

# Cancer Council

## Pro Bono Legal Referral Service

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research



advocacy



prevention



support



# Pro Bono Legal Referral Service

Provides people affected by cancer access to free legal advice and assistance about issues arising from a cancer diagnosis.

Aims to relieve financial burden and provide some respite from the issue and to contribute to well-being by reducing stress.

One of 4 professional referral services Cancer Council offers nationally through its Pro Bono Program.

# Background

Analyse 13 11 20 Information and Support calls

Survey NSW oncology professionals

Identify recurrent themes and barriers to access

Develop the Pro Bono Legal Referral Service

# Service model

REFERRAL

Health professionals and 13 11 20 consultants refer clients

INTAKE

Cancer Council team phone client to take detailed instructions

MATCHING

Client matched with law firm based on location, expertise and capacity

# Clients

- People affected by cancer
- Legal issue related to cancer diagnosis or treatment
- Unable to afford the cost of advice
- Not already receiving legal assistance
- Our clients are more likely to:
  - Be of working age
  - have high mortality cancers
  - have advanced or metastatic disease
  - live in a low socio-economic area

# Scope of service

## Getting your affairs in order

- Wills & substitute decision making documents
- Guardianship

## Financial matters

- Early access to superannuation
- Insurance claims & disputes
- Consumer credit

## 'Unfair treatment'

- Employment matters
- Welfare rights
- Housing

# Analysis of the model

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>LIMITATIONS</b>
<b>Core mission and brand awareness</b>	<b>Volunteers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lawyers</li><li>• Student interns</li></ul>
<b>Low cost high impact</b>	<b>Location specific</b>
<b>Wide reach</b>	<b>Relationships w/ referrers</b>

# Reach

- **5,762** clients since March 2010
- **\$7.7 million** of free advice/assistance
- **390** partner law firms nationally



# Evaluation of Pro Bono Program

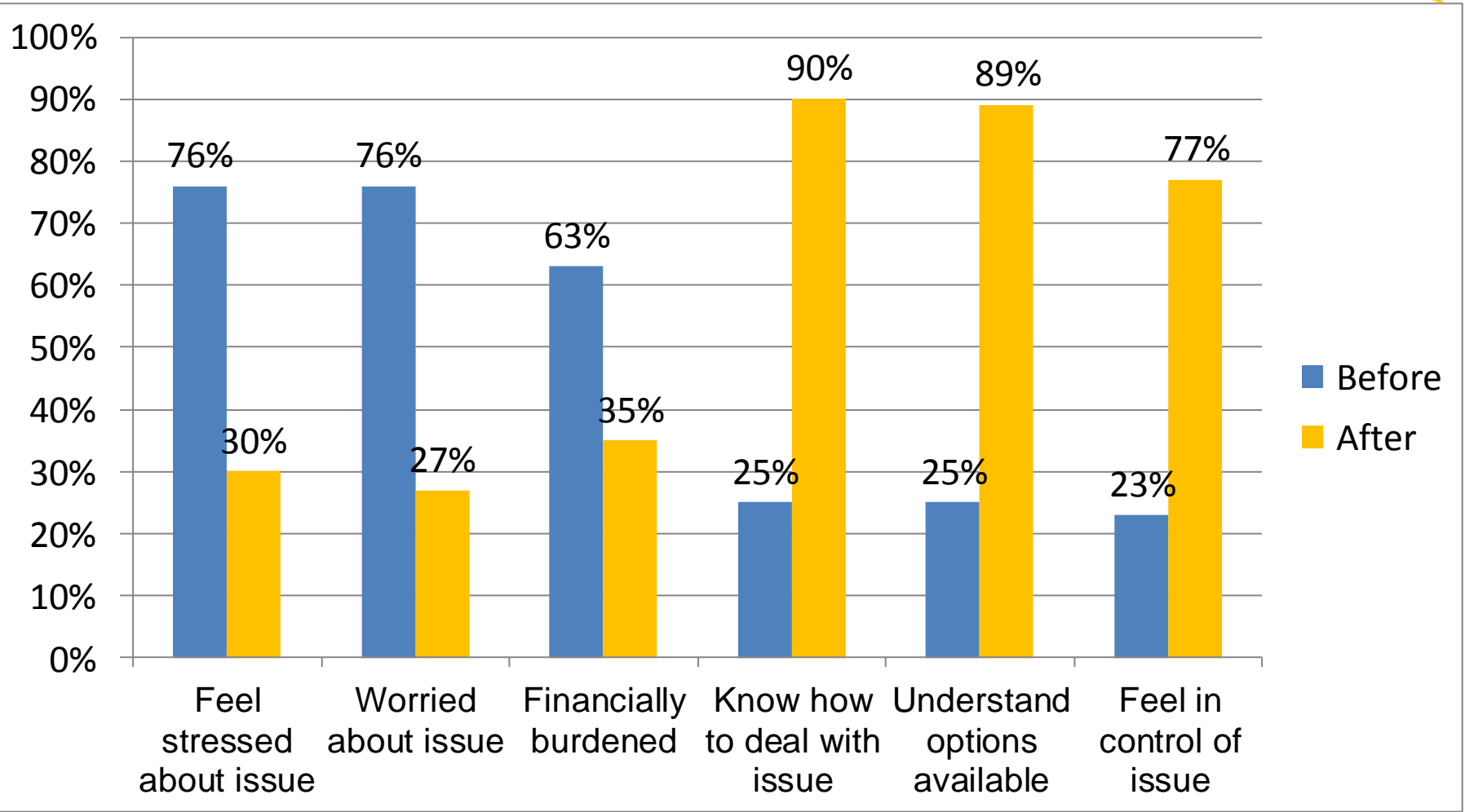
## Aim

- Provide evidence on efficiency of the program delivery and effectiveness of the model in achieving client outcomes

## Method

- Surveyed stakeholders about experience of program:
  - lawyers who provide pro bono services
  - health care professionals who refer to the program
  - clients who have used service during defined period

# Results



# Benefits

*“I have seen such a change in people’s level of stress and an improvement in their ability to cope (which equals better health outcomes) when we are able to resolve some of their legal and financial complications” - referrer*

*“Mainly relief for my family, so that they could freely survive without all the legal paperwork to sort out. Thank you for this... it gives me peace of mind” - client*

*“This program often plays an important role in reducing the associated stress with financial situations which unexpectedly arise when a person has a cancer diagnosis...” - referrer*

*“To know my will was what I wanted...to arrange guardianship for my son and to know who could make decisions for me when, or if, I cannot” - client*

# Implications

All three stakeholder groups confirmed benefits to clients:

- clarity around issue and better understanding of rights
- reassurance, peace of mind
- practical (eg documents prepared, super released, dispute resolved)

This underscores the importance of the program in filling a gap in service provision with a vulnerable population

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