

# Data Digests LawAccess 2002-2004

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Law and Justice Foundation of New South Wales  
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# Summary

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The goal of the Law and Justice Foundation's Access to Justice and Legal Needs Research Program is to identify the particular legal and access to justice needs of economically and socially disadvantaged people in New South Wales.

The *Data Digest* series of reports contributes to this research program by providing detailed information on the nature of legal inquiries made to the major public legal assistance services in this state. Such inquiries may be viewed as providing a picture of expressed legal in NSW.

This particular report examines legal inquiries made to LawAccess NSW between 2002 and 2004. LawAccess NSW is a free government telephone service providing information, advice and referrals for people with a legal problem. LawAccess NSW was established in September 2001 to assist people who experience difficulty in accessing other public legal services. The Advice services of LawAccess NSW are targeted to disadvantaged groups, such as persons living in rural and remote areas, Aboriginal people, people with a disability and people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

The types of legal inquiries made to LawAccess NSW, the demographic characteristics of persons seeking legal assistance, and the pathways taken by these persons to resolve their legal problems are detailed in this report.

## Type of legal matter

- More than half (56%) of all inquiries to LawAccess NSW made from 2002 to 2004 concerned civil law matters. Family law inquiries were the next most frequent (30%) type of legal inquiry. Fourteen per cent of inquiries related to criminal law matters.
- During the three-year period:
  - the number of family law inquiries increased by more than 94 per cent
  - the number of criminal law inquiries increased by 118 per cent
  - the number of civil law inquiries increased by 74 per cent
  - the overall number of inquiries increased by more than 85 per cent.
- Inquiries relating to children (under family law) accounted for the highest proportion of all inquiries (13.5%).
- Criminal offences represented 12.8 per cent of inquiries to LawAccess NSW, with motor/traffic offences accounting for the highest proportion (42%) of criminal offence inquiries, followed by offences against persons (22%) and theft & property offences (10%).
- Housing issues were the most common type of civil law inquiry, representing almost nine per cent of all inquiries. Credit/debt (8.2%), employment (7.8%), will/estates (6.7%) and accidents, injury & liability (6.4%) were also common topics of civil law inquiries.

- Legal inquiries relating to children (family law), domestic violence, criminal offences (criminal law), credit/debt, employment and housing (civil law) rose significantly from 2002 to 2004. On the other hand, legal inquiries relating to family relationships (family law), the legal system and wills/estates (civil law) decreased significantly over the same period.

## Demographics of service users

### Gender

- Females were the main users of LawAccess NSW, making significantly more inquiries than expected from their share in the NSW population.
- Men and women made roughly the same proportion of civil law inquiries, but women made significantly more family law inquiries and significantly fewer criminal law inquiries compared with men.
- Four specific areas of law – children (family law), criminal offences (criminal law), credit/debt and housing (civil law) – appeared in the top five inquiries for both men and women.
- Women made a higher proportion of family law inquiries than men across all specific areas of family law. Women also made a significantly higher proportion of health, housing and wills/estates inquiries than men.
- Men made a significantly higher proportion of criminal law inquiries than women, and this was the case across all three specific areas of criminal law, including victims of crime. Men also made a significantly higher proportion of civil law inquiries concerning accidents, injury & liability, business/media, consumers, credit/debt, employment, government, immigration/refugees and the legal system.

### Age

- Persons aged 25 to 54 years, were the main users of LawAccess NSW. This group was involved in approximately 80 per cent of inquiries to the service but made up just over 43 per cent of the NSW population.
- Persons under 25 years of age were using the service more in 2004 than in the previous two years, although their usage continued to be much lower than expected given their share in the NSW population. The same applied for persons aged 55 years and older.
- For each age group, the highest proportion of inquiries to LawAccess NSW concerned civil law matters. However, there is a clear trend of an increasing need for legal assistance for civil law matters as people get older.
- Criminal law inquiries were more common for those aged less than 25 years, whereas family law inquiries were more common for the 25 to 34 and 35 to 44 age groups.

## Region of residence

- Rural/regional NSW and the greater Sydney metropolitan area had an identical rate of legal inquiries to LawAccess NSW per capita (i.e. 11.9 inquiries per 1000 resident population).
- Gosford-Wyong, Inner Sydney, Richmond-Tweed, Central Western Sydney, Mid-North Coast and Outer Western Sydney recorded the highest rates of legal inquiries to LawAccess NSW.
- Murray, Murrumbidgee, Central Northern Sydney, Central West, Northern Beaches and Outer South Western Sydney had the lowest rates of legal inquiries to LawAccess NSW.
- In both the greater Sydney metropolitan area and regional/rural NSW, the highest proportion of inquiries to LawAccess NSW was for civil law matters, followed by family law matters, then by criminal law matters.
- However, the proportion of inquiries concerning civil law matters tended to be significantly higher in the Sydney metropolitan area compared with the area of the state outside Sydney. Furthermore, the proportion of inquiries concerning family law matters tended to be significantly higher in areas of regional/rural NSW than in the Sydney area.
- LawAccess NSW provided a higher level of legal advice to persons living outside Sydney. Around half of all legal advice was provided to inquirers living in regional and rural areas of NSW. By contrast, this group made up only 37 per cent of the NSW population. This is reflective of the service policy of LawAccess NSW to assist people who have difficulty in accessing other public legal services. Persons residing in regional and rural NSW are a target group identified by LawAccess NSW for its services.

## Pathways

### Source of inquiry

- Service users found out about LawAccess NSW in a range of ways, with the top five external sources of inquiries being the telephone book (16%), the Law Society of NSW (7%), friend/family (4%), courts/chamber registrars (3%) and community organisations (2%).
- Inquiries that were dealt with by LawAccess NSW through the provision of information only or through the provision of advice tended to originate from slightly different sources. Information inquiries tended to come from the telephone book, whereas inquiries to the Advice service tended to originate from 'active' referral points such as other public legal services (i.e. community legal centres and Legal Aid), community organisations, police and courts/chamber registrars.
- The source of inquiry, in general, also reflected the nature of the legal inquiry. Inquirers with a family law problem were more likely to come to LawAccess from a friend/family member, community organisation, a government agency or legal publication, whereas those with a criminal law problem were more likely to be referred by police or court/chamber registrar. Persons with a civil law problem were

more likely to make an inquiry after learning about LawAccess from the NSW Law Society, a media source or the telephone book.

### **Referral destination**

- In almost half (48%) of all inquiries, LawAccess NSW considered that the matter had been dealt with satisfactorily and no further referral of the inquiry was considered necessary.
- For those inquiries where LawAccess made a referral, a large proportion (35%) of referred inquiries went to public legal services. Legal Aid NSW, in particular, received almost three out of every four inquiries referred by LawAccess NSW to public legal assistance services.
- There was an even split of the remaining inquiries referred by LawAccess NSW with courts and tribunals picking up 14 per cent of referred inquiries, government agencies receiving 13 per cent, and private legal services, community organisations and dispute resolution services each receiving 12 per cent of all inquiries referred on by LawAccess NSW.

# Background

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- LawAccess NSW ([www.lawaccess.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lawaccess.nsw.gov.au)) is a free government telephone service that provides legal information, advice and referrals for people who have a legal problem in NSW. LawAccess was set up to assist people who have difficulty in accessing other public legal services. In particular, LawAccess assists customers who:
  - are living in regional or rural NSW;
  - are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders;
  - have a disability;
  - are from a non-English speaking background.
- LawAccess data were available for the 2002 to 2004 calendar years representing 253,079 inquiries.
- These data were loaded into the Law and Justice Foundation's *Data Digest Prototype*, an interactive, integrated data analysis and mapping application. The Prototype was used to generate most of the information contained in this report.
- The inquiry was the unit of measure for all data analyses. For each inquiry, available information was analysed on the type of legal matter, the source of inquiry to LawAccess, the destination of any referral made by LawAccess, and the demographic characteristics of the person who made the inquiry.
- The demographic data collected by LawAccess comprised gender, age and region of residence.<sup>1</sup>
- Data for each variable were mapped to common categories, wherever possible.
- Legal matters were categorised into three tiers using a classification developed by the Law and Justice Foundation of NSW for the initial Data Digest (2004) report. This classification system — involving *Broad*, *Specific* and *Detailed* areas of law — has been largely preserved. Nonetheless, the system has changed in a number of ways to incorporate suggestions from legal service agencies and to provide additional granularity, particularly in relation to matters categorised under family law.<sup>2</sup> *Appendix A* presents the taxonomy of legal matters used by the Foundation to categorise and standardise legal inquiries data.
- Changes over time or differences in the nature of inquiries between demographic groups that were found to be statistically significant are identified in this report through the use of the term '*significant*' (in italics). Chi-square tests were used to

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<sup>1</sup> LawAccess NSW also records information on the language spoken by the inquirer. This information was not used in analyses as English was recorded for 99.9% of inquiries.

<sup>2</sup> The two main changes involved moving domestic violence inquiries from crime to family and sub-dividing all previous matters categorised under family law into three new specific areas of law: children, financial matters and relationships.

determine significance but are not reported in the text. For a brief explanation of chi-square tests see *Appendix B*.

- Two relative measures are used in this report to take into consideration population differences across the various areas of NSW:
  - i The relative number of inquiries was calculated as a *Rate per 1000* using resident population figures from the 2001 Census.<sup>3</sup>
  - ii The *Index of Concentration (IC)* was calculated to show whether a particular group (e.g. males) made a higher or lower proportion of inquiries than expected given their share in the population. An IC over 100 indicates that the particular group made a higher proportion of inquiries than expected given their proportion in the population. An IC under 100 indicates a lower proportion of inquiries than expected. Additional detail on the Index of Concentration, including the calculation method, is provided in *Appendix C*.

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<sup>3</sup> NSW resident population figures were obtained from the Australian Bureau of Statistics SEIFA 2001 CD. These figures may differ slightly from those used in the Foundation's 2004 Data Digest report.



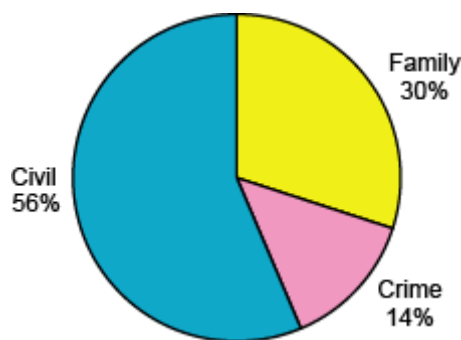
# The type of legal matter

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## Broad area of law

Figure 1 shows that more than half of all inquiries to LawAccess NSW in the 2002 to 2004 period were in the area of civil law (56%). Family law inquiries were the next most frequent (30%), with the remaining inquiries (14%) related to crime.

**Figure 1: Percentage of inquiries by broad area of law**  
LawAccess NSW, 2002–2004



**Notes:** N=252 966. An additional 113 records were missing legal matter information.

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data).

## Trends in broad area of law

- Table 1 and Figure 2a show that there has been a small decrease in the proportion of civil law inquiries - down from around 58 per cent in both 2002 and 2003 to 54 per cent in 2004. Over the same period, there has been small increases in the proportion of family law inquiries (up by 1%) and criminal law inquiries (up by 2%).
- However, these small proportional changes hide a *significant* increase in the number of inquiries to LawAccess NSW across all three areas of law. From 2002 to 2004:
  - the number of family law inquiries increased by more than 94 per cent;
  - the number of criminal law inquiries increased by almost 118 per cent;
  - the number of civil law inquiries increased by 74 per cent; and,
  - the *total* number of inquiries increased by more than 85 per cent.
- Civil law inquiries *significantly* decreased from 2003 to 2004. Over the same period, there was a *significant* increase in both family law and criminal law inquiries.

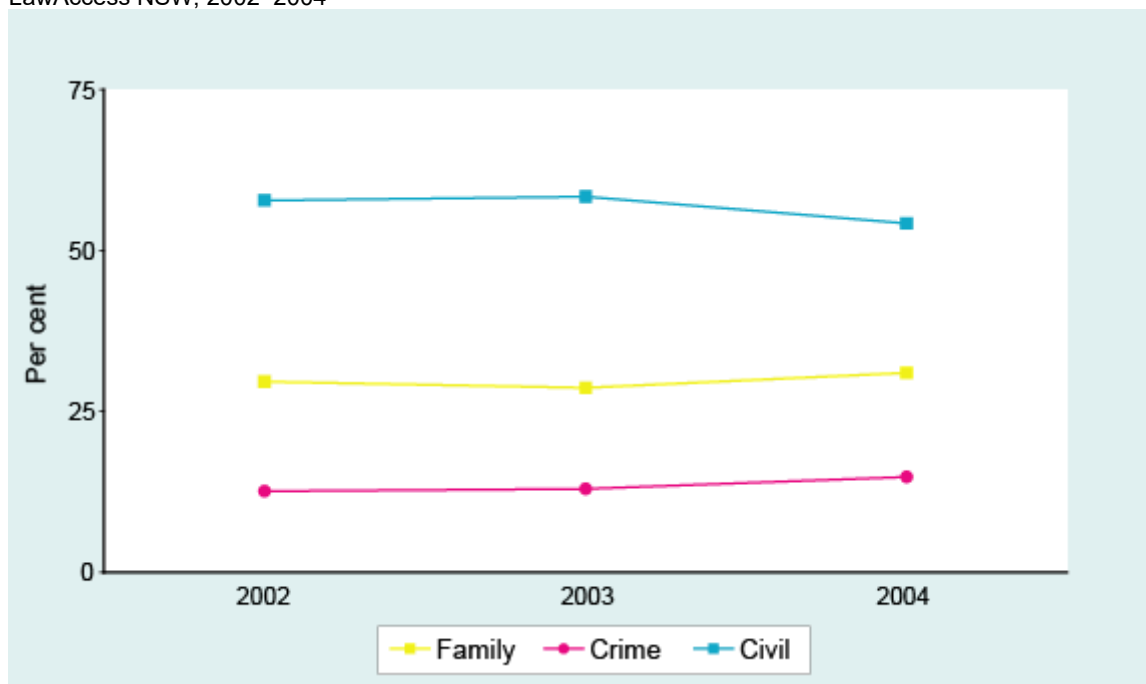
**Table 1: Number and percentage of inquiries by broad area of law and year**  
LawAccess NSW, 2002–2004

Broad area of law		2002	2003	2004	All
Family	%	29.6	28.7	31.0	29.9
	No.	18 083	22 541	35 102	75 726
Crime	%	12.6	13.0	14.8	13.7
	No.	7 707	10 213	16 783	34 703
Civil	%	57.8	58.4	54.2	56.3
	No.	35 256	45 900	61 381	142 537
Total	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	No.	61 046	78 654	113 266	252 966

**Notes:** N=252 966. An additional 113 records were missing legal matter information.

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data).

**Figure 2a: Percentage of total inquiries in family, crime and civil law by year**  
LawAccess NSW, 2002–2004



**Notes:** N=252 966. An additional 113 records were missing legal matter information.

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data).

- Figure 2b provides a breakdown of inquiries for each year in terms of broad area of law across each LawAccess service — that is, whether the inquiry was dealt with as an *Information* or as an *Advice*.<sup>4</sup>
- It may be seen that the changes to the proportion of civil, family and criminal law inquiries from 2002 to 2004 were largely the result of a *significant* decrease in the proportion of civil inquiries

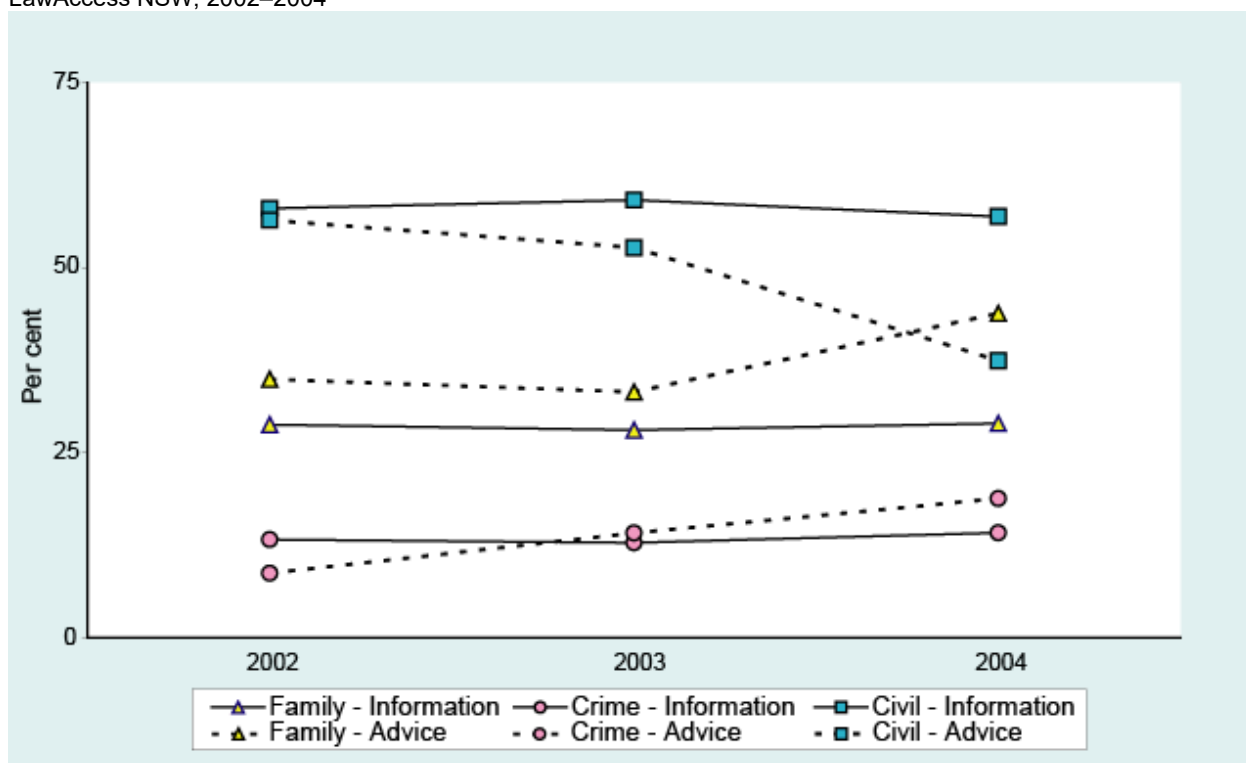
<sup>4</sup> Inquiries to LawAccess NSW will be dealt with as an Information or as an Advice. The difference involves the level of assistance and support provided. Inquiries handled by a customer service officer and dealt with by means of the provision of basic legal information are recorded as an Information. The provision of a legal advice session by a qualified legal officer characterises an Advice.

dealt with by the *Advice* service (Note: the Advice service is represented by the dotted lines in Figure 2b). At the same time, the Advice service saw a *significant* increase in the proportion of family law and criminal law inquiries.

- On the other hand, the profile of family, criminal and civil law matters within the *Information* service (represented by the solid lines in Figure 2b) remained largely unchanged across the three-year period for each broad area of law.

**Figure 2b: Percentage of inquiries in family, crime and civil law by year and service (Information and Advice)**

LawAccess NSW, 2002–2004



**Notes:** N=252 966. An additional 113 records were missing legal matter information.

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data).

## Specific area of law

- Table 2 provides a further breakdown of inquiries to LawAccess NSW in terms of specific area of law.<sup>5</sup>
- Family law inquiries relating to children accounted for the highest proportion of all inquiries (13.5%). Domestic violence, which is categorised in this report under family law, accounted for around four per cent of all inquiries.
- Criminal *offences* represented almost 13 per cent of inquiries to LawAccess, whereas inquiries concerning the criminal justice process or being a victim of crime together represented less than one per cent of LawAccess inquiries.
- Table 3 shows that motor/traffic offences accounted for the highest proportion (42.2%) of criminal offence inquiries, followed by offences against persons (21.7%), and theft & property offences (9.8%).

<sup>5</sup> Figures for specific area of law and detailed matter type are reported in the text to one decimal place.

- In terms of categories of civil law, housing represented 8.7 per cent of all inquiries, followed by credit/debt (8.2%), employment (7.8%), will/estates (6.7%) and accidents, injury & liability (6.4%).

**Table 2: Percentage of inquiries by specific area of law and year**

LawAccess NSW, 2002–2004

<i>Area of law</i>		<i>2002</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>All</i>
<i>Broad</i>	<i>Specific</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>Family</b>	Children	10.6	12.2	15.9	13.5
	Domestic violence	3.1	4.0	4.1	3.8
	Financial matters	4.2	4.0	4.8	4.4
	Relationships	11.7	8.4	6.1	8.2
<b>Total Family</b>		<b>29.6</b>	<b>28.7</b>	<b>31.0</b>	<b>29.9</b>
<b>Crime</b>	Criminal offences	11.5	12.0	14.0	12.8
	Criminal process	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.3
	Victims of crime	0.9	0.7	0.4	0.6
<b>Total Crime</b>		<b>12.6</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>14.8</b>	<b>13.7</b>
<b>Civil</b>	Accidents, injury & liability	6.2	5.8	6.9	6.4
	Business/media	1.9	2.2	1.8	2.0
	Consumers	2.8	3.5	2.9	3.0
	Credit/debt	6.9	8.2	8.9	8.2
	Employment	5.8	8.9	8.2	7.8
	Government	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
	Health	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.4
	Housing	8.0	9.0	9.0	8.7
	Human rights	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.8
	Immigration/refugees	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5
	Legal system	3.9	2.8	2.4	2.9
	Wills/estates	7.5	6.5	6.4	6.7
	Other (civil)	11.6	8.4	4.2	7.3
<b>Total Civil</b>		<b>57.8</b>	<b>58.4</b>	<b>54.2</b>	<b>56.3</b>
Total (%)		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total (No.)		61 046	78 654	113 266	252 966

**Notes:** N=252 966. An additional 113 records were missing legal matter information.

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data).

**Table 3: Top five criminal offence inquiries**

LawAccess NSW, 2002–2004

	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Criminal offences</b>	%	%	%	%
Motor/traffic offences	34.1	39.7	47.3	42.2
Offences against persons	21.9	21.3	21.8	21.7
Theft & property offences	7.8	10.6	10.2	9.8
Drug offences	3.6	3.6	4.5	4.1
Fraud & misappropriation	3.0	3.5	3.1	3.2

**Notes:** N=32 254. "Crime - other" represented 17.0% of criminal offence inquiries for this period.

This category is comprised of a wide variety of miscellaneous Commonwealth and State offences.

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data).

### Trends in specific area of law

The following *significant* changes in specific law categories were noted for LawAccess NSW inquiries from 2002 to 2004 (see Table 2):

- Family law inquiries relating to:
  - children increased from 10.6% of all inquiries in 2002 to 15.9% of all inquiries in 2004
  - domestic violence increased from 3.1% of all inquiries in 2002 to 4.1% of all inquiries in 2004
  - relationships decreased from 11.7% of all inquiries in 2002 to 6.1% of all inquiries in 2004.
- Criminal law inquiries relating to:
  - criminal offences increased from 11.5% of all inquiries in 2002 to 14.0% of all inquiries in 2004
  - criminal processes increased from 0.2% of all inquiries in 2002 to 0.4% of all inquiries in 2004
  - victims of crime decreased from 0.9% of all inquiries in 2002 to 0.4% of all inquiries in 2004.
- Civil law inquiries relating to:
  - credit/debt increased from 6.9% of all inquiries in 2002 to 8.9% of all inquiries in 2004

- employment increased from 5.8% of all inquiries in 2002 to 8.2% of all inquiries in 2004
- housing increased from 8.0% of all inquiries in 2002 to 9.0% of all inquiries in 2004
- human rights increased from 0.8% of all inquiries in 2002 to 0.9% of all inquiries in 2004
- the legal system decreased from 3.9% of all inquiries in 2002 to 2.4% of all inquiries in 2004
- wills/estates decreased from 7.5% of all inquiries in 2002 to 6.4% of all inquiries in 2004.

## Detailed matter type

A breakdown of LawAccess NSW inquiries by detailed matter type is provided in Table 4.

### Family Law

- Residence/contact matters made up 11.2% of all inquiries to LawAccess. These matters represented more than four in every five inquiries (83%) relating to the children sub-category of family law. Child support matters made up the bulk of the remaining matters (14%) within this sub-category.
- Domestic violence made up four per cent of all inquiries to LawAccess, with the vast majority of such inquiries relating to Apprehended Violence Orders.
- Family relationship matters represented eight per cent of all inquiries to LawAccess, with inquiries relating to divorce and de facto relationships comprising 25 per cent and 15 per cent respectively of inquiries under the sub-category.

### Criminal Law

- Inquiries concerning criminal offences made up 13 per cent of all inquiries. Table 3 provided a breakdown of the five most common criminal offences inquired about.
- Inquiries concerning the criminal process represented less than a half of a per cent of all inquiries. The relatively small number of criminal process inquiries was evenly split across bail (25%), police (23%), prisons (25%) and warrants/extradition (24%).
- Victims of crime inquiries made up less than one per cent of all inquiries to LawAccess, with coronial inquests comprising a small proportion (4%) of victim of crime inquiries.

### Civil Law

- Accidents, injury & liability inquiries represented six per cent of all inquiries, with traffic accidents involving either *property damage* (30%) or *personal injury* (28%) making up the bulk of matters under this sub-category.

- Debt (86%), bankruptcy (10%) and credit (4%) provided the breakdown of credit/debt inquiries. Together these matters made up eight per cent of inquiries to LawAccess.
- Employment inquiries also made up roughly eight per cent of inquiries to LawAccess, with general employment matters (46%), unfair termination (28%) and contracts (15%) figuring prominently within this sub-category. Workers' compensation inquiries made up around 11 per cent of employment related inquiries.
- Four in every ten (42%) inquiries concerning government related to pensions and allowances. Government inquiries represented just 1.5% of the total number of inquiries to LawAccess.
- Housing matters made up a little less than nine per cent of all inquiries. Tenancy (23%), neighbours (21%) and property law (19%) dominated housing inquiries. Fences (12%) and conveyancing (12%) inquiries also featured prominently.
- Two-thirds (67%) of inquiries concerning the legal system involved complaints about lawyers, with this sub-category making up just three per cent of all inquiries.
- Inquiries regarding wills and estates made up just under seven per cent of all inquiries to LawAccess. Probate (70%) was the most common form of inquiry concerning wills and estates.

**Table 4: Percentage of inquiries by detailed matter type**

LawAccess NSW, 2002 to 2004

Area of Law		Inquiry		
<i>Specific</i>	<i>Detailed Matter Type</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>% of total</i>	<i>% of specific category</i>
<b>Family</b>				
<b>Children</b>	Adoption	521	0.2	2
	Child protection	425	0.2	1
	Child support	4 906	1.9	14
	Residence/contact	28 259	11.2	83
	<b>Total</b>	<b>34 111</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Domestic violence</b>	Apprehended Violence Orders	9 044	3.6	93
	Domestic violence	673	0.3	7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>9 717</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Financial matters</b>	Property - family	11 065	4.4	99
	Spouse maintenance	107	0.0	1



	<b>Total</b>	<b>11 172</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Relationships</b>	De facto relationships	3 146	1.2	15
	Divorce	5 105	2.0	25
	Family - other	12 475	4.9	60
	<b>Total</b>	<b>20 726</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Crime</b>				
<b>Criminal offences</b>	Drug offences	1 312	0.5	4
	Firearms/weapons	162	0.1	1
	Fraud & misappropriation	1 031	0.4	3
	Justice offences	189	0.1	1
	Motor/traffic offences	13 619	5.4	42
	Offences against persons	6 994	2.8	22
	Street offences	321	0.1	1
	Theft & property offences	3 153	1.2	10
	Crime - other	5 473	2.2	17
	<b>Total</b>	<b>32 254</b>	<b>12.8</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Criminal process</b>	Arrest	8	0.0	1
	Bail	211	0.1	25
	Fines	13	0.0	2
	Police	190	0.1	23
	Prisons	210	0.1	25
	Warrants/extradition	202	0.1	24
	<b>Total</b>	<b>834</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Victims of crime</b>	Coronial inquests	63	0.0	4
	Victims of crime	1 552	0.6	96
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1 615</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Civil</b>				
<b>Accidents, injury and liability</b>	Accidents	39	0.0	0
	Personal injury	4 448	1.8	28
	Traffic accident - personal injury	858	0.3	5

	Traffic accident - property damage	4 810	1.9	30
	Other negligence/liability	5 937	2.3	37
	<b>Total</b>	<b>16 092</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Business/Media</b>	Business	45	0.0	1
	Contracts - business	3 513	1.4	71
	Intellectual property	174	0.1	4
	Media law	1 230	0.5	25
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4 962</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Consumers</b>	Banking	55	0.0	1
	Consumer protection	3 400	1.3	44
	Consumers	30	0.0	0
	Contracts - consumers	2 480	1.0	32
	Insurance	1 735	0.7	23
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7 700</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Credit/Debt</b>	Bankruptcy	2 165	0.9	10
	Credit	764	0.3	4
	Debt	17 744	7.0	86
	<b>Total</b>	<b>20 673</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Employment</b>	Contracts - employment	2 880	1.1	15
	Employment	9 105	3.6	46
	Unfair termination	5 571	2.2	28
	Workers compensation	2 264	0.9	11
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19 820</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Government</b>	Administrative law	716	0.3	19
	Environment	232	0.1	6
	Freedom of Information	298	0.1	8
	Government	671	0.3	18
	Local Government	13	0.0	0
	Pensions and allowances	1 590	0.6	42
	Taxation	214	0.1	6

	Veterans	89	0.0	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3 823</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Health</b>	Health	370	0.1	37
	Mental Health	641	0.3	63
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1 011</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Housing</b>	Animals	1 289	0.5	6
	Conveyancing	2 580	1.0	12
	Fences	2 676	1.1	12
	Housing	826	0.3	4
	Neighbours	4 585	1.8	21
	Noise	253	0.1	1
	Nuisance	440	0.2	2
	Property law	4 234	1.7	19
	Retirement villages	68	0.0	0
	Strata title	137	0.1	1
	Tenancy	5 035	2.0	23
	<b>Total</b>	<b>22 123</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Human rights</b>	Discrimination/EEO	1 141	0.5	53
	Guardianship/incapacity	996	0.4	47
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2 137</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Immigration/Refugees</b>	Immigration	1 258	0.5	95
	Refugees	67	0.0	5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1 325</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Legal system</b>	Complaints about lawyers	4 956	2.0	67
	Legal services	2 422	1.0	33
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7 378</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Wills/Estates</b>	Family provision	2 104	0.8	12
	Power of Attorney	2 939	1.2	17
	Probate	11 927	4.7	70
	Wills	8	0.0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>16 978</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Other (Civil)</b>	Civil - other	18 515	7.3	100
	<b>Total</b>	<b>18 515</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total</b>		252 966	100.0	100

**Notes:** N=252 966. An additional 113 records were missing legal matter information.

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data).

# Demographic characteristics of service users

## Gender

**Table 5: Percentage of inquiries by gender and service (Information and Advice)**

LawAccess NSW, 2002–2004

Gender	Information %	Advice %	Total %	IC	NSW Pop. (2001 Census) %
Male	37.2	40.8	37.6	76	49.4
Female	62.8	59.2	62.4	123	50.6
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0		100.0
<i>Total (No.)</i>	<i>219 582</i>	<i>33 354</i>	<i>252 936</i>		

**Notes:** Shaded areas indicate that the Index of Concentration (IC) is greater than 100.

N=252 936. An additional 143 records were missing gender. Prior to 2003, LawAccess recorded a default value of female where the gender of the inquirer was not identified

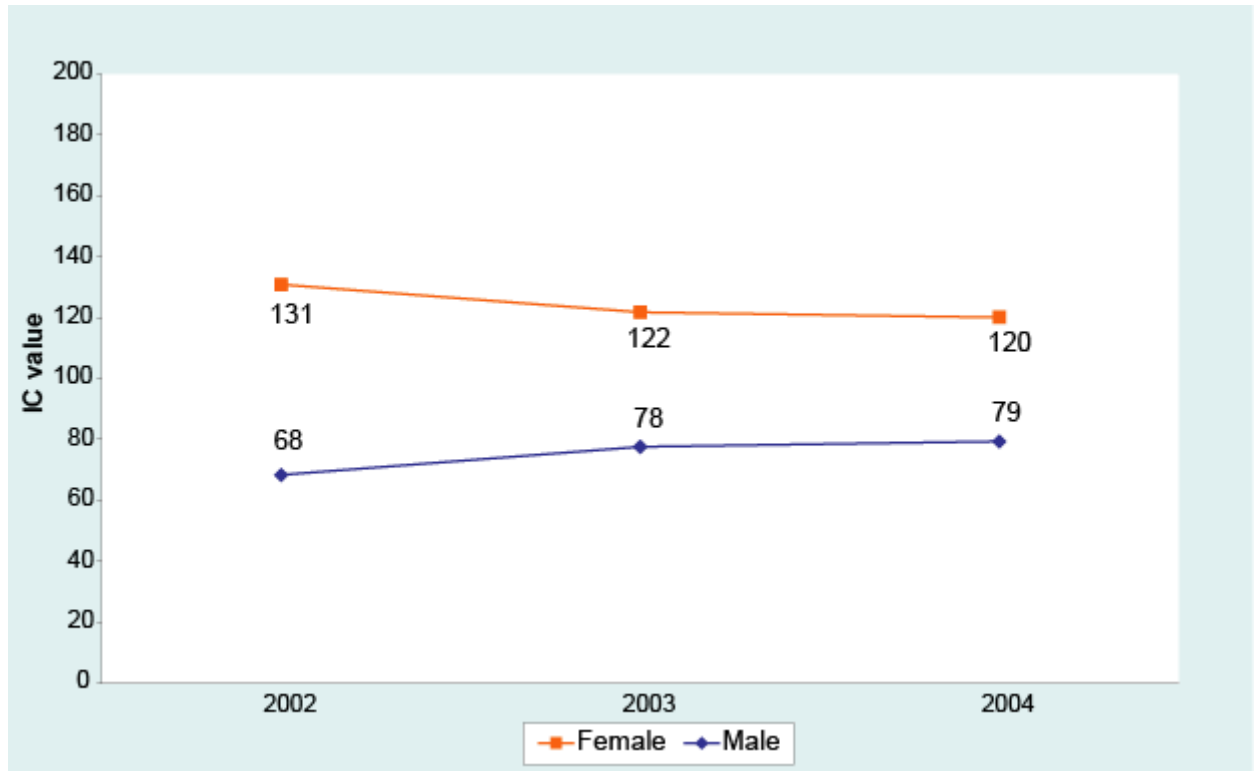
**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data) and Australian Bureau of Statistics SEIFA 2001 population statistics.

- Females were the main users of LawAccess NSW (Table 5), making *significantly* more inquiries than expected given their share in the NSW population.
- However, a *significantly* higher proportion of Advice inquiries involved men when compared with the proportion of men making Information inquiries.

### Trends in inquiries by gender

- Figure 3 indicates that there has been a slight drop in the proportion of inquiries being made by females. However, it should be noted that prior to 2003 LawAccess NSW recorded a default value (female) where gender was not identified. This would have resulted in an inflated Index of Concentration value for females in 2002.

**Figure 3: Index of concentration of inquiries by gender and year**  
LawAccess NSW, 2002–2004



**Notes:** N=252 936. An additional 143 records were missing gender. In 2002, LawAccess recorded a default value of female where the gender of the inquirer was not identified

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data) and Australian Bureau of Statistics SEIFA 2001 population statistics.

### Type of legal matter by gender

- The breakdown of inquiries by broad area of law for men and women was:
  - *Men: Family (25%), Crime (18%), Civil (57%)*
  - *Women: Family (33%), Crime (11%), Civil (56%)*
- Men and women made roughly the same proportion of civil law inquiries, but men made *significantly* fewer family law and *significantly* more criminal law inquiries than women.
- Table 6 shows for men and women separately the top 5 specific areas of law (ranked in order of frequency of inquiries) to LawAccess NSW in the period 2002 to 2004.
- Four specific areas of law — namely, children (family law), criminal offences (criminal law), credit/debt and housing (civil law) — appear in the top 5 list for both men's and women's inquiries.
- Criminal offences (criminal law) and children (family law) comprised the top 2 inquiries for both men and women, although not in the same order.

**Table 6: Top five specific area of law inquiries by gender**  
LawAccess NSW, 2002–2004

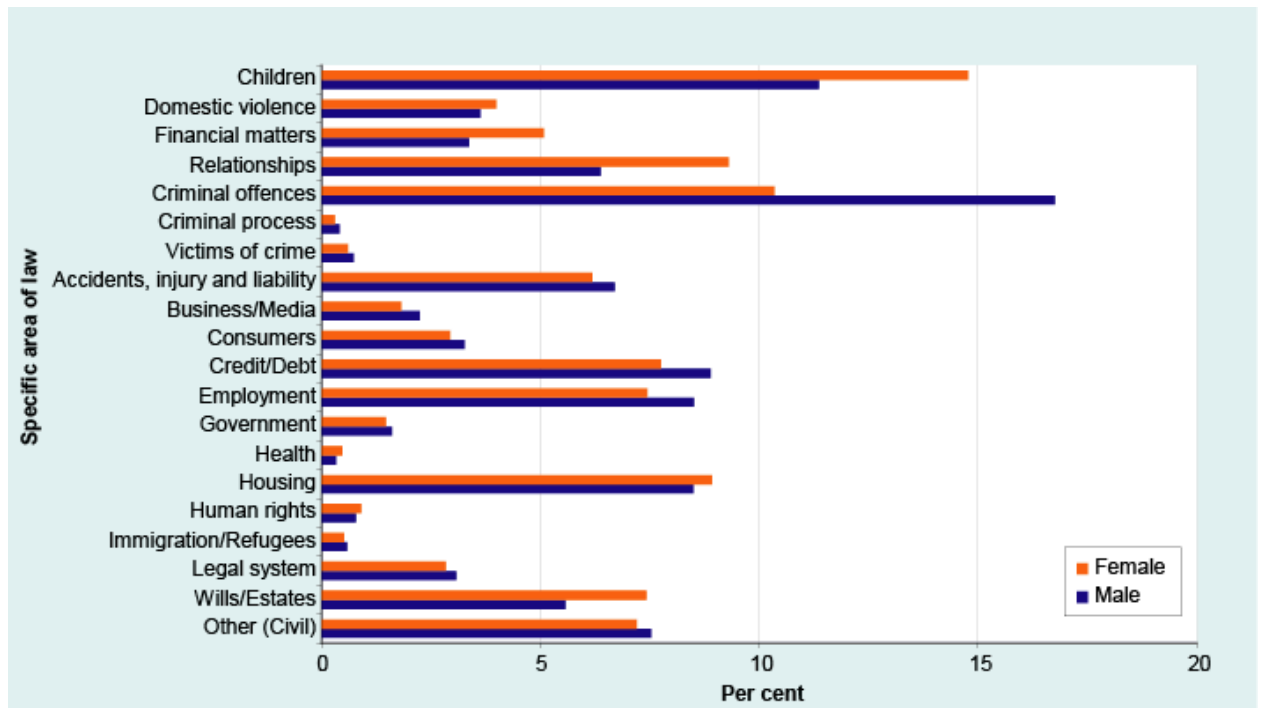
<i>Gender</i>	<i>Specific area of law</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>Male</b>	Criminal offences	16.7
	Children	11.4
	Credit/Debt	8.9
	Employment	8.5
	Housing	8.5
<b>Female</b>	Children	14.8
	Criminal offences	10.3
	Relationships	9.3
	Housing	8.9
	Credit/Debt	7.7

**Notes:** N=252 936. An additional 143 records were missing gender. In 2002, LawAccess recorded a default value of female where the gender of the inquirer was not identified

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data).

- Figure 4 presents a breakdown of legal inquiries by gender with regard to specific area of law. It shows that:
  - women made a *significantly* higher proportion of family law inquiries than men, and this was the case across all four specific categories of family law (i.e. children, domestic violence, financial matters and relationships)
  - the other specific law categories where women made a *significantly* higher proportion of inquiries than men were civil law inquiries relating to health, housing and wills/estates
  - men made a *significantly* higher proportion of criminal law inquiries than women, and this was the case across all three specific categories of criminal law (i.e. offences, criminal processes and victims of crime)
  - men also made a *significantly* higher proportion of inquiries in the civil law areas of accidents, injury & liability, business/media, consumers, credit/debt, employment, government, immigration/refugees and the legal system.

**Figure 4: Percentage of inquiries by gender and specific area of law**  
LawAccess NSW, 2002–2004



**Notes:** N=252 936. An additional 143 records were missing gender. In 2002, LawAccess recorded a default value of female where the gender of the inquirer was not identified

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data)

## Age

- Date of birth information was not disclosed by the inquirer in 23 per cent of inquiries to LawAccess NSW. It should also be noted that, prior to 2003, LawAccess recorded a default value of 1970 where date of birth was not identified. This would have inflated the number of inquiries recorded for the 35 to 44 age group in 2002.
- Table 7 shows that the main users of LawAccess services were the 25 to 34, 35 to 44 and 45 to 54 age groups. Each of these groups was over-represented up to twice the level of inquiries expected from their share in the NSW population. For instance, the 25 to 34 year olds represented 14.5 per cent of the NSW population (2001 Census) but made more than double that level of inquiries (29.4%) to LawAccess. Overall, persons aged 25 to 54 years made up just over 43 per cent of the NSW population but were involved in approximately 80 per cent of inquiries to LawAccess.
- The two youngest age groups, representing inquirers under the age of 25, had a lower than expected proportion of inquiries (7.1%) given their numbers in the NSW population (34.2%).
- The oldest age group (65 years and over) also had a level of inquiries (4.3%) much lower than expected given their proportion in the NSW population (13.2%).



- The age differences in inquiries to LawAccess (noted above) held true for both Information and Advice inquiries.

**Table 7: Percentage of inquiries by age group and service (Information and Advice)**  
LawAccess NSW, 2002–2004

Age group	Information %	Advice %	Total %	IC	NSW Pop. (2001 Census) %
17 and under	0.2	0.3	0.2	1	25.0
18 to 24	6.6	8.5	6.9	75	9.2
25 to 34	28.7	33.4	29.4	203	14.5
35 to 44	30.2	27.9	29.8	195	15.3
45 to 54	21.2	17.8	20.7	153	13.5
55 to 64	8.8	7.4	8.6	92	9.4
65 and over	4.3	4.8	4.3	33	13.2
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0		100.0
<i>Total (No.)</i>	<i>167 682</i>	<i>28 269</i>	<i>195 951</i>		

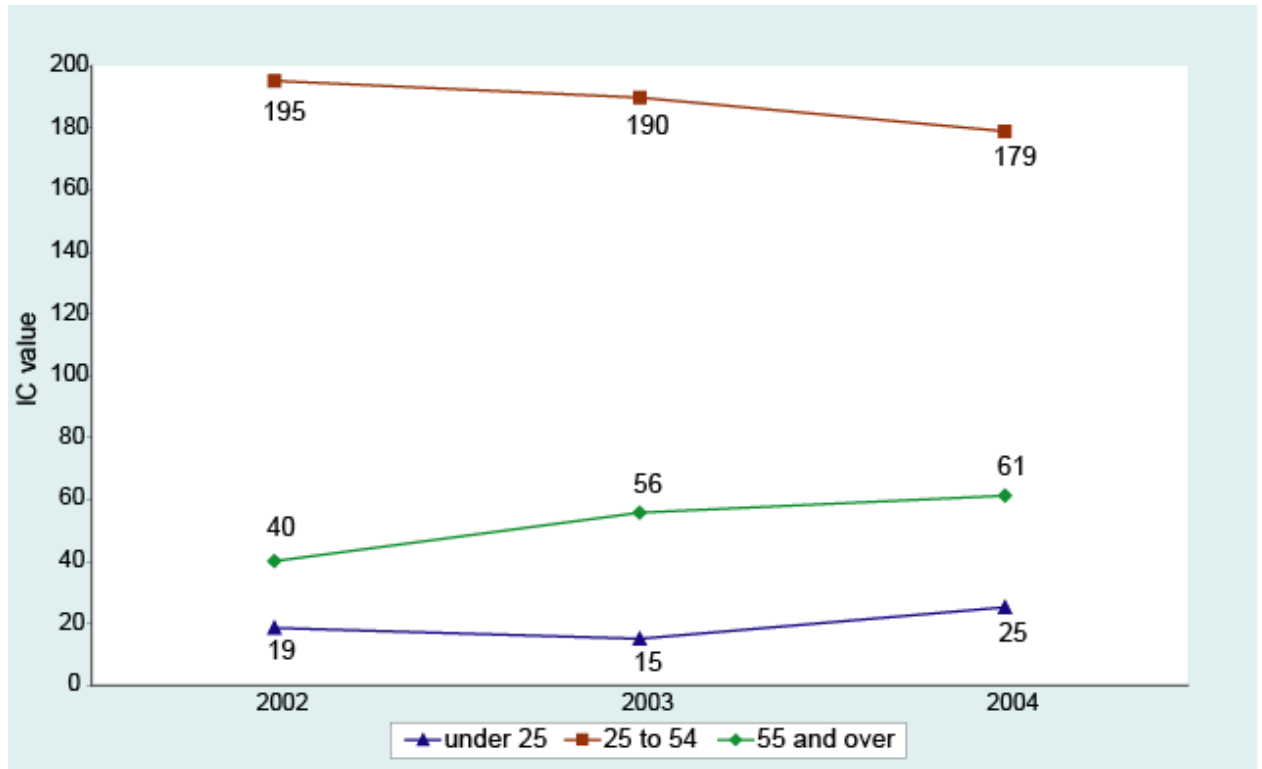
**Notes:** N=195 951. Date of birth was not disclosed in an additional 56 542 (or 23% of) inquiries. The range of valid ages was 10 to 93 years. In 2002, LawAccess NSW recorded a default value of 1970 where date of birth was not disclosed. Shaded areas indicate that the Index of Concentration (IC) is greater than 100.

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data) and Australian Bureau of Statistics SEIFA 2001 population statistics.

### Trends in age of inquirers

- Figure 5 reveals a *significant* trend in the use of LawAccess NSW by different age groups. Persons under 25 years of age were using the service more in 2004 than in the previous two years, although their usage continued to be much lower than expected given their numbers in the NSW population.
- Similarly, those aged 55 and older were using LawAccess more in 2004 than in the previous two years, although again their level of overall contact was lower than expected given their proportion in the general population.

**Figure 5: Index of concentration of inquiries by age (banded) and year**  
LawAccess NSW, 2002 to 2004



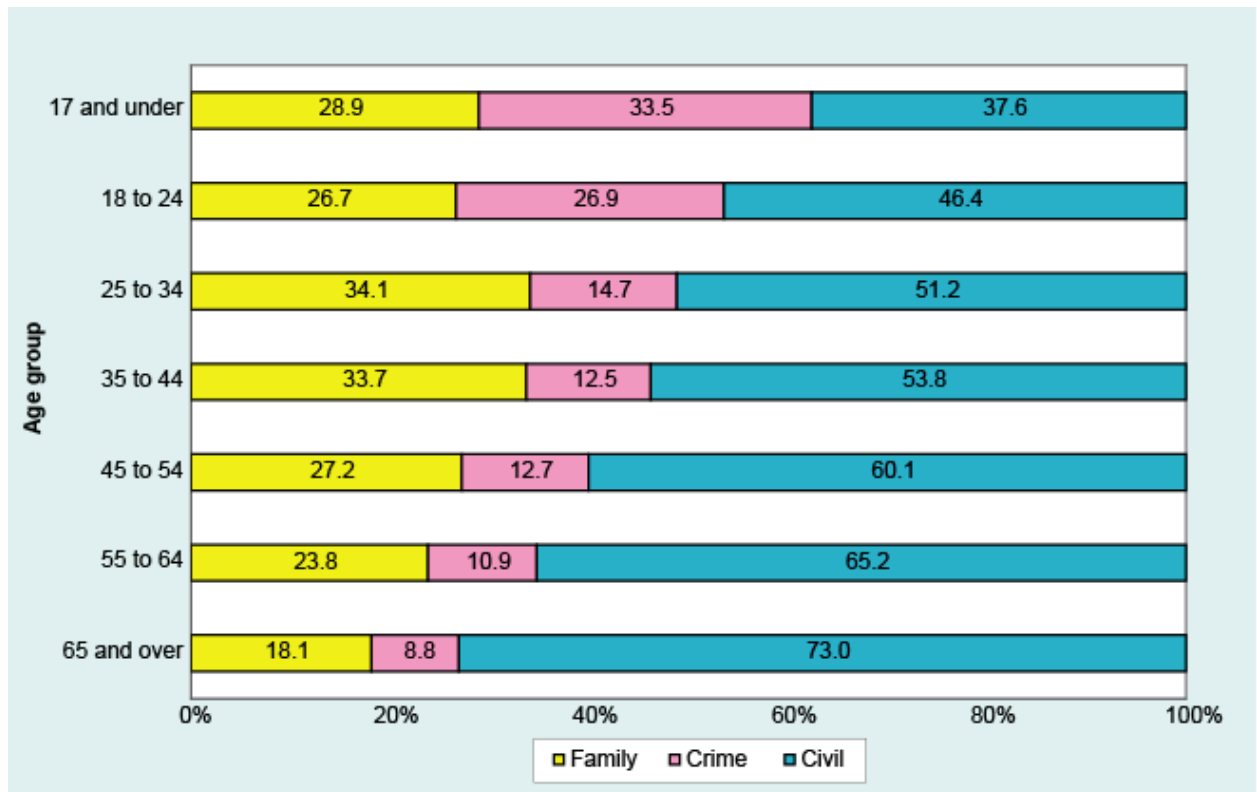
**Notes:** N=195 951. Date of birth was not disclosed in an additional 56 542 (or 23% of) inquiries. The range of valid ages was 10 to 93 years. In 2002, LawAccess recorded a default value of 1970 where date of birth was not disclosed.

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data) and Australian Bureau of Statistics SEIFA 2001 population statistics.

### Type of legal matter by age

- For each age group, the highest proportion of inquiries to LawAccess NSW concerned civil law matters (Figure 6). A clear 'step pattern' can be seen indicating an increasing need for legal assistance with civil law matters with age.
- *Significant* differences in the nature of inquiries by age group were noted:
  - the youngest three age groups (i.e. less than 35 years of age) were more likely than the older age groups to make criminal law inquiries
  - the 25 to 34 and 35 to 44 age groups were more likely than the other age groups to make family law inquiries
  - inquirers aged 45 years and older were more likely than the other age groups to make civil law inquiries.

**Figure 6: Percentage of inquiries by age group and broad area of law**  
LawAccess NSW, 2002 to 2004



**Notes:** N=195 951. Date of birth was not disclosed in an additional 56 542 (or 23% of) inquiries. The range of valid ages was 10 to 93 years. In 2002, LawAccess recorded a default value of 1970 where date of birth was not disclosed.

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data) and Australian Bureau of Statistics SEIFA 2001 population statistics.

- Table 8 provides additional detail in terms of the specific areas of law about which each particular age group was *significantly* more likely to inquire.
- Compared to other age groups:
  - persons under 18 years tended to approach LawAccess more often for legal assistance with problems relating to crime and family relationships
  - adults under 35 were more likely to inquire about employment and credit/debt problems. The need for legal assistance with family problems also was prominent at this stage of life
  - persons of middle age (35 to 54) were more likely to approach LawAccess regarding family related legal issues, but also consumer complaints, housing and wills/estates
  - 55 to 64 year olds tended to make relatively fewer family law inquiries with the focus of their attention turned to consumer complaints, government, housing, human rights, the legal system, wills/estates and being a victim of crime
  - the oldest age group (65 and over) shared many of the legal problems relating to consumer complaints, government, housing, human rights, the

legal system and wills/estates, but were also more likely to inquire about accidents, injury & liability.

**Table 8: Specific areas of law about which different age groups were more likely to inquire**

LawAccess NSW, 2002-2004

Age	Specific areas of law
17 and under	Family relationships, criminal offences
18 to 24	Criminal offences, credit/debt, employment
25 to 34	Children, family relationships, criminal offences, victims of crime, employment, immigration
35 to 44	Children, domestic violence, family financial matters, family relationships, accidents
45 to 54	Family financial matters, criminal process, business/media, consumers, credit/debt, housing, human rights, legal system, wills/estates
55 to 64	Victims of crime, consumers, government, housing, human rights, legal system, wills/estates
65 and over	Accidents, consumers, government, housing, human rights, legal system, wills/estates

**Notes:** N=195 951. Date of birth was not disclosed in an additional 56 542 (or 23% of) inquiries. The range of valid ages was 10 to 93 years. In 2002, LawAccess recorded a default value of 1970 where date of birth was not disclosed.

“More likely to inquire” is based on a chi-square test yielding residual values (i.e. the difference between the observed and expected value) that have been standardised (i.e. divided by an estimate of its standard deviation). Standardised residuals have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. Specific areas of law with a standardised residual value of 2 or more for a particular age group are presented in this table.

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data).

## Region of residence

- Information relating to the region of residence of inquirers to LawAccess NSW is provided in terms of Statistical Sub-Division (SSD) for the greater Sydney metropolitan area and Statistical Division (SD) for areas of NSW outside Sydney (Table 9).

**Table 9: Percentage of inquiries, rate of inquiries and Index of Concentration by service (Information and Advice) and region of residence of inquirer**

LawAccess NSW, 2002–2004

Region of residence	Information	Advice	Total Inquiries	NSW	Rate
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		%	%	%	IC	Pop. %	per 1000 per annum
Sydney	Inner Sydney	6.2	3.8	5.9	134	4.4	16.0
	Eastern Suburbs	3.9	2.6	3.7	102	3.6	12.1
	St George-Sutherland	5.9	4.9	5.7	88	6.5	10.4
	Canterbury-Bankstown	4.0	2.5	3.8	81	4.7	9.6
	Fairfield-Liverpool	4.7	3.2	4.5	85	5.3	10.1
	Outer South Western	2.8	3.1	2.9	80	3.6	9.6
	Inner Western	2.7	1.6	2.5	101	2.5	12.0
	Central Western	6.0	3.6	5.7	126	4.5	15.0
	Outer Western	5.4	5.3	5.4	110	4.9	13.1
	Blacktown	4.4	3.6	4.3	106	4.1	12.7
	Lower Northern	4.8	3.1	4.6	103	4.4	12.3
	Central Northern	4.5	3.4	4.4	71	6.1	8.4
	Northern Beaches	2.8	2.0	2.7	78	3.4	9.3
Gosford-Wyong	6.5	8.2	6.8	150	4.5	17.8	
<b>Total Sydney</b>		<b>64.5</b>	<b>51.1</b>	<b>62.7</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>62.6</b>	<b>11.9</b>
Hunter		9.6	10.8	9.7	110	8.9	13.0
Illawarra		5.7	6.2	5.7	95	6.1	11.3
Richmond-Tweed		4.1	6.2	4.4	131	3.4	15.6
Mid-North Coast		4.5	6.8	4.8	111	4.4	13.2
Northern		2.3	3.5	2.4	89	2.7	10.6

North Western	1.8	3.0	2.0	109	1.8	13.0
Central West	1.9	2.9	2.1	78	2.7	9.3
South Eastern	2.7	4.8	3.0	97	3.1	11.5
Murrumbidgee	1.5	2.4	1.6	70	2.3	8.4
Murray	1.0	1.6	1.1	63	1.7	7.5
Far West	0.3	0.7	0.4	98	0.4	11.7
<b>Total non-Sydney</b>	<b>35.5</b>	<b>48.9</b>	<b>37.3</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>37.4</b>	<b>11.9</b>
<i>Total NSW (%)</i>	100.0	100.0	100.0		100.0	11.9
<i>Total NSW (No.)</i>	194	30	224		6 292	
	322	442	764		015	

**Notes:** N=224 764. Postcode was not recorded in 1.9 per cent of inquiries. 5.2 per cent of inquiries were classified as Business and 4.1 per cent were from interstate. These have been excluded from the analysis.

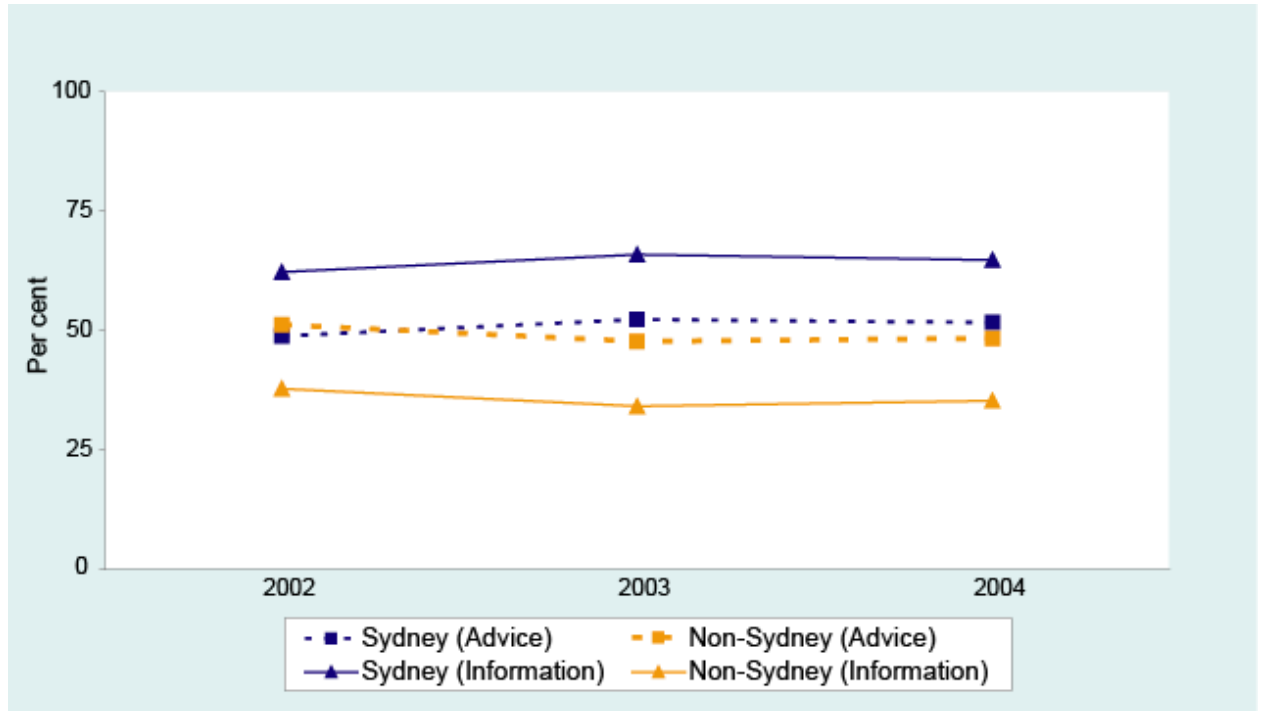
Shaded areas indicate that the Index of Concentration (IC) is greater than 100.

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data) and Australian Bureau of Statistics SEIFA 2001 population statistics.

- Rural/regional NSW and Sydney had an identical rate (11.9) of legal inquiries to LawAccess NSW per 1000 population. That is, the percentage of inquiries from Sydney and non Sydney residents reflected, almost exactly, their proportions in the NSW population.
- The top 25 per cent (upper quartile) of regions in terms of rate of legal inquiries consisted of: Gosford-Wyong, Inner Sydney, Richmond-Tweed, Central Western Sydney, Mid-North Coast and Outer Western Sydney (regions with *higher* rates are listed first).
- The bottom 25 per cent (lower quartile) consisted of: Murray, Murrumbidgee, Central Northern Sydney, Central West, Northern Beaches and Outer South Western Sydney (regions with *lower* rates are listed first).
- Figure 7 shows that, in relation to the provision of legal *advice*, LawAccess provided a higher level of advices to persons residing outside Sydney. Each year from 2002 to 2004, around half of the legal advices were provided to inquirers living outside Sydney, although this group made up only 37 per cent of the NSW population. Notably, this reflects LawAccess' service policy of assisting people who have difficulty in accessing other public legal services, with persons in regional/rural NSW being a designated target group.

**Figure 7: Percentage of inquiries by service (Information and Advice) and region of residence of inquirer (Sydney and non Sydney regions)**

LawAccess NSW, 2002 to 2004



**Notes:** N=224 764. Postcode was not recorded in 1.9 per cent of inquiries. 5.2 per cent of inquiries were classified as Business and 4.1 per cent were from interstate. These have been excluded from the analysis.

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data) and Australian Bureau of Statistics SEIFA 2001 population statistics.

- On the other hand, information inquiries matched, in broad terms, the proportions of the NSW population living inside and outside Sydney (63% and 37%, respectively).
- Table 10 provides more detail on the rate and concentration of Advice inquiries.
- Consistent with their stated service priorities, LawAccess provided higher rates of advices to persons from rural and regional areas of NSW. Overall, the annual rate of advices for rural and regional areas of NSW (2.1 per 1000) was 62 per cent higher than the corresponding rate for the Sydney area (1.3 per 1000).
- Richmond-Tweed had the highest rate of advices (3.0 per 1000 population) per annum, followed by Far West NSW (2.8 per 1000) and North Western NSW (2.7 per 1000).
- All rural areas except for the Murray region had a proportion of advices above that expected from their share of the NSW population. Murray SD had an annual rate of advices (1.5 per 1000), which was just below the State average of 1.6 advices per 1000 population.
- Within the greater Sydney metropolitan area, two areas – Gosford-Wyong and Outer Western Sydney – had above expected levels of legal advices. Gosford-

Wyong had an IC value of 181 and an annual rate of 2.9 advices per 1000 population. Outer Western Sydney had an IC of 110 and an annual rate of 1.8 advices per 1000 population.

**Table 10: Percentage and rate of inquiries and Index of Concentration by region of residence of inquirer – Advices only**

LawAccess NSW, 2002–2004

Region of residence	Advice inquiries		NSW Pop.	Rate per 1000 per annum	
	%	IC	%		
<b>Sydney</b>	Inner Sydney	3.8	87	4.4	1.4
	Eastern Suburbs	2.6	73	3.6	1.2
	St George-Sutherland	4.9	74	6.5	1.2
	Canterbury-Bankstown	2.5	54	4.7	0.9
	Fairfield-Liverpool	3.2	60	5.3	1
	Outer South Western	3.1	88	3.6	1.4
	Inner Western	1.6	65	2.5	1
	Central Western	3.6	81	4.5	1.3
	Outer Western	5.3	110	4.9	1.8
	Blacktown	3.6	90	4.1	1.4
	Lower Northern	3.1	70	4.4	1.1
	Central Northern	3.4	55	6.1	0.9
	Northern Beaches	2.0	60	3.4	1
	Gosford-Wyong	8.2	181	4.5	2.9
<b>Total Sydney</b>		<b>51.1</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>62.6</b>	<b>1.3</b>
<b>Hunter</b>		10.8	121	8.9	2
<b>Illawarra</b>		6.2	102	6.1	1.6
<b>Richmond-Tweed</b>		6.2	184	3.4	3
<b>Mid-North Coast</b>		6.8	155	4.4	2.5
<b>Northern</b>		3.5	127	2.7	2.1



<b>North Western</b>	3.0	167	1.8	2.7
<b>Central West</b>	2.9	110	2.7	1.8
<b>South Eastern</b>	4.8	153	3.1	2.5
<b>Murrumbidgee</b>	2.4	105	2.3	1.7
<b>Murray</b>	1.6	94	1.7	1.5
<b>Far West</b>	0.7	172	0.4	2.8
<b>Total non-Sydney</b>	<b>48.9</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>37.4</b>	<b>2.1</b>
<i>Total NSW (%)</i>	100.0		100.0	1.6
<i>Total NSW (No.)</i>	30 442		6 370 141	

**Notes:** Shaded areas indicate that the Index of Concentration (IC) is greater than 100.

N=30 442. Postcode was not recorded in 1.9 per cent of inquiries. 5.2 per cent of inquiries were classified as Business and 4.1 per cent were from interstate. These have been excluded from the analysis.

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data) and Australian Bureau of Statistics SEIFA 2001 population statistics.

#### Type of legal matter by region of residence

- Table 11 presents a breakdown of legal inquiries to LawAccess NSW in terms of the region of residence of the inquirer and the broad area of law which was the basis of their inquiry.

**Table 11: Percentage of inquiries by region of residence of inquirer and broad area of law**

LawAccess NSW, 2002–2004

Region of residence		Family	Crime	Civil	Total
		%	%	%	%
<b>Sydney</b>	Inner Sydney	20.9	15.0	64.1	100
	Eastern Suburbs	21.4	14.8	63.7	100
	St George-Sutherland	26.7	13.0	60.3	100
	Canterbury-Bankstown	26.3	13.4	60.4	100
	Fairfield-Liverpool	25.9	15.7	58.4	100
	Outer South Western	35.3	12.9	51.9	100
	Inner Western	22.6	13.4	63.9	100
	Central Western	25.7	13.7	60.6	100

Outer Western	35.2	13.7	51.1	100
Blacktown	31.8	15.2	53.0	100
Lower Northern	21.4	12.0	66.6	100
Central Northern	24.9	13.3	61.7	100
Northern Beaches	25.0	11.0	64.0	100
Gosford-Wyong	35.1	12.5	52.4	100
<b>Hunter</b>	<b>35.4</b>	<b>13.4</b>	<b>51.1</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Illawarra</b>	<b>38.9</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>48.0</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Richmond-Tweed</b>	<b>36.0</b>	<b>14.2</b>	<b>49.7</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Mid-North Coast</b>	<b>36.9</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>49.9</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Northern</b>	<b>33.6</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>52.6</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>North Western</b>	<b>39.2</b>	<b>14.1</b>	<b>46.6</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Central West</b>	<b>35.9</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>49.8</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>South Eastern</b>	<b>36.8</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>47.7</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Murrumbidgee</b>	<b>38.1</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>44.1</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Murray</b>	<b>42.2</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>44.0</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Far West</b>	<b>37.8</b>	<b>16.4</b>	<b>45.9</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>NSW average</b>	<b>29.9</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>56.3</b>	<b>100</b>

**Notes:** Shaded areas indicate a percentage of inquiries in that broad area of law above the NSW average. N=224 764. Postcode was not recorded in 1.9 per cent of inquiries. 5.2 per cent of inquiries were classified as Business and 4.1 per cent were from interstate. These have been excluded from the analysis.

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data).

- In both the Sydney area and regional/rural NSW, the highest proportion of inquiries to LawAccess was for civil law matters, followed by family law matters, then by criminal law matters. However, the proportion of inquiries concerning civil law matters tended to be *significantly* higher in the Sydney area compared with the area of the state outside Sydney. Furthermore, the proportion of inquiries concerning family law matters tended to be *significantly* higher outside Sydney than in the Sydney area.
- Table 12 provides a more granular analysis of the types of inquiries being made by persons residing in different areas of NSW.
- In the Sydney area, credit/debt, employment, immigration, housing, accidents, and wills/estates were regularly the themes of civil law inquiries. Criminal offences and victims of crime inquiries were similarly prominent in the profile of crime related inquiries for callers from the Sydney area.

- In regional and rural NSW, family law issues relating to children, domestic violence, family financial matters and family relationships were prominent. The criminal justice process also was a common topic for inquirers in a number of country areas.

**Table 12: Specific areas of law about which residents of different regions were more likely to inquire**

LawAccess NSW, 2002–2004

Region of residence	Specific areas of law	
<b>Sydney</b>	Inner Sydney	Criminal offences, accidents, injury & liability, business/media, credit/debt, employment, health, housing, immigration/refugees, legal system
	Eastern Suburbs	Criminal offences, accidents, injury & liability, business/media, employment, housing, immigration/refugees, legal system
	St George-Sutherland	Accidents, injury & liability, consumers, employment, housing, legal system, wills/estates
	Canterbury-Bankstown	Accidents, injury & liability, consumers, employment, immigration/refugees
	Fairfield-Liverpool	Criminal offences, accidents, injury & liability, employment, immigration/refugees
	Outer South Western	Children, domestic violence, family financial matters, consumers, employment
	Inner Western	Consumers, employment, health, housing, immigration/refugees
	Central Western	Accidents, injury & liability, business/media, consumers, employment, health, legal system, immigration/refugees
	Outer Western	Children, domestic violence, family financial matters
	Blacktown	Children, criminal offences, victims of crime, employment
	Lower Northern	Accidents, injury & liability, consumers, employment, housing, legal system, wills/estates
	Central Northern	Family financial matters, consumers, employment, housing, wills/estates
	Northern Beaches	Children, victims of crime, credit/debt, government, wills/estates
	Gosford-Wyong	Children, domestic violence, family financial matters, family relationships, housing

<b>Hunter</b>	Children, domestic violence, family financial matters, family relationships, human rights
<b>Illawarra</b>	Children, domestic violence, family financial matters, family relationships
<b>Richmond-Tweed</b>	Children, Domestic violence, family financial matters, family relationships
<b>Mid-North Coast</b>	Children, family financial matters, family relationships, government
<b>Northern</b>	Children, victims of crime, credit/debt, government
<b>North Western</b>	Children, domestic violence, family relationships
<b>Central West</b>	Children, criminal process
<b>South Eastern</b>	Children, domestic violence, family relationships, criminal offences
<b>Murrumbidgee</b>	Children, criminal offences, criminal process
<b>Murray</b>	Children, family financial matters, family relationships
<b>Far West</b>	Family relationships, criminal offences

**Notes:** N=224 764. Postcode was not recorded in 1.9 per cent of inquiries. 5.2 per cent of inquiries were classified as Business and 4.1 per cent were from interstate. These have been excluded from the analysis.

"More likely to inquire" is based on a chi-square test yielding residual values (i.e. the difference between the observed and expected value).

Specific areas of law with a standardised residual value of 2 or more for a particular region are presented in this table.

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data).

- A strong gender difference can be seen in Table 13, which provides a breakdown of inquiries for each region. Overall, females made 62.5% of inquiries in NSW and males made only 37.5% of inquiries. It was women residing in areas outside Sydney that contributed most to this difference.
- In ten of the 11 regional/rural areas of NSW, the proportion of inquiries made by females was higher than the state average for females of 62.5%. On the other hand, in nine of the 14 Sydney areas, the proportion of inquiries made by males was higher than the state average for males of 37.5%.

**Table 13: Percentage of inquiries by region of residence and gender of inquirer**  
LawAccess NSW, 2002–2004

Region of residence		Male	Female	Total
		%	%	%
Sydney	Inner Sydney	42.3	57.7	100
	Eastern Suburbs	39.4	60.6	100
	St George-	36.4	63.6	100

Sutherland			
Canterbury-Bankstown	40.4	59.6	100
Fairfield-Liverpool	39.4	60.6	100
Outer South Western	35.1	64.9	100
Inner Western	41.1	58.9	100
Central Western	41.0	59.0	100
Outer Western	35.3	64.7	100
Blacktown	37.9	62.1	100
Lower Northern	38.3	61.7	100
Central Northern	38.3	61.7	100
Northern Beaches	35.7	64.3	100
Gosford-Wyong	35.1	64.9	100
<b>Hunter</b>	35.5	64.5	100
<b>Illawarra</b>	35.2	64.8	100
<b>Richmond-Tweed</b>	38.1	61.9	100
<b>Mid-North Coast</b>	37.1	62.9	100
<b>Northern</b>	36.7	63.3	100
<b>North Western</b>	35.6	64.4	100
<b>Central West</b>	37.4	62.6	100
<b>South Eastern</b>	36.6	63.4	100
<b>Murrumbidgee</b>	37.2	62.8	100
<b>Murray</b>	35.0	65.0	100
<b>Far West</b>	33.8	66.2	100
<b>NSW average</b>	<b>37.5</b>	<b>62.5</b>	<b>100</b>

**Notes:** Shaded areas indicate a proportion higher than the NSW average for that particular gender. N=224 764. Gender was missing in 143 records. Postcode was not recorded in 1.9 per cent of inquiries. 5.2 per cent of inquiries were classified as Business and 4.1 per cent were from interstate. These have been excluded from the analysis.

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data).

# Pathways of service users

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LawAccess NSW collects information on both the *source of inquiry* (i.e. how the inquirer knew about contacting LawAccess) and the *referral destination* (i.e. should the inquirer have needed further assistance, the agency or organisation that LawAccess referred them on to).

## Source of inquiry

- In 19 per cent of inquiries to LawAccess, the source of inquiry was either missing or recorded as 'other'. These were excluded from the analysis.
- In almost two-thirds (65%) of all inquiries, the source of inquiry was recorded as the Legal Aid NSW Helpline (Table 14). A further 7 per cent of inquiries were referred to LawAccess from the NSW Law Society.
- Of the remaining inquiries, the most frequent source of inquiries to LawAccess was the telephone book (16.3%), followed by friend/family (3.5%), courts/chamber registrars (3%) and community organisations (1.5%).

**Table 14: Source of inquiry by service (Information and Advice)**  
LawAccess NSW, 2002-2004

Source of inquiry	Information %	Advice %	Total %-
Friend/family	3.5	3.5	3.5
Media	0.5	0.3	0.5
Telephone book	16.7	13.4	16.3
Legal publication	0.4	0.4	0.4
Legal Aid NSW Helpline	64.3	69.0	64.9
Community organisation	1.5	1.8	1.5
Government	0.7	0.6	0.7
Police	1.2	1.5	1.2
Community legal centre	0.9	1.4	0.9
Law Society of NSW	7.2	3.7	6.7
Private solicitor	0.4	0.2	0.4
Court/Chamber registrar	2.8	4.4	3.0
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0
<i>Total (No.)</i>	<i>178 356</i>	<i>26 046</i>	<i>204 402</i>

**Notes:** N=204 402. Source of inquiry was not recorded or recorded as 'other' in an additional 19 per cent of inquiries. These inquiries were excluded from analysis.

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data).

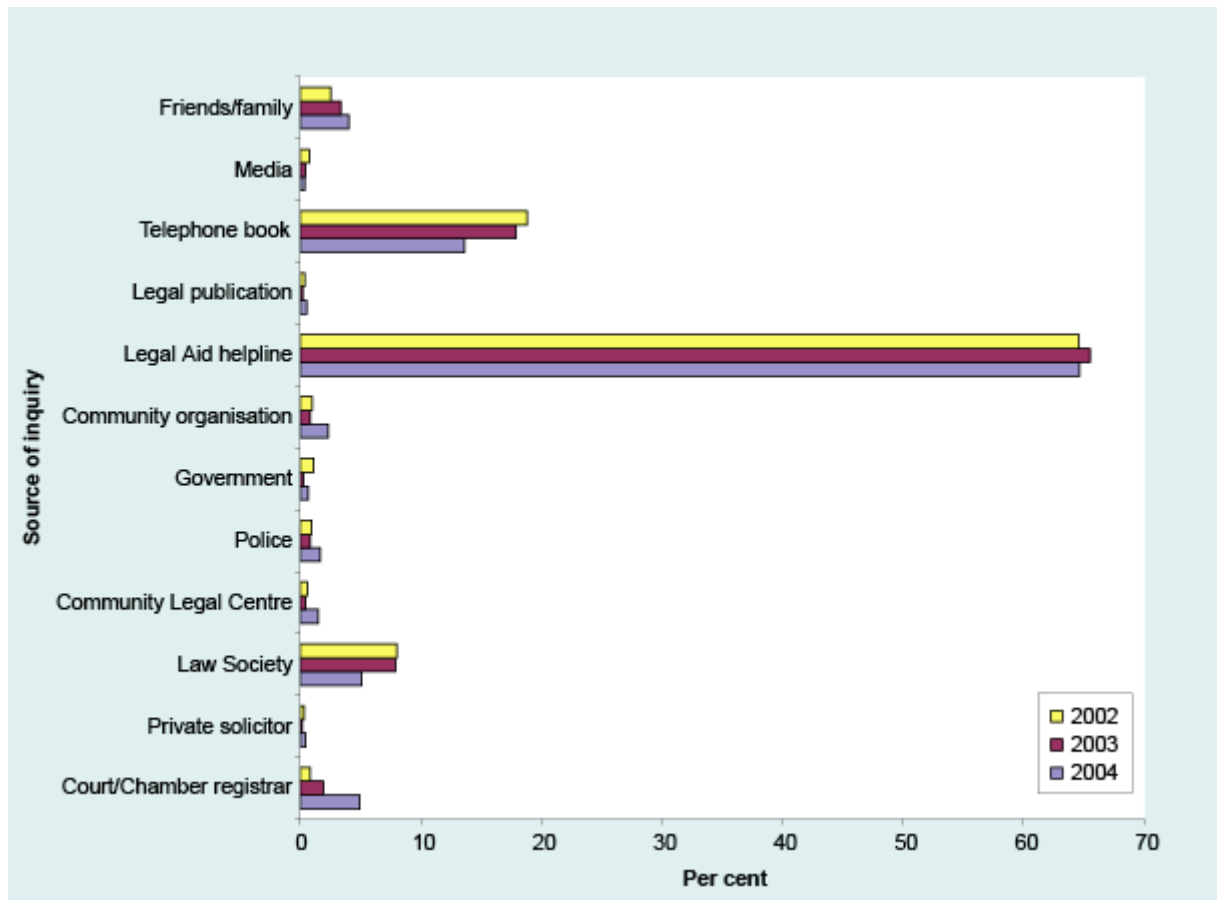
- Information and advice inquiries tended to originate from slightly different sources.
- In the three year period, *significantly* higher proportions of inquiries to the Information service, compared with the Advice service, came from the telephone book (16.7% vs. 13.4%, respectively) or from the NSW Law Society (7.2% vs. 3.7%).
- On the other hand, *significantly* higher proportions of inquiries came to the Advice service than the Information service from active referral points such as community legal centres (1.4% vs. 0.9%, respectively), community organisations (1.8% vs. 1.5%), the police (1.5% vs. 1.2%) and courts/chamber registrars (4.4% vs. 2.8%). The Advice service also received proportionally more inquiries than the Information service from the Legal Aid NSW Helpline (69.0% vs. 64.3%).

## Trends in source of inquiry

- Figure 8 shows that the proportion of LawAccess NSW inquiries sourced from a telephone book was *significantly* lower in 2004 (13.6%) compared to 2002 (18.8%) and 2003 (17.9%).
- Similarly, a *significant* downward trend – from around eight per cent of inquiries in 2002 and 2003 to five per cent of inquiries in 2004 - was noted for inquiries coming from the NSW Law Society to LawAccess.
- Across the same period, the proportion of LawAccess inquiries from friends/family, courts, community organisations, community legal centres, police and courts/chamber registrars increased *significantly*:
  - four per cent of inquiries were referred by a friend/family member in 2004, up from 2.5 per cent in 2002
  - referrals from community organisations more than doubled in the period, from one per cent in 2002 to 2.3 per cent in 2004
  - referrals from police increased from one per cent in 2002 to just under two per cent in 2004
  - referrals from community legal centres more than doubled from two per cent in 2002 to five per cent in 2004
  - referrals from courts and chamber registrars showed the largest proportional increase, up from less than one per cent in 2002 to almost five per cent in 2004.
- Notably, the proportional increase in LawAccess inquiries from community legal centres, community organisations and police in 2004 followed a *significant* decrease in inquiries from these sources the year before.
- Other trends were noted:
  - referrals to LawAccess NSW from private solicitors and legal publications, although proportionally small, were up *significantly* in 2004 from a decrease a year earlier
  - the proportion of media sourced inquiries dropped each year from 2002 to 2004. However, media sourced inquiries represented less than one per cent of inquiries to LawAccess NSW in any year.



**Figure 8: Source of inquiry by year**  
LawAccess NSW, 2002 to 2004



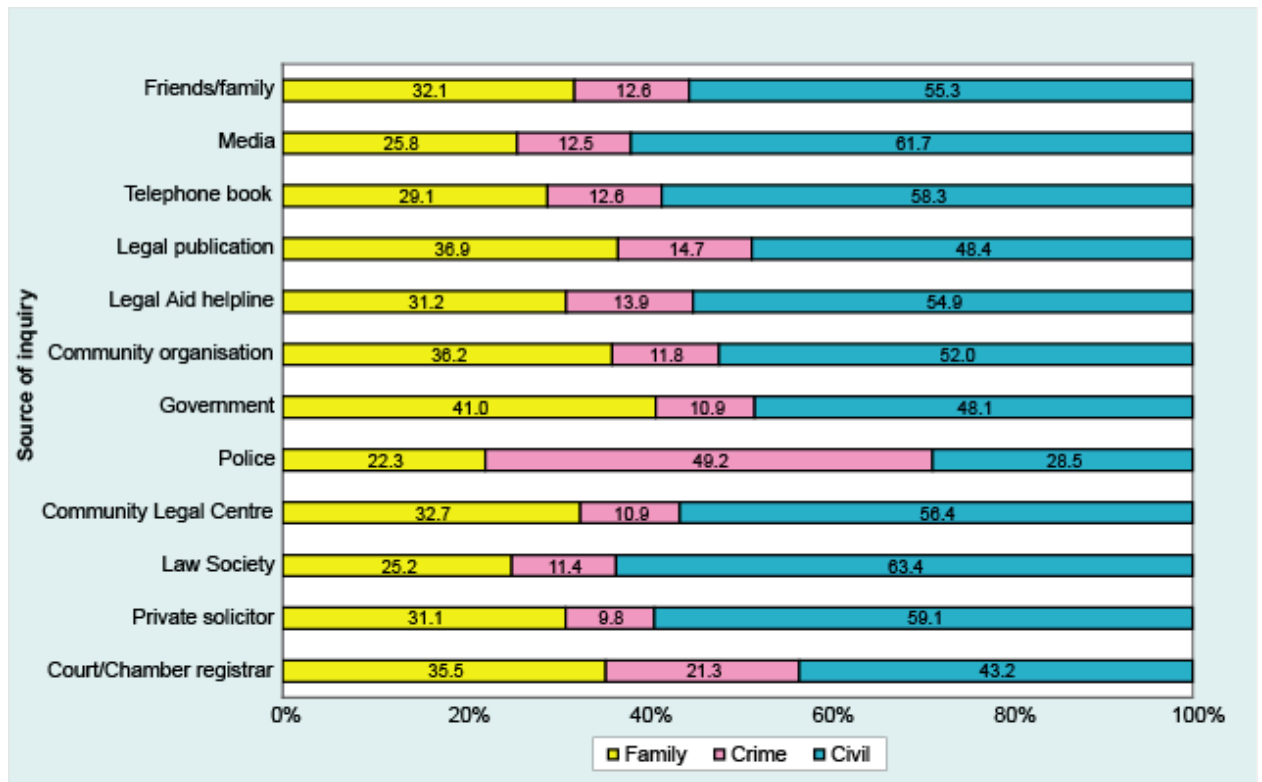
**Notes:** N=204 402. Source of inquiry was not recorded or recorded as 'other' in an additional 19 per cent of inquiries. These inquiries were excluded from analysis.

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data).

### Type of legal matter by source of inquiry

- Figure 9 provides a breakdown of inquiries in terms of broad area of law with regard to the source of the inquiry. It shows that persons who found their way to LawAccess NSW tended to take different routes depending upon the nature of their legal problem.
- Service users with a family law problem were *significantly* more likely to come to LawAccess from the following sources: a friend/family member, the Legal Aid helpline, a community organisation, a government agency, or court/chamber registrar. Persons with family law problems were also more likely to have found out about LawAccess through a legal publication.
- Those with a criminal law problem were *significantly* more likely to be referred to LawAccess by police or court/chamber registrar than from other sources.
- Persons with a civil law problem were *significantly* more likely to contact LawAccess after learning about this service through the NSW Law Society, a media source or from the telephone book than from other sources.

**Figure 9: Source of inquiry by broad area of law**  
LawAccess NSW, 2002 to 2004



**Notes:** N=204 402. Source of inquiry was not recorded or recorded as 'other' in an additional 19 per cent of inquiries. These inquiries were excluded from analysis.

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data).

### Source of inquiry by region

- The majority of inquiries to LawAccess NSW from all sources were made by residents of the greater Sydney metropolitan area (Table 15). This is hardly surprising given that 63 per cent of NSW residents live in the Sydney area.
- The Sydney area had a higher than expected percentage of inquiries to LawAccess coming from community organisations, police, community legal centres, the NSW Law Society and courts/chamber registrars. Sydney residents were also more likely than residents outside Sydney to find out about LawAccess from media sources, such as newspapers and radio, or from friends/family.
- On the other hand, regional and rural NSW had a higher than expected percentage of inquiries coming from persons who found out about LawAccess from the Legal Aid NSW helpline, government agencies, private solicitors, the telephone book or legal publications.
- However, it should be noted that the only *significant* differences are that LawAccess inquirers were more likely to be referred from a court/chamber magistrate or from the NSW Law Society than any other source of inquiry if they lived in the Sydney

region, and from a government agency or the Legal Aid NSW helpline if they lived in areas outside Sydney.

**Table 15: Sydney and non-Sydney inquirers by source of inquiry**  
LawAccess NSW, 2002-2004

Source of inquiry	Sydney %	non-Sydney %	Total %-
Friend/family	64.0	36.0	100
Media	64.4	35.6	100
Telephone book	61.9	38.1	100
Legal publication	59.8	40.2	100
Legal Aid helpline	61.7	38.3	100
Community organisation	65.3	34.7	100
Government	57.8	42.2	100
Police	63.8	36.2	100
Community legal centre	65.2	34.8	100
Law Society	70.6	29.4	100
Private solicitor	60.2	39.8	100
Court/Chamber registrar	64.9	35.1	100
Total (%)	62.6	37.4	100
<i>Population (%)</i>	<i>62.8</i>	<i>37.2</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>Population (No.)</i>	<i>3 997 321</i>	<i>2 372 820</i>	<i>6 370 141</i>

**Notes:** Shaded areas indicate a proportion higher than the average for that area of NSW.

N=182 499. Source of inquiry was not recorded or recorded as 'other' in an additional 19 per cent of inquiries, and for 11 per cent of inquiries the place of residence was recorded as falling outside NSW (i.e. interstate, overseas, offshore areas & migratory). These inquiries were excluded from analysis.

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data) and Australian Bureau of Statistics' SEIFA (2004) population statistics.

## Referral destination

- In 48 per cent of inquiries, LawAccess NSW considered that the matter had been dealt with satisfactorily and no further referral was made.
- For those inquiries where LawAccess made a referral, a large proportion (35%) of referred inquiries went to public legal services.
- In relation to the set of legal inquiries referred by LawAccess NSW to public legal services, Table 16 shows that Legal Aid NSW received almost 72 per cent of such referrals. Referrals to community legal centres and chamber registrars made up 18

per cent and 9 per cent, respectively, of referrals by LawAccess to public legal services. Referrals to the Aboriginal Legal Service represented less than one per cent of LawAccess referrals to public legal services.

- Of the remaining LawAccess referred inquiries, there was an even split involving referrals to courts and tribunals (14%), government agencies (13%), private legal services (12%), community organisations (12%) and dispute resolution services (12%).
- A small percentage (2%) of referrals was made to criminal justice authorities.

**Table 16: Referred inquiries to public legal services by year**

LawAccess NSW, 2002-2004

	2002	2003	2004	All
Public legal service	%	%	%	%-
Legal Aid NSW	85.2	75.1	63.3	71.9
Community legal centres	13.8	9.2	26.3	18.4
Chamber registrars	0.2	15.2	10.0	9.1
Aboriginal legal services	0.8	0.5	0.4	0.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Notes:** N=46 903 (inquiries referred to public legal services only)

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data).

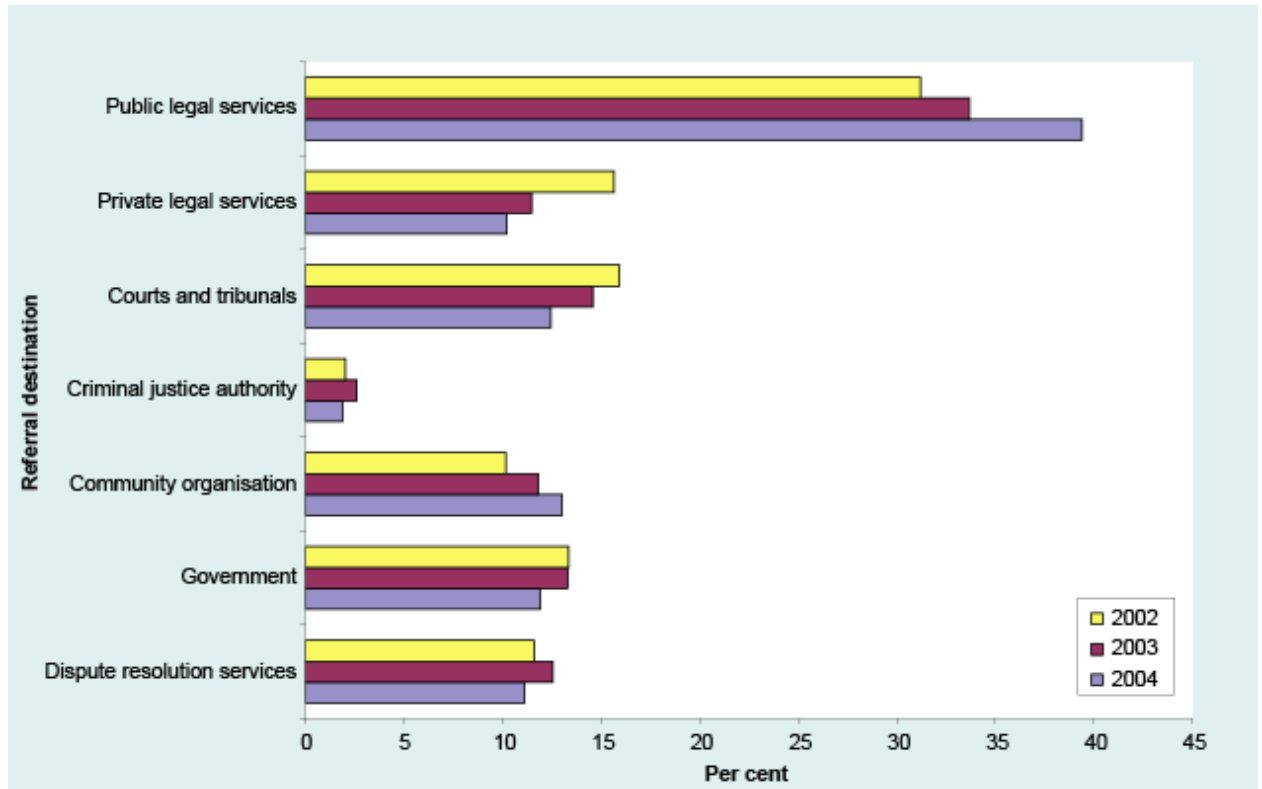
### Trends in referral destination

Figure 10 provides a breakdown of referred inquiries by their referral destination and year. It shows that:

- The proportion of LawAccess NSW inquiries referred to public legal services in 2004 (39%) was *significantly* up from previous years (31% in 2002 and 34% in 2003).
- The proportion of LawAccess referrals to community organisations *significantly* increased each year and in 2004 accounted for 13 per cent of LawAccess referrals.

**Figure 10: Referral destination by year**

LawAccess NSW, 2002 to 200



**Notes:** N=132 656. "No referral necessary" was recorded in an additional 48% of inquiries. These have been excluded from the analysis.

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data).

- Across the same period, LawAccess referrals to private solicitors, courts and tribunals and government agencies *significantly* decreased:
  - 16 per cent of inquiries in 2002 were referred by LawAccess to private solicitors, compared to 12 per cent in 2003 and 10 per cent in 2004
  - LawAccess referred 16 per cent of inquiries to courts and tribunals in 2002. This dropped slightly in 2003 before falling to 12 per cent in 2004
  - LawAccess referrals to government agencies fell from 13 per cent in 2002 to 12 per cent in 2004.
- The proportion of referrals from LawAccess to dispute resolution services increased *significantly* from 2002 to 2003, but then decreased *significantly* in 2004 to below the level it was in 2002.
- Table 16 (above) reveals that there has been a number of *significant* changes in the referral of legal inquiries from LawAccess to the different public legal services during the last three years:
  - while referrals to Legal Aid continue to represent the majority of referrals made by LawAccess to the public legal sector, there has been

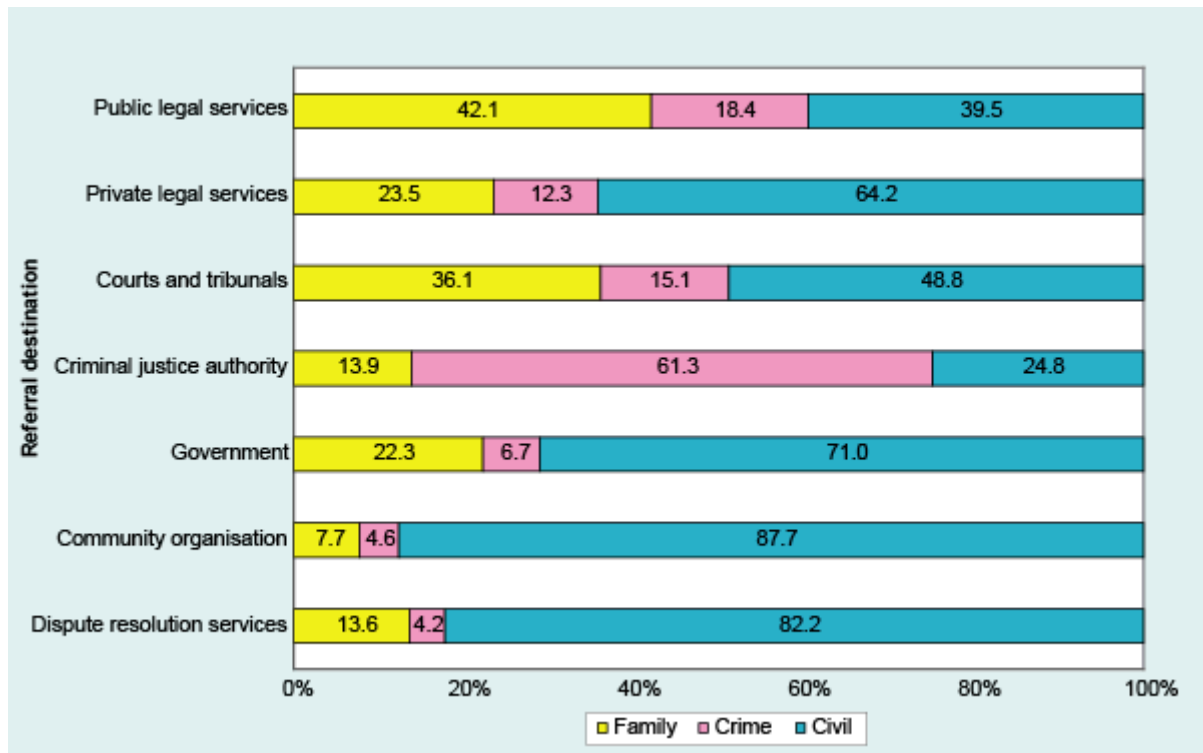
a *significant* decrease in the proportion of referrals to Legal Aid, from 85 per cent in 2002 to 63 per cent in 2004

- referrals to community legal centres changed significantly over the period. LawAccess referrals to community legal centres were at their highest level (26%) in 2004, up from only 9 per cent of referrals to public legal services in 2003. Notably, LawAccess referrals to community legal centres in 2003 were down from 14 per cent the year before
- a *significantly* larger share of LawAccess referrals were made to chamber registrars in 2003 (15%) and 2004 (10%) than in 2002 (less than one per cent). The drop in referrals to chamber registrars from 2003 to 2004 was also *significant*, although LawAccess NSW was involved in a service cooperation trial with four NSW chamber registrars in 2003 and this most likely explains the higher figure in that year
- referrals by LawAccess to Aboriginal legal services have remained small in number, but *significantly* such referrals have halved in terms of the proportion of all LawAccess referrals to public legal services (from 0.8% in 2002 to 0.4% in 2004).

### **Type of legal matter by referral destination**

- Figure 11 provides a breakdown of referred inquiries in terms of the referral destination and the broad area of law.
- This figure shows that:
  - persons with a family law inquiry requiring additional assistance were *significantly* more likely to be referred by LawAccess NSW to either a public legal service or court/tribunal than to any other referral destination
  - persons with a criminal law inquiry requiring additional assistance were *significantly* more likely to be referred by LawAccess to a criminal justice authority, other public legal service, or court/tribunal than to any other referral destination
  - persons with a civil law inquiry requiring additional assistance were *significantly* more likely to be referred by LawAccess to a community organisation, dispute resolution service, government agency or private legal service than to any other referral destination.

**Figure 11: Referral destination by broad area of law**  
LawAccess NSW, 2002 to 2004



**Notes:** N=132 656. "No referral necessary" was recorded in an additional 48% of inquiries. These have been excluded from the analysis.

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data).

- Table 17 provides, for each referral destination, the type of inquiry more likely to be forwarded to them by LawAccess NSW.
- In order of magnitude of *significance*, the top three specific areas of law referred by LawAccess to each referral destination were:
  - *Public legal services:* Credit/debt, children and business/media
  - *Private legal services:* Accidents, injury & liability, family financial matters and business/media
  - *Courts and tribunals:* Wills/Estates, victims of crime and domestic violence
  - *Criminal justice authority:* Domestic violence, criminal process and accidents, injury & liability
  - *Government:* Employment, housing and children
  - *Community organisation:* Credit/debt, immigration/refugees and employment
  - *Dispute resolution service:* Legal system, accidents, injury & liability and family financial matters.

**Table 17: Specific areas of law about which inquirers were more likely to be referred by referral destination**

LawAccess NSW, 2002-2004

Referral destination	Specific area of law
Public legal services	Children, criminal offences, business/media, consumers, credit/debt, employment
Private legal services	Family financial matters, family relationships, victims of crime, accidents, injury & liability, business/media, wills/estates
Courts and tribunals	Domestic violence, family relationships, victims of crime, credit/debt, human rights, wills/estates
Criminal justice authority	Domestic violence, criminal process, accidents, injury & liability, government
Government	Children, consumers, employment, government, housing, human rights
Community organisation	Domestic violence, victims of crime, credit/debt, employment, government, health, housing, immigration/refugees
Dispute resolution service	Family financial matters, criminal process, accidents, injury & liability, consumers, legal system

**Notes:** N=120 423. "No referral necessary" was recorded in an additional 48% of inquiries. These have been excluded from the analysis. The specific area of law category 'Other (Civil)' not included in this table. The referral destination category 'Other' also not included in this table. "More likely to be referred" is based on a chi-square test yielding residual values (i.e. the difference between the observed and expected value). Specific areas of law with a standardised residual value of 2 or more for a particular referral destination are presented in this table.

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data).

### Referral destination by region

- Overall, LawAccess NSW made relatively more referrals for Sydney based inquirers and relatively fewer referrals for inquirers outside Sydney based even when differences in their respective populations are considered (Table 18).



**Table 18: Sydney and non-Sydney referred inquiries by referral destination**  
LawAccess NSW, 2002-2004

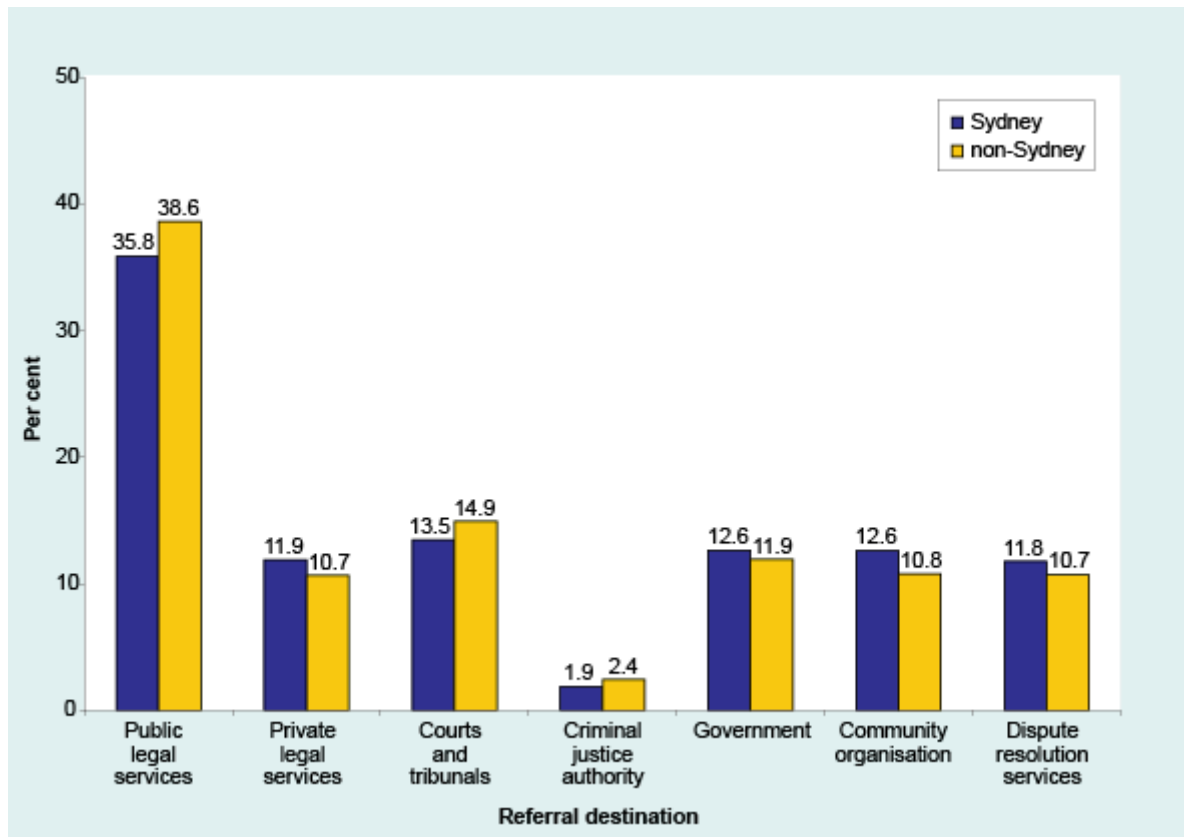
Referral destination	Sydney %	non-Sydney %	Total %-
Public legal services	62.2	37.8	100
Private legal services	66.4	33.6	100
Courts and tribunals	61.6	38.4	100
Criminal justice authority	57.7	42.3	100
Government	65.3	34.7	100
Community organisation	67.5	32.5	100
Dispute resolution services	66.1	33.9	100
Total (%)	64.0	36.0	100
<i>Population (%)</i>	<i>62.8</i>	<i>37.2</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>Population (No.)</i>	<i>3 997 321</i>	<i>2 372 820</i>	<i>6 370 141</i>

**Notes:** Shaded areas indicate a proportion higher than the average for that area of NSW. N=117 831. "No referral necessary" was recorded in an additional 48% of inquiries. Postcode was not recorded in 1.9 per cent of inquiries. 5.2 per cent of inquiries were classified as Business and 4.1 per cent were from interstate. These have been excluded from the analysis.

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data).

- Figure 12 presents the breakdown of LawAccess inquiries by referral destination and the general area of NSW in which the inquirer resided (i.e. Sydney vs. non-Sydney)
- In terms of percentages, the differences between referrals made for Sydney and non-Sydney inquirers appear minor. However, there are a number of *significant* differences:
  - LawAccess referred a higher proportion of Sydney inquirers (than non-Sydney inquirers) to private legal services, government agencies, community organisations and dispute resolution services
  - LawAccess referred a higher proportion of non-Sydney inquirers (than Sydney inquirers) to public legal services, courts/tribunals and criminal justice authorities.

**Figure 12: Referral destination for Sydney and non-Sydney referred inquiries**  
 LawAccess NSW, 2002 to 2004



**Notes:** N=117 831. "No referral necessary" was recorded in an additional 48% of inquiries. Postcode was not recorded in 1.9 per cent of inquiries. 5.2 per cent of inquiries were classified as Business and 4.1 per cent were from interstate. These have been excluded from the analysis.

**Source:** LawAccess NSW (unpublished data).

# Appendices

## Appendix A

### Data Digest Prototype — Taxonomy of Legal Inquiries

#### AREA OF LAW

Broad	Specific	Detailed Matter Type	
<b>FAMILY</b>	<b>Children</b>	Adoption	Child support
		Child protection	Residence/contact
	<b>Domestic violence</b>	Apprehended violence orders	Domestic violence
	<b>Financial matters</b>	Property	Spouse maintenance
	<b>Relationships</b>	De facto relationships	Family law - other
		Divorce	
<b>CRIME</b>	<b>Criminal offences</b>	Drug offences	Offences against persons
		Firearms/weapons	Street offences
		Fraud & misappropriation	Theft & property offences
		Justice offences	Other offences
		Motor/traffic offences	
	<b>Criminal process</b>	Arrest	Prisons
		Bail	Sentencing
		Fines	Warrants / extradition
		Police	
	<b>Victims of crime</b>	Victims of crime	Coronial inquests
	<b>CIVIL</b>	<b>Accidents, injury &amp; liability</b>	Accidents

		Personal injury	Other negligence/liability
		Traffic accident - personal injury	
	<b>Business/media</b>	Business	Intellectual property
		Contracts	Media law
		Defamation	
	<b>Credit/debt</b>	Bankruptcy	Debt
		Credit	
	<b>Consumers</b>	Banking	Contracts
		Consumers	Insurance
		Consumer protection	Superannuation
	<b>Employment</b>	Contracts	Unfair termination
		Employment	Workers compensation
	<b>Government</b>	Administrative law	Local government
		Education	Pensions/allowances
		Environment	Taxation
		Freedom of information	Veterans
		Government	
	<b>Health</b>	Health	Mental health
	<b>Housing</b>	Animals	Nuisance
		Conveyancing	Property law
		Fences	Retirement villages
		Housing	Strata title
		Neighbours	Tenancy
		Noise	
	<b>Human rights</b>	Discrimination/EEO	Human rights

		Guardianship/incapacity	
	<b>Immigration/refugees</b>	Immigration	Refugees
	<b>Legal system</b>	Complaints about lawyers	Legal services
	<b>Wills/estates</b>	Family provision	Probate
		Power of attorney	Wills
	<b>Civil (other)</b>	Civil (other)	

**Notes:** There are 3 *Broad* areas of law, 20 *Specific* areas of law and 81 *Detailed matter types*.

## Appendix B

### Chi-square test

The chi-square test is a non-parametric test that examines whether there is a significant relationship between two or more categorical variables with data in terms of frequencies. The chi-square test is based on a cross-tabulation of the relevant variables and compares the observed frequencies in each cell of the cross-tabulation with the frequencies expected on the basis of the null hypothesis.<sup>6</sup> All of the chi-square tests in this report were two-way, that is, conducted between two variables.

The chi-square test determines whether the relationship between the variables is significant. To determine which cells in the cross-tabulation had higher than expected frequencies, the standard residual for each cell was examined. The standard residual is the difference between the observed and expected frequency, adjusted for the scale effect of the frequencies.

Cells with a standard residual greater than or equal to two were deemed to be significantly higher than expected, and those cells with a standard residual less than or equal to minus two were deemed to be significantly lower than expected. Significantly high and low values are reported in the text.

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<sup>6</sup> For a description of the chi-square function and its test procedure, see Siegel, S. and Castellan, N.J., *Nonparametric Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences*, 2nd Ed., McGraw-Hill, NY, 1998.

## Appendix C

To examine whether the demographic profile of service users was similar to the demographic profile of the NSW population, index of concentration (IC) measures were calculated for a number of demographic variables for each service.<sup>7</sup>

The IC indicates the concentration of inquiry activity for a particular demographic group (e.g. females) relative to their proportion of the NSW population according to the 2001 Census.<sup>8</sup>

An IC of 100 indicates that the proportion of inquiries by a particular group is identical to the proportion of this group in the population. An IC over 100 indicates that the proportion of inquiries from this group is higher than would be expected given their proportion in the population, and an IC under 100 indicates a lower proportion of inquiries than would be expected.

### Calculating the Index of concentration (IC)

For each demographic variable (e.g. gender), an IC was calculated for each demographic group within that variable (e.g. men and women). For each demographic group, the IC was calculated by dividing the proportion of inquiries from that demographic group by the proportion of that group in the NSW population according to the 2001 census, and multiplying the result by 100.

The following example illustrates the calculation process.

### IC for men and IC for women for inquiries to the NSW Legal Aid Information/Advice Service

**Index of concentration for women** = Proportion of inquiries from women ÷ Proportion of women in NSW \* 100 = (54.4 / 50.6) \* 100 = **107**

**Index of concentration for men** = Proportion of inquiries from men ÷ Proportion of men in NSW \* 100 = (45.6 / 49.4) \* 100 = **92**

In this example, the IC for women (107), which is greater than 100, indicates that women accounted for a higher proportion of inquiries than would be expected given their proportion in the NSW population.

The corresponding IC for men (92), which is under 100, indicates that men made fewer inquiries than would be expected based on their proportion of the NSW population.

<sup>7</sup> In the Prototype, indices of concentration were calculated for gender, Indigenous status and total population within each NSW postcode.

<sup>8</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001 Census Basic Community Profile and Snapshot: New South Wales, 2001 <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/>.