Australians Living on the Edge 6

Community Sector Confidence Survey
January 2004

South Australian survey results

Background

This is the sixth *Australians Living on the Edge* survey of the community services sector conducted by ACOSS and the State and Territory Councils of Social Service. The survey examines key changes in the operating environment of community organisations, major issues of concern to organisations, and how the community services sector is responding. Indirectly, the survey also aims to provide a sense of how the primary users of community services – low-income and disadvantaged Australians – are faring.

Together, the 125 respondents to the survey delivered services to over 462,000 low income and disadvantaged clients in the 12 months to June 2003.

Key findings

- There has been a 17% increase in the number of people assisted by respondent South Australian agencies between the 2000-02 and 2002-03 financial years, rising from 396,532 to 462,529 people.

- There has been an 22% increase in the numbers of people seeking but not receiving service(s) between the 2001-02 and 2002-03 financial years, rising from 13,829 to 16,931 people.

- South Australian community sector organisations continue to work under increasing pressure, with only 2% of agencies reporting no increase in pressure. The main reasons given for the increase in pressure were increased operating costs (19%), increased numbers of clients seeking services (18%), and the increasingly complex needs of clients (18%).

- In response to the increase in pressure, South Australian agencies continue to rely on staff to provide additional unfunded work and/or are turning to volunteers (18%). The creation and extension of waiting lists, increased referrals and closer targeting of services were used by 21% of organisations as ways of dealing with the pressures they faced, while 29% sought additional resources from government, business and philanthropic bodies. There has been a significant increase in the proportion of agencies who met increased demand within existing capacity (11%).

- Sixty three per cent of agencies in South Australia expect an increase in capacity (due to a decrease in demand or costs and/or an increase in resources) or to absorb an increase in demand or costs over the next 12 months. Twenty six per cent of agencies in South Australia expect not to meet an increase in demand and/or an increase in costs over the next 12 months.

Methodology and number of responses

The survey was distributed by mail and email to the community services sector through the state and territory Councils of Social Service organisational membership and selected national member organisations of ACOSS. It is estimated that about 3000 surveys were distributed.

818 organisations completed the survey, and of these about 150 were completed online via the ACOSS website.

Table 1: Survey returns by State/Territory

State/Territory	Number of responses	Percentage of total	Number of responses for 2002 survey	Percentage of total
QLD	250	31	168	24
SA	125	15	44	6
WA	124	15	112	16
NT	83	10	67	10
VIC	83	10	52	8
TAS	59	7	70	10
NSW	58	7	141	21
ACT	36	5	31	5
Total	**818**	**100**	**685**	**100**

There was a marked increase in the number of responses from South Australian agencies between 2002 and 2003, jumping from 44 to 125.

Survey results

1. Types of work performed by participating agencies

Many agencies engaged in more than one type of service delivery (242 responses were provided by 125 agencies). South Australian agencies were more concentrated in the areas of crisis assistance and community development than the national average.

Table 2: Type of work done (SA)

Types of work / focus	No. of responses[1]	% (SA)	% (National)
Aged Care	11	4	5
Disability Services	17	7	10
Individual and/or Family Support	43	18	18
Children's Services	9	4	6
Employment	10	4	3
Advocacy	21	9	9
Crisis Assistance	40	17	11
Housing Assistance	10	4	8
Multi Service	25	10	10
Health Services	4	2	5
Community Development and/or Support	52	21	15
Total	**242**	**100**	**100**

[1] Multiple responses were invited for this question.

2. Size of agency by income

The figures for South Australia show a substantially larger proportion of agencies clustered in the $1 to $100,000 income bracket (44%) than the national average (20%).

Table 3: Size of agency by income (SA)

Income	No. of responses	% (SA)	% (National)
Zero	1	<1	1
$1 - $25,000	24	19	6
$25,000 - $100,000	31	25	14
$100,000 - $250,000	20	16	19
$250,000 - $500,000	10	8	18
$500,000 - $1m	15	12	17
$1m - $5m	12	10	14
Over $5m	9	7	7
No answer	3	2	4
Total	**125**	**100**	**100**

3. Source of agency income

The figures for South Australia show that proportionally more income is derived from donations and other sources and proportionally less from government grants when compared with national averages.

Table 4: Source of agency income (SA)

Income	% (SA)	% (National)
Government grants	68.5	72.8
Client fees	11.0	11.3
Contributions from business	2.2	2.1
Donations	7.7	5.3
Other	10.6	8.5
Total	**100**	**100**

4. Labour force

The average number of paid staff employed by respondent agencies in South Australia is 32 (compared to a national average of 25). The average number of board and management volunteers is 8 (compared to a national average of 7), the average number of clerical volunteers is 6 (compared to a national average of 3) and the average number of service delivery volunteers is 39 (compared to a national average of 27).

5. Number of people who received a service from participating agencies in the 2001-02 and 2002-03 financial years

There has been a 17% increase in the number of people assisted by respondent South Australian agencies between the 2001-02 and 2002-03 financial years, rising from 396,532 to 462,529 people.

Table 5: Number of people who received a service from participating agencies in 2002-03 and 2001-02 (SA)

Type of Service	No. of Clients SA (July 02 - June 03)	% of total	No. of clients SA (July 01 to June 02)	% change from 2001-02 to 2002-03
Aged Care	12,327	3	10,745	+15
Disability	11,641	3	11,085	+5
Individual and/or family support	64,404	14	46,975	+37
Children's services	15,809	3	14,781	+7
Employment	4,782	1	4,093	+17
Advocacy	32,077	7	21,587	+49
Crisis	43,689	9	26,939	+62
Housing	23,239	5	18,261	+27
Multi-Service	78,888	17	66,771	+18
Health	31,504	7	33,486	-6
Community Development and/or Support	144,168	31	141,809	+2
Total	**462,529**	**100**	**396,532**	**17**

6. Number of people who sought but did not receive a service from participating agencies in the 2001-02 and 2002-03 financial years

There has been an 22% increase in the number of people who did not receive the service(s) they sought between the 2001-02 and 2002-03 financial years (rising from 13,829 to 16,931 people). The areas where the greatest proportional increases occurred were in children's services (132%) and multi-services (42%).

Table 6: Number of people who did not receive a service from participating agencies in 2002-03 and 2001-02(SA)

Type of Service	No. of people (July 02 to June 03)	% of total	No. of people (July 01 to June 02)	% change from 2001-02 to 2002-03
Aged Care	671	4	651	**+3**
Disability	282	2	256	**+10**
Individual and/or family support	4,237	25	3,238	**+31**
Children's services	534	3	230	**+132**
Employment	285	2	285	**-**
Advocacy	635	4	468	**+36**
Crisis	3,518	21	2,986	**+18**
Housing	1,215	7	1,362	**-11**
Multi-Service	3,194	19	2,251	**+42**
Health	30	<1	0	**-**
Community development and/or Support	2,330	14	2,102	**+11**
Total	**16,931**	**100**	**13,829**	**Avg: +22**

Table 7 compares the number of people who received a service with the number of people who sought but did not receive a service. The purpose of this calculation is to illustrate which areas experienced the greatest mismatch between existing capacity and unmet demand.

Table 7: Number of people who sought but did not receive a service from participating agencies in 2001-02 as a percentage of current client base (SA)

Type of Service	Current client base (2002-03)	Persons not receiving a service (2002-03)	Persons not receiving a service as a percentage of persons receiving a service (SA)	Persons not receiving a service as a percentage of persons receiving a service (National)
Aged Care	12,327	671	**5**	**5**
Disability	11,641	282	**2**	**4**
Individual and/or family support	64,404	4,237	**7**	**9**
Children's services	15,809	534	**3**	**6**
Employment	4,782	285	**6**	**8**
Advocacy	32,077	635	**2**	**11**
Crisis	43,689	3,518	**8**	**17**
Housing	23,239	1,215	**5**	**33**
Multi-Service	78,888	3,194	**4**	**4**
Health	31,504	30	**<1**	**1**
Community development and/or Support	144,168	2,330	**2**	**4**
Total	**462,529**	**16,931**	**4**	**7**

7. What are the sources of increased pressure on the capacity of agencies to deliver services?

Agencies were asked to identify the sources of any increased pressure on their capacity to deliver services. The South Australian results closely reflect the national picture.

Table 8: Sources of any increased pressure on agencies (SA)

Source of any increased pressure	No. of responses	% (SA)	% (National)
No increase	8	2	2
Increase in referrals from another agency	62	14	13
Another agency has closed down/reduced its services	20	5	4
Existing clients have more complex needs	75	18	17
More people are seeking service	77	18	18
Increased operating costs	80	19	19
Decrease in income	25	6	7
Difficulty in retaining skilled/experienced staff	32	7	10
A state govt. policy change affected clients	28	6	5
A federal govt. policy change affected clients	21	5	5
Total	**428**	**100**	**100**

8. What impact is the increased pressure having on service delivery

Agencies were asked to indicate what strategies they used to cope with increased pressure.

The responses for South Australia closely reflect the national pattern, although South Australian agencies rely more on increased (unfunded) effort from staff and/or are turning to volunteers than the national average.

Table 9: Impact of any increased pressure on service delivery and coping strategies (SA)

Impact on service delivery and coping strategies	No. of responses	% (SA)	% (National)
Met increased demand within existing capacity	55	11	11
Greater targeting of services	33	7	7
Increased referrals to other agencies	26	6	7
Creation/extension of waiting lists	41	8	7
Using up financial reserves	52	11	12
Rationalising assets	20	4	4
Increased (unfunded) effort by staff/volunteers	89	18	15
Sought additional resources from government	56	12	14
Sought additional resources from business	30	6	6
Sought additional resources from philanthropic organisations	33	7	7
Advocacy for systemic change	30	6	7
Other	18	4	3
Total	**483**	**100**	**100**

9. Where agencies have experienced a decrease in pressure, what are the causal factors?

Sixty seven per cent of all responses to this question indicated that there has been no decrease in pressure for South Australian agencies. Eight respondents did not answer this question.

Table 10: Sources of any decreased pressure on agencies (SA)

Source of decreased pressure	No. of responses	% (SA)	% (National)
Not applicable	78	67	72
Cyclical/seasonal factors	5	4	6
Less demand for services due to increase in well-being of clients	0	0	1
Fee increases have led to a drop in demand	5	4	2
More agencies have opened to share workload	5	4	3
Increased targeting of services	8	7	7
Decrease in referral from other agencies	4	3	1
Lower operating costs	2	2	2
Increased funding	10	9	6
Total	**117**	**100**	**100**

10. Expectations about organisations' capacity to deal with changes in demand, costs or other significant changes over the next 12 months

Sixty three per cent of agencies in South Australia expect an increase in capacity (due to a decrease in demand or costs and/or an increase in resources) or to absorb an increase in demand or costs over the next 12 months.

Twenty six per cent of agencies in South Australia expect not to meet an increase in demand and/or an increase in costs over the next 12 months. A further 7% of responses indicated that there was no change expected.

Table 11: Expectations over the next 12 months (SA)

Expectation	No. of responses	% (SA)	% (National)
No change expected	13	7	6
Expect increased capacity due to decreased demand	10	5	6
Expect increased capacity due to decrease in costs	0	0	1
Expect increased capacity due to increase in income or other resources	24	13	11
Expect to meet increase in demand	51	28	23
Expect not to meet increase in demand	29	16	20
Expect to absorb increase in costs	32	17	15
Expect not to meet increase in costs	18	10	13
Other	7	4	5
Total	**184**	**100**	**100**

Insurance

The results below show that while sector organisations in South Australia made very few claims for most types of insurance, organisations report an average increase of 16% in the cost of cover between 2002-03 and 2003-04 and continuing difficulties in both affording cover and finding an insurer.

11. Type of claim made by service type

Agencies were asked how many insurance claims they had made in the last **two** years. The results show that few agencies have made professional indemnity and public liability claims compared to the number of claims made for building and contents and workers compensation.

Table 12: Insurance claims made by community sector organisations in the last two years, by service type (SA)

Service type[2]	Director Ind	Vol. Ins	Prof. Ind	Public Liabt'y	Bld & Cont's	Work. Comp	Total claims	Average no. claims per agency
Aged Care	0	1	0	0	1	9	**11**	**1**
Disability	0	0	0	2	1	441	**444**	**26**
Ind./Family	0	1	0	1	11	16	**29**	**<1**
Children	0	0	0	0	3	9	**12**	**1**
Empl.	0	0	0	0	2	21	**23**	**2**
Advocacy	0	0	1	2	1	53	**57**	**3**
Crisis	0	0	0	0	7	12	**19**	**<1**
Housing	1	0	0	0	5	14	**19**	**2**
Multi-service	0	0	1	1	12	50	**64**	**3**
Health	0	0	0	0	0	1	**1**	**<1**
Community	0	2	0	0	11	24	**37**	**<1**
Total	**0**	**4**	**2**	**6**	**54**	**650**	**716**	**Avg: 3**

12. Difficulties in obtaining insurance

Of the agencies that answered this question, one third (or 41 agencies) indicated that they had experienced difficulties in obtaining insurance cover in the 2002-03 financial year. Of these:

- 17 indicated that the difficulty was due to the increased cost of cover (41%)
- 24 indicated that the difficulty was due to being refused cover by an insurer (59%)

13. Costs of insurance

The data received from respondent agencies shows that the collective cost of insurance cover for South Australian agencies was $1.9 million in 2002-03, while the cost of cover in 2003/04 was $2.2 million. This represents a $0.3 million (or 16%) increase between 2002/03 and 2003/04.

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[2] Note that many agencies deliver more than one type of service and the one insurance claim is counted against each of the service categories across which these agencies work.

Information Technology

14. Access to and investment in information technology

This year's survey asked a number of questions about the capacity of the sector to invest in, and take advantage of, information technology.

Expenditure

South Australian agencies expect to collectively spend $1.9 million on information technology in 2003-04.

Networked desktop computers

Of the 108 agencies that answered this question, 69% had networked computer systems.

Organisations with a website

Of the 111 agencies that answered this question, 57 (51%) had a website.

Barriers to IT

Of the 145 responses to this question:

- 15 said that there were no barriers (10%)
- 49 said that low level IT skills in the organisation was a barrier (34%)
- 74 said that the cost of technology and support was a barrier (51%)
- 7 gave other reasons (5%).