



Our Reputation

Carers ACT Sector Partner Survey 2009-10

September 2010

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Carers ACT sincerely thanks all the agencies who participated in this survey for their feedback. We hope to use it so that we can continue to improve the way we work together.

Carers ACT acknowledges that modern day Canberra has been built on the traditional lands of the Ngunnawal People. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present. Carers ACT celebrates the Ngunnawal People's living culture and valuable contribution to the ACT community.

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Our Reputation

Carers ACT has a constitutional mandate to represent the voices of Carers to government and the wider community. We also provide direct support to over 5,000 families through our counselling, information, respite support, education, social support and case coordination services. Carers ACT also works with a range of organisations in different capacities, for example, we broker services, such as in-home respite and garden maintenance, we refer Carers to agencies that have their own funded programs, we make bookings for care recipients to stay at residential facilities in order to provide their Carers with respite, and we fund equipment purchases.

The 2010 Carers ACT Business Plan requires us to survey agencies with whom we have a service agreement or MoU to seek their opinion of our effectiveness as a brokerage agency. We are also required to survey HACC service providers about their use of the Commonwealth Respite Carelink Centre (CRCC) and whether any barriers exist that prevent them from accessing and fully utilising the CRCC.

Survey Methodology

It was important to find a balance in terms of the length of the survey; i.e. it needed to be able to obtain feedback on the full range of brokered services, whilst still being short enough so as not to unfairly impose on our partners' time.

The questions cover our understanding of Carers needs, the effectiveness of our processes and our ability to collaborate to achieve the best outcomes for Carers.

We restricted the survey to a page, comprised of several tick the box questions and a section at the bottom for comments or suggestions. It took approximately five minutes to complete. Whilst a longer survey would have provided more detailed information we felt that people would be less inclined to commit the time necessary to complete a long survey.

We emailed the survey and a covering letter to 95 contacts (a total of 66 organisations) (see appendix A for copies of the letter and survey). Carers ACT has MoUs or Service agreements with 40 of the 66 organisations (see Appendix B for a list of the agencies and programs who received a survey).

Response rate

We allowed almost two weeks for organisations to respond, but only 5 responses had been received by the due date.

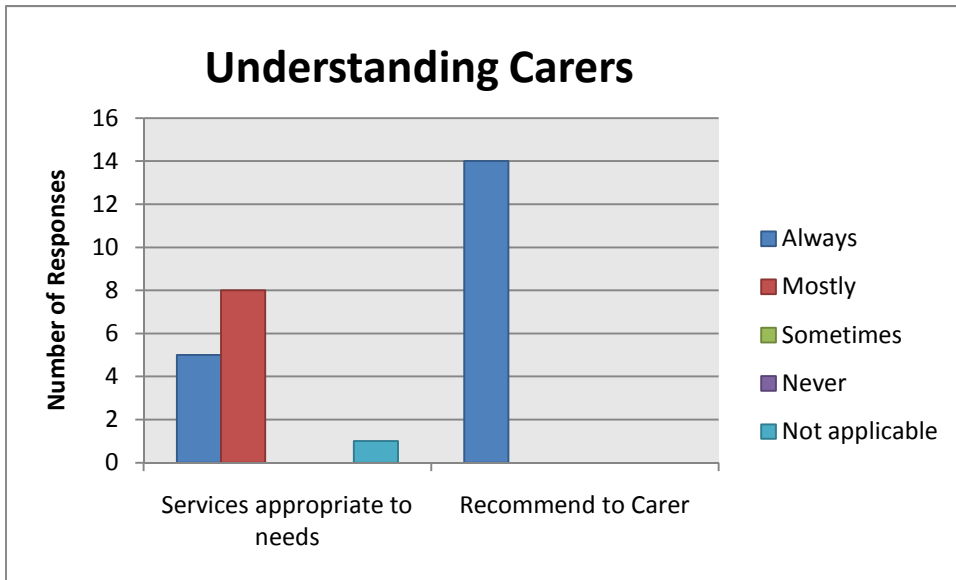
To obtain more data we telephoned 31 agencies with whom we have a lot of contact or with whom we have a MOU or Service Agreement (In bold in Appendix B).

This approach resulted in a further 9 surveys being completed. It is possible that this approach could have had an effect on the results because people may have answered the survey less negatively when responding over the phone than if they had been posting or emailing the completed survey to the organisation. Although the answers received over the phone were both negative and positive, it might be more difficult for the respondent to provide negative feedback over the phone. Firstly the responses are no longer anonymous and secondly some people may find talking to someone on the phone a more confronting situation, then writing, in which to express negative sentiments.

We received 14 completed surveys in total. Whilst being a relatively small sample of agencies, analysis of the results did show some clear themes emerging.

Understanding the Needs of Carers

The degree to which other community organisations believe that Carers ACT understands the needs of Carers and is helpful is revealed by their unanimous recommendation of Carers ACT to Carers. This finding is supported by our recent annual client survey in which approximately 97% of Carers said they would always recommend another Carer to make contact with Carers ACT.

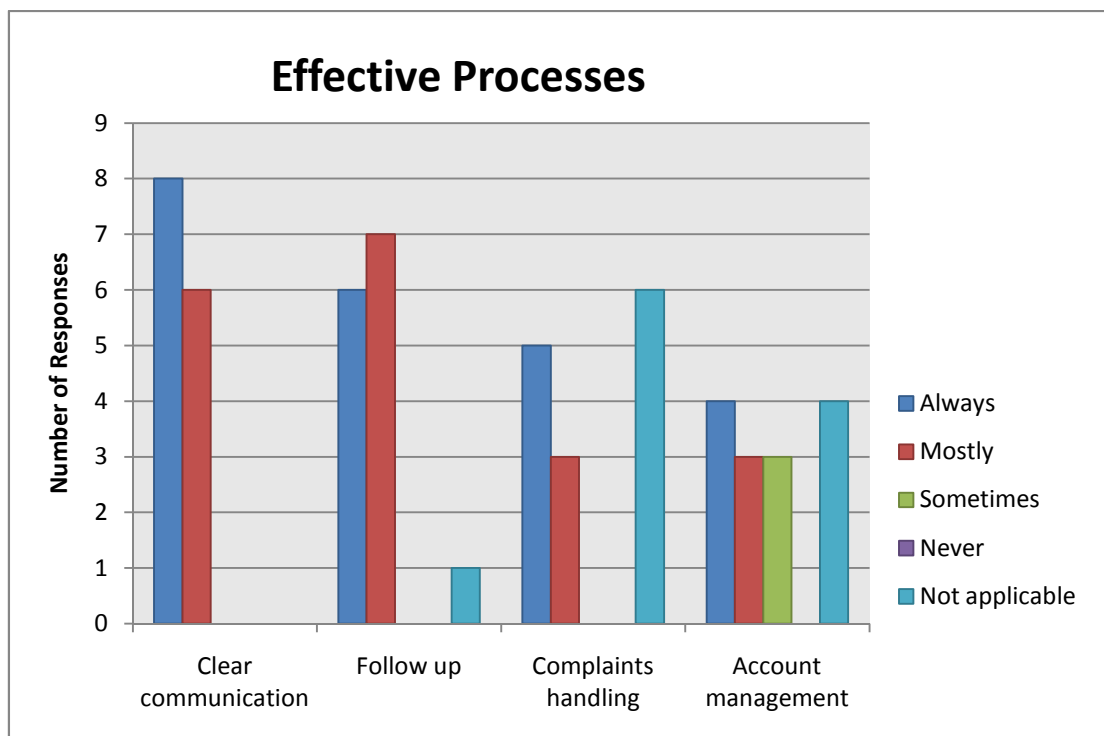


I have referred Carers to Carers ACT services numerous times

Thirteen respondents felt that the programs and services provided by Carers ACT are either always or mostly appropriate to the needs of Carers. The remaining respondent ticked not applicable because the services provided by her agency were targeted to the needs of the care recipient and not the Carer. She felt that she did not have a good enough understanding of the needs of Carers to be able to comment on the appropriateness of the programs of Carers ACT.

Effective Processes

To be an effective brokerage agency, our business processes must be efficient and operate in a timely manner. This not only ensures that our resources are used to maxim benefit for Carers, but also justifies the investment of tax payer funds.



All respondents reported clear communication of service requirements when dealing with Carers ACT. One respondent commented that the exchange of client information in the last year had really improved.

I think I have a wonderful relationship with the respite coordinators.

A similarly high rating was received for the degree to which we follow up on referrals and bookings. One person ticked not applicable because although Carers ACT never followed up with them, she felt that it was her agency’s responsibility to contact Carers if any problems or changes arose.

Six respondents had not been in the situation where a complaint was necessary (and so had ticked not applicable). Two of those six respondents commented that to date problems had been easily solved through negotiation without the complaints procedure being enacted. Those who had experience with our complaints procedure felt that complaints had been handled always or mostly effectively and efficiently.

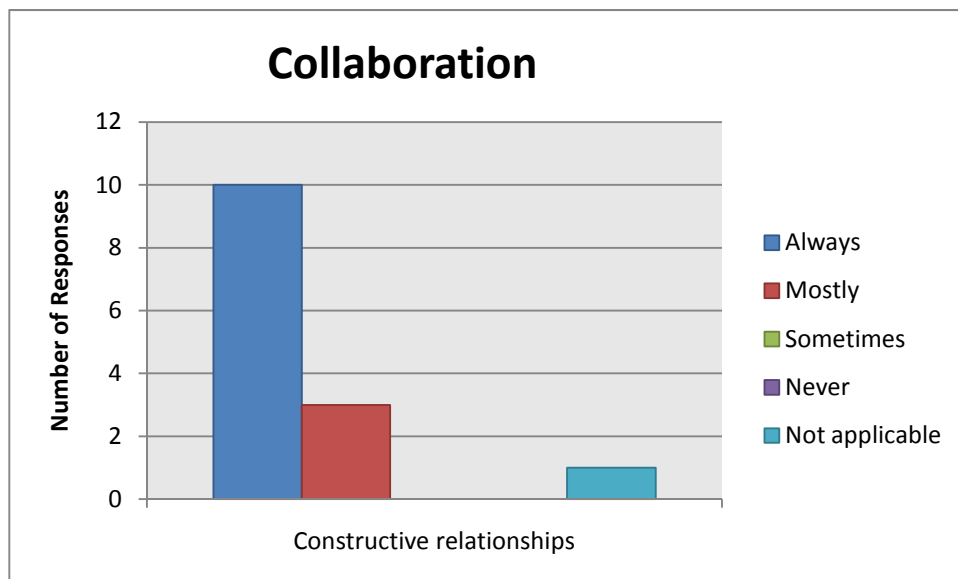
The majority of respondents (seven) felt that accounts were paid by Carers ACT in a timely manner always or most of the time. A further four respondents had not dealt with our accounts processes and so could not comment. Three respondents felt that accounts were only sometimes paid on time. This is reflected in the comment below.

Accounts to be paid on time – within a 28 day period. If an account is not being paid within this period an explanation would be appreciated. I have great difficulty with the accounts dept regarding unpaid accounts. I find myself constantly chasing up these accounts and reasons for non payment.

Changes to brokerage orders and missing booking reference numbers on invoices can cause delays in Carers ACT's ability to reconcile accounts payable.

Collaboration

Thirteen respondents felt that Carers ACT worked constructively with other agencies to achieve the best outcomes for Carers.



Analysis of the suggestions received indicates, however that there is room for improvement in collaboration across the community sector. One agency felt that their relationship with Carers ACT had improved in the last year or so partly because Carers ACT had initiated interagency mornings. Several other comments indicated that this type of exchange would be good to instigate, particularly in light of the staff turnover in the sector and the number of new programs being initiated.

Respite Coordinators visit facilities with which they have an MoU. This has several benefits as it enhances working relationships, as all concerned are able to put a face to a name. Enables Respite coordinators to know where the facility respite is organised.

The importance of being aware of each other's expertise and processes is vital to achieving the best outcome for Carers and their families. Carers have emphasised to us the importance of Carers ACT being a one stop shop of information to assist them to navigate the service provision maze.

Conclusion

Although only a small number of agencies were able to respond to our survey a few clear themes emerged:

- Carers ACT has a reputation for being a useful resource to Carers.
- None of the respondents experienced any barriers hindering their referral of Carers to Carers ACT (this would include CRCC and other Carers ACT programs).
- There is some room for improvement in the timeliness of our account management processes. Carers ACT is committed to re-examining its processes, to work with brokerage partners to include booking reference numbers on all invoices and flagging any changed orders so that accounts payment processes can be improved. Carers ACT will also reflect these requirements in new Service Level Agreements.
- Regular communication between organisations about their programs and processes is important to ensure that we are aware of who can do what for Carers.

Suggestion for obtaining sector feedback in the future

Feedback from partner organisations is a valuable resource which can be used to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of an organisation's operations. However providing feedback is a gift that takes time to produce, a resource that those in the community sector are often lacking. Lack of time available to complete the survey could have contributed to the low response rate.

A more effective and mutually beneficial way of obtaining feedback could be a sector wide feedback session in which agencies would be given the opportunity to give and receive feedback to their partners. This session would also be one way of improving collaboration across the sector which has the potential to lead to improved services for our clients.

Appendix A

August 2010

Dear,

Carers ACT aims to provide ongoing effective support to Carers. We know we cannot do this alone, and are dedicated to working hard to develop and build collaborative relationships with a broad range of service providers in the ACT.

We seek ongoing feedback from the Carers who access our services and the service providers with whom we do business. We have recently finalised the 2010 annual client survey, and the results of this are available on the website at carersact@asn.au.

As one of our valued sector partners, I am writing to ask you to complete a short survey (copy attached). Your assessment of our work and any suggestions you might have about how we can further improve our working partnership can only serve to improve outcomes for Carers and their families. (Please note: a Carer is defined as someone who provides unpaid care and support to family members and friends who have a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, terminal illness or who are frail aged.)

I am mindful that you are very busy, and apologise for the short timeframe, but would appreciate it if you could complete the survey by Monday 6 September and return it to Jodie.faram@carersact.asn.au. Please do not hesitate to contact Felicity Cotterill on 6296 9960 if you have any questions about the survey.

Yours sincerely,

Dee McGrath
CEO

Sector Partner Survey

How effectively does Carers ACT work with you to support Carers?



Understanding Carers

Are the programs and services provided by Carers ACT appropriate to the needs of Carers?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Mostly
- Always
- Not aware of the programs and services

Would you recommend Carers ACT to a Carer?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Mostly
- Always
- Not applicable

What would stop you from recommending Carers ACT to a Carer?

- Not aware of Carers ACT services
- Do not believe Carers ACT has a service to meet the Carer's need
- Believe Carer is already receiving enough support
- Not sure how to contact Carers ACT
- Other, please list -----

Effective Processes

When making a booking does Carers ACT communicate clearly what service it expects?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Mostly
- Always
- Not applicable

How thoroughly does Carers ACT follow up on bookings/referrals?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Mostly
- Always
- Not applicable

Does Carers ACT make and receive appropriate complaints efficiently and effectively?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Mostly
- Always
- Not applicable

How timely are Carers ACT's account management processes?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Mostly
- Always
- Not applicable

Collaboration

Does Carers ACT work constructively with other agencies to ensure the best outcome for Carers?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Mostly
- Always
- Not applicable

Suggestions

We would appreciate any comments or suggestions on how Carers ACT can improve the way we work with you -----

Appendix B

Service Providers (19)

Just Better Care	R & R Home Respite Services	Tandem –Adult Disability Program
Tandem – Children and Young Peoples Program	Absolute Home Care	ACT Nursing Services
All Suburbs Private Home Care Agency	Calvary Silver Circle	Mercy Health-Care on Call
Domiciliary Nursing Agency	Baptist Community Services	EZT Property Maintenance
Kin Care	Shaw Possibilities	Goodwin – Home Respite Services
Dallarooma _CBD Chauffeured Transport	Dial and Angel	Garden Makeovers & Maintenance
Illawarra Retirement Trust		

Residential Facilities 21

Adria Village Ltd	Brindabella Gardens	Bupa Aranda(formerly Amity)
Calvary Retirement Community	Carey Gardens for Aged Care	Eabrai Lodge Special Care Hostel
Ginninderra Gardens Nursing Home and Hostel	Goodwin Aged Care Facility _ Monash	Goodwin Aged Care Facility – Ainslie
Kalparrin Aged Care Facility (Residential Respite – 1 Room)	Kangara Waters	Kankinya Aged Care Facility
Morling Lodge Nursing Home	Morshead Home Hostel and High Level	Mountain View Aged Care Facility- (Residential Respite)
Southern Cross Care Campbell	St Andrew’s Village Harrison House and John Flynn House	St Nicolas’ Home for the Aged
Uniting Care Mirinjani Village – Weston	Upper Jindalee Nursing Home	Villaggio Sant’Antonio Hostel

Other Agencies

ACTCOSS	ADACAS	Advocacy for Inclusion
Alzheimer’s Australia	Anglicare Packages	Baptist Community Service
Calvary CACP Package Manager	Canberra Community Care	Catholic Care
Catholic Care – Dorothy Sales	Catholic Care Accommodation Support	Catholic Care HACC, LINC,SINC,Mature Carers Programs
Catholic Care Brokerage Program & Flexible Family	Catholic Care SAILS Program	CIT Skills for Carers
Communities @ Work- Centre 4 Seniors	Communities@ Work- HACC	Communities@ Work Parenting Programs
Communities@ Work Tuggeranong & Woden	Community Connections	Community Options

Focus	Goodwin - Package manager	Gungahlin Regional Community Service – HACC
Gungahlin Regional Community Service – Disability Program	Home Help	Human Rights Commission
Marymead Family Relationship	Marymead Family Support	Marymead – Out of Home Care
Red Cross	Sharing Places	Southside Community Service
Woden Community Services	Northside Community Service – Case Management	Northside Community Service - Transport
Kirra Aged Care	Southside Community Service - Case Management	Southside Community Service – Chinese Case Management
Southside Community Service – Croatian Case Management	Southside Community Service – Intensive Need and Spanish Case Management	Southside Community Service – Multicultural Case Management
Southside Community Service – Senior Groups	Southside Community Service – Transport Coordinator	Woden Community Service
Belconnen Community Service	Calvary EACH Package manager	Illawarra Retirement Trust Package Manager
Kincare Package Manger	Mirrinjani Package Manager	Moreshead Package Manager
Northside Community Service	Tandem Lesiurelink	Tandem Mental Health