



Work and Development Order (WDO) program

ANNUAL REPORT

16/17

Year in review

Education

317

Legal Aid NSW delivered 317 community legal education workshops on fines and WDOs

261

261 participants in 12 WDO regional forums across NSW

172

participants joined 3 webinars

154

Revenue NSW provided outreach services at 154 community days across NSW

WDO approved and debt resolved

23,122

WDOs approved (up 29% on previous year)

2,523

WDOs approved in May - a monthly record

\$27.6m

in fines resolved through WDOs

WDO sponsors

485

new WDO sponsors were approved (approx. 2,200 are approved in total)

>50%

Non-government organisations supported over 50% of approved WDOs

New

WDO Guidelines were approved by the Attorney General

WDO customers

38

applicants identified with a non-specific gender

36%

experienced acute economic hardship - the most common eligibility reason

21%

of participants were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

65%
male

34%
female

30%

sought drug or alcohol treatment through the program - the most common activity overall

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) people were more likely to apply under financial hardship reasons and do unpaid work as their WDO activity

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01

About this report



This is the first Work and Development Order (WDO) annual report. It is intended to provide an overview of the WDO scheme for interested parties.

The WDO scheme was implemented as a trial in 2009 and made permanent in 2011 after a positive evaluation. It is an example of co-design and collaboration between Government, community and private sectors to deliver real community benefit to the people of NSW.

Under the WDO scheme, disadvantaged people who have accumulated fines can clear their debts by undertaking activities which benefit them and the community. The scheme is limited to people who have serious medical, mental health or addiction problems; who have a cognitive impairment or intellectual disability; who are homeless; or who are in serious financial hardship.

WDOs are supervised by sponsors in the community, including government agencies; non-government organisations (such as charities); or health practitioners (doctors, psychologists, nurses).

The activities that can be included are very broad and are intended to benefit both the participant and the community. These include: unpaid work; education, vocational or life skills courses; financial and other types of counselling (including case management); medical or mental health treatment; drug or alcohol treatment; or mentoring (if the person is under 25). A WDO can reduce fines debt by up to \$1,000 per month.

This annual report covers the WDO scheme as at 30 June 2017, with particular focus on the 2016/17 financial year. However, as the first ever WDO annual report, it also provides some historical information about the scheme.

Departments and statutory bodies involved with the WDO scheme may be required to submit annual reports under the *Annual Reports (Departments) Act 1985* or *Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984*. Those departments and statutory bodies are defined in the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*. This report does not meet or replace any other requirement to produce or submit an annual report.

The annual reports of the key departments and the statutory body responsible for overseeing governance of the WDO scheme can be viewed at:

Department of Justice

www.justice.nsw.gov.au

Department of Finance, Service and Innovation

www.finance.nsw.gov.au

Legal Aid NSW

www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au

In addition to the departments and the statutory body listed above, the Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT also completes an annual report, available at www.alsnswact.org.au

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Message from the WDO Governance Group

This first edition of the Work and Development Order (WDO) annual report highlights achievements in the 2016/17 financial year. It was a year of significant change for the WDO scheme as we continued to implement important recommendations from the following three program reviews undertaken in recent years:

- a quantitative analysis of the operation, throughputs and outcomes of the WDO scheme
- a qualitative assessment of perceptions of, and experiences with, the WDO scheme
- an audit of sponsor compliance with the requirements of the WDO scheme.

These changes were carefully planned and systematically implemented by the WDO Governance Group, and they were embraced by WDO sponsors who supported WDOs in record numbers. Among our achievements in 2016/17, we are pleased to report:

- **WDO Guidelines 2017**

Important changes were made to the WDO Guidelines in 2017. These changes were implemented to make sure the WDO scheme can be accessed by people who are in the greatest need, and to help WDO sponsors understand and comply with their obligations.

- **Self-service portal changes**

Changes to the WDO self-service portal were deployed in 2016 to improve the user experience. The application process was streamlined so sponsors no longer have to call the WDO Hotline before lodging an application. There are prompts to help sponsors comply with obligations around choosing appropriate WDO activities, record-keeping and conflicts of interest. A pre-filled certificate of achievement is generated when a client completes their WDO (some sponsors have told us this is the first certificate of achievement their client has ever received).

- **Learning, development and communication**

In 2016/17 Legal Aid NSW delivered 317 community legal education workshops on fines and WDOs throughout the state. Legal Aid NSW and Revenue NSW continued to deliver WDO webinars with 172 participants joining three online events. Two issues of WDO News were distributed during the year and a new postcard was launched to help clients self-assess eligibility for a WDO. Legal Aid NSW also established regional forums to create opportunities for sponsors to connect, share experiences and learn together.

The forums are a response to recommendations in the 2015 evaluation of the WDO Scheme which identified a gap in peer-to-peer communication across the sponsor network. Forums were held in 12 locations and attended by 261 participants, with more events planned in regional and metro areas. With sponsor numbers increasing, the development of sophisticated self-help learning and development resources is critical. This was a focus in 2016/17 and will continue into 2017/18 – watch this space!

- **Government sponsor recruitment**

The Department of Justice, together with Legal Aid NSW, led a large scale recruitment of government sponsors. We asked government departments to commit to the WDO scheme, and they did. This work will continue in 2017/18.

- **Impressive growth**

There was solid growth in 2016/17. More sponsors came on board, WDOs were approved in record numbers, and a significant amount of debt was cleared.

In a year of significant reform, growth and change, all WDO sponsors have remained as committed as ever to supporting disadvantaged members of the community to reduce their debts through WDOs.

Without your tireless efforts and goodwill, the WDO scheme could not succeed.

There is still plenty to do and the WDO Governance Group will again carefully plan how it will support the WDO scheme into the coming year and beyond. Key focuses for the year ahead will be discussed further in this report.

The reforms and changes that have taken place over the past 12 months will ensure we have the foundations in place for the WDO scheme to continue to grow and for disadvantaged fine recipients to meet their obligation to the community by resolving their fines in a meaningful and responsible way.

Kathrina Lo

Deputy Secretary, Department of Justice
On behalf of the WDO Governance Group

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Corporate Governance

About the WDO Governance Group

The Work and Development Order (WDO) Governance Group oversees the WDO scheme to make sure it is administered responsibly and in line with Government and community expectations.

It is made up of representatives from the Department of Justice, Revenue NSW and Legal Aid NSW. The Group meets bi-monthly and the meetings are chaired by the Department of Justice.

The WDO Governance Group is responsible for:

- monitoring scheme performance against its objectives
- anticipating and responding to issues affecting WDO sponsors and clients
- interpreting the WDO Guidelines and recommending changes to the NSW Attorney General as required
- adjudicating and acting on instances where possible breaches of the Guidelines are brought to its attention, or where special consideration (as defined by the Guidelines) may be appropriate
- adopting planning, probity, due diligence and other practices designed to ensure the longevity and integrity of the WDO scheme by focusing efforts on scalability, risk mitigation and inclusive engagement with all key stakeholders and participants.

In addition to its regular bi-monthly meetings, the WDO Governance Group also engages in a planning day at the start of each financial year.

Focus for 2017/18 and beyond

The WDO Governance Group will meet shortly to plan how it will support the WDO scheme in the next financial year and beyond. Some key focuses will include:

- **Further evaluation of the WDO scheme**

NSW Treasury's Centre for Program Evaluation is undertaking a further review of the WDO scheme. Unlike previous evaluations, this one will examine the costs of the scheme versus the longer term financial benefits derived from it for WDO clients, sponsors, the Government and the community. The evaluation will be used to:

- identify opportunities for efficiency gains
- help the government understand the costs to sponsors
- help sponsors better understand the impact they are having.

- **Establishing a process to consult with sponsors**

It is important that WDO sponsors are consulted about issues which affect them and their clients. We want to hear from you. In 2017/18 we will be implementing a process for WDO sponsors to have their say.

- **Further enhancements to the self-service portal**

The Governance Group will invest in the ongoing development of the self-service portal to make it easier for sponsors to support the scheme according to their preferences.

- **Implementing a risk management framework**

We learned a lot from the program of audit undertaken in 2015. The audit was intended to be a way for us to identify weaknesses, so we could address these through education and better systems. It was about supporting WDO sponsors to comply with their obligations under the WDO Guidelines – not punishing them for doing the wrong thing. However, we listened to feedback and it was clear that this message didn't come across. In 2017/18 we will be working to implement an ongoing risk management framework. We listened to feedback and we are committed to making this a better experience for all WDO sponsors.

Get in touch!

Any ideas, compliments, complaints, good news stories, or other feedback can be shared with the WDO Governance Group by completing a feedback form:

www.revenue.nsw.gov.au/contact

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WDO sponsor growth

All data in this section of the report is based on WDO sponsors approved as at 30 June 2017. Sponsors who were previously approved but have since withdrawn, or were de-registered, are not included in the reported figures.

The amount of WDO sponsors continued to grow in 2016/17 with 485 new sponsors approved. In total, there are now 2,198 approved sponsors. Table 4.1 shows the number of approved sponsors by their type.

Table 4.1 - Approved WDO sponsors by type

WDO sponsor Type	Sponsors approved in 2016/17	Approved sponsors - total
Government organisation	42	306
Health practitioner	228	913
Non-government organisation	215	979
Grand Total	485	2198

Figure 4.1 compares the types of sponsors approved in 2016/17 with the types of sponsors approved since the scheme commenced. A higher percentage of health practitioners were approved in 2016/17 compared with previous years.

Figure 4.1 - Comparison of sponsor approvals in 2016/17 with total sponsor approvals

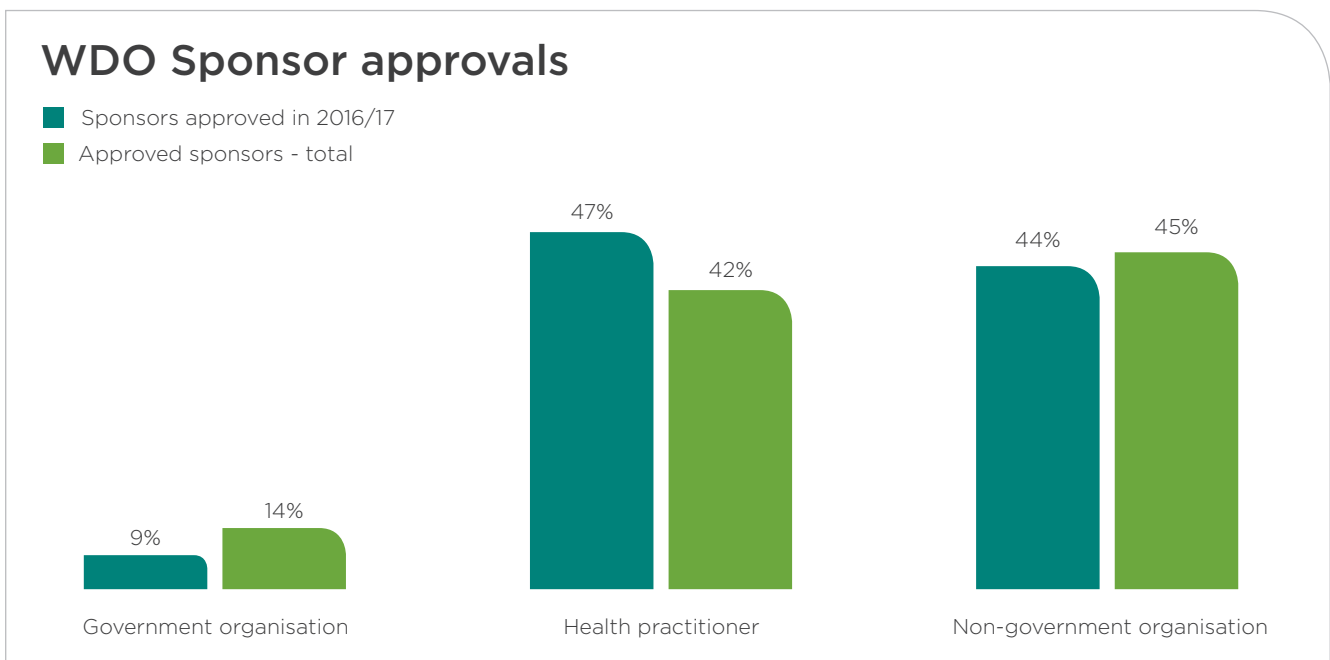


Table 4.2 shows the number of approved WDO sponsors and sponsors approved in 2016/17 by NSW statistical division.

Table 4.2 - Approved WDO sponsors by NSW statistical division

NSW Statistical Division	Sponsors approved in 2016/17	Approved sponsors - total
Capital Region	26	111
Central Coast	18	96
Central West	17	72
Coffs Harbour - Grafton	7	84
Far West and Orana	15	57
Hunter Valley exc Newcastle	13	45
Illawarra	26	180
Mid North Coast	13	81
Murray	14	61
New England and North West	13	80
Newcastle and Lake Macquarie	20	85
Richmond - Tweed	25	117
Riverina	7	21
Southern Highlands and Shoalhaven	8	61
Sydney - Baulkham Hills and Hawkesbury	15	45
Sydney - Blacktown	21	92
Sydney - City and Inner South	45	210
Sydney - Eastern Suburbs	16	56
Sydney - Inner South West	32	105
Sydney - Inner West	19	60
Sydney - North Sydney and Hornsby	12	70
Sydney - Northern Beaches	9	39
Sydney - Outer South West	5	22
Sydney - Outer West and Blue Mountains	12	52
Sydney - Parramatta	36	132
Sydney - Ryde	2	6
Sydney - South West	8	47
Sydney - Sutherland	7	39
Grand Total	461	2126

Figure 4.2 shows the geographic dispersion of all approved WDO sponsors in NSW. Note, statistical division is determined by the WDO sponsor’s location postcode. However, we acknowledge that many sponsors support WDOs for customers outside of their own area. For example, some sponsors may be located in the Central West, but provide WDO services to customers in the Far West.

Figure 4.2 - Geographic dispersion of all approved WDO sponsors in NSW

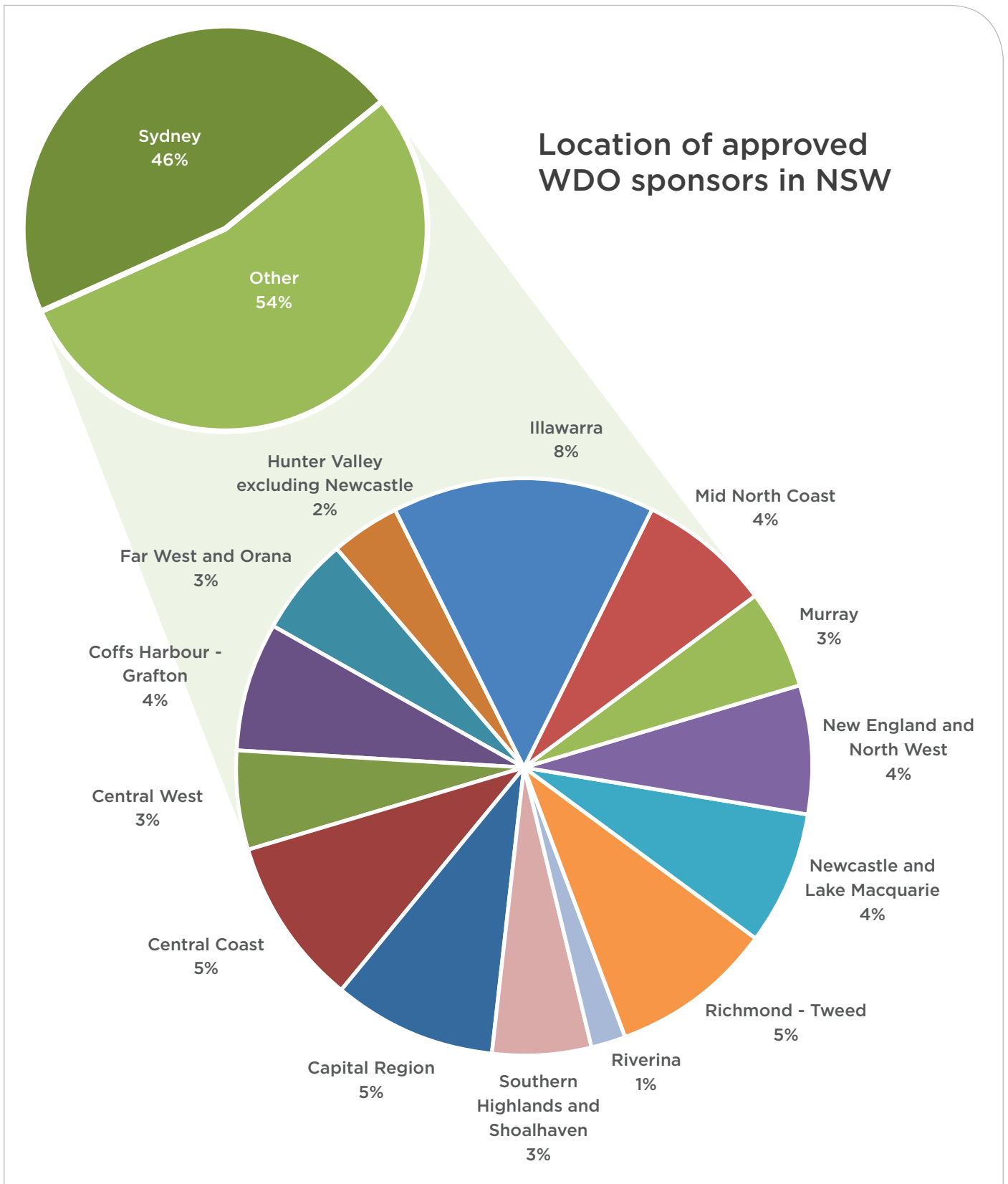
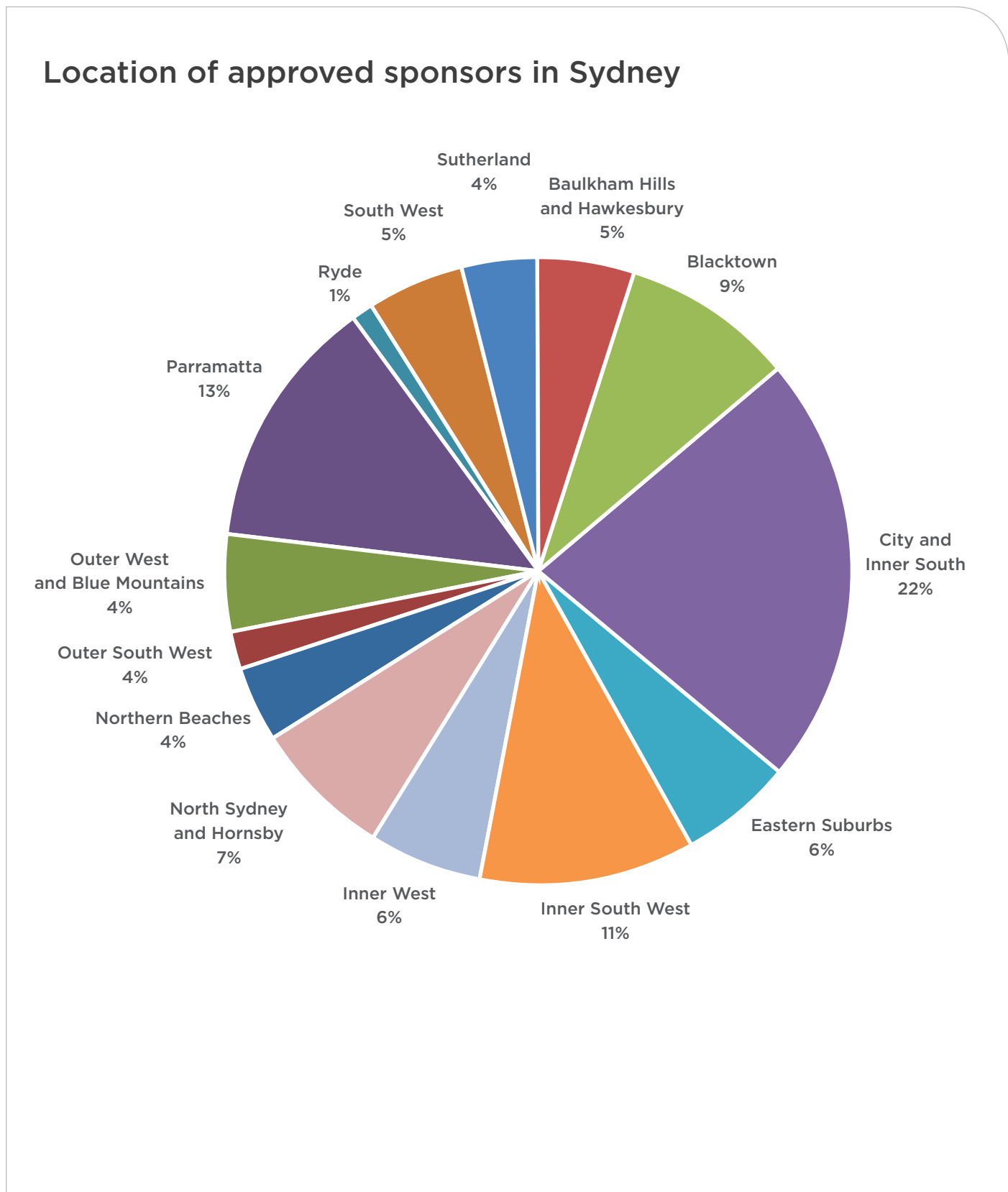


Figure 4.3 shows the geographic dispersion of all approved WDO sponsors in Sydney by statistical area.

Figure 4.3 - Geographic dispersion of all approved WDO sponsors in Sydney NSW

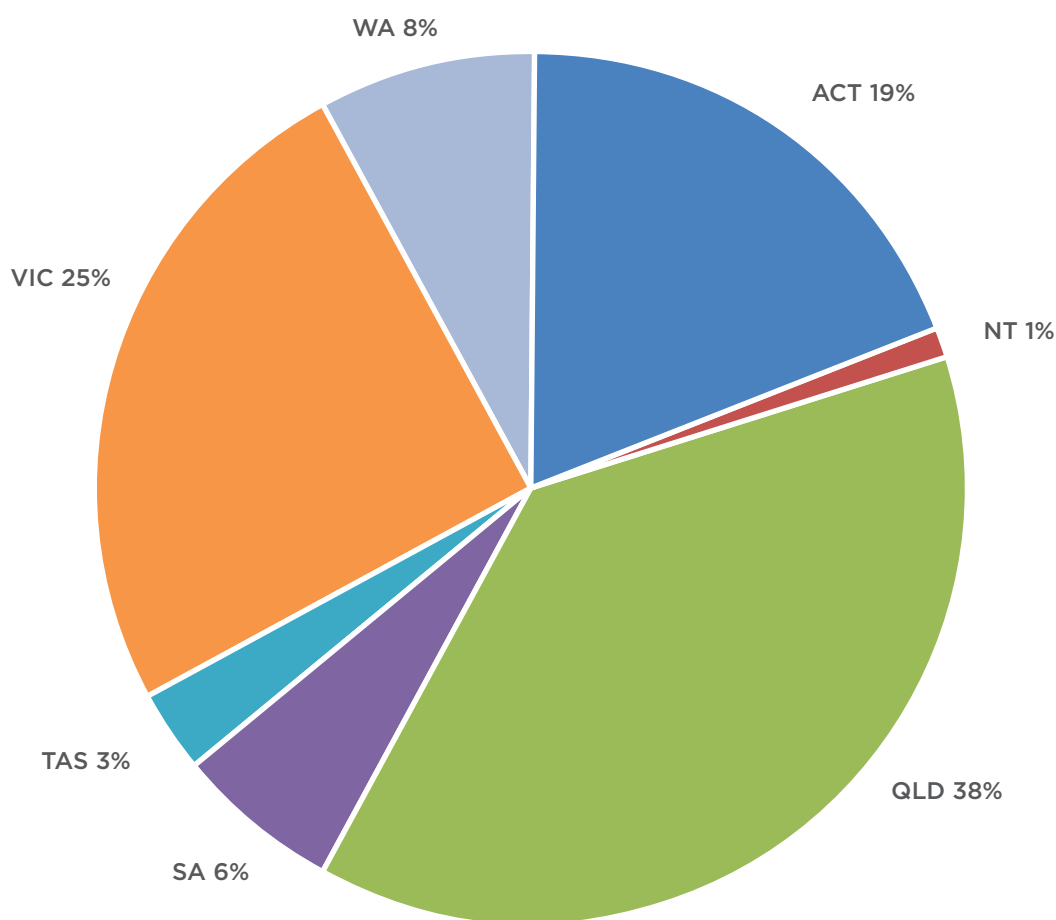


There has also been an increase in WDO sponsors located outside of NSW, who support WDOs for people with fines debt in NSW. Table 4.3 shows the number of sponsors approved outside of NSW in 2016/17 and since the scheme commenced. Figure 4.4 shows the dispersion of approved sponsors outside of NSW.

Table 4.3 -WDO sponsors approved outside of NSW

NSW Statistical Division	Sponsors approved in 2016/17	Approved sponsors - total
ACT	4	14
NT	1	1
QLD	10	27
SA	2	4
TAS	2	2
VIC	3	18
WA	2	6
Total	24	72

WDO sponsors approved interstate



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Scheme performance - general overview

5.1 Growth since the scheme was made permanent

The WDO scheme has experienced steady growth since it was made permanent. As at 30 June 2017, a total of 74,179 WDOs have been approved.

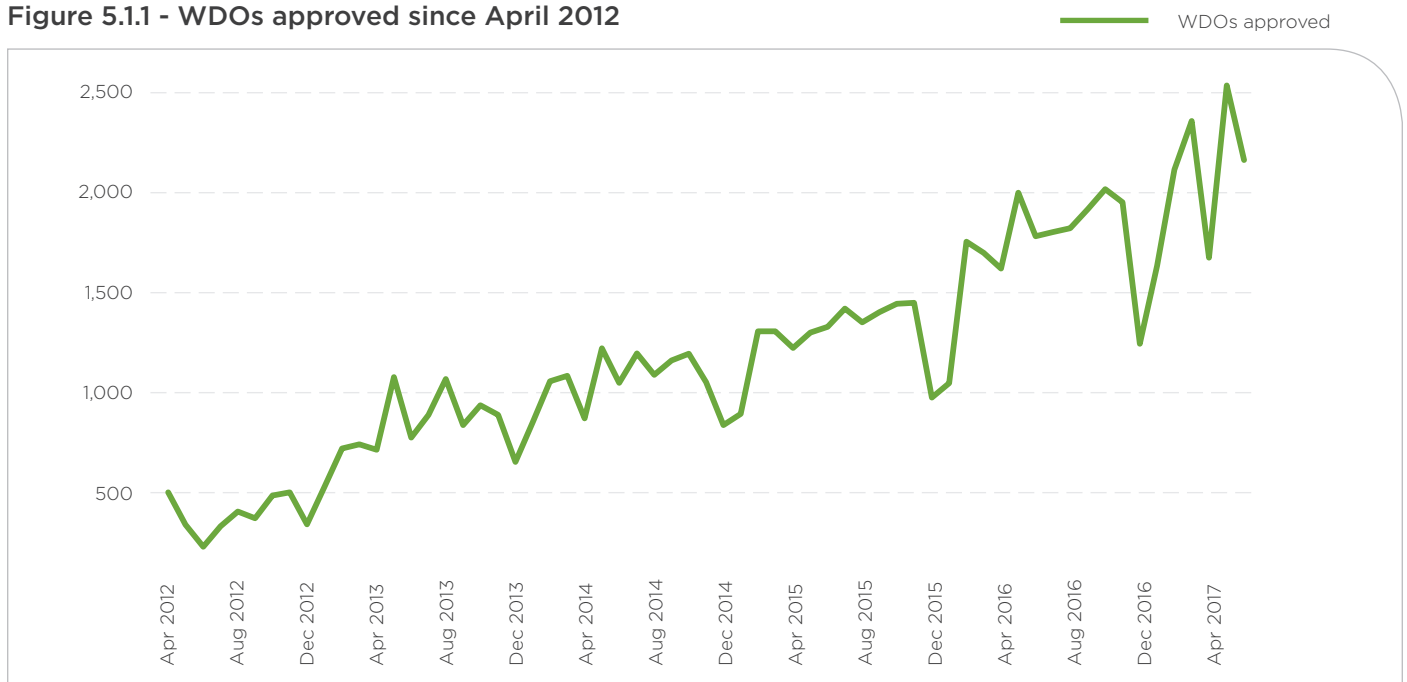
Table 5.1.1 shows the number of WDOs approved each financial year and Figure 5.1.1 provides a visual representation of the growth in the number of WDOs approved.

Table 5.1.1 - WDOs approved by financial year

Financial Year	Number of WDOs approved	Increase on previous year
2016/17	23,122	29%
2015/16	17,857	29%
2014/15	13,820	22%
2013/14	11,354	63%
2012/13	6,960	552%
2011/12	1,066	-
Total	74,179	-

* 2011/12 figures only include WDOs approved from April 2012 when the online WDO self-service portal was introduced.

Figure 5.1.1 - WDOs approved since April 2012



5.2 Growth in financial year

The WDO scheme continued to grow in the 2016/17 financial year. Another record was broken in May 2017, when 2,523 WDO applications were received and approved.

Table 5.2.1 shows the number of WDOs approved each month, and the value of debt attached to those WDOs at the time they were approved. The average debt for WDO participants in 2016/17 was \$3,076.75.

Table 5.2.1 - WDOs approved in 2016/17

Month	Number of WDOs approved	Value of debt attached to WDOs (at time of approval)
Jul	1,793	\$6,074,640
Aug	1,813	\$5,650,793
Sep	1,909	\$5,780,362
Oct	2,007	\$6,140,204
Nov	1,942	\$5,685,040
Dec	1,238	\$3,117,931
Jan	1,626	\$5,082,306
Feb	2,105	\$6,706,650
Mar	2,347	\$7,194,846
Apr	1,667	\$5,475,669
May	2,523	\$8,306,914
Jun	2,152	\$5,925,281
Total	23,122	\$71,140,635

5.3 Debt cleared through WDOs since the scheme was made permanent

As WDO volumes have increased, so too has the value of debt cleared through WDOs. In total, approximately \$90m of fines debt has been cleared through WDOs.

Table 5.3.1 shows the amount of debt cleared through WDOs each year.

Table 5.3.1 - Fines debt cleared through WDOs

Financial Year	Value of debt cleared
2016/17	\$27,647,442
2015/16	\$22,038,623
2014/15	\$17,307,525
2013/14	\$14,665,425
2012/13	\$7,641,792
2011/12*	\$676,931
Total	\$89,977,737

* 2011/12 figures only include WDOs approved from April 2012 when the online WDO self-service portal was introduced.

5.4 Debt cleared through WDOs in financial year

The program met another milestone in May 2017, when \$2.7m in debt was cleared through WDOs. This is the highest amount of debt cleared in a single month since the scheme commenced.

Table 5.4.1 shows the amount of debt cleared each month in 2016/17.

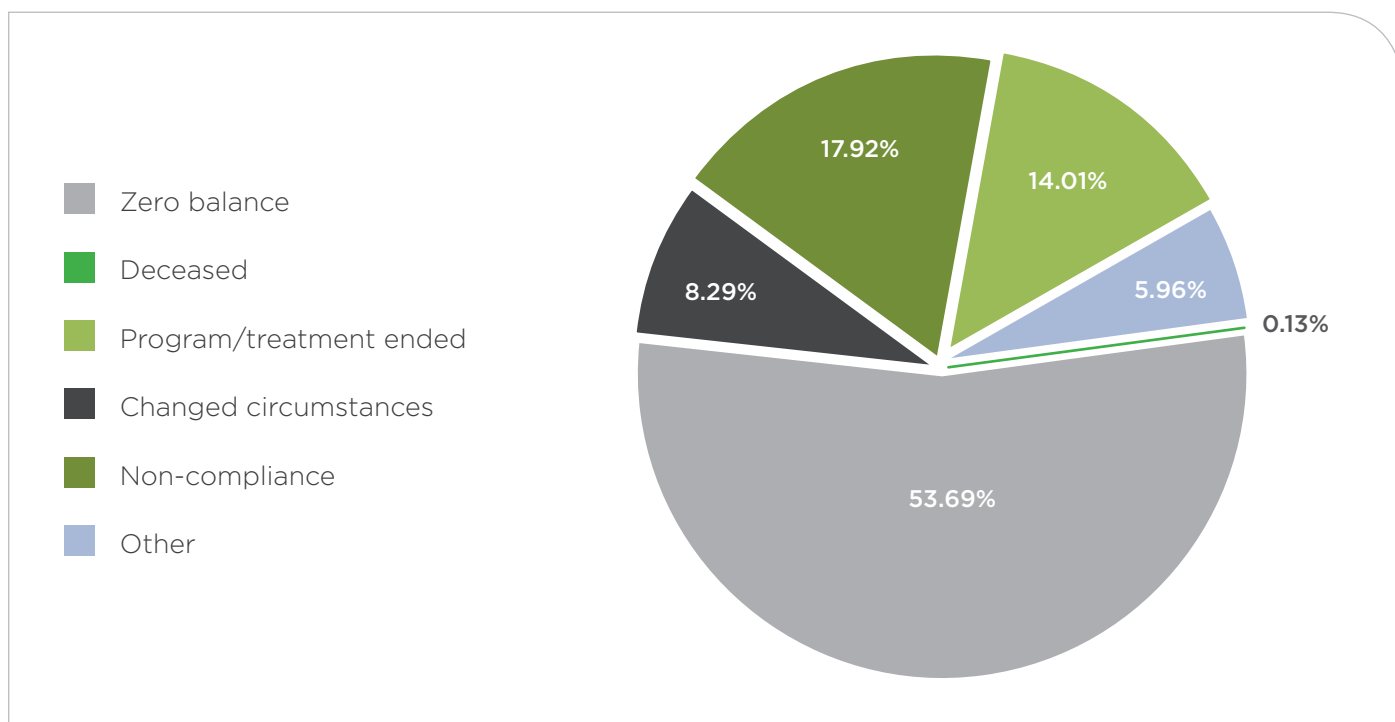
Table 5.4.1 - Fines debt cleared through WDOs in 2016/17

Month	Fines debt cleared through WDOs
Jul	\$2,178,907
Aug	\$2,093,260
Sep	\$2,490,858
Oct	\$2,282,633
Nov	\$2,532,066
Dec	\$2,190,019
Jan	\$1,642,771
Feb	\$2,103,213
Mar	\$2,531,477
Apr	\$2,221,863
May	\$2,719,056
Jun	\$2,661,320
Total	\$27,647,442

5.5 Closed WDOs

WDOs can be closed for a number of reasons. In 2016/17, 10,873 WDOs were closed with a zero balance, meaning all debt attached to the WDO was cleared. This represented 54% of all closed WDOs in this year. Figure 5.5.1 shows the reasons WDOs were closed in 2016/17.

Figure 5.5.1 - WDOs closed in 2016/17 - by reason



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WDO participants - who are they?

In this section of the report, we explore who is participating in WDOs. Please note, sections 8, 9 and 10 of this report provide information about specific customer groups. This section is a high level overview of all WDO participants.

6.1 Age

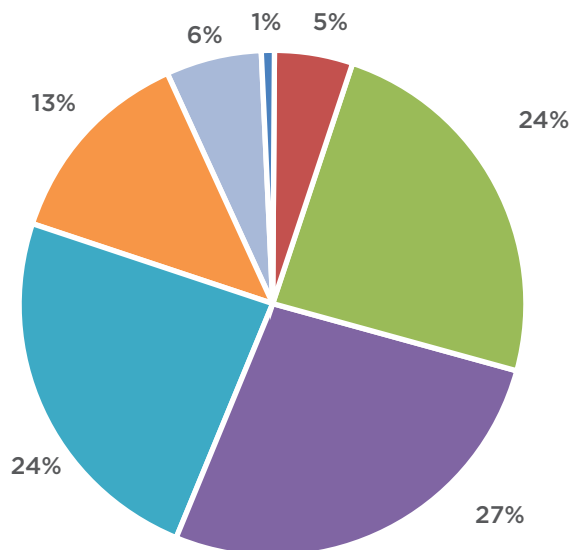
In 2016/17, 75% of WDOs were for people aged 18-45. Table 6.1.1 shows the number of WDOs approved in 2016/17 by participant age, and Figure 6.1.1 shows the distribution.

Table 6.1.1 – WDOs approved in 2016/17 by participant age

Age	WDOs approved in 16/17
Under 18	1,139
18 to 25	5,661
26 to 35	6,266
36 to 45	5,664
46 to 55	3,094
56 to 70	1,272
Over 70	226
Total	23,122

WDO approved in 2016/17 by age

- Under 18
- 18-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56-70
- Over 70



6.2 Gender

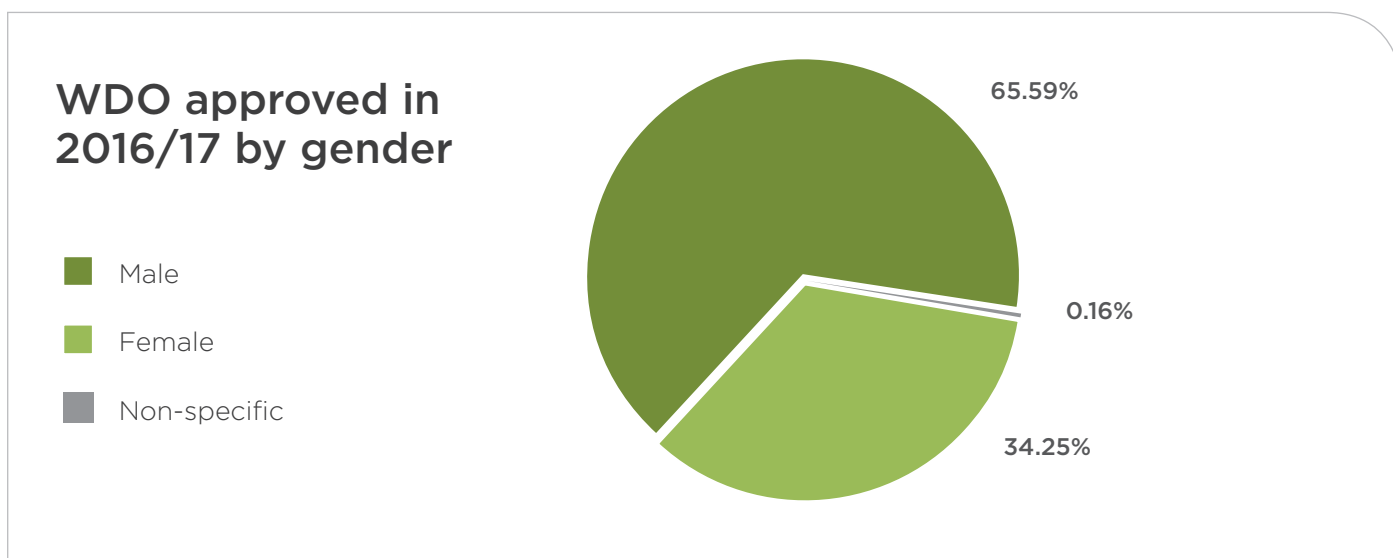
In 2016, we introduced a non-binary gender option into the WDO self-service portal, in response to feedback from our valued WDO sponsors and customers.

Over 65% of approved WDOs were for male participants (38 WDOs approved for customers who identified with non-specific gender. There was no significant variance in gender distributions among the various age ranges.

Table 6.2.1 shows the number of WDOs approved in 2016/17 by participant gender, and Figure 6.2.1 shows this distribution in a chart.

Table 6.2.1 - Gender of WDO applicants in 2016/17

Gender	WDOs approved in 16/17 by gender
Female	7,919
Male	15,165
Non-specific	38



6.3 Centrelink status

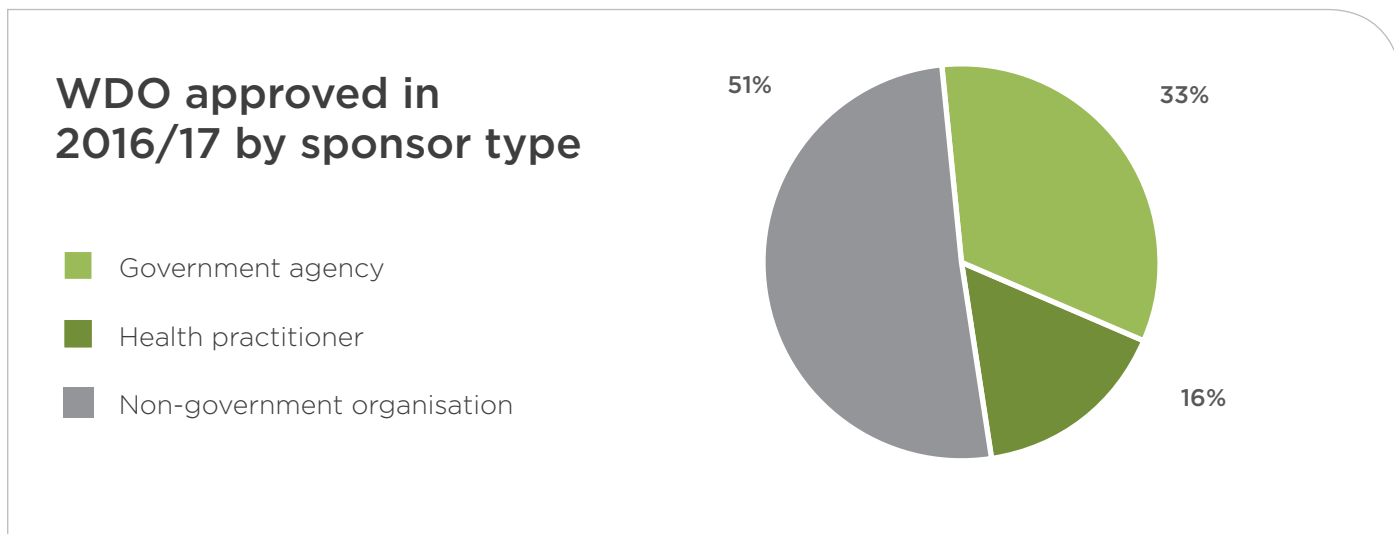
WDO sponsors are asked at the time of application whether the applicant receives of a Centrelink benefit. In 2016/17, 65% of WDO applicants (15,033) were receiving a Centrelink benefit.

6.4 Sponsor types

Government agencies, health practitioners and non-government organisations can be WDO sponsors. In 2016/17, non-government agencies were the biggest supporters, with 11,883 WDOs (51%). Government agencies supported 7,614 WDOs (33%) and health practitioners supported 3,625 WDOs (16%)

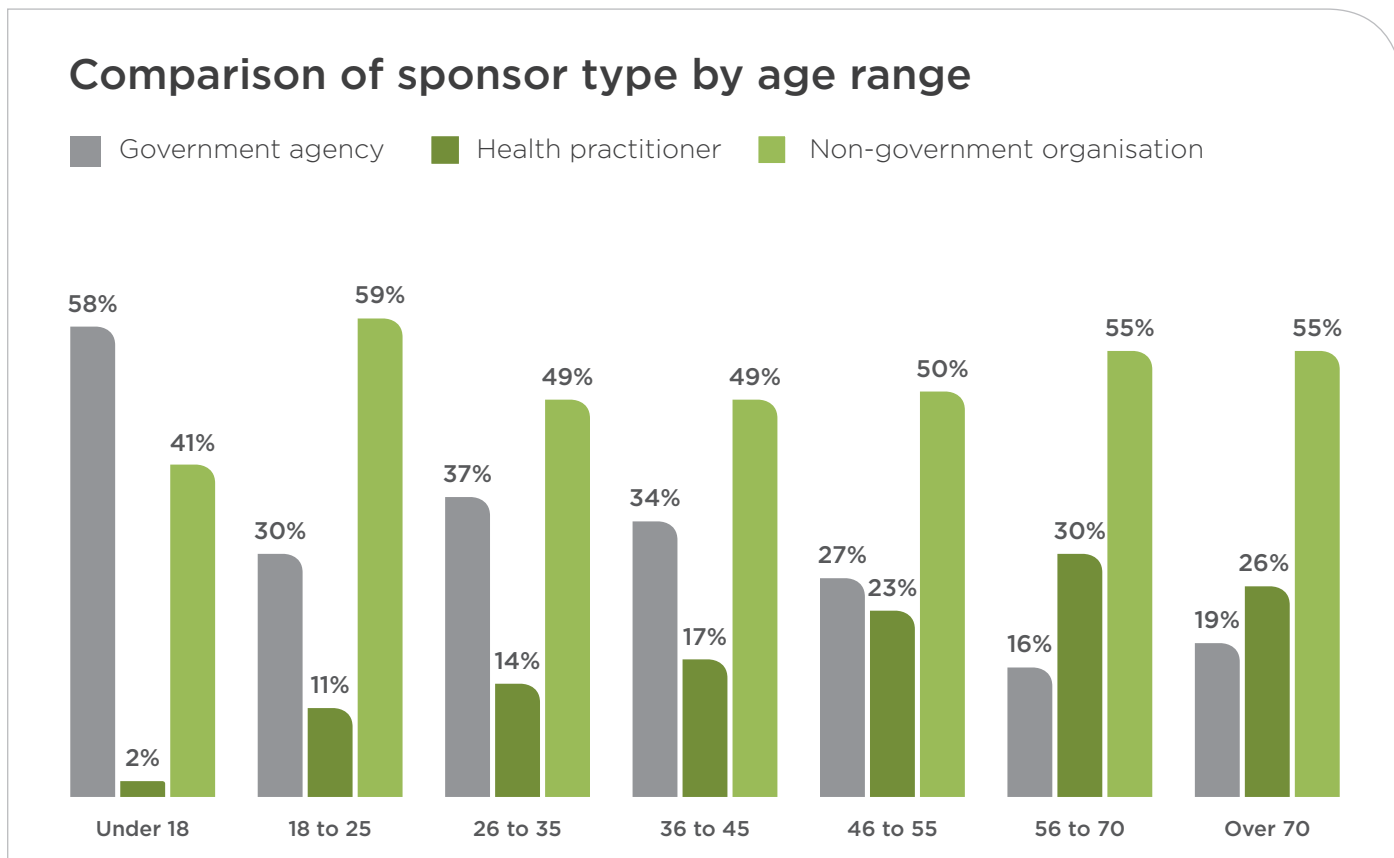
Figure 6.4.1 shows the distribution of WDOs approved in 2016/17 by the WDO sponsor type.

Figure 6.4.1 - WDOs approved in 2016/17 by sponsor type



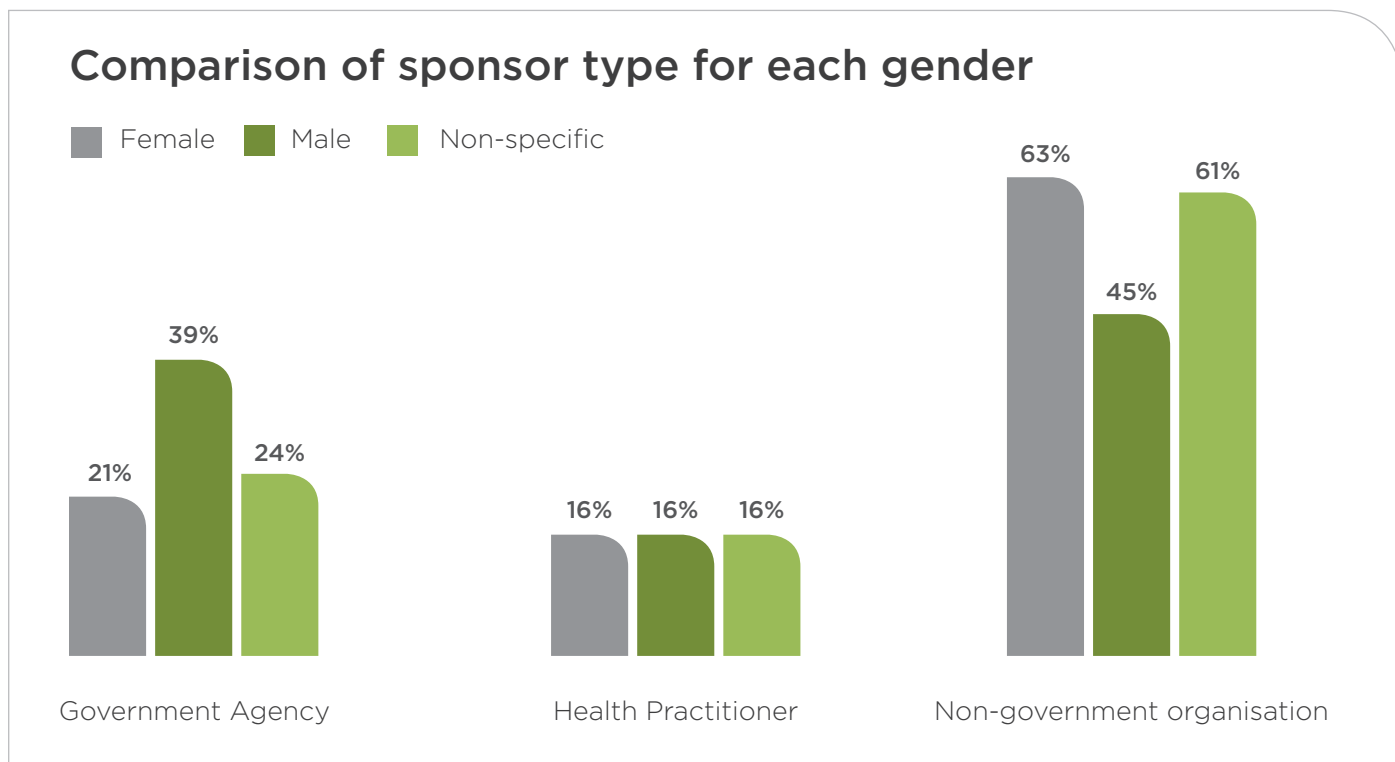
We also compared the types of customers each sponsor type engaged with in 2016/17. Figure 6.4.2 shows that young people under 18 were more likely to be supported by a Government sponsor. Sponsorship by a Government agency had a negative correlation with age; that is, the likelihood of having a Government sponsor decreased as age increased. Age had a direct positive correlation with likelihood of being sponsored by a health practitioner – as age increased, so too did the likelihood of being sponsored by a health practitioner.

Figure 6.4.2 - Sponsor type by age range



In Figure 6.4.3, we compare the distribution of genders across sponsor types for WDOs approved in 2016/17. The distribution of gender was even amongst WDOs supported by health practitioners. The distribution of male participants across Government and non-government organisations was similar, while female participants were much more likely to be supported by a non-government sponsor.

Figure 6.4.3 - Distribution of gender across sponsor type for WDOs approved in 2016/17



07

Eligibility reasons

7.1 Eligibility reasons

The most common ground for eligibility for a WDO was acute economic hardship. In previous evaluations, sponsors reported that this criterion is preferred because the evidentiary requirements are most straightforward. Therefore, this criterion is likely to be over-represented in the reported figures.

Figure 7.1 shows the range of WDO eligibility reasons for WDOs approved in 2016/17. Table 7.1 shows the number of WDOs approved under each eligibility criterion.

Figure 7.1.1 - WDOs approved in 2016/17 by eligibility criteria

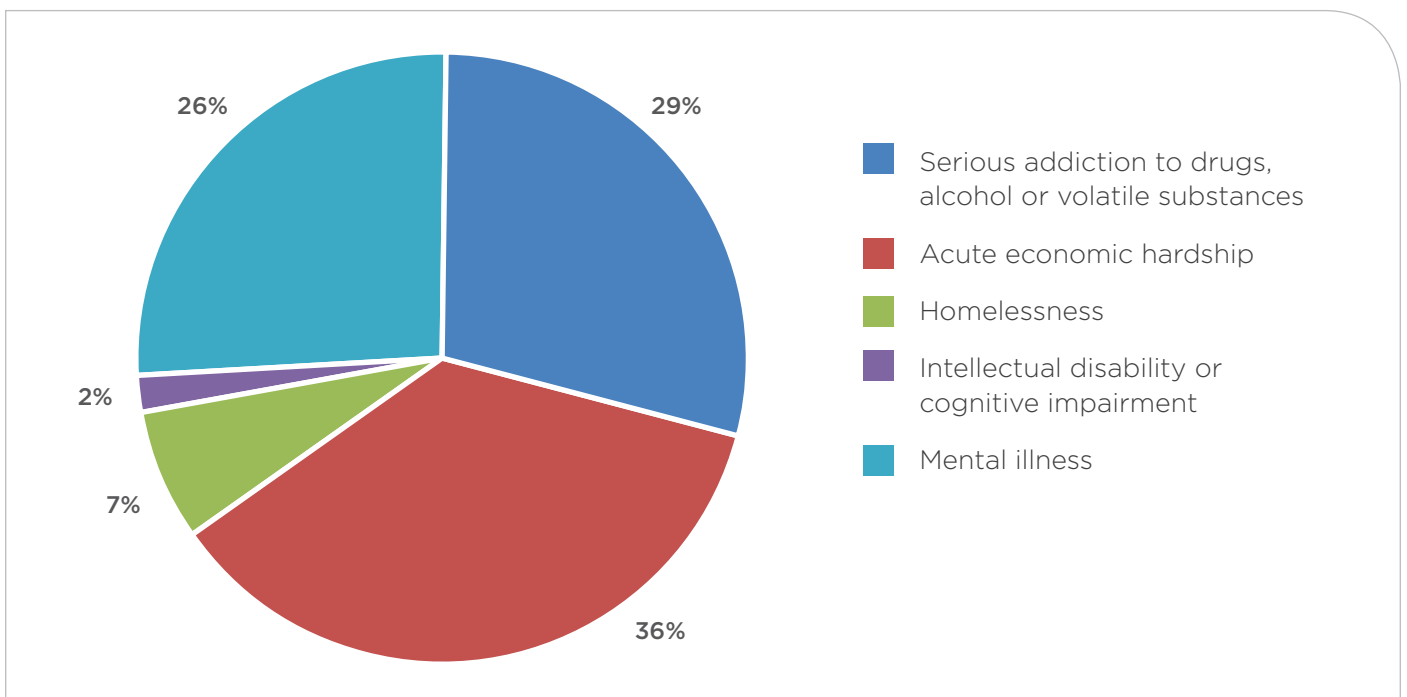


Figure 7.1.1 - WDOs approved in 2016/17 by eligibility criteria

Eligibility criteria	Number of WDOs approved
Serious addiction to drugs, alcohol or volatile substances	7,613
Acute economic hardship	9,441
Homelessness	1,728
Intellectual disability or cognitive impairment	608
Mental illness	6,780

Note: WDO participants can choose multiple eligibility criteria. Therefore, some WDOs will be counted in multiple categories above.

In 2017, the WDO Guidelines were amended to make a number of changes. Some of these related to eligibility criteria. For example, young people under 18 are now automatically eligible to participate under the ground of acute economic hardship and people with gambling disorders are eligible under the ground of mental illness.

We also compared eligibility reasons across participant gender. Figures 7.1.2 through to 7.1.4 below show the eligibility reasons selected by each gender.

Male participants were more likely than females to apply under the ground of serious addiction to drugs, alcohol or volatile substances (33% compared with 22%). Female participants were more likely than males to apply under the ground of acute economic hardship (43% compared with 33%).

Figure 7.1.2 - Eligibility reasons for female participants in 2016/17

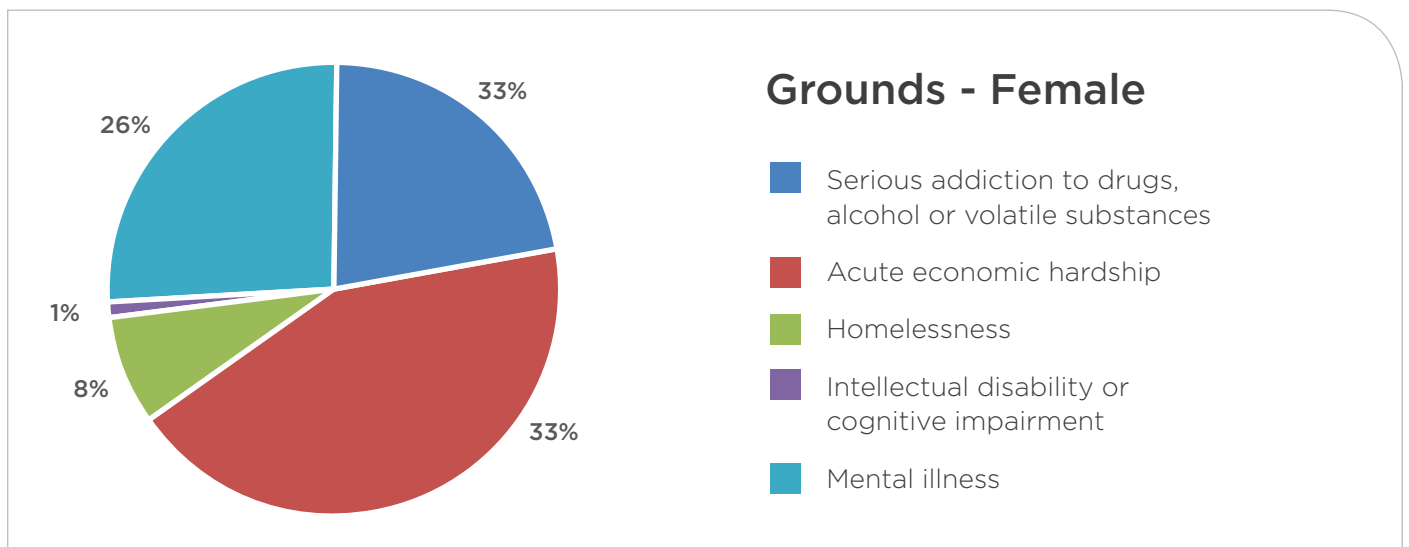
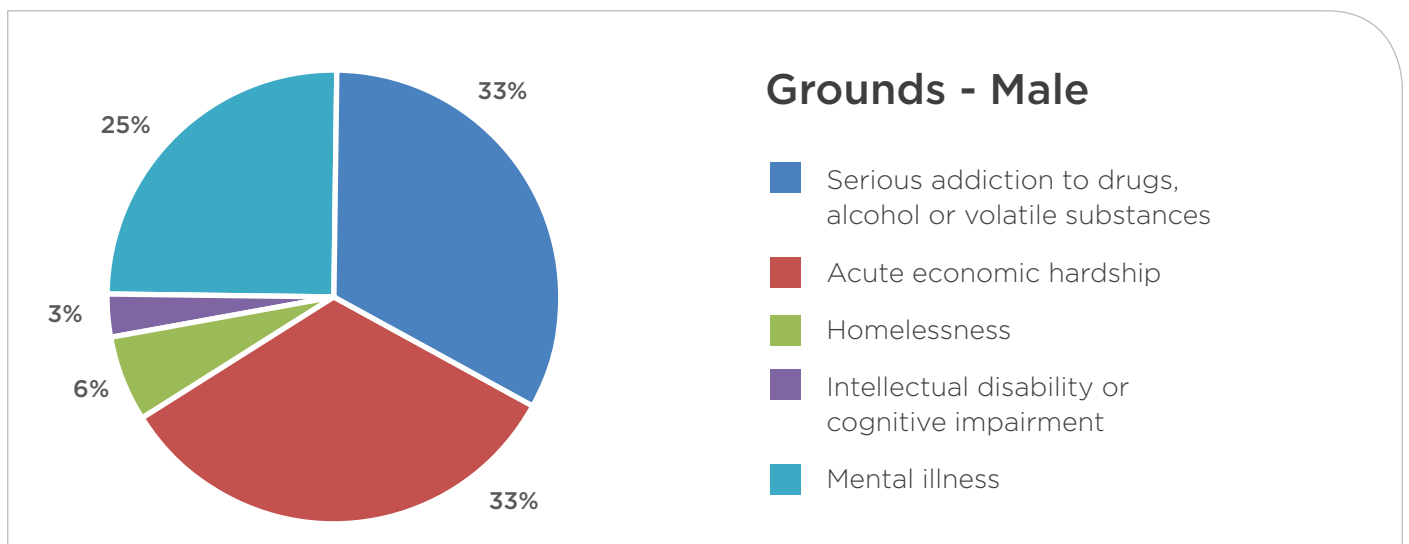
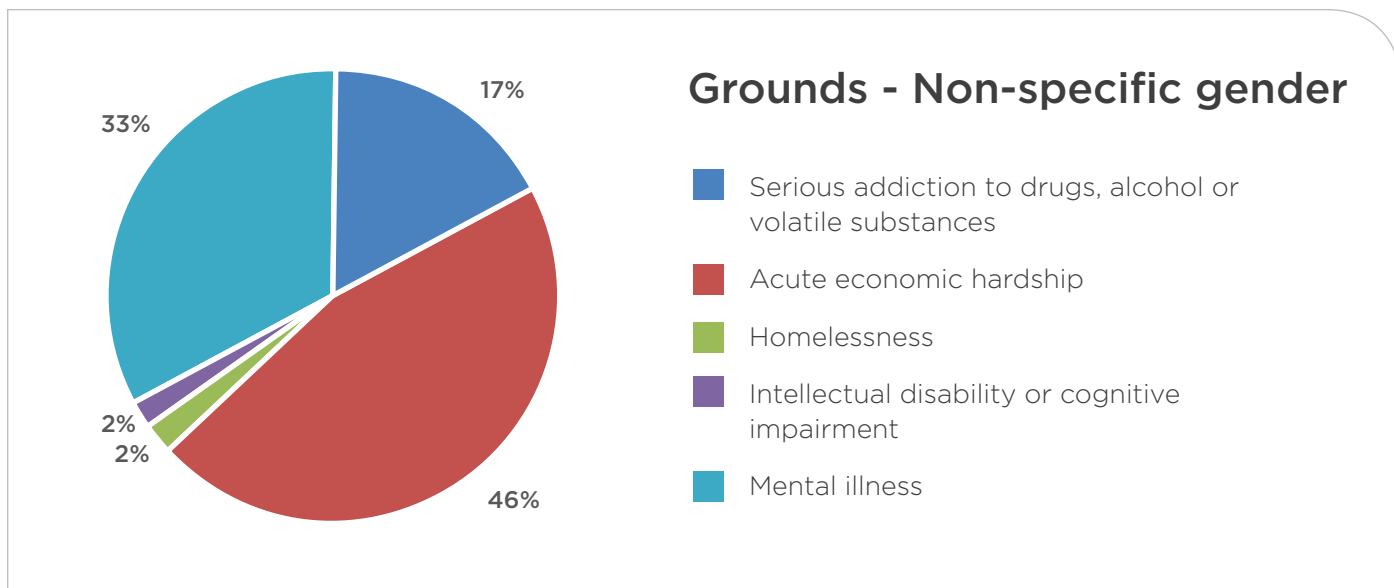


Figure 7.1.3 - Eligibility reasons for male participants in 2016/17



Participants who identified with a non-specific gender were more likely than other genders to apply under the ground of mental illness, and less likely to apply under the ground of homelessness. However, the number of participants who identified with a non-specific gender in 2016/17 was small, so these results should be interpreted with caution.

Figure 7.1.3 – Eligibility reasons for male participants in 2016/17



7.2 Activities undertaken

The most common activity was drug or alcohol treatment. The least common activity was mentoring, however, this activity is limited to people under 25 years of age.

Figure 7.2.1 shows the range of WDO activities undertaken for WDOs approved in 2016/17. In Table 7.2.1, we have provided the actual number of WDOs approved for each activity type.

Figure 7.2.1 - WDOs approved in 2016/17 by activity type

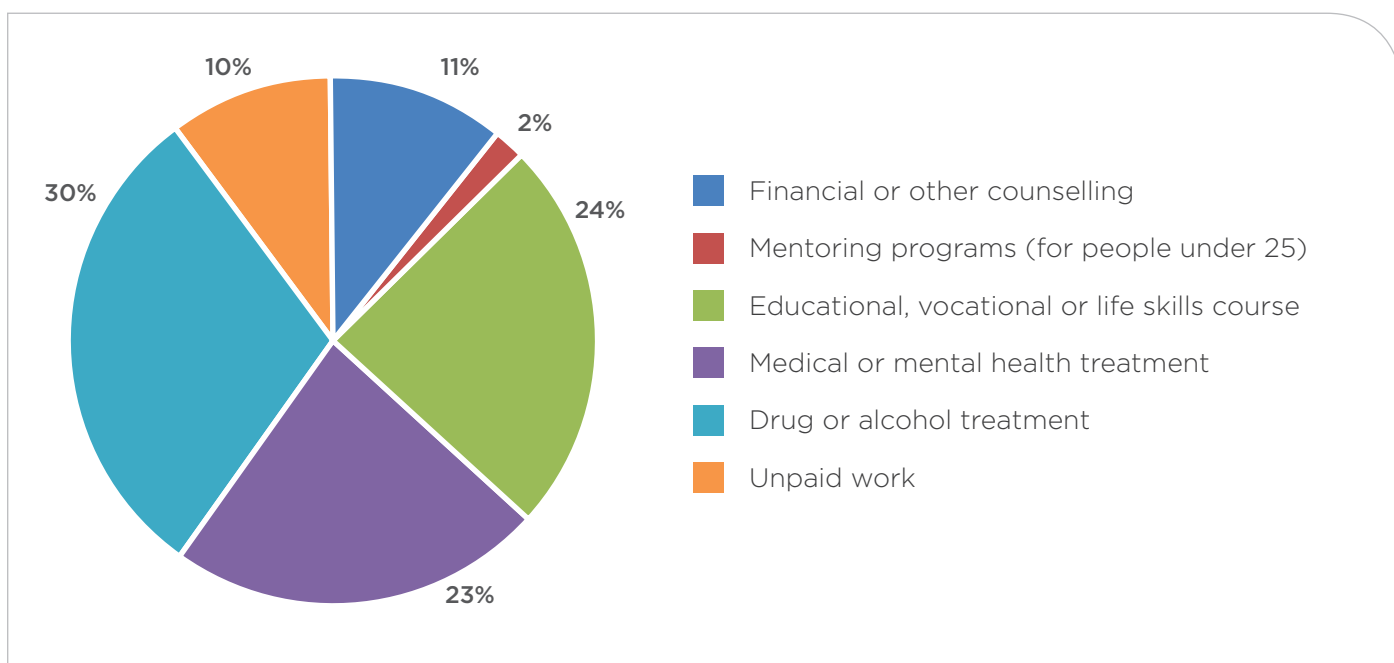


Figure 7.2.1 - Activities undertaken for WDOs approved in 2016/17

Activity type	Number of WDOs approved
Financial or other counselling	2,818
Mentoring programs (for people under 25)	517
Educational, vocational or life skills course	6,036
Medical or mental health treatment	5,831
Drug or alcohol treatment	7,570
Unpaid work	2,440

Notes: WDO participants can undertake multiple WDO activity types. Therefore, some WDOs will be counted in multiple categories above.

We also compared types of activities undertaken by each gender group. Figures 7.2.2 through to 7.2.4 below show the activities undertaken by each gender.

Male participants were more likely than females to undertake drug or alcohol treatment (34% compared with 23%).

Female participants were more likely than males to undertake financial or other counselling (17% compared with 8%).

Figure 7.2.2 - Activities undertaken by female participants in 2016/17

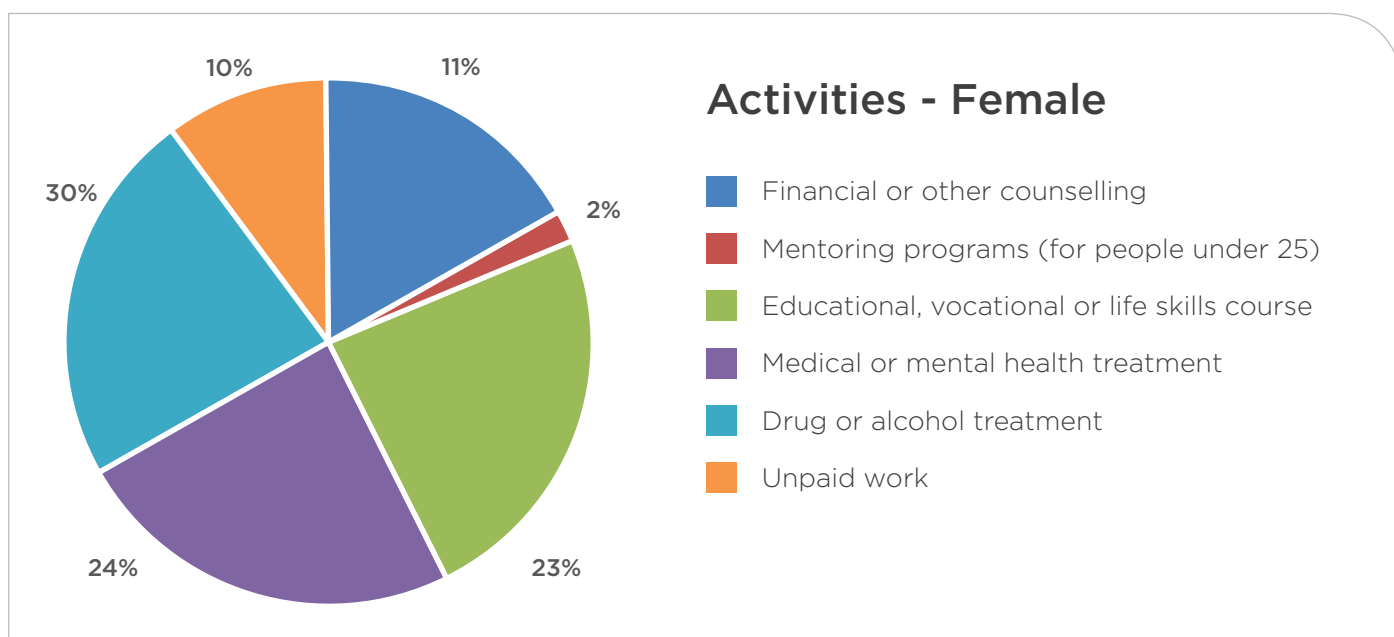
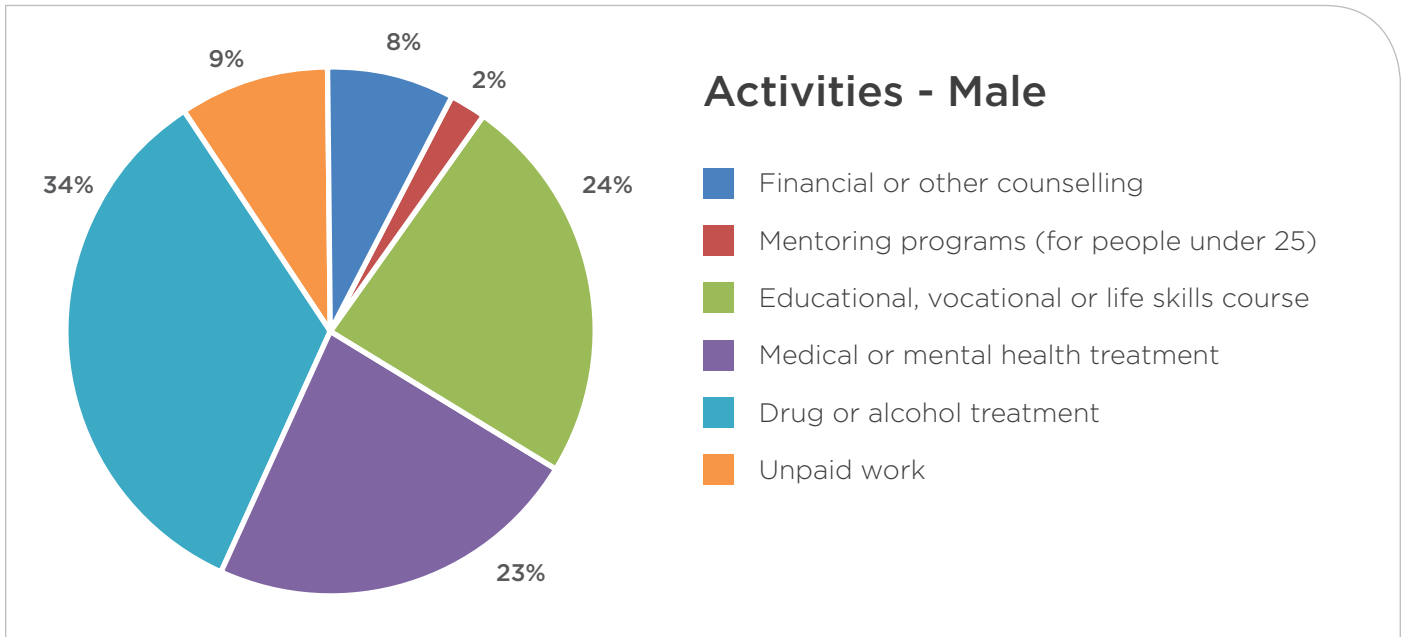
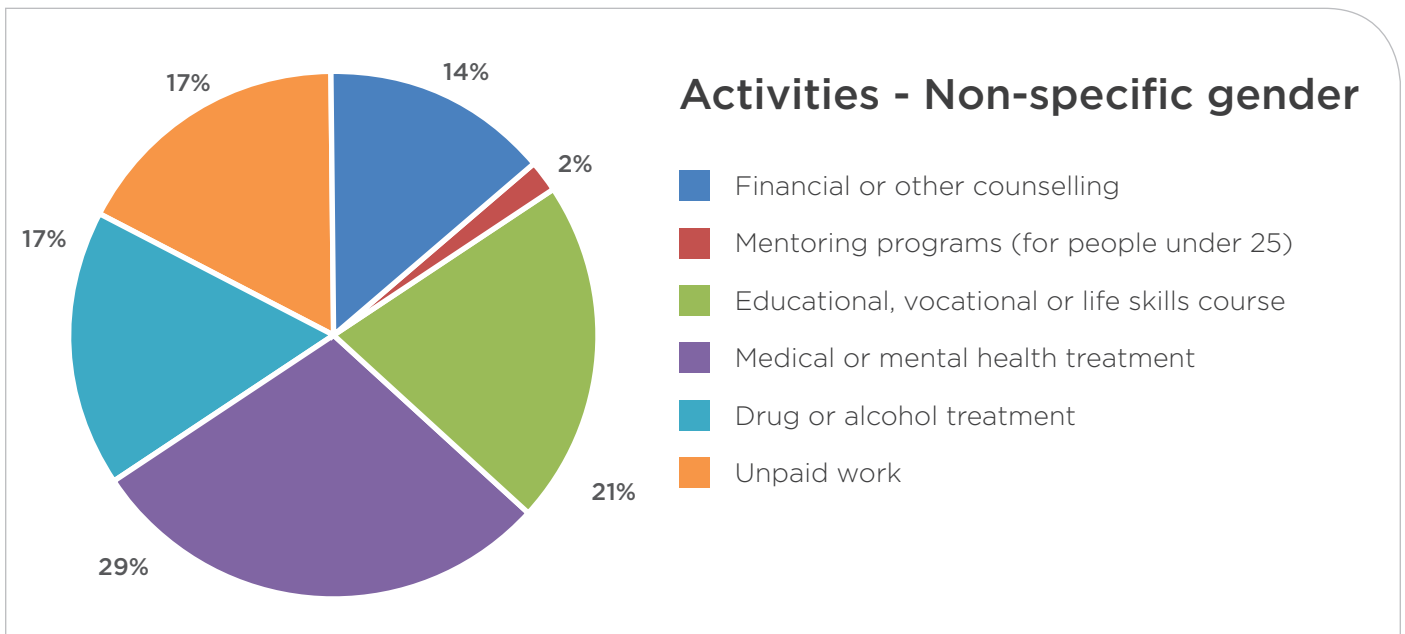


Figure 7.2.3 - Activities undertaken by male participants in 2016/17



Participants who identified with a non-specific gender were more likely than other genders to undertake unpaid work or medical/mental health treatment as their WDO activity, and less likely to undertake drug or alcohol treatment. However, the number of participants who identified with a non-specific gender in 2016/17 was small, so these results should be interpreted with caution.

Figure 7.2.3 - Activities undertaken in 2016/17 by participants who identified with a non-specific gender





Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

8.1 Participation

In 2016/17, there was strong participation in WDOs from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Table 8.1.1 shows the number of WDOs approved each month for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants and the value of debt attached to those WDOs when they were approved.

In total, 4,874 WDOs were approved, representing 21.08% of all WDOs. The average debt per participant was \$3,281.27, which is approximately 6.77% higher than the average for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Figure 8.1.1 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in WDOs

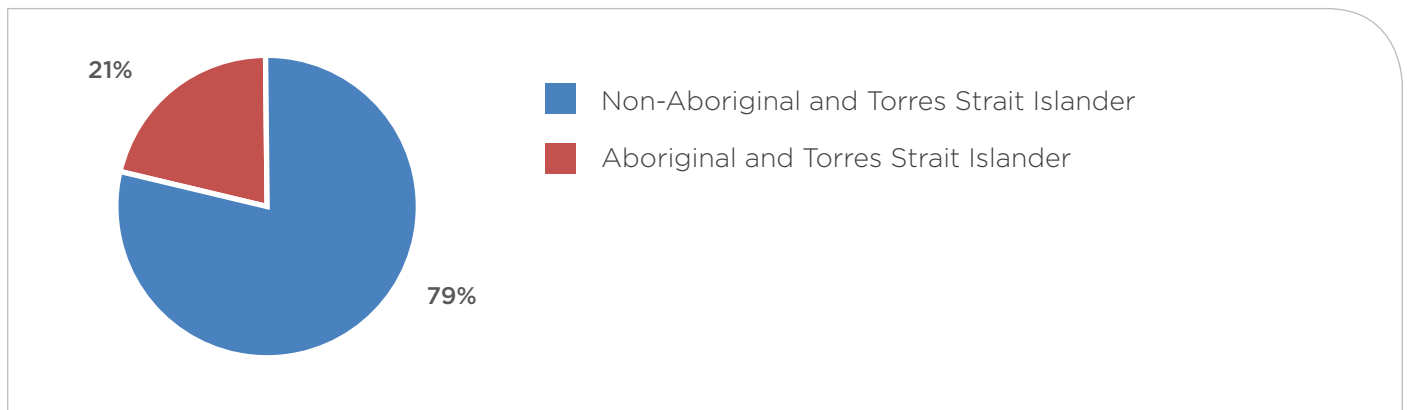


Table 8.1.1 - WDOs approved in 2016/17 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants

Month	Number of WDOs approved	Value of debt attached to WDOs (at time of approval)
Jul	348	\$1,083,727
Aug	387	\$1,192,731
Sep	373	\$1,172,264
Oct	436	\$1,378,608
Nov	406	\$1,263,972
Dec	233	\$665,623
Jan	319	\$1,029,254
Feb	440	\$1,502,205
Mar	534	\$1,635,026
Apr	361	\$1,388,502
May	564	\$2,124,410
Jun	473	\$1,556,605
TOTAL	4,874	\$15,992,923

8.2 Demographics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants

Gender

There was no significant difference in the gender distribution between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants. Table 8.2.1 provides a breakdown of gender for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants.

Table 8.2.1 - Gender for WDOs approved in 2016/17

Gender	Number of WDOs approved
Male	3050
Female	1817
Non-specific*	7

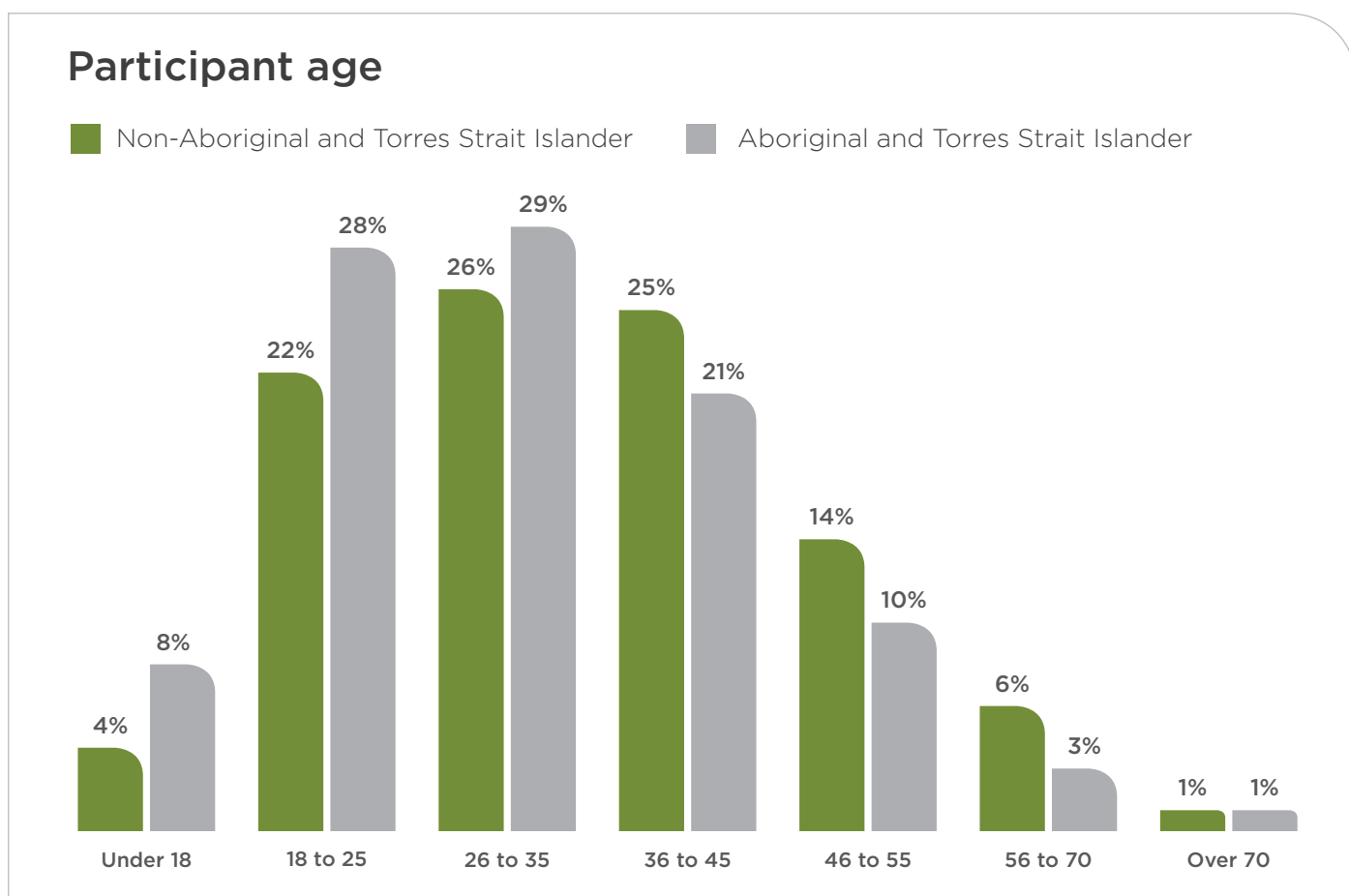
*Non-specific was a gender option introduced in late August 2016, in response to feedback from sponsors who requested a non-binary gender option.

Age

Generally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants tended to be younger than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants. 66% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants were 35 or under, compared with 53% of participants who were not Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

Figure 8.2.1 compares the age distribution between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants and participants who are not Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

Figure 8.2.1 - Participant age in 2016/17 - comparison between ATSI and non-ATSI participants



8.3 Eligibility reasons for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants

The most common criterion was acute economic hardship. As noted previously, sponsors have reported that this criterion is preferred over others because the record-keeping requirements are the most simple.

Table 8.3.1 shows the number of WDOs approved for ATSI participants under each eligibility criterion.

Table 8.3.1 - ATSI WDOs approved in 2016/17 by eligibility criteria

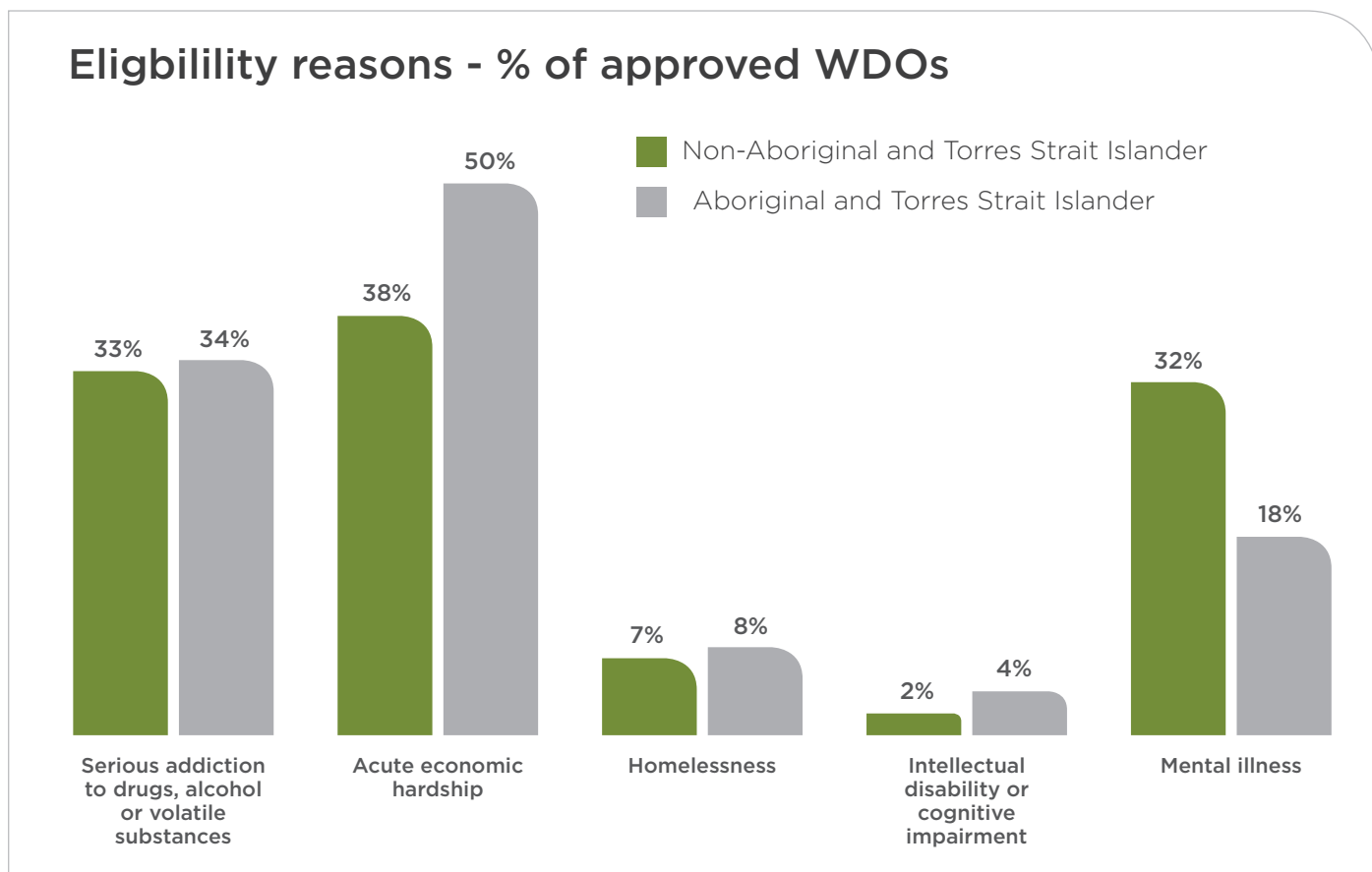
Eligibility criteria	Number of WDOs approved
Serious addiction to drugs, alcohol or volatile substances	1,670
Acute economic hardship	2,425
Homelessness	407
Intellectual disability or cognitive impairment	173
Mental illness	898

Note: WDO participants can choose multiple eligibility criteria. Therefore, some WDOs will be counted in multiple categories above.

Figure 8.3.1 compares the eligibility reasons used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants with the eligibility reasons used by participants who are not Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants were more likely to apply under acute economic hardship, and less likely to apply under the ground of mental illness.

Figure 8.3.1 - Eligibility reasons for WDOs - comparison between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants



Note: WDO participants can choose multiple eligibility criteria. Therefore, some WDOs will be counted in multiple categories above.

8.4 Activities undertaken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants

The most common activity undertaken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants was educational, vocational or life skills courses.

Table 8.4.1 shows the number of WDOs approved for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants by each activity type.

Table 8.4.1 - WDOs approved in 2016/17 by activity type

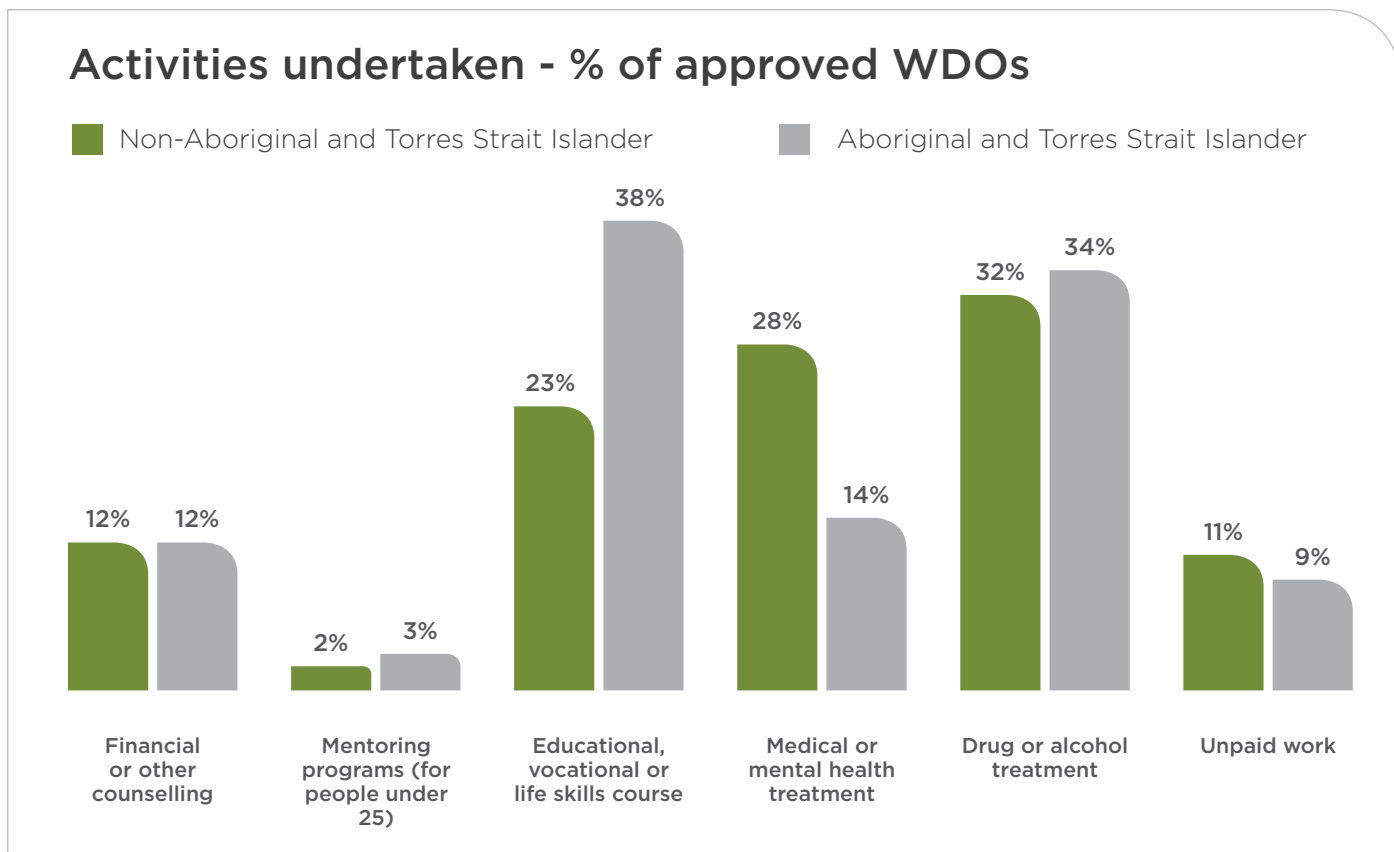
Activity type	Number of WDOs approved
Financial or other counselling	599
Mentoring programs (for people under 25)	130
Educational, vocational or life skills course	1,873
Medical or mental health treatment	686
Drug or alcohol treatment	1,676
Unpaid work	441

Note: WDO participants can choose multiple WDO activities. Therefore, some WDOs will be counted in multiple categories above.

Figure 8.4.1 compares the activities undertaken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants with the activities undertaken by participants who are not Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants were more likely to undertake educational, vocational or life skills courses, and less likely to undertake medical or mental health treatment.

Figure 8.4.1 - WDO activities undertaken - comparison between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants



Note: WDO participants can choose multiple WDO activities. Therefore, some WDOs will be counted in multiple categories above.

09

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse people

In 2016/17, 2,985 WDOs were approved for participants who identified as being from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community. In total, \$6.1m of debt was attached to those WDOs at the time they were approved. The average debt for CALD participants was \$2,051.09, which is 36.47% less than non-CALD people.

Approximately 65% of CALD participants were male, and 34% were female. There were five participants who identified with non-specific gender. There was no significant difference in the gender distribution between CALD and non-CALD participants.

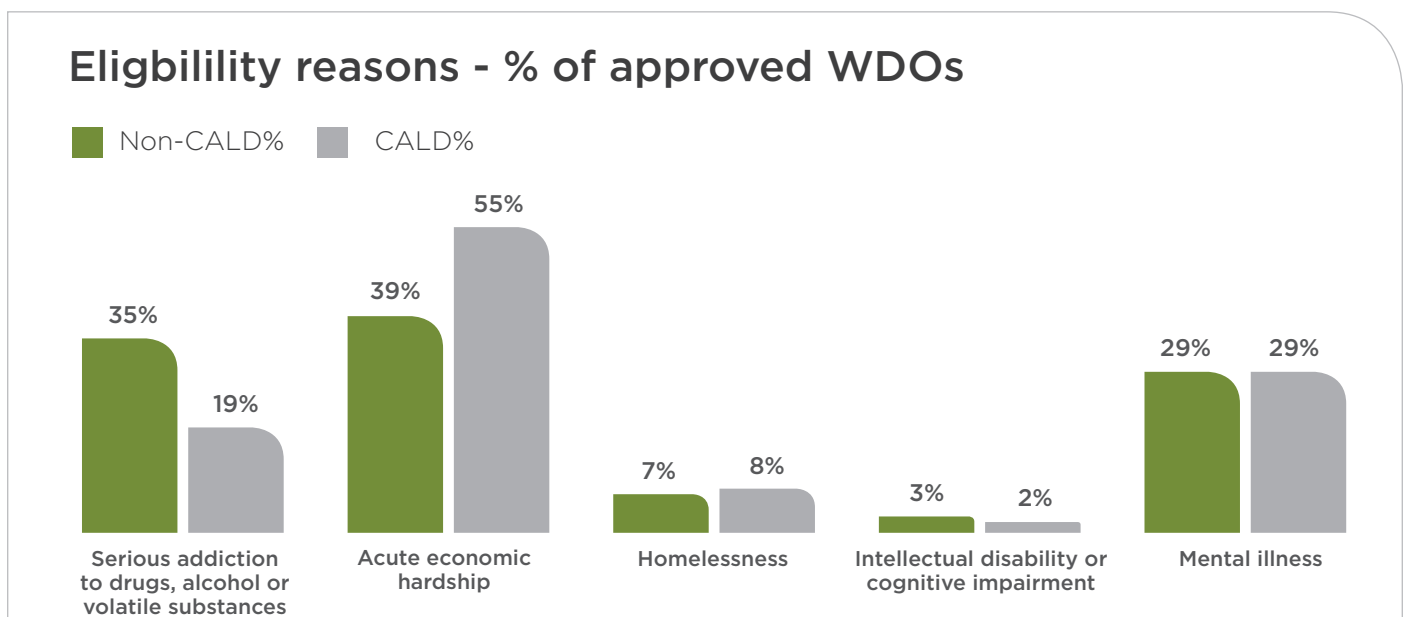
There was no significant difference in the age distribution between CALD and non-CALD participants.

Table 9.1 shows the eligibility criteria for WDOs approved for CALD participants in 2016/17. Figure 9.1 compares this with participants who are not from CALD communities. People from CALD communities were more likely to apply under acute economic hardship, and less likely to apply under the ground of serious addiction to drugs, alcohol or volatile substances.

Table 9.1 - WDOs approved in 2016/17 by eligibility criteria

Eligibility criteria	Number of WDOs approved
Serious addition to drugs, alcohol or volatile substances	51
Acute economic hardship	1653
Homelessness	226
Intellectual disability or cognitive impairment	51
Mental illness	869

Figure 9.1 - Eligibility criteria - comparison between CALD and non-CALD community participants



Note: Participants can choose multiple criteria. Some WDOs will be counted in multiple categories.

Table 9.2 shows the activities undertaken by CALD WDO participants in 2016/17. Figure 9.2 compares this with participants who are not from CALD communities.

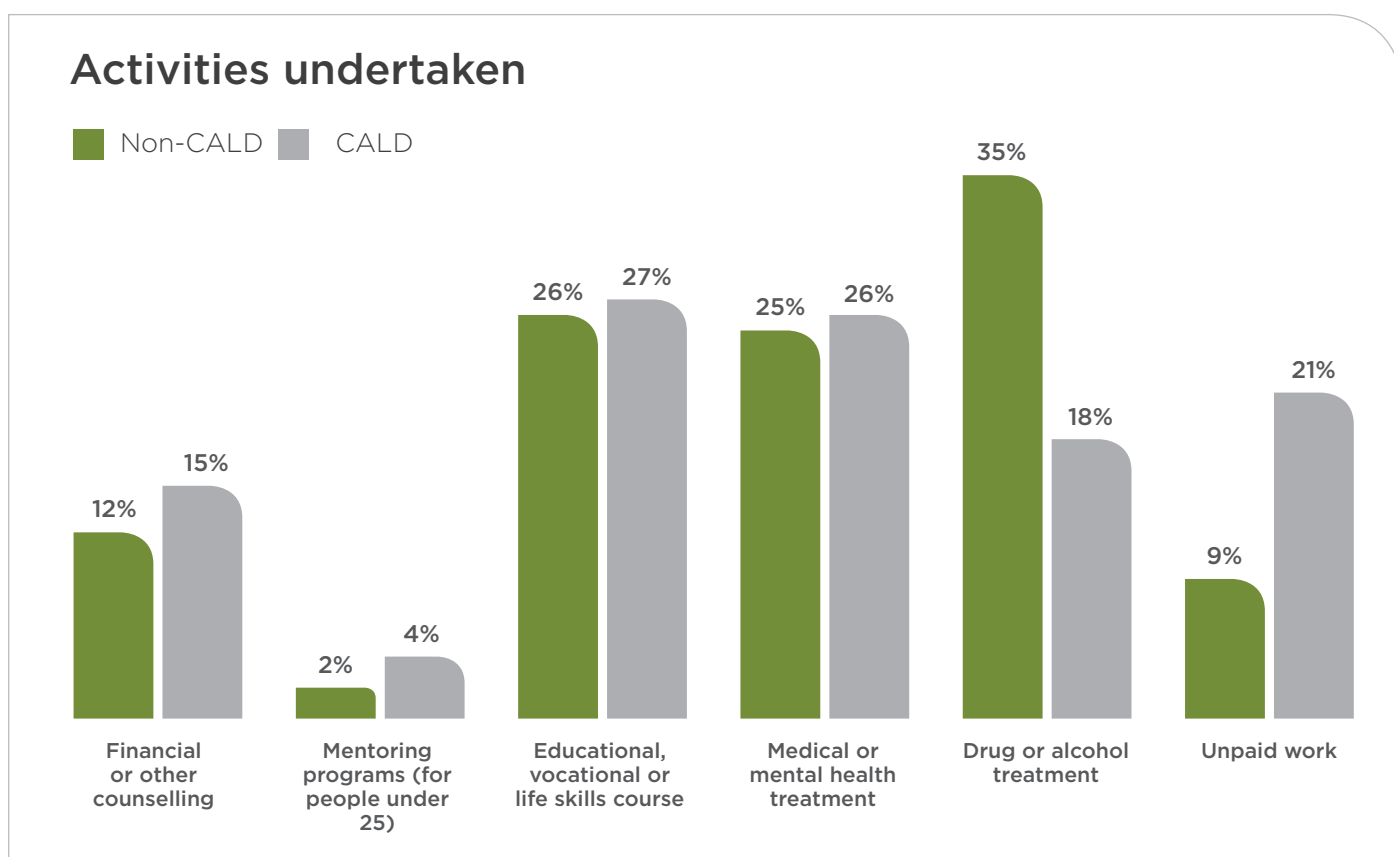
People from CALD communities were more likely than non-CALD people to undertake unpaid work as their WDO activity, and less likely to undertake drug or alcohol treatment.

Table 9.2 - WDOs approved in 2016/17 by activity type

Activity type	Number of WDOs approved
Financial or other counselling	446
Mentoring programs (for people under 25)	117
Educational, vocational or life skills course	814
Medical or mental health treatment	771
Drug or alcohol treatment	550
Unpaid work	615

Note: Participants can choose multiple activities. Some WDOs will be counted in multiple categories.

Figure 9.2 - Activities undertaken- comparison between CALD and non-CALD community participants



Note: Participants can choose multiple activities. Some WDOs will be counted in multiple categories.

10

Young people

The Fines Act 1996 and the WDO Guidelines 2017 provide specific concessions for people under 25 and additional concessions for people under 18. Therefore, this section of the report provides information about both groups. Figure 10.1 shows the age distribution of WDOs approved in 2016/17 - 29% were for under 25s.

Figure 10.1 - WDOs approved in financial year - age distribution

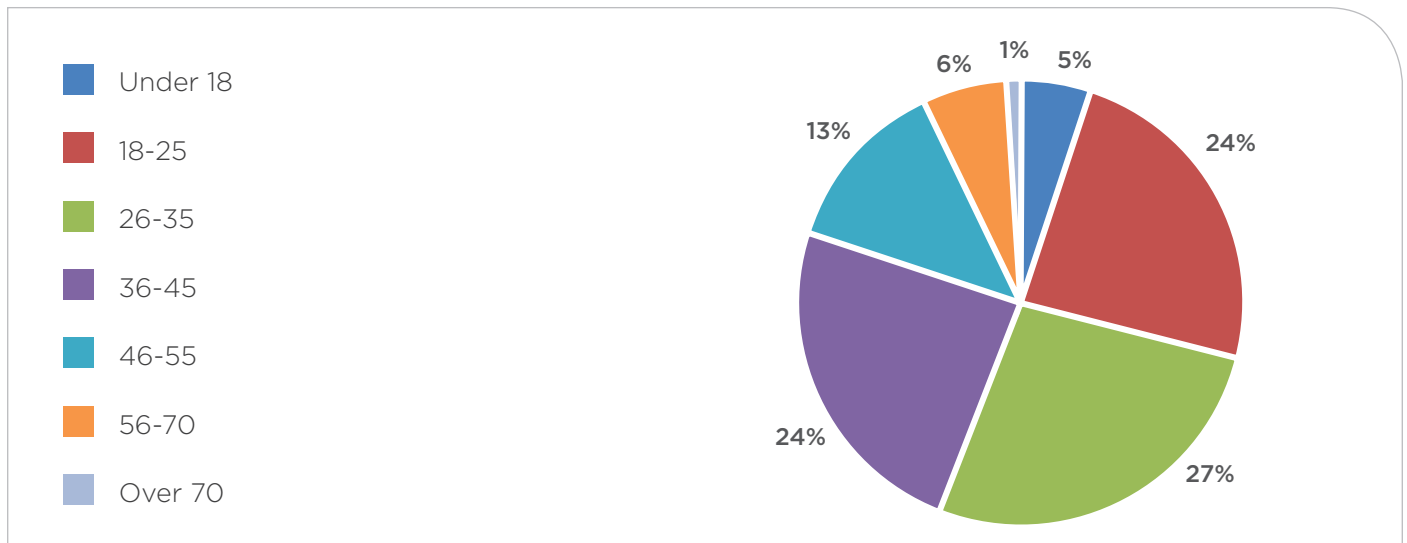


Table 10.1 shows the number of WDOs approved for young people in 2016/17 and the value of debt attached to those WDOs at the time they were approved. The average debt was \$823.96 for under 18s and \$2,300.60 for under 25s.

Table 10.1 - WDOs approved in 2016/17

Month	Number of WDOs approved		Value of debt attached (when approved)	
	Under 18yrs old	Under 25yrs old	Under 18yrs old	Under 25yrs old
Jul	97	516	\$80,926	\$1,286,914
Aug	104	562	\$102,028	\$1,315,494
Sep	116	563	\$82,645	\$1,330,159
Oct	93	571	\$76,216	\$1,331,510
Nov	84	529	\$47,631	\$1,053,276
Dec	64	353	\$43,505	\$673,566
Jan	95	462	\$52,773	\$1,210,509
Feb	98	608	\$91,254	\$1,424,336
Mar	104	690	\$121,711	\$1,719,339
Apr	79	469	\$78,171	\$1,114,984
May	125	701	\$110,354	\$1,512,271
Jun	80	576	\$51,280	\$1,231,271
TOTAL	1,139	6,600	\$938,494	\$15,183,955

Note: Under 25 refers to all people under 25, including those under 18.

Gender

The gender distribution for under 25s was comparable to people over 25. Males were slightly over-represented in the under 25 age group (69% compared with 64% in the over 25 category).

Eligibility

Table 10.2 shows the number of WDOs approved for young people under each eligibility criterion.

Table 10.2 - WDOs approved in 2016/17 by eligibility criteria

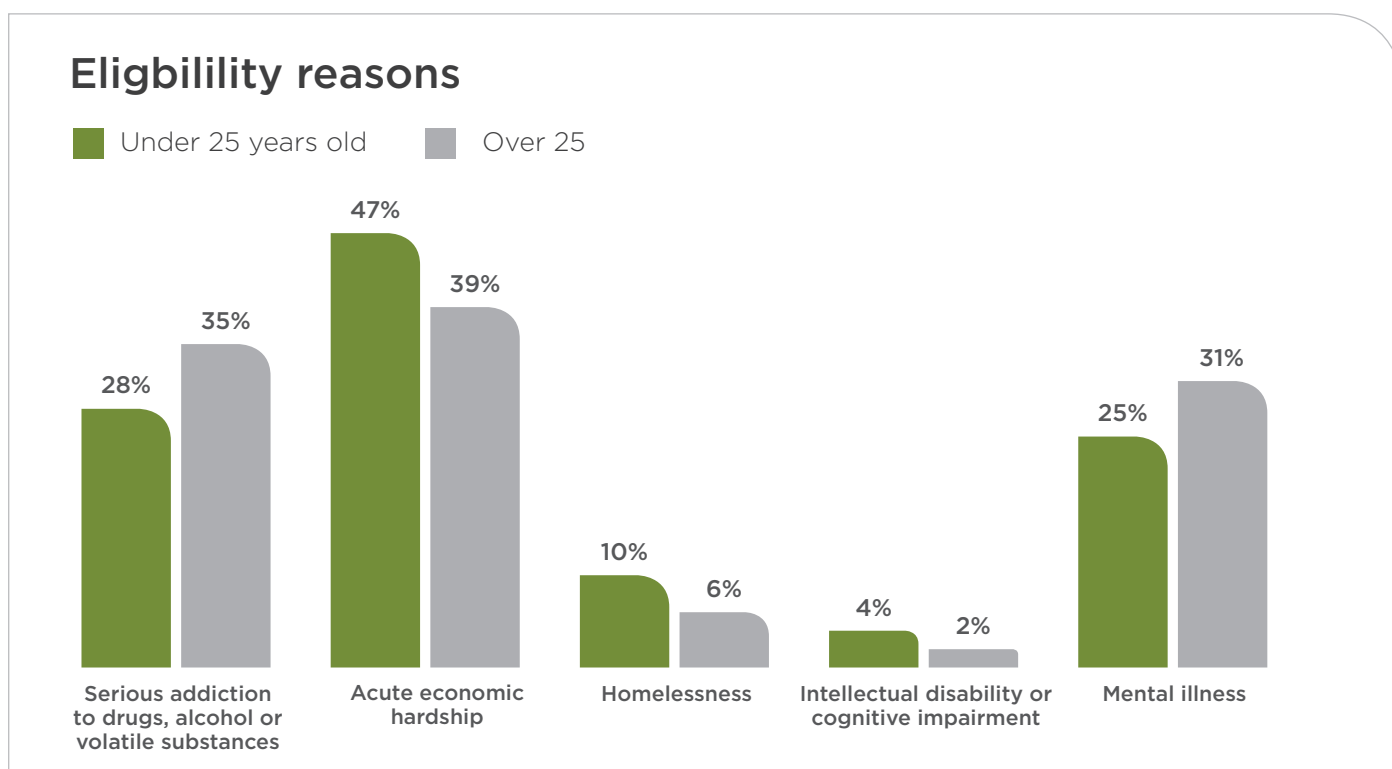
Eligibility criteria	Number of WDOs approved	
	Under 18 years old	Under 25 years old
Serious addiction to drugs, alcohol or volatile substances	335	1,877
Acute economic hardship	532	3,072
Homelessness	141	689
Intellectual disability or cognitive impairment	90	244
Mental illness	210	1,620

Notes: Under 25 refers to all people under 25, including those under 18. Participants can choose multiple criteria - some WDOs will be counted in multiple categories.

Generally, the distribution of eligibility criteria was comparable between under 25s and people 25 and over. Young people were more likely to apply under the grounds of acute economic hardship and homelessness, and less likely to apply under the grounds of serious addiction or mental illness.

Figure 10.2 compares eligibility reasons for young people with people 25 and over.

Figure 10.2 - Eligibility criteria - comparison between under 25 year olds and people 25 and over



Note: Participants can choose multiple criteria. Some WDOs will be counted in multiple categories.

Activities undertaken

Young people were more likely to participate in educational, vocational or life skills courses, and less likely to undertake medical or mental health treatment or drug or alcohol treatment.

Of note, there was some variance between the activities completed by young people and people over 25, however, it is important to remember that people 25 and over cannot undertake mentoring, so variance across the other activity categories was expected to be exaggerated.

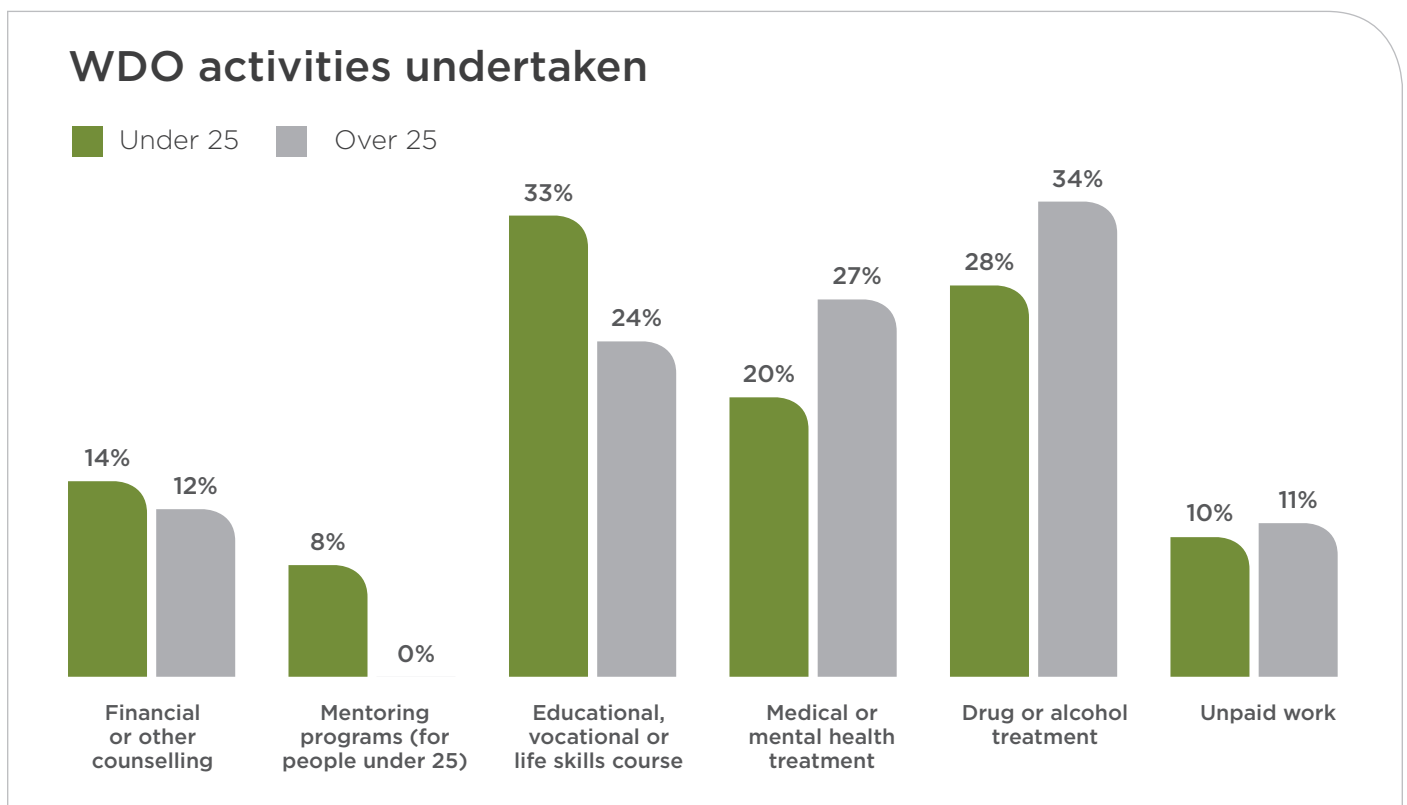
Table 10.3 shows the number of WDOs approved for young people by activity type. Figure 10.3 compares this with people 25 and over.

Table 10.3 - WDOs approved in 2016/17 by activity type

Activity type	Number of WDOs approved	
	Under 18 years old	Under 25 years old
Financial or other counselling	185	900
Mentoring programs (for people under 25)	165	514
Educational, vocational or life skills course	437	2,149
Medical or mental health treatment	172	1,320
Drug or alcohol treatment	339	1,870
Unpaid work	87	635

Notes: Under 25 refers to all people under 25, including those under 18. Participants can choose multiple activities - some WDOs will be counted in multiple categories.

Figure 10.3 - Activities undertaken - comparison between under 25 year olds and people 25 and over



Note: Participants can choose multiple activities. Some WDOs will be counted in multiple categories.

11

Geographic dispersion of approved WDOs

Since the scheme commenced, there has been significant effort to expand WDO services in all NSW locations. Legal Aid NSW has specialist WDO staff in various locations across the state, who recruit new WDO sponsors and support existing sponsors through training, education and support. They also provide WDO placements and other legal assistance to vulnerable clients with unpaid fines.

As noted earlier in this report, more than 50% of WDO sponsors are located outside of Sydney. This is despite Sydney customers accounting for more than 65% of all fines debt in NSW.

In this section of the report, we have provided heat maps showing the geographic dispersion of WDOs across NSW. Location is determined by the applicants' residential postcodes. This is important, because WDO sponsors often support customers outside of their own location (for example, when undertaking outreach services), so the location of the WDO sponsor would be misleading.

Where the customer elected to use the sponsor address when submitting the WDO application, the sponsor's postcode was used (for example, homeless customers and those who are living in a residential treatment facility).

All WDOs supported by Corrective Services NSW and Juvenile Justice NSW were excluded, as including these WDOs would lead to exaggerated outcomes in locations where there is a correctional facility.

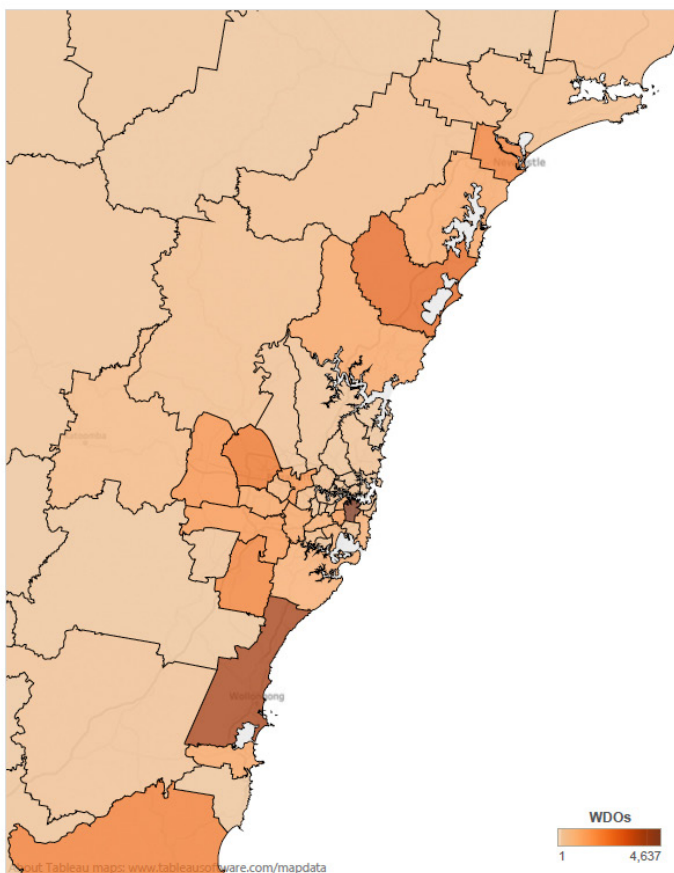
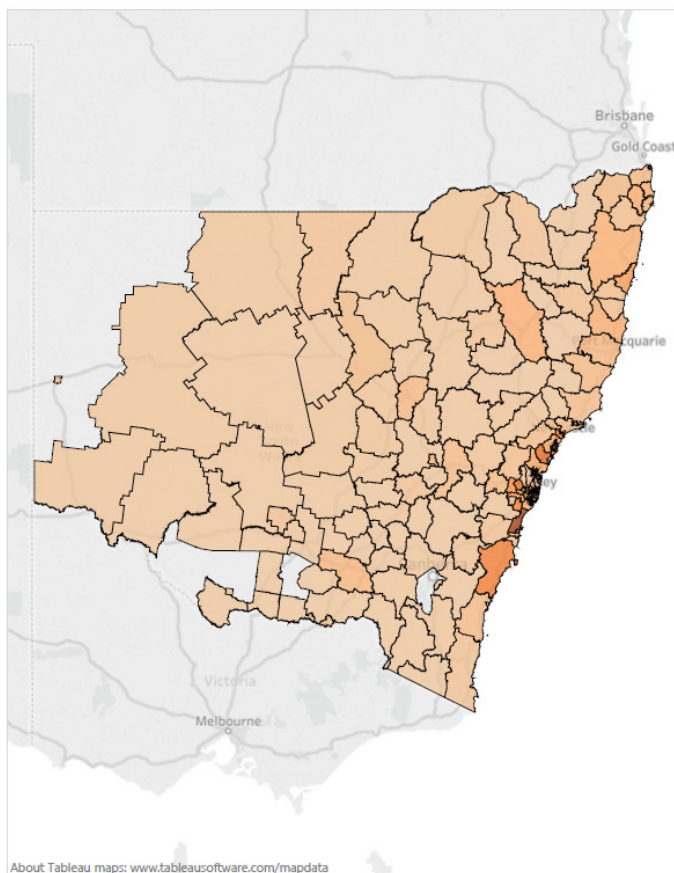
There has been good coverage across NSW since the scheme commenced. There were only a small number of Local Government Areas where there has not been a WDO approved. This trend continued into 2016/17.

There was also good geographic coverage across NSW of WDOs approved for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people. However, the distribution was less evenly spread compared with the general population. There were Local Government Areas in Northern NSW, North Western NSW, and the South Coast that showed dense activity.

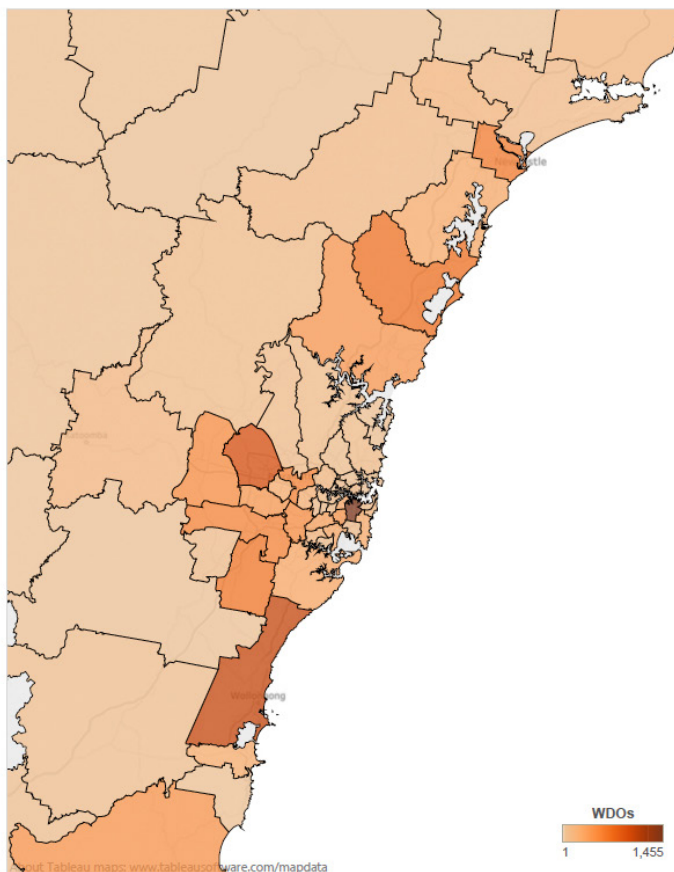
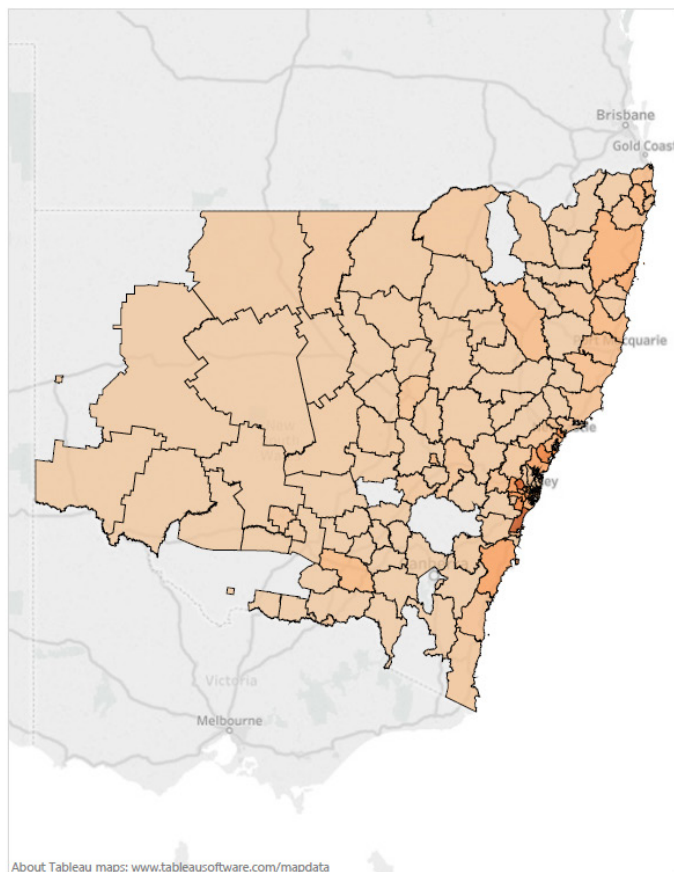
Figures 11.1-11.4 on the following pages show:

- Spread of all WDOs approved since 2011
- Spread of all WDOs approved in 2016/17
- Spread of WDOs approved for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People since 2011
- Spread of WDOs approved for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in 2016/17

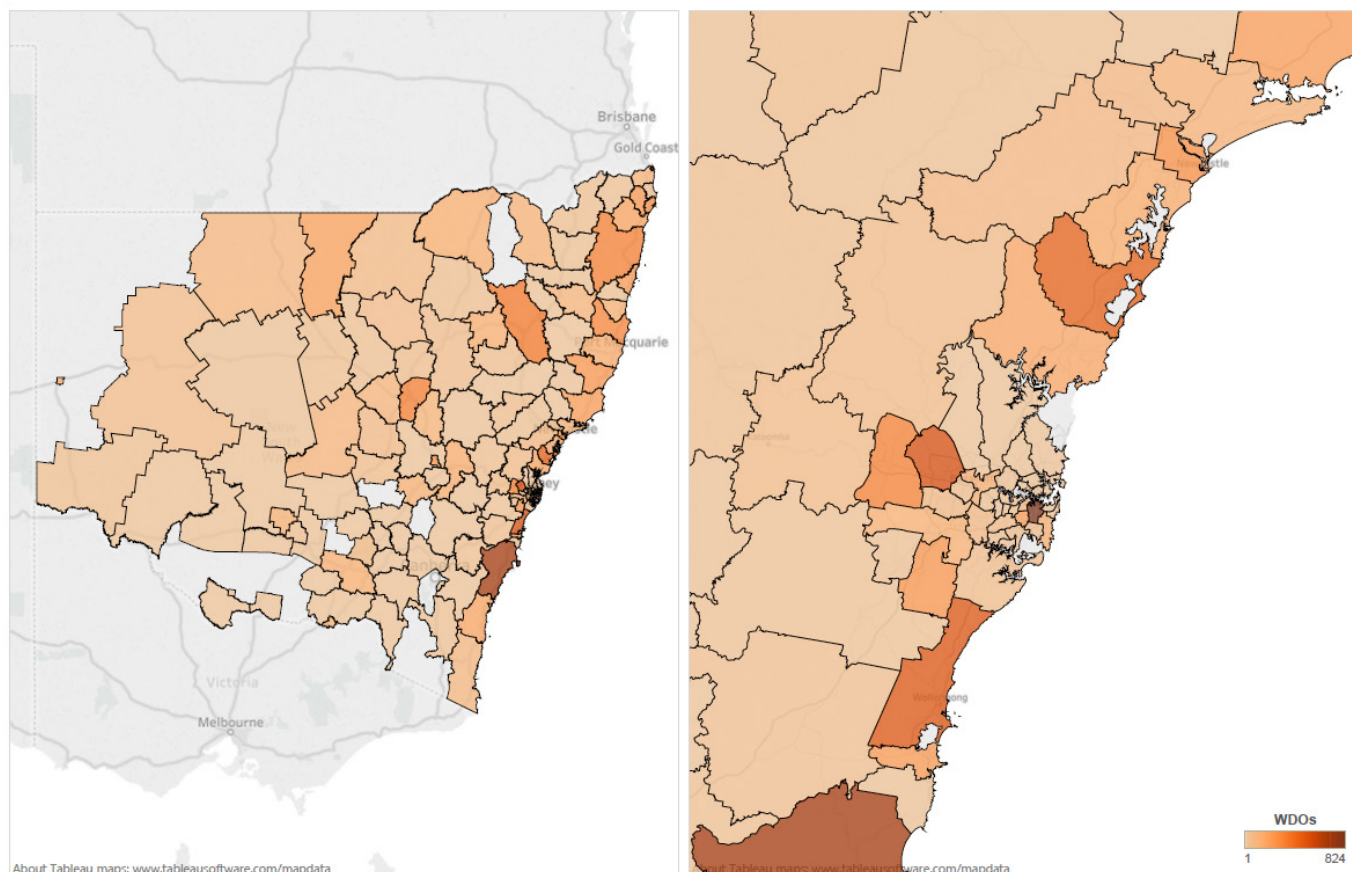
Approved WDOs by LGA - All WDOs since 01-Jul-2011



Approved WDOs by LGA - All WDOs in 2016/17



Approved WDOs by LGA - WDOs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders since 01-Jul-2011



Approved WDOs by LGA - WDOs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in 2016/17

