C Survey of court users

## C.1 Survey design and distribution

With the assistance of the South Australian courts, the Commission conducted a survey of parties who used the Magistrates, District and Supreme Courts of South Australia. Information elicited from survey respondents included the costs of obtaining legal representation, the amounts at stake for parties, the time taken to resolve disputes, reasons for a lack of representation, and important factors in parties’ decisions to settle or withdraw their cases.

The survey was sent to parties via post on 18 February 2014. Postal addresses for potential respondents were supplied by the courts from samples of cases finalised in the 12 months prior to February 2014. Parties who responded to the survey had the option of submitting their response via reply‑paid post or online.

A total of 779 surveys were distributed (table C.1). The Commission received a total of 86 responses. Another 64 survey forms were returned to the Commission without completion, due to the intended recipients no longer residing at the street addresses listed in the courts’ records. Overall, this represented a net response rate of 12 per cent. Given the low response rate, the results of the survey should be treated with some caution. Nonetheless, they provide some insights into the experiences of some parties in using the formal justice system in South Australia.

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| Table C.1 Summary of surveys sent, received and response rate  By South Australian court |
| |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Court | Surveys sent | Returned to sender | No. of responses | Net response ratea | | Magistrates Court | 430 | 32 | 57 | 14 per cent | | District Court | 176 | 16 | 11 | 7 per cent | | Supreme Court | 173 | 16 | 18 | 10 per cent | | **Total** | **779** | **64** | **86** | **12 per cent** | |
| a The net response rate was calculated as the number of responses divided by the total number of surveys distributed minus the number of surveys ‘returned to sender’. |
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A copy of the questionnaire sent to users of the South Australian Magistrates Court is reproduced in this appendix. The questionnaires sent to users of the District and Supreme Courts were identical to the questionnaire below, with the exception of the name of the court identified in the ‘About this survey’ section.

### The survey of court users







