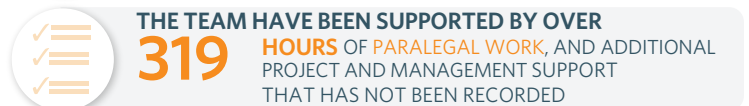
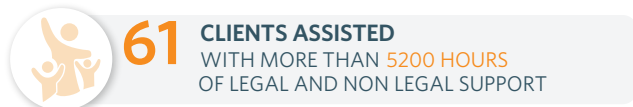


This snapshot provides an interim overview of the **Care and Protection** project run by **Ruah Legal Services**. The program is the first of its kind in WA, which provides a lawyer and a case worker to intensively support each client through their Care and Protection proceedings. We currently have 2 lawyers and 2 case workers on our dedicated Care and Protection team.

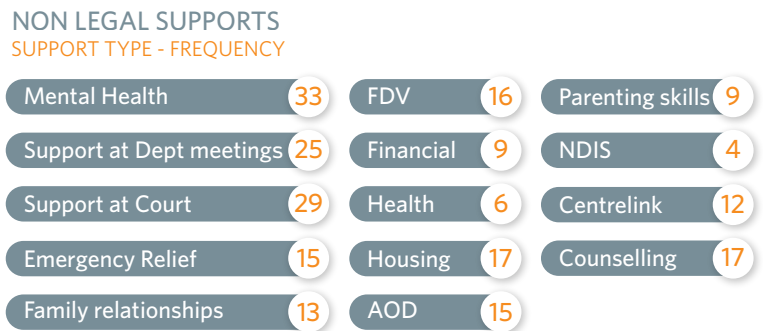
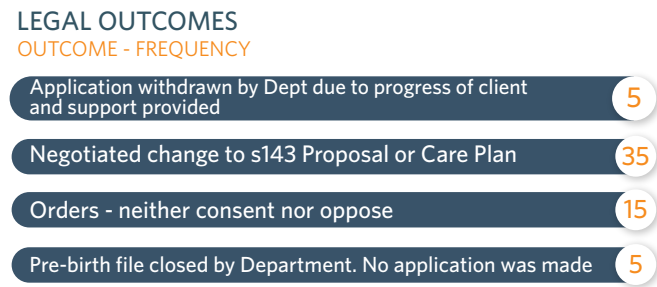
This snapshot illustrates data from **1 September 2020** until **31 December 2021** and shows the first evaluation data available for the project. The project aims to provide legal advice and representation and also social support to clients to ensure that they are empowered to make the best choices for their families.

Feedback from the Courts is also positive and indicative of reduced resource usage. A Magistrate from the Children's Court said that, "A legal service that is specialised results in less frustration and aggression due to a fear response. Clients are more confident, less anxious and it makes it easier.....What distinguishes Ruah is the wrap around service with additional support and having practical problems resolved".

## FAST FACTS

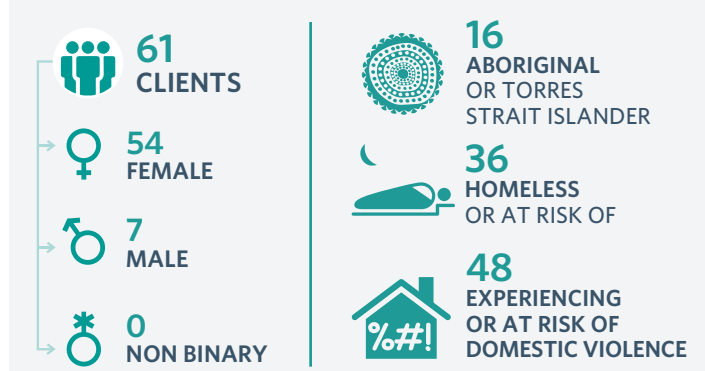


Of the **34 legal matters** that have concluded, the following **legal outcomes** and **non legal supports** have been achieved.<sup>1</sup>  
(Note: Multiple outcomes have been achieved per legal matter)



## THE MOST VULNERABLE CLIENTS

The **Care and Protection Project** supports some of the most vulnerable children and families in Perth.



<sup>1</sup> RLS has withdrawn from 10 services due to client disengagement (n = 6), no merit in application (n=4), and aggressive behaviour toward staff (n=1).

**86%** OF CLIENTS AGREED OR STRONGLY AGREED THAT AS A RESULT OF THIS SERVICE, THEY FELT THAT THEIR VOICE HAD BEEN HEARD IN CARE AND PROTECTION MATTERS.

**81%** OF CLIENTS AGREED OR STRONGLY AGREED THAT AS A RESULT OF THIS SERVICE, THEY BETTER UNDERSTOOD THE CARE AND PROTECTION PROCESS.

**86%** OF CLIENTS AGREED OR STRONGLY AGREED THAT THIS SERVICE HAD HELPED THEM FEEL MORE CONFIDENT ABOUT ENGAGING WITH CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES IN THE FUTURE.

**95%** OF CLIENTS AGREED OR STRONGLY AGREED THAT HAVING ACCESS TO BOTH LEGAL AND SOCIAL SUPPORTS FROM ONE SERVICE HAD BEEN VALUABLE.

**86%** OF CLIENTS AGREED OR STRONGLY AGREED THAT AS A RESULT OF THIS SERVICE THEY FELT MORE HOPEFUL FOR THE FUTURE.

## CLIENT COMMENTS FROM FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRES

What have been the biggest challenges you have experienced in your CAP proceedings? (for example: personal challenges, challenges dealing with the Department, challenges with the court hearings?)

"We didn't know we could get help. The department is very invasive. Dragging on - not able to enjoy the pregnancy. Quite cruel to be told, 'we'll see if you can keep your baby'."

### KEY THEMES

- DCP involvement – being bullied, going to meetings, their negativity, lack of trust in client, communication, and inconsistency.
- Personal mental health.
- Attendance at court.
- Anxiety around separation from children.
- Contact arrangements.

What supports have Ruah Legal Services provided that have assisted you manage these challenges?

"Coming to the meetings, helping keep things in perspective. Helping me to prioritize what is important to the department."

### KEY THEMES

- The legal advice and support to understand the legal process.
- Support to attend meetings.
- Help with managing disappointment, understanding, getting perspective.
- Liaison with DCP – support with communication and understanding what they require of the client.

What have been the best things about the Ruah CAP service?

"Professionalism, reassurance. How much knowledge they have and they go above and beyond. Communication is very thorough and informative."

### KEY THEMES

- The support from the case workers. This includes mental health support and practical supports such as transport and attending meetings with the client.
- Help navigating and interacting with the Department of Communities.
- Feeling comfortable with team members.
- Communication – reminders about appointments, court, etc.

Are there things about Ruah Legal Services you have not liked or that you think could be improved?

"Nope, I love your service - I tell everyone about you. Without you I would have walked away ages ago."

### KEY THEMES

- No (majority).
- After hours support and weekend support (n=1).
- Better communication about appointments (n=1).

What has changed in your life as a result of being engaged with Ruah Legal Services?

"How I see life - before RLS I thought my life was completely destroyed. You have given me hope that I can get through this and get my kids."

### KEY THEMES

- Feeling supported and having hope.
- Awareness of processes in the system.
- Increase in confidence.

What do you think would have been different (better or worse) if you had not engaged with Ruah Legal Services?

"I would have ran away and never looked back. I would have never seen my kids again. You helped me so much even when I wasn't honest, You have been a major support."

"I wouldn't be here to answer this question."

### KEY THEMES

- Having to navigate court.
- Not having access or contact with their children.
- Meetings wouldn't have been as positive.
- Lack of understanding and ability to engage in the process.

#### PROCESS AND SOURCE

The Care and Protection service is being evaluated through several different avenues.

1.The data from this snapshot was collected by way of client surveys and interviews designed by Ruah to gather some mid-project data and gain a better understanding of how the project was being received by clients and the impact it was making. The client interview has been conducted with 24 clients to date.

2.We are also using a Department of Social Services (DSS) survey. This data is comparative and can only be used as clients exit the service. To date we have collated 24 DSS intake surveys that help create a snapshot of who our clients are and a sense of their own understanding of their situation when initially accessing the Care and Protection Service.