



**THE SOCIAL**  
RESEARCH CENTRE

# **PERSONAL ADVISER EVALUATION RESEARCH**

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**PERSONAL ADVISER / JET ADVISER SURVEY  
RESEARCH REPORT – FINAL**

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## Executive Summary

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This report presents selected findings from the survey of Personal Advisers (PAs) and JET Advisers (JAs) in June 2004 and associated qualitative research among PAs/JAs undertaken as part of the broader evaluation of the Personal Adviser (PA) initiative.

The main PA intervention is a Participation Planning interview. The aim of this interview is to encourage targeted customers (such as Parenting Payment customers, mature age job seekers and New Start Allowance (NSA) customers with an activity test exemption) towards economic participation and greater self-reliance.

PAs/JAs are generally positive in their views regarding the impact of the PA intervention with the most beneficial elements of the intervention considered to be:

- the provision of opinions and ideas to set customers on pathways they may not have otherwise pursued;
- more appropriate referrals;
- motivation and encouragement and the positive reinforcement offered by the Participation Planning process;
- the identification and acknowledgement of problems and barriers as a first step towards overcoming these; and
- increased customer awareness of the services available to them and their obligations and how to meet them.

There was also a perception among PAs/JAs that they were showing many of these customers the “*human face*” of Centrelink for the first time.

The intervention was generally viewed by PAs/JAs as effective in fostering increased social participation with 53% of PAs/JAs regarding it as ‘very effective’ in this regard. Survey respondents were less optimistic about the impact of the intervention in affecting long term attitudinal change among customers who didn’t really want to work with 38% of PAs/JAs regarding the intervention as ‘very effective’ in achieving this end.

PAs/JAs were mainly of the view that they had the most success (in terms of participation outcomes) with Parenting Payment customers. The “pre-retirement” attitude and accompanying sense of entitlement that some mature age NSA customers brought to the intervention was seen as an inhibiting factor for this customer group, as was the complexity and multiplicity of the problems faced by some of the NSA (incapacitated) and Better Assessment at Risk (BA at Risk) customer groups.

Although PAs/JAs felt they were less likely to influence social or economic participation outcomes for Mature age customers, NSA (incapacitated) customers or BA at Risk customers, there was still a feeling that the intervention was “effective” for these groups in other ways. For example, confirming obligations and entitlements for mature age customers and providing a “road map” for the BA at Risk and NSA (incapacitated) customers.

The implementation and design factors (as distinct from customer-based factors) seen by PAs/JAs as limiting the effectiveness of the intervention were:

*Lack of prior knowledge of the purpose of the PA interview among interview attendees:* PAs/JAs felt customers’ lack of prior awareness about the purpose and intent of the PA interview hampered disclosure and limited engagement, therefore limiting the effectiveness of the intervention. Day 1 servicing for mature age customers was seen as a major contributing factor to this initial lack of engagement.

*Lack of specialist expertise:* The primary role of PAs/JAs is that of referrals agent and as a result PAs/JAs sometimes feel they lack the specialist skills to adequately respond to, or appropriately refer, customers presenting with severe non-vocational barriers. The inability to refer customers to a Centrelink Psychologist without customer consent is felt to exacerbate this problem as does the perceived *lack of availability of referral services* and the *protracted waiting times for some services*.

*Inappropriate Targeting:* A flow on effect from the above is that PAs/JAs feel that they are sometimes being asked to deal with customers that shouldn’t have been referred to them in the first place. Related factors that come into play here include a perceived *lack of control over the appointments process* and being “*used as a dumping ground for all the too hard cases*”. The suggestion put forward for overcoming this issue as well as the dead weight issue (i.e. customers referred to PAs/JAs that don’t really need help) was the introduction of some sort of *pre-screening* process. This could possibly involve an enhanced role for Centrelink Customer Service Officers (CSOs) or a group screening process prior to referral.

*The inability of Job Network members to refer customers back to PAs/JAs:* This was regarded by PAs/JAs as a flaw in the current process because in order for a customer to be referred back to a PA/JA they would have to incur a breach penalty. There was a feeling among some PAs/JAs that back referrals might lead to better outcomes than having a customer placed with a Job Network member who didn’t really see how they could help them.

*More time for developing and maintaining relationships with the local service network:* Over two thirds of PAs/JAs (68%) were dissatisfied with the time available to them to develop and maintain relationships with local service providers.

The improvement suggestions put forward by PAs/JAs included:

- adopting a pre-referral screening process;
- improving prior awareness of the purpose and intent of the intervention among customers;
- streamlining internal and external referral pathways and enabling ‘back referrals’ from the Job Network;

- avoiding the amount of repetition / over-servicing. Customers having to tell their story over and over;
- greater availability of referral services - especially specialised services for mature age NSA customers and drug and alcohol rehabilitation services; and
- increasing staff numbers and funding to support the PA function and the associated service infrastructure.

# 1. Introduction

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## 1.1 Background

This report presents selected findings from the survey of PAs and JET Advisers (the PA/JA Survey) undertaken by the Social Research Centre on behalf of the Department of Family And Community Services (FaCS)<sup>1</sup>. The report also incorporates results from a workshop among PAs and JET Advisers held at the outset of the evaluation process<sup>2</sup> and a number of in-depth telephone interviews with PAs and JET Advisers to inform the design of the quantitative survey instrument.

The PA evaluation methodology is designed to provide information on the impact of the intervention among targeted income support customers. The research among PAs and JET Advisers is one component of a broader PA evaluation methodology which also includes:

- 40 in depth interviews among a sample of BA at Risk customers, and
- a 2-wave longitudinal telephone survey of 3,000 customers who participated in a PA interview (with the telephone interviews taking place at approximately 6 weeks and then six months after the PA intervention).

PAs were introduced as part of the Australians Working Together (AWT) package of welfare reforms. Located in Centrelink, PAs are a major part of an enhanced and individualised approach to service delivery and feature in Centrelink's role as the gateway to the social support system.

The role of the PA/JA is to work with targeted income support customers to help them develop individualised strategies to increase economic and social participation, achieve greater self-reliance and contribute to their community. The primary method of delivering this service and engaging with the targeted customers is through a Participation Planning interview.

The JET Adviser role, to provide Jobs, Education and Training support to Parenting Payment customers and mature aged job seekers, pre-dated the introduction of the PA initiative. Under the current arrangements, JET Advisers provide services to Parenting Payment customers whose youngest child is aged 13 to 15 years with the other customers groups being serviced by PAs.

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<sup>1</sup> The area commissioning this research was transferred to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) in December 2004 as part of the Machinery of Government changes.

<sup>2</sup> The workshop, held on 2 March 2004, involved 11 PAs/JAs from across Victoria, 2 Centrelink National Support Office staff and relevant staff from FaCS and the Social Research Centre.

Income support recipients targeted for the PA intervention include mature age job seekers (aged 50 years and over); Parenting Payment customers with a youngest child aged 6 years or over; new claimants of NSA and Youth Allowance (YA) who have recently been released from prison, are Indigenous, or are exempt from the Activity Test due to special circumstances<sup>3</sup>, and NSA recipients who have received an Activity Test exemption on the grounds of medical incapacity.

As part of their role PAs are required to conduct pre-interview research and preparation, make a detailed assessment of customer needs, identify opportunities for greater participation, match customers with appropriate types of assistance, motivate customers to take up referrals and activities, negotiate a participation plan and undertake referral, monitoring and follow-up activities.

The PA intervention had a staggered introduction. From September 2002, mandatory PA interviews were introduced for:

- Parenting Payment customers whose youngest child was aged 12 years and over;
- NSA and YA recipients who are activity test exempt due to a medical condition, if the client was assessed to be of high risk;
- Indigenous NSA and YA customers, and
- Activity Test Exempt non incapacitated customers such as homeless people, refugees, persons facing a major personal crisis and persons recently released from prison.

At the same time, voluntary PA interviews were also available for:

- Parenting Payment customers whose youngest child was aged 6 to 11 years, and
- Mature age customers aged 50 years and over on Mature Age Allowance, Partner Allowance and Widow Allowance.

From September 2003, mandatory PA interviews were introduced for:

- Parenting Payment customers (partnered and single) with youngest child aged 6 to 12 years;
- Mature age customers aged 50 years and over on NSA; and
- New claimants of Widow Allowance.

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<sup>3</sup> For example, refugees have a 26 week exemption from the Activity Test and some customers undergoing a major personal crises are exempted from the Activity Test.

Also from September 2003, mandatory participation requirements were introduced for Parenting Payment customers whose youngest child was aged 13 and over and more flexible requirements introduced for mature age NSA customers. In addition to attending a PA interview, these customers must do a part-time activity. This activity may be up to 150 hours over every 26 weeks.

## 1.2 About this Survey

The PA/JA Survey comprised 583 interviews with PAs and JET Advisers from a total population of 649 at the time of interview (June 2004).

In order to maximise the information gained from the survey without imposing too great a 'burden' on respondents it was decided that approximately half the sample would be asked to go through an extended interview of approximately 27 minutes duration and half would go through a shorter version of the interview (approximately 15 minutes in duration).

The broad topic areas of the survey included:

- PA/JA employment history (all respondents);
- perceptions regarding the timing of the intervention (short Interview only);
- perceptions regarding various aspects of the referrals process (short interview only);
- perceptions regarding the various impacts of the intervention (all respondents); and
- demographic information (all respondents).

## 1.3 About this Report

The PA/JA Survey was designed to collect information on the characteristics of PAs and JET Advisers and to tap into their experiences of working with the different PA customer groups. The broad level evaluation questions addressed by this element of the evaluation include:

- the extent to which the current participation planning processes are appropriate for the targeted customer groups;
- the extent to which the PA process can be individually tailored to suit each customer's personal circumstances;
- the effectiveness of PAs and JET Advisers in supporting increased participation among customers;
- the extent to which PAs and JET Advisers engage with their local service system to provide assistance to customers;
- the factors that determine the successful linking of customers with the Job Network; and
- the identification of any unintended effects arising from the PA intervention.

## 2. Generalised Perceptions of Customer Groups

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Workshop participants were asked to characterise their relationship with, and provide their overall impressions of the customer groups they mainly dealt with (i.e. mature age job seekers, Parenting Payment customers and Activity Test Exempt (incapacitated) customers)<sup>4</sup>. The generalised impressions which emerged are summarised below.

### 2.1 Mature Age Customers

September 2003 signalled the advent of NSA customers aged 50 years and over being directed to PAs for a Participation Planning interview.

The general consensus among workshop participants was that having to deal with so many mature age NSA customers (accounting for an estimated 50-60% of their workload) had a detrimental impact on their ability to help the customers that most wanted their help<sup>5</sup>.

*“Can’t get to the customers where we can make a difference.”*

*“Can’t get to the voluntary parents.”*

*“More of a compliance role now with the introduction of the mature age customers.”*

PAs attributed some of the difficulties they encountered in effectively helping mature age customers to the sometimes unexpected and often demoralising situation that brought these customers to Centrelink. Some mature age customers never thought they would be reliant upon Centrelink payments and had trouble adapting to their changed circumstances. Workshop participants expressed a view that mature aged customers felt as though it was their entitlement to receive payments without any reciprocal participation requirements.

*“Some have worked for a long time and are close to retirement so they think they are owed.”*

*“Some take a package, move up here to retire (Regional area) and are shocked to find they have an obligation to work.”*

*“Some are grandparents with other family responsibilities and would rather do community involvement - difficult to find full time work.”*

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<sup>4</sup> Views regarding the perceived effectiveness of the intervention for Better Assessment at Risk customers were not directly canvassed in the PA/JA workshop. The views of Better Assessment at Risk customers regarding the intervention are contained in the report “Better Assessment at Risk Customer Group : Qualitative Research Report”.

<sup>5</sup> The clear implication being that many mature age NSA customers did not necessarily want / need the type of assistance being offered by PAs.

PAs mentioned that the service levels demanded by mature-aged customers could be greater than those of other customer groups. The general feeling was that mature age customers required higher levels of ongoing contact and support, often with purely administrative issues ... “...you’re **my** buddy, **my** personal adviser. I’ll come to you for everything.”

## 2.2 Parenting Payment Customers

The PAs who attended the workshop generally felt that Parenting Payment customers were the most likely of the customer groups to achieve positive outcomes.

*“Parents have untapped potential.”*

*“... my volunteer parents – the part of the job where we can really make a difference.”*

*“If you get a parent you will eventually get an outcome.”*

For ‘volunteer parents’ the PAs reported being “...like a tour guide for them – it’s all about choice, guide them through all the things and develop a Participation Plan.”

Despite the PAs’ largely positive impression of Parenting Payment customers, there was still a view that some partnered Parenting Payments customers are “quite comfortable in their role as homemaker” and therefore less inclined towards economic participation.

## 2.3 NSA (Incapacitated) Customers

The NSA (incapacitated) customers referred to PAs are generally those who have been granted an exemption from the activity test or have had their application for exemption rejected by a Centrelink Assessment Officer or Disability Officer yet are considered to be at risk of long term income support dependency. While some of these customers recover from their temporary incapacity relatively quickly, others have much more complex and severe barriers to economic participation.

In particular PAs found NSA (incapacitated) customers with barriers of an emotional or psychological nature very challenging:

*“There’s more mental health customers than I ever imagined.”*

*“Incaps are a nightmare. Can’t refer to a Psychologist unless a customer says they have a problem. We are not trained – can’t put anything onto a Plan or notes that might offend the customer.”*

It was difficult for PAs to know what to do with these customers.

*‘A lot of the medical certificate group and a lot of the mature age are not Job Network ready.’*

*“And you can’t refer them to the Job Network because they’d just get breached.”*

## 3. Perceived Effectiveness of the Intervention

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Asking PAs/JAs to evaluate the effectiveness of the PA intervention is somewhat akin to asking them to evaluate the effectiveness of their own role. While this approach provides valuable insights into how the intervention can be improved, it is important that the inevitable bias associated with this perspective is borne in mind when considering the results presented in this section.

Another factor to be taken into account in interpreting PA's/JA's views of the perceived effectiveness of the intervention is that PAs/JAs are largely relying on their *impressions* of how effective the intervention is. They receive very little in the way of direct feedback about the outcomes of their customers.

### 3.1 Most Beneficial Aspects of the Intervention

The prevailing view of the workshop was that customers benefited from the intervention in a variety of practical ways including:

- via increased awareness of their options
- more information about their obligations and how to meet them
- due to the motivational impact of the interview, and
- via appropriate referrals.

Ultimately, identifying suitable goals and working with customers to develop a plan for achieving these goals was considered the most important and beneficial aspect of the PA/JA interview.

The reasons why PAs/JAs regarded these particular aspects of the intervention as the most beneficial stem from:

- customers becoming less confronted and/or more assured of their options
- the identification of new options which can lead to renewed self-confidence / self-esteem
- the realisation among customers of the services and support available to them, and
- the tangible benefits of an appropriate referral.

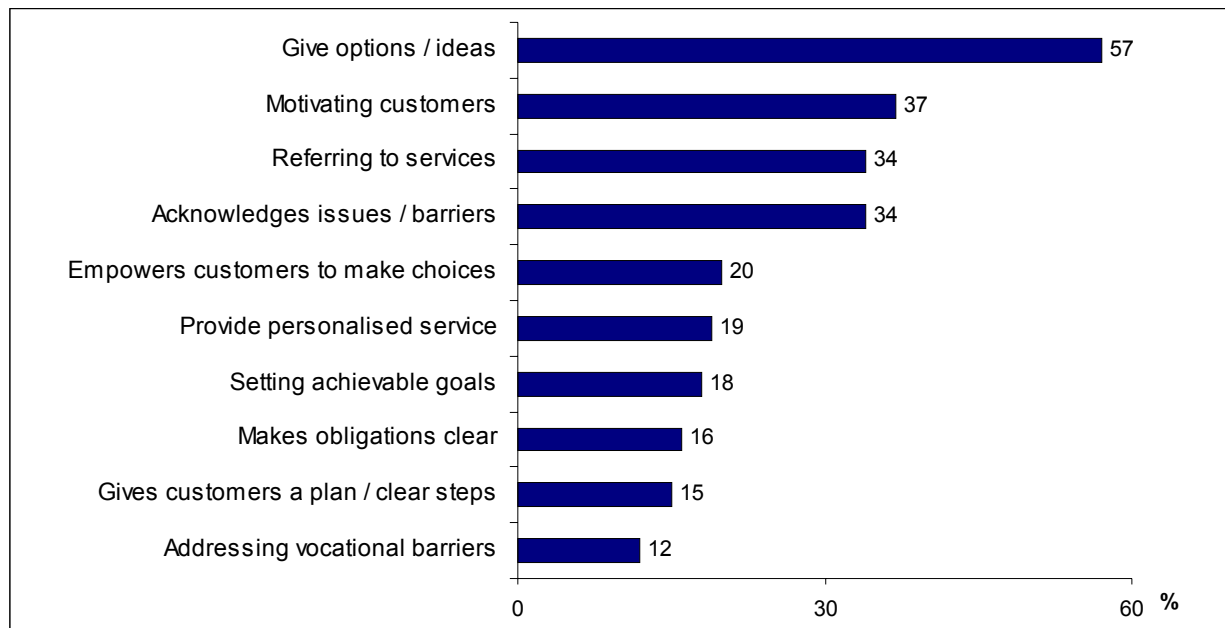
While PAs felt that even *“planting the seed”* was of benefit, this view was tempered by the realisation that for some customers any motivational impacts would be short-lived and for others, not at all.

*“We act as a broker to provide the right referral – it’s like a gateway – but we’re not there to take them through it.”*

The quantitative survey largely reflects these workshop findings with the most beneficial aspects of the intervention considered to be (Figure 1):

- giving customers options and ideas (57%)
- motivating customers (37%)
- referring customers to other services (34%); and
- acknowledging customers issues/barriers (34%).

**Figure 1: Most beneficial aspects of the PA interview.**



Base: Short Interview (n=583).

### 3.2 Perceived Effectiveness of the Intervention by Customer Group

The qualitative research among PAs and JET Advisers revealed two main criteria by which PAs/JAs assess the benefit of the intervention. For some, this judgement was based on helping those with the *greatest perceived need* (i.e. NSA (incapacitated) customers and the BA at Risk customers) and for others the beneficial impact of the intervention was determined by the extent to which favourable participation outcomes were achieved by the various customer groups.

This duality provides a context for the PA/JA Survey results which show that the customers who were thought to benefit the most from the intervention were: compulsory parents (i.e. those with a youngest child aged 13 years and over who are required to attend a Participation Planning interview and undertake an approved activity); followed in descending order by voluntary parents, mature age customers, the BA at Risk customer group and NSA (incapacitated) customers. The inverse applies when PAs/JAs were asked to nominate the customer groups that they thought benefited least from the intervention.

**Table 1: Perceived effectiveness by Customer Group.**

Customer Group	Most benefit	Least Benefit
	n=583	n=583
	%	%
Compulsory Parents	53	5
Voluntary Parents	37	10
Mature Aged	35	15
Better Assessment at Risk	26	16
Activity Test Exempt (Incapacitated)	11	32

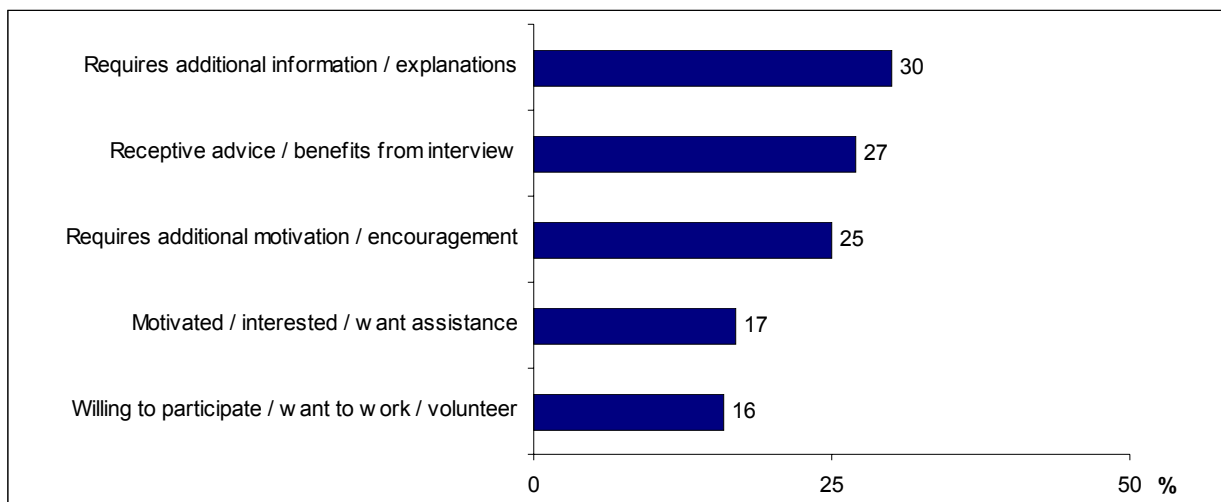
Note: series does not add to 100 due to the exclusion of don't know/can't say/refused and multiple responses.

Figures 2a and 2b show the reasons given by PAs/JAs for considering the intervention to be of most / least benefit to a particular customer group. The most prevalent reasons for rating the intervention as beneficial include the benefit gained by customers from the additional information/explanations provided (30%), the perceived receptiveness of the customer groups to the PA interview (27%) and the motivation and encouragement provided (25%).

On this interpretation of the data the compulsory parents tend to emerge as the customer group that benefit most from the PA intervention as JET Advisers consider them to have relatively low levels of awareness of their entitlements ...

*“They are not aware of the services that exist... they don't know what they are entitled to...they are willing to work with us...are motivated or easy to motivate.”*

**Figure 2a: Most commonly cited reasons for rating the intervention as most beneficial for a customer group.**



Base: Short interview (n=528)

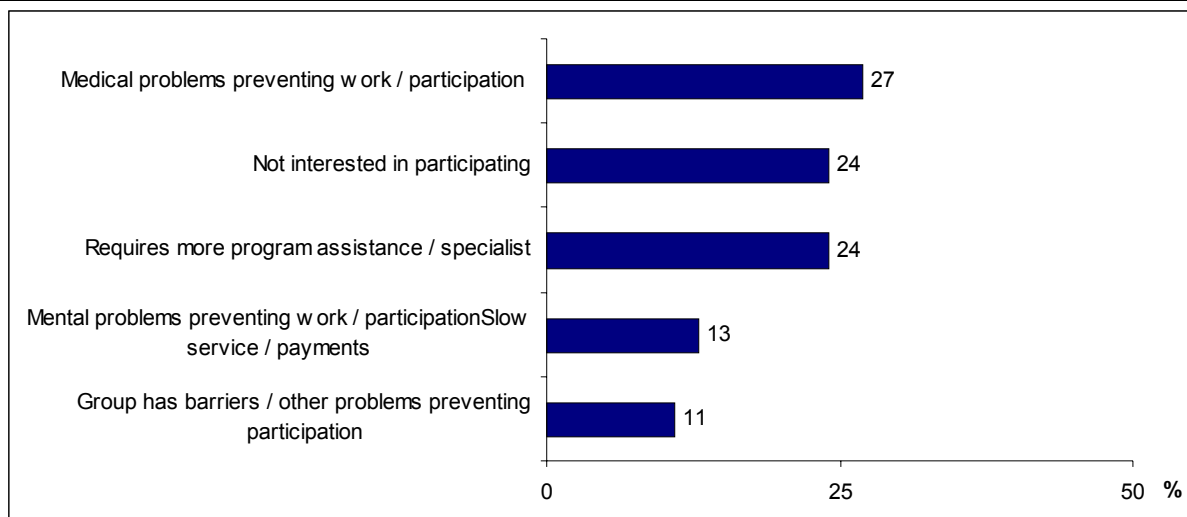
The intervention is considered least beneficial for those customers with medical problems preventing work or participation (27%). This result is mirrored in the perception of some PAs who feel that they do not have the resources to cope with incapacitated customers.

*“9 out of 10 times the customers feel that we don’t have the experience to assess their needs...medical or other.”*

Other important factors seen as limiting the effectiveness of the intervention include its perceived lack of impact among those customers not interested in participating and not necessarily being able to cope with customers that require more specialist assistance (both at 24%). This issue is reflected in the perceptions of some PAs with regard to the lack of cooperation they experience in dealing with some BA at Risk customers.

In summary, the PA intervention is thought by PAs/JAs to be of most benefit to cooperative customers with relatively low barriers to participation and of least benefit to those with relatively high barriers to participation.

**Figure 2b: Most commonly cited reasons for rating the intervention as least beneficial for a customer group.**



Base: Short interview (n = 421)

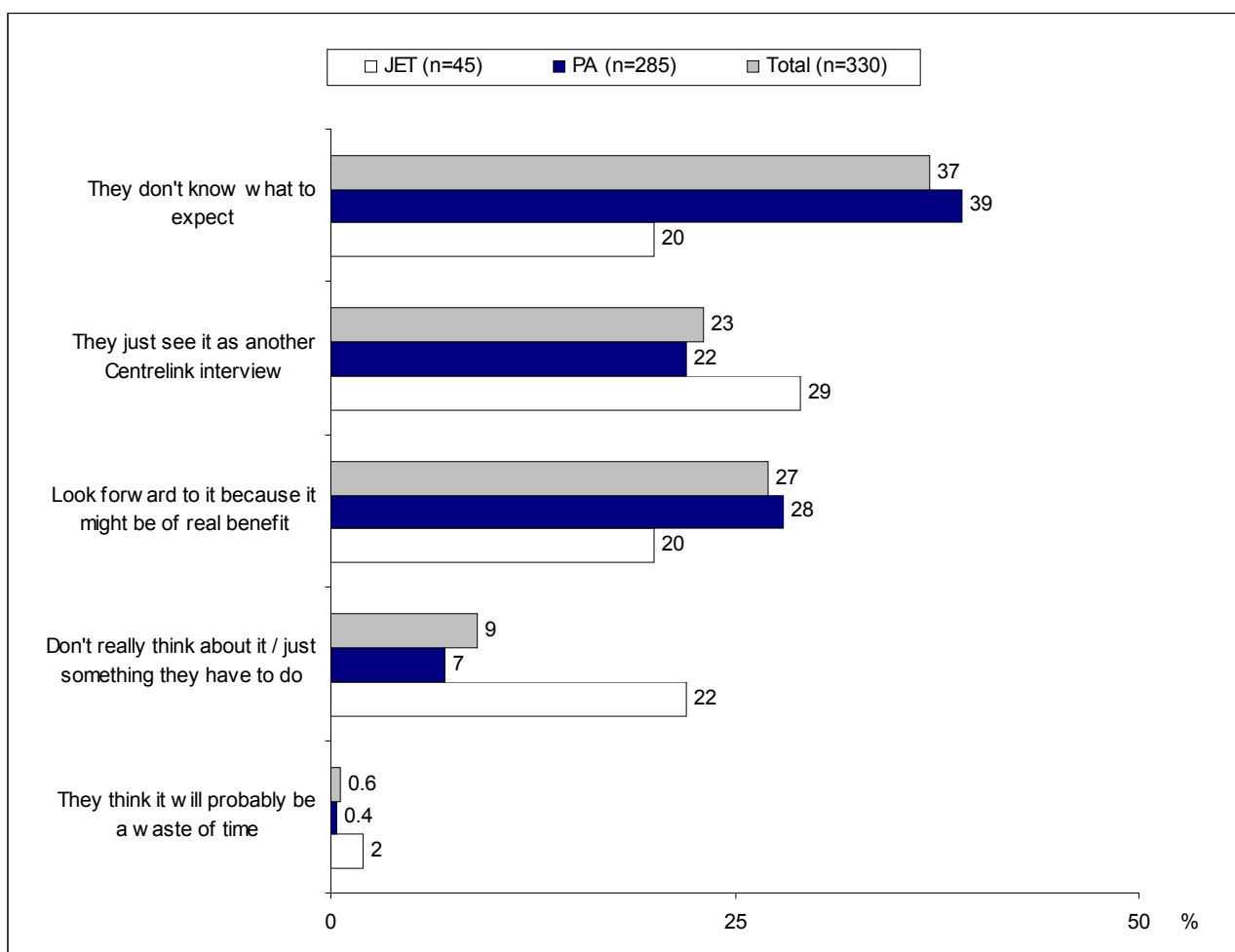
A sense also emerged from the qualitative research that the low level of awareness among compulsory interview attendees as to what to expect from the PA interview was another factor limiting the effectiveness of the intervention. This was seen as a particular barrier for mature age customers going through Day 1 servicing<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Day 1 servicing is when a customer has their Newstart registration interview and their PA interview on the same day.

A commonly held view among PAs/JAs, and a finding consistent with the results from qualitative research among customers and Wave 1 of the PA Customer Survey, is that customers generally don't know what to expect from the PA intervention. This was a view held by 37% of PAs/JAs. The next most common perception is that customers 'see it as just another Centrelink interview' (a view held by 23% of PAs/JAs).

Qualitative research among customers indicates that this lack of prior awareness as to what the PA /JA interview involves can inhibit the effectiveness of the intervention and sometimes work against full disclosure by the customer. This suggests an enhanced role for Centrelink Customer Service Officers in explaining the role of the PA for cases where Day 1 servicing occurs and the need for improved pre-interview communications to better explain the purpose of the PA interview.

**Figure 3: PAs' perceptions regarding customers' expectations of the interview.**



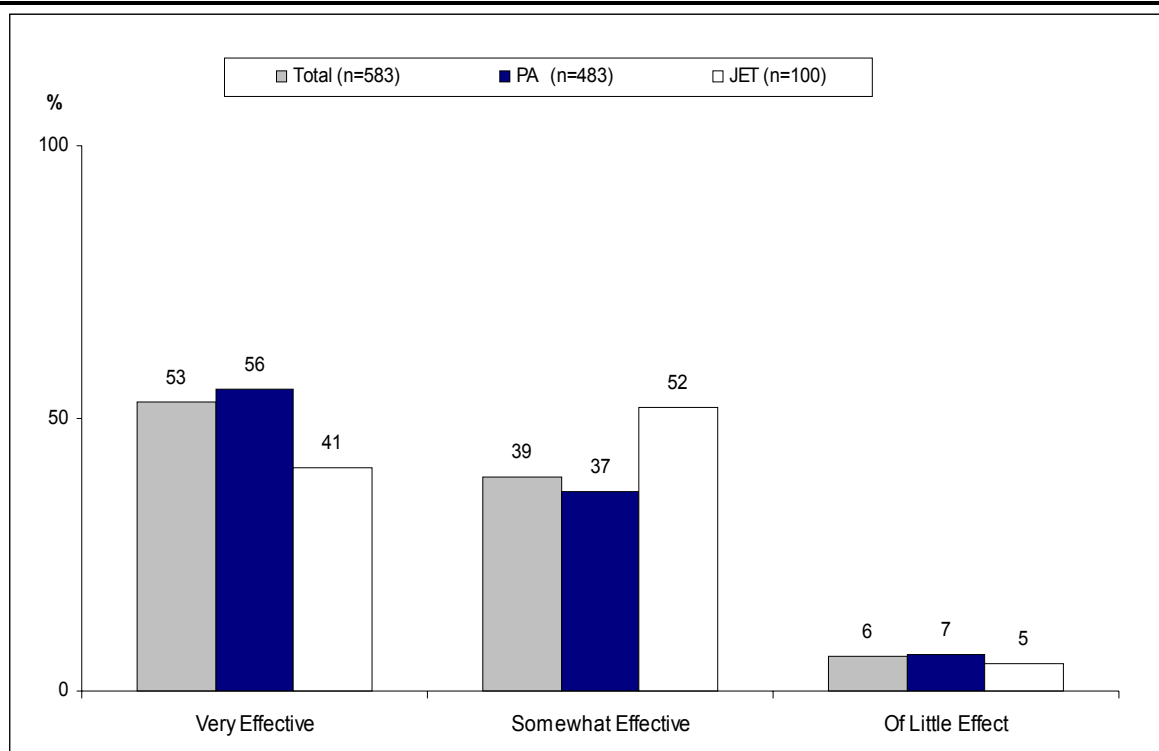
### 3.3 Effectiveness of the PA Intervention in Encouraging Participation, Motivating Customers and Fostering Long Term Attitudinal Change

As noted previously, the views of PAs/JAs regarding the effectiveness of the intervention are largely impressionistic. In particular, PAs/JAs who participated in the workshop recognised that the limited amount of follow-up interviews they are able to conduct and a lack of system-based outcomes information means that their knowledge of the outcomes achieved by their customers is limited. Bearing this in mind, PA's/JA's perceptions of the effectiveness of the intervention in encouraging 'social participation'<sup>7</sup> and fostering long term attitudinal change towards participation are discussed below.

#### 3.3.1 Effectiveness in Encouraging Social Participation

Survey respondents were asked to consider the effectiveness of the intervention in encouraging social participation among those customers not really looking to work or participate in other activities. The results (Figure 4) show that just over half of the PAs/JAs interviewed (53%) considered the intervention to be 'very effective' in encouraging social participation with a higher proportion of PAs (56%) holding this view compared with JET Advisers (41%).

**Figure 4: Effectiveness in encouraging social participation among customers not really looking to work or participate in other activities.**



<sup>7</sup> While 'social participation' was not defined for the purposes of the survey, a review of verbatim comments provided by PAs/JAs shows that social participation was generally considered to comprise activities such as involvement in community groups and the take up of voluntary work.

Despite the perceived effectiveness of the intervention in encouraging social participation it was also acknowledged that “some customers just can’t be encouraged to do anything”, “you can lead a horse to water but you can’t make them drink” and “you can mention all the things you like but at the end of the day it’s their choice”.

Those customers that PAs/JAs tended to find the most difficult to encourage towards social participation included some indigenous customers, those with alcohol and drug related problems, those with emotional or psychological barriers to participation and some mature age customers (i.e. those with fairly entrenched non-participation attitudes).

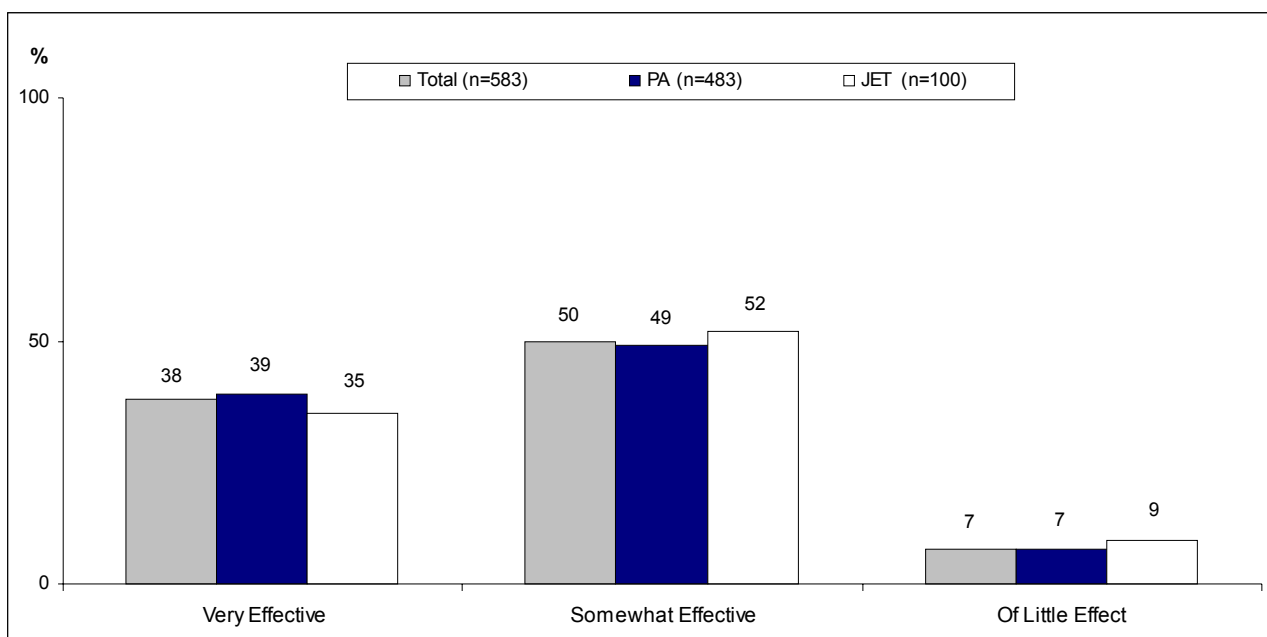
### 3.3.2 Effectiveness in Fostering Attitudinal Change

The data presented in Figure 5 shows PAs’/JAs’ perceptions of the effectiveness of the intervention in bringing about long term attitudinal change among customers not really looking to work or participate in other activities.

Nearly 40 per cent of PAs and 35 per cent of JET Advisers considered the intervention to be ‘very effective’ in fostering more positive participation attitudes among customers not initially inclined towards participation.

Those customers with the greatest barriers to participation and those with entrenched non-participation attitudes were very challenging for PAs/JAs. In these circumstances PAs/JAs felt they could do little more than encourage them to become involved but “if they’re really not going to do something they’re just not going to do it.”

**Figure 5: Effectiveness in bringing about long-term attitudinal changes among customers who are not really looking to work or participate in other activities.**



### **3.3.3 The Motivational Aspects of the PA Interview**

PAs/JAs were asked the extent to which they agreed that customers attending a PA interview left *'feeling motivated to give things a try that they mightn't have otherwise'*. The mean score given by PAs was 8.1 (using a 10 point rating scale where 1 was strongly disagree and 10 was strongly agree) and 7.5 for JET Advisers<sup>8</sup>.

While this is a strong result, the difficulties in encouraging participation among the various customer groups were acknowledged. The following quotes from the in depth telephone interviews among PAs/JAs encapsulate these views ...

Compulsory Parents:

*"Because usually they don't know why they have to come in .... they feel that we are trying to get them back into the workforce and many of them are already studying and working....they find it imposing as they are busy with work etc."*

Mature age NSA:

*"A lot of mature aged just want to be left alone...some already know what they have to do...some just want to retire and be left alone until they do this."*

NSA (Incapacitated):

*"It's their attitude, they have this opinion that they shouldn't have to work, I am often left wondering what I should or could do with some customers."*

BA at Risk:

*"Indigenous customers see no reason to change what they are doing...a lot of them have personal issues and they get to the point where they feel like they are jumping through a hoop when they come to us...."*

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<sup>8</sup> Bearing JET Advisors only service Parenting Payment customers with a youngest child aged 13 to 15 years.

## 4. Timing of the Intervention

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Survey respondents were asked whether they thought the current timing of the Participation Planning interview was effective for the various customer groups.

### **Mature Age Customers**

While 85 per cent of survey respondents agreed that the timing of the PA interview for the mature age customer group (within 21 days of going onto payments) was optimal, this finding to some extent masks the negative reaction to Day 1 servicing that was apparent from Workshop participants.

*“Not on 1st day...overwhelming... should wait at least a couple of weeks till they know what they want to do and see where they are.”*

*“The same day equals tragedy.”*

*“Customers sit at Centrelink for three hours and by the end of it their head is spinning.”*

### **Compulsory Parents**

Almost three quarters of JET Advisers<sup>9</sup> agreed with the current approach of seeing parents with a youngest child aged 13 years or over as soon as possible. Among those that disagreed, the issue was not so much one of the timing of the intervention as it currently stands but of targeting parents with younger children (youngest child aged 6 to 12 years). The following quote is fairly typical.

*“Alright in a way but I feel the important intervention is when youngest is 6-12...early intervention...sometimes I see compulsory customers who have only 2/3 months before pension stops and are not even aware that it will stop. If you get someone to come in when child starts school they start studying and working by the time pension ends”.*

### **Better Assessment at Risk customers**

The large majority of PAs (84%) agreed that the current timing of the intervention for the BA at Risk customers (within 14 days of going onto payments) was effective. Of those with a different view, some were of the opinion that the interview should be pushed out to 21 days to allow more time for preparation. Others held the view that the interview should be brought forward given the “at risk” nature of the customer group.

*“It needs to be stretched out to 21 (days)... gives us time to talk to the Centrelink Disability Officer or the Occupational Psychologist if needed...”*

*“Should be same day because the risk of them not turning up for the appointment is high, better off getting them while they are in the office.”*

*“Sooner we see them the better, especially if they don’t have any housing.”*

*“Within the first two weeks or ASAP because “at risk”, especially if have to refer.”*

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<sup>9</sup> Note small base for this question (n=38) as only those JET Advisers that went through the 'long interview' were asked this question.

## 5. Follow-up Interviewing

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While the survey results show that two thirds of PAs/JAs (68%) feel they have enough control over their workload to be able to arrange follow-up interviews when needed, there was nonetheless a strong feeling among workshop participants that they lacked control over their workloads (e.g. system appointments, local appointments, positional appointments). Their schedules were booked out 6 to 8 weeks in advance which left very little scope for “positional bookings”. This was exacerbated by being *“treated like a resource for all the difficult cases that walk into the office.”*

The types of considerations that come into play for PAs/JAs when deciding whether or not a follow up interview is warranted are shown in Figure 6. The most common reasons being ‘the individual circumstances of the customer’ (41-42%) and whether or not the ‘customer requires ongoing assistance’ (24%). Some examples put forward

*“If you sense you are not going to get a commitment there and then from a customer.”*

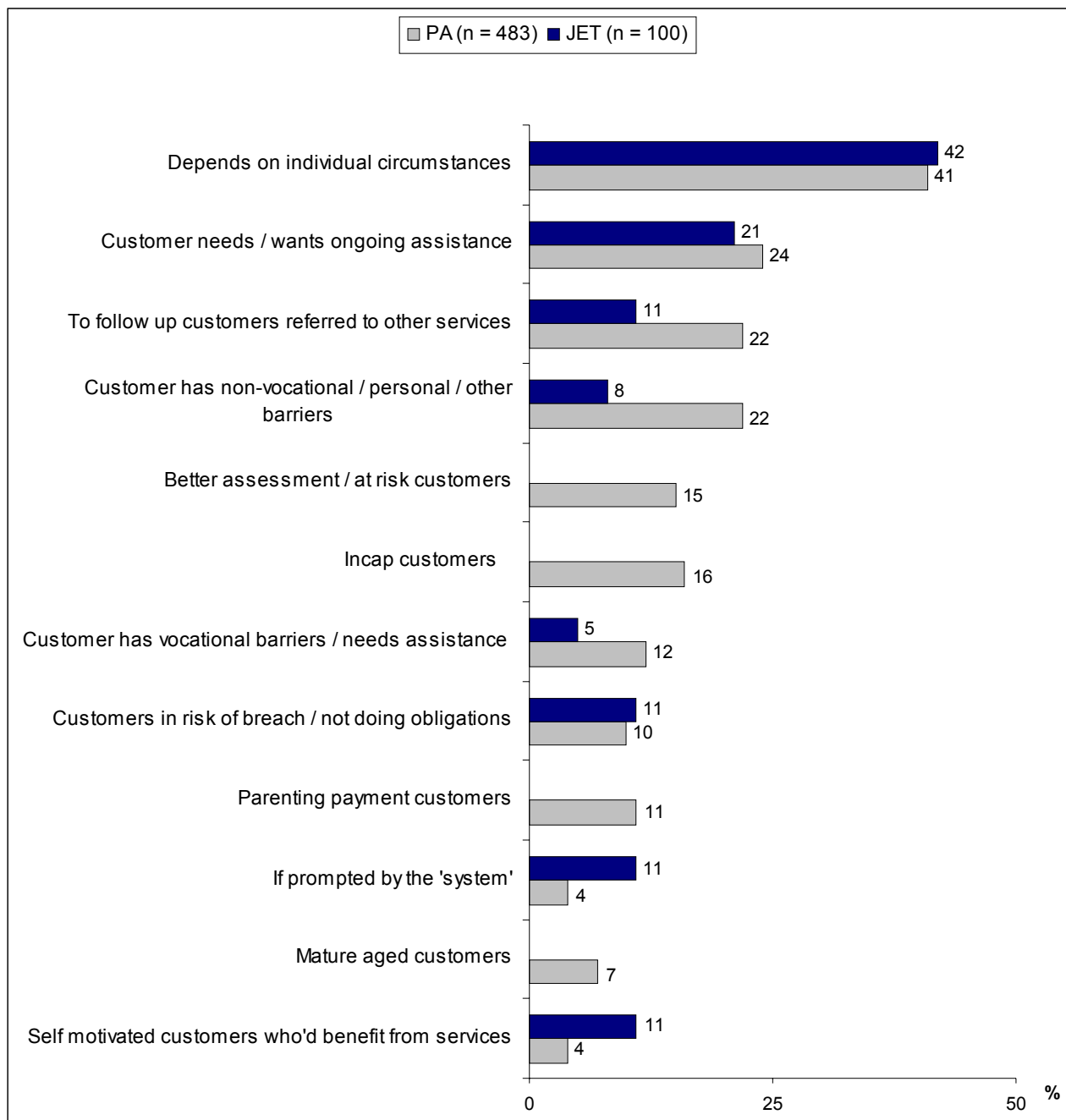
*“Mainly if a customer is taking up something new or doing volunteer work or study or personal issues they were looking at addressing, just to make sure everything was moving ahead for them.”*

Follow up referrals were also used to fill the gap in service arising from long delays in the availability of some referral places. These delays were detrimental to the attainment of good outcomes as PAs/JAs knew that customers could easily lose their motivation once out of the interview.

*“Peers, friends and family can pull them back.”*

*“They can leave here with the best intentions but we aren’t living their life for them.”*

**Figure 6: Circumstances under which PAs arrange for a follow-up interview.**



Multiples accepted

## 6. Relationships with Local Service Providers and Referrals

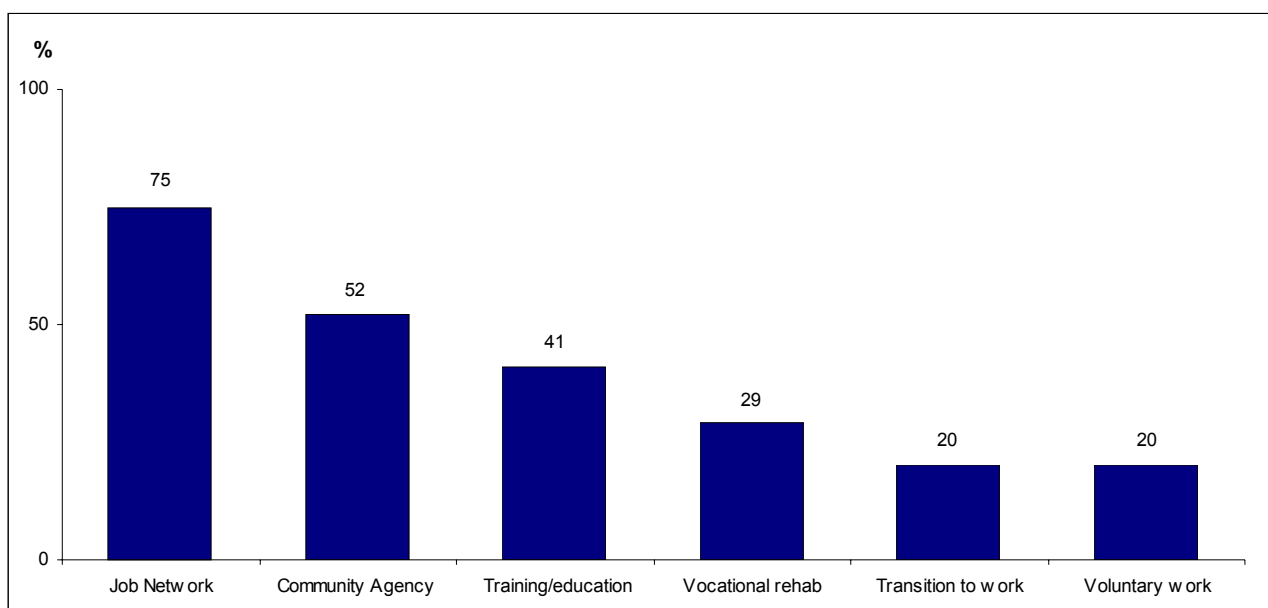
### 6.1 The Quality of Relationships with Local Service Providers

While the majority of PAs and JET Advisers feel they have sufficient time to schedule follow up interviews for those customers that need them, the same was not true when it came to maintaining relationships with local service providers, with two thirds of PAs/JAs (68%) dissatisfied with the time available to build relationships with local service providers and stay up-to-date with what is going on in their local area.

This general feeling of dissatisfaction with the time available to carry out this important aspect of the role came about despite the fact that 90 per cent of PAs/JAs had had some non customer-specific face-to-face contact with service providers in the previous three months.

Of those PAs/JAs that had been in face-to-face contact with their local service network, 75 per cent had met with a local Job Network member, 52 per cent with a community agency, 41 per cent with training/educational institutions and 29 per cent with vocational rehabilitation agencies.

**Figure 7: PAs/JAs face-to-face contact with local service providers.**



Base: Short interview – Had face-to-face contact with local service providers in last six months (n=296).

In terms of rating their satisfaction with their own level of knowledge about the internal and external services available to refer customers, the mean score for PAs/JAs was 8.8 (out of 10) for internal services and 7.7 with respect to external services.

Given the paramount importance of the Job Network as a referral pathway, PAs/JAs were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the 'quality of the relationship' they had with the Job Network members in their area. The resultant mean score was 6.9 out of 10.

### The Perceived Quality of Local Services

PAs in the workshop expressed some reservations about the quality of the services provided to referred customers. While they hoped other service providers are “as motivated to help as us” some concerns remained:

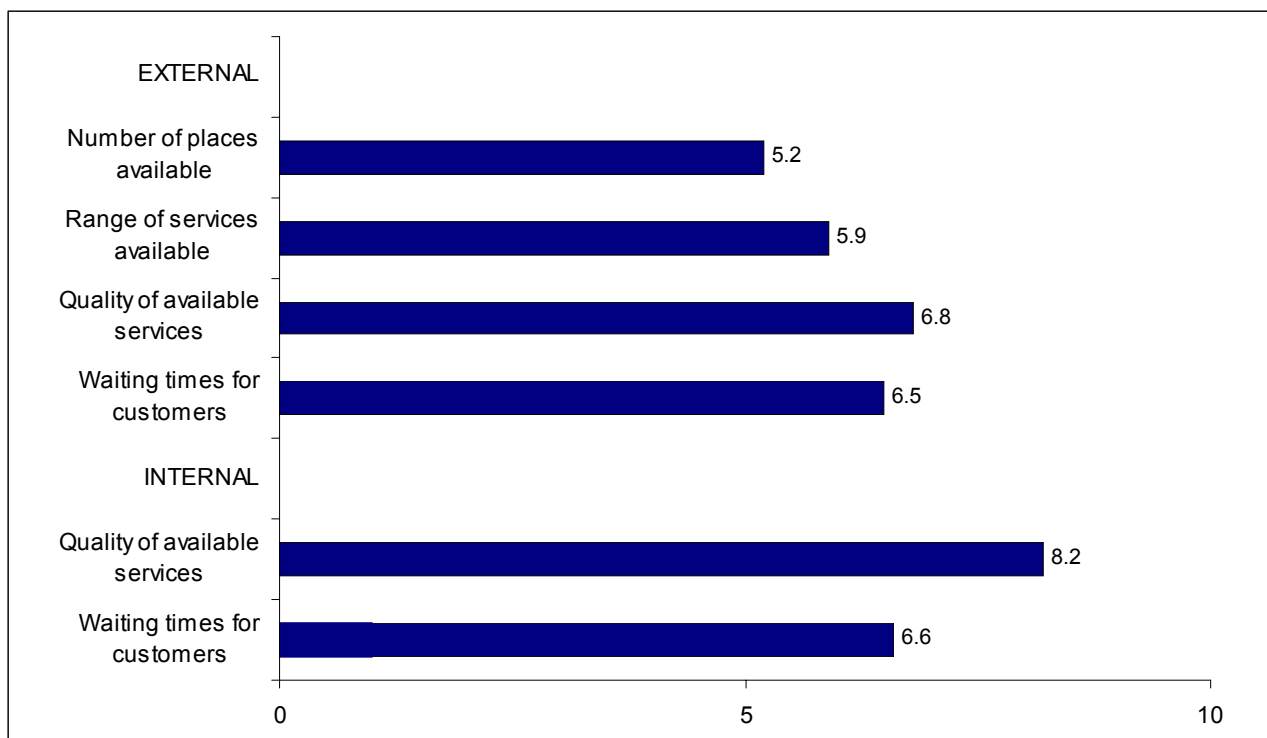
*“I think there are certain pockets that aren’t catered for i.e., alcohol/drug, prison release...might be a bit for them to travel...lack of services.”*

*“In some cases it takes six weeks to refer someone to family counselling or getting an application for public housing.”*

*“There aren’t enough skilled providers to take appointments. In some cases providers have large caseloads and aren’t adequately managing the customers.”*

Survey respondents were asked to comment on various aspects of the quality of the internal and external services available for customers upon referral. The mean scores out of ten for each of the service attributes measured are provided in Figure 8. In terms of the perceived overall quality of the services available, internal services scored 8.2 out of 10 and external services 6.8 out of 10.

**Figure 8: Satisfaction with selected aspects of relationship with internal and external service providers.**



Base: Long Interview (n=583).

## 6.2 Selected Aspects of Referring Customers to the Job Network

PAs/JAs recognise the importance of having a good relationship with Job Network members and feel that this is generally the case. It was acknowledged, however, that due to time pressures the relationship with Job Network members mainly revolves around sorting out problems or issues over the phone. The general impression of workshop participants was that the relationship was such that Job Network members would contact them if a problem arose. PAs/JAs felt they were sometimes better placed to help than Job Network members because they had more information about the customer than the Job Network member.

*“...a lot of queries come back because they don’t (have) the same information as a PA does.”*

Some PAs/JAs felt they needed to play an educational role for Job Network members to *“bring them up to speed on the role of the PA”*.

There was also a perception among some PAs/JAs that some Job Network members sometimes *“give up”* on some customers and that in such circumstances it would be desirable if the customer could be referred back to the PA/JA for a further interview. PAs/JAs were of the view that this is not possible at the moment unless a breach penalty is incurred.

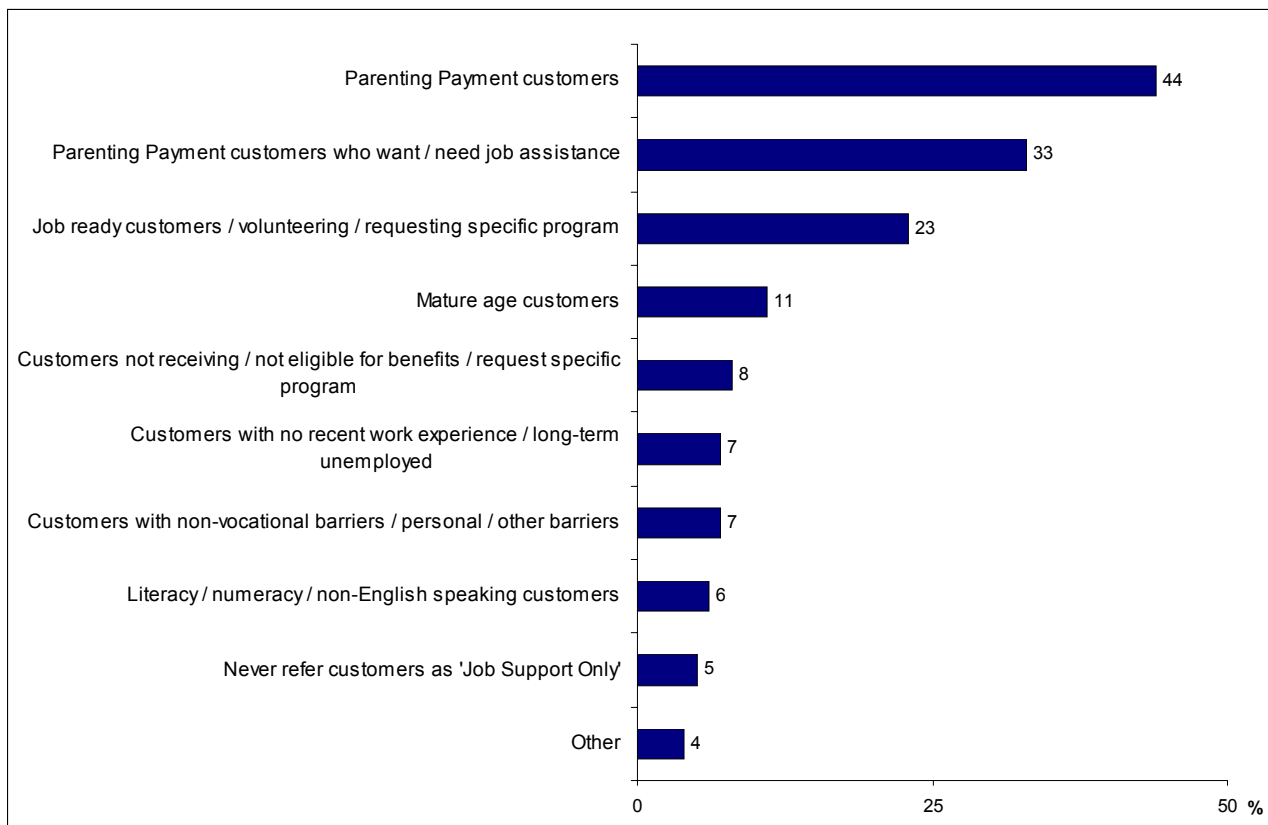
There is also some frustration among PAs/JAs at not being able to direct customers to the Job Network member that they feel might be the best placed to help. Customers often base their choice on proximity to home and convenience even in cases where the PA/JA believes that a particular provider with specialist skills would be more helpful. A PA told of an example of a provider that specialised in placing customers with Hepatitis. The PA said that they cannot recommend Hepatitis customers use that provider, so the customer ends up *“locked in for life”* with a Job Network member that doesn’t know what to do with them. One PA said they recommend customers *“job interview each of the Job Network members to find out what they could offer and select on that basis.”*

### Referrals for Job Search Support

The PA/JA Survey explored two specific aspects of referrals to Job Network members – the circumstances under which referrals are made for ‘Job Search Support only’<sup>10</sup> and the barriers to customers taking up Job Network referrals.

The main reasons given by PAs/JAs for referring customers to the Job Network as ‘Job Search Support Only’ rather than fully Job Network eligible are shown in Figure 9. It appears that customers are largely referred as Job Search Support Only on the basis of; being a Parenting Payment customer, requesting access to a particular program or having been assessed as not fully Job Network ready.

**Figure 9: Circumstances under which PAs refer customers to the Job Network as ‘Job Search Support Only’.**



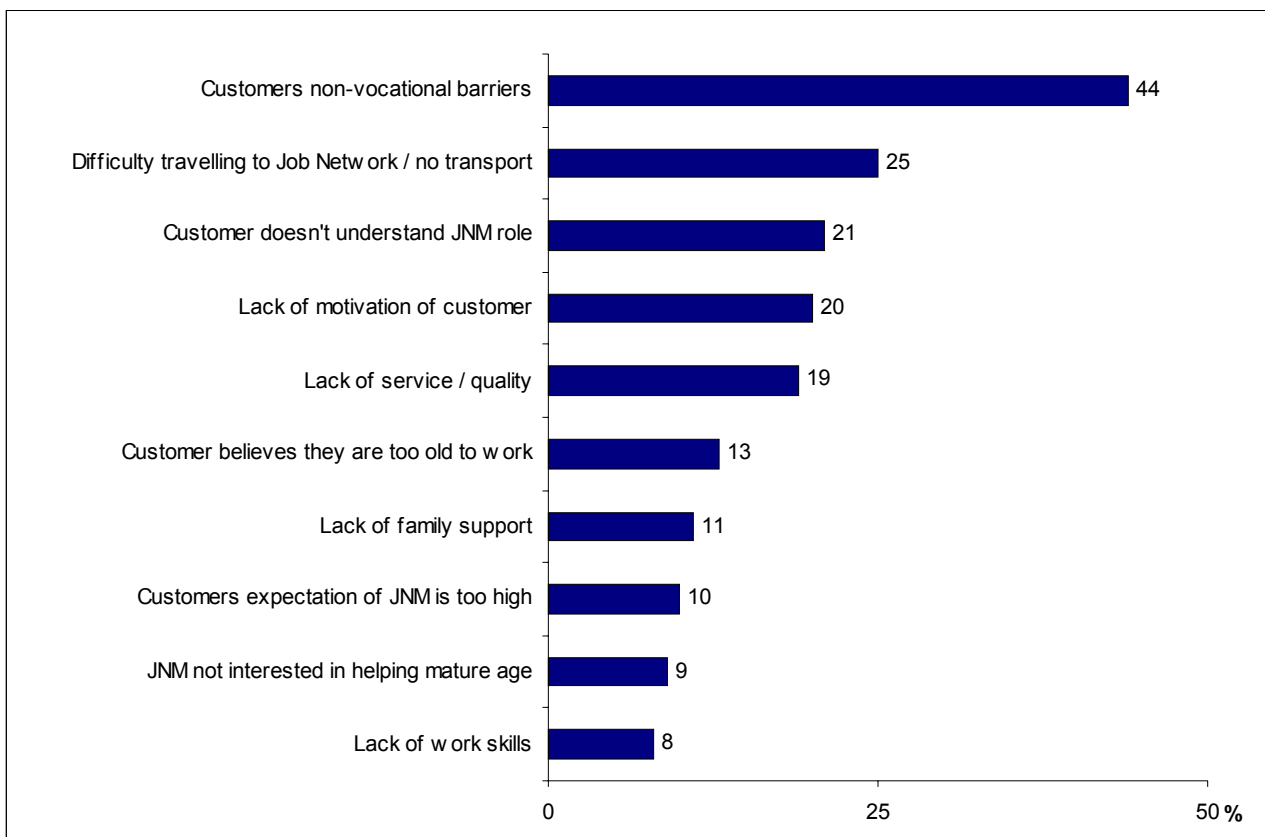
Base: Long Interview (n=324).

<sup>10</sup> There are two main categories of job seekers eligible for Job Network services: Job Search Support Only job seekers, who are eligible only for the Job Search Support component of Job Network, and Fully Job Network Eligible job seekers, who are eligible for the full range of Job Network services.

From a PA/JA perspective, the main barriers to the take up of Job Network referrals include (Figure 10):

- non-vocational barriers;
- transport difficulties;
- customers' lack of understanding of the role of the Job Network; and
- a perceived lack of motivation on the part of customers.

**Figure 10: Barriers for customers in taking up referrals to the Job Network'**



Base: Long Interview (n=324).

## 7. Service Gaps, Improvement Suggestions and Unintended Negative Effects

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### 7.1 Service Gaps and Improvement Suggestions

Survey respondents were asked what they considered to be the main service gaps for customers in their local area. While responses generally reflected variations in local conditions, a common theme to emerge was the lack of specialised services for mature age customers. Other responses covered health and drug rehabilitation services, childcare, Indigenous services – particularly for young Indigenous customers, housing and English language classes.

Some also complained that the customers referred to them were not always appropriate. Sometimes PAs/JAs felt they were referred the customers who did not belong anywhere else, including those who needed professional counselling services.

Another issue raised was the need to overcome the sometimes cynical attitude of some Centrelink staff towards the intervention.

*“Seen it before, it’s never going to work.”*

An improvement suggestion not captured in the survey but which received some support at the workshop was that of (selectively) running seminars with customers as a prelude to, or in place of, individual interviews. This would help to relieve some pressure on schedules and could provide other benefits to customers, including the improved streaming of customers to PAs.

The main service improvement suggestions put forward by PAs/JAs are shown in Figure 11 with some of the verbatim comments that support these suggestions provided in Appendix 2. It is worth noting that 15% of PAs/JAs didn’t proffer any suggestions as to how the PA intervention could be improved.

YA customers (21%) and DSP customers (15%) were put forward by PAs/JAs as the customer groups that would benefit most from any expansion in the PA target groups.

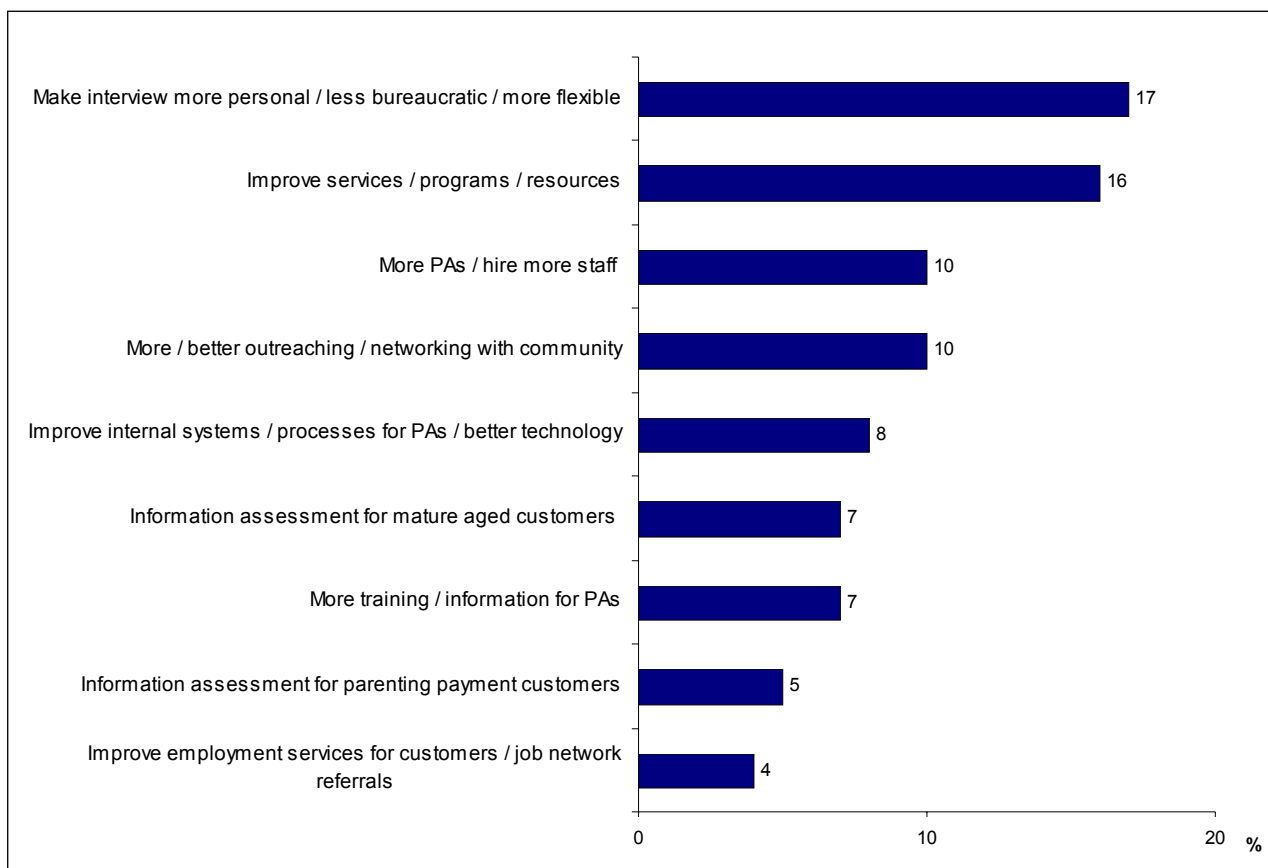
Based on verbatim responses to the PA/JA survey it seems that those PAs/JAs of the view that YA customers would benefit from the intervention had in mind customers such as homeless youth, at-risk youth, early school leavers and teenage parents. The rationale was that these customers should be seen before they become entrenched on income support and while their prospects for a successful vocational outcome (e.g. a return to study/training or the take up of paid work) are still quite good. It was also felt that letting Youth Allowance customers know about the support and services they have access to would be positive.

Those PAs/JAs who felt that DSP customers would benefit from the intervention generally stipulated that they felt that the intervention would benefit “voluntary DSP customers” and “those DSP customers that want to work”. Often these PAs/JAs were of the view that the intervention should be available for any Centrelink customer who is interested and “anyone outside of the target group facing barriers to participation.”

These views are encapsulated in the quote ...

*“We spend a lot of time seeing people who don’t want to be helped and have to knock back people we could help and who want help because they’re not in the target group.”*

**Figure 11: Suggestions for improving the effectiveness of the PA intervention**

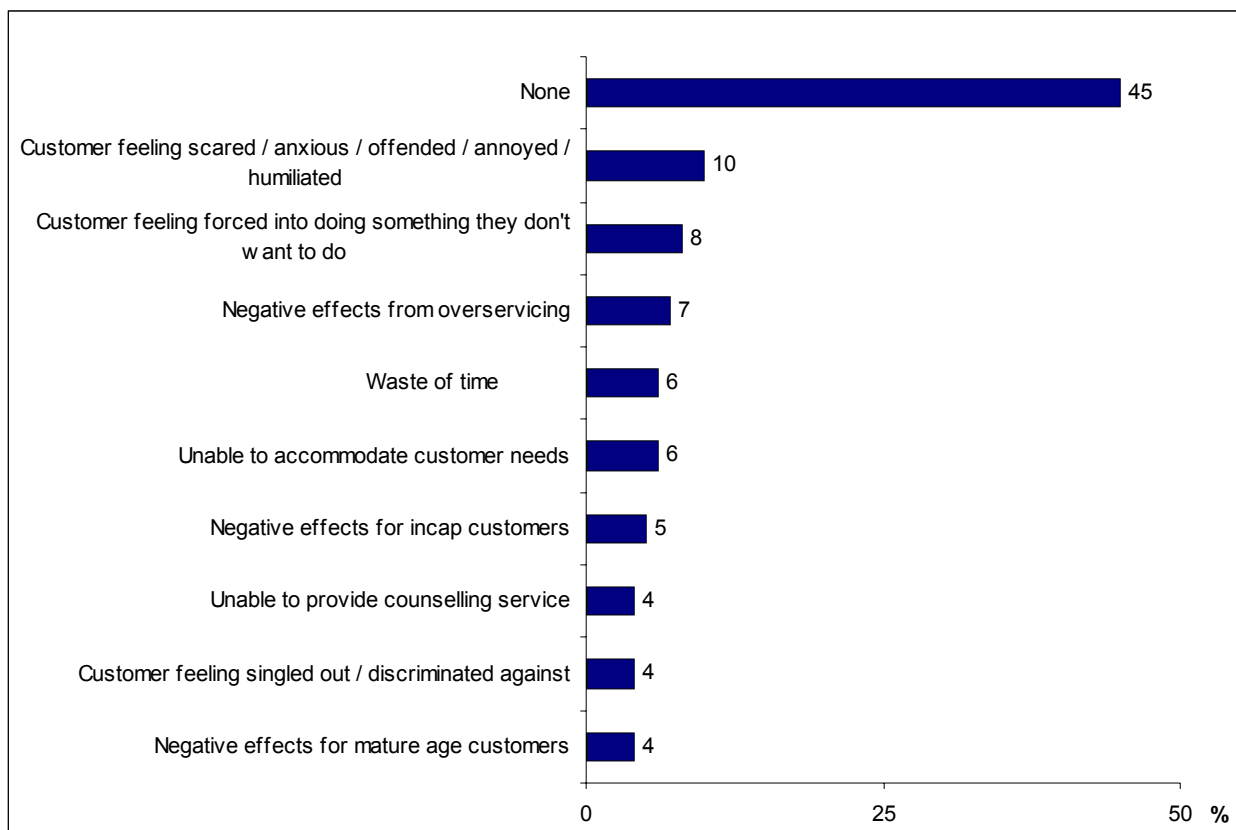


Base: Total Sample (n=577).

## 7.2 Unintended Negative Effects

PAs/JAs were asked if there were any unintended negative effects arising from the PA intervention. The main issues to arise are presented in Figure 12 and further expanded upon in the verbatim comments provided in Appendix 2. While 45% of PAs/JAs did not nominate any unintended negative effects arising from the PA intervention, 10% mentioned raised anxiety levels on the part of the customers, 8% cited the fact that the customer felt compelled to do something that they didn't want to, 7% felt that there was some over servicing and, by way of a related response, 6% felt that the intervention was a waste of time for some customers.

**Figure 12: Unintended negative effects of the PA intervention**



Base: Total Sample (n=577).

## Concluding Remarks

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As mentioned at the outset of this report, the PA/JA Survey and associated qualitative research among PAs/JAs is just one of the research inputs into the evaluation of the PA initiative. This research reveals PAs/JAs to be generally optimistic about the effectiveness of the intervention but also realistic about the limitations of their role (“*we aren’t case managers*”). The role is regarded as particularly effective in terms of awareness raising, motivating customers and as a means of ensuring more appropriate referrals. The impact of the intervention in terms of the attainment of economic and social participation outcomes for customers, while generally seen in a favourable light, was also seen to be strongly influenced by customers’ underlying attitudes to participation – a paradigm that was difficult to change in a one-off interview situation.

PAs/JAs are of the view that while the intervention is most effective in attaining participation outcomes among ‘job ready’ customers or those with more easily overcome vocational barriers, it still has a positive outcome for other customers in terms of appropriate referrals, awareness raising, positive reinforcement and ensuring a thorough understanding of entitlements and obligations.

The operational factors that were seen to be limiting the effectiveness of the intervention from the PA/JA perspective include:

- lack of prior knowledge of the purpose of the PA interview among interview attendees;
- lack of specialist expertise on the part of PAs/JAs when it comes to dealing with customers presenting with severe non-vocational barriers;
- lack of availability of referral services and the protracted waiting times for some services;
- having to deal with inappropriate referrals and being treated as a dumping group for all the “too hard” customers; and
- the inability of Job Network members to refer customers back to PAs/JAs thereby resulting in customers sometimes being placed with a Job Network member who perhaps isn’t really able to help them.

The next phase of the PA evaluation is to put the findings from this phase of the research into the context of the overall evaluation, and in particular the findings emerging from the direct customer research, to enable the overall effectiveness of the intervention to be monitored and the development of appropriate recommendations.

## Appendix 1: Staff Profile

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Table A1 (next page) shows that over three quarters (78%) of PAs/JAs are female with an average age of 40 years (45 years for JET Advisers). The proportion of PAs/JAs born overseas (22%) exactly matches that of the population as a whole<sup>11</sup>. Ten per cent of PAs/JAs identify themselves as of Indigenous origin compared with only 1% of the total population aged 18 years and over<sup>12</sup>.

Given that the Jobs Education and Training (JET) Scheme, staffed by JET Advisers, has been in operation for several years it comes as no surprise that JET Advisers have been in their role longer than PAs and are much more likely to have come to their current position via an internal appointment rather than via an external selection process.

While a similar proportion of PA and JET Advisers have a Bachelors Degree or Post Graduate qualification, PAs are significantly more likely to have a Diploma and JET Advisers significantly more likely to come from a skilled vocational occupation background.

Of the PAs/JAs who had post school qualifications almost two thirds (65%) regarded their qualification as 'very relevant' to their current position with the proportion slightly higher for PAs (66%) than JET Advisers (59%). The most commonly held post secondary qualifications were in the fields of Community Services (28%), Counselling (15%), the Social Sciences (9%) and Education (8%).

In terms of the perceived relevance of their previous work experience, 83% of PAs/JAs regard their previous work experience as 'very relevant'.

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<sup>11</sup> Source: ABS Basic Community Profile for Australia. All persons aged 15 years and over, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

<sup>12</sup> Source: ABS Basic Community Profile for Australia. All persons aged 15 years and over, 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

**Table A1: Personal Adviser / JET Adviser Profile by Selected Characteristics.**

Selected Characteristics	Total <i>n</i> =583	Personal Advisers <i>n</i> =483	JET Advisers <sup>(1)</sup> <i>n</i> =100
	%	%	%
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	22	23	21
Female	78	77	79
<b>Age (Years)</b>			
30 or less	19	23	4 <sup>#</sup>
31 to 40	30	31	26
41 to 50	33	30	43
51 or over	17	15	25
Mean Age	40.3	39.4	44.9
<b>Birthplace</b>			
Australia	78	78	78
Overseas	22	22	22
<b>Indigenous</b>			
Yes	10	11	4
No	90	89	96
<b>Time in current role</b>			
Less than 6 months	9	9	10
6<12 months	32	36	12 <sup>#</sup>
1<2 years	39	42	24 <sup>#</sup>
2 years or more	20	13	54 <sup>#</sup>
<b>Internal or External Appointment</b>			
Internal	53	46 <sup>#</sup>	90 <sup>#</sup>
External	47	54 <sup>#</sup>	10 <sup>#</sup>
<b>Educational Attainment</b>			
Secondary School	11	11	11
Basic Vocational	7	8	10
Skilled Vocational	19	18	30 <sup>#</sup>
Diploma	25	26	14 <sup>#</sup>
Degree or higher	38	38	36

Base: Total Sample

Note (1): Includes 15 respondents who are both Personal Advisers and JET Advisers.

# Denotes statistical significance at the 95% confidence interval.

## Appendix 2: Selected Verbatim Comments

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Selection of verbatim comments from the unintended negative effects that might result from the PA intervention:

*“Better Assessment at Risk and INCAP groups see it as red tape thus de-motivating them.”*

*“Some take it the wrong way when they are offered extra assistance.”*

*“One day servicing can make it a long day resulting in a loss of concentration...”*

*“Customers have to repeat dramatic stories over and over again, especially people with trauma such as refugees...”*

*“If they have come in to see us and we can’t help them. They feel there is no way out after we have tried to assist them.”*

*“Sometimes an incap may see a PA and disability adviser... they have to tell their story too many times...it happens still.”*

*“A waist of time for mature age customers with work skills and no barriers”*

*“People that don’t really need assistance feel that it is a waste of time... I feel a bit stupid asking them to set goals etc. Should make it quicker.”*

Selection of suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the intervention

*“Recognition with other CSO’s about what we do. We do not get properly promoted.”*

*“More PAs. Extra money for counselling, drug and alcohol, housing especially for prison release.”*

*“More time. Fund more time per client. KPI is 40 per day, 6 hours just interviewing a day, need more time for workload management. It’s like case management but not taken into account. It burns you out or you don’t have time to follow up. Also target groups have gotten too big... Now too big to be effective or specialised.”*

*“Allowing the PAs to do their job with appropriate funding to see the customers frequently to give them a nudge.”*

*“More places to refer to. Mental health and counselling by the time you motivate someone to access these services they go and find there is a waiting period of 2 to 3 months and by then the momentum is gone.”*

*“Need to have more funding for the customers and to have a larger amount of services to refer them to.”*

*“More options for participation. More approved activities.”*

*“More course to do and other options.”*

*“Up the funding and options to get them back to work or other avenues they could take.”*

*“More funding, more childcare”*

*“more time.. more flexibility with the Job Network providers, with the programs and systems we have so we can address the customer's individual circumstances.”*

*“A mature aged/participation guide - it would be useful if they had time to read and understand what options they have before the actual interview”*

## Appendix 3: Survey Questionnaire

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### Personal Advisers/Jet Advisers Survey

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is (...). I am calling on behalf of the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services from the Social Research Centre. May I please speak to (INSERT NAME FROM SAMPLE)?

WHEN TALKING DIRECTLY TO RESPONDENT SAY:

You should have recently received information from Centrelink about a survey being undertaken by the Australian Government Department of Family and Community about Personal Adviser policy.

These interviews are being done as part of the evaluation of the Australians Working Together initiative. Whilst participation is completely voluntary we would really appreciate your cooperation as the Department feels that it is important to get the views of Personal Advisers and JET Advisers as part of this evaluation.

(CHECK SAMPLE - ALLOCATE TO SHORT INTERVIEW LONG INTERVIEW STRATUM)

S1 This interview should only take <just over 5 minutes / about 20 minutes>. Is now a convenient time to talk to you?

EXPLAIN BEFORE CONTINUING:

Any information you provide will be protected by strict privacy and confidentiality rules. The aim of the survey is to help the Department evaluate the effectiveness of the Australians Working Together initiative.

While we hope that you answer all the questions if there are any questions you don't want to answer just tell me so I can skip over them.

1. Person available (CONTINUE)
2. No answer
3. Fax Machine / Modem
4. Answering machine
5. Engaged
6. Appointment
7. Telstra message / Disconnected
8. Wrong Number / Respondent not known
9. Denies being a Personal / JET Adviser
10. Claims to have done survey
11. Not available / Away for duration
12. Hard Refusal

13. Soft Refusal
14. Language difficulty
15. Stopped Interview
16. Terminated mid survey

S5 Before we begin I need to point out that this call may be monitored for training and quality purposes. If you don't wish this to happen please let me know?

1. Monitor
2. Do not monitor

**Module A: EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**

A1 First I have some questions about your employment history. These questions are being asked of all Personal Advisers and JET Advisers so that we can get a better understanding of the different sorts of skills and experiences that people bring to the job

Do you currently work as a Personal Adviser, a JET Adviser or both?

1. Personal Adviser
2. JET Adviser
3. Both

A2 How long have you been in your current role for? (READ OUT)?

1. Less than 3 months
2. 3 < 6 months
3. 6 < 12 months
4. 1 < 2 years
5. 2 years or more
6. Don't Know / Can't Say
7. Refused

A3 Did you work for Centrelink before taking up your <Personal / Jet> Adviser position or were you recruited from outside Centrelink?

1. Appointed from within Centrelink
2. Recruited from outside (GO TO A5)

A4 And approximately how long have you worked at Centrelink for?

1. Less than 3 months
2. 3 < 6 months
3. 6 < 12 months
4. 1 < 2 years
5. 2 < 5 years
6. 5 years or more (GO TO PREB1)
7. Don't Know / Can't Say (GO TO A5)

8. Refused (GO TO A5)

PREA5 (IF A4 IS LESS THAN 5 YEARS CONTINUE ELSE GO TO PREB1)

A5 Had you done any paid work of any kind before <joining Centrelink / becoming a Personal / Jet Adviser>?

1. Yes
2. No (GO TO PREB1)
3. Don't Know / Can't Say (GO TO PREB1)
4. Refused (GO TO PREB1)

A6 What would you say your MAIN occupation was before <joining Centrelink / becoming a Personal Adviser>?

**Module B: ASPECTS OF THE PERSONAL / JET ADVISER ROLE**

PREB1 (IF LONG INTERVIEW CONTINUE OTHERWISE GO TO C1.)

CUSTOMER PERCEPTIONS OF ATTENDING

B1 Now some questions about how you think customers respond to the Personal Adviser Interview. Which one of the following statements best describes how you think customers feel about attending the (Personal / JET) Adviser interview ... (READ OUT)?

1. They look forward to it because they think it might be of real benefit to them
2. They just see it as another Centrelink interview
3. They don't really think about it / Just something they have to do
4. They don't know what to expect
5. They think it will probably be a waste of time
6. (Don't know / Can't say)
7. (Refused)

COMPULSORY ACTIVITIES

B2 DELETED

PREB3a (IF B3=2 CONTINUE ELSE GO TO PREB4)

B2a Why do you say that?

(RECORD VERBATIM)

INTERVENTION TIMING

PREB4 (IF A1 = 2 GO TO B6 ELSE CONTINUE)

B3 One of the things we are interested in finding out about is when might be the best time for the PA intervention to take place.

Currently PA's see Mature Age customers either same day or within 21 days of going onto payments. Do you think this is the most effective time for the intervention to take place for this group?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know / can't say

4. Refused

PREB4a (IF B4=2 CONTINUE ELSE GO TO B5)

B3a Why do you say that?

(RECORD VERBATIM)

B4 Currently PAs see Better Assessment At Risk customers within 14 days upon commencement of payments with same day servicing being aimed for. Do you think this is the most effective time for the intervention to take place for this group?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know / can't say
4. Refused

PREB5a (IF B5=2 CONTINUE ELSE GO TO B7)

B4a Why do you say that?

(RECORD VERBATIM)

PREB6 (IF A1= 2 OR 3 CONTINUE ELSE GO TO B7)

B5 Currently JA's see parents with a youngest child 13 to 15 as soon as they can. Do you think this is the most effective way to manage the timing of the intervention for this group?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know / can't say
4. Refused

PREB6a (IF B6=2 CONTINUE ELSE GO TO B8)

B5a Why do you say that?

(RECORD VERBATIM)

B6 Are there other groups not currently included in the AWT target groups who would benefit from the PA intervention?

1. Yes (specify)
2. No
3. Don't know / can't say
4. Refused

## REFERRALS

B7 Now some questions about the INTERNAL Centrelink services available for you to refer customers to such as Social worker, Psychologist, Disability Support Officer.

For each statement I read out please give me a rating on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is very dissatisfied and 10 is very satisfied.

(STATEMENTS)

- a) With your knowledge of available services
  - b) The waiting times for your customers
  - c) The quality of available services
- (RECORD NUMBER 1 - 10) DK REF

B7a Now some questions about the EXTERNAL SERVICES available for you to refer customers to in your local area.

For each statement I read out please give me a rating on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is very dissatisfied and 10 is very satisfied.

(STATEMENTS)

- a) With your knowledge of available services
  - b) The waiting times for your customers
  - c) The quality of available services
  - d) The range of services available
  - e) The number of places available
- (RECORD NUMBER 1 - 10) DK REF

B8 Excluding contact about individual customers, have you had any face to face meetings with any local service providers over the last three months?

- 1. Yes (GO TO B9a)
- 2. No (GO TO B10)
- 3. Don't know / can't say (GO TO B10)
- 4. Refused (GO TO B10)

B8a Which type of local service providers have you had face-to-face meetings with in that time? (PROBE IF NECESSARY)

(MULTIPLE RESPONSE)

- 1. Job Network
- 2. Transition to work
- 3. Voluntary work
- 4. Work for the Dole
- 5. Mature Age Workers program / employment services
- 6. Vocational rehabilitation (CRS Australia)
- 7. Work Capacity Assessments or medical assessments
- 8. Community agency
- 9. CDEP
- 10. Centrelink specialist (eg Psychologist, social worker, disability officer)
- 11. Personal Support Programme
- 12. Career counselling
- 13. Training/education
- 14. Personal or relationship counselling including drug and alcohol

15. Financial counselling
16. Disability Employment Services
17. Childcare
18. Other (Specify\_\_\_\_\_)
19. Don't know / can't say
20. Refused

B9 How satisfied are you with the extent to which you are able to stay in touch with the local service providers in your area on a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 is very dissatisfied and 10 is very satisfied?  
(RECORD NUMBER 1 – 10) DK REF

B10 Do you think that the time that's available for you to build relationships with local service providers to stay up to date with what is going on in your area is adequate or inadequate?

1. Adequate
2. Inadequate
3. Don't Know / Can't Say
4. Refused

B11 Overall, how satisfied are you with the relationship you have with the Job Network Member's in your local area on a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 is very dissatisfied and 10 is very satisfied?  
(RECORD NUMBER 1- 10) DK REF

PREB12a (IF B12=1 OR 2 CONTINUE ELSE GO TO B12b)

B11a Why do you say that?  
(RECORD VERBATIM)

B11b What are the barriers for customers in taking up referrals to the Job Network?  
(MULTIPLE RESPONSE)

1. Lack of motivation of customer
2. Delayed vocational profile interview
3. Lack of family support
4. Change of customer circumstances
5. long waiting times
6. lack of service/quality
7. Difficulty travelling to Job Network / No transport
8. Customers non vocational barriers (eg drug/alcohol dependence, language etc)
9. Customer doesn't feel they need assistance
10. Customer believes they are too old to work
11. Customers expectations of JNM too high
12. Customer doesn't understand JNM role
13. JNM has negative attitude towards Mature Age
14. JNM not interested in helping Mature Age
15. Other (specify)
16. Don't know / can't say

17. Refused

B11c Deleted

B11d Under what circumstances do you refer customers to the Job Network as Job Search Support Only rather than as fully Job Network Eligible?

(RECORD VERBATIM)

B12 Thinking about all your customer groups what, if any, do you consider to be the main “service gaps” in you local area?

1. No gaps
2. Other (Specify)
3. Don't Know / Can't Say
4. Refused

B13 For the following statements I read out, please give me a rating for each on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is strongly disagree and 10 is strongly agree ...

(STATEMENTS)

- a) Deleted
- b) Deleted
- c) The PA intervention is effective in encouraging increased social participation
- d) The PA intervention is effective in encouraging increased levels of economic participation
- e) Deleted
- f) Customers find the participation planning process to be really valuable
- g) Customers leave feeling motivated to give things a try that they mightn't have tried otherwise
- h) Deleted
- i) The participation planning process makes it easy to individualise service
- j) Deleted
- k) The PA intervention is effective in helping customers access services to overcome barriers

(RECORD NUMBER 1 - 10) DK REF

B14 Generally speaking, do you feel you have enough control over your workload and the appointments process to be able to arrange follow up interviews for those customers that would benefit most from another contact?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't Know / Can't Say
4. Refused

B15 Under what circumstances do you usually try and arrange for a follow up interview?

(RECORD VERBATIM)

**Module C: THE PERCEIVED IMPACT OF THE PERSONAL ADVISER INTERVIEW**

C1 In what ways do you think the PA interview most benefits customers?

(MULTIPLE RESPONSE)

1. Setting achievable goals
2. Referring to services
3. Motivating customers
4. Addressing non-vocational barriers
5. Addressing vocational barriers
6. Gives customers a plan / clear steps
7. Acknowledges issues / barriers
8. Gives customers short-term goals
9. Empowers customers to make choices
10. Given options / ideas
11. Makes obligations clear
12. Other (specify)
13. None
14. Don't know / can't say
15. Refused

C2 DELETED

C3 How effective do you think the Personal Adviser interview is in encouraging social participation amongst customers who aren't really looking to work or participate in other activities? Would you say...

1. Very effective
2. Somewhat effective, or
3. Of little effect
4. Don't Know / Can't Say
5. Refused

PREC3aa (IF C3 = 1 CONTINUE ELSE GO TO C3b)

C3aa Why do you say that?

(RECORD VERBATIM)

C3b How effective do you think the Personal Adviser interview is in bringing about long-term attitudinal changes amongst customers who aren't really looking to work or participate in other activities? Would you say...

1. Very effective
2. Somewhat effective, or
3. Of little effect
4. Don't Know / Can't Say
5. Refused

C4 Which one of the following groups do you believe the Personal Adviser interview is of most benefit to ...

(MULTIPLE RESPONSE)

1. Mature aged customers
2. Compulsory Parents
3. Voluntary Parents
4. Activity Test Incapacitated
5. Better Assessment at Risk

C5 Why do you say that?

(RECORD VERBATIM)

C6 And which one of these of groups do you believe the Personal Adviser interview is of least benefit to ...

(MULTIPLE RESPONSE)

1. Mature aged customers
2. Compulsory interview Parents
3. Voluntary Parents
4. Activity Test Incapacitated
5. Better Assessment at Risk

C7 Why do you say that?

(RECORD VERBATIM)

C8 MOVED(to C8e)

C8a What suggestions do you have for improving the effectiveness of the PA intervention?

1. No suggestions
2. Other (specify)
3. Don't know / can't say
4. Refused

C9 What, if any, unintended negative effects can you think of that might result from the PA intervention?

(RECORD VERBATIM)

1. None
2. Other (specify)
3. Don't know / can't say
4. Refused

#### **Module D: DEMOGRAPHICS**

D1 Now a final few questions to help us analyse the results of this survey. Please remember that all your answers are confidential etc. and that this data is being used for research purposes only.

Have you completed any formal post school educational qualifications?

1. Yes
2. No (GO TO PRED4)
3. Don't Know / Can't Say (GO TO PRED4)
4. Refused (GO TO PRED4)

D2 To what extent would you say your post school qualifications are relevant to you in your work as a Personal Adviser. Would you say they are very relevant, somewhat relevant, of slight relevance or not relevant at all

1. Very relevant
2. Somewhat relevant
3. Slightly relevant
4. Not relevant at all
5. Don't Know / Can't Say
6. Refused

D3 What is the broad subject matter of your post school qualifications?

PRED4 (IF WORKED PRIOR TO PA/JA ROLE ASK ELSE GO TO D5)

D4 To what extent would you say your previous work experience is relevant to you in your work as a Personal Adviser. Would you say it is very relevant, somewhat relevant, of slight relevance or not relevant at all

1. Very relevant
2. Somewhat relevant
3. Slightly relevant
4. Not relevant at all
5. Don't Know / Can't Say
6. Refused

D5 What is the highest qualification you have completed? (SINGLE RESPONSE)

1. Secondary school qualification – yr 10 equiv
2. Secondary school qualification – yr 12 equiv
3. Basic Vocational Qualifications
4. Skilled Vocational Qualifications eg Trade certificate/apprenticeship
5. Associate diploma (1-2 years FT study)
6. Undergraduate diploma (3+ years FT study)
7. Bachelor degree (incl honours)
8. Postgraduate Diploma / Masters degree / doctorate
9. None – never attended any schooling
10. Secondary school qualification – yr 11
11. Secondary school qualification – yr 9 or less
12. Other (Specify)
13. Don't know / can't say

14. Refused

D6 Were you born in Australia or overseas?

1. Australia
2. Overseas (GO TO D8)
3. Refused

D7 Are you of Aboriginal, Torres Strait islander origin?

1. Yes – Aboriginal
2. Yes – Torres Strait Islander
3. Yes – Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander
4. No – neither
5. Don't Know / Can't Say
6. Refused

D8 Age

1. Under 21
2. 21 to 25
3. 26 to 30
4. 31 to 35
5. 35 to 40
6. 41 to 45
7. 45 to 50
8. 51 to 55
9. 56 to 60
10. 61 and over
11. Don't know / can't say
12. Refused

D9 Sex

1. Male
2. Female

END That's the end of survey. Thank you (..NAME..). The Department of Family and Community Services really appreciates your time. Just in case you missed it my name is (...) and this survey was conducted on behalf of the Department of Family and Community Services.

Thank you for your cooperation

### Interviewer Declaration

I certify that this is a true, accurate and complete interview, conducted in accordance with the briefing instructions, the IQCA standards and the MRSA Code of Professional Behaviour (ICC/Esomar). I will not disclose to any other person the content of this questionnaire or any other information relating to the project.

Interviewer name:

Interviewer I.D:

Signed:

Date

### ONLY IF NECESSARY:

If you have any queries about this survey, or would like any further information, you can ring the Department of Family and Community Services on 1800 636 431.