

The Rest

Relationship Statistics

Vol. 51 - September 2005

THE COMMUNITY SECTOR

- The Community Services Sector in Australia covers organisations that provide the following services: health services, aged care, community care, child care, child welfare, employment services, community advocacy groups, housing services, supported accommodation for people with a disability, legal aid, individual and family relationship counselling, community activities information and referral services and government administration responsible for funding community services or directly providing those services.
- According to the ABS, there were 9,287 employing businesses and organisations comprising the community services sector in June 2000. This included 2,800 'for profit', 5,938 'not for profit' and 548 government agencies. The number of government agencies remained largely unchanged since 1996, but the number of 'for profit' and 'not for profit' organisations increased by 32% and 10% respectively over this period.
- Direct community services expenditure increased by 28% from 1995-96 to 2000.
- According to the 2001 Census, there were 237,000 people employed in community service occupations in Australia. This was a 27% increase from 1996. As many as 87% of this workforce was female.
- The Australian Capital Territory had the highest rate of workers in the community services sector with 1,694 per 100,000 people. New South Wales had the lowest at 1,077 per 100,000.
- Based on the 2001 Census, the community service occupations with the largest number of workers were child and youth service workers (101,696) and aged and disabled care workers (51,784). Disability workers increased 58% from 1996 to 2001.
- A total of \$12.643 billion was spent on community services and community services activities in 1999-2000. This was a 32% increase from 1995-96. The total expenditure was made up of \$2.111 billion from 'for profit' organisations, \$7.086 billion from 'not for profit' organisations and \$3.445 billion from government.
- In a survey of 831 agencies in the community sector conducted by ACOSS, only 6% of respondents agreed with the statement that the number of clients seeking their service had decreased. Only 11% said that waiting lists for their services were shorter this year than last.
- Regarding the financial situation of providers operating in the community sector, 54% of respondents to the above survey agreed that income for services had not met costs. However, only 9% were prepared to admit that they turned away clients because they could not afford to pay fees.
- Regarding the complexity of client needs, 67% of respondents to the ACOSS survey agreed that their clients had more complex needs than last year.

SOURCES:

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2001). Community Services Australia. ABS Catalogue No. 8696.0. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

Australian Council of Social Service. (2005). Australian Community Sector Survey. Sydney: ACOSS.