



## Work and Development Orders

**A significant role in the treatment of patients with drug and alcohol problems  
....or money for jam?**

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## Work and Development Orders (WDOs)



### WDOs in Drug Health

Do Work & Development Orders assist patients who attend our Drug and Alcohol service?

Do they assist clinicians to deliver services more effectively or do they cause a headache for staff and an easy means for patients to write off debt for very little effort at all?

In 2015 Legal AID and Population Health committed to increasing access to WDOs for residents of Western Sydney

They approached Drug Health to participate.



### What is a WDO?

Activity	Maximum \$/month
Unpaid work for or on behalf of an approved organisation	\$30 per hour worked. Breaks are not to be counted
Medical or mental health treatment in accordance with a practitioner's treatment plan	\$1000 per month. (for full compliance, or proportional for part thereof)
Educational, vocational or life skills course	\$50 per hour to a maximum of \$1000 per month
Financial or other counselling (including attending case management meetings)	\$50 per hour to a maximum of \$1000 of fine debt per month
Drug or alcohol treatment	\$1000 per month. (for full compliance, or proportional for part thereof)
Participation in a mentoring program (for under 25s)	\$1000 per month. (for full compliance, or proportional for part thereof)

## Key Findings

- Patients frequently had undisclosed fine-related debt.
- Most clinicians had some knowledge of WDOs.
- WDO uptake increased, with participation in some teams greater than others.
- Factors clinicians said influenced their participation in WDOs included previous positive experiences with WDOs, length of treatment, practical or ethical concerns and the presence of a WDO 'champion' within a team.

## Fine Debt in Western Sydney



As of January 2016, there was  
**over \$214,000,000 of debt**

in Greater Western Sydney

=

**Approx. One Third of Total Fine Debt in  
 NSW**

Fine Debt in Western Sydney



LGA	Client count	Total postcode fine debt (\$)
Auburn	8,525	\$12,348,158
Blacktown	27,176	\$53,339,329
Holroyd	13,356	\$23,110,722
Parramatta	1,203	\$2,298,214
The Hills Shire	10,239	\$19,275
TOTAL	60,499	\$110,372,353

Source SDRO Oct 2016



What did we do?

Survey 2015 & 2016

Work Development Orders (WDO) 2016

Work and Development Orders (WDO) are made by the State Debt Recovery office to allow eligible people who have a service addiction to drug/alcohol to satisfy their financials through unpaid work or attending drug and alcohol treatment.

1. Have you heard of Work and Development Orders (WDO) before now?

☐ Yes

☐ No (Please go to Question 6)

2. Are you familiar with how they work?

☐ No

☐ A little

☐ Confident / understand them

3. What is your opinion of supporting WDO clients in D & A?

☐ Not worthwhile

☐ Neither good nor bad

☐ Worthwhile

☐ Don't know

Comments appreciated

4. Have you sponsored, co-sponsored or referred a patient for WDO sponsorship?

☐ Yes

☐ No

5. If yes, how many clients have you assisted in the last 12 months?

6

6. Were any of these clients from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background?

4

7. Were any of these clients from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) background?

6

8. What is your role in Drug Health?

2

Other (please specify your role)

9. Have you commenced in Drug Health since September 2015?

8

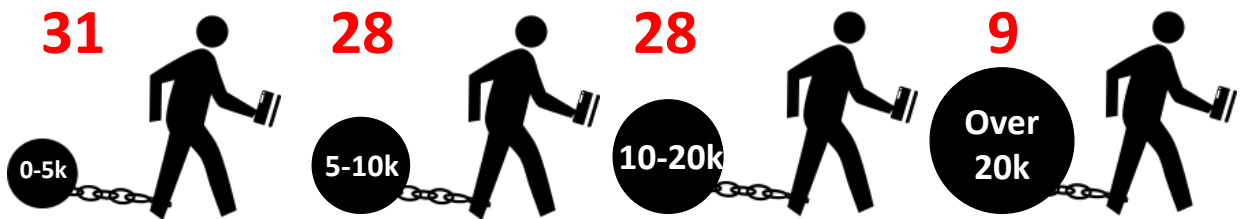
Training



Focus Groups



## Blacktown D&A Service Fine Debt



## Fleet St Parramatta Opiate Treatment Service



50% patients have fine debt. All have been offered WDOs

\$0-5K= 64

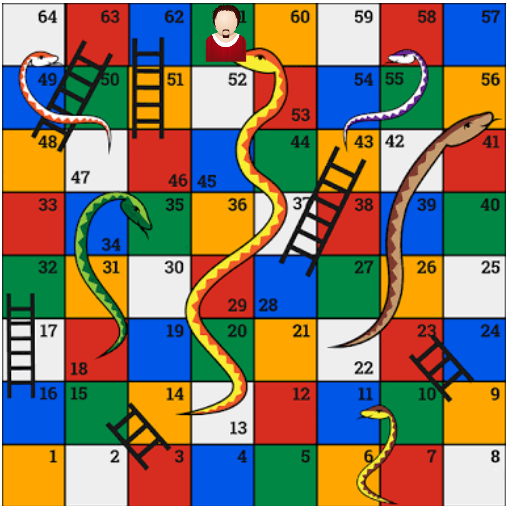
\$5-10= 15

\$10-\$20k=9

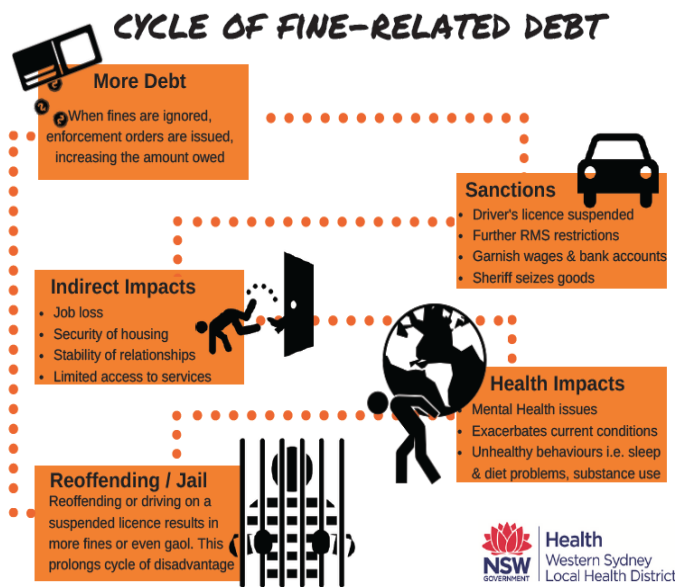


10 have added new WDOs (11%)

Case Example



When Fines Are Not Paid



State-Wide Evaluation of a WDO Scheme



Reduced Reoffending

82.5%

Did not receive another fine since their WDO was approved



Improved Mental Health



Client stress, anxiety & feelings of hopelessness & despair were reduced



Improved Self-Esteem



Increased self-esteem, agency & self-efficacy of participants

A TOOL FOR ENGAGEMENT

WDOs engage clients in appropriate treatment or activities that they may not otherwise engage in

SUPPORT FOR THE WDO SCHEME

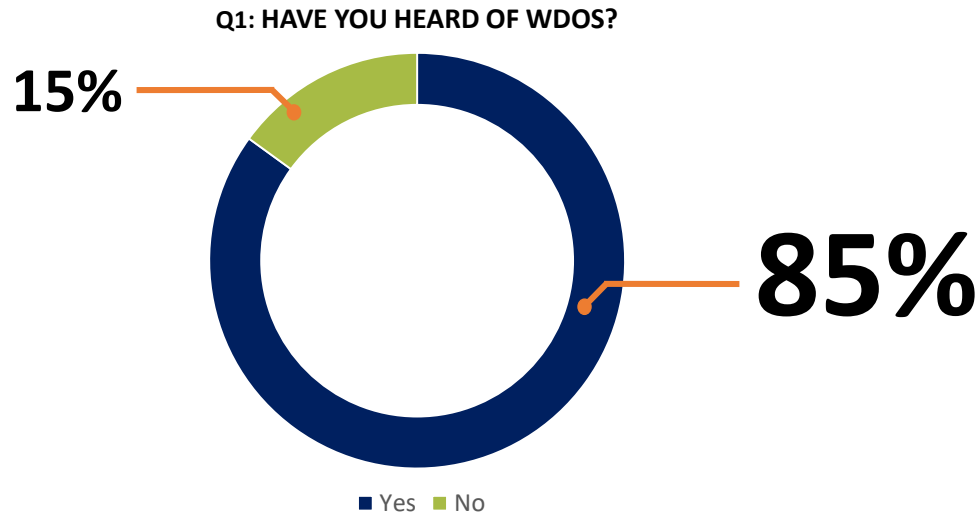
95%

Sponsors said the scheme had helped reduce the level of stress & anxiety their client felt about their fine debt

87%

Sponsors said the scheme enabled clients to address the factors that made it hard for them to pay their debts in the first place

Our Service Investigation: Most staff had heard of WDOs

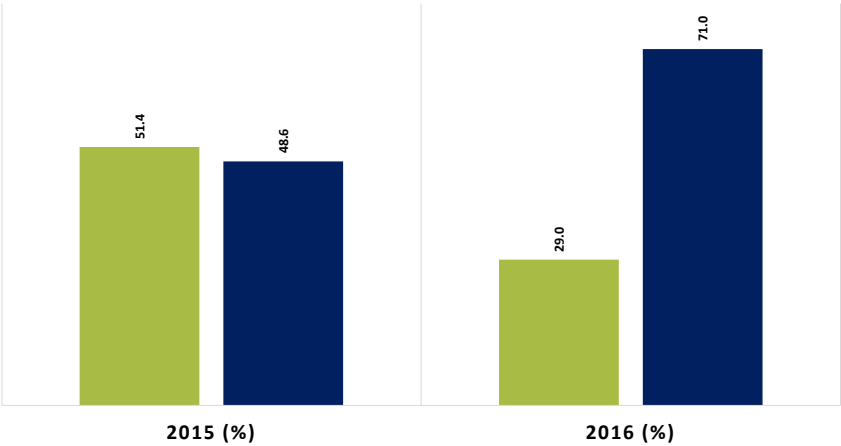




Increased understanding of WDOs

Q2: FAMILIAR WITH WDO

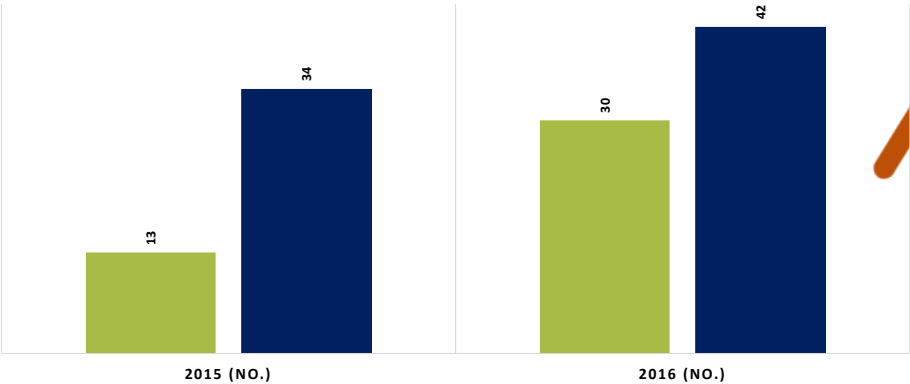
A little      Confident- I understand them



Increased use of WDOs

Q5: NUMBER OF CLIENTS REFERRED BY ROLES BY YEAR

Nursing      Psychology/Counselling

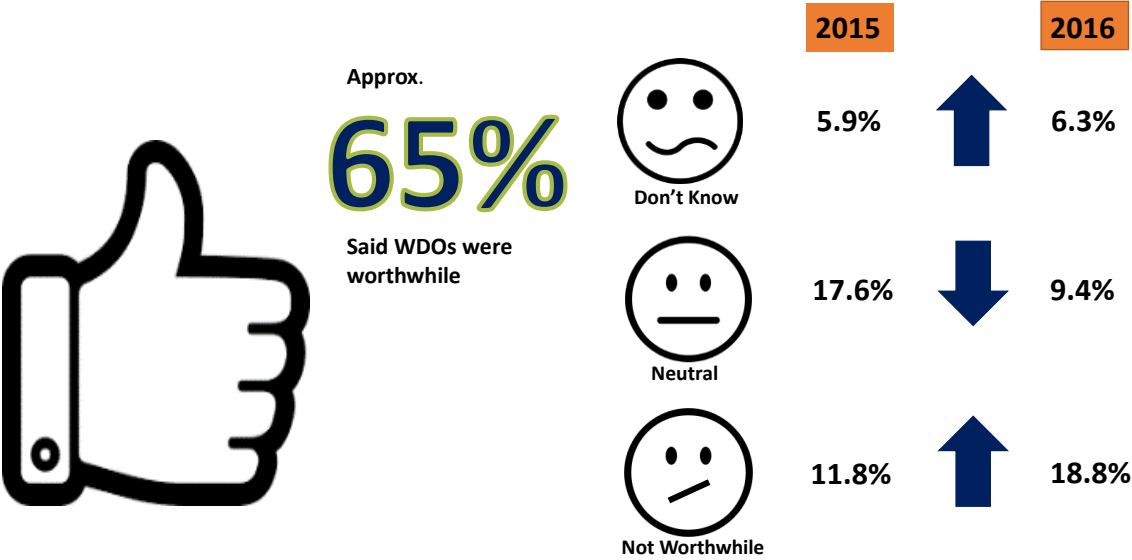


162%

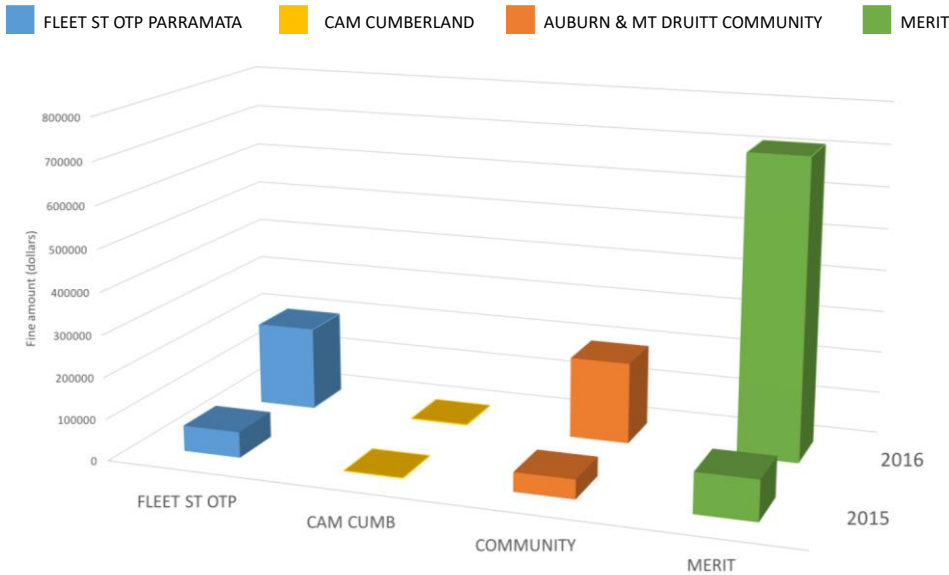


Increase in referrals from nurses (and counsellors) between 2015-16

Most staff thought WDOs were worthwhile



Total value of WDO fine amounts 2015-2016





## Impact of experience with WDOs

### Relief & gratitude of patients

- "I had no idea they would have such financial problems. They are so burdened by them... it such a relief"
- "Patients are so appreciative, sometimes they cry"

### Interrupting downward problem spiral/ reducing problem burden

- "It helps patients get out of the quagmire"
- "I had a patient with the sheriff at the door. The WDO stopped all that"
- "Its not too overwhelming so they can deal with it"
- "A WDO allows access to a payment plan. Without it, your bank account can be suddenly emptied and you have no food!"

### Assists with treatment

- "To get your driver's licence back is such a good thing – you can find work!" \*\*
- "One client worked out his own treatment care plan, he really thought it through"
- "Compliance with dosing a attending appointments definitely improves"
- "It helps with avoidance. Patients can start to plan."
- "It's a drawcard to keep clients engaged for first 2 sessions."

### Pride in achievement

- "It's nice to print the certificate in the end. I didn't think they would care about it but they do!"
- "I remember people taking a lot of pride in reducing their debt. They remember reducing their debt as a major outcome of completing the program."

### Ease of use/ excellent support

- "They are easy to manage. You can always phone for support"
- "The SDRs are so nice. They call clients and check if they are OK. They also contact therapists and help with suggestions. They talk with you about clients you might have to close".

### CONS

**Practical Concerns** Extra time & work, negotiation skills.

- Patients can be demanding "Here's my debt. Fix it!"

**Ethical Concerns** Social rules "It's too easy!" They should be doing it anyway!" Secondary gain concerns "They should want to come!"

- Ambivalence about allowing **subsequent** WDOs. (Clinicians believed 50% had new debt. Evidence: new Order rate=11% )
- Lack of standardised guidelines\*\*

## Impact of experience with WDOs

### In 2016:

#### Clinicians with no experience of WDOs were:

- more likely to have a **negative opinion** about supporting WDO clients in D&A or
- be **uncertain/ambivalent** about supporting WDO clients in D&A
- less likely to rate such support as worthwhile.

#### Clinicians with experience of WDOs were:

- more likely to rate supporting WDO clients in D&A as worthwhile.

( $\chi^2 = 9.888$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p < 0.025$ )

## Conclusion:

**Provide sponsorship & engage support from SDRO**  
**Have a WDO 'champion' within a team**  
**Enthusiasm follows**

