

## Australian Calisthenic Federation Coaching Committee Coaches Survey Report

Australian Calisthenic Federation Coaching Committee (ACFCC) undertook a major coaches' survey to evaluate the perceptions of coaches regarding coach training programs. ACFCC endeavour to formulate appropriate policies regarding coaching and coach accreditation and endeavour to improve and develop quality coaching programs.

All Calisthenics coaches in Australia were encouraged to participate anonymously and comment and share experiences associated with their coaching career. The major aims were to discover what is enjoyable about coaching as well as gain some insight into why coaches leave.

The survey was developed by the ACFCC committee and was conducted in 2004. It consisted of 37 questions covering the major topics of: demographics about the coach, coaching history, coaching accreditation and reasons concerning coaching. Several questions were targeted to the areas of Cadet, Level 1 and Level 2 coaching programs.

Surveys were sent out to all currently registered coaches in 2004 and also to coaches that didn't reregister of that year. There were 950 registered coaches in 2004 and it was up to each state to send out to unregistered coaches. Approximately one thousand surveys were sent out and 346 surveys were returned and analysed. This demonstrated a 35% response rate and all results and comments in this report are from the 346 coaches that responded. Results were tabulated and means were derived and graphed as percentages or number of coaches. Comments were categorised and generalised as the perception of coaches' comments.

### Results

A total of 346 surveys were returned with 82.4% of these coaches currently coaching. 52% of these coaches are under 30 years of age with 8% over 50 years of age (Figure 1).

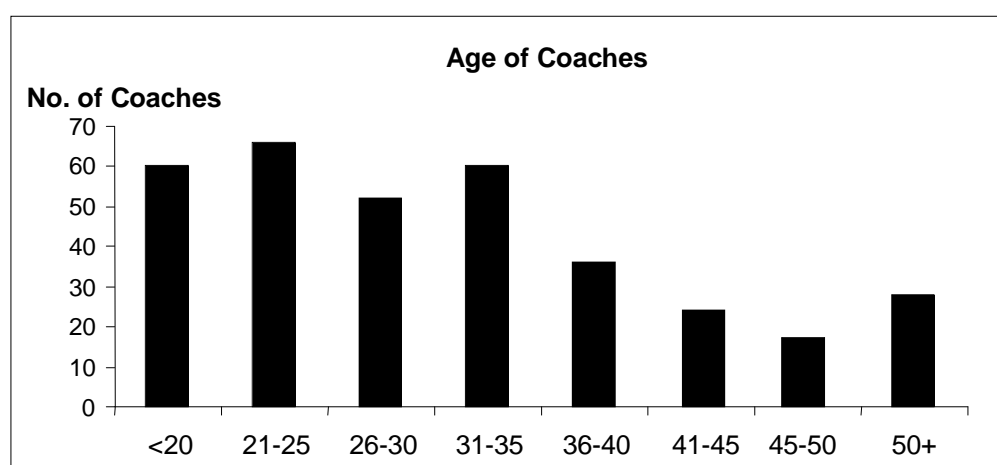


Figure 1: Age of Coaches

Calisthenics is conducted in all states except Tasmania with 46% of coaches in Victoria metropolitan area. Figure 2 demonstrates the location of coaches with Table 1 indicating the proportion of coaches in each state. There were 42 coaches that had coached in another area such as changing from regional to metropolitan or changing states. The marital status of our coaches is that 46% of coaches are married and 40% are single. 44% of coaches have children with the average number of children is 2.13 per coach.

|     |       |       |        |
|-----|-------|-------|--------|
| ACT | 5.20% | SA    | 27.17% |
| NSW | 2.02% | VIC   | 54.62% |
| NT  | 0.58% | WA    | 4.05%  |
| QLD | 4.34% | Blank | 2.02%  |

Table 1: Location of Coaches

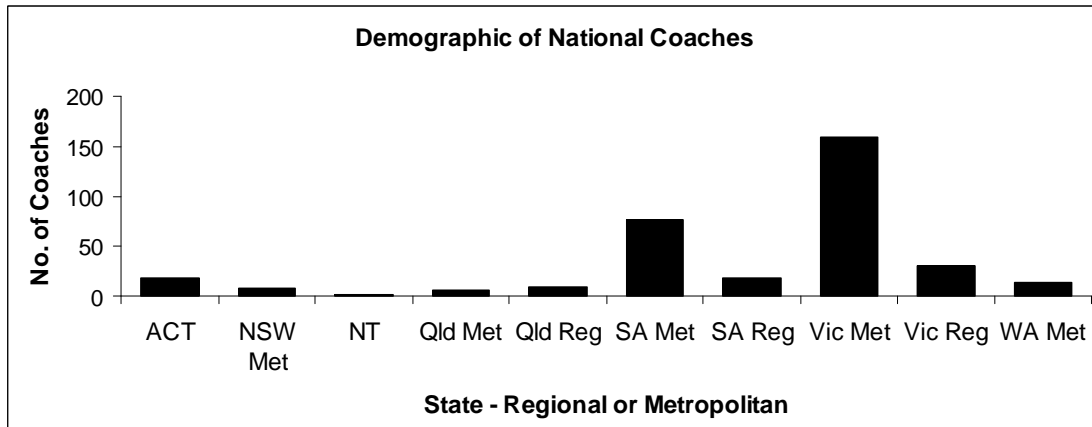


Figure 2: Location of Coaches across Australia

The level of education that our coaches have obtained is shown in Figure 3. Coaches are employed in various occupations and too numerous to mention here but the main groupings are shown in Figure 4. There are 47 coaches that are currently students and the most common occupation is a school teacher. Thirteen percent of coaches are involved in home duties and therefore not in paid employment. Other occupations that are common for calisthenics coaches are administration, child care workers and coaches that own a business. Seventeen percent of coaches' work casually with 26% of coaches working part time and 44% work full time.

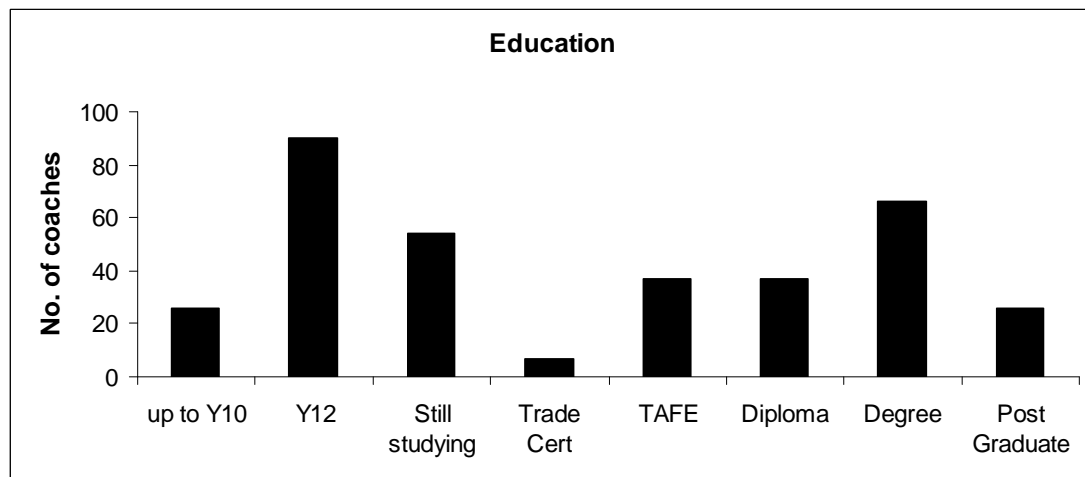


Figure 3: Level of Education undertaken by Coaches

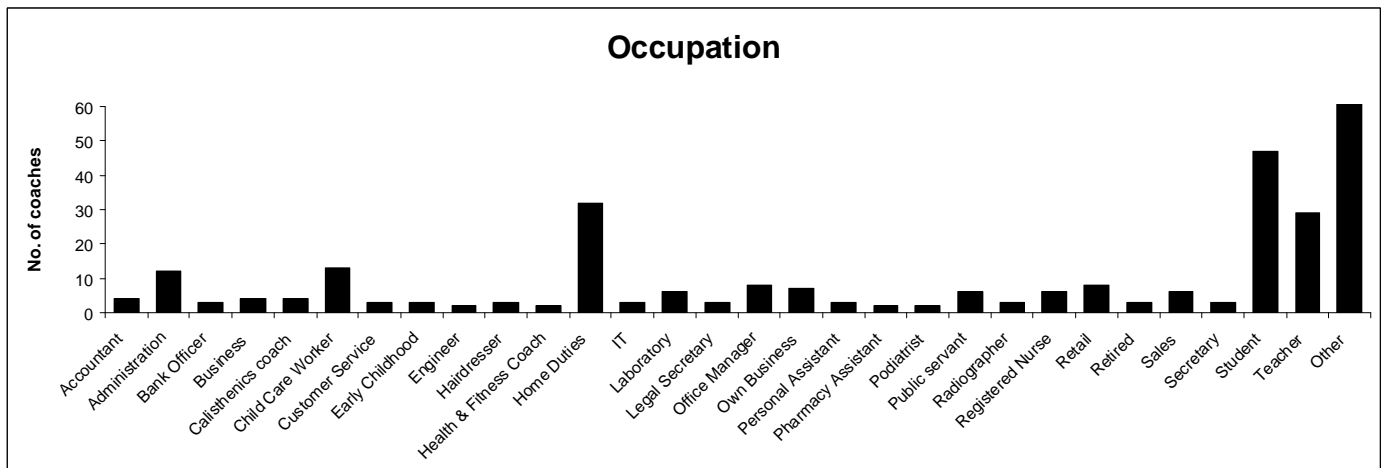


Figure 4: The main Occupations held by coaches

The average age that coaches' started coaching was 16.9 years with 13.6 years the average number of years spent coaching. 72-82 % of coaches had coached Tinies, Sub-Juniors, Juniors and Inters at some point in their coaching career. Only 48% have coached a Senior team. Team coaching is the main focus with 98.8% percent involved in coaching teams with 98.5% coaching competitive calisthenics. Recreational coaching accounted for 38% of coaches. 70% and 61% are involved in coaching solos/duos and skills coaching respectively. Approximately 17% are involved with either coaching an elite team or national team.

Most coaches are aware of the ACF Disability policy with only 13% unaware that the policy exists. 64% of coaches had coached a person with a disability which may have included a physical, intellectual or behavioural disability. Different coaching skills are required to adequately coach these participants and 71% of coaches believe they have the necessary skills to do this. However 40% were unaware that there is specific coach training available for coaches who are coaching people with a disability. Only 11% of coaches have undertaken this specific coach training.

Coaches believe that the most appropriate way of training coaches in coaching people with a disability is to undertake either a Level 1 Module or a Level 1 Update Seminar. 60% of coaches believe coaching people with a disability should be compulsory and 40% believe that it shouldn't and the reasons they believe this are described in Table 2:

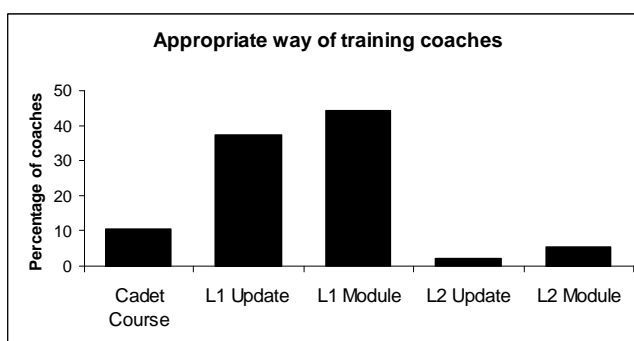


Figure 5: The most appropriate way of training people with a disability

| <b><u>FOR COMPULSORY TRAINING</u></b> | <b><u>AGAINST COMPULSORY TRAINING</u></b>            |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Equal opportunities for all           | Available only if needed                             |
| Be prepared                           | Coach's choice                                       |
| Depends on circumstances              | Every disability different                           |
| Awareness and skills are required     | People may have experience elsewhere                 |
| Temperament of coach important        | Responsibility shared with parent, student & teacher |
| Important issue                       | Unlikely everyone will need                          |
| Good for general coaching skills      | Most is common sense                                 |

Table 2: Comments regarding whether there should be compulsory training for coaching people with a disability

The highest level that can be obtained by calisthenics coaches is Level 2 and currently only 2% of coaches have obtained this. 78% have obtained Level 1 coaching accreditation as demonstrated in Figure 6.

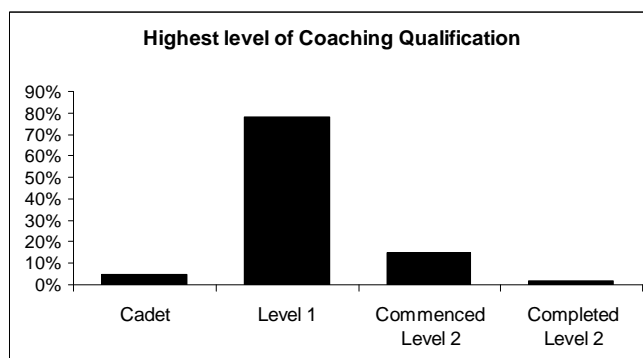


Figure 6: The coaching qualifications of our coaches

### Cadet Program

Cadet course was introduced in 1999 and therefore only 25% of coaches had completed the cadet course. Majority of coaches believe the cadet course is appropriate and contained valuable information that assisted in the role as a cadet. Most found the cadet course to be enjoyable, provided useful information and were made aware of responsibilities and role of a cadet. However some found the course day to be long with some tedious modules that didn't include visuals and practicals. A suggestion was made due to the large amount of information given and the long day that a video to take home would be useful.

Ninety percent believed that the cadet course prepares cadets for the Level 1 coach program especially after coming back into coaching and for young and inexperienced cadets it was very useful. However some found the two courses repetitive and very similar, this may be due to undertaking them close together and not per the original progression of the coaching courses being several years apart. 39% felt that they would of found the Level 1 course more difficult if they hadn't completed the cadet course first and most of these respondents were in the under 20 age group. Most thought it was a good chance to revise the basic information taught in the cade course and the level one course then broadened your knowledge. However 61% found that the Level 1 course would not of been more difficult without the cadet course and the reasons for this may be some felt the two course to be too similar and very basic and only aimed at 14-18 years so people undertaking the cadet course later found it basic and common knowledge.

### Level 1 Program

The national Level 1 training program began in 1992 with several undertaking a similar coaching course prior to the National Level 1 accredited program that exists now. The current age to begin the Level 1 course nationally is 18 years of age and 72% agree that this is the correct age with 23% believe it should be younger and only 4.5% believe that is should be greater than 18 years of age.

Figure 7 demonstrates the year in which coaches had completed the Level 1 course with 52 coaches leaving this question blank or unsure when they completed the course. Figure 8 demonstrates coaches perception on whether they felt the Level 1 course adequately prepared them to coach and were there any aspects of coaching not adequately covered in the course.

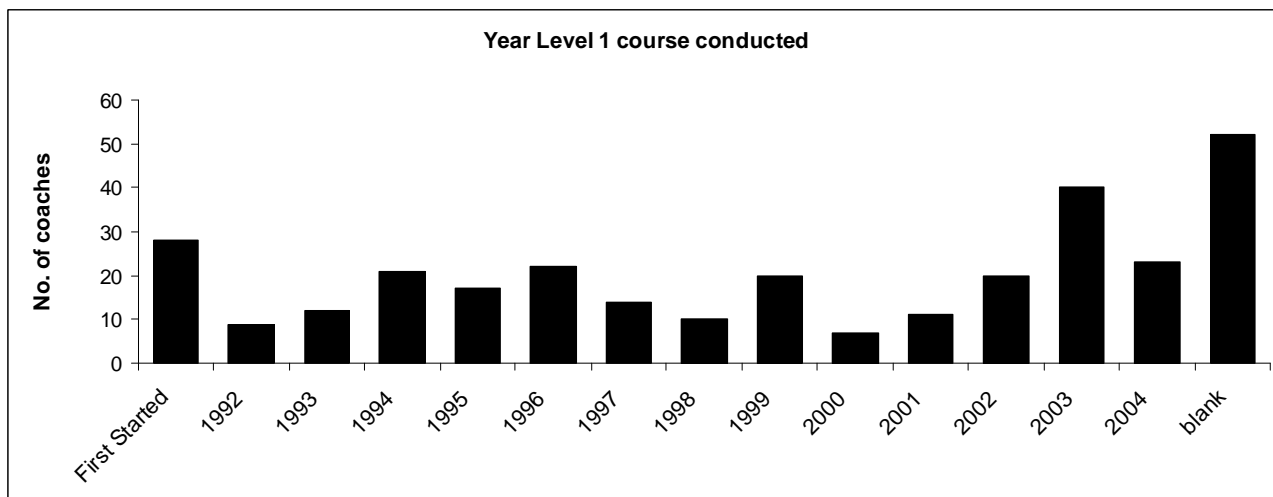


Figure 7: The year level 1 was conducted.

60% believed that the course prepared them for coaching however most still felt that practical and previous experience were important and working with another coach provided valuable skills. The areas that coaches felt not covered in the course included: Music and choreography, costumes, lighting and competitions, disability coaching and behaviour management to include dealing with parents.

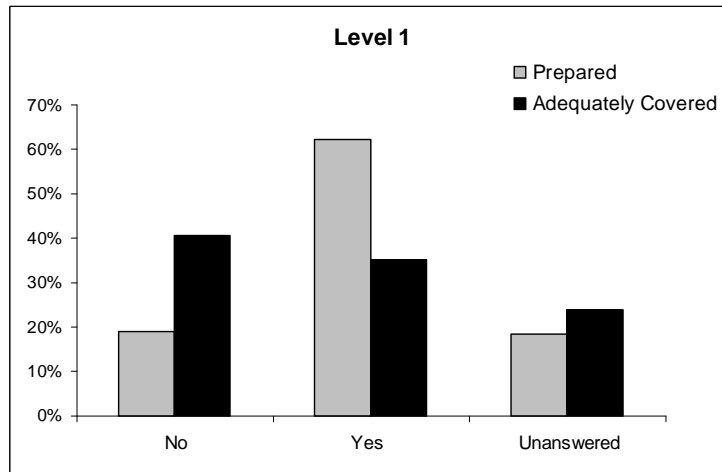


Figure 8: Perception on whether coaches found the level 1 course prepared them for coaching and whether they found it adequately covered the aspects required for coaching.

73% believe that the current assessment is adequate and that no further assessing is necessary. Of the 23% that believe further assessing should occur there was varying degrees of assessment from three time a year in your first year to once every four year accreditation period. Mentors were also mentioned that could help play a role in checking a coach's progress.

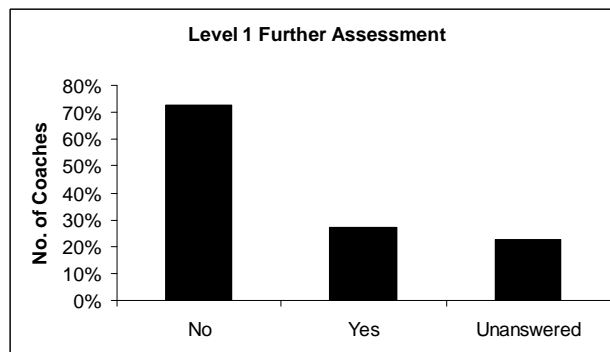


Figure 9: Request for further assessment after level 1 course completed

### Level 2 Program

The Level two coaching course commenced in 1998 and 15% of coaches have commenced the Level 2 course with only 2% being a fully qualified Level 2 coach. 92% of these coaches found the content valuable and useful. The general comments made were that the course was excellent and the modules attended were fabulous, informative and they learnt a great deal. They felt the presenters were extremely helpful and informative and put a lot of effort into presenting their course. However some coaches felt the cost too expensive and at times modules were not offered in their state.

The General Principles course helped me to see calisthenics more from the outside looking in & addressed aspects of coaching that were not dealt with in the Level 1 course or Level 1 updating modules.

The presenters who have taken the various elements I have completed have truly been awe-inspiring. They make one stand back and really analyse what one has done in the past and present and where to go from here.

83% felt the Level 2 course content is aimed at the right level with 15% believing it is not advanced enough and 2% felt it was too advanced. 69% of coaches felt that no changes were required for the Level 2 program and the general comments to change the program were regarding:

the relevance of the general principles course to calisthenics, assessment of all modules required, the inclusion of Music and choreography and modules on - pupil skills, aesthetics & rhythmic and viewing and evaluating work according to critique mark-up.

The reasons for deciding to undertake Level 2 are specific for each coach however most of the coaches are doing it to broaden their knowledge and update their own coaching skills in order to be the best coach that they can. Several coaches commenced level 2 when it was a requirement to coach a national team. Other reasons included wanting to be an inspiration to their younger coaches, some felt they owed it to their pupils to continually improve their coaching skills to benefit and improve the team and some liked the challenge. Most felt they were never too old to learn.

**Coaching Programs**

Twelve percent of coaches had difficulty accessing the coaching programs, in particular 6% had trouble accessing Level 1 and 3% had trouble accessing each of the cadet course and the Level 2 programs as demonstrated in Figure 10.

Several reasons for this difficulty arose with the main ones being limited number of places in cadet and Level 1 courses, having enough participants to run a viable course, frequency of modules being held, and travel from rural areas. Some had problems in the administration of the paperwork, cost of modules, difficulty in updating, and the ability to find presenters and inconvenient dates and times.

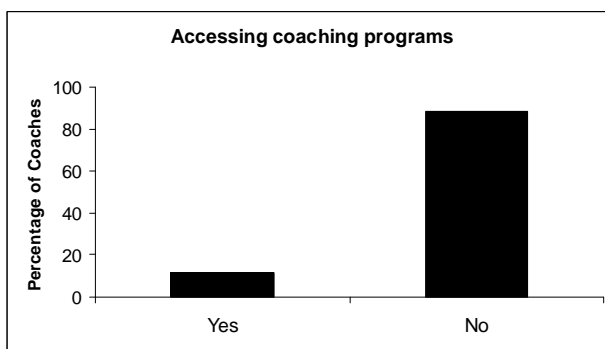


Figure 10: Availability of accessing coaching Programs

A Distance Education program has now been developed and became operational in 2005 and is available in all states. However in 2004 61% of coaches were not aware that a Distance Education program was being developed.

Attending update sessions was difficult for 40% of coaches as shown in Figure 11 due to mainly other commitments (56%), travel and distance was a problem for 21% and the other main reason was the timing of seminars with 21% of coaches experiencing problems.

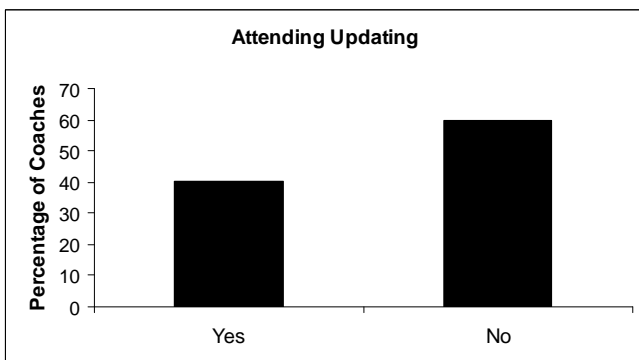


Figure 11: Difficulty in attending Updating sessions.

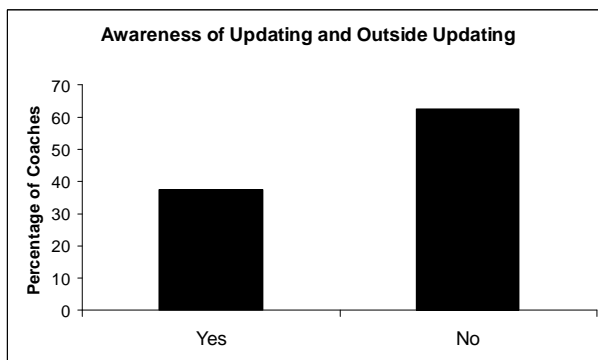


Figure 12: Awareness of Updating and Outside Updating.

Updating is an essential component of Level 1 accreditation however 62.7 % were not aware of what can be claimed as updating and the process for claiming “outside or non-calisthenics presented” updating points as demonstrated in Figure 12.

Coaches are the backbone of calisthenics – without you we would not have a sport! We are interested in finding out what factors lead to people leaving calisthenics coaching – and what factors contribute to people continuing coaching.

43% of coaches have not stopped coaching, however 26% have stopped temporarily and another 26% have considered stopping. Only 4.5% have stopped permanently. 193 coaches responded yes to either stopped permanently, stopped temporarily or considered stopping. Coaches were all to tick as many applicable factors that contributed to their decision. Each factor was looked at as a percentage of coaches that responded yes and most gave 2-3 factors that contributed to their decision as indicated in Table 3.

|                                     |    |        |
|-------------------------------------|----|--------|
| Family Commitments                  | 92 | 47.68% |
| Takes up too much time              | 90 | 46.32% |
| Work or employment                  | 81 | 41.97% |
| Registration/accreditation/updating | 52 | 26.94% |
| Wanted a break                      | 44 | 22.80% |
| Study                               | 37 | 19.17% |
| Only wanted to coach                | 25 | 12.95% |
| Too competitive                     | 17 | 8.81%  |
| Dispute with club                   | 17 | 8.81%  |
| Health reasons                      | 12 | 6.22%  |
| No local club                       | 10 | 5.18%  |
| Retired                             | 10 | 5.18%  |
| Concentrate on performing           | 8  | 4.15%  |
| Other                               | 50 | 25.91% |

Table 3: Reasons for why some coaches have stopped or considered stopping coaching. Percentages are based on that coaches were able to select several answers and were derived from the number of coaches that answered Yes to this question.

Some coaches have returned to coaching and the reason behind this were that they moved to another club, returned from travelling overseas, offered a coaching position, missed the children and passion for calisthenics returned. However some coaches would consider returning to calisthenics if there was less updating requirements, higher salary, more support at club level, when family or work commitments change and less politics at club or state level.

A leave of absence may be granted for up to 12 months during the last two years of each four year accreditation cycle. 54% of coaches were aware of this feature/component. Only 7.7% had ever used a leave of absence from their Level 1 qualifications. 48% believed that 12 months was too short however 52% believed that it was not. 94% believed that it should be available at any time in the 4 year accreditation cycle.

Coaches can remain affiliated with their State or Territory association even if they are not coaching with a club and 83% of coaches are aware of this.

78% of coaches have or would consider another role involved with calisthenics in the future that may include mentoring, committee member, adjudicating, writing, team or stage manager or emergency /fill in coach. Several coaches were interested in pursuing the role as an adjudicator or writer in the future but some found the criteria too restrictive. Many coaches believe that they don't have the time to pursue another role. Some coaches were unaware of the opportunities and that education on alternate involvement in calisthenics needs to be made available.

Majority of coaches (89%) enjoy their coaching experience and would encourage others to coach calisthenics. They find it very rewarding and inspiring to encourage others to coach. Many coaches receive a great deal of fulfilment from coaching including their love to see participants achieve and improve. Coaches want to share their love, passion and knowledge of calisthenics to younger and other coaches. Some believe that skills learnt as a calisthenics are interchangeable and help them develop their professional life with leadership and assertive skills. Some coaches believe that there are too many hassles involved including administration of being a coach and club difficulties. It takes a lot of commitment and time.

## Discussion

The results from this survey provide a comprehensive idea of coaches' perceptions on coaching programs and what they enjoy and dislike about coaching. It is impossible to mention all comments but several generalised comments have been included. The results will assist the ACF and ACFCC in making future decisions regarding coaching programs and coaching in general.

The limitations of the survey include the 35% response rate of returned surveys, and the subjective nature of the comments. Even though calisthenics is performed nationally each state has its own concerns and this may be due to numbers of participants and coaches, distance to travel and the number of people involved in the state associations.

There is a lot of comment concerning the courses and the availability of these and reasons behind this may include that the courses need to be financially viable, the availability of presenters and halls and administrators of these courses needs to be taken into consideration when thinking about the frequency of courses.

As the survey was conducted in 2004, some changes have been made according to the survey responses. Some states with smaller numbers of coaches indicated it was difficult to obtain presenters. The distance Ed program is now available in all states and may help alleviate these problems.

Leave of absence may now be granted in any year of your four year cycle after the first 4 year accreditation period. This point was highlighted as 94% of coaches believing it should be in any year of the accreditation period and this is now reflected in the current policy.

A lot of comments were made regarding the amount of time and commitment required to coach calisthenics, the requirements to update their qualifications are often a hassle and that at times it doesn't fit in with family and work commitments. These are issues that need to be considered when facing the future of calisthenics and coaching.

This survey provides an insight into the thoughts of our coaches and hopefully will be taken into consideration regarding coaching and coaching programs in the future. The main feature that came out of the survey is the love and passion that coaches have for our wonderful sport- Calisthenics.

Renae Gow  
ACFCC Victorian Delegate