

Tenants Survey 2015

Introduction

This report provides the findings of the tenant satisfaction survey conducted by Access Community Housing Company (ACHC). Questions about level of satisfaction were based upon those used by the NSW Federation of Housing Associations that manages a comprehensive tenant satisfaction benchmarking service in Australia.

Methodology

Seventeen questions were developed. The core questions were aimed at finding out tenants' level of satisfaction with overall services; repairs and maintenance; communication; level of support; understanding of tenants' rights and responsibilities and tenant engagement.

A covering letter and prepaid response envelope was also included to explain the purpose of the survey and to request completion and return (see Appendices).

Method of collecting information

There were 2 methods of collecting information:

1. Posted with reply paid envelopes
2. Face to face interviews

Access Community Housing has properties spread over a wide geographical area with a mixture of long term housing including detached houses, and unit complexes, as well as community rent scheme properties, and community managed studio units. The majority of the 513 surveys were distributed as a hard copy via mail excepting 118 Murray Street, Manoorra, 468 Mulgrave Road, Earlville, and Seniors' accommodation in 63-67 Pease Street, Manoorra and 28 Grove Street, Parramatta Park. These complexes house tenants that are comprised of: predominantly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background where English is often a second language; tenants who are elderly; have low literacy and numeracy levels or physical and mental health issues. At each complex the Tenant Engagement Officer provided tenants with the option of leaving the questionnaire with them to return later or the TEO conduct a face to face interview. The TEO conducted face to face survey interviews with 28 tenants from these complexes. Tenants' anonymity was protected as they were not asked to provide their names and addresses on the survey.

Tenant Incentive

Tenants were encouraged to respond by using an incentive. This was a draw of two prizes of \$100 food vouchers from Coles. Tenants' contact information was returned in a separate envelope to maintain confidentiality.

Analysis of Responses

156 surveys completed and returned. This equates to a response rate of 30.2%.

No of Survey Questionnaires returned by Housing Stream

Long Term Unit Complexes	63
Community Managed Studio Units	42
Seniors	20
Long Term Detached properties	13

Community Rent Scheme	11
Babinda properties	7
Total	156

The responses to the numbered questions were coded and entered into an Excel spread sheet to summarise the data using frequency distributions. A thematic qualitative analysis was conducted on the responses to the open ended questions data.

Demographic data

Gender of Respondents

Female	50%
Male	47%
Unanswered	3%

Age of Respondents

18 - 34	10%
35 - 54	36%
55 - 64	26%
65 – 74	17%
75+	11%

Length of tenancy

Less than 1 year	17%
1-6 years	57%
More than 6 years	26%

Cultural Group most identified with

Australian	53%
Aboriginal	19%
Torres Strait Islander	11%
Both Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander	8%
Other	9%

Disabilities

46% of respondents identified as having a long term illness or disability.

Mental Health

The majority of respondents who identified as having a mental health condition were from Community Managed Studio Units. 22.6% of respondents from CMSU identified various mental health conditions including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Depression and Schizophrenia. This is 1 in 4, higher than the national statistic of 1 in 5 people who will experience a mental health problem in any one year. This is a

reflection of mental illness deemed a higher needs category for social housing. The other 4% of respondents who identified a mental health condition were from Long Term housing and Community Rent Scheme.

Knowing Housing Manager

87% responded they know who their Housing Manager is.

3% responded they do not know who their Housing Manager is.

10% responded they were unsure.

Language spoken at home

84% respondents spoke English.

9% respondents spoke other than English at home, mainly Creole and Islander language.

7% respondents did not answer this question.

Concerns to Tenants

Just over half of respondents, 51%, responded that Money Matters are one of the most important concerns to them.

28% responded that Safety was an important concern to them.

How Community Housing has helped tenants

The majority of respondents, 79%, responded that they feel more settled in general.

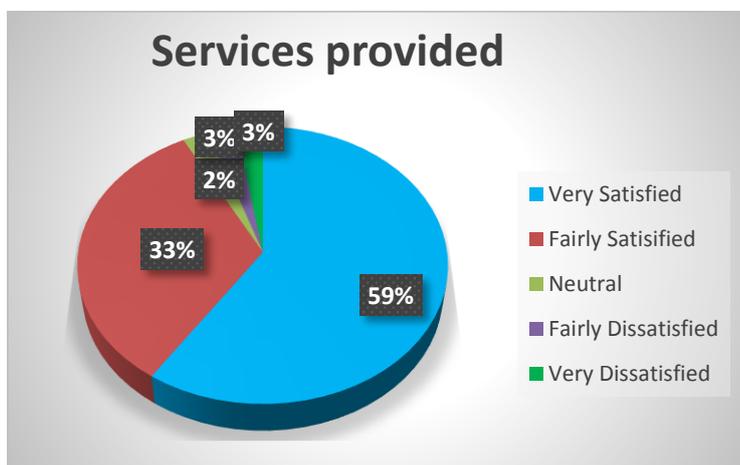
63% responded that it provided better access to shops, schools, transport etc.

60% responded that it provided low cost housing.

The Services provided by Access Community Housing

92% of tenants responded that they were satisfied overall with the services that Access Community Housing provides. Of these, 59% were very satisfied and 33% were fairly satisfied.

Very Satisfied	92
Fairly Satisfied	51
Neutral	4
Fairly Dissatisfied	4
Very Dissatisfied	4
No Response	1



Tenant comments on housing services

Many tenants used the opportunity to provide positive feedback about Access Community Housing. A recurring theme was tenants' satisfaction with the housing that ACHC provides. Tenants' comments demonstrate that ACHC is fulfilling their ACHC Vision statement: 'The leading organisation through which people in need access affordable, suitable housing outcomes in Cairns and surrounding regions'.

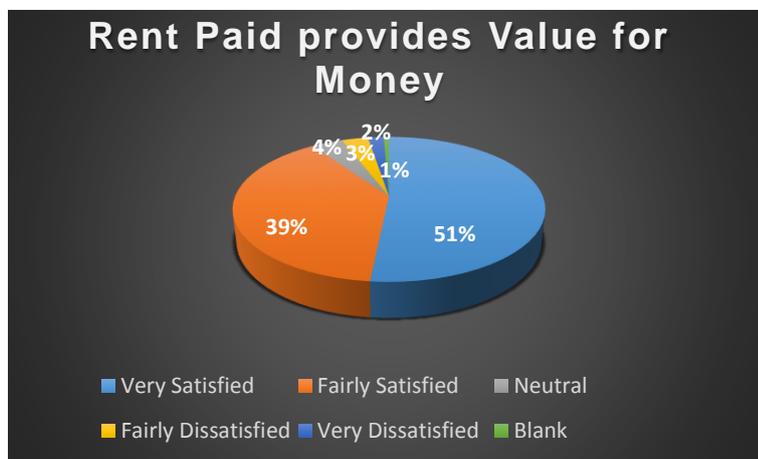
"They are providing people with mental illness and disability and low income earners a place they can call home to feel more at ease. I think it's very important for people in my situation to have a place they can feel safe and feel at peace to have somewhere to sleep and continue with their lives."

"Provided me a place to call home, as I do not (have) good income to be able to rent in the private sector ."

Rent Paid provides value for money

90% of tenants responded that they were satisfied overall that the rent they paid gave value for money.

Very Satisfied	80
Fairly Satisfied	60
Neutral	6
Fairly Dissatisfied	5
Very Dissatisfied	3
No Response	2



Tenant comments on value for rent paid

"Providing safe affordable, clean, well maintained housing for people who need hassle free home e g health/medical issues".

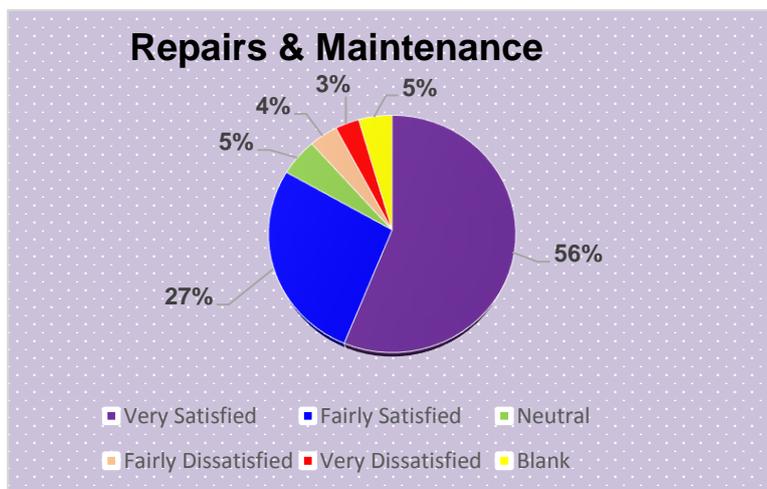
"Nice unit, cheap rent"

"Maintenance of first class housing at affordable cost. Safety and security. Simply continue the excellent service you provide."

Repairs and Maintenance

93% of respondents were overall satisfied with repairs and maintenance services. Of these 56% were very satisfied.

Very Satisfied	87
Fairly Satisfied	42
Neutral	8
Fairly Dissatisfied	6
Very Dissatisfied	5
No Response	8



Tenant comments on Repairs and maintenance

“Polite service, repairs done promptly; very happy.”

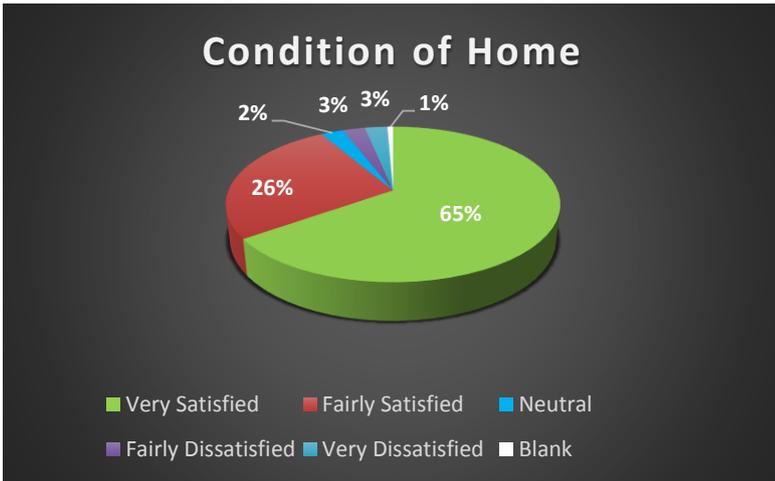
“Access Housing keeps my home safe and always fix things that break.”

“They follow up on reports about house maintenance efficiently.”

Condition of Home

91% of respondents were satisfied overall with the condition of their home. Of these 65% were very satisfied.

Very Satisfied	101
Fairly Satisfied	41
Neutral	4
Fairly Dissatisfied	4
Very Dissatisfied	4
No Response	2



Tenant comments about the condition of their home

“Maintaining house in good condition. Everything is better from the day I first moved in.”

“Having space around my home; everything is kept neat and tidy. Buildings are cared for.”

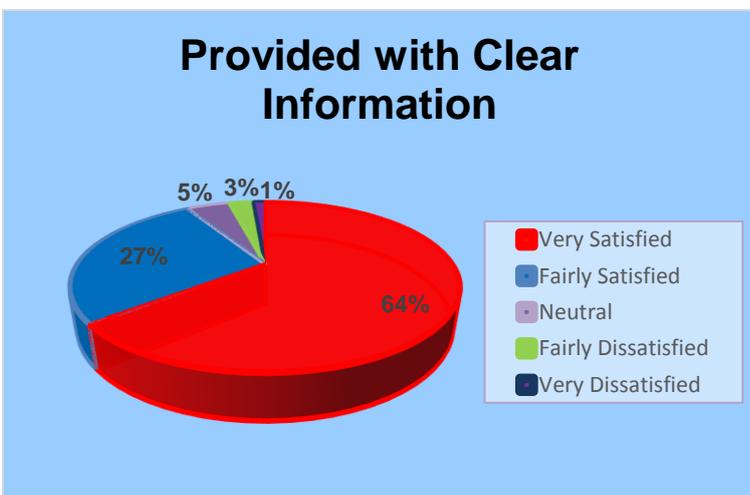
“Accommodation is good; pleased with the gardener/groundsman.”

Communication

Provided with clear information

91% of tenants responded that they were satisfied overall that information their Housing Manager provided to them was clear. Of this number 63% were very satisfied.

Very Satisfied	98
Fairly Satisfied	42
Neutral	7
Fairly Dissatisfied	4
Very Dissatisfied	2
No Response	3



How you have been dealt with by ACHC staff

91% of tenants responded that they were satisfied with how they are dealt with by Access staff. Of these, 64% were very satisfied.

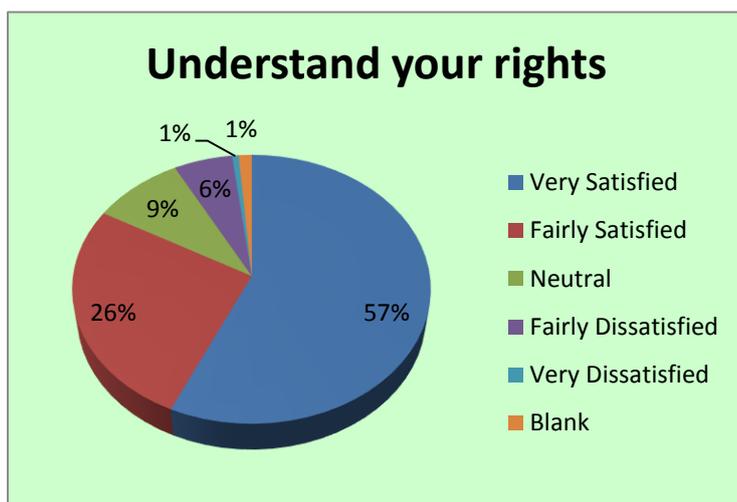
Very Satisfied	98
Fairly Satisfied	43
Neutral	2
Fairly Dissatisfied	10
Very Dissatisfied	0
No Response	3



Helping tenants to understand their rights

83% of respondents were satisfied overall with the way they have been helped to understand their rights as a tenant. Of these 57% were very satisfied.

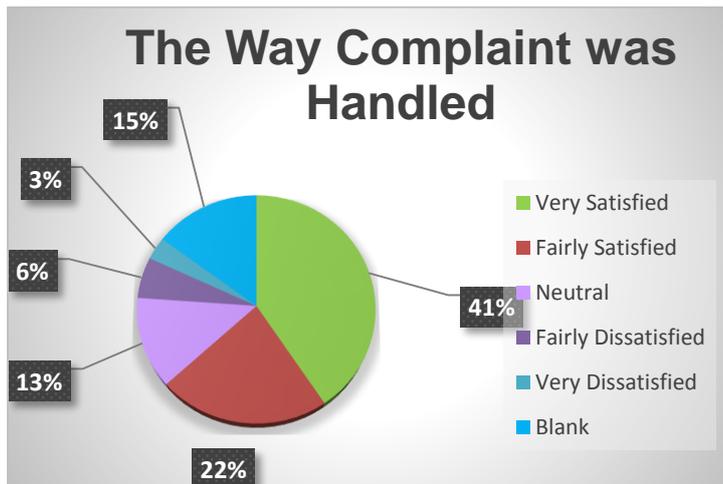
Very Satisfied	88
Fairly Satisfied	41
Neutral	14
Fairly Dissatisfied	9
Very Dissatisfied	1
No Response	3



Handling of Complaints

73% of respondents were satisfied overall with the way complaints are handled.

Very Satisfied	63
Fairly Satisfied	35
Neutral	20
Fairly Dissatisfied	9
Very Dissatisfied	5
No Response	24



Tenant comments on communication

Communication is a key factor in how tenants experience and perceive ACHC services. The following communication themes were identified as important to the respondents:

Dealing with other tenants/neighbourhood issues

"Managing complaints and noisy neighbours"

Understanding

"Being understanding about illnesses and accidentally missed rent payments."

Responding

"My emails, phone calls and questions are always responded to."

Informing and Explaining

*"I think everything is done very well, tenants are kept well **informed** ie newsletters; notification to tenants re entry by companies i.e fire inspections."*

"Advise tenants' rights and obligation."

Helpful and Respectful

"Staff courteous to tenants in the office and on the phone.

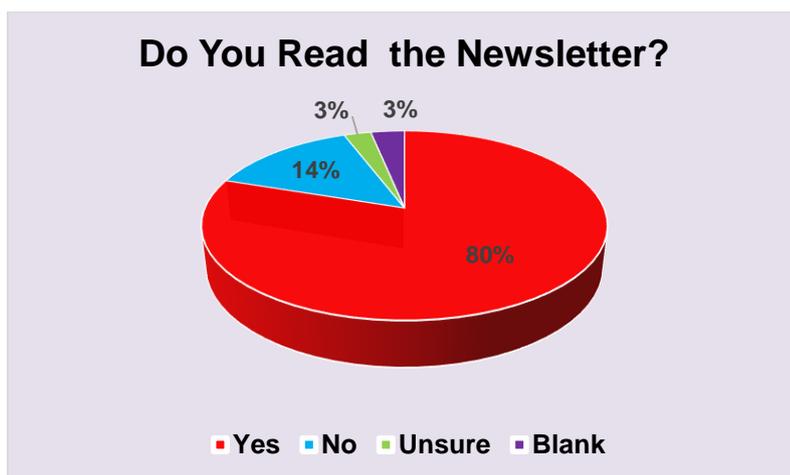
"The staff are helpful and easy to talk to."

Tenant Engagement

Newsletter

81% of respondents read the tenant newsletter.

Yes	125
No	22
Unsure	4
No Response	5

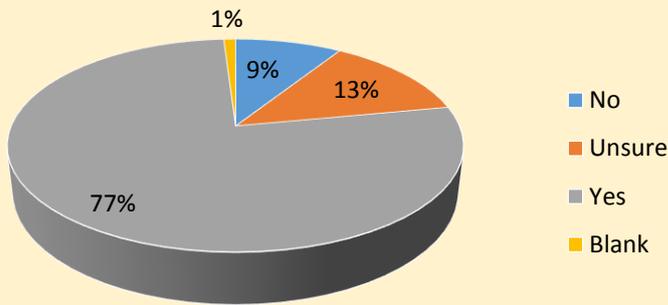


Newsletter - Informative and Interesting?

77% of tenants responded that they found the newsletter to be informative and interesting.

Yes	110
No	13
Unsure	19
No Response	14

Do you find the newsletter informative and interesting?



Tenant comments about newsletter

"Covers a great range of topics; needs to be longer."

"It's a good newsletter"

"Tenants are kept well informed "

What would you like to see in the newsletter?

The most popular items identified were:

- Vouchers- either awarding or promoting through competitions and draws
- Recipes
- Information about Housing services and Access Housing
- Hints, tips for budgeting

Activities/interests of tenants

In answer to the question 'Which issues/activities are you interested in, the 3 most popular responses were:

Gardening	41%
Cooking quick and easy budget meals	33.5%
Arts and crafts	31.6%

Preferred methods of communication

In answer to the question 'which methods of communication do you prefer when ACH wants to inform you about community events, services, activities, and get your feedback?', the responses were:

By telephone	45.8%
Mailed survey	36.7%
Tenant newsletter	36%
Visit from Housing staff	26.4%
Text message	22%
Email	11%
Through the website	0.6%

How can Access do things better? Tenant comments/suggestions

The following main themes were identified with comments on improvements.

Dealing with other tenants/neighbourhood issues

Tenants are concerned about other tenants' anti-social behaviour and community safety that affects them and the complexes as a whole.

"They could deal with the alcohol and violence within the complex a lot better."

"Warn the known bullies that their intimidatory behaviour will not be tolerated."

"Rules should be looked at- specially for people who suffer bi polar; noise is unbearable."

"Screening people more to who you are going to put as a tenant. Please consider who you place in these units."

"Attend property to present 'a face of authority' at crisis/critical times; attend with police."

"Listen to tenants genuine problems which include neighbours who don't respect their surroundings. More one on one time with troublesome tenants to trouble shoot instead of relying on police to do it."

Communication

The themes of Responding; Informing and Explaining were identified;

"To follow up complaints in person and have mediation when needed, not just sending letters."

"Need more information about what's going on."

"Give us more information about our tenancy and housing."

"Could better help tenants understand rules for those who need assistance."

Expectations of staff's role and responsibilities

Some tenants have expectations and misunderstandings of the role and responsibilities of the Housing Managers and Management:

"Even for smaller repair jobs are difficult for the elderly people- changing a light bulb on the ceiling or in the bathroom. I was told it was no longer Access's problem. Can we elders get some help?"

"Lower the cost of rent to low income earners."

(Suggestion)-*"Three times a day visit to the community."*

Tenant Engagement

Respondents suggested that Access Community Housing continue with its current tenant engagement strategies:

"Art competition for tenants to win a prize of some sort."

"Keeping tenants better informed via newsletter and competitions that include tenant participation."

"Art and garden competition- should be more, and encouragement for tenants to be involved."