

ACE
Providers
Business
Survey

The changing face of community business



Adult, Community and
Further Education



Department of Education and
Early Childhood Development

10

The changing face of community business 2010

ACE Providers Business Survey

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This report is based on information from the ACE Providers Business Survey 2010. The ACE Providers Business Survey was undertaken by CWCC on behalf of the ACFE Board, using CWCC survey methodology and approach. The views expressed herein are the views of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the ACFE Board.

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Executive summary

Recent reforms to the skills system have changed the way training is delivered and funded in Victoria by offering more places through a broader range of training organisations. For training providers this means responding to market demand, managing new learner eligibility requirements, attracting new learners into higher qualifications under the Victorian Training Guarantee and contesting for funding. Business changes arising from the new skills system include increased compliance, payment in arrears dependent on successful data submission and changed fee structures.

The Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board is implementing a number of initiatives designed to assist ACE providers in the context of these changes.

CWCC has undertaken ACE Providers Business Surveys since 2005 in conjunction with the ACFE Board, utilising CWCC's survey and research methodology. In addition, CWCC has undertaken a range of workshop programs with ACE providers relating to their business, people and skill issues.

This Report draws on data from the 2010 ACE Providers Business Survey and CWCC's other work/analysis with ACE providers and other community organisations.

In 2010, around half of ACFE funded community organisations (153 organisations – 48%) completed the ACE Providers Business Survey.

Some key findings are summarised below.

- Around 60% of respondents indicated that programs/services had changed in the last 12 months. Of these, most organisations (85%) had added new programs/services and 65% had discontinued specific programs/services.*
- The client demographic profile of organisations is consistent with 2008 and 2009 survey information, although the proportion of organisations indicating clients in the 45-64 age group was lower (by approximately 10%) than in 2008/2009.*
- Around a quarter of respondents indicated that the mix of learner groups had changed in the last year. Learner groups that had increased included: learners aged 16+ without Year 12 qualification; people returning to work; CALDs; new arrivals; unemployed; and employees from business/industry.*
- In terms of workforce, the total number of people employed (full time, part time, casual, and sessional) by organisations in the sample was 3796. In addition, these organisations had 3310 'general' volunteers (excluding Committee of Management members).*

As in previous years, 'larger' organisations in the sample (financial turnover >\$1 million), had a greater proportion of employees employed full time/part time (68%), compared to 39% in 'medium' organisations (\$250,000 - \$1 million), and 35% in 'smaller' organisations (<\$250,000).

- A third of respondents (32%) indicated that their organisation had current job vacancies. This proportion varied in previous surveys from 22% to 26%.*
- In terms of financials, there are complex mixes/patterns in terms of funding sources – consistent with previous surveys.*

A key focus of the 2010 ACE Providers Business Survey involved the impact of reforms to the skills system.

The 2010 survey was undertaken approximately a year after changes were introduced. In this context, respondents were asked a series of questions about the impact on their organisation, opportunities provided, changes in programs/services and organisational changes.

Some key points raised by respondents that are RTOs include the following.

- In general, RTO respondents indicated a range of positive outcomes and challenges.

In terms of positive outcomes, RTO respondents indicated: opportunities to grow their organisation through expanding programs/services; improved funding opportunities for delivery of accredited training programs; and streamlined internal business processes in response to changing requirements.

In terms of challenges, RTO respondents indicated: increased administration with growth in accredited programs; increased compliance; impacts of student eligibility criteria; complexity of funding; increased competition; and securing suitably qualified staff.

- RTO respondents indicated a range of impacts and opportunities, as well as changes in delivery of programs and services.
- Around a third of RTO respondents had grown/expanded Foundation Skills and around a third had grown/expanded Skills Creation. Around a quarter of RTOs had grown/expanded Skills Building, and 20% had grown/expanded Skills Deepening.

Non-RTO respondents raised a range of issues including concerns about impacts on the demand for, and funding of, pre-accredited training.

The 2011 survey will include further ongoing information concerning impacts of reforms.

Message from the ACFE Board

The Changing Face of Community Business 2010 provides a wealth of information about the clients, services and business operations of ACE Providers.

As with previous Changing Face of Community Business reports, it provides an understanding of the diversity of ACE organisations and the challenges they face, particularly with regard to business capacity and future workforce development.

The 2010 survey has explored the impact on ACE organisations of recent reforms to the skills system, including the growth and expansion of courses and services. The report highlights the clear opportunity to expand the client profile across the ACE sector.

This information is gathered from the ACE Providers Business Survey and workshops conducted throughout the year. The report builds on the rich bank of knowledge about ACE already developed as a result of the surveys conducted over the past four years. ACE organisations are to be commended for the enthusiastic participation in the development of such a broad, deep and valuable snapshot.



Rowena Allen

Chairperson

Adult, Community and Further Education Board

1 Introduction

The ACFE Board is implementing a number of initiatives designed to assist ACE providers transition to the new skills system. These initiatives build on projects conducted through 2005 - 2008 that were directed at improving the sustainability of adult community education provision in Victoria. Those projects focused on improving the understanding and use of sustainable business practices in community-based not-for-profit organisations providing adult education and training.

One of those projects is an annual ACE Providers Business Survey to provide an overview of a highly complex and diverse sector and to identify critical issues and trends in their business experience. CWCC (a research and consulting company) has undertaken this work since 2005 in conjunction with the ACFE Board and utilising CWCC's survey and research methodology. In addition, CWCC has undertaken a range of workshop programs with ACE providers relating to their business, people and skill issues.

The 2007 'Changing Face of Community Business: ACE Providers Business Survey' report provided a snapshot of ACE providers in terms of clients, services, workforce profile (including demographics, employees, volunteers), 'business'/financial issues, and operations. It also outlined the changing context of community organisations, including: changing services to meet changing client needs; increased workforce diversity and segmentation; and 'business' operations.

The 2008 survey and report focused on governance and business operations/processes. This involved governance structures, issues relating to Committees of Management, business processes, infrastructure and local government support – in addition to key areas of clients, markets, services, people and financials.

The 2009 survey and report focused on the expected impacts of the new skills system implementation including expected impacts on organisations, potential opportunities and plans to grow training.

This Report builds on the previous work. It draws on data from an ACE Providers Business Survey undertaken in 2010 and from CWCC's other work/analysis with ACE providers and other community organisations.

A specific theme of this year's ACE Providers Business Survey involved the impacts to date of the skills system implementation on ACE providers. Respondents were asked a series of questions relating to: impacts on their organisation; opportunities provided; changes in demand for programs and services; and organisational changes (see Section 4).

2 Survey participation

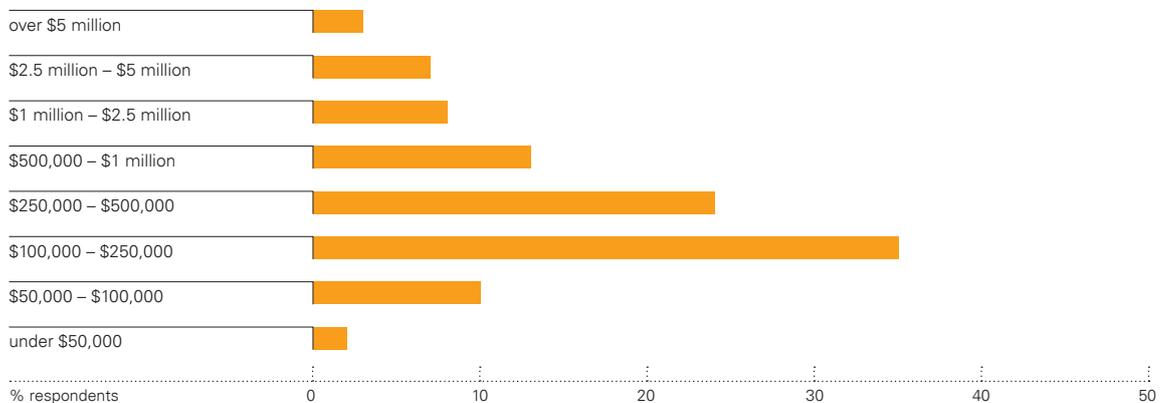
ACFE invited all ACE providers in Victoria to participate in the survey in May - August 2010. The survey process, using ID numbers, ensured that CWCC did not have information linking IDs to ACE providers by name, and that the ACFE Board did not have access to survey responses linked to IDs.

The survey was completed by 153 organisations - 48% of ACFE funded community organisations.

Around half (46%) of the organisations in the sample were Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and 67% were Neighbourhood Houses.

The sample covered a broad range of annual financial turnover, from under \$50,000 to over \$5 million annual turnover. Financial turnover information was provided by 152 organisations (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 Annual financial turnover – 152 organisations



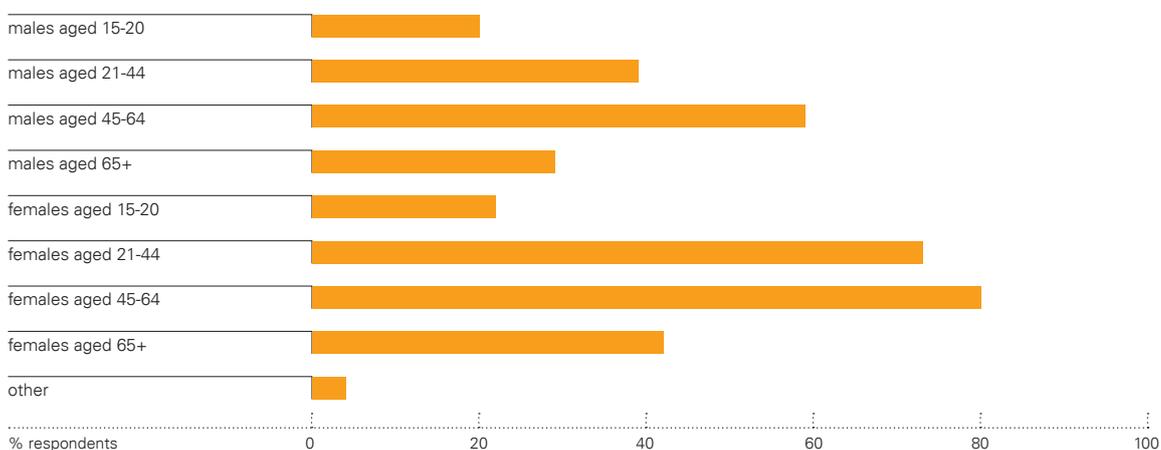
3 Clients & services

Clients

The ACFE Board has a service provision relationship with nearly 350 community-based not-for-profit organisations across metropolitan, rural and regional Victoria. Collectively known as Adult Community Education (ACE) organisations, they deliver adult literacy and numeracy, employment skills, VCE/VCAL, vocational skills training and other less formal learning in local communities to people aged 15 - 64. They access diverse funding from state and national government and various private sources to provide a broad service range including vocational education and training, employment, neighbourhood house activities, community access and development, disability and youth programs and childcare.

ACE providers in the sample indicated a range of client groups - see Figure 2. This profile is consistent with 2008 and 2009 survey information, although the proportion of organisations indicating clients in the 45-64 age group was lower (by approximately 10%) than in 2008/2009.

Figure 2 Main client demographic groups currently serviced by organisations in the sample



Services

A broad range of services are provided by organisations in the sample (see Table 1: note – organisations could select multiple services).

Table 1 Services provided by organisations in sample

services	% respondents
Pre-accredited training programs	98%
Accredited training programs	56%
Recreation and leisure	77%
Community development	73%
Childcare	43%
Community and health	33%
Employment services/programs	18%
VCE/VCAL	11%
Other	14%

Around 60% of respondents indicated that programs/services have changed in the last 12 months. Of these, 85% of organisations had added new programs/services, while 65% had discontinued specific programs/services.

Reasons for the change in programs/services included: change in demand (81%); change in funding environment (56%); change in organisation’s capacity/capability (29%); and change in organisation’s direction (13%).

Learners

Respondents were also asked about the types of learners that their organisation currently services (see Table 2).

Table 2 Types of learners currently serviced by organisations in the sample

types of learners currently serviced	% respondents
Learners aged under 16 years	16%
Learners aged 16+ without Year 12 qualification	52%
Unemployed	86%
People returning to work	80%
Employees from business/industry	42%
Learners with a disability	72%
Culturally and linguistically diverse learners (CALDs)	58%
Retirees	72%
New arrivals	33%
Koories	8%
Other*	2%

* Other includes ‘disadvantaged youth’, residents new to the area, self-employed and small business owners/directors.

Around 27% of respondents indicated that the mix of learner groups has changed in the last year. Learner groups that had increased included: learners aged 16+ without Year 12 qualification; people returning to work; CALDs; new arrivals; unemployed; and employees from business/industry.

4 Skills system implementation

The new skills system has changed the way training is delivered and funded in Victoria by offering more places through a broader range of training organisations. For training providers this means responding to market demand, managing new learner eligibility requirements, attracting new learners into higher qualifications under the Victorian Training Guarantee and contesting for funding. Business changes arising from the skills system include increased compliance, payment in arrears dependent on successful data submission and changed fee structures.

In the context of the skills system that commenced 1 July 2009, participants in the 2009 survey were asked questions about expected impacts of the skills system, potential opportunities and plans to grow types of training.

The 2010 survey focused on effects of the skills system implementation to date. Respondents were asked a series of questions relating to: impacts on their organisation; opportunities provided; changes in demand for programs and services; and organisational changes.

Organisations in the sample that are not RTOs ('non-RTO respondents') raised a range of issues including concerns about impacts on the demand for, and funding of, pre-accredited training. Many non-RTO respondents indicated that they expected their organisation to continue operating in the same way.

The rest of this section focuses on RTOs in the sample ('RTO respondents').

In general, RTO respondents (n=70) indicated that the skills system implementation to date has provided both positive outcomes and challenges.

Positive outcomes indicated by RTO respondents included the following.

- Opportunities to grow their organisation through expanding the programs/services they offer.
- Improved funding opportunities for the delivery of accredited training programs.
- Streamlined internal business processes in response to changing requirements.

Challenges indicated by RTO respondents included the following.

- Increased administration with growth in accredited programs.
- Increased compliance and the importance of having efficient and cost effective compliance processes and procedures.
- Impacts of eligibility criteria on potential students in the context of socio-demographics and geography.
- Capacity of organisations to cost their programs/courses.
- Managing funding in a more complex environment.
- Ensuring the availability of suitably qualified and experienced staff.

Impacts

Specifically, respondents were asked about impacts of the skills system implementation. Most RTO respondents (84%) indicated that the implementation had impacted on their organisation. Some areas of impact included increased compliance/reporting, issues surrounding student eligibility and increased competition.

Sample comments

Increased compliance/reporting

Greater stress on staff to understand changes and apply them.

Admin requirements have increased dramatically. Working through the changes and other requirements has taken a lot of staff time.

Need a full time administrator to manage it.

More reporting requirements - more time taken from other management role duties that cannot be made up due to limit of 30 hours paid per week, regardless of what is yet to be completed overall. Rules re: student enrolments require much juggling.

New systems and reporting procedures have been set up. Training of RTO staff to make correct decision re: eligibility for funded places.

Required higher level of administration time and expertise overall. Management team have needed PD around a number of issues.

Student eligibility

The eligibility criteria have excluded many of our previous participants. They are unable to pay for an unsubsidised place in a course.

It has restricted eligibility significantly. As we do not deliver Diploma courses, the only benefit is through participation of students under 24 years.

We will have to look at offering courses that are higher than a Certificate III level to try and ensure they are eligible for funding. A lot of people have a Certificate III level qualification.

Increased competition

We have progressed as before with our pre-accredited programs, but have decided to relinquish our RTO status as we have not delivered to our scope for a number of years. The new reform and the contestable marketplace have probably prompted this.

Made the income stream more uncertain and need to be aware of TAFE activities to a larger extent.

Changes in demand for programs/services

Respondents were then asked if the skills system implementation had changed demand for their organisation's programs/services, with 44% of RTO respondents indicating that it had. Of these, 40% indicated increased demand for programs/services.

Sample comments

Increased enrolments in Youth and Higher Qualifications.

A Diploma in Children's Services is now more affordable for students.

Diploma level programs are now funded, so there is more demand.

Demand has increased enrolments substantially in our accredited courses. However, not all people enrolled attend classes regularly. We have become a dumping ground for people who are forced by Centrelink to be enrolled (no enrolment = no payment), but not necessarily attend. Job search providers send us new students, but not all follow up our reports of client non-attendance. Recently we un-enrolled a student who had not attended in 3+ months and the job search provider lectured us on how this impacted on them/the client, showing complete ignorance of our obligations in reporting to our funding bodies.

Growth/expansion of types of training

The skills system categorises accredited training as follows.

- Foundation Skills - literacy, numeracy and language and job-readiness skills.
- Skills Creation - initial vocational skills.
- Skills Building - more advanced workplace skills.
- Skills Deepening - higher qualifications needed for more skilled, specialised or paraprofessional employment.

Respondents were asked if they had grown/expanded types of training.

- 35% of RTO respondents had grown/expanded Foundation Skills.

Sample comments

Increased youth and disability.

25% increase.

Yes, through VCAL.

A marginal increase in Foundation Skills clients.

We are expecting to run more Foundations Skills in future.

- 35% of RTO respondents had grown/expanded Skills Creation.

Sample comments

Growth has been stronger in this area.

Youth compact funding has allowed us to expand delivery in all subsidised funded areas.

Introduced and running Cert II courses now.

Focusing on employability skills and specific pathways.

Offering Cert II in Business and Cert II in Information Technology next term targeting under 25s.

- 26% of RTO respondents had grown/expanded Skills Building.

Sample comments

Added two new Certificate IV qualifications on our scope and anticipate adding more in 2011.

Have eligible students enrolled in Cert III in Aged Care and Cert III in Children's Services.

20% increase.

All demand for increase of training has been in the area of Community Services due to changes in workplace requirements.

- 20% of RTO respondents had grown/expanded Skills Deepening.

Sample comments

Yes, in our Diploma of Beauty Therapy, Diploma of Children's Services and Diploma of Business Management.

Increase in Diploma and Advanced Diploma.

Opportunities

Respondents were asked if the skills system implementation had provided opportunities.

- 68% of RTO respondents indicated there were opportunities, including opportunities in terms of programs/services or improving business operations, networks and partnerships.

Sample comments

Opportunities in terms of programs/services

Opportunities to access more funded places and attract students into a much broader range of courses.

Can have as many students as walk through the door, as long as we can fit them in. Youth (aged 15-19) numbers can be much bigger than the previous caps.

Will remove the limitation on the number of accredited and pre-accredited programs we can run next year.

Previously capped in the area of youth, which is now open, and higher qualifications always had to be fee-for-service. Now, dependent on eligibility, most students are now funded.

In the past we have always over delivered as we were never allocated enough SCH to meet demand. The demand driven funding, when fully implemented in 2011, will allow us to deliver training as required by our customers.

We are able to offer more VCE/VCAL and VET than in the past because of the training guarantee.

We can see more opportunities to offer training for people with a disability, and in the long term, for training our own people.

After a somewhat slow start, momentum is increasing as we expand programs to meet customer demand.

We will be receiving funding according to what we provide, which is more than double the amount we receive at present. This will enable us to grow and provide more.

To look at extending our scope, providing more accredited training, and allowing the hours to be able to do that instead of the current delivery plan under restricted delivery.

Opportunities to improve operations, networks and partnerships

We are partnering with larger organisations.

Increased opportunity to interact with businesses.

Entered into partnerships/shared services with other ACE RTOs.

Opportunity to reconsider positioning in the market.

- 32% of RTO respondents indicated there had not been opportunities so far. Of these, some respondents indicated there would be opportunities in the future, while others indicated issues or reasons why they were unable to capitalise on potential opportunities.

Sample comments

Will be opportunities in the future

Not as yet, but [Organisation] expects to derive opportunities as a result of the skills reform.

We hope so - we don't move fully into this area until next year, and when this happens we hope that we will be paid for the over-supply we deliver.

Capacity building funding - from 2011 onwards it is hoped that it will open up the market more.

Issues/unable to capitalise

We applied for various funds but remain unsuccessful. I believe our location and size played a contributing factor in our lack of success.

Although in theory we could expand and grow our business, there are no resources available to do this. We could gamble and put on programs, employ tutors and take up rooms that are otherwise used by other programs in the hope of new/increased students. However, we don't have the resources upfront and would be in a financial mess if the students don't come. For us it does not work in practice.

Opportunities have decreased as the target audience has decreased due to eligibility criteria.

Organisational changes

Respondents were asked if any changes had been made in their organisation in the context of the skills system implementation (see Table 3).

Table 3 Changes made in organisation

area of change	% RTOs (n=70)
Business processes	71%
Promotion/branding	70%
Administration	77%
Compliance/reporting	86%
Cost of programs/services	54%
Student fees	56%

5 People

The number of people employed across 149 organisations in the sample is shown in Table 4 - including paid employees and 'general' volunteers (excluding Committee of Management members). The total number employed (full time, part time, casual, and sessional) is 3796.

Table 4 Workforce snapshot – employees and volunteers across 149 organisations in sample

financial turnover	number of organisations	employees		general volunteers*	
		total	median	total	median
>\$1 million	25	1987	60	511	10
\$500,000 – \$1 million	19	549	30	454	10
\$250,000 – \$500,000	36	608	15	1043	15
\$100,000 – \$250,000	52	528	9	1110	15
<\$100,000	17	124	4	192	10
total sample	149	3796	12	3310	12

*General volunteers excludes Committee of Management members.

As in previous years, the median number of employees increases with increasing financial turnover.

Employment status

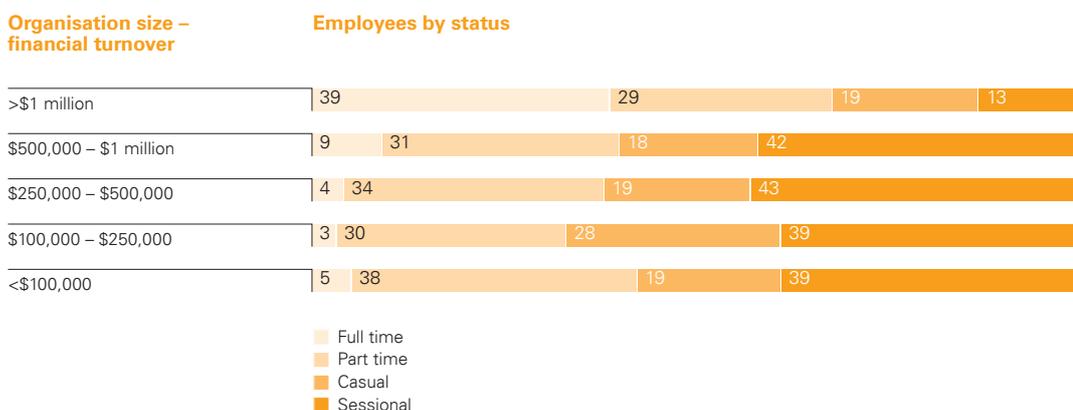
Figure 3 provides detail concerning employment status of staff for organisations in the sample.

Across 'larger' organisations in the sample (financial turnover >\$1 million), 68% of the total employees were employed full time/part time, with the remainder being casual (19%) and sessional (13%). This is similar to previous years.

In 'medium' organisations (\$250,000 - <\$1 million), the proportion of full time/part time staff has increased in organisations responding to survey over the last few years: 28% in 2006; 32% in 2008; 35% in 2009; and 39% in 2010.

In 'smaller' organisations (<\$250,000), 35% of the total employees were employed full time/part time, and 26% were casual. The proportion of full time/part time staff has ranged from 28% - 44% in organisations responding to the survey over the last few years.

Figure 3 Workforce snapshot – proportion of employees by employment status across 149 organisations in sample



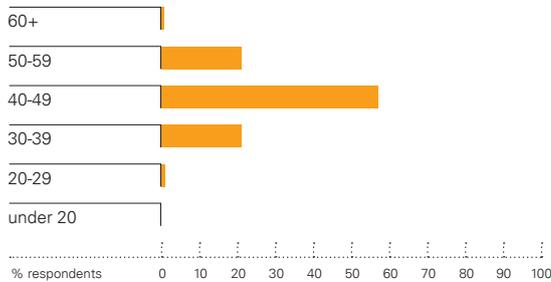
Demographics & length of service

Respondents were also asked about gender, age and length of service of staff. The profile is broadly similar to previous years.

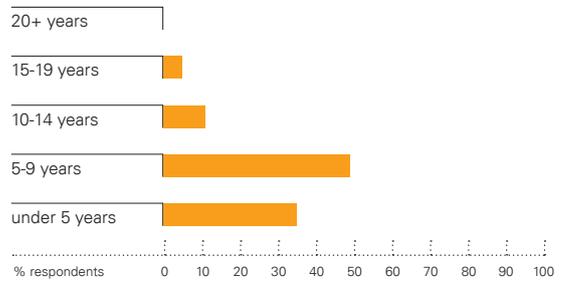
- In terms of gender, most organisations (96%) have greater than 50% female staff and over half (59%) have greater than 80% female staff.
- Over half of respondents (57%) indicated that the average age of their full time/part time staff is 40 - 49 (see Figure 4). This is similar for casual staff, with 54% of respondents indicating an average age of 40 - 49.
- Around two-thirds of respondents (65%) indicated that the average length of service for full time/part time staff was 5 or more years. Around a third of respondents (34%) indicated that the average length of service for casual/sessional staff was 5 or more years (see Figure 4).

Figure 4 Age and length of service of staff of organisations in sample

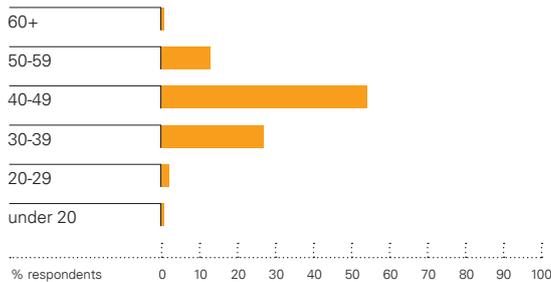
Average age – full time/part time staff



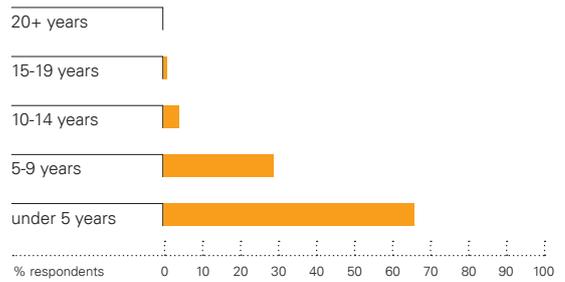
Average length of service – full time/part time staff



Average age – casual/sessional staff



Average length of service – casual/sessional staff



Managers/Coordinators/CEOs

Respondents were also asked specifically about Managers/Coordinators/CEOs.

Over 90% of 'larger' organisations (>\$1 million turnover), indicated that their Managers/Coordinators/CEOs are employed on a full time basis. The corresponding figure for 'medium' organisations (\$250,000 - \$1 million turnover) was 42%, and 14% for 'smaller' organisations (<\$250,000 turnover). This pattern is consistent with 2009.

The length of service of current Managers/Coordinators/CEOs varied, with 23% of organisations indicating that their Manager/Coordinator/CEO had a length of service of less than 2 years, 27% indicating a length of service of 5 - 10 years, and 25% indicating a length of service of more than 10 years (see Table 5). This is similar to 2009.

Table 5 Length of service of current Managers/Coordinators/CEOs

length of service	% respondents
Less than 6 months	9%
6 months - 1 year	7%
1 - 2 years	7%
2 - 3 years	10%
3 - 5 years	14%
5 - 10 years	27%
More than 10 years	25%

Recruitment & retention

Respondents were also asked about recruitment and retention of staff.

- 32% of organisations in the sample indicated they had current job vacancies. Vacancies included tutoring/training, project work/administration, childcare/aged care, counselling/case work, community development and financials. The proportion of organisations indicating vacancies has varied in previous surveys (22% - 26%).
- Respondents were asked to indicate any specific issues with recruiting staff in their organisation. Key issues included pay (e.g., other organisations pay more) and a lack of suitable applicants in the area.
- Respondents were also asked which types of organisations were their main competitors in recruiting new staff. Responses included: other not-for-profit organisations (32% of respondents); TAFE (31%); and private sector (30%).
- 16% of respondents indicated that they currently have issues with retaining staff in their organisation. Some comments included: insufficient pay or hours; competition from TAFE/other organisations for staff; and demanding jobs.

Salaries & benefits

Respondents were asked about salaries and benefits offered by their organisation.

In terms of salaries in the past 12 months, 39% of respondents indicated that all salaries in their organisation had risen, and 38% indicated that some had risen.

Over a third of respondents (38%) indicated that their organisation offers salary sacrificing to staff.

Committee of Management

Respondents were asked specifically about recruitment of Committee of Management members. Most respondents (81%) indicated that it is hard to find Committee of Management members with the skills needed by their organisation.

Some respondents (23%) indicated that the ease/difficulty of recruiting Committee of Management members is likely to change in the next 3 - 5 years. Some comments indicated it would be easier, while others indicated it would be more difficult.

Sample comments

If we improve the profile of the organisation, the training, and governance, we hope to attract a broader demographic in terms of age and skills.

Committee has changed from an older Committee to younger Committee members who know lots of people within the town, so it is now easier to source people with specific skills.

Baby-boomer retirement will mean more skilled people are available to volunteer as Board members.

As the centre improves its financial position, it becomes more attractive to people to be involved.

People in the community are now aware of changes and needs of the community. Many retirees wanted to continue work that is valuable and benefits both themselves and the community.

We are fortunate enough to have recently recruited a majority of Committee members with business skills and younger demographic (i.e. 35 - 55 years). This is quite a change from the previous Committee demographic. The challenge is that working people with business skills don't have as much time...

RTO accountability/compliance requirements and governance responsibilities will increase the difficulty of recruiting Board members.

Volunteers with the commitment and experience must be sourced from the community (small) and are no longer part of the [organisation's] general population.

We need Board members with a higher level of skills than in the past. The time commitment has significantly increased.

Organisation and environment becoming increasingly complex (e.g., Skills Victoria requirements).

It will get harder.

Small numbers of people with the interest and the skill sets necessary to take such roles. They are in high demand amongst the various volunteer organisations in the area.

...We have gathered a Committee with skills, but will need to find new a Treasurer in next 12 months and this will be difficult. Have good potential for a new/skilled Committee, but some areas are harder than others.

Ageing population and fewer people willing to assist.

People are generally more skilled than in the past, but the skills required are outstripping the skills of members.

Competition for Committee members and volunteers in a small community.

Demographic changes, greater variety of community interest, increase in confidence.

If you target the skills you need and issue a personal invitation to join, most people will give it a go.

People are more wary of the responsibility that being on a Board entails.

Volunteers

This section contains information about 'general volunteers' (excluding Committee members).

Nearly all (94%) organisations in the sample have volunteers. This is similar to previous years.

Volunteers undertook activities in areas including: administration; assisting with programs/ tutoring; childcare; aged care (including 'meals on wheels'); disability care; driving/transportation; maintenance/gardening; IT/technical support; customer service (e.g., Op-shop); hospitality (e.g., café, catering); promotions/events management; fundraising; and advice/consulting.

In terms of finding volunteers, around a third of respondents (34%) indicated that it was easy to find volunteers with the skills their organisation needs.

Sample comments

We provide opportunities for people to use their skills and tailor tasks to individual competency.

We register volunteer positions on the Volunteers Resource Centre website and receive applications via this site from interested persons. We are not flooded, but are able to meet our needs. We also provide work experience opportunities for people who are unemployed and looking for work in administration.

With the classes we run there is always a lot of support to keep them going from interested volunteers who are mostly retired.

We are lucky at the moment with a good bank of volunteers with skills. This could change when these leave as they are mainly older retired people.

We attract and treasure our volunteers and we have fun.

Expect an increase due to baby-boomer retirement.

Two-thirds (66%) of respondents indicated it was hard to find volunteers with the skills their organisation needs. Comments from these organisations included: it is difficult to find volunteers - generally and in skilled areas; and specific issues (e.g., increasing levels of responsibility/skills required, changing/shrinking volunteer pool, skilled people leave for paid work).

Sample comments

Generic employment skills are paramount in our sector - good English, communication, technology, good attitude, etc. These people have never been easy to find.

It is difficult to find volunteers who have IT skills or specialised business knowledge and skills. Volunteers with marketing skills are also hard to recruit.

Due to stringent guidelines and training required, not many people are suitable as volunteer care givers. Youth volunteers are easier to find, as they have an interest in delivering events, projects and activities to other young people.

Volunteers are hard to find, and skilled persons are even harder to find.

It is hard to accurately predict. We frequently are approached by potential volunteers who do not fit our organisation's needs (e.g., lack skills, interpersonal issues, etc.). Competition for skilled volunteers is increasing.

We get a number of volunteers who would like experience to put on their resume for future employment. Often, because of our location, there are language barriers and few admin skills.

Skills are not the issue - interest and genuine commitment are necessary. We need people to assist people with disabilities in art programs, computer programs...help around the [organisation], etc. If a person wants to help we can easily teach them the required skill.

Volunteers are generally retired or looking for work. The ones that have retired generally stay on. However, the ones who are looking for work generally find it.

Most people with skills use them in their workplace and most people commute to work from this town, so have little time for volunteering.

It seems that volunteers are a dying breed and any volunteer is not only volunteering in one place, but many. We have not seen many young people volunteer.

In terms of their volunteer workforce, 30% of respondents indicated that there have been changes in quality in the last 12 months.

Sample comments

Our organisation requires a high level of functioning in a wide variety of areas, and the people who have these skills are scarce. Low skilled people with poor communication skills and lack of reliability are in greater supply. Good volunteers often go to paid work.

Harder as skills shortages loom.

Increased quality - more interested volunteers with a higher level of existing skills.

We have a volunteer selection process and only accept volunteers who will fit in with our team approach. If they fit in with our organisational values we are happy to train them.

Higher quality volunteers coming with good admin skills.

Better qualified looking for work as volunteers.

We are recruiting volunteers for specific projects now, not general volunteers.

People do not want to stay. They may want to help at reception as work experience, or to fill in for an afternoon now and again. It is not worth spending the time with people unless they want to commit.

People volunteering to gain skills and knowledge in an area, then move into employment in this area.

If a person has some skills they are pushed for work. Volunteering is seen as a dumping ground by Job Services Australia. On the other hand, there are not enough skilled retirees in our area.

There has been a slight increase in skilled volunteers who are looking for volunteer hours as they search for employment.

Around 47% indicated there have been changes in availability in the last 12 months. Sample comments relating to availability are provided below.

Sample comments

From having very few volunteers, many have come forward over the last 12 months, although we have not made any more effort to attract them. Maybe physical and organisational changes made over the last couple of years have made the Community House more attractive.

Establishment of [Program] has increased our volunteers.

Through advertising with local volunteer resource centre, we have attracted a lot more.

Not as many inquiries to fill new positions. Many older volunteers retiring.

Work commitments restrict some volunteers.

Both up and down - volunteers looking to comply with Centrelink contract (15hrs) and increase in those wanting to get involved in community.

So much unemployment - people are available any time.

Volunteers finding full time/part time employment has led to a decrease in the availability of some of our volunteers.

More available - partnerships and group support/auspices have made this possible.

More volunteers were available after advertising with volunteers' small grant.

We have a turnover with some of our volunteers due to returning to work etc...

There are many people in our community who want to volunteer. However, they want to do the office admin, which in 2010 is very complex. We cannot afford to have mistakes, so we do not offer that volunteer service.

There has been an increase of volunteers coming to fulfil Centrelink obligations as they are looking for employment. They do not stay long as they are skilled, and usually employed quickly.

Some volunteers are committed to more than one organisation or work full time, so sometimes lack time to give to our organisation.

Because our programs have been successful, our volunteers move on and replacing them can sometimes be difficult. Sometimes our volunteers become paid casual staff for a short time before they move on. This enables them to gain experience and confidence...

We ask for long term commitment - this is not easy for some potential volunteers to give. Also, we ask people to support those with a disability - this is not a popular volunteer option.

6 RTO status/context

RTOs in the sample (n=70) were asked a series of questions about RTO status and scope, trainers/deliverers, reporting/compliance and RTO future size and services.

Over half of the RTOs in the sample indicated that they had changed their status/scope in the last 12 months (e.g., added higher level courses, removed specific courses that had not operated recently).

RTO respondents were also asked if it was easy or hard to find trainers/deliverers.

- Around 35% of RTO respondents found it easy to find trainers/deliverers to meet their organisation's needs.

Sample comments

We are able to keep our trainers for many years.

Depends on subject area, but currently able to meet our requirements.

Well sought after workplace.

We have excellent word of mouth in finding and appointing tutors.

- Around two-thirds (65%) of RTO respondents found it hard to find trainers/deliverers to meet their organisation's needs. Some organisations indicated issues including general difficulties finding suitable trainers/deliverers, competition with TAFEs/other RTOs and location issues.

Sample comments

Rural community - small pool of suitable trainers. Unable to afford to pay travel expenses to lure trainers from regional centres. We have Cert IV in TAA on our scope in an effort to train up local tutors.

Finding trainers who have the right qualifications, are good with disengaged youth and can do the compliance paperwork is extremely difficult.

Many people wish to be trainers/tutors, but we find their experience and qualifications are lacking.

Very hard to find TAA qualified trainers for accredited courses.

Small rural community with three large cities within one hour which all have universities, TAFEs and numerous private RTOs.

Difficult to find - particularly in specialist areas such as maths.

It is easy to find people willing to take up the roles and who feel that they are suitably qualified. However, many people who hold their Certificate IV in Training and Assessment do not seem to understand that they also need the vocational qualification they wish to train in...(e.g., Cert IV in Disability as well as their Cert IV in Training & Assessment).

Often we cannot offer the salary levels available at TAFEs, which limits the quality of applicants.

People with the skills for the challenging learners often do not have the formal qualifications required. Trainers are not keen on small amounts of hours across many days - makes it hard to accept other work.

In rural areas it is hard to get qualified trainers in a variety of industries. TAFEs can afford to pay higher rates for those available. We can only offer sessional employment and only for short periods (i.e. length of course and only every two years).

We cannot offer full time hours or high rates like TAFEs and private RTOs.

Many prospective trainers send resumes without advertising. Getting good quality is more difficult.

They don't want to travel to this area.

Most RTO respondents (87%) indicated that all of their reporting/compliance is undertaken internally. RTO respondents were also asked to estimate the time spent monthly on reporting/compliance in their organisation (see Table 6).

Table 6 Time spent monthly on reporting/compliance

number of hours	% respondents
Up to 15	29%
16 - 30	31%
31 - 40	27%
Over 40	12%

RTO respondents were asked if there have been changes in the last 12 months in terms of their organisation's compliance requirements and capacity.

- In terms of changes in compliance requirements, most RTOs (85%) indicated changes in the last 12 months, including increased reporting requirements and administration.
- In terms of changes in their organisation's compliance capacity, around 56% of RTOs indicated changes in the last 12 months (e.g., more staff hours devoted to compliance/reporting, new staff hired in this area).

RTO respondents were also asked about their RTO in 3 - 5 years time. Two-thirds of respondents thought that their RTO would be bigger.

Respondents were also asked if services they offer in 3 - 5 years time would be similar or different to what they offer now. Around a third indicated their RTO would offer similar services, 15% indicated services would be different, and around half (53%) indicated that their organisation would offer a mix.

There were 83 organisations in the sample that are not RTOs. Non-RTOs were asked a different set of questions. These related to arrangements for delivering accredited programs in their communities and any potential plans to become an RTO. Around half (47%) of these non-RTO respondents indicated they have arrangements with an RTO to provide accredited programs. Under 10% of non-RTO respondents indicated plans to become an RTO in the next 1 - 2 years.

7 Financial performance

As in previous surveys, respondents were asked a series of questions about financials and funding including annual financial turnover, sources of funding, capital base, support from local government and accumulated funds.

Response rates varied between questions. The information provided below should be interpreted with caution. The information requested was relatively complex and most respondents (91%) indicated they were providing estimates, rather than precise figures.

Funding

In terms of funding, respondents were asked to estimate what proportion of their total revenue comes from various funding sources (see Table 7 below).

- ACFE funding constitutes a larger proportion of funding in organisations below \$1 million turnover compared with 'larger' organisations (over \$1 million turnover).
- Neighbourhood House Coordination Program funding is more prevalent in 'smaller' organisations (<\$250,000 turnover) compared with organisations over \$250,000 turnover.
- 'Larger' organisations have State Government (other than ACFE and Neighbourhood House Coordination Program) and Federal Government sources as a more prevalent part of their funding mix than organisations below \$1 million turnover.

Table 7 Funding breakdown across 110 organisations in the sample

funding sources - %	financial turnover					total sample median - % (range - %)
	<\$100,000	\$100,000 - \$250,000	\$250,000 - \$500,000	\$500,000 - \$1 million	>\$1 million	
	median - % (range - %)					
ACFE	22.5 (3-80)	15 (1-95)	20 (5-66)	34.5 (8-60)	5 (0-35)	15.5 (0-95)
Neighbourhood House Coordination Program	34.5 (0-73)	31.5 (0-60)	15 (0-60)	10 (0-20)	0 (0-4.5)	11.3 (0-73)
Fee-for-service	17.5 (0-35)	17.5 (0-51.5)	20 (0-70)	25.5 (0-77)	7 (0-55)	15.5 (0-77)
Local government	5 (0-23)	2 (0-37)	5 (0-66)	2.75 (0-15)	0 (0-15)	2.75 (0-66)
Other state government	0 (0-10)	2 (0-94)	11 (0-60)	8.5 (0-90)	30 (4.9-90)	8 (0-94)
Federal government	0 (0-5)	0 (0-30)	0 (0-35)	0 (0-25)	20 (0-85)	0 (0-85)
Sponsorship	0 (0-0)	0 (0-4)	0 (0-0.1)	0 (0-0.1)	0 (0-10)	0 (0-10)
Donations	0 (0-10)	0 (0-5)	0 (0-10)	0 (0-10)	0 (0-29)	0 (0-29)
Other*	1 (0-30)	0 (0-45)	0 (0-49)	0 (0-47.5)	0 (0-25)	0 (0-49)
number of organisations	10	36	27	16	21	110

*Other includes rent/facility hire, membership, sales and other grants.

A preliminary analysis was undertaken to explore whether organisations participating in the 2009 survey had changed their financial turnover category in the 2010 survey.

This analysis involved 96 organisations that completed both 2009 and 2010 surveys. Of these:

- 72 organisations remained in the same financial turnover category (e.g., remained in the \$250,000 - \$500,000 category in both 2009 and 2010 surveys).
- 14 organisations had moved up one financial turnover category (e.g., moved from \$250,000 - \$500,000 in 2009 to \$500,000 - \$1 million in 2010). Of these, 7 were RTOs.
- 10 organisations had moved down one or more financial turnover categories (e.g., moved from \$250,000 - \$500,000 in 2009 to \$100,000 - \$250,000 in 2010). Of these, 4 were RTOs.

Local Government support

Respondents were also asked about their organisation's relationship with local government in terms of support (see Table 8). The profile is similar to 2009, although proportions have increased slightly (2% - 6%) for all categories.

Table 8 Local government support across 147 organisations in the sample

type of support	% respondents
Grants/funding	76%
Premises/building/maintenance of facilities	56%
Promotion	48%
Training staff	19%
Management support	22%
Other*	29%

*Other includes use of facilities, network support and meetings, collaboration on projects and support with applications.

Accumulated funds

Respondents were asked about accumulated funds. Of the 147 respondents who answered this question, 125 indicated that they have accumulated funds. Of these, 99 respondents provided an accumulated funds figure. As in previous years, accumulated funds increased with financial turnover (see Table 9 below).

Table 9 Accumulated funds split by financial turnover category across 99 organisations in the sample

financial turnover	number of organisations	accumulated funds median (range)
>\$1 million	18	\$667,705 (\$150,000 - \$7,820,000)
\$500,000 - \$1 million	13	\$150,000 (\$20,000 - \$300,000)
\$250,000 - \$500,000	22	\$75,000 (\$10,000 - \$300,000)
\$100,000 - \$250,000	38	\$40,000 (\$5,000 - \$250,000)
<\$100,000	8	\$37,500 (\$10,000 - \$60,000)
total sample	99	\$75,000 (\$5,000 - \$7,820,000)

