271 clients over the life of the project (Table 2). Demand for the TJP’s services outstripped the capacity of the TJ Case Manager and TJ Lawyer, who acknowledged that on occasion they had to “close the door” due to high case-loads. Key informants interviewed for the final evaluation also acknowledged the high demand for TJP services, and commented on the need for more Case Managers at Court to facilitate client assessment, referral and service coordination processes.

Outcome 2: Integration of legal services at PCC and in partnership with PCC at Shepparton Magistrates’ Court



Key evaluation questions: To what extent did the TJP break down barriers and increase interdisciplinary knowledge, capacity and respect between justice and health sector actors? To what extent did the TJP contribute to improved service coordination? What strategies or processes enabled increased collaboration between services and what were the barriers?

Finding 4: The TJP established effective mechanisms for improved collaboration and coordination between services, breaking down silos, and enabling information, knowledge and capacity to be shared between services, with the TJ Case Manager playing a critical facilitation role.

The evaluation identified a range of mechanisms and processes established by the TJP that increased opportunities for information sharing, collaboration and coordination between legal, health and justice services. The presence of the TJ Case Manager at the Court three days a week enabled on-site referrals and information sharing with legal practitioners, who were able to check on the progress of clients and update Magistrates on their progress. The TJ Lawyer was also based at PCC one day a week, which enabled warm referrals from PCC staff and secondary consultations. Family Violence Court Meetings and Care Team Meeting, including the development of “Resolve Plans” and subsequent “Review” processes, were identified by interview participants as effective mechanisms contributing to improved service coordination. 100% of stakeholders who responding to the end-line survey said that the TJP had made a “significant” or “essential” contribution to information sharing between legal, health and social services; multi-agency case coordination and management; and increased coordination and engagement between PCC, Shepparton Magistrates’ Court and legal assistance services (Figure 9).

Finding 5: By working collaboratively and building trusted relationships with services, the TJ Lawyer and TJ Case Worker were effective role models and contributed to inter-disciplinary knowledge, understanding and respect between legal, health and justice sector actors.

Key informants interviewed for the final evaluation highlighted the transformative nature of their engagement with the TJP and the collaborative relationships and trust established with the TJ Lawyer and Case Manager. The evaluation found that the TJP had increased recognition of the interconnectedness of legal, health and social issues, and the need for a more holistic and coordinated response. Professionals in the Court setting reported changes in their understanding of the role that lawyers, social workers and other health and justice professionals could play, working collaboratively to achieve better outcomes for clients, families and the community. 87% of stakeholders responding to the end-line survey reported that there had been “strong” or “very strong” improvements in inter-disciplinary knowledge and trust between justice, health and social sector professionals, and three quarters (75%) of all respondents attributed this outcomes directly to the TJP (Figures 8 and 9). Tables 6-8 highlight the improved inter-disciplinary or cross-sectoral understanding of legal, health and justice services, and increased interaction between services, achieved over the life of the project.

Finding 6: The TJP increased understanding of therapeutic justice principles and approaches and had a positive impact on the enabling environment for therapeutic justice at Shepparton Magistrates’ Court.

By the end of the project, close to two thirds (61%) of survey respondents had a “good” or “very good” understanding of therapeutic justice, compared to less than half (45%) at the beginning of the project (Table 10). The evaluation found evidence of changes in the attitudes and practices of professionals working in the Court setting, and in the ability of the Court to identify, assess and understand the underlying health and social issues affecting clients, contributing to more therapeutic justice outcomes. The TJP also strengthened interdisciplinary understanding and relationships between community-based and court-based services. Key informants interviewed for the final evaluation expressed confidence that these cross-sectoral relationships would be maintained beyond the life of the TJP, and that mechanisms for service coordination would continue with the TJ Case Manager taking on the CISP Coordinator role.

Outcome 3: Improved health and welfare outcomes for target clientele



Key evaluation questions: What impact did the TJP have on health and justice outcomes for clients with complex cases?

Finding 7: The TJP had an overwhelmingly positive impact on clients, contributing not only to improved legal and health outcomes for clients, but to their faith in and willingness to engage with support services on an ongoing basis.

The evaluation found strong evidence that the TJP had improved legal, health and wellbeing outcomes for clients. The TJP engaged some of the most high-risk and vulnerable people in the community, and feedback from clients was overwhelmingly positive throughout the three-year pilot. While only a small number of client surveys and case studies were collected during the first and second evaluation snapshots, this data consistently highlighted the trust, increased engagement with services, and motivation to address underlying issues that the TJP had fostered in clients (Case Studies: “James”, “Michael”, “Ben”, “Tom” and “Matt”). Similar positive outcomes were evident in the client interview conducted for the final evaluation (Case Study: “Brian”). Project data showed that 88% of clients had received non-custodial sentences, affording them the time and opportunity to continue engaging with services to address their underlying health and social issues, and reducing the risk of recidivism.

Self-reported wellbeing data collected from clients (at intake and at review or exit) revealed that a vast majority of TJP clients, between 94-100%, had experienced significant improvements in mental health, alcohol and drug issues, self-motivation and legal health through engagement with the project (Figure 4). This data was collected from 160 clients, over half (59%) of the TJP's total client base, and can therefore be considered representative of client experiences.

In addition to the overwhelmingly positive legal, health and wellbeing outcomes experienced by TJP clients, the evaluation found that the project increased levels of trust in and engagement with support services. This finding points to the project having a longer-term and more sustainable impact on individual and community wellbeing. Case studies highlighted examples of clients who had regained faith in services, and a willingness to seek support, after a long and fraught history of unsuccessful or negative engagement (Case Studies: "Brian", "Angela" and "James"). The number of return clients (Table 2) and clients who referred family and friends to the TJP and other support services (Case Studies: "James", "Michael", "Tom", "Adam") is further evidence of the project's impact on sustained engagement with and trust in services. As the TJ Lawyer articulated in an application to the 2017 Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards:



"Some of our best client referrals now come from former clients who are sending their family and friends to see the team. The TJP has not only raised community awareness of violence and crime issues, it has given hope to people overwhelmed by their circumstances." (TJ Lawyer, 2017).

Finding 8: The TJP demonstrated an effective and efficient model for increasing therapeutic support for clients with complex needs, and improving client outcomes, with potential to reduce recidivism.

The evaluation found that the TJP met – and in many cases exceeded – its key performance targets and intended outcomes. In doing so, the project successfully demonstrated a low-cost service model that increased access to therapeutic supports and improved legal and wellbeing outcomes for clients and community. The evaluation found strong anecdotal evidence of the project's impact on reduced recidivism, with client case studies and key informant interviews providing numerous examples of the TJP acting as a "circuit-breaker" for clients with complex needs and extensive histories of negative engagement with the justice system.

Recent Crime Statistics for Victoria also show significant positive shifts towards reduced recidivism in Shepparton. The State-wide average increase in breach rates is 10.7%, while the corresponding rate in Shepparton is now at 4.9%. This figure sits against a background that has the offending rate in Shepparton close to 14,000 per 100,000, while the State-wide average is just over 8,000. Although this achievement reflects the dedicated work of Magistrates, Police and Corrections in the region, and cannot be attributed solely to the work of the TJP, it does suggest that initiatives such as TJP are contributing to real changes in rates of recidivism, increased community safety and wellbeing.

Systemic Impact and Sustainability



Key evaluation questions: To what extent has the TJP contributed to a more responsive and therapeutic environment for clients with complex cases engaged in the justice system? To what extent will the relationships and processes established through the TJP be maintained? What lessons or recommendations can be drawn for replication or scaling-up the TJP?

Finding 9: The TJP relied heavily on relationships and processes established by the TJ Case Manager and TJ Lawyer, who played an essential facilitation role for improved referral pathways and services coordination, which may pose a risk to the long-term sustainability of project outcomes.

The evaluation found that having the “right people” in the TJ Lawyer and Case Manager roles was critical to the project’s success. Key informants interviewed for the final evaluation emphasised the collaborative style of the TJ Lawyer and Case Manager, their effective communication and relationship-building skills, comprehensive understanding of local services, and non-judgemental, holistic and therapeutically-minded approach to addressing the needs of clients.

The TJ Lawyer and Case Manager played an essential facilitation role, linking clients with and improving information sharing and coordination between services. Some key informants interviewed for the final evaluation expressed concern that without this facilitation, the mechanisms established for improved referral pathways and service coordination may not be maintained, and that over time communication channels and collaborative relationships between services may diminish as a result. Other interview participants were more hopeful, however, that with the introduction of CISP at Shepparton Magistrates’ Court, and the TJ Case Manager stepping into the role of CISP Coordinator, that collaborative relationships and mechanisms established by the TJP would be sustained.

The former TJ Case Manager, now CISP Coordinator, identified a number of lessons learned through the TJP that would inform his approach to CISP, including the value of Court and Care Team Meetings for coordination of services to better support clients with complex needs. He also acknowledged the limitations of his new role, as an officer of the Court with a different set of obligations and more limited capacity to assist clients before they are “in crisis” at Court, highlighting the value and critical difference of the community-based model offered by the TJP.

Finding 10: The TJP’s flexible intake criteria and capacity for early intervention are unique features of this service model which could complement or add value to other therapeutic programs such as CISP.

The TJP enabled clients to engage with support even before appearing in Court, to build their relationships and engagement with appropriate services and achieve a degree of stability, with a clear plan to address issues, prior to sentencing. The TJ Lawyer put the nature of the client’s issues, their level of service engagement and rehabilitation progress to the Magistrate, who could take this information into account before arriving at an appropriate sentence. Magistrates regularly made continued engagement with the TJP a condition of orders made. This capacity for early engagement was considered by key informants to be a unique and valuable feature of the TJP model.

Due to its low-cost, community-based approach – working with established local health and social services in the community – the TJP is could be easily replicated in other settings. The model would be well-suited to regional towns and centres, where there is a strong sense of community and opportunities to work with community-based agencies and practitioners who are not solely focused on legal outcomes, but also the long-term wellbeing of clients and the community. With the Victorian Government funding the introduction of the CISP across several Regional Courts, TJPs would also be well-suited to brokerage funding.

5. Conclusion

The evaluation results and findings presented in this report highlight the significant achievements of the TJP and its impact on access to therapeutic services and improved legal, health and wellbeing outcomes for clients with complex needs at Shepparton Magistrates Court. The success of the TJP provides a powerful counter-narrative and challenges the current populist push for more punitive responses to law and order in Victoria. The TJP has demonstrated the significant and positive impact that more therapeutic approaches to the administration of justice can have on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and the community. It offers a low-cost and community-based model that would be readily adaptable in other regional and rural settings.

Key learnings from this evaluation are of particular relevance to Community Legal Centres, community health providers, and Court Services Victoria, who are designing and implementing therapeutic justice programs and services. In particular, findings from this evaluation can inform the roll-out of the CISP Program in regional Courts. The TJP model could complement this service by offering expanded access to early intervention support for clients with complex needs. In Courts where CISP or similar programs are yet to be introduced, the TJP model would be an effective and low-cost alternative.