



**AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY SECTOR SURVEY**

**2005**

Sponsored by



Produced by



## Acknowledgments

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## Executive summary

This Report presents the results of the *Australian Community Sector Survey 2005* (ACSS). The Report provides information on income and expenditure, service use and workforce issues for the non-profit community sector.

### The survey

The ACSS is the only annual survey which covers the non-profit community services sector, which is a major provider of the community services that most of us rely on at some point in our lives but which are particularly important to people on low incomes.

The ACSS 2005 was completed by 831 agencies who provided information about their activities over the past two financial years, 2002-3 and 2003-4. Respondents to the ACSS were drawn from the membership of the State and Territory Councils of Social Service and ACOSS. Collectively these organisations provided the following services:

- Health services
- Aged care
- Community care
- Child care
- Child welfare
- Employment services
- Housing services
- Supported accommodation for people with a disability
- Legal services
- Individual and family relationship counselling
- Community activities information and referral services.

To place the ACSS in the context of other quantitative information which is available on the sector, it is useful to compare the services and organisations covered by the ACSS with those covered by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in its survey *Community Services Australia*,<sup>1</sup> and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) in its publication *Australia's Welfare 2003*.<sup>2</sup>

The respondents to the ACSS cover a wider field of services than those categorised under the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare National Classification of Community Services. The ACSS includes employment, housing and health services as well as the traditional community services such as aged care and child care.

<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2001), *Community Services Australia*, ABS Catalogue No. 8696.0

<sup>2</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Australia's Welfare 2003*, Canberra, 2003

The ACSS is also wider in scope than *Community Services Australia*. *Community Services Australia* covers only employing businesses and organisations that provide community services as defined by the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification, which encompasses:

- nursing homes
- child care
- accommodation for the aged
- residential care services
- non-residential care services
- employment placement services
- interest groups involved in community service advocacy
- government administration responsible for funding community services or directly involved in the provision of community services.

However, the ACSS is narrower than *Community Services Australia* in so far as the ACSS does not include for-profit businesses.

## Key findings

### Demand

In 2003-4 respondent agencies provided services to 2,009,831 people, which is 70,095 (or 3.4%) less than the 2,079,926 people who received a service in 2002-03.

When looking at the *number of times* a service was provided, respondent agencies provided 290,000 more services in 2003-4 compared with 2002-3, which represents a 9.2% increase.

Demand for services has outstripped growth in expenditure (8.9%) and income (6.8%).

The corollary of this is that people are being turned away from agencies. Thirty two per cent of respondents said that they had assisted all the people who sought assistance from their service while 68% said that had not been able to do so.

When the number of times people are turned away is compared to the number of services actually provided by service type, it is clear that housing services and legal services experience particular problems. In 2003-4, housing services turned people away 3.6 times for every 10 times someone was assisted and legal services turned people away 1.6 times for every ten times someone was assisted.

Sixty nine per cent of respondents agreed that their organisation was targeting its services more tightly than in the past and another 20% were neutral on the question (suggesting neither an increase or decrease in rationing).

Only nine per cent of agencies agreed that they had turned people away from their services because clients could not afford to pay fees.

Only eleven per cent of respondents agreed that their waiting list was shorter in 2003-4 than it was in 2002-3.

Seventy one per cent of respondents agreed that other community agencies had referred more clients to their organisation in 2003-4 than in 2002-3.

Only eleven per cent of organisations agreed that their organisation had referred fewer people to other community agencies in 2003-4 than in 2002-3.

Sixty seven per cent of respondents agreed that their clients in 2003-4 had more complex needs than in 2002-3. A further 25% neither agreed or disagreed and only 8% disagreed.

## Deficits

While income increased between 2002-3 and 2003-4 by \$27.9 million, operating expenses increased by \$41.8 million. This has led to growth in the overall deficit being carried by respondent agencies, up \$13.9 million to \$76.1 million.

These global figures translate into an average deficit per agency of \$121,600 in 2003-4. However this burden is not shared evenly across respondent agencies. Fifty four per cent of respondents agreed that income for their services had not met costs, 21% were neutral and 26% disagreed.

Agencies secured a 6.8% increase in the overall amount of income between 2002-3 and 2003-4. Income has grown across all the major sources with:

- a 10.3% increase in client fee incomes
- a 6.7% increase in government funding
- a 5.1% increase in agency own source income.

In terms of the total increase in additional income, government funding accounted for nearly three-quarters of all additional funding.

While overall funding may have increased, the majority of agencies struggled to find new sources of income. Only thirty six per cent of agencies agreed that they had secured new sources of income.

## Delivery

Nearly half of agencies report an increase in the number of paid hours worked by staff while over three-quarters reported increases in the unfunded work of staff and volunteers.

Forty-four per cent of respondents agreed that they had increased the number of paid hours worked by staff while 45% disagreed.

There has been an overall increase of 540 full time equivalent employees working in respondent organisations during 2003-04. This represents an increase of 4.4% on the total number of paid staff.

Seventy-three per cent of agencies agreed that the unfunded work by staff and volunteers had increased between 2002-3 and 2003-4.

The workforce of respondent agencies is characterised by the dominance of voluntary labour, which constitutes over 70% of the workforce.

In 2003-4, respondent agencies employed 12,135 full time equivalent staff and lost 1,976 full time equivalent staff. Average staff turnover across respondent agencies is therefore equivalent to 16.3% which is high compared to the all Australian industry average of between 10% and 12%.<sup>3</sup>

A total of 382 respondents (46%) said that they had difficulty attracting appropriate staff while 359 (54%) reported no difficulties. Of those that answered that they had difficulties attracting staff, the main reasons were levels of pay (76%) and shortages in the availability of paid hours per week (49%).

Of 763 respondents, 206 (27%) reported a workplace injury in 2003-4, compared with 557 (73%) who did not report a workplace injury.

<sup>3</sup> Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, DEWR Job Outlook, June 2004, p20. [http://www.workplace.gov.au/WP/Content/Files/WP/Employment Publications/JOMain2004.pdf](http://www.workplace.gov.au/WP/Content/Files/WP/Employment%20Publications/JOMain2004.pdf). DEWR uses the term 'job openings' to describe staff turnover.

## Methodology

In previous years, ACOSS has conducted the *Australians Living on the Edge: Community Sector Confidence Survey* which examined key issues affecting the community sector and how organisations responded to these challenges. The ACSS aims to build on the work of the *Australians Living on the Edge* project by providing a more detailed picture of the community sector and enhancing the quality of the data we collect.

This year's questions were developed in consultation with a number of community sector organizations, the state and territory Councils of Social Service and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. The survey examines changes in the operating environment of community sector organizations, as well as gathering information about the size and type of services in the community sector. Specific questions have been included in this year's survey about occupational health and safety and staff turnover, since these have been identified as emerging issues in the sector.

As with previous years, a variation of Dillman's method was used to distribute and collect the surveys<sup>4</sup>. This involved mailing out a cover letter and a copy of the survey to all organisations, followed one week later with a mailed reminder letter thanking those people who had already returned the survey and reminding those who were yet to complete the survey of the importance of doing so. The reminder letter also referred organisations to a website where the survey could be completed. The official date to return the surveys was four weeks after they were sent. Follow up phone calls were made by the state and territory Councils of Social Service to those organisations whose surveys had not been received by the official date for return.

The ACSS 2005 was completed by 831 agencies who provided information about their activities over the financial years 2002-3 and 2003-4. The year on year comparisons in this report refer only to the information collected from this survey. No comparisons are made between this and previous surveys.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Dillman, D. (1978), 'Mail and Telephone Surveys: The Total Design Method', Wiley, New York

<sup>5</sup> Respondents to the survey vary from year to year which makes direct comparisons with previous surveys of this kind misleading.

**Table 1: Survey returns by State/Territory**

State/Territory	Number of responses	Percentage of total
NSW	187	23
QLD	175	22
VIC	103	13
WA	77	10
SA	73	9
TAS	69	9
NT	67	8
ACT	47	6
<b>Total<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>798</b>	<b>100</b>

**The survey population**

To place the ACSS in the context of other quantitative information which is available on parts of the sector, we compare the services and organisations covered by the ACSS with those covered by *Community Services Australia*, and *Australia's Welfare 2003*.

The ACSS 2005 was completed by 831 agencies who provided information about their activities over the past two financial years, 2002-3 and 2003-4. Respondents to the ACSS were drawn from the membership of the State and Territory Councils of Social Service and ACOSS. Collectively these organisations provided the following services:

- Health services
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- Supported accommodation for people with a disability
- Legal services
- Individual and family relationship counselling
- Community activities information and referral services.

The respondents to the ACSS cover a wider field of services than those categorised under the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare National Classification of Community Services, as they include employment, housing and health services as well as the traditional community services such as aged care and child care.

<sup>6</sup> Thirty-three organisations did not identify a particular state or territory

The ACSS is also wider in scope than *Community Services Australia*. *Community Services Australia* covers only employing businesses and organisations that provide community services as defined by the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification, which encompasses:

- nursing homes
- child care
- accommodation for the aged
- residential care services
- non-residential care services
- employment placement services
- interest groups involved in community service advocacy
- government administration responsible for funding community services or directly involved in the provision of community services.

However, the ACSS is narrower than *Community Services Australia* in so far as the ACSS does not include for-profit businesses.

The ACSS questionnaire is reproduced in Appendix I.

### **Size and scope of sector**

Although it is not possible to compare the results of the ACSS 2005 with other surveys because the surveyed populations and time frames are different, some information from *Community Services Australia* and *Australia's Welfare 2003* is provided here as context for the results of the Survey.

### **Size of Sector**

The ABS has estimated that as at the end of June 2000 there were 9,287 employing businesses and organisations involved in the provision of community services. The 9,287 businesses and organisations comprised 2,800 'for profit' organisations, 5,938 'not for profit' organisations and 548 government organisations. While the number of government organisations has remained virtually the same since June 1996, the number of 'for profit' and 'not for profit' organisations have increased by 32% and 10% respectively.<sup>7</sup>

### **Expenditure**

According to the ABS, direct community services expenditure by these organisations has increased by 28% since 1995-96. Increases were different by sector, with expenditure by 'for-profit' organisations increasing by 16% (to \$2.1 million), 'not for profit' organisations by 47% (to \$7.1 million) and government organisations by 6% (to \$3.4 million).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> ABS (2001), p5

<sup>8</sup> ABS (2001), p8

## Workforce

The 2001 Population Census shows 237,000 people employed in community service occupations in Australia (including but not restricted to community service industries), an increase of 27% over the number in 1996. This growth was substantially higher than the total growth in all occupations over the period (8.7%).

Of the total, 87% were females. Of the occupational groups, the largest was child and youth services workers, with 101,696 employees, followed by aged or disabled care (51,784). The fastest growing broad category between 1996 and 2001 was disability workers, up 58%.

There were 1,228 community service workers per 100,000 population in Australia in 2001. The Australian Capital Territory had the highest rate of persons working in community services occupations, with 1,694 per 100,000 population, followed by the Northern Territory (1,589). New South Wales had the lowest rate, with 1,077 per 100,000 population.

There were slightly more volunteers in community service *industries* in 1999-2000 than employees (276,334 and 269,022, respectively). Volunteers are much more likely to provide indirect services (37.4%) than employees (18.0%). The distribution of volunteers and workers across industries varies. For example, over three quarters (76.6%) of all volunteers provided services to non-residential care services compared with 29.3% of employees. Almost one third of employees (31.4%) worked in nursing homes compared with just 5.7% of volunteers.

Because many workers in community services occupations are employed part-time, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has converted this contribution into the equivalent full time workforce and has estimated that there were 195,313 full time equivalent (FTE) paid workers employed in occupations that provided, or supported the provision of, community services in Australia in 2000-01.

## Survey results

### Income and Expenditure

Agencies report that the single most important issue facing them is funding. Forty per cent of respondents named inadequate funding to meet service and client needs as one of the three most important issues facing their service.

This concern was reflected in the information provided by respondents on operating expenses and income.

While income has increased over the year by \$27.9 million, operating expenses have increased by \$41.8 million, which has increased the overall deficit by \$13.9 million to \$76.1 million. The rate at which expenditure is growing (8.9%) is also outstripping the growth in income (6.8%).

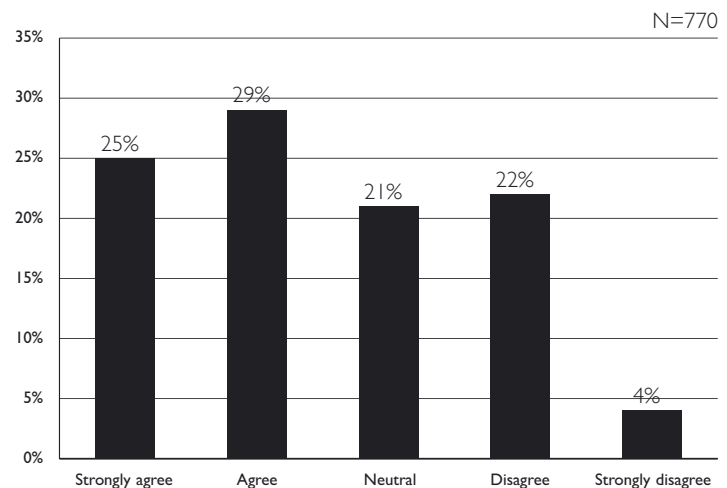
These global figures for the 625 agencies that answered this part of the survey translates into an average deficit per agency of \$121,600 in 2003-4. However, the financial difficulties implied in the magnitude of agency deficits are not shared evenly across the sector:

Fifty-four per cent of respondents agreed that income for their services had not met costs, 21% were neutral and 26% disagreed.<sup>9 10</sup>

**Table 2: Income and Expenditure 2002-3 & 2003-4**

Year	Total operating expenses \$ (millions)	Total income \$ (millions)	Deficit/Surplus \$ (millions)
2003/4	511.3	435.2	-76.1
2002/3	469.5	407.3	- 62.2
<b>Difference</b>	<b>41.8</b>	<b>27.9</b>	<b>13.9</b>

**Figure 1: Income and costs: proportion agree/disagree with statement: 'income for services has not met costs'**



Further data analysis will be required to look at the features of those organisations whose income is meeting their costs and those where this is not the case.

<sup>9</sup> In some cases totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

<sup>10</sup> For simplicity of expression, the level of agreement or disagreement will use only the terms 'agree' and 'disagree' but will incorporate the level of 'strong agreement' and 'strong disagreement'.

**Responding to financial problems**

Increasing the amount of income from established sources and finding new sources of income are two obvious ways of responding to financial problems.

Agencies have secured a 6.8% increase in overall amount of income between 2002-3 and

2003-4. Income has grown across all the major sources between 2002-3 and 2003-4, with:

- a 10.3% increase in client fee incomes
- a 6.7% increase in government funding
- a 5.1% increase in agency own source income.

In terms of the total increase in additional income, government funding accounted for nearly three-quarters of all additional funding.

While overall funding may have increased, the majority of agencies struggled to find new sources of income.

**Table 3: Funding Sources**

Source	2002-03 (millions)	2003-04 (millions)	% change	% of total increase
Australian Government funding	97.8	105.9	8.2%	29.0%
State/territory funding	172.2	180.6	4.8%	30.1%
Local government	3.0	3.4	13.3%	1.4%
Gov't unknown/unspecified	30.1	33.5	11.3%	12.1%
<b>Government funding total</b>	<b>303.1</b>	<b>323.4</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>72.6%</b>
<b>Client fee income</b>	<b>43.9</b>	<b>48.4</b>	<b>10.3%</b>	<b>16.1%</b>
Interest	4.7	5.1	8.5%	1.4%
Payment for goods and services	23.4	25.3	8.1%	6.8%
Net profit from business/social enterprise	3.9	3.8	-2.6%	-0.4%
Donations	3.4	3.3	-2.9%	-0.4%
Special events/fetes	0.9	1.6	77.7%	2.5%
Other fundraising	4.0	3.6	-10.0%	-1.4%
Bequests	0.8	0.8	—	—
Membership dues	0.5	0.6	20.0%	0.4%
Service club donations	0.17	0.25	47.1%	0.3%
Support from business	1.5	1.9	26.6%	1.4%
Other (see list)*	17.0	17.1	0.6%	0.4%
<b>Total own source</b>	<b>60.3</b>	<b>63.4</b>	<b>5.1%</b>	<b>11.0%</b>
<b>Total all sources</b>	<b>407.3</b>	<b>435.2</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>100%</b>

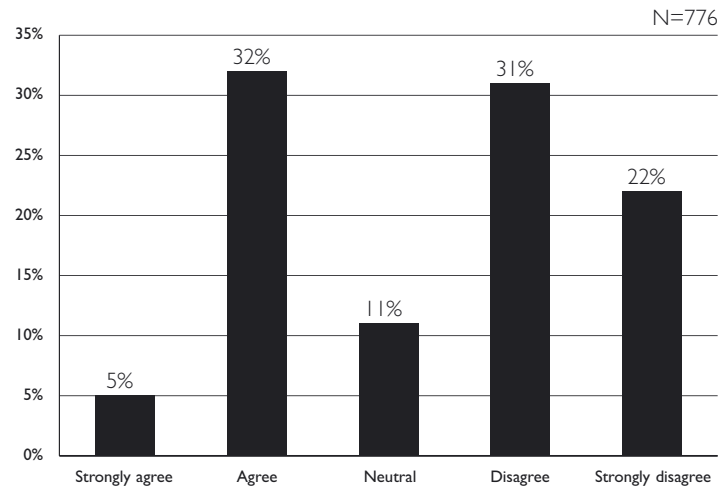
Thirty-six per cent of agencies agreed that they had secured new sources of income compared to 54% who disagreed.

Agencies were asked to identify the most successful new way of generating income in the last two years. The most common answers from the 531 respondents were:

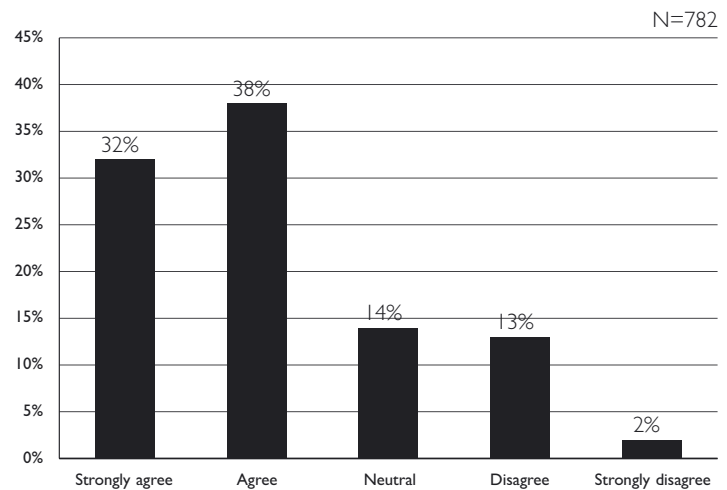
- government grants and programs (74 responses);
- fundraising (44 responses);
- donations (28 responses);
- corporate sponsorship (15 responses)
- client fees (11 responses); and
- philanthropic trusts (7 responses).

Another way that many organisations use to respond to immediate financial difficulties is to draw on their financial reserves. Seventy per cent of agencies agreed that their organisation was using up its financial reserves.

**Figure 2: New sources of income: proportion agree/disagree with statement: ‘this year we have secured new sources of income’**



**Figure 3: Use of financial reserves: proportion agree/disagree with statement: ‘this organisation is using up its financial reserves’**



## Service use

The income and expenditure section of this report showed that expenditure is outstripping income and that expenditure is growing at a faster rate than growth in income.

Expenditure growth is, at least in part, a function of demand for services (including the demand for good quality services). As the following section shows, demand for services has increased by 9.2%, which has outstripped both growth in expenditure (8.9%) and income (6.8%).

Client demand is certainly at the forefront of concerns for many agencies. When asked about the three most important issues facing their service, client demand was the second most reported issue (30% of all responses).

## Overall demand

In 2003-4 respondent agencies provided services to 2,009,831 people, which is 70,095 (or 3.4%) less than the 2,079,926 people who received a service in 2002-03.

When looking at the *number of times* a service was provided, respondent agencies provided 290,000 more services in 2003-4 compared with 2002-3, which represents a 9.2% increase.

That is, a marginally smaller number of people used a greater number of services in 2003-4 when compared to 2002-3.

This suggests that any spare capacity which may have resulted from serving fewer people has been absorbed by more intensive help for those people who were assisted by agencies.

## Perceptions of demand

It is possible to calculate the number of people seeking services in 2002-3 and 2003-4 by adding together the number of people who received services and the number of times people have been turned away from a service (see table 5). This shows that the number of people seeking services has declined slightly (by 60,000 people) between 2002-3 and 2003-4.

However, the strong perception among agencies is that the number of people seeking services has either remained stable or increased. Eighty-six per cent of respondents disagreed that the number of clients seeking their service had decreased.

This apparent paradox may be explained by the marginal level of the decrease (less than 3%) and the fact that perceptions about the numbers of clients seeking services may be a proxy for the greater intensity of work which most agencies are experiencing.

**Intensity of demand**

The more intense service provision to a smaller number of people is consistent with what agencies report is happening in terms of:

- turning people away;
- service targeting;
- waiting lists;
- referrals; and
- complexity of client need.

**Turning people away**

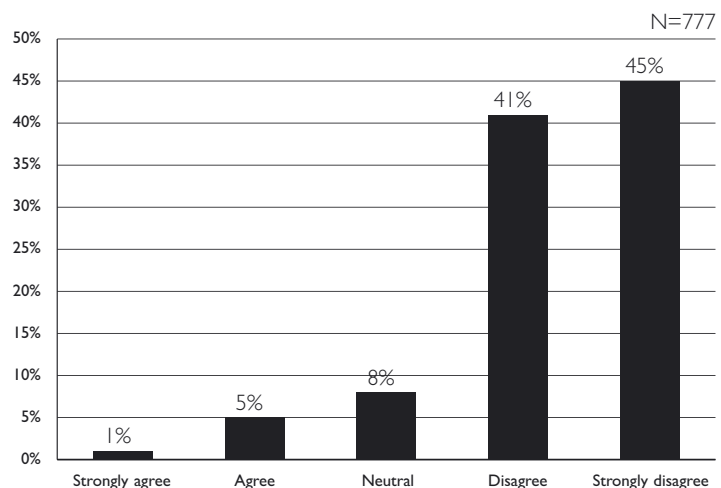
As services concentrate on providing assistance to those most in need, the number of times others are turned away from a service increases. While people may be turned away because they are ineligible for the service, it is also the case that many people will be turned away simply because their level of need is less critical than others and/or the service is already operating at maximum capacity.

Of the 741 respondents who answered the question, 32% said that they had assisted all the people who sought assistance from their service while 68% said that had not been able to do so. The table below shows this broken down into the numbers of people turned away by service type over two years.

**Table 4: Number of times services provided 2002-3 and 2003-4**

Service Type	Number of services	Number of times service was provided (2002 - 2003)	Number of times service was provided (2003 - 2004)
Community Care	109	986,520	1,070,488
Community activities, info & referral	184	454,408	539,887
Child Care	73	428,945	448,035
Relationship/counselling/support	184	241,797	261,496
Financial and Material Support	149	195,009	205,477
Housing Assistance	137	109,827	117,561
Community Legal Centre	63	96,516	94,907
Residential Aged Care	12	66,033	66,119
Individual Advocacy	139	54,351	64,653
Disability Supported Accommodation	29	33,550	35,537
Health Service	44	28,895	29,716
Child Welfare Service	37	23,809	24,082
Employment Service	55	13,595	15,995
Other	180	429,026	478,220
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,395</b>	<b>3,162,281</b>	<b>3,452,173</b>

**Figure 4: Number of clients: proportion agree/disagree with statement: 'the number of clients seeking our service has decreased'**



**Table 5: Number of times people turned away 2002-3 and 2003-4**

Service Type	Number of service providers	Number of times people turned away (2002-03)	Number of times people turned away (2003-04)
Community Care	60	2,667	3,156
Community activities, info & referral	34	4,639	4,863
Child Care	57	5,167	6,185
Relationship/counselling/support	54	5,312	5,663
Financial and Material Support	78	16,399	18,202
Housing Assistance	120	38,643	42,561
Community Legal Centre	45	12,946	14,785
Residential Aged Care	14	205	236
Individual Advocacy	38	2,741	3,220
Disability Supported Accommodation	32	1,094	1,173
Health Service	23	2,675	2,772
Child Welfare Service	22	941	1,020
Employment Service	22	626	720
Other	60	4,032	4,617
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,318</b>	<b>102,465</b>	<b>109,173</b>

When the number of times people are turned away is compared to the number of services actually provided by service type, it is clear that housing services and legal services experience particular problems. Housing services turned people away 3.6 times for every 10 times someone was assisted and legal services turned people away 1.6 times for every ten times someone was assisted.

**Table 6: Number of times people turned away as a percentage of services provided**

Service type	Number of services provided (2003-4)	Number of times people turned away (2003-4)	Number of times people turned away as % of services provided
Community Care	1,070,488	3,156	0.3%
Community activities	539,887	4,863	0.9%
Child Care	448,035	6,185	1.4%
Relationship support	261,496	5,663	2.2%
Financial & Material Support	205,477	18,202	8.9%
Housing Assistance	1,175,561	42,561	36.2%
Legal Centre	94,907	14,785	15.6%
Residential Aged Care	66,119	236	0.4%
Individual Advocacy	64,653	3,220	5.0%
Disability Accom.	35,537	1,173	3.3%
Health Service	29,716	2,772	9.3%
Child Welfare Service	24,082	1,020	4.2%
Employment Service	15,995	720	4.5%
Other	478,220	4,617	1.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,452,173</b>	<b>109,173</b>	<b>3.2%</b>

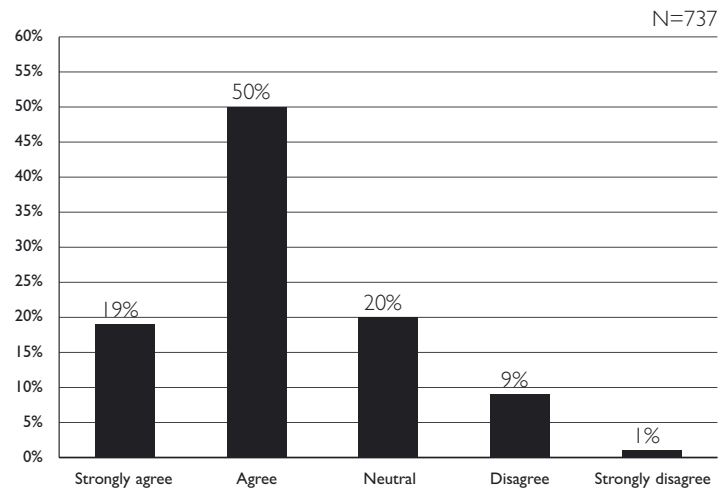
**Service targeting**

Agencies use service targeting as a means of filtering those who qualify for their service and those who do not. The majority of agencies reported tighter targeting of their services in the past. Sixty nine per cent of respondents agreed that their organisation was targeting its services more tightly than in the past and another 20% were neutral on the question (suggesting neither an increase or decrease in rationing).

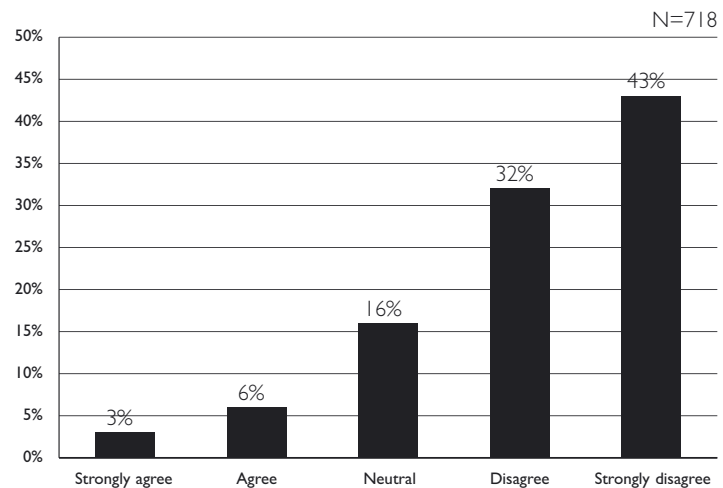
**User fees**

Although user fees are a significant part of the income stream of respondent agencies, the great majority of respondent agencies do not ration services, at least directly, according to the ability of clients to pay user fees. Seventy five per cent of agencies disagreed that they had turned people away from their services because clients could not afford to pay fees. The level and strength of disagreement was the most marked response in the survey, but it is worth noting that 9% of respondents agreed with the statement.

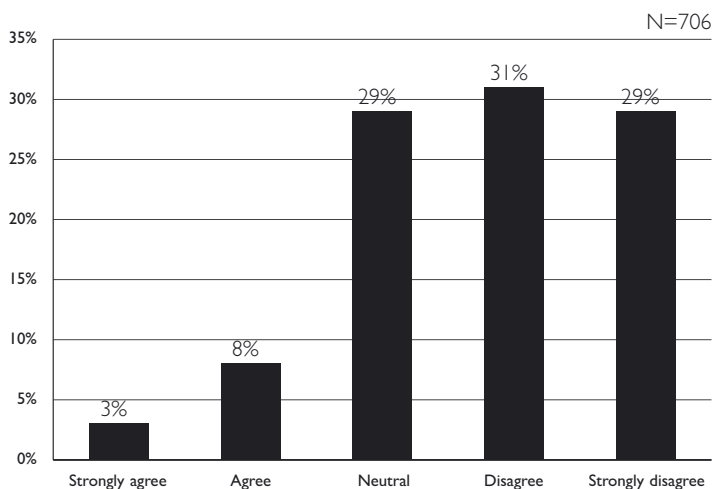
**Figure 5: Targeting services: proportion agree/disagree with statement: 'this organisation is targeting our services more tightly than in the past'**



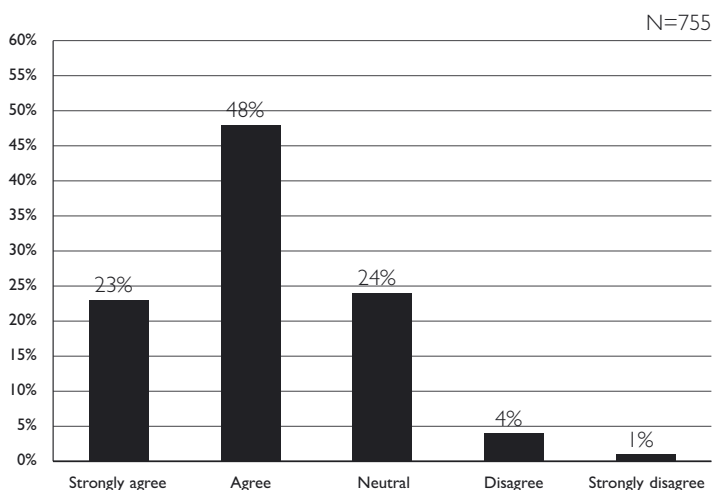
**Figure 6: User fees: proportion agree/disagree with statement: 'we turned people away because they could not afford to pay fees'**



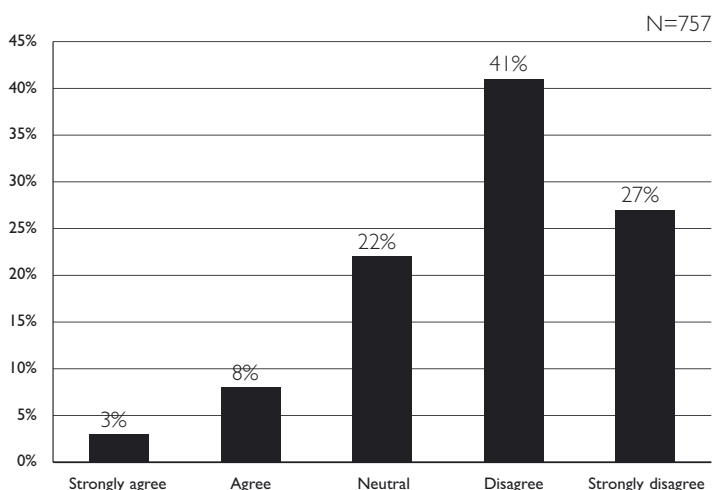
**Figure 7: Use of waiting lists: proportion agree/disagree with statement: 'our waiting list was shorter this year than it was last year'**



**Figure 8: Referrals into agency: proportion agree/disagree with statement: 'other agencies referred more clients to our organisation this year'**



**Figure 9: Referrals out of agency: proportion agree/disagree with statement: 'compared to last year, this organisation referred fewer people to other agencies'**



### Waiting lists

Waiting lists are a means by which respondent agencies use to ration their services. Waiting lists are an acceptable means of rationing where they sort more urgent cases from less urgent ones and where there are acceptable benchmarks governing the length of time people have to wait for a service. Many waiting lists do not have these features and it is concerning that waiting lists may be growing for many respondent agencies. Sixty per cent of respondents disagreed that their waiting list was shorter in 2003-4 year than it was in 2002-3.

### Referrals

Another indicator of intensity of demand is the number of referrals to and from agencies. Seventy one per cent of respondents agreed that other community agencies had referred more clients to their organisation in 2003-4 than in 2002-3.

This finding was reflected in the findings about referrals to other agencies. Only five per cent of organisations agreed that their organisation had referred fewer people to other community agencies in 2003-4 than in 2002-3.

**Complexity of client need**

Each of these rationing techniques leads to a concentration of people with the most complex needs in services and this is a major contributor to work intensity. Sixty seven per cent of respondents agreed that their clients in 2003-4 had more complex needs than in 2002-3. A further 25% neither agreed or disagreed and only 8% disagreed.

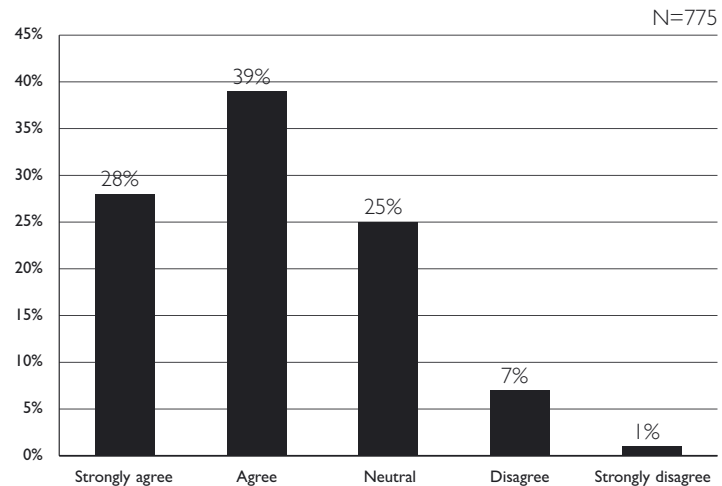
**Capacity to meet demand**

The preceding results suggests that many agencies do not have the capacity to meet demand within existing resources. However, when asked directly about their capacity to meet demand , 48% of respondents agreed that they had met demand for services within their existing resources while another 44% disagreed.

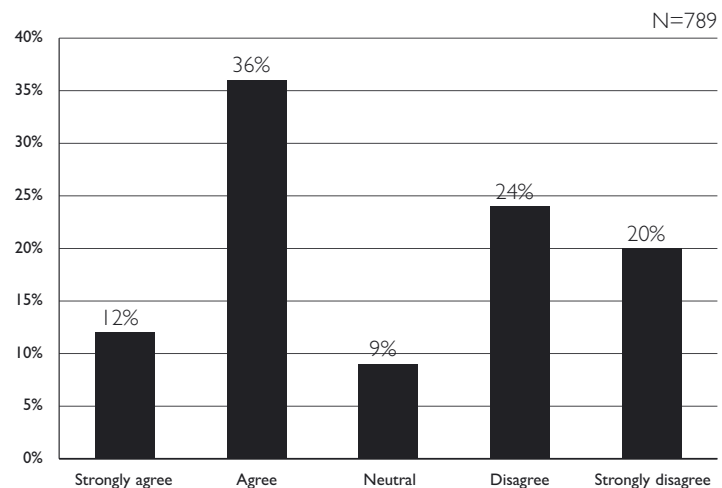
The level of agreement with the statement is somewhat surprising and the even split in responses suggests that there are some important differences among respondent agencies. While further analysis is required to determine the factors contributing to these differences, one explanation is that respondents to the survey have interpreted the question in different ways.

Those that agreed with the statement may have interpreted demand in relation to the actual demands placed on their specific agency by the people served by that agency. Those that disagreed may have understood demand in relation to community-level demand and factored in the number of people who have sought but not received assistance.

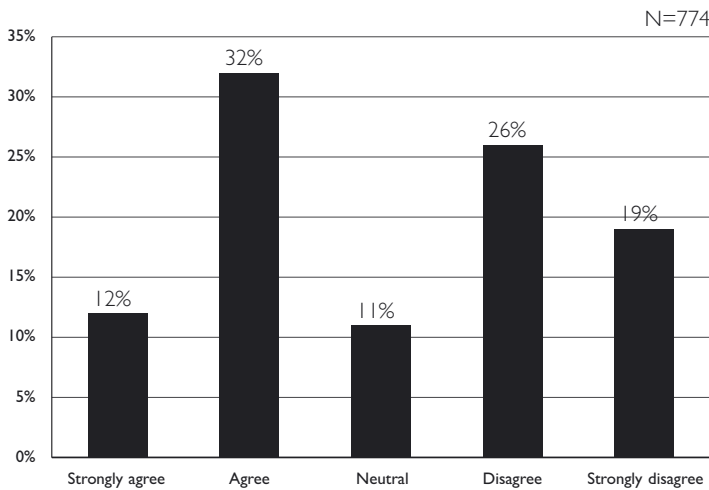
**Figure 10: Complexity of client need: proportion agree/disagree with statement: 'our clients have more complex needs than last year'**



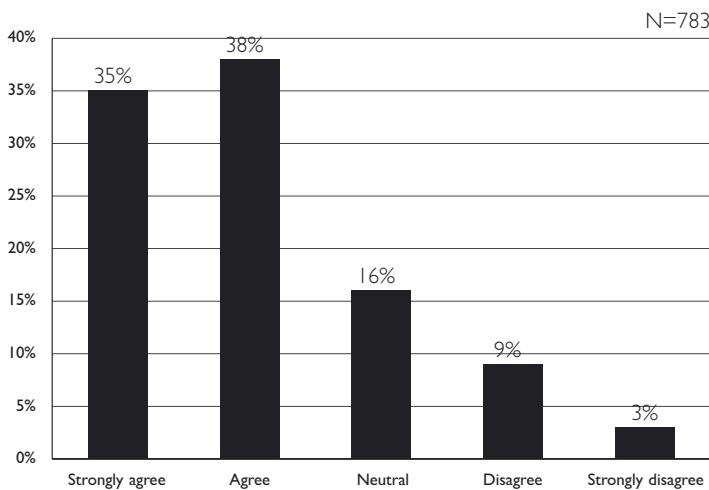
**Figure 11: Capacity to meet demand: proportion agree/disagree with statement: 'this year we met demand for our services within existing capacity'**



**Figure 12: Use of paid work: proportion agree/disagree with statement: 'this year we have increased the number of paid hours worked by staff'**



**Figure 13: Use of unpaid work: proportion agree/disagree with statement: 'compared to last year unfunded work by staff and volunteers has increased'**



## Workforce

The major impact of increased work intensity falls on the workforce of community sector organisations. Nearly half of agencies report an increase in the number of paid hours worked by staff while over three-quarters reported increases in the unfunded work of staff and volunteers.

### Paid work

Forty four per cent of respondents agreed that they had increased the number of paid hours worked by staff while 45% disagreed. The nearly even split in responses suggests that there are some important differences among respondent agencies and further analysis will be required to determine the factors contributing to these differences

### Unpaid work

In looking at the capacity of agencies to meet demand within existing resources, many try to squeeze more out of their existing resources, which includes the use of increased volunteer and unpaid staff labour. Seventy three per cent of agencies agreed that the unfunded work by staff and volunteers had increased between 2002-3 and 2003-4.

**Character of the workforce**

The workforce of respondent agencies is characterised by the dominance of voluntary labour; which constitutes over 70% of the workforce.

**Staff hiring and leaving**

There was an overall increase of 540 full time equivalent employees working in respondent organisations during 2003-04. This represents an increase of 4.4% on the total number of paid staff (see table 7) which might usefully be compared with the 6.8% increase in overall income and the 9.2% increase in the number of times services were provided between 2002-3 and 2003-4.

So while staff numbers have risen, both overall income and the volume of service provision have increased at a greater rate.

**Table 7: Workforce by category**

<i>Work category</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Paid staff (full time equivalent)	12,135	29%
Voluntary board/mgt	6,198	15%
Voluntary service delivery	10,943	26%
Other voluntary workers (eg clerical, students on placement)	13,047	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>42,323</b>	<b>100%</b>

N=830

**Table 8: Staff hired and left 2003-4**

<i>Employee category</i>	<i>Hired (FTE)</i>	<i>Left (FTE)</i>	<i>Difference (FTE)</i>
Service professional	1,310	1,069	241
Clerical/administration	501	343	158
Management	275	220	55
Other	430	344	86
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,516</b>	<b>1,976</b>	<b>540</b>

### Staff turnover

Staff turnover is a function of the number of staff leaving over the number of staff employed. In 2003-4, respondent agencies employed 12,135 full time equivalent staff and lost 1,976 full time equivalent staff. Average staff turnover across respondent agencies is therefore equivalent to 16.3% which is high compared to the all Australian industry average of between 10% and 12%.<sup>11</sup>

What constitutes unacceptably high turnover is a complex issue. Some turnover is clearly desirable in providing job opportunities and ensuring new ideas and approaches are brought into organisations. Excessive turnover on the other hand may be a sign of job pressures and insufficient support for employees and can lead to a lack of continuity and corporate knowledge within organisations. Turnover is also expensive, especially where skilled and experienced staff leave and new staff need to be trained.

### Factors in keeping good staff

Agencies were asked to identify three issues which they thought were most important in keeping good staff.

Of the 831 respondents, the highest frequency response related to:

- wages (33%)
- support from other staff and management (33%)
- working conditions (19%)
- training (19%)
- good communication among staff and management (13%)
- access to good supervision (9%)
- job satisfaction (7%).

<sup>11</sup> Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, DEWR Job Outlook, June 2004, p20. [http://www.workplace.gov.au/WP/Content/Files/WP/Employment Publications/JOMain2004.pdf](http://www.workplace.gov.au/WP/Content/Files/WP/Employment%20Publications/JOMain2004.pdf). DEWR uses the term 'job openings' to describe staff turnover.

### Attracting appropriate staff

A total of 382 respondents (46%) said that they had difficulty attracting appropriate staff while 359 (54%) reported no difficulties. Of those that had difficulties attracting staff, the main reasons were levels of pay and shortages in the availability of paid hours per week.

'Other working conditions' includes things like the general amenity of the work environment and access to technology, and was reported as important by 18% of respondents.

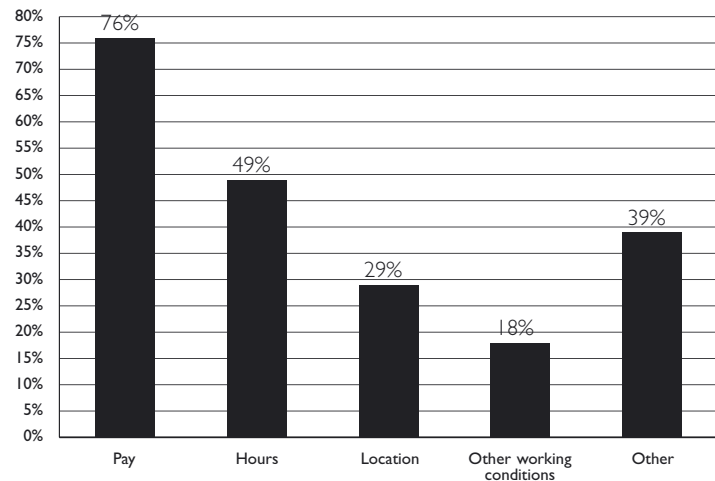
'Other' factors accounted for 39% of responses. Overwhelmingly respondents mentioned the shortage of suitably qualified and experienced staff, with longer term job security and lack of funding being other common responses.

### Occupational health and safety

Of the 763 respondents to the questions on occupational health and safety, 206 (27%) reported a workplace injury in 2003-4, compared with 557 (73%) who did not report a workplace injury.

The main causes of injury among the respondents that reported a workplace injury are outlined in the table below. Among 'other incidents' trips and falls were the most common response, followed by general accidents and traffic accidents. Needle stick injuries were reported by two respondents.

**Figure 14: Reasons for difficulties in attracting appropriate staff**



**Table 9: Number and type of Occupational Health and Safety incidents**

Cause	Number of incidents	% of total
Body Stressing (e.g. Repetitive Strain Injury, muscle strain from lifting heavy objects)	230	42%
Mental stress	136	25%
Physical assault	64	12%
Exposure to heat, sound, electricity, chemicals or other environmental factors	20	4%
Other incident	93	17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Appendix I: The questionnaire

### ACOSS Community Sector Survey

You can download/complete online at [www.acoss.org.au/survey](http://www.acoss.org.au/survey)

Please return to ACOSS by 12 November 2004

**Instructions**

This survey is confidential. Only ACOSS and the state and territory COSSes will see your completed survey. No individual organisations will be identified in published reports.

- This survey is for the period 1 July 2003 – 30 June 2004
- The survey should be completed by organisations which provide services directly to the public.
- If you are completing the survey for a number of subsidiary organisations, please ensure that those subsidiary organisations do not also complete the survey. This is to avoid the risk of double counting results.
- In piloting this survey, we found that service coordinators or managers are often best placed to answer these questions.
- If you are unable to calculate the exact numbers for any question, then please provide us with a professional estimate. Your best estimate is better than us having no data at all.
- If you have any queries, please contact Garth on (02) 9310 4844 or [garth@acoss.org.au](mailto:garth@acoss.org.au)

**1 Over the last 12 months, what were the three most important issues facing your service?**

.....

.....

.....

**Service Issues**

**2 In your professional opinion, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements for the period July 2003 to June 2004. (Please circle one number in each row.)**

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Can't choose
This year we met demand for our services within our existing capacity	<sup>01</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	6
This organisation is targeting our services more tightly than in the past	<sup>02</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	6
Compared to last year, this year we have referred fewer people to other community agencies	<sup>03</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	6
Compared to last year, unfunded effort by staff and volunteers has increased	<sup>04</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	6
This year we have increased the number of paid hours worked by our staff	<sup>05</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	6
This organisation is using up its financial reserves	<sup>06</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	6
Our waiting list is shorter this year than it was last year	<sup>07</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	6

**3 Tell us about strategies your organisation has used over the last year to improve its effectiveness?**

.....

.....

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**4** In your professional opinion, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements for the period July 2003 to June 2004. (Please circle one number in each row.)

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Can't choose
Other community agencies referred more clients to this organisation this year than they did last year	01	1	2	3	4	5	6
This year we have secured new sources of income	02	1	2	3	4	5	6
Our clients this year have more complex needs than last year	03	1	2	3	4	5	6
The number of clients seeking our service has decreased	04	1	2	3	4	5	6
Income for our services has not met our costs	05	1	2	3	4	5	6
We turned people away from our service because they could not afford to pay client fees	06	1	2	3	4	5	6

**5** Over the period July 2003 to June 2004, has any state government policy change(s) affected your clients? If yes please specify which policy or policies and how they have affected your clients.

.....

.....

**6** Over the period July 2003 to June 2004, has any federal government policy change(s) affected your clients? If yes please specify which policy or policies and how they have affected your clients.

.....

.....

**Workforce**

**7** Please estimate how many paid and unpaid people work for your organisation.

Paid staff (full time equivalent)	01	<input type="text"/>
Voluntary board/management committee	02	<input type="text"/>
Voluntary service delivery workers	03	<input type="text"/>
Other voluntary workers	04	<input type="text"/>

The following questions seek to find out the rate of staff turnover in your organisation.

**8** Please indicate the number of full time equivalent paid staff who were newly hired, and the number who left, in the 2003 - 04 financial year.

		No. of full time equivalent paid staff newly hired Jul 2003 – Jun 04	No. of full time equivalent paid staff who left Jul 2003 – Jun 04
Clerical / Administration	01	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Service Professional	02	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Management	03	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Other (please detail)	04	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**9 What three issues do you think are most important in keeping good staff?**

.....

.....

.....

**10 In the past year did your organisation have difficulty attracting appropriate staff?**

Yes 01

No 02

**If yes, what were the reasons? (tick all that were relevant)**

General rate of pay in the community sector	01	<input type="checkbox"/>
Location of your organisation	02	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not enough paid hours per week	03	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other working conditions	04	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please detail)	05	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Occupational Health and Safety**

**11 Did any member of your organisation's staff or volunteers suffer a workplace injury in the last financial year that resulted in: an insurance claim, sick leave being taken or a formal notice being given to workplace management?**

Yes 01

No 02

**12 If yes, please identify the incident(s) which caused the injury/injuries.**

	Number of incidents
Mental stress	01 <input type="text"/>
Physical assault	02 <input type="text"/>
Body Stressing (e.g. Repetitive Strain Injury, muscle strain from lifting heavy objects)	03 <input type="text"/>
Exposure to heat, sound, electricity, chemicals or other environmental factors	04 <input type="text"/>
Other incident (please detail)	05 <input type="text"/>

**Service Usage**

*It is very useful for us to know what activities community agencies are performing and how many people are assisted through your work. If you cannot calculate the exact figures for the following questions, then please provide your best estimate.*

**13 Please estimate the number of people who received a service from your organisation in the periods July 2003 – June 2004 and July 2002 – June 2003.**

July 2003 – June 2004	July 2002 – June 2003
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

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**14** Please tick the types of services your organisation provides, and indicate the number of times each service was provided for the periods July 2003 - June 2004 and July 2002 - June 2003. (For example, if you provide a service to one person three times during the year you should count this as three occasions of service.)

Service Type	Tick service type if appropriate	Number of times service was provided (July 2003 - June 2004)	Number of times service was provided (July 2002 - June 2003)
Community Care (e.g. Home And Community Care, Community Aged Care Packages, non residential disability service)	01 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Residential Aged Care	02 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Disability Supported Accommodation	03 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Child Care	04 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Child Welfare Service	05 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Individual and/or Family relationship counseling/support	06 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Financial and Material Support Incl. crisis assistance, emergency relief	07 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Housing Assistance Incl. transitional and crisis accommodation	08 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Employment Service Incl. training, labour market programs	09 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Community Legal Centre	10 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Community activities, information and referral (e.g. neighbourhood centres, Migrant Resource Centres)	11 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Health Service	12 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Individual Advocacy	13 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Other (describe) .....	14 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**15** Is your organisation able to assist all the people who seek assistance through the services you provide?

- Yes 01  if yes go to question 17
- No 02

**16** If no, please estimate the number of times people sought assistance but were turned away, for each service type in the periods July 2003 - June 2004 and July 2002 - June 2003.

Service Type	No. of times people turned away (July 2003 - June 2004)	No. of times people turned away (July 2002 - June 2003)
Community Care (e.g. Home And Community Care, Community Aged Care Packages, non residential disability service)	01 <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Residential Aged Care	02 <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Disability Supported Accommodation	03 <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Child Care	04 <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Child Welfare Service	05	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Individual and/or Family relationship counseling/support	06	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Financial and Material Support Incl. crisis assistance, emergency relief	07	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Housing Assistance Incl. transitional and crisis accommodation	08	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Employment Service Incl. training, labour market programs	09	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Community Legal Centre	10	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Community activities, information and referral (e.g. neighbourhood centres, Migrant Resource Centres)	11	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Health Service	12	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Individual Advocacy	13	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Other (describe)	14	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

17 Are the figures you have provided for questions 14 and 16 based on:

(please tick)

Service database records	01	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional estimate	02	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please detail)	03	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Income and Expenditure**

18 What were the total operating expenses for your organisation in each financial year?

		July 2003 - June 2004	July 2002 - June 2003
Total operating expenses	01	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>

19 What do you consider has been the most successful new way of generating income for your agency over the last two years?

.....

.....

20

Please indicate all sources of your organisation's income for the last two financial years

	July 2003 - June 2004	July 2002 - June 2003
Total government funding (e.g. grants, contracts) Of which...	\$	\$
Commonwealth government	\$	\$
State and/or territory government	\$	\$
Local government authority	\$	\$
Level of government unknown	\$	\$
Client fee income	\$	\$
Interest (bank, building society, other)	\$	\$
Payments for goods and services (Non-government sources)	\$	\$
Net profit from business venture / social enterprise	\$	\$
Total fundraising from the public, members Of which...	\$	\$
Donations	\$	\$
Special events, fetes etc	\$	\$
Other fundraising	\$	\$
Bequests	\$	\$
Membership dues	\$	\$
Service club donations	\$	\$
Support from business Incl. cash donations and in kind	\$	\$
Other (describe) .....	\$	\$
Total Income	\$	\$

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**Contact Details**

Name of organisation

*(organisation name must be supplied – other contact information optional)*

Address




Postcode:

Web Address

Name of person completing this survey

Position

How long have you been working in this organisation?

Contact phone number

Contact email address

***Remember that to be in the draw to win a complimentary registration to the 2005 ACOSS Congress plus travel costs to Queensland, the survey must be completed and contact details must be provided.***

**Thank you very much for your help.**

**Completed surveys should be returned to ACOSS by  
12 November 2004**

**Email:** [garth@acoss.org.au](mailto:garth@acoss.org.au)

**Fax:** (02) 9310 4822  
Attention Garth Williams

**Mail** Locked Bag 4777  
Strawberry Hills, NSW 2012

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