



ANNUAL CLIENT SURVEY REPORT

2013-2014

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1. Background

The Accident Compensation Conciliation Service (ACCS) is a Victorian statutory authority established under the Victorian Accident Compensation Act 1985 ("the Act").

In accordance with the Act, the ACCS provides an independent service that helps resolve workers compensation disputes in Victoria by involving key parties to a dispute - workers, employers and Victorian WorkCover Authority (VWA) agents or self-insurers - in an informal, non-adversarial process to attempt to achieve an agreement that is fair, using the principles of Alternative Dispute Resolution.

Conciliation requests are brought to the Conciliation Service by the worker having a dispute conciliated at ACCS is a compulsory step before proceeding to court. Conciliation helps resolve disputes by sharing information, clarifying issues in disputes, discussing them and exploring options to try to reach an agreement. It is fair, informal and quick and is offered as a free service.

Conciliation plays a major role in the Victorian WorkCover Authority (VWA) scheme. In the 2011/12 financial year, ACCS received over 14,867 requests for conciliation and this number has again increased in 2012/13 to 17,144 requests. With such a large number of requests per annum, ACCS places particular emphasis on client servicing and has conducted research addressing this area for many years.

ACCS has been conducting a client survey since 2002, aiming to understand the service experience of persons involved in the conciliation process, assess how the Conciliation Service has been operating and explore opportunities for improvement. The survey has historically been conducted semi-annually with two waves of research in November and May collecting data from three target audiences (clients) involved in the conciliation process:

- Workers
- Employers
- VWA Agents/self-insurers

2. Aims and Outcome

Aims

The overarching aim of the research in 2013/14 was a critical review of the current research approach and reshape of the approach/structure/questions to offer greater insight and stronger alignment with ACCS's strategic and business direction.

Specifically, the aims of the annual client survey sought to:

- measure the service experience of participants involved in the conciliation process, using best-practice measures that are valid and reliable
- understand the overall sentiment and satisfaction of participants involved in the conciliation process
- identify whether or not experiences of participants align with organisational values/objectives, such as:
 - the achievement of durable resolutions/agreements through conciliation
 - being perceived as impartial, even-handed and fair
 - participant experiences of conciliation perceived as informal and flexible
 - prompt and timely resolution throughout the conciliation process
- ensure that the research approach is robust enough to distinguish the drivers, barriers, perceptions and attitudes of the individual target audiences (workers, employers and WorkCover agents/self-insurers)
- also, the research must be able to distinguish and differentiate participant sentiment for different stages of their journey (particularly before, during and after the conciliation conference)

Outcomes

The overall outcome of the program was the provision of an up-to-date best practice research program that effectively measures the key performance indicators and business objectives set by ACCS.

The specific tangible deliverables of the proposed research involved an initial report detailing a critical review of the current research methodology including recommendations for improvement and a final report and executive summary detailing the insights obtained from the 2013/14 iteration of the Annual Client Survey.

3. Methodology and Sample

To effectively measure the key performance indicators and business objectives set by ACCS a critical review of the past methodology has been carried out, resulting in slight modifications of the existing research instrument which was followed by qualitative and quantitative phases.

The qualitative phase involved focus groups and indepth telephone interviews with ACCS target clients. Two focus groups were conducted with injured workers, the majority of whom had recently attended a conference although there was a small number who had had their dispute resolved without the need of a conciliation conference. The other 2 groups consisted of employers who had recently attended a conference as shown in the table below:

Group	Segment	Sample	Location	Moderator
1	Injured Workers	6	Richmond	Luke Brady (Research Consultant)
2	Injured Workers	8	Richmond	Luke Brady (Research Consultant)
3	Employers	7	Richmond	Craig Frost (General Manager Research)
4	Employers	7	Richmond	Craig Frost (General Manager Research)
Total sample		28	Richmond	Luke Brady & Craig Frost

The group discussions were conducted on 13th and 14th November with participants receiving a monetary incentive for their participation.

The 8 indepth phone interviews were conducted with VWA Agents/Self-insurers. The purpose of this phase was firstly to gain greater insight into the mechanics and overall perceptions of the conciliation process, as well as to understand the participants' expectations and experience of each stage of the conciliation process (pre-conference, conference and post-conference).

Segment	Sub-segment	Sample
VWA Agents/Self-insurers	Category A – Manager or Team Leader	5
	Category B – Dispute Resolution Officers/Conference attendees	1
WorkCover Assist/Union Assist	Category A – Manager or Team Leader	1
	Category B – Dispute Resolution Officers/Conference attendees	1
Total sample		8

The quantitative phase involved a 13-minute CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interview) survey conducted with three main conciliation participants – Workers, Employers and WorkCover Agents/Self-insurers who had previously been involved in a conciliation process through the ACCS. It was intended to achieve an equal split of n=200 for both workers and employers and a smaller sample of n=50 for insurance agents, since ACCS deals mostly with 5 authorised insurance agents plus self-insurers. To facilitate respondents' participation in the research, Workers and Employers were offered an opportunity to win a \$100 Coles/Myer voucher once fieldwork was finished.

The quantitative survey fieldwork began on Wednesday 23rd April and concluded on Thursday 22nd May. The following table depicts the sample achieved for each segment and corresponding accuracy levels at one point in time. The sample approach is highly accurate and insightful, delivering robust and reliable results. With an overall sample of n=450, results obtained will be accurate to within ± 4.59 at a 95% confidence level.

Segment	Assumed Population	Achieved sample	Accuracy at one point in time †
Workers	18,000*	200	$\pm 6.91\%$
Employers	15,000*	200	$\pm 6.91\%$
Workcover Agents/ Self Insurers	200**	50	$\pm 12.15\%$
Overall Total	33,200	450	$\pm 4.59\%$

* Population based on total number of requests for conciliations received by ACCS in 2013/2014 assuming that employers might be asked to participate in conciliation process multiple times per year.

** Assumption is based on the number of insurance agents ACCS currently deals with (n=5).

† Accuracy at one point in time refers to the accuracy of results should you take a sample of the population now compared to if you had results for every single resident. Calculation of the level of accuracy is based on the size of the population that your sample is drawn from. The level of accuracy increases as the size of the sample approaches the size of the population. For example, if the level of accuracy at one point in time is quoted at $\pm 4.59\%$, this means that the measurement of items in the research study accurately represents the measurement of these same items in the population, within a range of $\pm 4.59\%$.

The research was carried out in compliance with International Standard AS ISO 20252.

4. Key Changes in Methodology

Previous methodology & sampling

The previous methodology involved research being conducted over two data collection periods, the first in early November (Wave 1) and the second in late May (Wave 2), with waves 1 and 2 combined to provide an overall result.

The research was conducted via a quantitative approach, employing a combination of CATI (computer aided telephone interviewing) and online surveying techniques to sample three core segments:

- Workers – n ~ 400 (approx. n~200 for waves 1 and 2)
- Employers – n ~ 400 (approx. n~200 for waves 1 and 2)
- VWA agents/ self-insurers – n ~ 100 (approx. n~50 for waves 1 and 2)

For each wave, a random sample was achieved based on contacting persons who have had an experience with ACCS in the previous three months.

The results obtained for both Workers and Employers have historically been weighted based on the 2000/01 results in terms of the proportion of the sample that attended a conference.

New/current methodology

newfocus employed a two-stage research approach:

Stage 1: Qualitative research – focus groups and indepth interviews were conducted to help better understand perceptions of ACCS and guide the second stage of research.

Stage 2: Quantitative research – CATI interviewing with the three core segments:

- Workers – n=200
- Employers – n=200
- VWA agents/ self-insurers – n=50

Rather than using two waves of research as with the previous methodology, newfocus conducted the research on a rolling basis over one wave to reduce variability from measuring at different points in time and to ensure the survey was carried out in a timely manner with participants (ie shortly after conciliation) to ensure accurate responses. This variation in methodology enables the research to gain a deeper understanding into the perceptions and attitudes toward the conciliation experience and deliver more actionable insights.

No weighting has been applied to the results.

5. How Results are reported

Tables and charts are reported in percentage results. Due to rounding some scores may range from 99% to 101%.

n = value

The n= value in the tables and charts represents the total number of respondents included in the study and the number of respondents that answered a specific question (excluding 'don't know' responses except where noted).

n ~ value

In some cases n~ is used. This represents the average number of respondents across two or more questions.

Statistically significant differences between segments

A cross-tabulation or chi-square statistic is a common method of describing whether a relationship exists between two or more variables, ie it allows us to statistically test whether the differences we note in the sample are genuine differences or simply chance occurrences.

Relationships are said to be statistically significant if the P value (chi-square statistic) is less than the chosen significance level. For example, if .05 (5%) is selected as that level, a P value less than .05 implies that there is a relationship between the two variables that have been cross-tabulated. The only outcomes which have been reported on are those found to be statistically significant at $P < .05$.

Tests for statistical significance have been conducted on particular sub-groups of interest (where bases sizes are large enough to allow for significance testing) in this survey, including:

- Workers
- Employers
- Agents

Statistically significant differences are highlighted throughout the report with the use of the following symbols:

- ↑ Indicates the percentage for that subgroup is statistically significantly higher than other subgroups
- ↓ Indicates the percentage for that subgroup is statistically significantly lower than other subgroups

Use of top/bottom-two box terminology

- top-2-box (T2B) refers to combined responses of *somewhat/very satisfied, agree/strongly agree, good/very good*
- bottom-2-box (B2B) refers to combined responses of *somewhat unsatisfied/not satisfied at all etc*

Regression Analysis

Higher statistical analysis including regression modelling was conducted to determine the main predictors of satisfaction with a number of service points and communication material. Regression analysis has been conducted to determine the strongest influencing factors of satisfaction with the following:

- Going to Conference DVD & Brochure (see pg. 14)
- Pre-conference communication material (see pg. 15)
- Conference process (see pg. 18)
- Conciliation officer (see pg. 18)
- Conference overall (see pg. 18)
- Outcome certificate (see pg. 19)

Drivers of satisfaction have been listed in order of influence ie. strongest driver of satisfaction listed first.

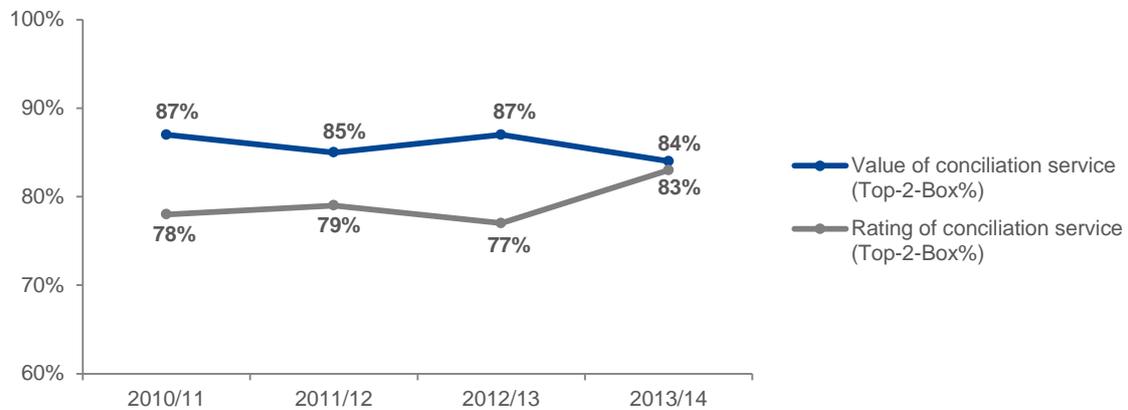
6. Key Findings

6.1 Overarching metrics

In line with previous iterations of the ACCS Client Survey, two overarching questions relating to overall service quality and perceived value of the conciliation service were asked of all participants. As shown below, the aggregated score (across all participants) for the question “*Weighing up your entire conciliation experience and regardless of the outcome, do you agree or disagree that conciliation is a valuable process?*” remained consistent with the aggregated scores from the past three years at 84% Top-2-Box (strongly agree/agree).

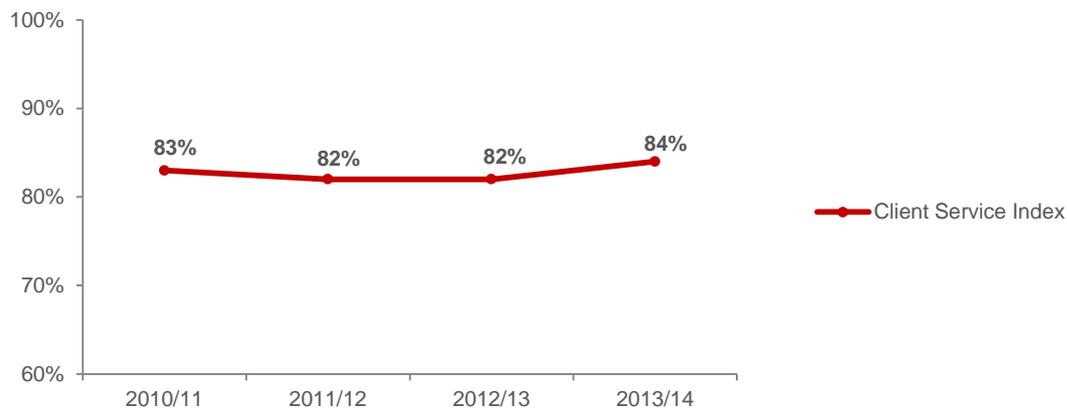
In comparison, the responses to the overall service rating question “*Weighing up your entire conciliation experience and regardless of the outcome, how would you rate the service you received?*” was higher than previously recorded with 83% Top-2-Box (very good/good) compared to previous years scores below 80%.

Service quality and perceived value of the conciliation service



Note: please refer to pg 5 for an explanation of the change in methodology for 2013/14. Any comparison over time should be made within this context.

Client Service Index



Note: the Client Service Index = average of top-2-box % service rating and value perception rating.

The increase in the positive service rating was predominantly driven by the Workers', with nearly nine in ten Workers (87%) reporting a positive service experience (up from 79% in 2012/13). As noted on page 10, the main reason for their positive service rating was that they felt well informed and that they understood the process (41%). Furthermore, the results suggests that the more prepared the Worker feels, the more likely to give a positive services rating score (those who felt prepared gave a top-2-box service rating score of 88%, while those who did not feel prepared gave a top-2-box service rating score of 74%).

By shifting these questions to the end of the survey, participants were able to consider their entire experience (from pre-conference through to post-conference) when answering this question.

Perceived value

As illustrated in the table below, when compared across the three participant segments, the perception of value was extremely consistent regardless of the participant.

Value of the conciliation service (top-2-box)

	Workers (n=198)	Employers (n=198)	Agents (n=50)	Total (n=446)
Conciliation is a valuable process	84%	84%	86%	84%

While the value perception rating remains high, it represents a slight decline since the previous wave (from 87% in 2012/13 to 84% this wave). The rating among Workers and Agents has remained consistent since the previous wave, though a slight decline was noted among the Employer group (from 88% in 2012/13 to 84% this wave).

This high level of perceived value displayed by all parties was backed up by positive reasons why the process was seen as valuable. The qualitative research conducted as part of the current Client survey identified that all participants valued the opportunity to resolve the dispute and avoid court to either reduce the stress (a particular motivator for workers) or the cost and time involved in court proceedings (more so a motivator for employers and agents). The quantitative research validated these findings with these two reasons accounting for 60% of all reasons why participants saw value in the conciliation process. The ability to vent/have a say/be listened to (17%) and the opportunity to go somewhere that is independent/fair/unbiased (16%) were also strong reasons for seeing value in conciliation.

Only 10% of workers and 6% of employers disagreed or strongly disagreed with the value statement, with none of the n=50 agents disagreeing. The reasons behind not seeing this value, however, differed between workers and employers with workers tending to cite the fact that they didn't benefit from the process or the fact that the process was a waste of time/took too long (both 20% of worker responses) whereas employers suggested that the inability to reach an outcome or a perceived bias towards the employee/employer not having a voice (both 33% of employer responses) as reasons for not seeing value in the conciliation process.

As with attendance, the 'type of claim' did not affect the perceived value of the process. As shown in the table below, the three most common claim types, the perceived value ranged from 84%-90%, which are not significant differences.

Influence of claim type on perceived value of the conciliation process

Section of the Act	n	Perceived value (Top-2-Box%)
ACA - 99 - Compensation for Medical and Like services	68	90%
ACA - 109 - Claim for compensation	53	85%
ACA - 114(2)(b) - Termination of weekly payments - No entitlement	25	84%

Perceived value appears to *slightly* diminish with multiple conciliation experiences. Although not statistically significant, the perceived value of the conciliation process appears to lessen with multiple experiences, with both employers and workers with prior conciliation experience less likely to suggest that the process is valuable.

For Workers, those who had attended their first conciliation process were slightly more likely than those with at least one prior dispute to see the value in their recent conciliation process (88% versus 82%), compared with 77% of those with 'five or more' previous disputes seeing the value.

For Employers, conciliation participation was given a temporal aspect (ie in the last 12 months). In an identical finding to Workers, Employers who were undertaking their first conciliation session were slightly more likely than those with multiple experiences to see value in the process (88% versus 82%).

Taken together, these findings suggest that all participants generally see the conciliation process as a valuable process regardless of attendance or previous history with the process.

Rating of service

In the current study, participants are asked near the end of the survey to weigh up their entire conciliation experience, with responses fluctuating between the three segments.

Rating of service received throughout entire experience

	Workers (n=199)	Employers (n=196)	Agents (n=50)	Total (n=445)
Rating of service received	87% ↑	↓76%	92% ↑	83%

(↑% ↓% reflect statistically significant differences between groups)

Agents (92%) and Workers (87%) were more likely than Employers (75%) to rate the service as good/very good - workers were most likely to give the conciliation service a 'very good' rating with 61% of workers selecting this top rating.

Participants were asked to provide reasons for why they rated the service as being very good/ good. There were two common reasons mentioned. Being well informed and understanding the process was the most commonly stated reason (33%) followed by the conciliation officer being professional, knowing the law and being friendly (23%).

Stated reasons why service was very good/ good

	Workers (n=174)	Employers (n=148)	Agents (n=46)	Total (n=368)
Conference/Conciliation Officer related	51%	36%	52%	45%
Conciliator was professional/took control/very aware of the law/ calm/patient/friendly	22%	20%	35%	23%
Treated well/they were friendly/courteous/polite/made to feel relaxed/I didn't feel bullied/intimidated	21%	9%	7%	15%
Remained neutral/unbiased/presented a fair picture/listened to both sides	10%	12%	28%	13%
Felt they were there for me also/interested/allowed me to speak/put my case forward	13%	1%	2%	7%
Was given time to ask questions/had my questions answered	4%	3%	—	3%
Communication	32%	47%	46%	40%
Well informed/it was clear/everything was explained in plain/simple terms/understood the process	41%	27%	20%	33%
Good communication/keep in contact/clear/concise/returned calls	9%	16%	11%	12%
Timely/prompt/efficient/had plenty of time to prepare/ran on time	10%	13%	7%	11%
After conference/advised of outcome/given direction on what I needed to do next/follow up requirement was all taken care of	3%	3%	4%	4%
Other reasons	65%	53%	63%	60%
Well organised/professional/efficient/everything happened as it was supposed to/people conducted themselves appropriately	14%	26%	26%	21%
Opportunity to reach an agreement/outcome/happy with the outcome	9%	18%	28%	15%
Very good service/happy with everything	1%	9%	13%	6%
Very helpful/provided advice/options we hadn't thought of before	9%	3%	4%	6%
They were kind/caring/understanding	9%	1%	—	5%
Transparent/honest	1%	—	2%	1%
Having someone with the knowledge to assist/without needing expensive lawyers/felt comfortable being familiar with someone throughout the process	2%	—	—	1%
Able to decide for yourself if you wish to attend or not	—	1%	—	0%
Accessible/people were available to speak to when needed	—	1%	—	0%

Note: 0% represents n=1

Only 6% overall rated the conciliation service as poor or very poor, including 9% of employers, 7% of workers and 4% of agents. As with the reasons for good service, reasons for poor service differed between groups and represent key areas for ACCS to concentrate on for each group.

For workers, perceived bias or the feeling of not being listened to during the conference was the key reason for poor service with 42% of workers who selected very poor/poor service suggesting that *"Didn't have our say/don't feel I was heard/listened to/felt the Conciliator's mind was made up already"*.

Employers on the other hand were split between perceived bias and a lack of information with *"Felt it was biased/don't think the Conciliator takes all sides into account"* (19%) or *"Lack of information/didn't feel informed/before or after/lots of things weren't explained to me properly/not aware of the process"* (19%) the most common responses. The lack of communication (13%), lack of CO power or control (13%), cancellations at short notice (13%) and not being listened to (13%) were also raised by employers.

For Agents, poor service was reflective of failed attempts to achieved resolution prior to conference, ie *"Attempted/achieved resolution prior to conference but Conciliator was determined to go ahead with conference regardless"* (100%, n=2)

Conference attendance plays a significant role in service rating among employers

Conference attendance did not have a significant impact on service rating scores among workers and agents, though did have a noticeable impact on employer ratings. Although employer attendance was relatively low (45%), employers who did attend a conference were significantly more likely than those who did not attend a conference to give positive ratings to the overall service received (88% vs. 65% very good/ good rating).

Impact of conference attendance on Employer service rating



Claim history has little impact on service rating across all groups

Although not statistically different, Workers' rating on overall service slightly deteriorates among those who have experienced multiple disputes versus those who have had no previous disputes (86% vs. 90%). Conversely, employers with multiple conciliation experiences are slightly more likely to give a higher rating of service than employers experiencing the process for the first time (76% vs. 74%).

The less the effort required of workers the more satisfied they will be

Workers who initiated phone or email contact with ACCS prior to conference were asked how much effort they had to exude in handling their request. Those who perceived to have put forward little effort were much more likely to be satisfied with the overall service received compared with those who felt they had to put forward high effort (95% vs. 53%).

6.2 Preconference stage

Expectation setting

Resolving the dispute or getting an outcome is the primary expectation of the conciliation process

The expectations of the conciliation process were extremely consistent across all participants with the expectation of *'resolving the dispute/getting an outcome'* mentioned as the core expectation by three-quarters of the sample (76%), driven mainly by Employers and Agents.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Employers with conciliation experience (5 or more matters) were significantly more likely to hold this expectation (versus those who have only been involved in one case), as were those who personally attended the conference.

Expectations were primarily based on past experience of conciliation, particularly for Employers (51%) and Agents (66%). Workers were more likely to base their expectations on their most recent experience of conciliation (28%) or their personal belief/what they should be doing (22%).

Contact from ACCS

The majority of participants had some form of contact from ACCS prior to conference. Notification of the time and date of the conference was the most common piece of information communicated to participants prior to conference, followed by the general ACCS materials (brochure and DVD) to help participants prepare for conference. Direct, personal contact via phone or email were less common forms of communication.

About nine in ten participants recall having received written confirmation of receipt of their 'request for conciliation' form, with a similar proportion overall reporting to have had some other form of communication with ACCS prior to the conference.

Employers were less likely than Workers or Agents to have had communication with ACCS prior to conference; however the most common form of communication across all three groups was receiving notification of the date/time of the conference (though this was significantly more likely to have been received among Workers and Agents compared to Employers).

'Going to Conference' DVD & brochure

The 'Going to Conference' DVD and brochure prove to be widely used sources of information, particularly among Workers, and are seen as useful and relevant tools in preparing for conference.

Evidence suggests that the 'Going to Conference' brochure and DVD were well received among Workers, with more than three quarters reporting to have received the material, and a similar proportion reporting to have read the brochure or watched the DVD. Employers were significantly less likely to have received and reviewed the material.

Usage of 'Going to Conference' DVD and Brochure

		Received Material		Read/ Watched
Workers	Brochure	84%	➔	87%
	DVD	76%		70%
Employers	Brochure	29%	➔	68%
	DVD	26%		33%

There has been a slight decline over the past four years in the proportion of Workers having received the DVD, though the proportion of those having actually watched the DVD has significantly increased since last wave and is back on par with 2011/12 levels. Nearly nine in ten workers reportedly read the brochure, which is a significant increase on previous waves. However it should be noted that previous waves' data does not take into account those who did not recall receiving the brochure.

Usage of 'Going to Conference' DVD and Brochure among Workers – over time

		2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
DVD	Received	87%	86%	81%	76%
	Watched	70%	70%	58%	70%
Brochure	Received	n/a	n/a	n/a	84%
	Read	70*	66%*	62%*	87%

*Does not take into account those who did not recall receiving the brochure

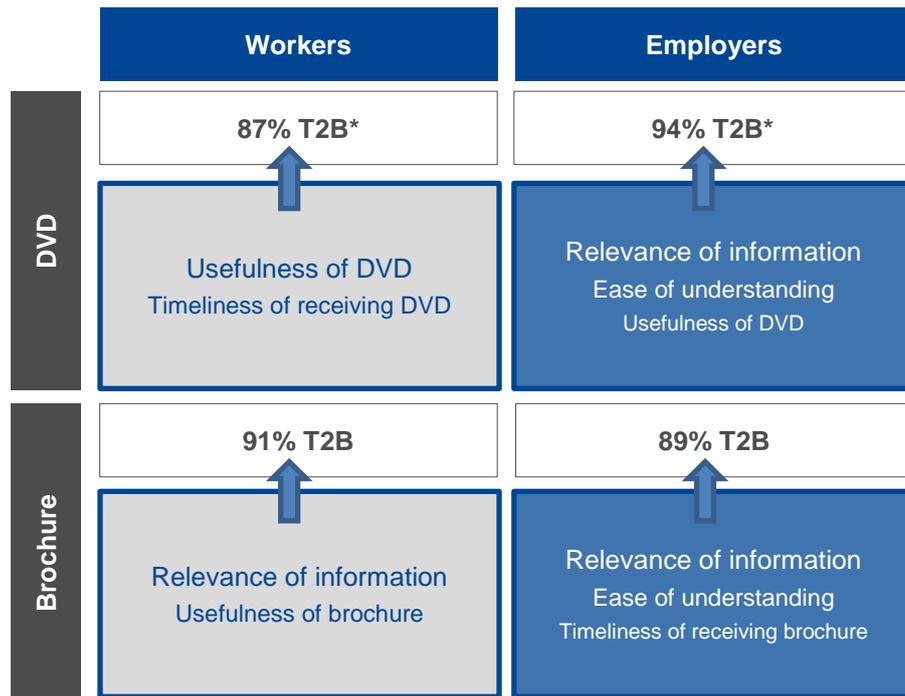
Perhaps not surprisingly the main reason for not having watched the DVD was time constraints (20% among workers and 35% among employers), followed closely by having seen it before/the first time/this was the second part of conciliation (17% of workers and 21% of employers).

The top reason for Employers not having read the brochure was having read it before (39%), while Workers felt the content in the DVD had covered everything (29%) or that they knew the process/previous experience/work in a related field (24%).

As shown in the table below, both Workers and Employers reported high levels of satisfaction with the DVD and the brochure overall.

In the qualitative phase of research, workers described the DVD as easy to understand and providing a broad overview of the process – which was seen as useful. The quantitative research has further validated these findings with the high levels of satisfaction being driven mainly by the usefulness, relevance of information, ease of understanding, and the timing of receiving both the DVD and brochure.

Drivers of satisfaction with the 'Going to Conference' DVD and Brochure



*T2B = %very satisfied/ satisfied

Note: Drivers are listed in order of influence

Phone call and email contact

About one-third (34%) of participants received a phone call from ACCS prior to conference, while about one-quarter (26%) received an email. This contact was most commonly made by the Conciliation Officer (51%) or an administration officer/conciliation support officer (24%).

Workers who speak English were more likely to have received communication from the Conciliation Officer.

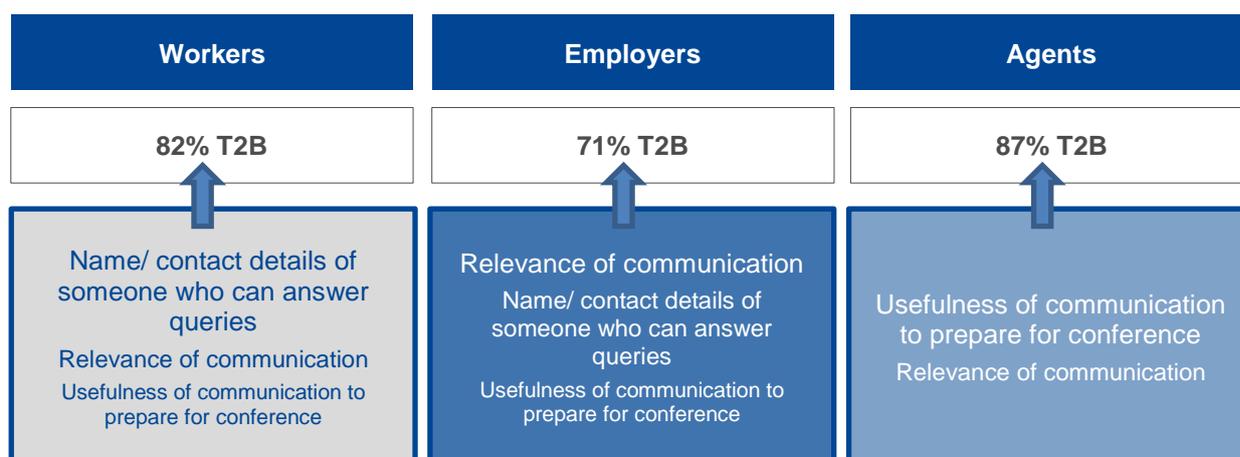
Overall satisfaction with pre-communication

Satisfaction with pre-communication is driven by three key metrics: 1) having the name/contact details of someone who can answer queries, 2) the relevance of communication and 3) the usefulness of communication in preparing for the conference.

More than three-quarters reported feeling satisfied with the pre-conference communication from ACCS. Agents (87%) and Workers (82%) reported higher levels of satisfaction than Employers (71%). Interestingly, as can be seen in the table below, all three participant groups are driven by the same measures in determining their overall satisfaction levels. Namely, having the name/contact details of someone who can answer queries, the relevance of communication and the usefulness of communication in preparing for the conference.

These satisfaction levels further quantify the results in the qualitative phase of research, where Employers identified a need for more detailed information about what the specific dispute is to aid their preparedness and ensure they have all the relevant material with them.

Drivers of satisfaction with the pre-conference communication



*T2B = %very satisfied/ satisfied

Note: Drivers are listed in order of influence

Proactive contact with ACCS

Although visitation to the website is still relatively low, it comprises useful information in helping workers (in particular) to prepare for conference.

Just over half of Workers (55%) and Agents (58%) initiated some form contact with ACCS prior to the conference or outcome, compared to just one-quarter of Employers (25%).

Workers were most likely to have called an ACCS staff member or visited the ACCS website, while Agents were most likely to have had email contact with an ACCS staff member.

About one-fifth of workers reported having visited the ACCS website prior to the conference, with nine in ten reporting to be very satisfied/ satisfied with their experience. During the qualitative phase of research, Workers found the website to comprise useful information in providing an understanding of what to expect. These results have been further quantified through uncovering the drivers of satisfaction with the website, which include the quality of information, ease of finding content and the usefulness of content.

For those participants who initiated phone or email contact, half of Workers felt it required little effort on their behalf to handle the request, though nearly three-quarters of Agents felt it required medium to high effort on their behalf. Workers who felt it required little effort were 100% satisfied with the initiated communication (n=45).

6.3 Conference stage

Attendance

The majority of Agents and Workers attended the conference, though Employers, particularly those with little conciliation experience were significantly less likely to attend.

Agents (100%) and Workers (89%) were more likely to have personally attended the conciliation conference, whilst employers were significantly less likely to have attended (45%). Employers who have only been involved in one conciliation process were less likely to have personally attended the conference.

When asked reasons for not attending, Employers felt they didn't need to, they didn't have to/matter was resolved beforehand or simply were not able to/had work commitments. The qualitative results revealed that Employers

viewed the conciliation process as inflexible with little consideration given to the Employer in terms of setting up a mutually beneficial date/time.

Workers who didn't attend were most likely to suggest that they didn't attend because the dispute was resolved before they needed to attend (78%), legal representative agreed that the dispute could not be resolved at conciliation (13%) and the matter went straight to court (9%). When asked if they would have liked to attend, roughly half (52%) suggested that they would have liked to, predominantly to get things off their chest (58%). Although only a small proportion, this suggests that this is a core motivation and ACCS should consider promoting it as a reason to attend.

Nearly all those who attended the conference attended in person. No one reported to have attended via skype/ video conference.

Day of conference

The conciliation day makes a good *first* impression on workers. Evidence suggests that participants are ultimately satisfied with the pre-conference and post-conference stage, it's the conference overall and process itself where participants are least satisfied and presents the greatest opportunity for improvement overall.

As shown in the table below, the Conciliation day makes a good first impression on Workers, with the Conciliation Officer, value and rating of service all at or approaching the 90% satisfaction/agreement range. The weakest area of satisfaction with the entire process is the conference overall and conference process itself.

Top-2-Box rating of conciliation day – among Workers

	Preparedness	Receptionist greeting**	Conference Process	Conciliation Officer	Value	Service
1 st time	70%	93%	79%	90%	88%	90%
Multiple times	89%	97%	70%	84%	82%	86%
TOTAL	81%	96%	73%	86%	84%	87%

** Receptionist greeting = being greeted in a polite and professional manner

Interaction with receptionist

Nearly nine in ten participants recalled speaking with a receptionist or staff member upon arrival. Employers (80%) were significantly less likely than Workers (90%) and Agents (92%) to recall doing so. All participants reported high levels of satisfaction with their experience with the receptionist and being greeted in a polite and professional way.

Preparedness

Levels of preparedness for conference are relatively high overall, with nearly all Agents claiming to feel prepared.

Agents were more likely than Employers and Workers to have felt prepared or very prepared before entering the conference. Workers were significantly less likely to have felt prepared, but those who have been involved in multiple disputes were more likely to have felt prepared than those who had no previous experience with the conciliation process (89% vs. 70%).

Levels of preparedness for conference

	Workers (n=176)	Employers (n=90)	Agents (n=50)	Total (n=316)
Very prepared/ prepared	81%	85%	98%↑	85%
Very prepared	39%↓	52%	72%↑	48%

(%↑ %↓ reflect statistically significant differences between groups)

Interesting, of the 19% of Workers who had visited the ACCS website prior to conference, they were significantly more likely to feel prepared for conference than those who did not visit the website (94% vs. 78%). This again reiterates the importance of the website being a catalyst of information in helping participants prepare for conference and guiding their expectations.

Drivers of satisfaction

As previously mentioned, there is significant room to improve satisfaction levels with the conference stage, particularly among workers and employers.

Ultimately, overall satisfaction with the conference is driven by satisfaction with the Conciliation Officer and with the conference process itself. As such, the focus needs to be on those metrics which drive satisfaction with the process and Conciliation Officer.

Workers' and Employers' satisfaction levels are driven by relatively similar metrics.

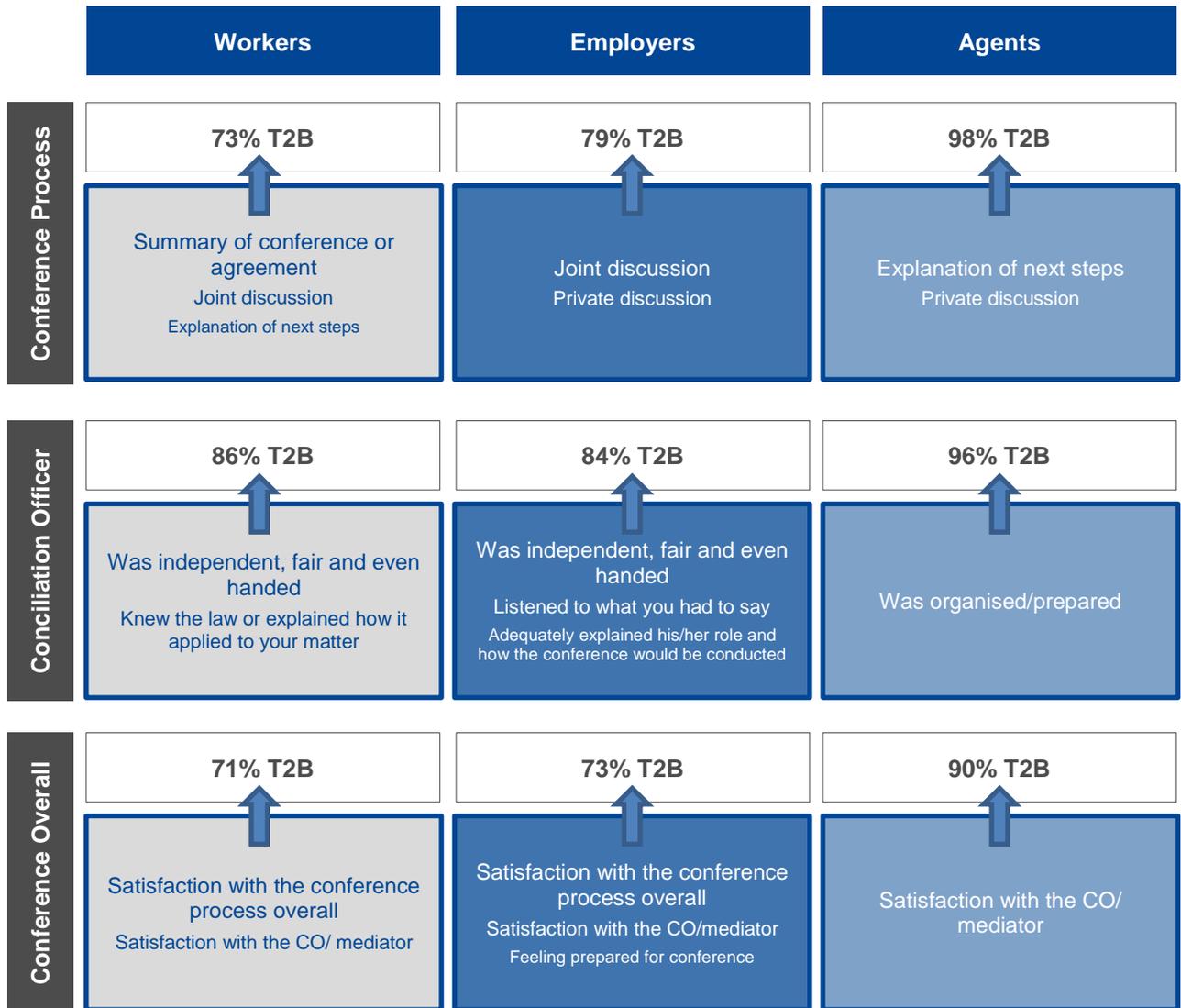
Workers were least satisfied with the joint discussion and summary of conference or outcome aspects of the conference process, both of which drive overall satisfaction with the process for this participant group. This group also revealed in the qualitative phase that they often felt rushed, particularly if there was more than one dispute to discuss.

Employers were also driven by the joint discussion aspect of the conference as well as the opportunity to have a private discussion. The qualitative research revealed that Employers felt the conciliation process was stacked in the Worker's favour and that in many cases, the Conciliation officer had already made up their minds with regard to the outcome.

Knowing the conciliation is independent, fair and even-handed is also crucial in driving satisfaction. In the qualitative phase, there was a general consensus among groups that the Conciliation Officer was fair and even-handed. This has been further quantified in this phase of research with nearly nine in ten participants satisfied with this metric.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Workers who felt prepared going into conference were significantly more likely to be satisfied with the conference process. This again highlights the importance of the pre-communication stage in the conciliation process.

Drivers of satisfaction with the conference process, conciliation officer and conference overall



T2B = % very satisfied/satisfied
 Note: Drivers are listed in order of influence

6.4 Post-conference

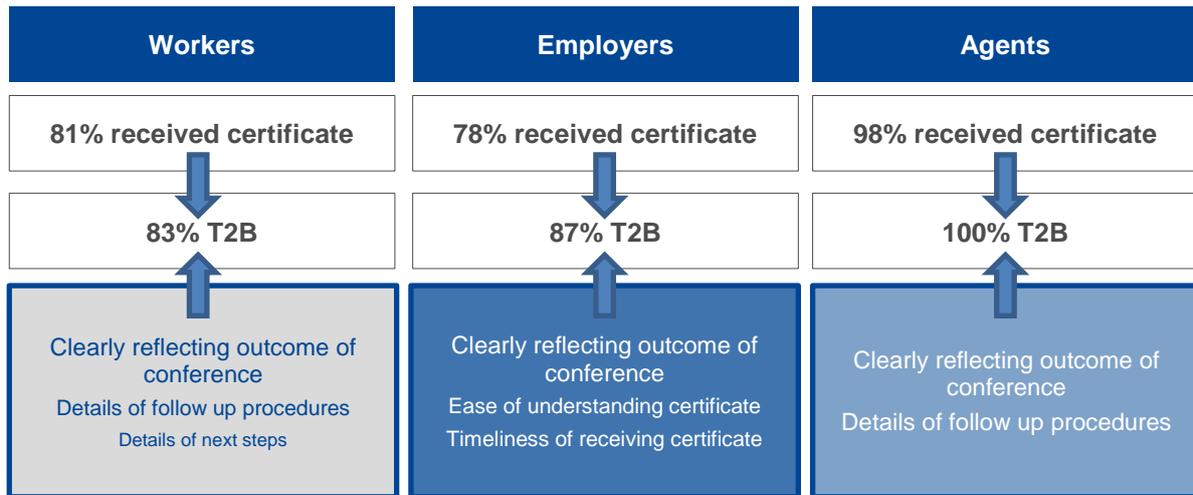
Satisfaction with the outcome certificate is relatively high.

In the qualitative phase of research timeliness, the increase in progress certificates and following up with the required documentation or next steps were recognised as key drivers for influencing levels of satisfaction for all participant groups. The quantitative research further reinforces the importance of these post conference actions, with each of them being cited as a key driver of overall satisfaction with the outcome certificate.

Agents were most likely to recall receiving an outcome certificate, followed by Workers and Employers. Agents were more satisfied than Workers and Employers with all aspects of the certificate, whilst Employers who attended the conference were more likely than those who did not attend to be satisfied with the 'relevance of the information in the certificate'.

'Clearly reflecting the outcome of the conference' was the main driver of satisfaction with the certificate overall across all three participant groups. The lowest satisfaction scores were attributed to 'details of follow up procedures' (74% satisfied) and 'details of next steps' (79% satisfied), both of which are key drivers, particularly among Workers.

Drivers of satisfaction with the outcome certificate



T2B = %very satisfied/satisfied

Note: Drivers are listed in order of influence

Less than two-thirds of participants (63%) report feeling satisfied with the outcome of the conciliation process. Agents (92%) were significantly more satisfied overall with the outcome of the conciliation process than were Workers (61%) and Employers (59%). Employers with 500 or more employees were more likely to be satisfied than were Employers at smaller companies.

Workers who were dissatisfied with the outcome were asked why they were dissatisfied. The top three reasons for dissatisfaction included 'other party/employer/insurer refused responsibility/not willing to negotiate', 'didn't get the outcome I wanted/didn't go in my favour/what I felt entitled to', and 'don't feel I was heard/made no difference what I said/what information I provided/decision was already made.'

Although less than two-thirds (63%) of participants reported feeling satisfied with the outcome of the conciliation process, four-fifths (80%) felt that their expectations had been met or exceeded in the conciliation process. This suggests that participants consider all stages of the conciliation process, not just the outcome, when reflecting on whether or not their expectations had been met.

Workers were least likely overall to feel their expectations had been met or exceeded. As mentioned previously, Workers' initial expectation of the conciliation process was to 'resolve a dispute/get an outcome'; among the 70% of Workers who held this expectation, three-quarters felt their expectations had been met or exceeded.

Impact of conciliation on expectations

	Workers (n=195)	Employers (n=192)	Agents (n=50)	Total (n=437)
Exceeded expectations	16% ↑	5% ↓	6%	10%
Met expectations	58% ↓	78% ↑	88% ↑	70%
Failed to meet expectations	26% ↑	17%	6%	19%

(% ↑ % ↓ reflect statistically significant differences between groups)

Workers who felt prepared prior to conference were significantly more likely to have their expectations met or exceeded in the conciliation process compared to those who did not feel prepared (78% vs. 53%), again reiterating the importance of the quality and content of pre-conference material and contact in helping participants form realistic expectations of the process.