

Objectives and Outcomes of Outreach Program

Objective 1: Identification and Understanding of Consumers

- 1.1 *Performance indicator: ACE will liaise with peak disability bodies within Australia and suggest the formation of collaborative arrangements or information sharing.*

Australian Communication Exchange (ACE) has consistently complied with this performance indicator across the contract period. It has formed strategic alliances with many organisations in the deaf and disability community.

- 1.2 *Performance indicator: ACE will liaise with relevant government, academic and research institutions with a view to establishing relationships to share information and research activities.*

ACE has consistently complied with this performance indicator across the contract period. It has formed strategic alliances and relationships with relevant academic and research institutions, including the Office of Hearing, the Australian Communications Industry Forum (ACIF) and the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO).

Objective 2: Consumer and Community Awareness of the NRS

- 2.1 *Performance indicator: ACE will conduct metropolitan and regional information sessions in each significant Australian population centre during the year. At least 50 per cent of session attendees will be people who are not currently regular users of the ACE/NRS when they attend the meeting.*

ACE has consistently achieved well in excess of the required level of new users at their regular information sessions, across the contract period. Importantly, the level of new users attending information sessions has been maintained over time.

- 2.2 *Performance indicator: At least 75 per cent of participants will rate the “overall effectiveness” of the community information sessions as “useful” or better on the session evaluation forms returned at the completion of each session by Participants.*

ACE has consistently achieved the level of satisfaction of information sessions. High proportions of attendees agree that the sessions are ‘useful’ or better, across all years.

- 2.3 *Performance indicator: The number of relayed calls made by the relay users who have a speech and/or hearing impairment will increase by at least 10 per cent through the year (as measured by the number of Speech to Speech Relay (SSR), Voice Carry Over (VCO) and Hearing Carry Over (HCO) calls as compared to the totals for the previous year).*

In 1999–00 and 2000–01 ACE has only partially complied with this standard. Data for the SSR and 2001–02 is not yet available.

2.4 *Performance indicator: The number of new users of the NRS will increase by at least 5 per cent in at least six of the eight Australian States and Territories as compared to the previous year (as measured by the number of unique CLI telephone numbers that call the NRS for each State).*

This is designed to ensure that growth of the NRS has an even geographical spread. ACE achieved this standard in 1998–99. The measure of the indicator was changed for the 2000–01 and 2001–02 plans, moving to a measure using States. ACE failed to achieve the required increase in new users in both 2000–01 and 2001–02. During 2000–01, no State or Territory recorded an increase in new users; with the exception of South Australia, all States and Territories recorded a decrease in new users of at least 40 per cent. During 2001–02 only Western Australia (nineteen per cent) and the ACT (three per cent) recorded increases, with all other States showing decreases. ACE believes that this drop in new users is due to the uptake of SMS and e-mail technologies. They also note that this trend is consistent with trends in the UK.

2.5 *Performance indicator: The number of calls made by relay users who are not primary consumers (that is people who are not deaf, and don't have a hearing and/or speech impairment) will increase by at least five per cent through the year (as measured by the number of voice calls to the Relay Service).*

The growth of voice calls has been mixed over the contract period. ACE achieved the required growth during 1998–99 and 1999–00, however during both 2000–01 and 2001–02 the number of voice calls fell. ACE believes that this is primarily due to the uptake of SMS and e-mail.

Objective 3 Education and Effective Use of Services

3.1 *Performance indicator: At least 75 per cent of relay users rate themselves as “competent users of the service” or believe they have adequate support mechanisms to assist them in improving their use of the service (as measured by customer self ratings in the quarterly Customer Satisfaction Surveys).*

This indicator uses responses from customer satisfaction surveys to gauge the competency of relay users in using the service. ACE had consistently achieved the required standard for this indicator, with high rates for all four years and a gradual increase from 1998–99 to 2001–02.

3.2 *Performance indicator: At least 80 per cent of participants rate the “overall effectiveness” of the training activity undertaken as “useful” or better on the session evaluation forms returned at the completion of each session by participants. Should this target not be achieved, a review of session structures and methods will be undertaken.*

ACE has consistently achieved a high standard for this indicator, with close to all participants in training activities rating the overall effectiveness of the training as useful or higher.

3.3 *Performance indicator: Increased use of ACE information and support services as measured by the following indicators. Registration for training and information sessions. Number of telephone Hotline requests for information. Number of hits on the ACE Internet site. Number of brochures, fact sheets and information kits distributed.*

- *Registration for training and information sessions.*

ACE has failed to achieve an increase in registration for training and information services during 2000–01 and 2001–02. During 2001–02 registrations fell by eight per cent from the previous year, while in 2000–01 there was only a marginal increase from the previous year in one quarter. This record is a contrast from the first two years of the contract where there were strong increases in registrations for training and information sessions, particularly in 1999–2000.

- *Number of telephone Hotline requests for information.*

ACE has consistently achieved increases in telephone Hotline requests across the contract period, with steady growth in requests across all years.

- *Number of hits on the ACE Internet site.*

ACE has experienced consistent growth in ‘hits’ on its website since the introduction of monitoring of activity on the site in September 1998. In particular, during 2001–02 there was a 153 per cent increase in visitors to the website from the previous year.

- *Number of brochures, fact sheets and information kits distributed.*

ACE has failed to achieve an increase in two of the three years that it has been able to be measured (in 1998–99 there was no comparable data from the previous year). In particular, during 2001–02 there was a significant decrease of 43 per cent. ACE believes that this is due to increased use of the website, therefore more users and potential users are getting information electronically.

Objective 4 Quality and Responsiveness of Services

In order to continually meet the needs of consumers, ACE must actively seek consumer feedback and make changes to practices based on this information. ACE’s performance in achieving this objective is reviewed using the following performance indicators.

4.1 *Performance indicator: Customer Service toll free telephone lines will be attended during business hours (for each time zone) on every working day, except public holidays (in Queensland).*

ACE has consistently complied with this performance indicator by providing a Customer Service line available during business hours in all time zones throughout Australia. This service has been in place for the entire period of the contract.

4.2 *Performance indicator: Achievement of complaint resolution target response times:*

- *Complaints will receive a response within one working day of receipt of the complaint;*
- *Persons registering a complaint will receive a written or telephoned formal response within four working days of the complaint being resolved, or a determination that an immediate resolution is not available.*

ACE has advised the ACA that it has complied with this indicator in each of the four contract years to date. During 1999–00, ACE conducted a survey of 100 complainants. The sample results indicated that 94 per cent of complaints received were responded to within one working day.

4.3 *Performance indicator: Overall customer satisfaction with relay usage will be positive (measured as a ratio of compliments, expressions of satisfaction to the number of negative comments or complaints that relay users spontaneously offer – sampled over a set time period and reported quarterly).*

ACE has achieved a positive ratio of positive to negative comments to the service, although there has been a decline in this ratio over time. The ACA has raised some concerns about this measure. The measure records expressions of satisfaction, therefore the nature of data sampling means that not all respondents chose to make a comment.

4.4 *Performance indicator: Results of Customer Satisfaction Surveys to be delivered with each quarterly report. These reports will highlight areas of concern that require attention, and indicate ACE's plans to address the issues raised.*

ACE consistently complied with this performance indicator by conducting surveys for each quarter and providing these to the ACA.

Further information on Service Standards and compliance with the requirements of the current contract can be obtained from the annual ACA National Relay Service Performance Reports from 1998–99 to 2001–02, which can be found at http://www.aca.gov.au/consumer_info/disability_services/national_relay_service/reports/index.htm.