

# Therapeutic Justice Program



Goulburn Valley CLC's Therapeutic Justice Program is delivered at the Shepparton Magistrates' Court three days a week, in partnership with Primary Care Connect. The program employs one Lawyer and one Therapeutic Case Manager. Both work at Primary Care Connect and the courts, breaking down traditional workplace barriers. The resulting relationships are leading to a cross-pollination of referrals and secondary consultations and an increase in client trust.

The program provides a holistic health and legal case management service that helps offenders to address underlying health and personal issues that prevent them dealing with their offending behaviour.

The three-year pilot program was launched in November 2015. By December 2015 it had already helped 58 clients, 33 more than targeted for the period.

The service is particularly beneficial for offenders who are not already engaged with services mandated by the courts. By working collaboratively with other agencies, the program has been able to identify and respond to systemic issues faced by clients.

The program has generated considerable media interest, including coverage by WIN News, ABC News and Shepparton News, which profiled the program after its first year of operation.

Now in its second year, the program is focused on delivering community legal education around Legal Health Checks to local agencies. Legal Health Checks help non-legal services to detect legal issues affecting their clients before they escalate to crisis.

To date, the program has delivered six Legal Health Check sessions. Following a request by a local agency, it has also delivered two sessions on another area of law. The program's community legal education target is eight sessions per project year.

Therapeutic Justice Program clients have been asked to assess their wellbeing across 10 indicators at intake, at the beginning of their court proceedings, upon completion of their court matters, and three months after court. Clients claimed marked improvements across all indicators.

'She "nailed it in Court." The lawyer is a force to be reckoned with. If it wasn't for the lawyer, I wouldn't have had the confidence to stand up in Court. She is my voice when I can't speak, calming and soothing... She comes across as very experienced and doesn't lose heart.' - Therapeutic Justice Program client



The Therapeutic Justice Program has assisted  
**140 CLIENTS** since March 2015



**84%** of Therapeutic Justice clients successfully engaged with the program

THERAPEUTIC JUSTICE LAWYER provided Primary Care Connect staff with  
**236** secondary consults