

families ACT

**Annual Report to the Community Services Directorate
2017-2018**

Introduction

This report provides examples of Families ACT’s work throughout the 2017-18 year and an assessment of our performance based on our annual member and stakeholder survey. The survey was conducted through June and July 2018. For each deliverable this and last year’s results are presented side by side for comparison.

This year the number of those who completed our survey rose from 25 to 33. More importantly we received an unprecedented amount of written feedback – the most valuable input for reporting and planning purposes.

The biggest increase in satisfaction with our work was in sector development with the number of respondents who were very satisfied rising from 65% to 79%. In contrast those who were very satisfied with our leadership and innovation fell from 91% to 72%. However as with last year’s survey, no respondents were dissatisfied with Families ACT’s performance, and the majority were very satisfied with our work across all domains. In some areas, such as the provision of information and advice, individual responses varied significantly with a number respondents rating Families ACT as a perfect 10 while others rated our performance at 7.

Given the increased participation rate in this year’s survey, we believe that this year’s results may be a more accurate reflection of member sentiment than in 2017.

1. Advocacy and Media

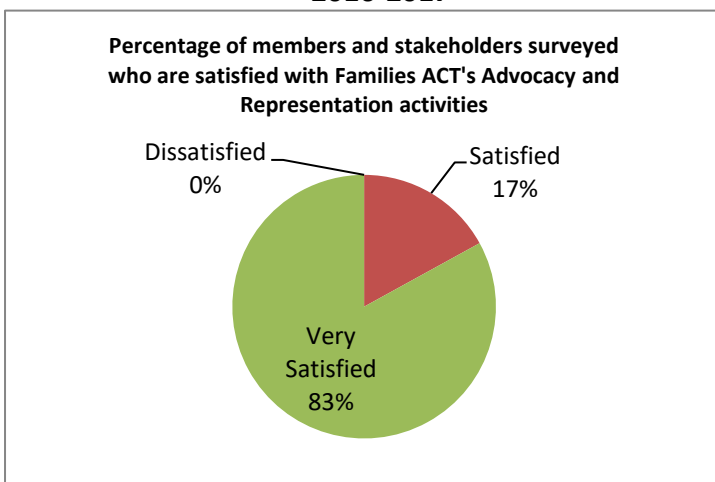
Last year members commented on our improved advocacy. This year we have continued to build our profile adding Twitter to our social media tools. Homelessness and housing affordability remain key concerns for us. As was the case last year, our ACT Budget day media release focussing on this area was picked up by the Canberra Times.

Equally we maintain a strong voice around domestic and family violence, but have recently focussed more on the needs of children and young people as they can be overlooked when providing services to address the issue.

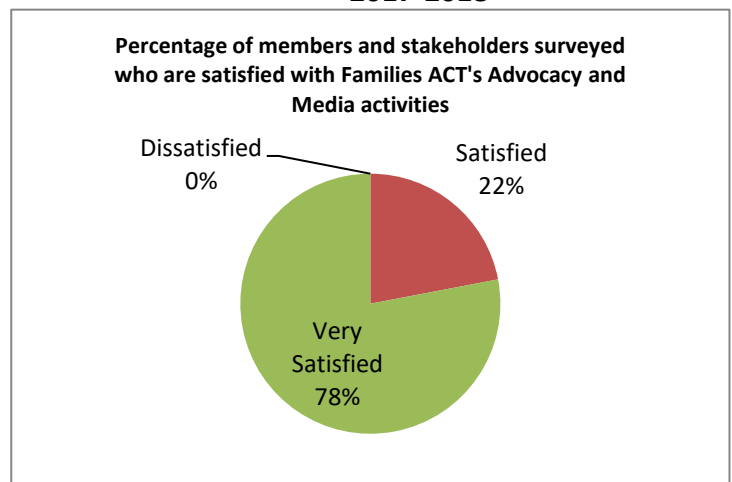
The past year’s advocacy and representation activities have included:

- Involvement in the ACT Government’s Housing Strategy consultation
- A submission to the ACT 2018-190 Budget
- Participation in the ACT Government’s Housing Summit
- An ACT Budget day media release picked up by the Canberra Times.

2016-2017



2017-2018

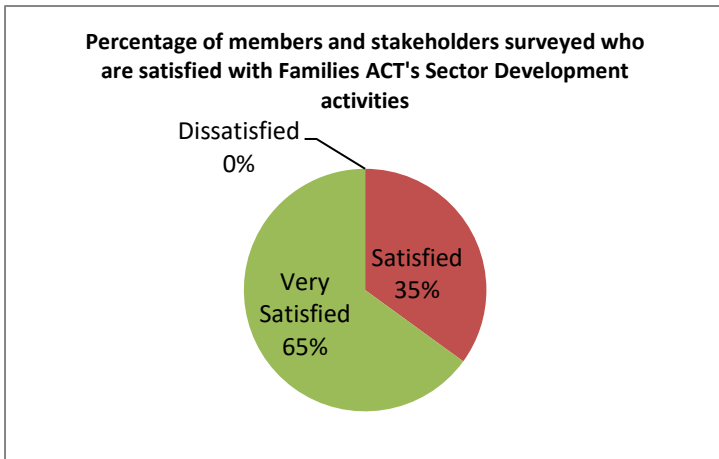


2. Capacity Building Contributing to Sector Development

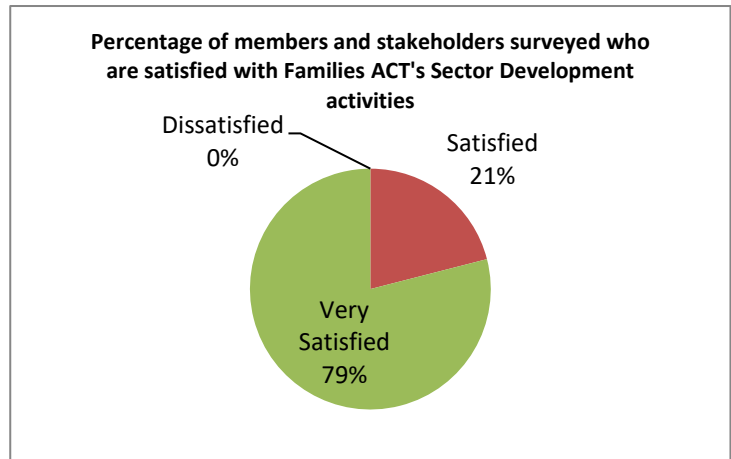
Families ACT aims to support workers and services to build their capacity to work with children, young people and families in the ACT. Our activities in this area have included:

- Delivering 4 workshops on the Practice Framework & Strengthening Families methodology to over 60 staff
- In partnership with the Youth Coalition, delivering a self-care session for the Youth Worker Practice Network
- Designing a case management framework for the CYFSP, which we hope will become a widely used tool across the community and Government sectors
- Playing an active role on the CYFSP workforce development sub-committee.

2016-2017



2017-2018



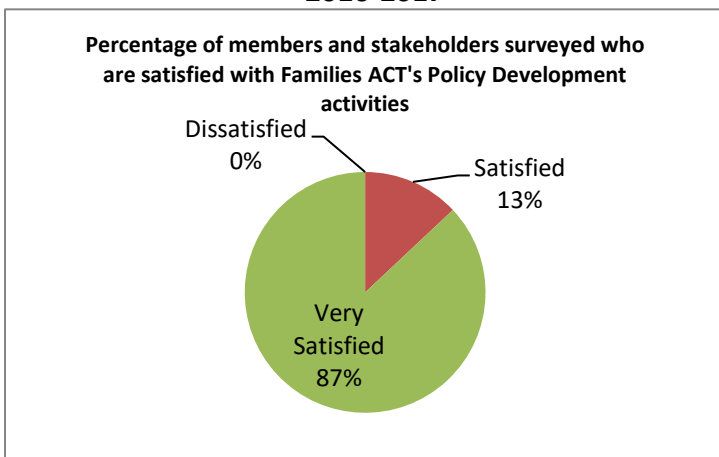
3. Policy Development

Each year Families ACT funds one key piece of research to support its policy agenda. Promotion of preventive and early intervention approaches continues to be the underlying value in all our work. This year we have been working to influence policy change around services for children in the middle years. We believe that this is timely given the ACT Government's Early Intervention by Design initiative. Our second Middle Years forum in November deepened key stakeholder understanding of the critical issues for this age group. We are now consulting with the community sector and Government as we prepare a policy paper. The aim is to agree on very targeted asks for our budget submission in October.

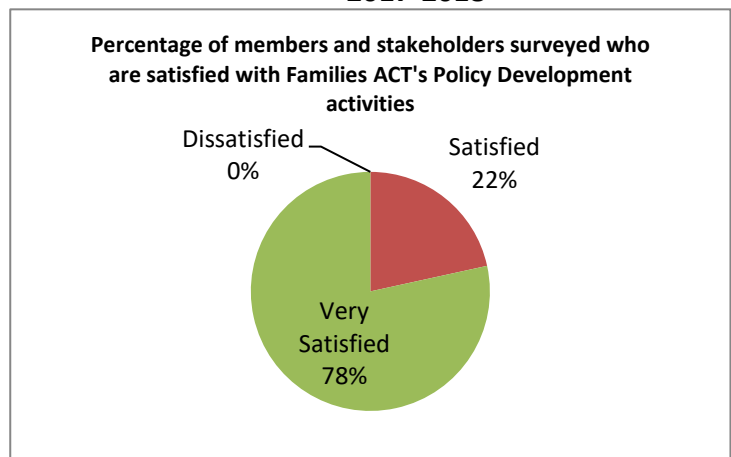
Other activities have included:

- Participation in consultation around the Education Directorate's Off Campus Model.
- Participation in the consultation process for the Early Intervention by Design initiative.

2016-2017



2017-2018



4. Leadership and Innovation

As a peak body, Families ACT has an important role to play in leadership and innovation. Over the past couple of years members have asked for support in the upcoming CYFSP procurement process. One of the ways we have chosen to do this is by assisting in the Youth Coalition's work to develop program logics. This will help member organisations in demonstrating their value propositions to Government.

Other leadership and innovation activities have included:

- A strategic planning process focussing on what our priorities should be to best support our members and ACT Government
- Contributing to an ACTCOSS peaks briefing for the Director General of CSD.

2016-2017



2017-2018

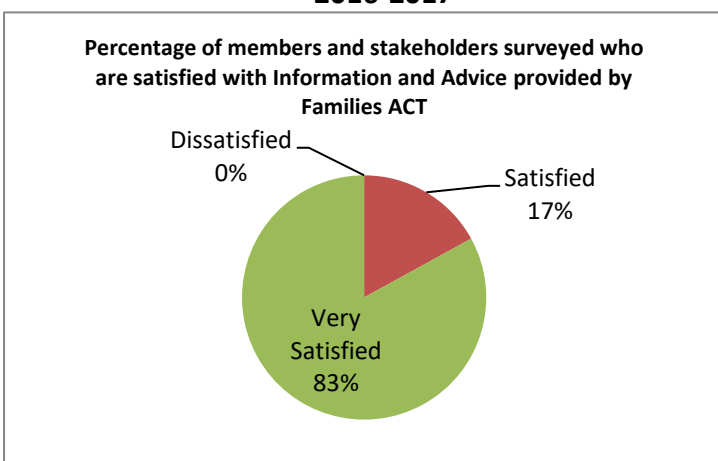


5. Information and Advice

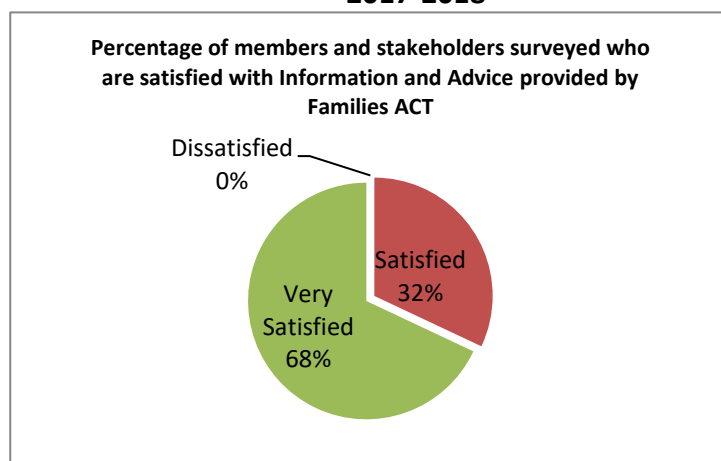
A core function of Families ACT is to communicate information and provide advice to members and stakeholders. Examples of our work in this area have included:

- Member email communications
- Building our YouTube channel
- Establishing a presence on Twitter
- Redeveloping our website
- Creating a Blog
- Participating in networks and forums.

2016-2017



2017-2018



6. Collaborative Approaches

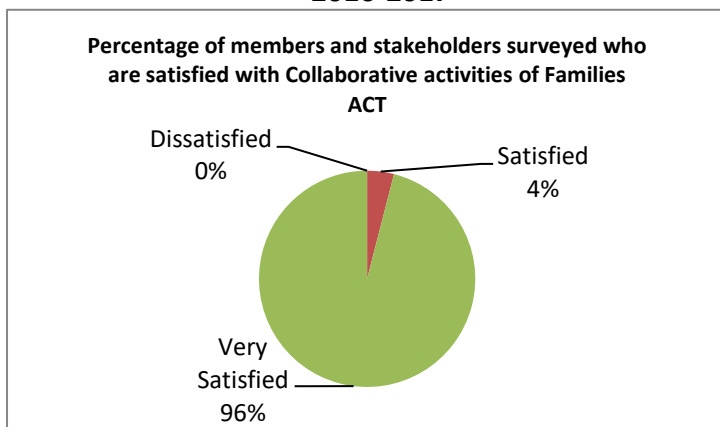
Families ACT supports the development of collaborative approaches and partnerships with members, peak bodies, government agencies and other services. Since our co-location with the Youth Coalition (YCACT) in 2014 we have benefitted greatly from the arrangement in terms of support. This year we will be supporting ACT Shelter to co-locate with us, growing the collective skillset that will make all three organisations stronger.

Other partnership activities have included:

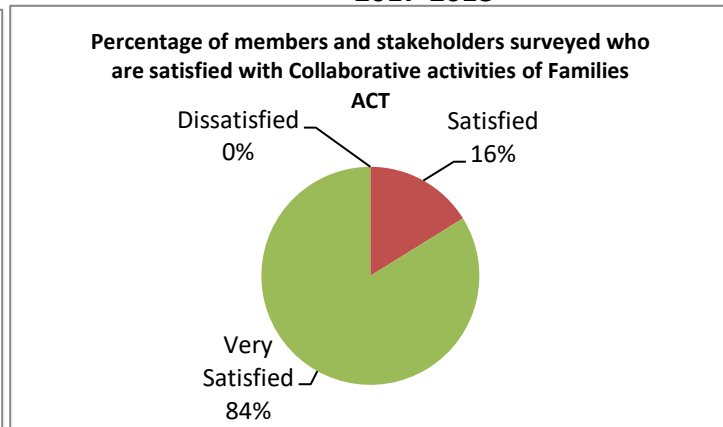
- Continuing work with ACTCOSS on a united community sector advocacy to address homelessness and affordable housing
- Working with the Domestic Violence Prevention Council (DVPC) to prepare for their Extraordinary Meeting on the Needs of Children and Young People Experiencing Domestic and Family Violence
- In partnership with YCACT and DVPC, holding a joint National Families Week seminar on the approaches that work best for supporting children and young people experiencing domestic and family violence
- Sitting on interview panels for our members to assist with their staff recruitment processes
- Supporting BIG HART's Project O 2017 Canberra Colourathon for young people.

In December last year Families ACT received a Yogies Staff Acknowledgement Award in appreciation of support provided to the Youth Coalition.

2016-2017



2017-2018



Member Feedback

The breakdown of our Annual Member Survey responses was:

- staff member of a Families ACT member agency - 36.36%
- staff member of another non-government organisation - 48.48%
- staff member from a government agency - 15.15%

Of these respondents;

- frontline worker comprised 3.03%
- program coordinators or team leaders comprised 24.24%
- program managers comprised 24.24%
- senior managers comprised 9.09%
- directors or executive officers comprised 39.39%

Strengths

Feedback from survey respondents was very positive. Some of the comments received were:

- Continue with quality, in depth, focussed work. FACT does a great job of not trying to cover everything in a haphazard way, but covering a small number of significant things well. Continuing this should be a priority.
- Families ACT makes a significant contribution to the sector in terms of sector development, policy and advocacy. With very limited resources, Families ACT has built strong partnerships and collaborated effectively and made a positive impact which is a credit to the commitment and quality of its staff.
- Families ACT continues to support the child, youth and family sector well, either directly or through partnerships with like organisations. I believe Families ACT is going from strength to strength and as the organisation matures, it is reflected in the outputs of the organisation (this being training opportunities, policy papers etc) and the partnerships and advocacy the organisation fosters to improve collaboration and outcomes for the whole Canberra community.
- We think that Families ACT has brought a different perspective to the work of the already established peak bodies, being more specific in addressing the daily work of community services and the direct needs and reality of people who are vulnerable, have considerable needs and that seek to access social support and other services.
- Great to see the work that FACT is doing with the Youth Co - strengthening the collaborative/integrated work between the two. The possibility of adding Shelter ACT to the O'Connor stable would build greater strength!
- With the level of resourcing available to Families ACT I think the quantity and quality of their work is admirable!
- It has been a pleasure working with such a small but effective peak
- Your professionalism and work is outstanding, achieving many high quality outcomes.
- Thank you for everything you do to improve the sector for the people in the community
- Many thanks for your careful and expert representation.

Areas for Improvement

While no one area was singled out as needing improvement, suggestions included:

- More campaigning
- Advocacy for the recognition of the needs of children to be considered independently from their caretakers
- Continuing to raise your profile in the media and community would be good. FACT has a lot of expertise and people need to know more about what you do
- I really benefit from attending forums and focus groups, so maybe an increase in how often they run.

Priorities

Respondents identified policy and advocacy activities as the main priorities for Families ACT to work on. The following areas were mentioned specifically:

- Policy development in relation to social housing
- Progressing the conversation on the middle years with a focus on a policy paper which sets the intention clearly of what the ACT community needs to achieve as a collective to improve outcomes for these children and young people, and their families.
- Advocacy and policy development on the reforms and impact of government decisions on families, in particular, on the children in those families whose voices are often not heard
- Advocacy about the importance of local providers in service procurement support sector in responding to procurement
- Advocacy around child protection issues
- Advocacy around domestic violence.

Conclusion

This year all members and stakeholders who responded to our survey suggest were satisfied or very satisfied with Families ACT's performance. Respondent feedback continues to provide valuable input into our planning, however it is important to recognise that in some cases the work that members would like to see expanded on and prioritised by Families ACT currently exceeds the organisation's capacity. Families ACT's Board and Advisory Council will therefore need to make decisions on which areas to prioritise in future planning.