Aboriginal Youth Services Investment Reforms
YACWA Survey Analysis (Oct 2015)

Survey limitations and distribution

There were **81 responses** to the survey. From a review of the positions of people who filled in a question about staying informed from YACWA about the progress of the reforms, the majority (60-70%) of respondents appear to be in some managerial capacity.

From the responses themselves, though, it feels as though approximately 15-20% are program staff rather than middle or senior managers.

The survey was sent to the sector and promoted via the following mechanisms:

- ILG members, to be distributed through their Departments to service providers
- Department of Finance, WACOSS and YACWA member and distribution lists
- Youth networks, for which there were contacts, across the state
- Mirrabooka and Geraldton Regional Managers Forums

It is uncertain as to whether every Department did in fact send the survey – from the responses, it is possible that they did not as we would have expected a higher response rate.
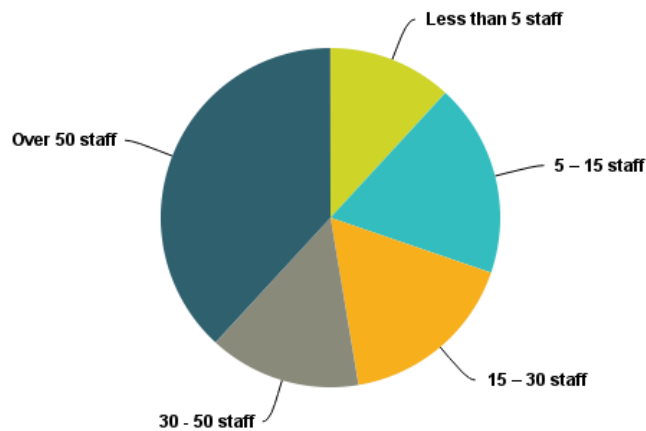
However this sample size, given the demographic information, does provide a representative sample of the wider sector, though there are potentially some gaps (eg Aboriginal community controlled organisations, and smaller regional organisations). Further specific consultation with these groups may yield some complementary data.

Demographics

- **Only 5% of organisations defined themselves as Aboriginal community controlled organisations;** with about 88% being sure that they are not
- **The proportion of clients that are Aboriginal young people was highly varied**. The highest proportion was between 11-45%, with 33% of respondents fitting in this category.
- There was quite a large proportion which had between 0-5% of young Aboriginal clients (22%), and there was also a large proportion at 81-100% of clients being young Aboriginal people (18%).
- There was an even spread in terms of staff, with 38% of organisations having over 50 staff, but generally evenly spread amongst the other answers.
- In terms of organisational turnover, 42% had a turnover of more than $3 million. Approximately 26% had a turnover of between $1 million and $3 million, with 32% then being less than $1 million. **Only 10% were less than $300,000.**

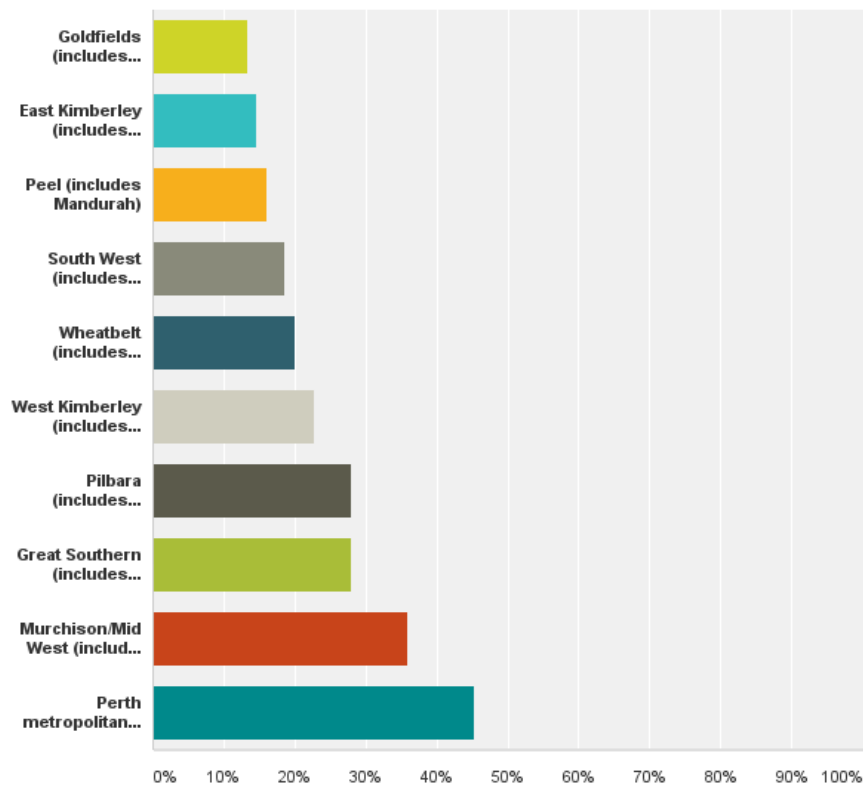## Q3 How many staff does your organisation have?

Answered: 76 Skipped: 2

Geographically, there is a great mix of locations, which the services operate within. Note that the question doesn't ask about headquarters, so many of these services may be based in the Perth metropolitan area and work within these geographic areas.

The Perth metropolitan area was the most commonly serviced by organisations that answered the survey (45%), but so is the Mid-West/Murchison region (36%), and the Great Southern (28%). The least number of responses was 10 servicing the Goldfields. Also worth noting is considering the Kimberley cumulatively, approximately 36% of respondents ran services in that region.
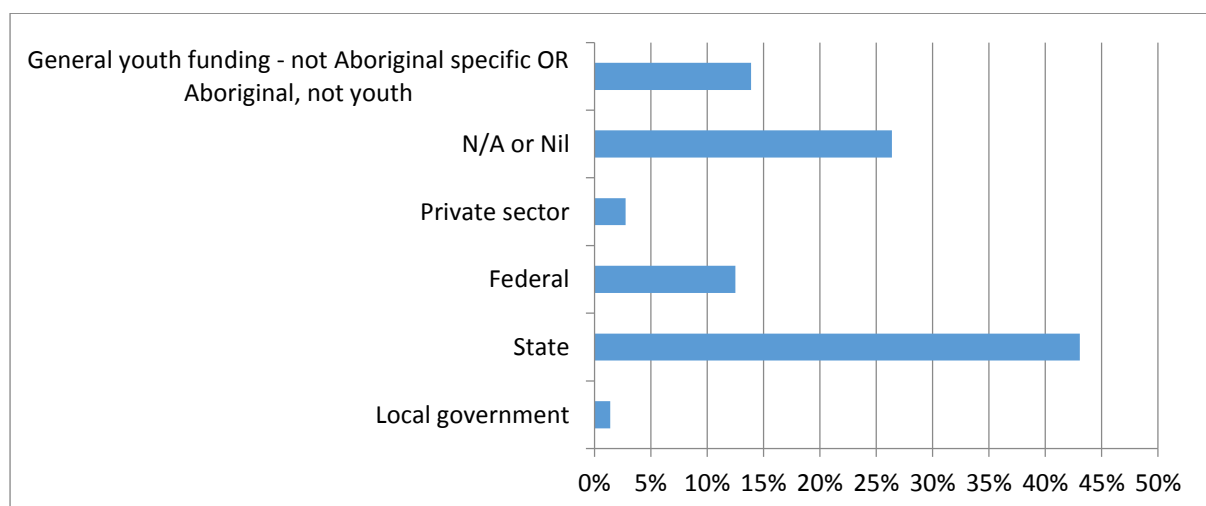
Q6 Please indicate the areas in which your organisation operates:

Answered: 75   Skipped: 3

Funding Situation

The **largest source of funding was the state government**, with 43% respondents receiving funding from one or more departments. This was mixed relatively evenly over 12 different contracting agencies.
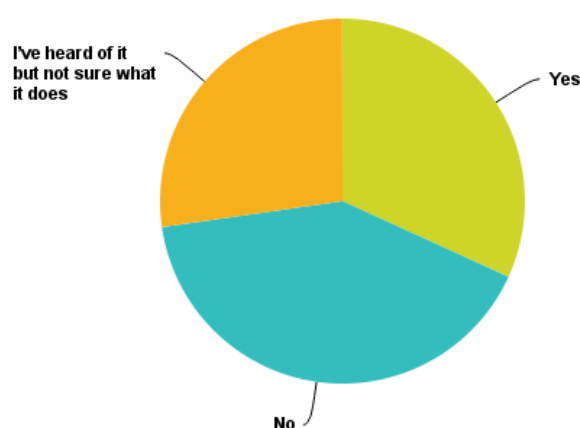
Knowledge of interagency groups and RMFs

On the question on **engagement with any State government interagency group,** 63% of respondents said that their organisation engaged with one.

However, when this drilled down into the specifics about Regional Managers Forums, 32% knew what one was and what it did. A further 27% had heard of an RMF, but didn't know what it did. This means 41% of respondents do not know what a RMF is and what its role is.

Q9 **Do you know what a Regional Managers Forum is, and what it does?**

Answered: 66   Skipped: 12

The following question asked respondents to write down who they knew from the NFP sector that sat on the RMF, if they knew. There were 21 responses, but 8 of these indicated they didn't know. Of the remaining 13 responses, approximately half of these indicated that attendance (and some intimated the meeting itself) happened only sporadically.

COMMENT: There may be ramifications for this if the RMF is the vehicle by which the reforms primarily engage with the regions. On the ground, if the RMFs aren't operating, or don't appear to be operating from the perspective of those who actually know what they are – it is likely that the reform effort could be seen as somewhat less legitimate.
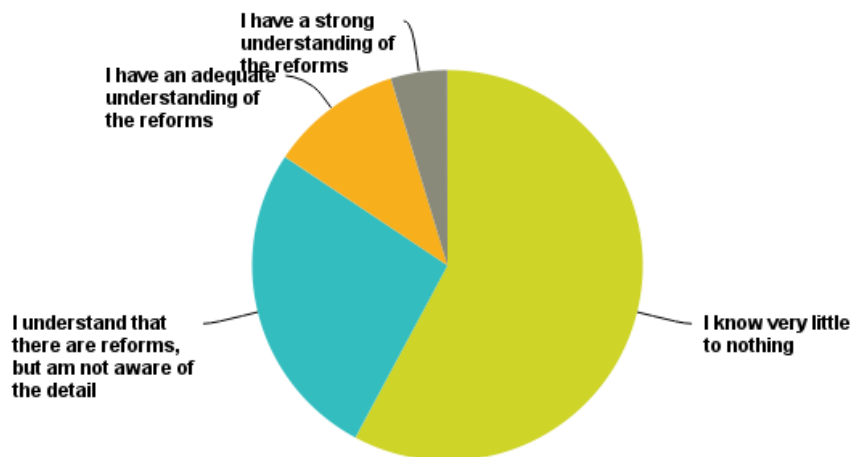
The meetings held by YACWA in Geraldton from the 20 – 22 October 2015, support this information. We had one-to-one meetings with nine organisations, and about half did not know what the RMF did.

Understanding of Investment Principles

Approximately 84% of respondents either knew very little to nothing about the reforms, or knew there were reforms but had no idea what the detail was. Only 16% of respondents had an adequate or strong knowledge of the reforms, the majority of whom are likely on the ILG.

Q11 **What is your understanding of the Aboriginal Youth Services Investment Reforms?**

Answered: 64   Skipped: 14

Despite respondents not being aware of the detail of the reform, it appears that from what little they had heard, and possibly from accessing the Investment Principles linked in the introduction of the survey, they were fairly accurate in terms of what the reforms are trying to achieve.

Though 41% still said they had no idea what the reforms were trying to achieve, **48% of respondents accurately identified two of the major principles** – refocussing investment to address the complex needs of young people more appropriately, and stronger partnerships between organisations and government. The next most popular answers were 'have stronger relationships with communities' (43%) and 'reduce fragmentation of funding and effort' (40%).

COMMENT: Of the one-to-one meetings held by YACWA in Geraldton in October 2015, no organisation had any knowledge of the reform process apart from what they had been advised from YACWA in wanting to come and meet with them. This made the engagement with them difficult – as we wanted to understand how they thought the Reform would impact upon them, but they had not yet had an opportunity to understand that there was a reform process and that it might impact upon them, let alone think about in what way in might do that.

Preparedness for reform
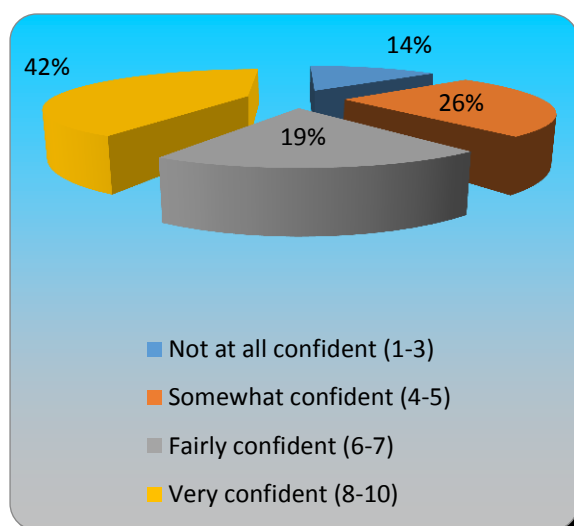
Costing and Pricing

- 23% of respondents did not know what the DCSP Policy was.
- 52% of respondents were either somewhat or very confident in costing their service. Only 8.5% of respondents were not at all or not very confident. This may also reflect the high number of respondents from larger organisations, which traditionally are more confident in matters of financial management.
- The majority (40%) of respondents did feel the same level of confidence in pricing as in costing
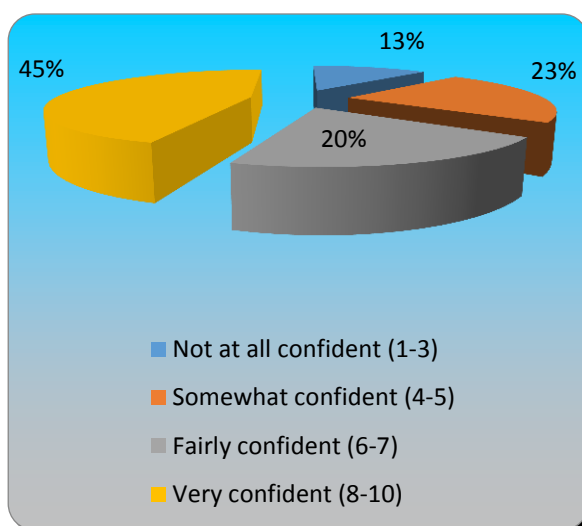
Outcomes Measurement

Questions on outcomes measurement covered two topics – level of confidence in measuring outcomes for the organisation as a whole, and level of confidence in measuring outcomes of particular funded services/programs.

The responses here were very encouraging, with about **60% being fairly or very confident on measuring outcomes both for organisations, and services.**

There was a slightly higher level of confidence in measuring outcomes of funded services/program, which is to be expected.
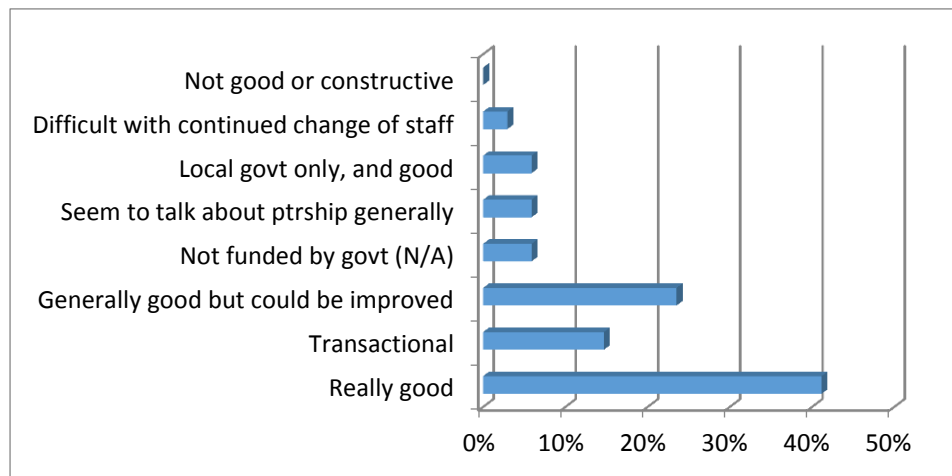

Confidence in measuring organisation outcomes	*Confidence in measuring program outcomes*

Collaboration and Partnership

The survey asked respondents to describe the **relationship they have with their major government department funding bodies**.
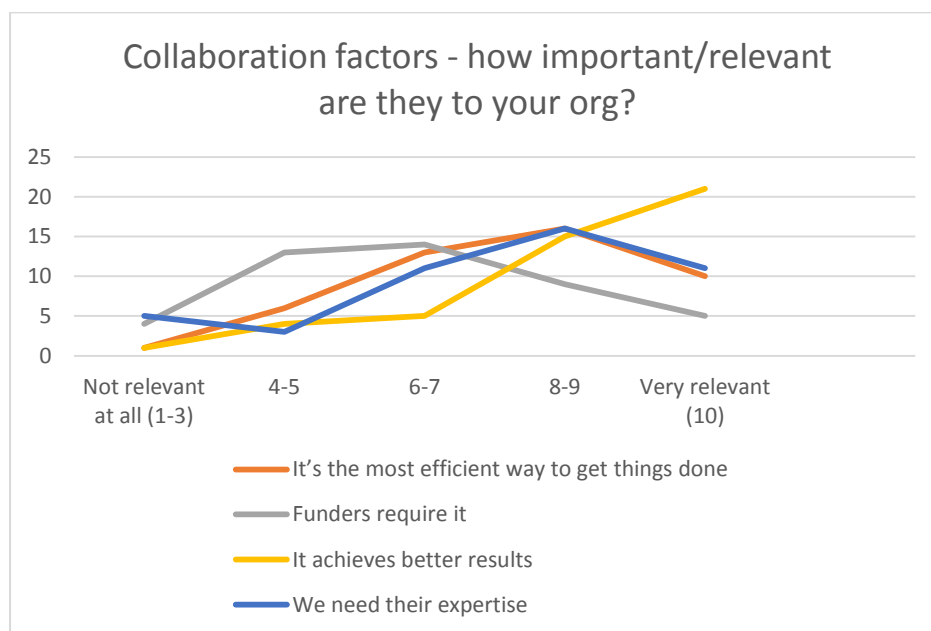

The responses were mainly positive, with **41% of respondents providing a description depicting the relationship as particularly good**.

About 39% of respondents stated that the relationship was good but could be improved, or described it with words that depicted a very transactional style relationship.

On the question of how well organisations work with other organisations working with Aboriginal young people in their area, approximately **79% said they work either extremely or fairly well with other organisations**. The other 21% of responses was spread between 'neutral', 'not really that well' and 'not well at all'.
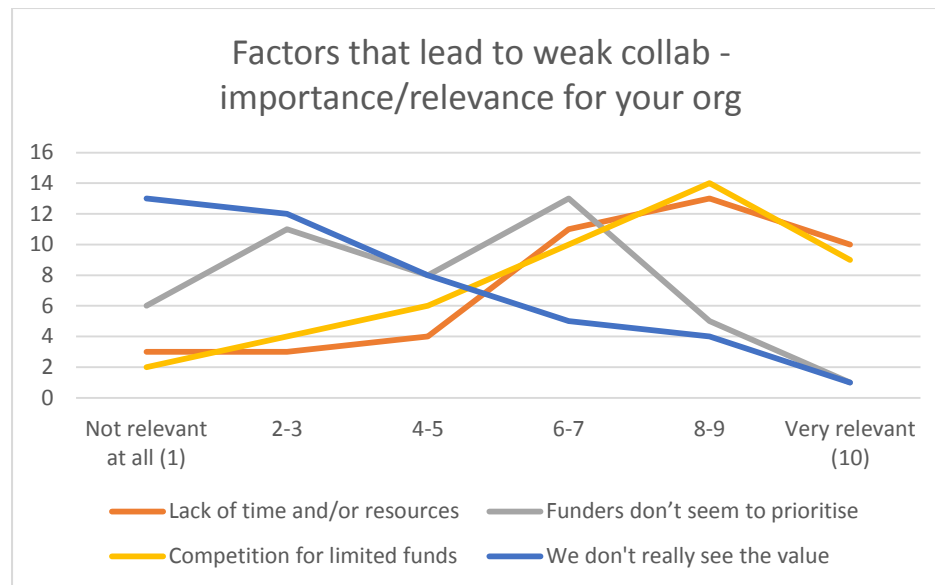
Factors for collaboration

These were complex questions. Although these questions were hard to navigate, it appears respondents were able to navigate them sufficiently to answer them.

This graph demonstrates that the most important reason by far for organisations to collaborate was because it achieves better results. The least important reasons overall was that funders require it, and the idea that they need other expertise.

COMMENT: This is interesting, as one would think collaboration would occur because other organisations have something to offer, which is seen and understood by other organisations.

Factors that lead to weak collab - importance/relevance for your org

This graph demonstrates that **the greatest barriers to collaboration** are the competition for limited funds and a lack of resource/time. The least important reasons (ie don't impact at all, or aren't true) are that funders don't seem to prioritise and organisations themselves don't see the value.
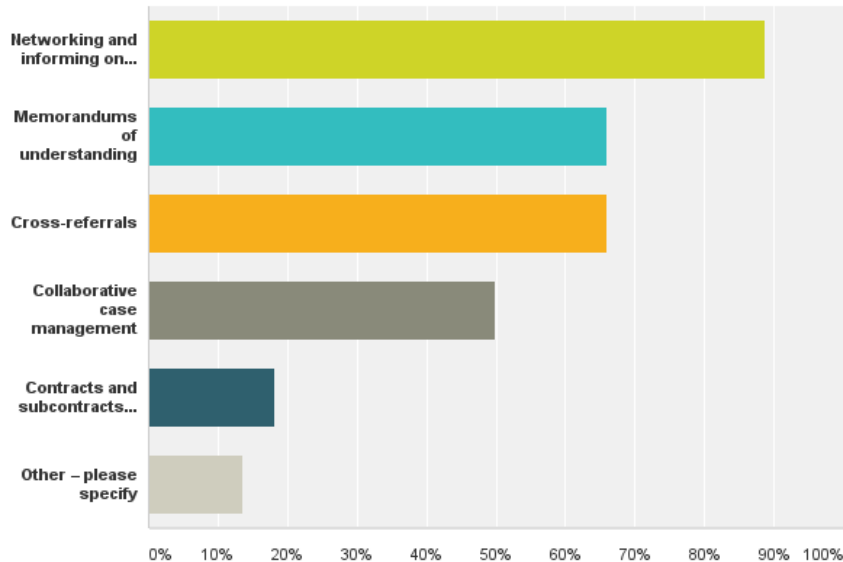
Overall, when taken together this information demonstrates that organisations will collaborate because they see the inherent value in it and not because it is or is not on the agenda of funders.

On the factors that lead to less collaboration (or prevent collaboration), the additional comments made included, primarily, that other organisations don't seem to see the benefit in it. There were also mentions of nepotism and a lack of service providers to engage with, especially in emerging or particularly remote communities.

In terms of **the type of engagement** that respondents had with other service providers, 89% of respondents networked and informed one another of their activities.

Q20 How would you describe the kind of engagement you have with other service providers? (Tick all that apply)
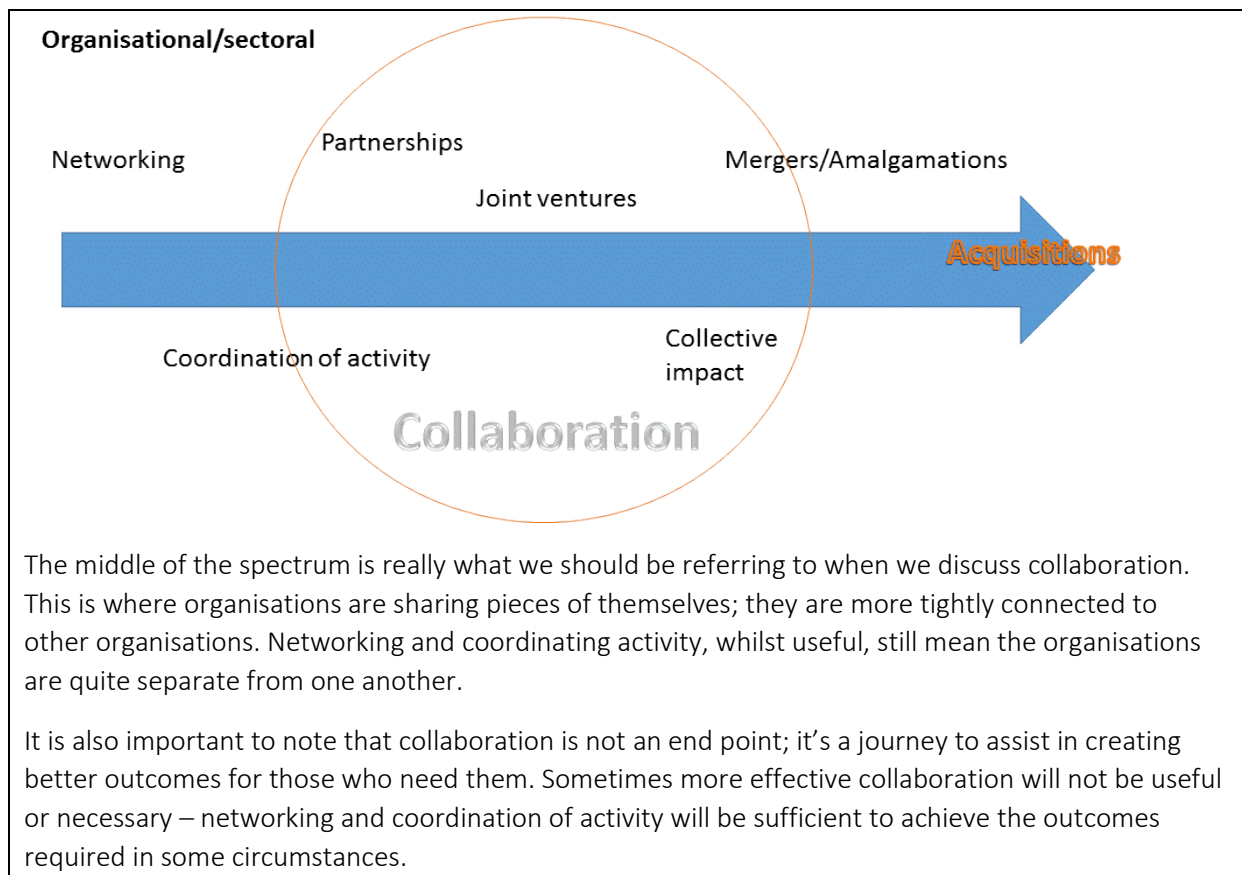
Answered: 44   Skipped: 34

COMMENT: The IAP2 spectrum of public participation looks at engagement of organisations/government with people.

This diagram takes the IAP2 spectrum of participation, and morphs it into something useful for examining and analysing collaboration between organisations:

Organisational/sectoral

Networking

Partnerships

Mergers/Amalgamations

Joint ventures

Acquisitions

Coordination of activity

Collective impact

Collaboration

The middle of the spectrum is really what we should be referring to when we discuss collaboration. This is where organisations are sharing pieces of themselves; they are more tightly connected to other organisations. Networking and coordinating activity, whilst useful, still mean the organisations are quite separate from one another.

It is also important to note that collaboration is not an end point; it's a journey to assist in creating better outcomes for those who need them. Sometimes more effective collaboration will not be useful or necessary – networking and coordination of activity will be sufficient to achieve the outcomes required in some circumstances.

The survey results demonstrate that largely, organisations are at the networking and 'coordination of activity' end of the collaboration spectrum.
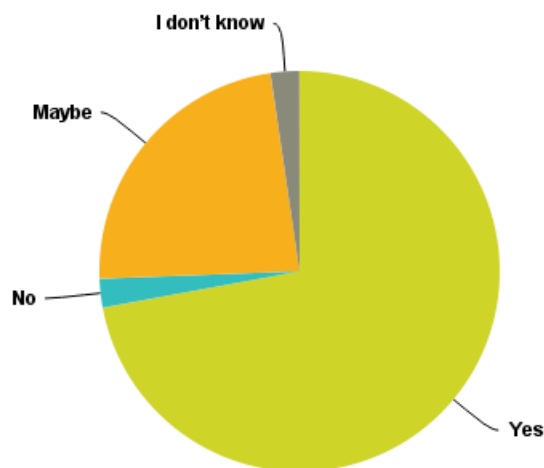
MoUs and cross-referrals was the next most popular engagement mechanism by respondents, at 66% each.

The options for responding to this question also seem to have almost been an exhaustive list of the ways service providers engaged with one another. The 'other' response yielded only 10 responses, which could have been encompassed by the options listed.

Despite not being able to identify many others barriers, as identified in previous questions, **approximately 74% of respondents do feel as though they can collaborate better**.

Q21 Do you think you could engage and/or collaborate/work better with other service providers in your area?
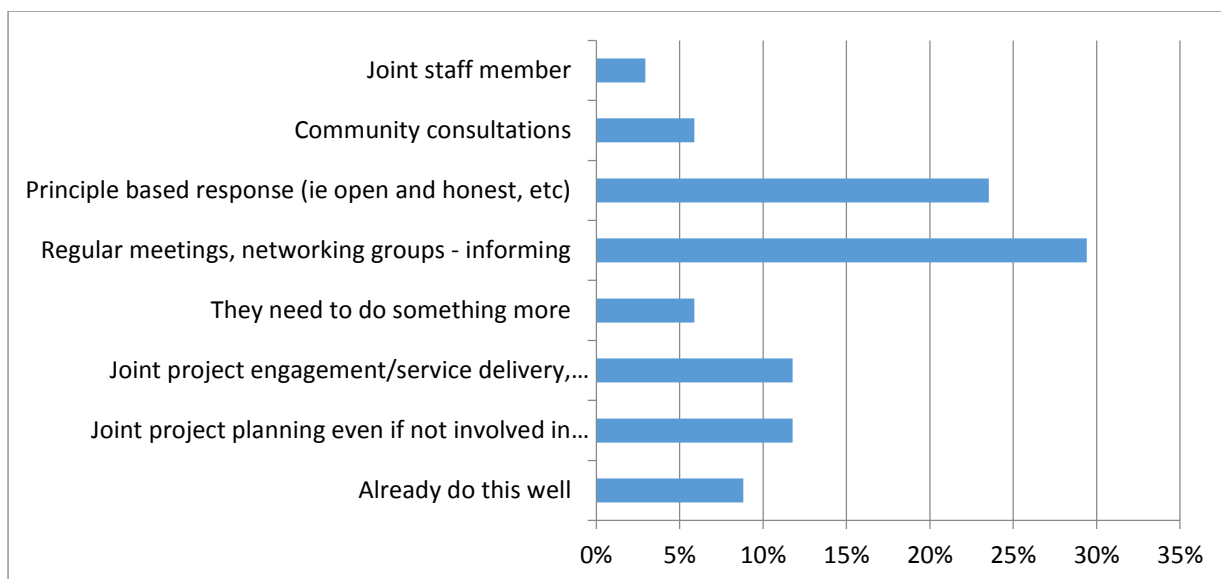
Answered: 43   Skipped: 26

Additional comments provided here by respondents included that they would collaborate better if there were service providers in the area to collaborate with, that there are missed opportunities as a result of not being aware of opportunities, and that generally respondents felt as though they were collaborating well but could always improve.

On the question of **how respondents might like to engage or collaborate with service providers in the area**, the major response was meaningful regular meetings, networking groups, primarily playing an informing role. There were comments though that the meetings need to be open, and focussed on the end goal of clients rather than what individual organisations need.

COMMENT: This demonstrates again that organisations are wanting to be more at the networking/coordination of activity end of the spectrum. This could be cause for some concern, however given that the largest proportion of respondents don't know about the reforms and potential impact, there is no reason they would be looking to other more intensive forms of collaboration (necessarily). The questions may have yielded different results if there was a higher level of awareness of the reforms amongst the respondents.

There were some other good suggestions though, such as having shared staff members, joint project planning even if not involved in the delivery, and joint community consultations.
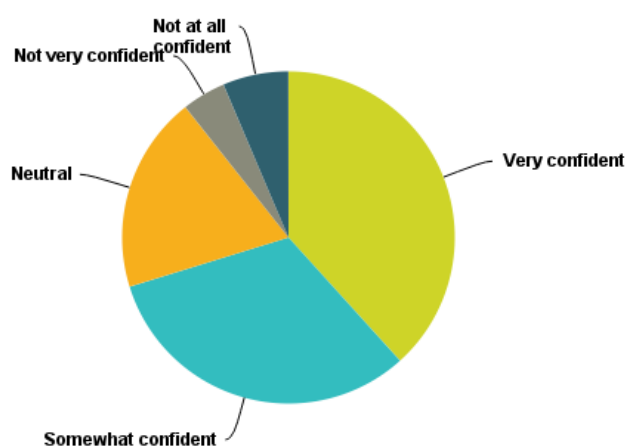
Co-design

Approximately **70% of respondents felt either somewhat confident or very confident that their programs reflect the feedback of Aboriginal young people they engage with**:

This suggests a strong majority of organisations surveyed believe that they undertake a co-design process with Aboriginal young people and their families so that the service they provide is what's actually required.

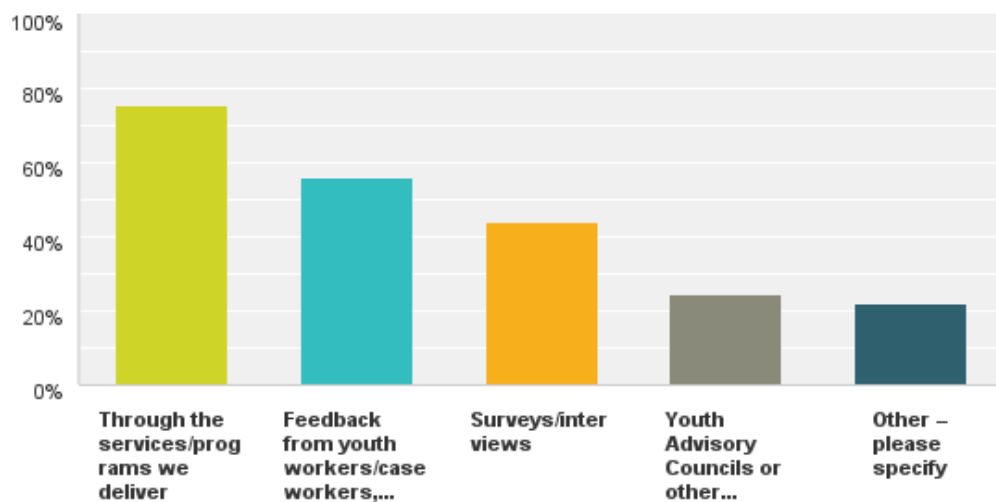This question can also be considered in two ways:

1. As described above, 70% of respondents feel confident or very confident in co-designing, or

2. That only 30% of respondents know that their services meeting the needs of Aboriginal young people.

COMMENT: If our aim is for all services to be co-designed with Aboriginal young people, then 30% is very low.

Q24 How do you currently engage with Aboriginal young people in designing your service? (Select all that apply)

Answered: 41   Skipped: 29

Only 25% used their Youth Advisory Councils or some structured youth input mechanism. In terms of the comments provided, the additional engagement mechanisms included informal conversations; committee members form meetings with elders and parents and other community groups, speaking to Aboriginal consultants, and working groups.

Overwhelmingly **the respondents did want to understand how to better engage Aboriginal young people in service design (80% of respondents)**. However, from the clarifying comments, it appears this is more that they think they already do it well, but could always improve.

Survey conclusion

Overwhelmingly people preferred online tools and resources (69%) and face to face training (64%). They weren't too interested in webinars (20%) which is unfortunately given the significant geographic disparity of the state:

In terms of 'any other statements you'd like to make', most people entered No, or N/A. Some comments worth noting included:

- Training and information provided to direct delivery staff, who will have less of an understanding of the reforms
- Provision of localised information meetings
- Need for resources to connect and network
- How can Aboriginal families, services and organisations add value in engaging with young Aboriginal people, and be a part of this discussion. In a sense, how do we work with what already exists, and the link between Aboriginal young people and their families?

Conclusions from Analysis and Recommendations

- RMFs need to be supported to engage further within their communities, so organisations understand where the primary engagement for the Aboriginal Youth Program Investment Reforms is occurring.
- The roll-out of this reform process will require some further information and support around the principles of the DCSP which feed into the AYSIR.
- Information on costing and pricing and understanding outcomes can be provided as resources for organisations to read through and ask questions about in their own time, rather than further training on these topics. The survey did not highlight them to be of overwhelming importance
- It is still very early to consider training, as the ramifications of the reform for organisations are still not clear. However, at this early stage, it is possible training provided should be a mix of:
  - o 'About the Policy', and potential ramifications, facilitating some understanding of what this is going to mean for organisations
  - o High level understanding and overview of collaboration and strategic alliances, working better together
  - o Co-designing with Aboriginal young people
  - o Creating a co-design session in the demonstration sites (similar to YPP Youth Summit)