



**Northern Rivers
COMMUNITY TRANSPORT**

Client Satisfaction Survey 2014

Analysis by Colleen Thomas

Client Satisfaction Survey 2014

Summary & Recommendations

- Clients' satisfaction with existing services proved to be very high.
 - Commend staff and volunteers for doing an excellent job.
- Volunteers have stated that they choose to work with NRCT because they want to **'Make a Difference'**. The question **'Do we make a difference'** was put to the clients; the response was overwhelmingly positive and affirms the volunteers' efforts.
 - Responses to be shared with volunteers, staff and Management Board.
- Mostly clients' support needs were met, but a small number indicated they require more assistance in and out of cars.
 - Ensure that drivers always provide sufficient support, especially on the individual door-to-door services.
- Five percent of respondents said that the increase in fees would present a barrier and eleven percent stated that they would not be comfortable negotiating a lower rate should they have financial difficulties.
 - All client literature to reiterate that fees are negotiable.
 - A standardised booking response to be developed, normalising and encouraging clients to discuss financial matters.
 - Letters to be sent to respondents who expressed reticence, outlining fees policy.
 - NRCT to develop further strategies to reassure clients that fees can be reduced or waived if they are experiencing financial hardship.
- Twenty six percent of respondents were males; this is a marked increase in male survey respondents and hopefully indicates that men are increasingly interested and involved in NRCT.
 - Continue to expand services designed to target men.
- Whilst only two percent of respondents said they would prefer more assistance it would be ideal for everyone to receive the level of support required.
 - Ensure all volunteers are providing door-to-door support.
 - Employ personnel for higher needs clients.
- Ninety six percent of respondents had experienced no difficulties with NRCT procedures, difficulties experienced by the other 4% pertained to late pick-ups (individual medical appointments) and restricted booking procedures.
 - Research capacity for more flexible booking procedures
- Respondents indicated that they would like to see individual trips include other essential services (apart from medical) and weekend trips.
 - Research NRCT's ability to combine individual shopping with medical appointment trips.
 - Offer weekend trips.

Introduction

In December 2013 Northern Rivers Community Transport (NRCT) conducted a client satisfaction survey inviting all clientele who had used the service in 2013 to participate. This spanned the organisation’s entire catchment area, being the three local government areas of Lismore, Kyogle and Richmond Valley. The survey undertook to ascertain the level of satisfaction clients experienced with existing services and to identify service gaps. With intention of raising the client contribution in January 2014, NRCT also wished to ascertain the impact of the proposed fee increase. The survey also sought to find out if clients experienced qualitative benefits by using services, the approach taken was to ask an open-ended question, does NRCT ‘Made a Difference’? This follows a person-centred approach and encourages people to ‘tell their story’.

Method

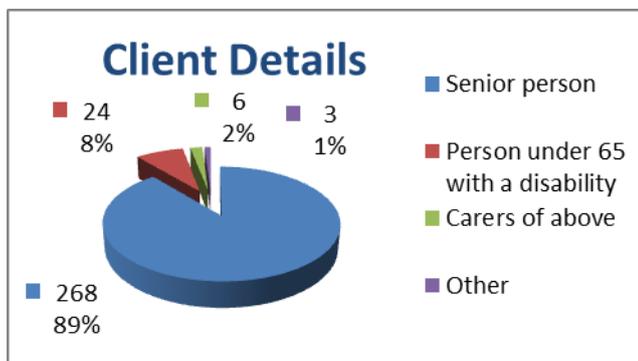
NRCT Clients who utilised services (excluding youth programs and known ‘exits’) in 2013 were posted the survey along with a letter explain forthcoming fee increases. A total of 1400 surveys were posted (this included one-off users and those that may have exited without informing NRCT).

The response rate was very good at 23% particularly as NRCT was unable to provide stamped return envelopes on this occasion.

Not all respondents answered all questions; the number of respondents is listed at each heading and is expressed as XXX/323 (323 being the total number of respondents).

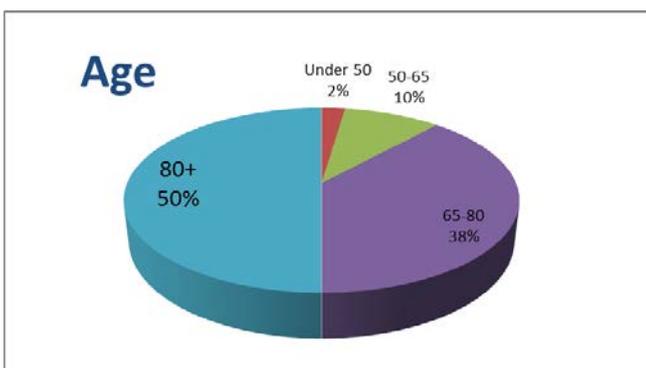
Percentages reference the number of respondents to each particular question.

Profile 301/323



The majority 89% of respondents were aged (over 65) 8% were younger people with disabilities and 2% were carers. The 1% ‘other’ would include people with a temporary mobility issue. Only 3 respondents identified as ATSI which does not reflect the 25% ATSI service makeup. This type of survey is not culturally appropriate and other methods are utilised to survey ATSI clients.

AGE 306/323



Twelve percent of respondents were under 65, 38% were between 65 and 80 and the majority; being 50% of respondents, were 80+ years of age. This reflects an increasingly aging demographic.

Gender 296/323

Male respondents totalled 26.6 %, females 73% and other .4%. This shows a continued increase in men responding to NRCT surveys. In the 2007 client satisfaction survey, only 8% of respondents were male, in 2012 20% were male. NRCT has strongly targeted males over the last four years and structured services to be more relevant and appealing, designing male specific outings to venues of their choice. Whilst the overall numbers of male clients has stayed stable on 32%, the frequency of usage has increased as has the scope of services utilised. The increase in survey response hopefully indicates that men are more involved with, and interested in, NRCT services. The inclusion of 'other' in gender is a recent strategy to include persons in the LGBTI communities and it is interesting to see that this option was utilised.

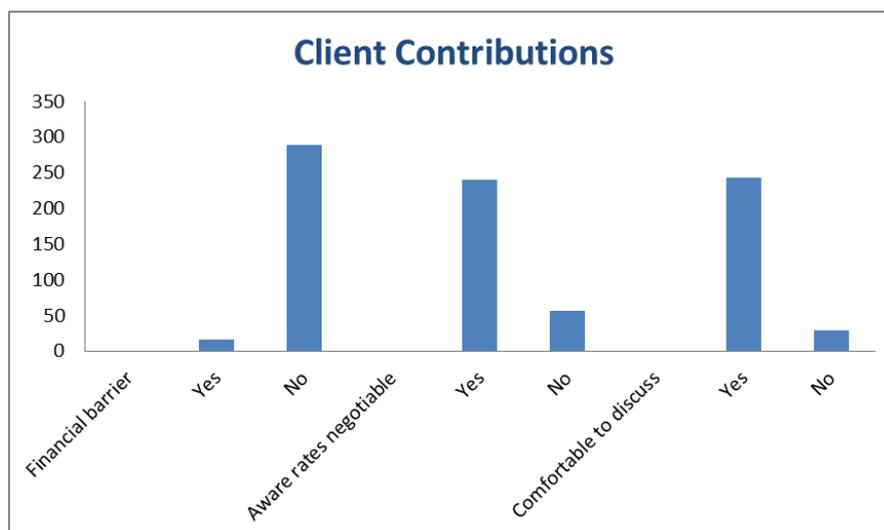
Client Contributions

One of the main aims of the survey was to ascertain the impact of the proposed fee increase and to draw attention to the fact that fees can be negotiated.

A schedule of the fee increases was included with the survey and the questions asked:

1. Will the proposed costs of the service pose a financial barrier to you?
2. Are you aware rates are negotiable?
3. Are you comfortable discussing rates when booking?

The survey indicates that most clients find the fee increases affordable 95%; however 5% indicated that they would have difficulty. Eighty percent of respondents said they knew the fees were negotiable and 90% said they were comfortable discussing rates when booking. NRCT will continue to work towards assisting clients to access services regardless of their ability to pay a contribution.

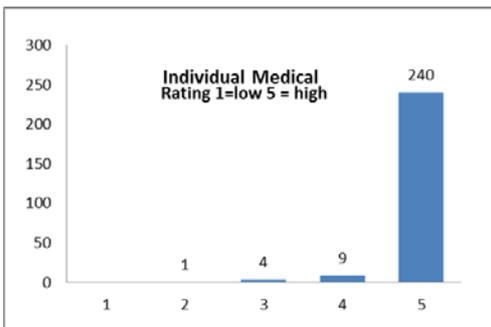
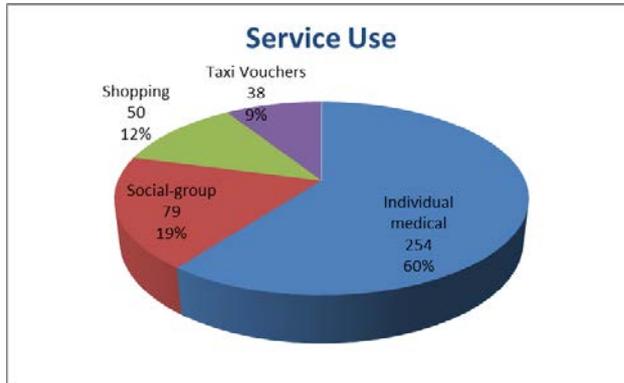


These figures indicate a vast improvement in knowledge concerning flexibility of the fee structure. NRCT has made consistent efforts to educate clients, staff and volunteers regarding client contributions. In the 2012 survey only 50% of respondents knew that the fees were negotiable compared to 80% in this survey. Whilst 90% of respondents felt comfortable in negotiating fees, it is likely however that despite best efforts (see recommendations p2) there will always be some people who will have difficulty discussing affordability, as this can be a sensitive topic.

Satisfaction with Services:

There were 421 responses to services used, indicating that over a third of respondents use more than one service. Individual Medical Transport was by far the most used service with 254 (60%) respondents indicating usage.

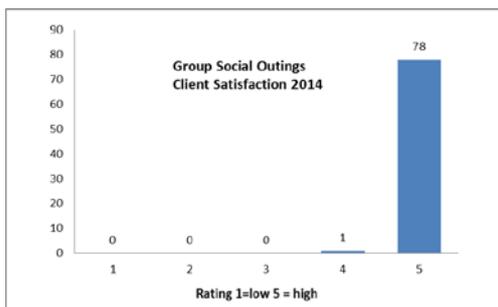
Respondents were asked to rate the services they use, 1 to 5, with 1 being low 5 being high.



Individual Medical Transport 254/323

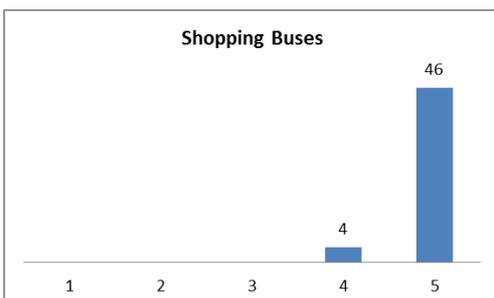
Individual medical transport rated an extremely high level of satisfaction, 239 (94%) of respondents rated the service at level 5 – being the highest rating.

Nine (3.5%) rated the service as a 4, four respondent (1.5%) as a 3 and under 1% as 2 - low satisfaction. Given the individual medical services enlist 120 volunteers across three local government areas this is a remarkable outcome.



Group Social Outings 79/323

With group social outings 78 respondents (98.8%) selected 5 the highest level of satisfaction with one person selecting level 4. Alleviation from social isolation is cited in the 'Making a Difference' comments section regarding Social Outings, e.g. "Enabled me to remain independent and socially active".



Shopping Buses 50/323

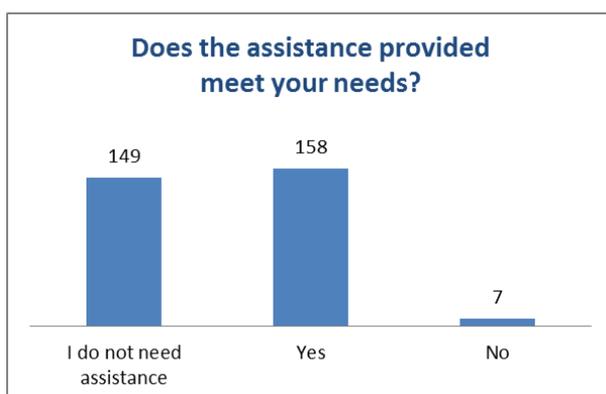
The Shopping Buses proved to rate a very high level of satisfaction with 92% of respondents selecting 5, the highest score and the remaining 8% selecting 4, the second highest level of satisfaction.

Taxi Vouchers 38/323

Taxi vouchers were rated a 5 by 34 of the 38 respondents, the other 4 scored 4 which indicates overall high satisfaction levels. The vouchers enable people to visit loved ones and to attend support groups, at a time which suits them. Several references were made to the vouchers in the 'Making a Difference' comments: e.g.

"I am very grateful for the vouchers as I have 2 friends in the Cedars Nursing Home and one who is terminally ill at her home & housebound. I have no car and can't drive. I live on the full basic pension and I'm grateful to be able to see these friends regularly".

Assistance: 314/323



Asked if the level of support provided met the client's needs almost half (47%) said that they did not require assistance, 50% were happy with the support and 2% said that they would prefer more assistance, usually with regard to entering/exiting vehicles.

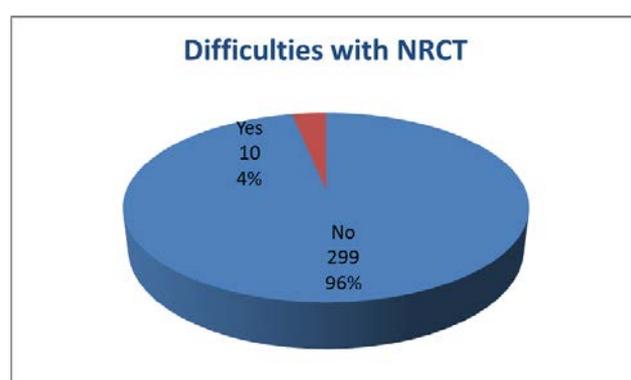
"My wife is usually available for assistance however the CT Members have always offered to help and are always aware of my disabilities".

"I'm capable of getting to the car without help. But the drivers are gentlemen; they open the door & do up the seat belt. Great service".

Difficulties with NRCT Procedures. 310/323

Ninety six percent of respondent had experienced no difficulties with NRCT services. The 10 (4%) respondents that had experienced difficulties mostly commented on late individual medical pick-ups and unsuccessful bookings, due to booking timeframe limitations.

"Occasionally they're late however not recently".



"Didn't know soon enough that I need to go to the doctor so I can't book ahead".

What other Services Would You Like to See?

Generally respondents said they were happy with the services they had and did not need additional services but several respondents said that they require individual trips to essential services other than medical, e.g. solicitors, banking, barber, one respondent mentioned weekend trips. Some of the younger respondents with disabilities said that they would like more social outings.

Does NRCT Make a Difference?

In past surveys, to collect qualifying information Clients were asked to tick if using services has assisted to 'alleviate isolation' or improve 'health outcomes'. Whilst this information is valuable (and much easier to collate) it is ultimately not person-centred. In this survey respondents were asked an 'open-ended' question; the response rate and the wealth of information received was very informative. In asking, 'Does NRCT Make a Difference' clients feel invited and encouraged to tell their story.

There were 249 responses, all of them positive, additionally, the majority of respondents offered comment on why Northern Rivers Community Transport 'Made a Difference'. Several main categories emerged:

General:

There were over 120 comments that simply mentioned that the services did make a difference, though several made mention of the stress reduction inherent in utilising NRCT services.

"This excellent service makes a big difference to all who use it".

"CT has been a lifeline to me and I appreciate all the help I receive".

"Yes CT is a great service, you can always be sure that you will get to your appointment on time".

"You take the stress away for people with disabilities or hassles about getting medical treatment".

"Yes you take away the stress from organising others to transport me to appointments that are already stressful".

Limited Options

Forty five people commented that they would have difficulty attending medical appointments without NRCT, e.g.

"Extremely grateful for your kind friendly help and support, I could not afford to go to medical appointments if it wasn't for your wonderful service. My disability prevents me catching a bus. Thank you so much".

"Yes because without you I will not be able to get to my appointments".

"Very grateful for personalised transport as my health prevents me using public transport and taxis would be too expensive for me".

"I don't have a car or a license only the disability pension, CT enables me to keep afternoon medical appointments in Lismore".

"Yes, as I cannot see to drive home after eye injections".

"Yes you do. As a relative newcomer to the area requiring more medical treatment than I realised where would I be without you? I do not have my own transport".

"Yes without transport I would not be able to get to doctor or dentists or get any treatment of hospital".

Several respondents mentioned rurality and long distance trips:

"Absolutely, living in a rural location without CT would be the difference of making a medical appointment or not".

"This service allows us to remain living in a rural area where we love to be".

"All the difference in the world. I wouldn't be able to live here without CT and have nowhere else to live".

"This service allows us access to our medical requirements in Ballina and Lismore".

"It has made a terrific difference to me I have used the service to go to RPA in Brisbane to John Flynn Tugun & frequently to St Vincent's rehab. All the drivers are fantastic more like friends than drivers".

Independence and alleviation of isolation featured strongly:

"You make all the difference. Your excellent service enables us (clients) to keep our independence and out of the age homes".

"Yes, you make a big difference to get to appointments and help with my isolation for getting out of the house".

"I appreciate the service given to me, it's a big help carrying my groceries in as my knees hurt a lot and I lose my balance".

"Yes Big difference to my life It give me company with other people".

"Enabled me to remain independent and socially active".

Staff and drivers were commended:

"You certainly do. We enjoy the social interaction with the other passengers and love the good humour, care and attention we receive from your wonderful staff".

"The service given by CT is just wonderful and very much appreciated. All drivers are courteous and obliging. Thank you. The office staff friendly and helpful".

"It has made a great difference to my life having made many friends and met the wonderful people who look after us".

Social and Shopping outings were specifically referred to and again the need for social connectedness and inclusion mentioned:

"Yes, a great difference to my happiness. I do not know how I could live without your social support and CT".

"Yes. My Husband & I enjoy our Rover social outings each month. Staff are exceptional to our needs, we love them".

"Yes provides a feeling of security by enabling us to attend Medical appointments etc. and happiness by joining with others on shopping trips etc."

*"Most certainly, I would never get out, everyone has been so helpful as I had a bad year otherwise".
"I enjoy getting out with my friends, both new & old, it keeps my head together".*