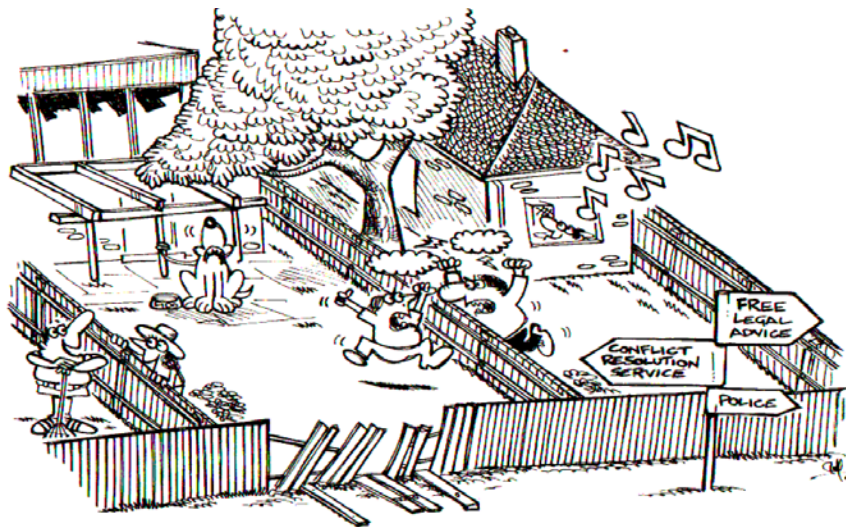




Conflict Resolution
Service

Annual Report 2007 – 2008



20th Anniversary

8-8-1988 to 8-8-2008

Empowering individuals to understand their differences and resolve conflicts peacefully, by providing skilled and accessible dispute resolution service, since 1988.

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About the Conflict Resolution Service



Vision

A community where Alternative Dispute Resolution processes and skills are accepted and utilised to develop mutual understanding and appreciation of differences, which will improve people's wellbeing and relationships

Mission

To provide professional, accessible and effective dispute resolution and training services to the ACT community that will help and empower people to prevent, manage and resolve disputes peacefully

Values

Professional

- Integrity: CRS will work within an ethical framework based on values we share with our stakeholders, including respect, honesty, confidentiality and transparency
- Best Practice: Relevant industry standards will serve as a minimum benchmark for service delivery in ADR, training and governance, in order to ensure competency of staff and confidence in CRS's service
- Impartiality: CRS will treat stakeholders equally, demonstrating objectivity, neutrality, freedom from prejudice and judgement.

Effective

- Empowering: CRS will empower clients to become self determining to achieve positive outcomes
- Relevant: CRS will ensure its programs and services are current and appropriate for client needs
- Influential: CRS will advise and make recommendations to government, industry and our clients on the benefits of alternative dispute resolution

Accessible

- User-friendly: CRS will provide clear, understandable, appropriate and practical processes and information in a welcoming and inclusive environment
- Available: CRS will provide equitable access to a reliable, timely, affordable and efficient dispute resolution service
- Flexible: CRS will ensure service delivery is responsive to the needs of individual client circumstances

Enabling

- Governance: Good governance practices will ensure CRS's ongoing viability, accountability, stability and security
- Profile: CRS will increase community awareness of and confidence in its services
- Resources: CRS resources will be developed, maintained and engaged efficiently in order to achieve optimum outputs, especially in the areas of human resources, infrastructure and financial sustainability.

PEOPLE OF CRS



Board of Directors 2007-08

		<i>No. of Meetings Eligible to Attend</i>	<i>No. of Meetings Attended</i>
Amanda Aspden	Treasurer (to Nov 07)	4	2
Rachel Bacon	Secretary (to Nov 07), Ordinary Member	9	8
Richard Bear	Treasurer (from Nov 07)	5	5
Richard Duckett	Chair (Acting), Vice Chair	6	5
Gary Kent	Chair, Ordinary Member	9	8
John King	Chair (Acting), Vice Chair, Ordinary Member	8	7
Jason Lange	Ordinary Member	3	2
Katherine Reimers	Secretary (from Nov 07)	8	6

Staff

Executive Officer.....Katrina Spyrides
 Dispute Assessment Officer..... Mary Hinchey
 Dispute Assessment Officer..... Bob Westwood
 Training/Professional Standards.....David Purnell / Kate Price
 Community Education Officer.....Fiona McIlroy

Nb – Permanent staff only

Panel of Registered Mediators

Mediators are registered annually with the ACT Department of Justice and Community Safety.

The following mediators are registered under Section 5 or under Section 7(2) of the Mediation Act 1997 (ACT).

Nigel Biginell	Lawry Herron	Judy Scott
Paul Bonnett	Mary Hinchey	Cynthia Shannon
Geoffrey Blackert	Tim Johnstone	Katrina Spyrides
Janine Brissett	Toni Lee-Howie	Annie Vickers
Tim Chadwick	Shelley McInnis	Branka Vlaicevic
Caroline Charles	Fiona McIlroy	Tony Wallace
Rene Charles	Elizabeth McKenzie	Russ Whitewood
Jillian Crisp	Anthony Melican	Rhonda Woodward
Annette Crotty	Christine Mogg	Rachel Wynd
Mariénéolle Curé	Kate Price	Christopher Yong
Purnima Gurung	Brian Proctor	Stephen Young
Minoo Hatami	David Purnell	

CHAIR'S REPORT



During 2007/08, the Conflict Resolution Service began the celebrations to commemorate its 20th anniversary.

Even though outside the reporting period, the commemorative dinner on 16 August 2008, attended by the ACT Chief Minister, Jon Stanhope MLA, provided an opportunity to reflect on the valuable work performed by the organisation over two decades. It was most fitting that the contribution of a number of CRS 'pioneers' was publicly recognised on the night.

CRS continued to exceed expectations in its provision of services to the Canberra community during the reporting year, with a substantial increase in activity over 2006/07. There were 890 new inquiries (690), 924 active disputes (730), 289 mediation offers (232), 100 disputes mediated (80), 125 mediation sessions (103) and 433 hours of mediation (354). (The 2006/07 figures are provided in brackets for comparison).

I wish to thank those individuals who so ably contributed to CRS' success during the year through their membership of the Board. Their names are recorded elsewhere in this report but it is appropriate that I make special mention of those who occupied the position of CRS chair over this period, namely John King, Gary Kent and Richard Duckett. Thank you also to the members of the Board who departed during the year: Jason Lange, Amanda Aspden and John King

High amongst the Board's priorities during the year was the updating of the CRS Strategic Plan for 2008-2011. The adoption of a new CRS Vision, Mission and values in the CRS Constitution at a special meeting on 30 June 2008 represented the culmination of a process of consultation with the CRS membership commencing in early 2007.

The Board pursued a number of projects during the year aimed at strengthening CRS and ensuring it remains at the forefront in its area of specialisation. These included increased focus on marketing activities, broadening the base of CRS activities, including increased provision of

training, and adoption of a range of financial and other key governance policies.

During the year, Board members attended Governance Training provided by the ACT Council of Social Services. In the ATCOSS assessment of CRS governance processes and documentation, CRS achieved 'high marks' across all categories for best practice.

In recent years CRS has appreciated very much the support of the ACT Government in assisting it carry out its activities. 2007-08 is no exception and I wish on behalf of the Board to express our thanks to the ACT Departments of Disability Housing and Community Services, and Justice and Community Safety, for their continued financial and other assistance.

The Board wishes to place on the record its deep appreciation of the contribution to CRS of its Executive Officer, Katrina Spyrides and her professional staff. They do a tremendous job for us all. Katrina, as our chief executive, works incredibly hard, often over and above the call of duty, to ensure that the organisation functions smoothly.

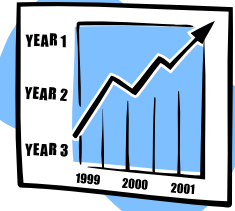
Finally, thank you to our mediators who continue to provide such a high level of service to CRS customers and who ensure the continued high reputation of CRS for quality and professional service in the community sector.

2008/09 will pose its own challenges for the organisation as we continue to strive to attract new business to the organisation, while operating effectively and efficiently, within the limited resources available, and maintaining the level of service our clients have quite rightly come to expect.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Norman'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'L'.

Lisa Norman
Acting Chair CRS Board of Directors

TREASURER'S REPORT



It is with pleasure that I submit the audited financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2008.

CRS has ended the year with an operating surplus of \$62,080 and a corresponding increase in net assets and equity. Income for the year is up by \$71,860 (24%) primarily due to an increase of \$46,000 in services, mediation and training fees. This reflects the specific program developed and implemented during the year and which is being continued into the 2008/09 year. At the same time expenses have been held at 2006/07 levels due to the recurrent nature of savings effected in the 2006/07 year and to ongoing close monitoring by the Executive Officer.

As an Incorporated Association any revenues raised will be invested back into the organisation. During the reporting period this has been seen through the increase in staffing hours, subsidizing CRS events for members, increase in wages for mediators and improvements in CRS infrastructure.

The Board through the Executive Officer will continue their focus on continuously improving financial management and reporting which includes a regular review of forecast expenditure and expected cash flows.

CRS is in a strong financial position and well able to continue and even expand the services it provides to the Canberra community. It is an exciting time for CRS as it looks to the future.

I take this opportunity to convey my thanks to the staff and board members for the support provided over the past year.

Richard Bear
Treasurer

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT



Implementation of strategic priorities, management of the increasing demand for CRS services and sourcing resources to support service expansion were the focus for Conflict Resolution Service during 2007-08.

Dispute Resolution Services

CRS has continued to increase its activities in all areas of its core business – mediation, information/referral and dispute counselling. Substantial increases were evident in the number of new enquiries (↑129%), active disputes (↑29%) and ultimately mediations (↑25%) resulting in approx 23% increase in mediation hours.

As a result of the increased workload CRS needed to undertake a paradigm shift from client centred service deliver to client/service centred service delivery. Community organisations by their very nature have been client focused and rightly so, however as CRS began to exceed its capacity to meet the needs of clients it was at risk of not meeting them to the high standard which CRS has always maintained. To this end, the Dispute Assessment Office closed its doors for an unprecedented 2-day planning session in order to identify current strengths and future opportunities to provide a best practice model for a mediation agency.

The objectives of the planning activity were summarized as follows, to maintain

- Efficiency of processes
- Effectiveness of information gathering
- Minimal time to understand status of disputes
- Fluid handovers
- Timeliness of service delivery
- Legislative compliance
- calm, productive, happy staff.

In effect by undertaking the temporary closure of the Dispute Assessment Line, CRS was able to become service-centered, identify and implement areas of best practice which resulted in a re-emergence of improved client-centered service delivery.

Family Law

On 1st August 2007, the Commonwealth Attorney Generals Department officially designated CRS as a provider of Family Dispute Resolution under paragraph 10G(b) of the Family Law Act 1975 (FLA) until 30 June 2009

Apart from providing a more child-focussed process, the designation status has also afforded CRS the ability to issue Section 60I Certificates to clients who wish to proceed their case to court.

Official designation impacted on several areas of CRS as follows:

- Family law mediations topped the list for the most requested service, surpassing neighbourhood disputes.
- Due to the overwhelming demand for family law mediations, CRS for the first time in its history needed to implement a waiting list for clients wanting to access family dispute resolution. Post the planning process which occurred with the Dispute Assessment Office, the waiting list was no longer required as alternate strategies were implemented to assist clients.
- Specialised Staff/mediator professional development continued to focus on areas required under the Family Law regulations to ensure mediators implemented practices which were in the best interests of the child by encouraging parents to take a child-focussed approach to the resolution of their issues.

As a designated organisation CRS is also able to auspice those CRS mediators who are not able or wanting to become registered in their own right.

As a result CRS also continued to become more involved with the ACT Family Pathways Network, taking a place on the Steering Committee which organised such events as 'Respecting Indigenous Culture in Family Dispute Resolution' and 'Voice of the Child in Family Dispute Resolution'. CRS was also funded by the network to represent the ACT in at the National Family Pathways meeting in Darwin to deliver a presentation on ACT activities.

Training

A continuing area of expansion for CRS has seen a focus on training and professional development services. During the reporting period CRS reviewed its training strategic directions which resulted in the service undertaking a revamp of training packages and marketing materials.

CRS was able to identify numerous opportunities within the ACT marketplace, which in turn contributed to broadening the base of CRS training courses and developing tools to assist clients to identify the scope of their training requirements. CRS has also progressively moved towards the development of standard training packages which at the same time can be tailored to suit the needs of clients.

CRS commenced delivery of 2 mediation courses during the period; one which was open to the general public, the other saw CRS contracted by a government agency to provide mediation training in response to legislative changes affecting the department. CRS also successfully continued to gain training contracts for ongoing programs, in once case a 12 month program was developed as part of ongoing staff professional development for an ACT government department.

Publicity and Promotion

CRS continued to identify opportunities to promote the value of Alternative Dispute Resolution to the ACT community. An increasing area for publicity has been in response to requests from media outlets (ranging from newspapers, specialist magazines and radio stations) in response to current affairs. CRS has been asked for comment such issues as "Is it Australian to dob in your neighbour for water usage?", 'Preparing the Family for what's in your Will' and 'When has workplace conflict gone too far?'.

Resources

In order to provide effective service delivery, CRS needed to source appropriate infrastructure and human resources to continue to provide a quality service. To this end, CRS successfully gained funding through the Community Support and Infrastructure Grant Program (an initiative of the ACT government) to purchase new IT equipment and other office furniture.

The additional revenues made from service fees also afforded CRS the opportunity to increase hours in the Dispute Assessment Office, Training and Administrative areas as well as increased pay rates for mediators.

Acknowledgements

I would like to once again thank those staff members and mediators who continue on a daily basis to work towards the vision and mission of CRS with integrity, professionalism and ethical conduct.

I would also like to extend my appreciation to the CRS Board of Directors who has shown the service and myself unfailing support and confidence. It has been a pleasure to work with board members who have continued to deliver on best practice in all areas of governance.

CRS is fortunate to have members and staff who consistently deliver with passion and a steadfast belief in what CRS can contribute towards the betterment of the ACT.



Katrina Spyrides
Executive Officer

Dispute Assessment Office



Figures in brackets throughout this area of the report refer to the 2006-07 period and serve as a source of comparison for the increase in CRS activity in the Dispute Assessment Office for the 2007-08 period

Overview

890 new enquiries (690)
924 active disputes (730)
289 mediation offers (232)
100 disputes mediated (80)
125 mediation sessions (103)
433:03 hours of mediation (353:40)
6170 actions recorded for active disputes (4880)

*Of those disputes which reached mediation **81% achieved resolution***

Dispute Counselling

Information and referral continues to be an important part of the Conflict Resolution Service. Parties often seek information on how to handle the conflict themselves rather than requesting mediation. The service encourages parties to resolve disputes themselves by assisting them to clarify the issues that are most important and consider possible solutions that parties can apply themselves.

For the 924 disputes which were active during the period a total of 6170 activities were conducted. Activities include actions such as phone calls, letters, organising mediators, and contacts with referrers etc

This figure only represents the activities entered into the client database and does not include any adhoc contacts such as people who may walk in off the street requesting brochures, or in some instances additional calls made to/from existing clients to 'quickly' clarify information.

Dispute Types

Conflict Resolution Service provides the community with assistance in resolving conflict across a wide range of dispute types

<i>Type</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Separated Couple	347	38.99%
Neighbourhood	317	35.62%
Family	111	12.47%
Workplace (not Facilitation)	27	3.03%
Business/Consumer	17	1.91%
Not stated	16	1.80%
Not Applicable	16	1.80%
Social	14	1.57%
Tenant/Landlord/BodyCorp	13	1.46%
Youth (not Family)	5	0.56%
Facilitation	5	0.56%
Organisation	2	0.22%

Presenting Problems

The tables below outline the range of issues for which assistance was provided, based on parties' comments at the time of dispute assessment. Parties may have identified more than one issue.

Substantive Issues		Behavioural Issues	
<i>Issue</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Issue</i>	<i>Number</i>
Separated couple - parenting	184	Inability to communicate	70
Separated couple - property	65	Agreement Breakdown	28
Fence	60	Lack of trust	22
Trees/shrubs/plants	42	Complaints	13
Lifestyle/environmental	32	High intensity verbal abuse/swearing	13
Noise (not dog barking)	30	Low intensity verbal abuse/swearing	10
Relationship breakdown	27	Threats of violence or things thrown	9
Parenting (not separated couple)	16	Theft/damage	9
Invasion of privacy	15	Other (behavioural)	6
Unsatisfactory service	15	Refusal or failure to act on complaints	6
Workplace related complaints	14	Gossip and rumours	6
Money/debt	13	Bullying	5
Dog	12	Assault	1
Child/teenager's behaviour	11		
Other (substantive)	8		
Animal (not dog)	3		
Car Accident/injury	1		

Offers and acceptances

Mediation is not offered in all cases. Staff speak with the first party and assess whether a dispute may be suitable for mediation. If mediation appears to be suitable and the first party agrees, a file is opened and an offer of mediation is made to the other party involved.

Mediation is voluntary and both parties must agree for mediation to proceed.

Even when both parties agree to mediation, parties sometimes resolve matters themselves prior to mediation occurring. After both parties agree to mediation, one or other party may change their mind or the service may find that a dispute is not suitable for mediation due to factors that were not apparent in the initial assessment.

Cases where mediation was offered	289	Mediation declined by other party	43
At least one session arranged	110	Pre-resolved before mediation	22
Offer accepted by the other party	103	One or other party withdraws	40
No response from other party	100	CRS withdraws	8

The number of cases suitable for mediation and the rate of acceptance of offers of mediation vary by dispute type. For example, Neighbourhood disputes are frequently resolved through effective dispute counselling and providing information to parties. Also, the second party is often more likely to accept mediation in a separated couple dispute than in a neighbourhood dispute.

Offers and acceptance in the most common dispute types

<i>Dispute type</i>	<i>New enquiry</i>	<i>Offer made</i>	<i>Party B accepts</i>	<i>Session occurs</i>
Separated Couple	347	183	84	82
Neighbourhood	317	76	15	11
Family	111	57	23	15

Mediation sessions

100 disputes were mediated, with 433hrs 03 min of mediation in 125 sessions during the year. 155 mediation sessions were scheduled; there were 7 late withdrawals, parties did not show up for 7 sessions; and 26 sessions were postponed and rescheduled.

Outcomes of Mediation

74 sessions reached written agreements, 20 sessions reached verbal agreement, 28 sessions reached no agreement.

45 sessions, parties agreed to continue at a later session.

Of 100 disputes that reached mediation, 81 achieved agreements in at least one session, giving an 81% resolution rate for disputes.

Format of Mediation and Outcomes

	Face-to-face	Phone	Shuttle
Written	70	0	4
None	22	1	5
Verbal	16	0	4

Profile of Clients accessing the Service

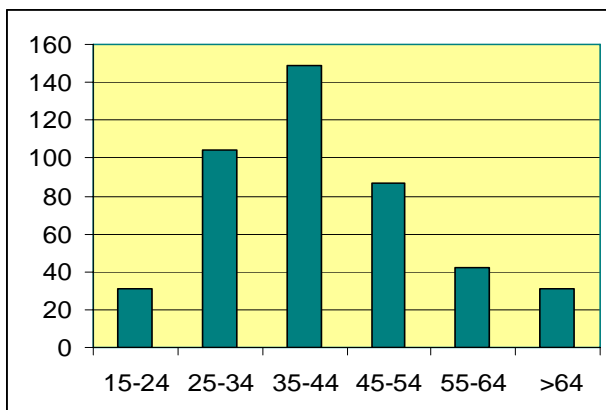
During the period 1601 people accessed CRS services (not counting training and facilitations).

Gender

More women than men contacted the service first (55.06%:44.94%).

Across all parties the number of women and men reflected the population (57%:43%).

Age Range



(Nb 361 unknown age)

Disability

49 parties identified disabilities including physical, mental and intellectual disabilities. No case was refused and no parties were unable to participate in mediation due to disability.

Cultural & Linguistic Diversity

10 people identified as being Aboriginal or Torres Straight Islander.

116 people identified languages other than English as the language they speak at home. Languages included Italian, Spanish, Polish, German, Chinese, Serbian, Rupa, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Hokkien, Hindi, French, Cantonese, AUSLAN, Arabic and Filipino.

Interpreters were used during Intake and/or mediation for 5 clients.

Country of Origin

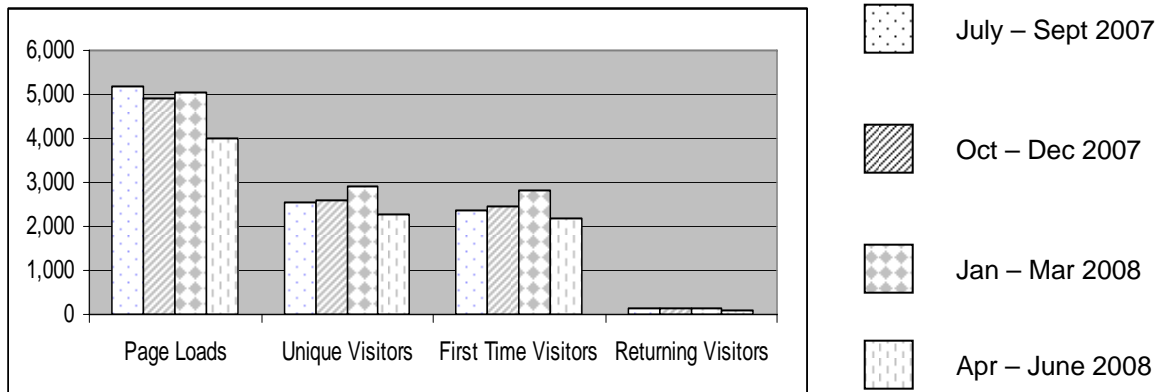
Australia	260
Not Stated	351
United Kingdom	25
New Zealand	6
United States	6
Italy	4
Malta	3
Malaysia	3
Germany	3
Egypt	3
China	3
Canada	2
France	2
Poland	2
Fiji	2

Philippines	2
Austria	2
Sri Lanka	2
South Africa	2
Serbia	2
Singapore	1
Papua New Guinea	1
Peru	1
Pakistan	1
Laos	1
Iran	1
Vietnam	1
Germany	1
France	1
El Salvador	1

Columbia	1
Morocco	1
Lebanon	1
Kenya	1
Israel	1
Indonesia	1
India	1
Burma	1
Brazil	1
Belgium	1
Argentina	1
Africa	1

Visits to CRS Website

Total visitors for 2007-08 19,166



Returning Visitors - Based purely on a cookie, this person is returned to CRS website for another visit an hour or more later

First Time Visitors - Based purely on a cookie, if this person visited CRS website for the first time.

Unique Visitor - Based purely on a cookie, this is the total of the returning visitors and first time visitors

Page Load - The number of times CRS website has been visited.

Healthy Neighbourhood Project



The Healthy Neighbourhood Project aims to assist the community in the prevention and resolution of neighbourhood disputes by:

- providing a free mediation service for neighbourhood disputes.
- increasing the community's knowledge of conflict resolution techniques and their rights and responsibilities as neighbours.
- facilitating improved agency collaboration, efficiency and effectiveness in preventing and resolving neighbourhood disputes.

Overview

Neighbourhood disputes accounted for 35.6% of total disputes with an *80% resolution rate for disputes*

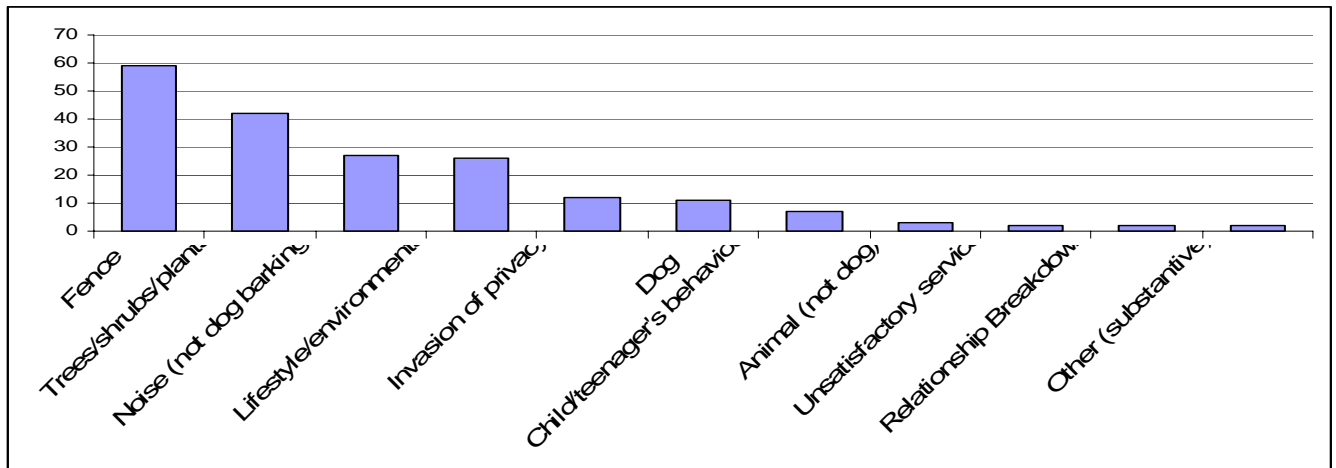
556 Clients
317 new enquiries
344 active disputes

76 mediation offers
15 disputes mediated
11 mediation sessions

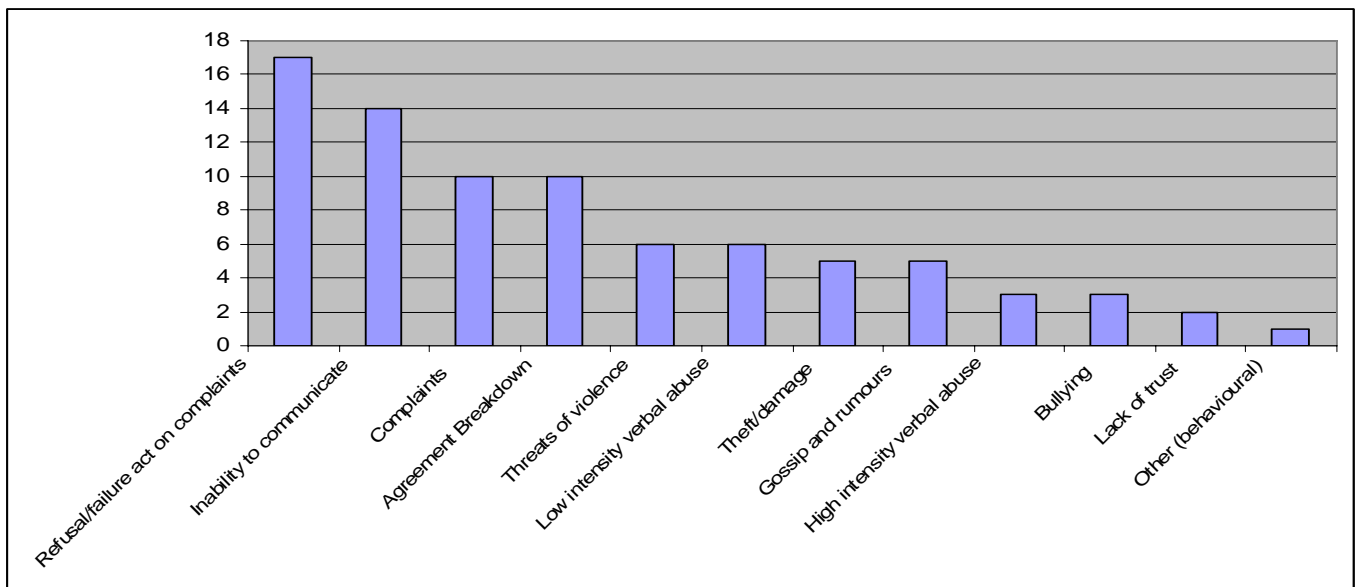
33:35 hours of mediation
1558 actions recorded for active disputes

The major presenting problems are shown below:

Substantive Issues



Behavioural Issues



Collaborations

The Healthy Neighbourhoods Project has continued to allow CRS to work closely with many services in the ACT who also have a stake in developing stronger community relationships in order to foster healthy neighbourhoods throughout the region.

Key agencies include DHCS (Housing ACT), Linkages Program, AFP, Legal Aid, Tenants Union & Welfare Rights, Neighbourhood Watch, Supportlink, Victims of Crime Assistance League, Citizens Advice Bureau, Ombudsman, Community Services and Mental Health Community Coalition.

CRS has seen an increased call for assistance from government agencies such as Housing ACT to facilitate meetings between housing managers and tenants; the aim of these facilitations is not to change Housing policy but to provide a better understanding and clearer guidelines for communication between Housing and their tenant/s.

The HNP has continued to collaborate with agencies in pre-mediation outreach to neighbourhoods where there is a reasonable chance of either pre-resolving a conflict, or moving the parties toward dispute counselling or mediation. The outcome has resulted in approximately 90% visits being pre-resolved.

Outreach and Case Conferencing

Increase in outreach services are reflective of the hesitation and anxiety clients feel when experiencing issues with their neighbours. CRS has worked with clients to overcome their trepidation: in the first instance by coaching with skills and strategies to manage or resolve the dispute themselves; in the second instance by preparing them to attend mediation sessions. The former has been more prevalent as indicative of the low number of neighbourhood mediations.

CRS has also been involved in case conferencing with other services and assisting the client and other services to determine the best course of action where the client is experiencing neighbourhood difficulties as part of wider issues. Clients who are being supported by several services, including CRS, are assisted to navigate their way through the best options to assist with their circumstances. Some clients have many issues besides Neighbourhood Disputes – which is why CRS is assisting them. Clients may also have other support services for such issues as mental illness, family support, counselling, public housing. Case conferencing allows the client plus all the services who are assisting them to come together to discuss the priorities and determine timelines for effective intervention.

Healthy Neighbourhood Network Meetings

CRS has held six network meetings over the twelve months, and covered topics including:

- Uses and abuses of Protection Orders (Legal Aid) in neighbourhood disputes
- Role of the Aboriginal Justice Centre in neighbourhoods;
- Impact of mental health issues within neighbourhoods
- Role of the Ombudsman in keeping government accountable to the community
- Changes and growth model of the community housing sector.
- Measurement of community wellbeing
- Neighbourhood impact on social inclusion/exclusion
- Do neighbours have human rights? How does the ACT Human Rights framework cover neighbour harassment etc?

Social Marketing Tools

CRS has continued to promote the Healthy Neighbourhood Project through:

- Articles published through the reporting period
 - The Word *Get to Know your Neighbour*
 - YWCA newsletter *Further thoughts on respect*
 - ACT Critical Incident *React or Respond to a Crisis: which path*
 - Newsletter *will you take?*
 - The Word Online *Fireworks in Canberra a burning issue!*
 - Bona Fides Bulletin *Healthy Neighbourhoods*

- No Door is the Wrong Door intake referral form introduced at ACT Shelter forum, whereby clients referred to SAAP services will have their situation assessed by the first agency they ring, to avoid being passed from pillar to post.
- Attending community meetings with a Linkages worker to be introduced informally as HNPO, for residents to know who they can talk to if neighbour tensions arise.
- Regular guest spots on Radio 2XX to promote and raise awareness about CRS services and the Healthy Neighbourhoods role, while at the same time using creative form such as verse or song to capture attention.
- Providing consultation in the development of booklets entitled *Calm Living: Naturally Healthy Neighbourhoods* and *Relationship Things*

Profile of Client Group

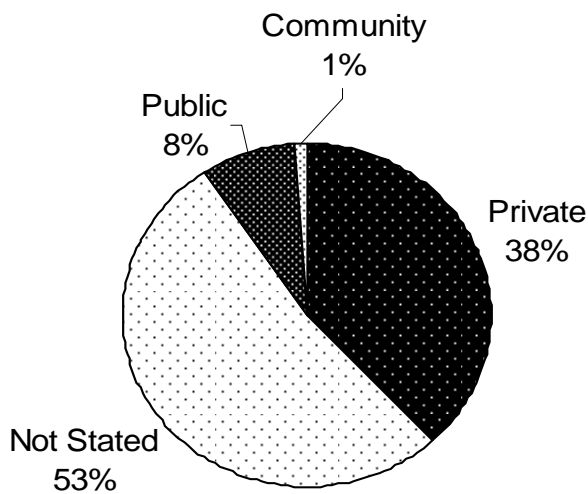


Fig 1: Type of Housing

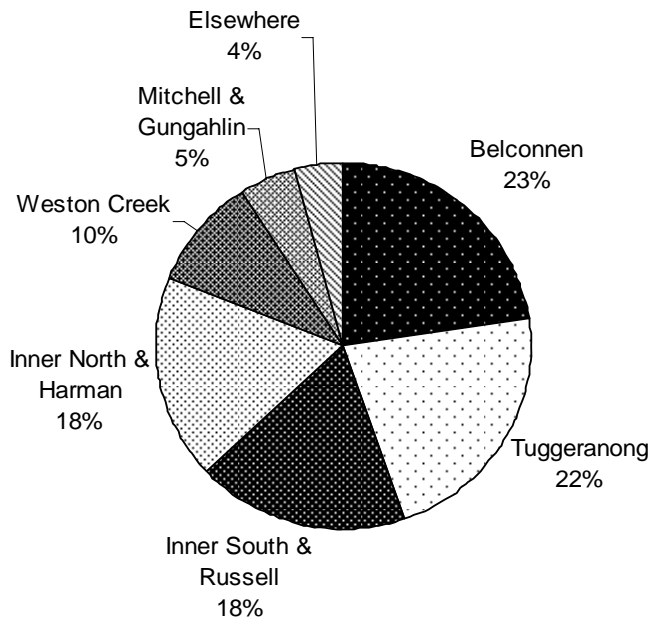


Fig 2: Geographic Location

Community Education



CRS receives requests for assistance from community groups, private firms and government agencies. Sessions lasting from one hour to several days are arranged as needed to meet these enquiries. Content of sessions range from education on the services CRS delivers to more technical skills development on communication and dispute resolution.

Progressively throughout the 12-month period, CRS has made concerted efforts to develop succinct and structured community education programs which provide opportunities for agencies and groups to access dispute resolution knowledge and skills as well as understand more about the value of CRS in assisting to manage and resolve disputes.

The following is a list of events and organisations which CRS has had the opportunity to educate on the benefits of alternative dispute resolution.

Migrant Resource Centre	VOCAL
Tuggeranong Community Council	Joint Champions Group
Wellbeing Fiesta	ACT Shelter Forum
ACT Shelter Forum	Dept Ed: Indigenous Policy Unit
Media interview 2XX	Supportlink
CIT LLNP adult literacy	Family Relationship Centre
University of Canberra Lecture	BAC Flats
Family Pathways Network	Community Safety Field Day
Family Relationships Centre	National Dispute Resolution Network
YWCA Stepping Forward Young mums	AFP
Beryl Women's Refuge	Canberra Connect
Mental Health & Wellbeing Vic	Housing ACT
Commonwealth Rehab Service	MRC Open Day
Ainslie Village Residents Panel	Parking Inspectors
The Hub	ACT Tribunal Review
Woden Linkages	Family Pathways Network
Multicultural Women's Advocacy	Multicultural Network
UNIFEM Human Rights	CIT
Weston Ck Network Meeting	Contact Canberra
AFP Policy Unit	Belconnen Community Festival
Housing ACT	
ACT Shelter	
Legal Aid	
DHCS	
Belconnen Community Service	
Migrant Resource Centre	
Woden Community Service - The Hub	
Community Development Network	
Waramanga Primary	
YWCA	
Mental Health Dept	
Multicultural Network	

Professional Development



The mediation landscape has changed dramatically in recent years with the progressive introduction of new legislation, standards and reforms.

CRS is working towards having all its mediators accredited and registered under various current and emerging systems including:

- Mediation Act 1997 (ACT)
- Family Law Act (Cth)
- National Mediator Accreditation System
- ...as well as CRS's own Accreditation Policy.

In line with the above requirements, CRS's provision of professional development for staff and mediators throughout 2007-08 has included the following courses:

- Working with clients with Intellectual Disabilities
- Mentoring
- Effective Facilitation
- Child-Focussed Dialogues
- Neighbourhood Disputes
- Shuttle Mediation
- Dispute Counselling and Intake
- Workplace Disputes
- Family Dispute Resolution
- Working with Clients with Mental Illness
- Domestic Violence
- Self Care for Mediators
- Mediation – just one part in a clients journey
- Understanding Conflict: Family Law
- Child-Focussed Dialogues: Putting it into Practice

As Mediation is becoming increasingly mainstream and incorporated in legislation, CRS has developed a range of topic areas designed to provide professional and organisational learning and development opportunities.

CRS courses were offered to external individuals and agencies in order for their practitioners to expand on existing practice and knowledge with current information in order to achieve exceptional outcomes for clients, customers and staff. Lively discussions on theory and practice with industry peers allows for shared experiences and new techniques

National Mediator Accreditation Standards.

Throughout its 20 year history, CRS has been active in providing comment and recommendations on the direction of mediation within Australia. Throughout the reporting period CRS has continued to participate in debate at the national level on the future landscape of mediation as the industry moves towards a voluntary national accreditation system for mediators.

Input into the emergence of a national standards system has been possible through various avenues including conferences, meetings and involvement in national networks such as the National Dispute Resolution Network which comprises CRS's sister organisations in each state/territory.

The aim of nationally consistent accreditation standards is to:

- enhance the quality of national mediation services,
- facilitate consumer education not only about mediation but also other Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) services,
- build consumer confidence in ADR services,
- improve the credibility of ADR and
- help build the capacity and coherence of the ADR field.

To introduce a nationally consistent accreditation standard, the National Mediator Accreditation System (NMAS) commenced operation on 1 January 2008.

The NMAS is an industry-based scheme that relies on voluntary compliance by mediator organisations that agree to accredit mediators in accordance with the requisite standards.

National Mediator Accreditation Committee (NMAC)

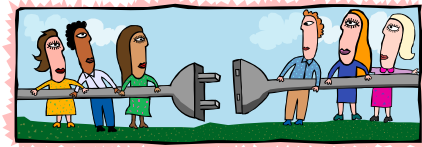
A National Mediator Accreditation Committee has been established to oversee the implementation of the National Mediator Accreditation System. NADRAC has agreed to facilitate the Committee's operations over the next two years by coordinating meetings, helping set agendas and developing papers. The NMAS is intended to provide a base level of accreditation for all mediators irrespective of their field of work. Specific requirements relevant to particular fields may be imposed by other accreditation schemes (for example the accreditation scheme for family dispute resolution practitioners). Mediation organisations may opt to accredit mediators under both the NMAS and more specific field based accreditation schemes. Mediators voluntarily accredited under the Australian National Mediator Standards must comply with the *Approval Standards* as well as the *Practice Standards*.

CRS attended the NMAC meeting in Canberra on 5 March 2008, where participants agreed that the NMAC should establish four working groups to progress NMAC's work as follows

- i. Purpose, constitution and structure
- ii. Practice and compliance (transitional and beyond)
- iii. Complaints handling, and
- iv. Resources

CRS has been successful in gaining a position on the Practice and Compliance working group and has continued to participate in discussions via teleconference and face-to-face meetings as well as submit research for the working group reports to the committee's national membership.

Agency Collaboration



CRS has worked with the following agencies during the reporting period (referrals were made to or from):

- | | |
|--|--|
| Aboriginal Health Service | Domestic Violence Crisis Service |
| ACT Aboriginal Justice Centre | Elder Abuse Line |
| ACT Chief Minister's Dept | Environment ACT |
| ACTCOSS | Family Court of Australia |
| ACT Dept of Education | Family Relationships Centre |
| ACT Dept of Disability, housing and Community Services | Healthcare Consumer Network |
| ACT Dept of Justice and Community Safety | Housing ACT |
| ACT Dept Territory and Municipal Services | Human Rights Commission |
| ACT Health | Law Society |
| ACT Human Rights Office | Legal Aid Office, ACT |
| ACT Legislative Assembly | Linkages |
| ACT Magistrates Court | Mary Mead |
| ACT Office of Fair Trading | Mensline |
| ACT Planning and Land Authority | Migrant Resource Centre |
| ACT Policing | Northside Community Services |
| ACT Shelter | Office of the Community Advocate |
| ADACAS | Ombudsman's Office |
| AIATSI | Parentline |
| Ainslie Village | Rape Crisis Centre |
| AlaTeen | Relationships Australia |
| Attorney General's Dept (Cth) | Restorative Justice Unit |
| Australian Federal Police | Samaritan House |
| Belconnen Community Service | Southside Community Service |
| Canberra Connect | Supporting Families |
| Canberra Men's Centre | SupportLink |
| CANFACS | Tenants Union |
| CARE Financial Counselling | Victims of Crime Assistance League |
| Care and Protection | Welfare Rights |
| Centacare | Woden Community Service |
| Child Support Agency | Women's Information and Referral Service |
| Communities@work | Women's Legal Centre |
| Community Development Network | YWCA |
| Community Justice Centre | |
| Corrective Services | |
| Domestic Animal Services | |

Acknowledgements

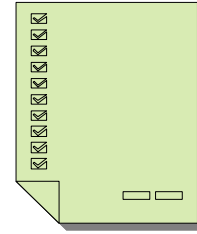


CRS has been very fortunate to have the support of many friends, colleagues and organisations since it began in 1988. We would like to acknowledge and sincerely thank the all those individuals and organisations who have volunteered their time, expertise and/or donated goods throughout 2007-08.

Special mention goes to ACT Government (grants), Canberra Southern Cross Club (grants), Fariz Rachman & Selina Cho (bookkeeping); DVCS, ACT Health, Rachel Wynd, Tony Wallace, Anthony Melican and Russ Whitewood for staff training/professional development.

And the Staff, Mediators & Board of CRS.

CLIENT FEEDBACK



41 clients returned questionnaires and provided feedback on their mediations, representing a response rate of 17.1%.

Below is an average of all responses. 1 means poor and 5 means excellent.

Service delivery:

Contact with office staff	4.41
Venue and facilities	4.22
Written information	4.15

Mediators were:

Were biased/very impartial	4.49
Confused things/made things clearer	4.37
Hindered/helped discussion	4.24
Were unskilled/very skilled	4.27

If agreement was reached it was considered to be:

Unfair/very fair	3.53
------------------	------

If agreement was not reached during mediation, a later agreement was:

Not at all likely/certain, already made	3.83
---	------

The respondents felt that mediation

Make things worse/great improvement	3.70
-------------------------------------	------

Overall satisfaction with the Service:

<i>Dissatisfied/highly satisfied</i>	4.12
--------------------------------------	-------------

What some people said they liked most about the Service: (selection

- I felt that the CRS did what it claims to do: provide a venue and situation in which a disagreement might be resolved without legal recourse.
- Immediate appointments, unbiased mediators, after business hours appointments, mediators gave encouraging words that made us feel stronger.
- Accessibility, friendly, relaxed, flexible appointment times, shuttle system takes time but mediators happy to function this way which helps our situation.
- The opportunity to sit and discuss things with husband knowing there is another pair of ears to listen to what is said and help clarify things.
- Contact with your intake people & follow up from you CEO after we changed mediator. I could see the process is a good one with highly skilled mediators it would be very beneficial. Overall I have been able to reach agreements & this is positive.
- It worked. The process was more conducive to a successful outcome than (organisation X) which only seemed to promote future appointments at (organisation X)
- Your commitment to the best interests of the clients (us) and attention to the process, both in mediation and setting up the mediation.
- The mediators were very understanding and I felt secure in the shuttle rooms. It was good that the mediators continued for as long as they could. It was a long process but they pressed on for a resolution and I thank them for that.
- I appreciated being kept up to date and informed all along the way, and the willingness of your office staff to spend as much time as was necessary to explain the process.
- Access to service- ie: not hindered by bureaucracy or paperwork.
- The professionalism of the staff employed at this office.

**CONFLICT RESOLUTION SERVICE
INCORPORATED**

***Financial Statements
For The Year Ended 30th June, 2008***

Houston & Hanna
Chartered Accountants
15/11 McKay Gardens
TURNER ACT 2601

Phone: 02-62498515 Fax: 02-62496792
Email: kim@khanna.com.au

CONFLICT RESOLUTION SERVICE INCORPORATED

COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Your Board Members submit the financial report of Conflict Resolution Service Incorporated for the financial year ended 30 June 2008.

BOARD MEMBERS

The names of the Board Members of the Association as at the date of this report are:

Lisa Norman
Margaret Moreton
Rachel Bacon
Richard Duckett
Richard Bear
Gary Kent
Katherine Reimers
Helen Lang

PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES

The principal activities of the Association during the year was to promote harmony in the community, by providing a skilled and accessible dispute resolution service, that empowers individuals to understand their differences and resolve conflicts peacefully.

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

No significant changes in the nature of these activities occurred during the year.

OPERATING RESULT

The net Surplus/(Loss) for the year ended 30th June, 2008, was \$ 62,080
(2007: Surplus \$2,850) .

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Members of the Committee.

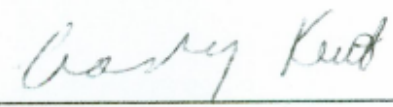
Dated this 11 day of November 2008



Committee Member

Richard BEAR

Name



Committee Member

GARY BRINN KENT

Name

CONFLICT RESOLUTION SERVICE INCORPORATED

**INCOME STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2008**

2007 \$		NOTES	2008 \$
	INCOME		
<u>296,581</u>	Revenues from Ordinary Activities	2	<u>368,442</u>
	EXPENSES		
227,440	Employee Expenses		235,068
<u>66,291</u>	Other Expenses from Ordinary Activities		<u>71,294</u>
<u>293,731</u>	TOTAL EXPENSES		<u>306,362</u>
<u>2,850</u>	NET LOSS FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES		<u>62,080</u>
<u><u>2,850</u></u>	TOTAL CHANGES IN EQUITY OF THE ASSOCIATION		<u><u>62,080</u></u>

**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2008**

Accumulated Funds \$		Accumulated Funds \$
36,673	Balance at 1st July 2006	28,785
<u>(7,888)</u>	Surplus (loss) - 2007	<u>2,850</u>
28,785	Balance at 30th June 2007	31,635
<u>2,850</u>	Surplus (Loss) - 2008	<u>62,080</u>
<u><u>31,635</u></u>	Balance at 30 June 2008	<u><u>93,715</u></u>

CONFLICT RESOLUTION SERVICE INCORPORATED

**BALANCE SHEET
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2008**

2007 \$		NOTES	2008 \$
	CURRENT ASSETS		
33,554	Cash Assets	7	80,360
1,032	Receivables		50,378
2,630	Other - Prepayments		2,567
37,216	TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		133,305
	NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
44,442	Plant & Equipment	4	35,334
44,442	TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		35,334
81,658	TOTAL ASSETS		168,639
	CURRENT LIABILITIES		
24,842	Payables	5	31,028
10,355	Provisions	6	13,890
	Income in Advance		19,860
5,460	HP Loan		5,460
40,657	TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		70,238
	NON -CURRENT LIABILITIES		
9,366	HP Loan		4,686
9,366	TOTAL NON CURRENT LIABILITIES		4,686
50,023	TOTAL LIABILITIES		74,924
31,635	NET ASSETS		93,715
	EQUITY		
31,635	Retained Funds		93,715
31,635	TOTAL EQUITY		93,715

CONFLICT RESOLUTION SERVICE INCORPORATED

**CASH FLOW STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2008**

2007		NOTES	2008
\$			\$
	Cash Flow from Operating Activities		
286,485	Grant income received		290,857
9,434	Receipts from customers		42,880
662	Interest received		1,887
(270,357)	Payments to suppliers and employees		(283,352)
(654)	Interest paid		(786)
<u>25,570</u>	Total Cash Flow from Operating Activities	7(b)	<u>51,486</u>
	Cash Flows from Investing Activities		
(27,004)	Payments for property, plant & equipment		-
14,826	Borrowings		(4,680)
<u>(12,178)</u>	Total Cash Flows From Investing Activities		<u>(4,680)</u>
13,392	Net movement in cash held		46,806
20,162	Cash at the beginning of the year		33,554
<u>33,554</u>	Cash at the end of the year	7(a)	<u>80,360</u>

CONFLICT RESOLUTION SERVICE INCORPORATED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2008

NOTE 1: STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The financial report is a general purpose financial report that has been prepared in accordance with Accounting Standards, Urgent Issues Group Interpretations and other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board and the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act (ACT) 1991.

The financial report covers Conflict Resolution Service Incorporated as an individual entity. Conflict Resolution Service Incorporated is an Association incorporated in Australian Capital Territory under Associations Incorporation Act (ACT) 1991.

The following is a summary of the material accounting policies adopted by the Association in the preparation of the financial report.

Basis of preparation

The financial report has been prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historical costs and does not take into account changing money values or, except where stated, current valuations of non-current assets. Cost is based on the fair values of the consideration given in exchange for assets. The accounting policies have been consistently applied, unless otherwise stated.

(a) Income Tax

The Association is considered to be a community service association and is therefore exempt from tax under section 50-10 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

(b) Property, Plant and Equipment

Each class of property, plant and equipment are carried at cost or fair value less, where applicable any accumulated depreciation and impairment losses.

Plant and Equipment

Plant and equipment is measured on the cost basis.

The carrying amount of plant and equipment is reviewed annually by the Association to ensure it is not in excess of the recoverable amount from those assets. The recoverable amount is assessed on the basis of the expected net cash flows which will be received from the assets' employment and subsequent disposal. The expected net cash flows have not been discounted to present values in determining recoverable amounts.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION SERVICE INCORPORATED

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (cont)

Depreciation

The depreciable amount of all fixed assets are depreciated on a straight line basis over the useful lives of the assets to the Association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use. The depreciation rates for Furniture, Plant and Equipment range from 13-40%.

(c) Employee Benefits

Provision is made for the company's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to balance date. Employee benefits expected to be settled within one year together with benefits arising from wages and salaries, annual leave and sick leave which will be settled after one year, have been measured at their nominal amount.

Contributions are made by the Association to employee superannuation funds and are charged as expenses when incurred.

(d) Revenue

Revenue from the provision of services is recognised when the service has been provided to the clients. Grant income is recognised in the period for which it relates. Annual membership is accounted for as income at the time of receipt.

(e) Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Tax Office. In these circumstances the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of an item of the expense. Receivables and payables in the statement of financial position are shown inclusive of GST.

(f) Cash

For the purposes of the statement of cash flows, and financial instruments cash includes cash on hand, cash at bank and cash on deposit, net of any outstanding bank overdraft.

(g) Impairment of Assets

At each reporting date, the Association reviews the carrying value of its tangible and intangible assets to determine if there is any indication that those assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the assets fair value less costs to sell and the value in use, is compared to the asset's carrying value. Any excess of the assets carrying value over its recoverable amount is expensed to the income statement.

Where it is not possible to estimate the recoverable amount of an individual asset, the association estimates the recoverable amount of the cash generating unit to which the asset belongs.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION SERVICE INCORPORATED

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2008**

NOTE 2: REVENUE

	2008	2007
Operating activities	\$	\$
Grant income	293,157	286,485
Service income	52,272	6,308
Membership dues	990	1,399
Interest	1,887	662
Other	20,136	1,727
	368,442	296,581

NOTE 3: LOSS FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES

Loss from ordinary activities has been determined after

(a) Expenses

Depreciation		
- Office Plant and Equipment	9,108	6,750
Remuneration of the auditor for:		
- auditing the financial statements	2,200	2,000
- other services	-	-
	2,200	2,000

NOTE 4: PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

Office furniture & equipment - at cost	54,048	54,048
Less: accumulated depreciation	(18,714)	(9,606)
Total plant & equipment	35,334	44,442

Movements in carrying amounts

Movement in the carrying amounts for each class of property, plant and equipment between the beginning and the end of the current financial year.

	Office Furniture & Equipment	Office Furniture & Equipment
Balance at the beginning of the year	44,442	24,188
Additions	-	27,004
Depreciation	(9,108)	(6,750)
Carrying amount at the end of the year	35,334	44,442

CONFLICT RESOLUTION SERVICE INCORPORATED

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2008**

NOTE 5: PAYABLES	2008	2007
	\$	\$
GST payable	13,979	6,372
PAYG withholding tax	6,744	4,520
Sundry creditors	4,573	2,150
Insurance recovery money held	-	9,500
CERT IV funds unexpended	-	2,300
Superannuation payable	5,731	-
	<u>31,028</u>	<u>24,842</u>
NOTE 6: PROVISIONS		
Provision for employee benefits	<u>13,890</u>	<u>10,355</u>
Number of employees at year end	5	5
NOTE 7: CASH FLOW		
(a) Reconciliation of Cash		
Cash on Deposit	62,509	0
Cash at bank	<u>17,851</u>	<u>33,554</u>
	<u>80,360</u>	<u>33,554</u>
(b) Reconciliation of net cash provided by operating activities to loss from ordinary activities		
Surplus (loss) from ordinary activities	62,080	2,850
Non-cash flow in loss from ordinary activities:		
Movement in leave entitlements	3,535	6,829
Depreciation	9,108	6,750
Changes in assets and liabilities:		
(Increase)/decrease in receivables	(49,346)	(1,032)
(Increase)/decrease in other current assets	63	(63)
Increase/(decrease) in Income in Advance	19,860	
Increase/(decrease) in payables	6,186	10,236
Net Cash from Operating Activities	<u>51,486</u>	<u>25,570</u>

CONFLICT RESOLUTION SERVICE INCORPORATED

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2008**

NOTE 8: FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

(a) Interest Rate Risk

The Association's exposure to interest rate risk, which is the risk that a financial instrument's value will fluctuate as a result of changes in market interest rates and the effective weighted average interest rates on those financial assets and financial liabilities, is as follows:

	Weighted average effective interest rate	Floating interest rate	Fixed interest rate maturing within one year	Non- interest Bearing	Total
	%	\$	\$	\$	\$
2007					
Financial Assets					
Cash at bank	0.2	33,554			33,554
Receivables		0		1032	1,032
		33,554		1032	34,586
2008					
Financial Assets					
Cash at bank	3.05	22,116	62,509		84,625
Receivables				50,378	50,378
		22,116	62,509	50,378	135,003

(b) Credit risk

The maximum exposure to credit risk, excluding the value of any collateral or other security, at balance date to recognised financial assets is the carrying amount, net of any provisions for doubtful debts, as disclosed in the statement of financial position and notes to the financial statements.

The Association does not have any material credit risk exposure to any single debtor or group of debtors under financial instruments entered into by the Association.

(c) Net fair values

Methods and assumptions used in determining net fair value.

The net fair values of listed investments have been valued at the quoted market bid price at balance date adjusted for transaction costs expected to be incurred. For other assets and other liabilities the net fair value approximates their carrying value. No financial assets and financial liabilities are ready traded on organised markets in standardised form other listed investments. Financial assets where the carrying amount exceeds net fair values have not been written down as the economic entity intends to hold these assets to maturity.

The aggregate net fair values and carrying amounts of financial assets and financial liabilities are disclosed in the statement of financial position and in the notes to the financial statements.



1. *Dispute Resolution Services*

Taking account of legislative developments and changing community needs and expectations, CRS will increase its capacity to offer and provide, a greater number of mediations covering a wider range of disputes without compromising the quality, accessibility and effectiveness of its services.

2. *Training and Community Education*

CRS will increase its provision of high quality training and community education through

- Raising awareness of the benefits for individuals to develop alternative dispute resolution skills as a relevant, useful and desirable discipline to achieve and practice.
- Flexible CRS training programs to meet the requirements of various industries and workplaces.

3. *Enabling*

CRS will

- Improve its governance processes, particularly in the areas of succession, board education and financial management;
- Expand and diversify sources of funding to ensure its financial sustainability;
- Attract and retain skilled and competent staff, trainers and mediators; and
- Ensure its infrastructure is adequate to achieve its mission.

Future Challenges

- Resources to adapt to the changes within the ADR industry in order to remain current and provide best practice.
- Sustainability of government funding
- Attracting, recruiting and effectively remunerating staff and mediators
- Attracting motivated and skilled Board Members
- Increasing acceptance and usage of alternative dispute resolution

VISION

A community where Alternative Dispute Resolution processes and skills are accepted and utilised to develop mutual understanding and appreciation of differences, which will improve people's wellbeing and relationships.

Professional

- ✓ Integrity
- ✓ Best Practice
- ✓ Impartial

Effective

- ✓ Empowering
- ✓ Relevant
- ✓ Influential



Accessible

- ✓ User-friendly
- ✓ Available
- ✓ Flexible

Enabling

- ✓ Governance
- ✓ Profile
- ✓ Resources

MISSION

To provide professional, accessible and effective dispute resolution and training services to the ACT community that will help and empower people to prevent, manage and resolve disputes peacefully.