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Innovative Pro Bono Partnerships

LegalPod

National Access to Justice and Pro Bono Conference



Innovative pro bono partnerships

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6th National Access to Justice and Pro Bono Conference

Adelaide

Thursday 23rd March

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LegalPod=pro bono legal service

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- ❖ Young people transitioning to independence from state care...
- ❖ ...need intervention to avoid homelessness (34%-88% risk)
- ❖ ...to *sustain housing, avoid jail, stabilise health & income* and *support decision-making*;
- ❖ And become adults who are *housed, healthy* and know how to *get help*.



“Josh” – since April 2015

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“[In]..the eyes of the community I was a drop kick that wouldn't make it in life but thanks to the support and belief provided by qpuiltch I was able to confidentially make a change in my lifestyle...

...none of what [I] accomplished would have been possible without legalpod and qpilch guiding [me] through the entire journey so thank you.”



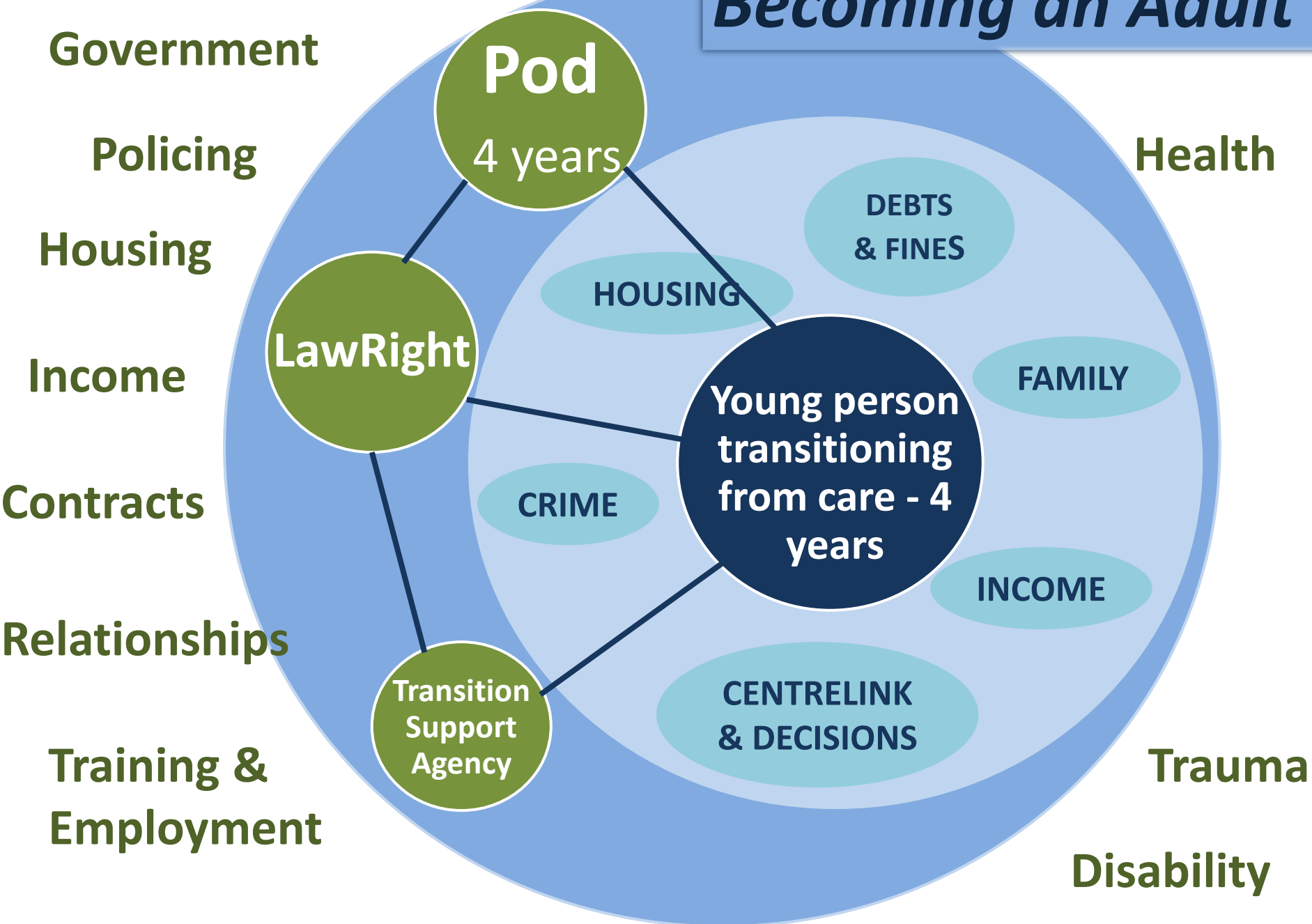
LegalPod=collaborative

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- ❖ **48 young people + 38 pods + 11 law firms + 11 transition support agencies.**

- ❖ **Funded since 2013, thanks to one-off grants from:**
 - StreetSmart
 - Ian Potter Foundation
 - AGD
 - Sidney Myer Foundation
 - DJAG (Qld)
 - Individual gifts

Becoming an Adult





What is it that makes a pro bono partnership work and the courage to be innovative?

- 1. Commitment** to reducing disadvantage through legal and community solutions
- 2. Consultation**
- 3. Client-centred** service design and delivery – dynamic & flexible
- 4. Communication**

1. Commitment to reducing disadvantage through legal and community solutions



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- ❖ 34-88% homelessness
- ❖ Crucial transition is an opportunity
- ❖ Target group don't realise they have legal need and are traumatised
- ❖ Mental health, disconnection, disability & crime are typical features of client group
- ❖ No other legal service available for multiple legal needs
- ❖ Need personalised, flexible, assertive, persistent and holistic service delivery (Homeless outreach clinics not good enough)

3. Client-centred service delivery



Targeted

- Young people with care history, marginalised, traumatised, texters (poor with email and letters)

Comprehensive

- Legal Health Check covers all relevant legal needs, not just the presenting need (where there is one)

Collaborative

- Partner with community workers and supporters in referral process AND delivery of legal service as well as non-legal need

Assertive

- Assume client will have a new legal need every 6 months at least, so keep showing the “menu”

Consistent

- Recognisable faces and service for the duration of the transition, approximately 4 years.

Flexible

- Lawyers meet the young person where they feel comfortable – libraries, coffee shops, community service centre

What do young people say they want?



- Easy access to information and advice on wide range of matters before and after care
- Emotional and health support
- Access to housing
- Support to maintain stable housing
- Life skills training
- Advocates

= Housing + Health + Support

Correlation [with homelessness] greatest when care is insecure and transition unsupported.



Homelessness and Leaving Care 2013

LegalPod has intervened for 52 young people, to...



Sustain housing	Avoid jail	Stabilise health	Stabilise income	Support decision-making
10 clients had evictions overturned or public housing secured	25 clients represented in criminal proceedings with improved outcomes (e.g. charges withdrawn)	11 clients supported with stalking, disability, victims compensation or family disputes	44 clients had 76 debts or fines waived, reduced or arranged.	Stronger connection to community support for all clients. 25 clients access DOCS files, resolve ATO, Public Trustee or training arrangements

Three years of change for "Bob Marley"



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From Bob's support agency...



“Once the lawyers had successfully developed a relationship with [Bob...her] legal issues were quickly dwindled down”. Within a year, Bob is able to say ‘I have no more court days now’.

“Without the flexible, outreach approach that LegalPod adopts, this would never have happened. B’s trajectory was to end up in prison.

“Ongoing legal support and a sense that her legal issues were being resolved, helped her to make better choices to prevent further charges.”

February 2017

4. Communication



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- ❖ LegalPod firms inductions, training
- ❖ Supervision of all file work, using LawRight precedents, fact sheets and guidance
- ❖ LegalPod firms meetings
- ❖ Reference Group
- ❖ Trained over 100 lawyers and 150 community workers
- ❖ Changed intake processes





Law firm perspective

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- MinterEllison – 7 pods
- Baker Mackenzie – 3 pods

- Thanks also to:
 - Allens Arthur Robinson
 - Ashurst
 - Clayton Utz
 - Herbert Smith Freehills
 - HopgoodGanim
 - HWL Ebsworth
 - King & Wood Mallesons
 - MurphySchmidt
 - Idemitsu (legal unit)
 - Colin Biggers & Paisley (pending)

Contact



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