

High client satisfaction with AFP performance

Behind the headlines of the AFP's major successes are a range of formal agreements between the AFP and its client and partner agencies. The AFP is called on to investigate infringements against Government policies and programs which may range from major tax evasions through to fraudulent claims for welfare payments.

Research published in 2002 stated that the AFP returned \$5.20 to the Australian community for every dollar invested in drug investigations. Similarly the AFP was estimated to be returning \$5.10 to the Government for every dollar invested in fraud investigations.

For the period 1999-00 and 2000-01, the AFP returned through its fraud and drug investigations more than \$1.5 billion to the Australian community for an investment of less than \$300 million. This being the case, effective liaison with client departments translates to significant returns to the Commonwealth.

Focusing the good relations between the AFP and its client departments is the AFP's National Client Service Team and local office Client Liaison.

The AFP Manager Performance and Planning, Federal Agent Adrian McKnight has the responsibility for the AFP's national client services. The AFP's client service teams are often the first point of contact and may take on the role of client advocate in order to ensure the best possible service to a client once an investigation has been accepted.

"While there is an evaluation and priority process involved in choosing investigations the AFP takes on, we also focus on the needs of clients when it comes to making a final decision," Federal Agent McKnight said.

Client satisfaction survey results from 1999 to 2003

	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2003
Investigation Services	91%	97%	89%	89%
Protection Services	Not surveyed	97%	100%	100%
International Services	Not surveyed	Not surveyed	100%	100%

Client satisfaction is what it is all about. In fact it is a key performance indicator when the AFP's performance is evaluated by Government.

"From the outset, establishing what the client expectations are of an investigation is vitally important in the success of that investigation," he said.

The approach must be working, because the latest client satisfaction survey undertaken by an independent group establishing that for investigations the AFP has a 90 per cent client satisfaction rating and with protection and international services the satisfaction rating is 100 per cent.

2003 Client Satisfaction Survey

As one of the three AFP key performance indicators, the satisfaction of AFP clients must be regularly measured for the AFP to report to Government on outcomes and outputs we have achieved with the funds appropriated to us.

Earlier this year, the AFP commissioned its fourth national client satisfaction survey to gauge the attitudes and perspectives of Australian Government and other client agencies toward services provided by the AFP. The survey was conducted by Market Attitude Research Services (MARS). MARS conducted over 400 telephone-based interviews with AFP clients. Those surveyed included representatives of Commonwealth and State Government agencies, foreign embassies, diplomatic missions in Australia and Australian diplomatic missions overseas.

The results of the 2003 AFP client satisfaction results indicate that levels of satisfaction with services provided by the AFP are still strong and positive. Around nine in ten (89%) AFP investigation services clients expressed satisfaction with the quality of service provided. Over two in ten (22%) were "very satisfied". Satisfaction with both protection services and international services was 100%.

The table above provides a comparison of results since the inception of the survey in 1999.

Overall client satisfaction has remained consistent with the results achieved in 2001-2002. Clients of the AFP reported that high levels of satisfaction with AFP services were generally linked to the:

- professionalism and policing expertise of AFP members;
- quality and accuracy of written and oral advice given; and
- appropriate knowledge, responsiveness and accountability of AFP members.

Whilst the majority of clients are satisfied with overall service delivery, those dissatisfied have identified specific elements of AFP service delivery that do not meet their expectations, including:

- AFP members changing too frequently;
- AFP members not keeping the client informed; and
- AFP investigations taking too long to complete.

A consistent action plan to address these areas of client dissatisfaction has been developed and implemented with input from all of the AFP's functions and offices.

The final report of the Client Satisfaction Study 2003 can be viewed on the AFP website at <http://www.afp.gov.au/afp/page/GovCorporate/satisfaction.htm>