

MEDIA RELEASE

MONDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2010

Number: 2010/01



ONE IN TEN HAVING TO BE TURNED AWAY

The Australian Community Sector Survey, released today by the Australian Council of Social Service, shows demand for community sector services in the ACT continues to grow.

"These figures show that demand for community sector supports is high, but we are being hampered in our mission to work with Canberra's most vulnerable by inadequate funding and onerous contract requirements," commented Roslyn Dundas, Director of the ACT Council of Social Service.

Key ACT results from the Australian Community Sector Survey:

- Over 50% of ACT community sector organisations reported they were unable to meet demand for services;
- Local agencies turned away one in ten people who were eligible for their services. Of people turned away 53% were seeking child welfare, child services and day care;
- 62% of respondents disagreed with the statement that 'Government funding covers the true cost of delivering contracted services.' And 51% agreed that Government contract requirements and red tape adversely affected organisations' capacity to deliver services;
- While respondents indicated an increase in the number of paid staff, 62% reported that the current salaries in the community sector make attracting and retaining staff more difficult;
- Positively, 82% of respondents indicated they were able to speak publicly about issues affecting their clients.

Single parents in the ACT are 6.4 times more likely to use community and welfare services than their representation in the general community would suggest. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are 1.9 times more likely. The ACT community sector provides important support and services in the lives of low income and disadvantaged groups within the community.

The survey, collecting data about the non-government, non-profit community services and welfare sector, was undertaken in late 2009 and gathers information regarding the 2008-09 Financial Year. A separate report highlighting the responses of ACT organisations to the survey is available.