

Australian Capital Territory COURTS AND TRIBUNAL

Highlights from the 2019 Courts Satisfaction Survey

As part of the implementation of the International Framework for Courts Excellence (IFCE), the ACT Supreme Court and ACT Magistrates Court conducted a court user satisfaction survey to capture feedback about our services, facilities and processes.

The survey was based on questions found within the International Framework for Courts Excellence and in satisfaction surveys used by other Australian courts.

The ACT Courts worked with the Australian National University (ANU) College of Law and University of Canberra (UC) Law Faculty to review the survey and arrange student volunteers to assist court staff to promote and conduct the survey in the foyer of the ACT Law Courts Building.

The survey was administered online and through face-to-face interviews from 3 May to 21 June 2019.

Over 260 persons responded to the survey with 62 respondents undertaking the survey face-to-face.

26% of respondents were attending court for a specific matter. Of these, 15% were defendants, 28% were applicants or plaintiffs and 22% were family or friends.

Approximately 73% of respondents had an ongoing professional relationship with the Courts. 43% of these respondents were solicitors, barristers or prosecutors and 16% were from law enforcement agencies such as Police or Corrective Services.

The survey provides a valuable source of feedback about where the courts may

improve their services, facilities and processes.



Photo: Front of ACT Law Courts Building

Feedback Highlights

Professionalism of staff

80% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that staff were polite and professional and 79% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that staff treated them with courtesy and respect.

Court information

Over 80% of responses were positive about the information provided by staff on court processes.

Efficiency and effectiveness

Around 80% of responses were positive about the courts being efficient and effective.

Safety

95% of responses indicated people felt safe whilst at court.

Judicial Officers

Over 97% of respondents thought judicial officers hearing their case listened to them and were courteous, respectful and fair.

Areas of improvement

Respondents rated the following issues as poor to satisfactory:

- Signage 25%
- Websites 28%
- Telephone enquiries 23%
- Face-to-face enquiries 20%

Current priorities

The ACT Courts and Tribunal (ACTCT) is currently focussing on the following areas for improvement.

Signage

A working group has been established to work with our building partners to deliver improvements in signage and wayfinding in the new building.

Safety

The ACTCT has recently employed a Security and Intelligence Coordinator within the Sheriff's Office to strengthen our security and safety arrangements. When completed, the new courts building will provide greater opportunities for parties and associates in stressful matters to have their own designated waiting areas.

Accessibility

The new building has improved the experience of persons with disability and the ACTCT is liaising with Advocacy for Inclusion and Guide Dogs NSW/ACT to further test our facilities.

Our Court Assistance Officers and Sheriff Officers can help people with a disability when they attend the courts, and we are improving the information about accessibility on our new websites.

Access to information

The Supreme Court and Magistrates Court are developing new websites that will make it easier for court users to find information about court processes, listings and decisions.

The Magistrates Court has recently published videos on its website explaining the process to make, or to respond to, an application for a protection order. Supporting factsheets have been uploaded in 11 different languages.

Enquiries and customer service

The courts receive some 40,000 telephone enquiries per year. The highest volume of calls made are to our civil, criminal and protection registry teams. The courts also assist approximately 30,000 persons who attend our enquiry counter each year. It is estimated that 70% of counter enquiries relate to protection or civil related matters.

Enquirers are regularly referred to legal services to obtain advice about what options or remedies are available to them.

Our services for courts users will be enhanced by initiatives currently underway which include:

- improved information on our websites explaining court processes;
- the introduction of online services, such as electronic lodgement of civil applications;
- improving registry processes;
- developing a proposal to create a new role of public information officer.