

SARA key performance indicators and customer satisfaction survey 2014–15: Report

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The establishment of the State Assessment and Referral Agency (SARA) was given effect on 1 July 2013. The commencement meant that where the State is an assessment manager or referral agency for a development application, the Chief Executive administering the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* (SPA), being the Director-General of the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (DILGP), became the single entity responsible for the State's interest in development assessment. The primary role of SARA is to deliver a co-ordinated, whole of government approach to the State's development assessment by providing a single agency for the lodgement and assessment of development applications (including one consolidated decision) where the State has jurisdiction.

SARA has been operational for two years now and continues to place a heavy emphasis on the ongoing improvement of operations, procedures and services wherever possible. To facilitate this, SARA adopt Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and undertake an annual Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS) to help drive and maintain a high level of performance, professionalism and efficiency in day-to-day operations. KPIs are an integral component in helping to deliver the best planning and development system in Australia.

The Department is committed to the continual improvement of SARA's supporting tools and systems. This is demonstrated in the proposed upgrade of MyDAS, being the online system that allows an applicant to prepare and lodge or refer applications to SARA. The new and improved MyDAS is being developed at present and is scheduled to go live in 2016 as part of a full suite of planning reform initiatives (including new planning act).

1.2 Objectives

As part of the Department's ongoing commitment to improving its performance under SARA, the KPIs have been developed to:

- drive the necessary cultural and organisational change to deliver a successful and efficient development assessment system
- provide a high level of transparency and ensure SARA is accountable to its customers
- inform ongoing and continual improvement to SARA processes and performance.

The KPIs focus on four key areas of: customer satisfaction; IDAS timeframes; information requests; and appeals.

1.3 Summary of key findings

Customer satisfaction

- The sample size for the 2014–15 customer satisfaction survey was considerably smaller (136 respondents) compared to the 2013–14 sample size (182 respondents).
- Whilst the percentage of respondents satisfied with SARA's overall performance (77 per cent) did not meet the set target (80 per cent), it was a marked improvement from the percentage of stakeholders that believed SARA met expectations (48 per cent) for the 2013–14 year.
- The overall satisfaction of other SARA services and staff rated very well once again, with the majority of respondents stating they were satisfied or very satisfied with:
 - pre-lodgement meeting experiences (83 per cent)
 - level of service provided by SARA officers (85 per cent)
 - level of service provided by MyDAS helpline (79 per cent)
 - development assessment mapping system (87 per cent).
- The MyDAS system was again identified as an area of significant discontent with 63 per cent of respondents stating they were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with MyDAS (compared to 62 per cent who were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied for the 2013–14 year).

IDAS timeframes, information requests and appeals

- SARA continued to perform at a very high level compared to the set KPIs for 2014–15. Despite the high level of performance, the targets for three KPIs were not met:
 - Ninety per cent of assessment manager applications were decided within 40 business days, against a target of 98 per cent (compared to 97 per cent decided in 2013–14).
 - Eighty-seven per cent of referral responses were issued without an extension of time, against a target of 90 per cent (compared to 97 per cent issued in 2013–14).
 - Sixty-three per cent of assessment manager requests for information were issued without an extension of time, against a target of 80 per cent (compared to 83 per cent issued in 2013–14).

2. Key statistics

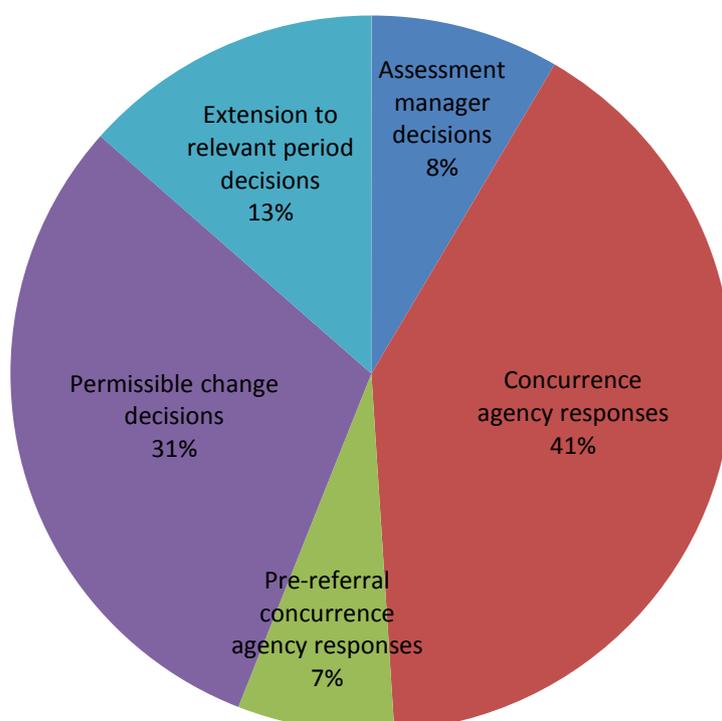
In order to provide context to the KPIs and subsequent results, key SARA statistics have been compiled. In the 2014–15 financial year, SARA issued a total of **4302** decisions/responses, comprised of the following (see figure 1):

- 364 assessment manager decisions
- 1743 referral agency responses
- 302 pre-referral responses
- 1313 permissible change decisions
- 580 extension to relevant period decisions.

Further, SARA undertook a total of 442 pre-lodgement meetings or pre-lodgement written advices.

It is noted that out of the total number of decisions/responses issued, only four appeals (within the Planning and Environment Court) were entered that were directly against a condition(s) or decision of SARA.

Figure 1 – SARA decisions/responses breakdown for 2014–15



3. SARA achievement of 2014–15 KPIs

3.1 Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction was measured via an annual customer satisfaction survey. The survey questions varied between 2013–14 and 2014–15 and thus there is no direct comparison between financial years.

Measure	2013–14			2014–15		
	Target	Actual	Target achieved	Target	Actual	Target achieved
1. Percentage of respondents satisfied with the SARA pre-lodgement meeting process/experience.	N/A	N/A	N/A	80%	82% ¹	
2. Percentage of respondents satisfied with SARA's overall performance as assessment manager or referral agency over the last 12 months.	N/A	N/A	N/A	80%	77% ²	

3.2 IDAS timeframes

Measure	2013–14			2014–15		
	Target	Actual	Target achieved	Target	Actual	Target achieved
Assessment manager decisions (decision stage³)						
3. Percentage of total applications decided within 40 business days.	95%	97%		98%	90%	
4. Percentage of total applications decided within 20 business days.	40%	88%		60%	73%	
5. Percentage of total applications decided within 5 business days.	5%	58%		15%	41%	

¹ Based on 46 survey responses

² Based on 123 survey responses

³ The decision/referral stage begins when SARA advises an applicant that all information required to assess the application has been provided. It ends when a written decision (where SARA is the assessment manager) or referral response (when SARA is the referral agency) is issued to the applicant. For example, where an extension of time is required for the information request period, the referral/decision stage begins when the extended period expires. Where a request for information is made to the applicant, this stage does not begin until the day after SARA receives the response providing all or part of the requested information.

Measure	2013–14			2014–15		
	Target	Actual	Target achieved	Target	Actual	Target achieved
Concurrence agency responses (referral stage³)						
6. Percentage of total referral responses issued without an extension of time.	80%	97%		90%	87%	
7. Percentage of total referral responses issued within 20 business days.	N/A	N/A	N/A	30%	83%	
8. Percentage of total referral responses issued within 5 business days.	5%	52%		15%	42%	

3.3 Information requests

Measure	2013–14			2014–15		
	Target	Actual	Target achieved	Target	Actual	Target achieved
When an information request is not required / issued						
9. As assessment manager , percentage of total applications decided without an information request.	50%	95%		70%	89%	
10. As concurrence agency , percentage of total referral responses issued without an information request.	50%	88%		70%	79%	
Requests to extend the information request period						
11. As assessment manager , percentage of total information requests issued without an extension of time.	70%	83%		80%	63%	
12. As concurrence agency , percentage of total information requests issued without an extension of time.	70%	77%		80%	80%	

3.4 Appeals

Measure	2013–14			2014–15		
	Target	Actual	Target achieved	Target	Actual	Target achieved
13. Percentage of total assessment manager decisions appealed.	<3%	0%		<2%	0%	
14. Percentage of total concurrence agency responses appealed.	<3%	0.06%		<2%	0.17%	

4. Customer satisfaction survey

4.1 Purpose

The purpose of the survey was to provide an insight into the views of customers/applicants regarding the success and efficiency of the current development assessment framework implemented by SARA.

4.2 Timeframe and content

The survey was conducted through SurveyMonkey for a period of approximately 5 weeks from the 25 May 2015 to 30 June 2015. The survey questions were developed via a series of internal workshops and covered a broad range of SARA operations and tools, including:

- development application processes
- the quality of SARA assessment/s
- staff service
- MyDAS
- the State Development Assessment Provisions (SDAP)
- Development Assessment (DA) mapping.

4.3 Response rate and additional notes

A total of **136 survey responses** were received.

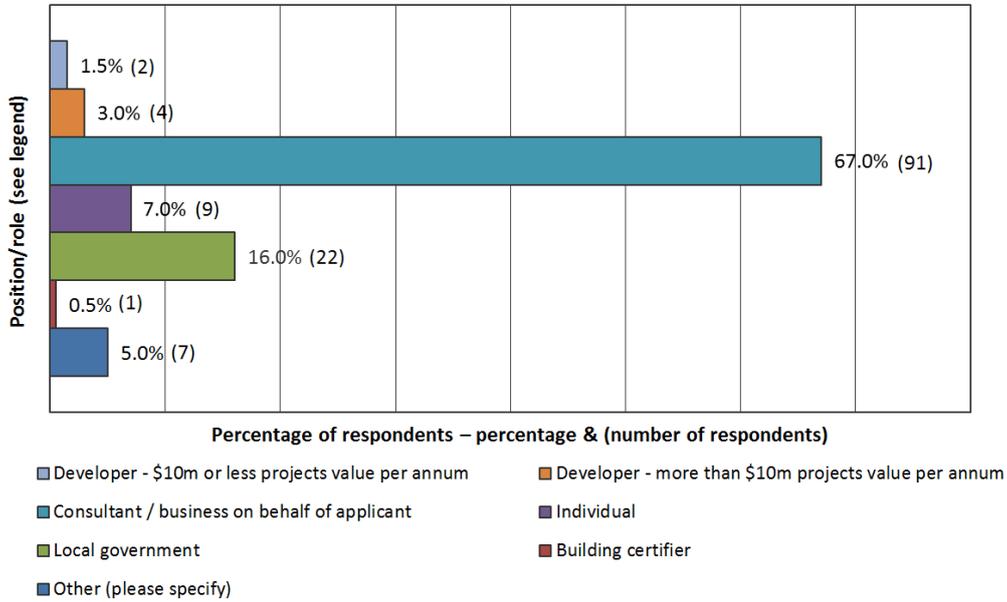
The following notes apply to the data provided within the survey results:

- SurveyMonkey records the respondent data once each question is completed, as opposed to at the completion of the survey. As such, the number of responses slightly declines throughout the survey due to participants not fully completing the survey/dropping out.
- Due to the rounding of results in some instances, percentages expressed in the findings may not always add up to exactly 100.

4.4 Profiling

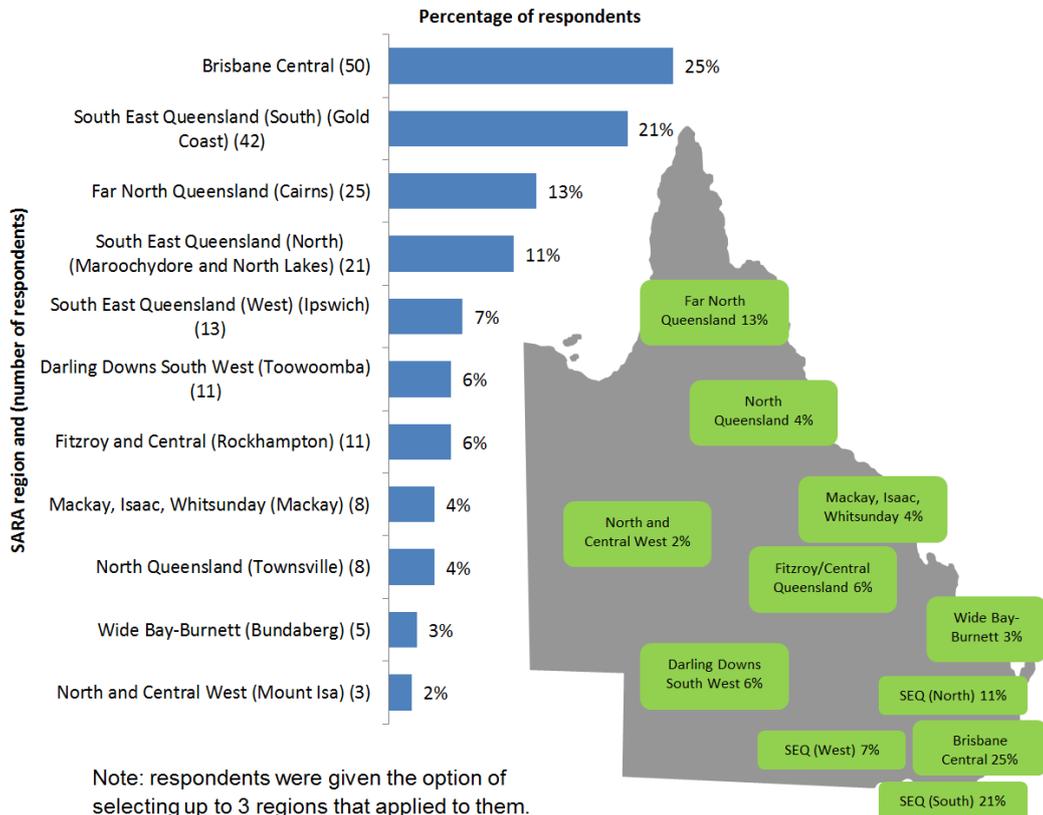
Respondent position/role

Q: Which of the following best describes your position or role? (total responses: 136)



Respondents' predominant application/referral locations

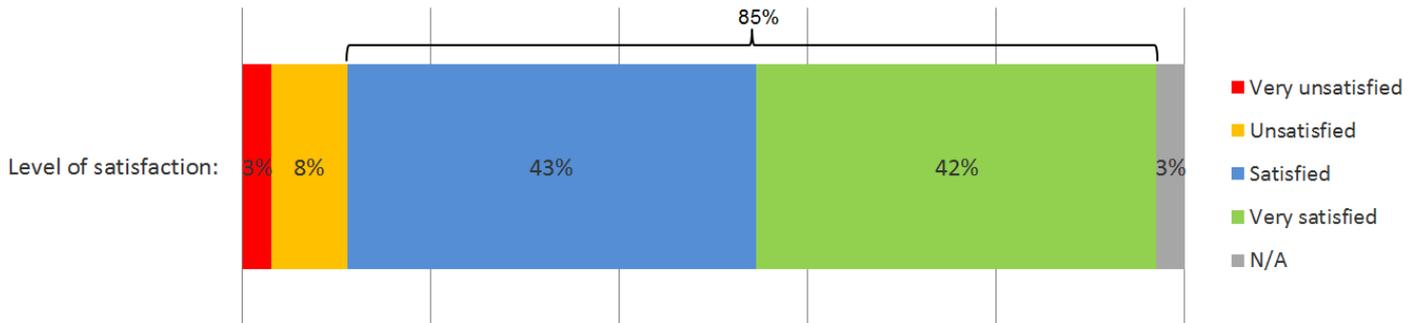
Q: In the last 12 months, in which regions were the majority of your SARA applications located?



4.5 Staff service

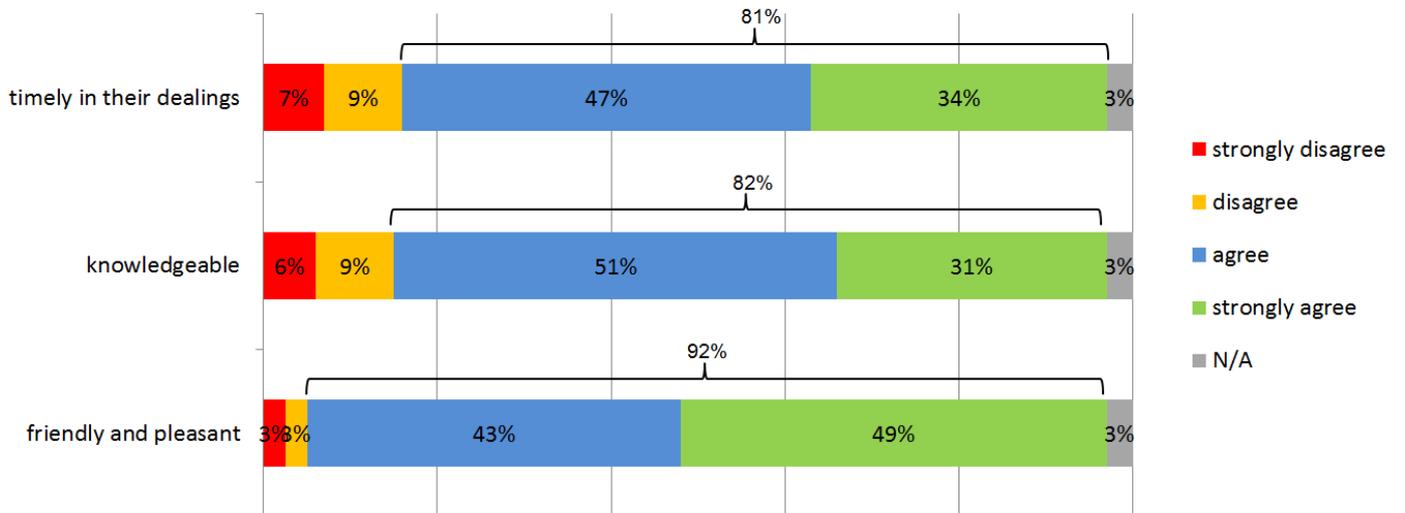
Satisfaction with level of service provided by SARA officers

Q: In relation to your dealings with SARA over the last 12 months, how satisfied were you with the level of service provided by SARA officers? (total responses: 118)



Quality of interactions with SARA officers

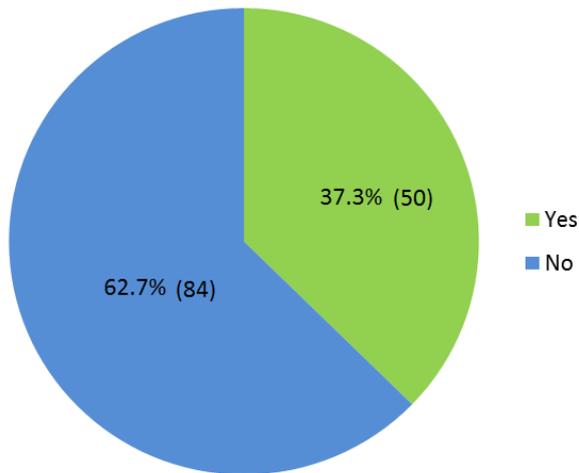
Q: In relation to those dealings with SARA officers, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements—SARA officers were: (total responses: 118)



4.6 Pre-lodgement meetings

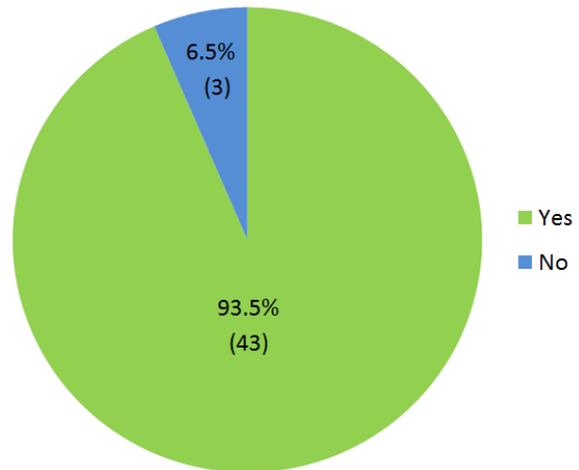
Attendance at a pre-lodgement meeting

Q: Have you attended a SARA pre-lodgement meeting in the last 12 months? (total responses: 134)



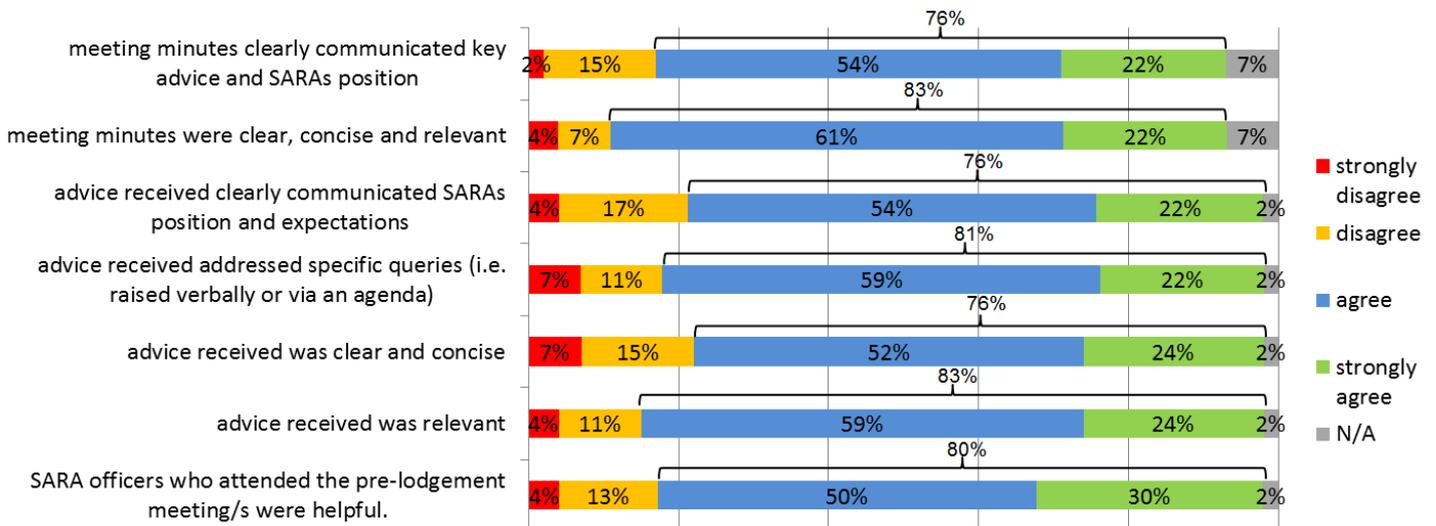
Future attendance at pre-lodgement meetings

Q: Would you undertake a SARA pre-lodgement meeting again? (total responses: 46)



Quality of pre-lodgement meeting

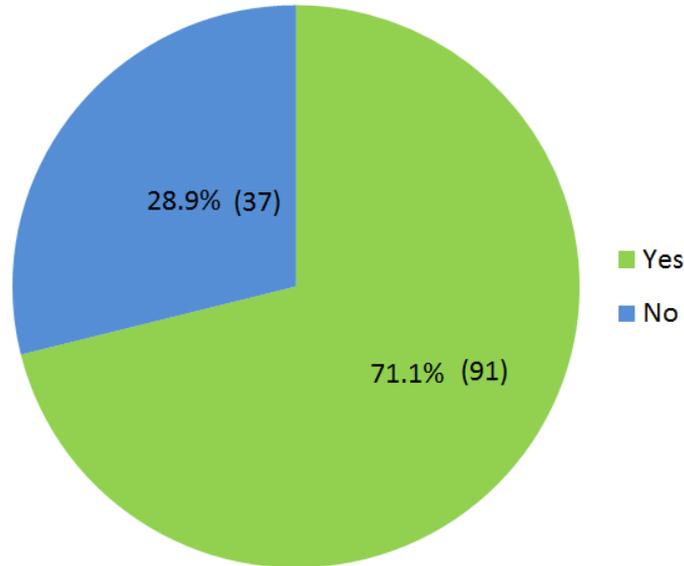
Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: (total responses: 46)



4.7 Information requests

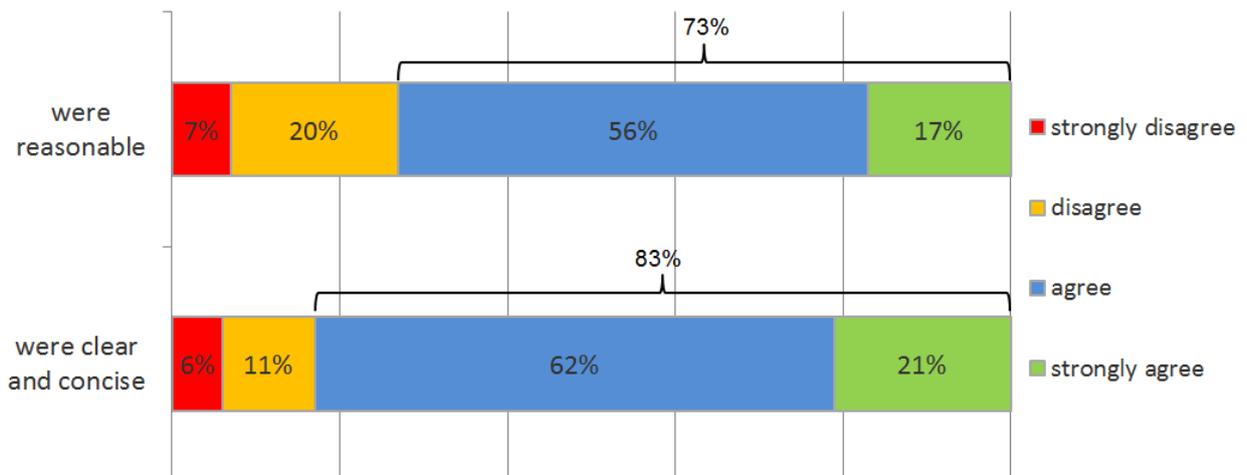
Receipt of an information request/s

Q: Have you received a SARA information request in the last 12 months? (total responses: 128)



Quality of information request/s

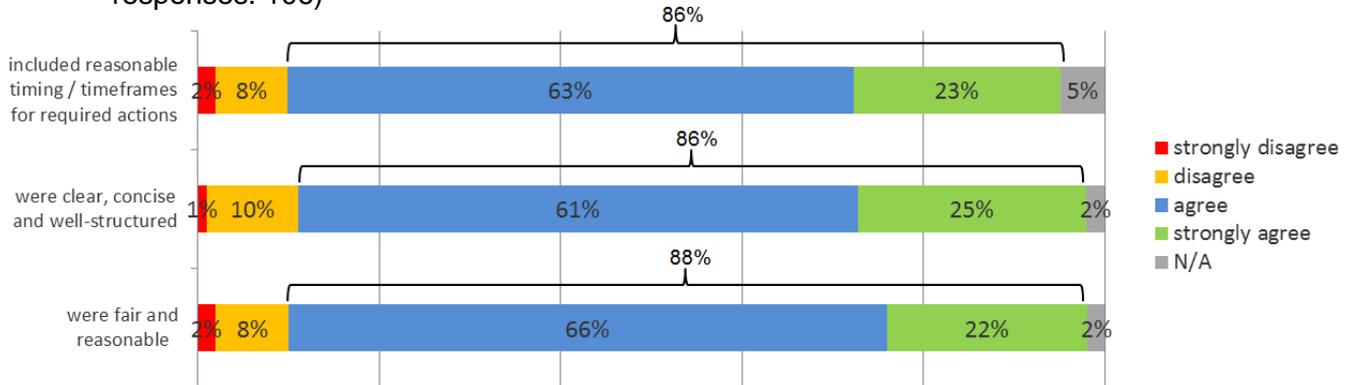
Q: In relation to the information request/s you have received in the last 12 months, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements—Information requests: (total responses: 89)



4.8 Decisions and responses

Quality of SARA conditions

Q: In relation to SARA conditions over the last 12 months, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements—SARA included conditions that: (total responses: 106)



4.9 MyDAS

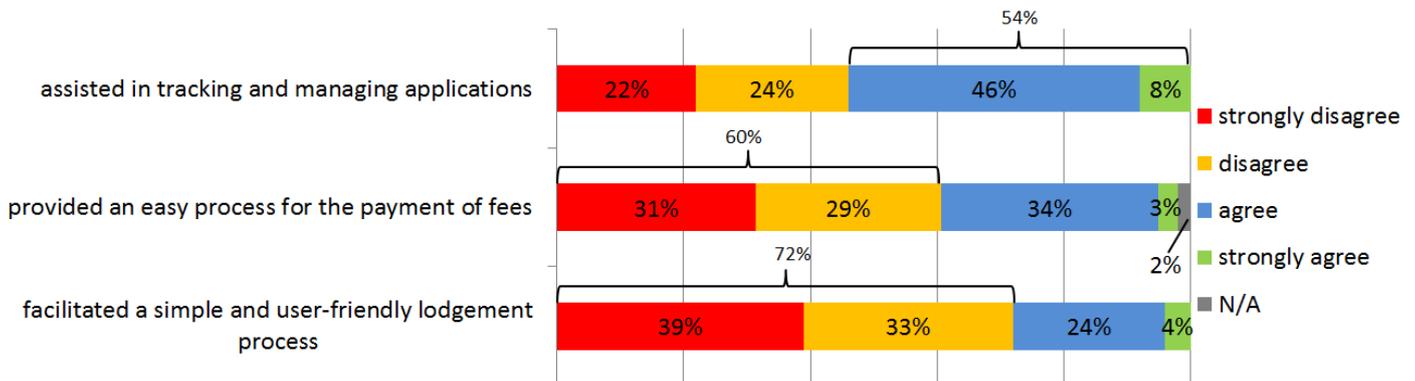
Satisfaction with MyDAS

Q: In the last 12 months, how satisfied were you with your overall experience with the MyDAS system? (total responses: 89)



Quality of MyDAS features

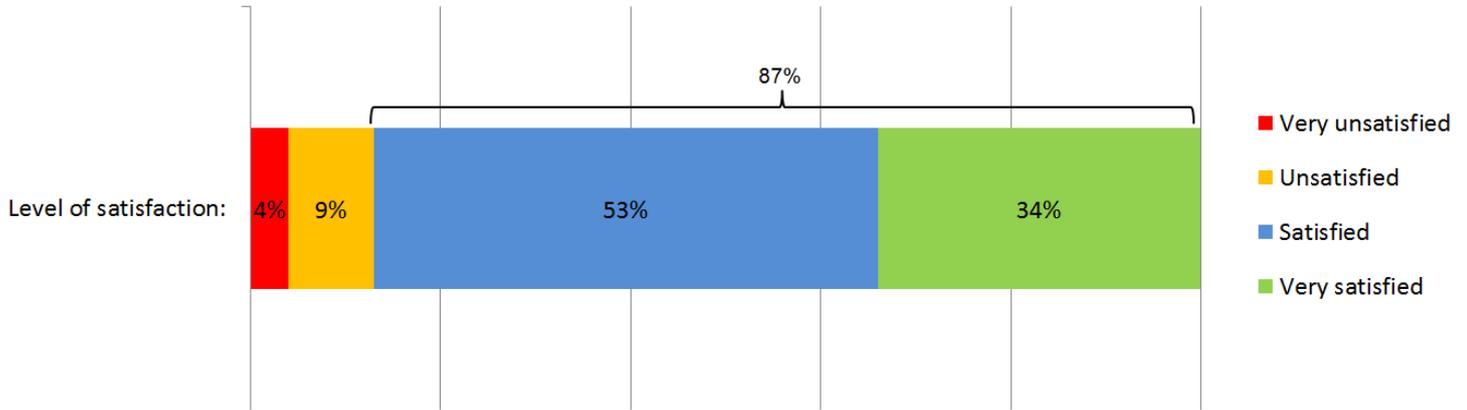
Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements—The MyDAS system: (total responses: 89)



4.10 MyDAS DA mapping

Satisfaction with the MyDAS DA mapping system

Q: How satisfied were you with your overall experience with the MyDAS development assessment (DA) mapping system? (total responses: 101)



Quality/effectiveness of the MyDAS DA mapping system

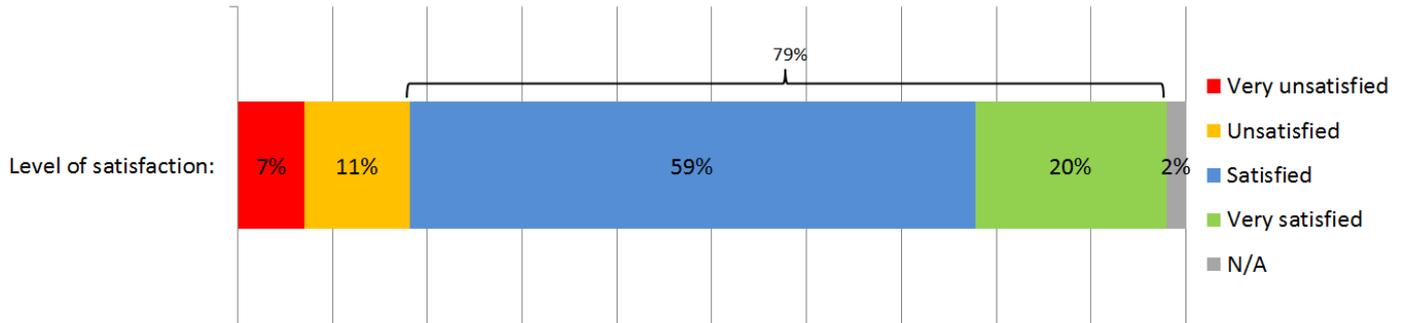
Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements—The MyDAS DA mapping system: (total responses: 101)



4.11 MyDAS support

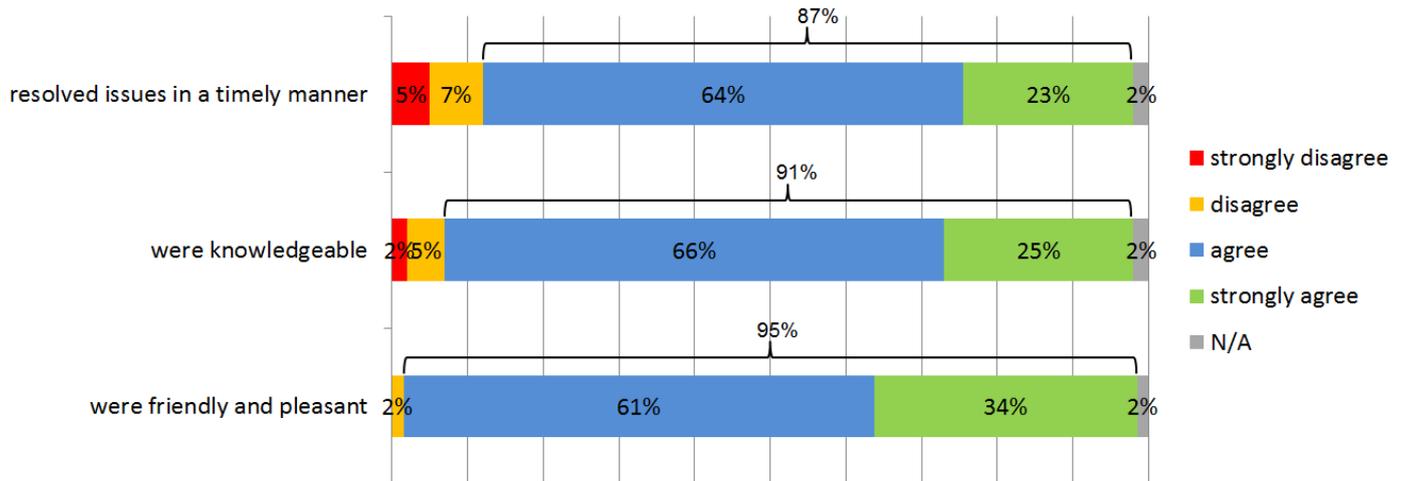
Satisfaction with level of service provided by the MyDAS helpline

Q: How satisfied were you with the level of service provided by the MyDAS helpline/support staff? (total responses: 44)



Quality of support provided by the MyDAS helpline

Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements—MyDAS helpline/IT support staff: (total responses: 44)



Abbreviations

CSS	Customer satisfaction survey
DILGP	Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning
KPI	Key performance indicator
SARA	State Assessment and Referral Agency
SPA	Sustainable Planning Act 2009

