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Community services workforce

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10 Community services workforce

Key points

- More than half a million people (571,000) were employed by organisations providing community services in June 2009, equivalent to 362,000 full-time positions.
- The majority (59%) of community service workers in June 2009 were employed by not-for-profit organisations, while one-quarter (26%) were employed by for-profit organisations and 15% were employed by governments.
- The community services workforce was predominantly female, with women accounting for 78% of people employed by community services organisations in June 2009—and more than 90% of aged care workers.
- Only one-third (33%) of people in the community services sector were employed on a permanent full-time basis in June 2009, with 42% being permanent part-time and 25% casual or contractors.
- More than 325,000 volunteers gave an average of 78.3 hours service each to community service organisations in 2008–09.
- Community service workers were less likely to have a bachelor degree or higher qualification than the overall workforce aged 15–64 years (15% compared to 26%), but were more likely to have a diploma, certificate or equivalent qualification (43% compared to 33%).
- One in 10 child protection and juvenile justice workers in 2009 were Indigenous.
- Community services industry workers earn less, on average, than people in other industries: \$982 per week in 2010, compared to \$1,219 for the equivalent number of hours paid at the average wage of all other industries.
- The number of students completing community service-related university courses increased by 8% between 2004 and 2008. The large majority (89% each year) were female.

10.1 Introduction

Outcomes in the welfare sector are affected by the composition and nature of the community services workforce, including its ability to respond to growth in demand, changing models of service delivery, expectations of recipients and the broader community, and introduction of new technologies. Consequently community services require a workforce that is accessible and sufficiently skilled, as well as being of adequate size.

While technological developments continue to change the way people interact with services, the labour-intensive nature of many vital community services means that technology is unlikely to successfully substitute for labour in the foreseeable future. Therefore trends in the size, distribution and capability of the workforce are of ongoing importance.

This chapter presents data on the size and characteristics of the paid and volunteer workforces. Data on volunteers are limited as they are collected only through occasional special purpose Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and industry-specific surveys. The chapter also discusses potential entrants to the paid workforce and shortages in community service-related occupations. Information on informal carers is presented in 'Chapter 7 Informal care'.

10.2 Workforce change and challenges

Strong recent growth in the community services workforce (AIHW 2009) is expected to continue (DEEWR 2010). In the 5 years up to 2014–15, it is projected that workforce growth of between 3.3% and 3.7% per year will be achieved in the various community service sub-industries, compared with 1.8% for all industries.

Despite having grown considerably in size over recent years, the community services workforce faces important challenges (Cortis et al. 2009; Healy & Lonne 2010). This has led to a number of recent government and non-government policies and initiatives (see Box 10.1).

Box 10.1: Policy responses to community services workforce challenges

Numerous workforce initiatives have been developed within the community services sector, many of which share common themes:

- Raising the profile and status of the community services sector to make the work more attractive to new workers through advertising campaigns, career resource kits for employers and careers counsellors, career exhibitions and promoting school-based apprenticeship pathways.
- Promoting the positive aspects of the work, including opportunities to make a difference to people's lives, flexible working hours, access to entry-level positions and salary-sacrifice options.
- Investigating possible improvements in conditions of employment, including portable long service leave and more competitive salaries.
- Reforming the provision of higher education and vocational training for community services workers to ensure access to relevant skills and the capacity to transfer skills between sections of the industry.
- Building the capacity of organisations to effectively manage their workforce, particularly for smaller organisations with limited infrastructure, through development of shared resources, workshops and equipment grants.

Source: CSHISC 2011.

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Growing demand for services

The demand for community services is expected to increase at a greater rate than overall population growth. Population ageing and the implementation of reforms in the aged care and disability sectors, including a possible National Disability Insurance Scheme, are expected to increase the demand for aged care and disability support services (see chapters 5 and 6). Similarly, the ongoing availability of unpaid informal carers providing assistance within the household unit is affected by rising participation of women in the labour force, increasing numbers of single-person households, and the ageing of the carer population (see Chapter 7). Chapters 1, 2 and 3 present further information on the demographic and economic trends that are driving demand for community services.

Difficulty attracting and retaining workers

It can be difficult to attract people to careers in community services and to retain them once recruited. In part, this may be related to a perception that community services work is undervalued by the general community, and is regarded as challenging work for comparatively low return (Meagher 2007).

Many of the same demographic trends that drive the demand for community services also affect the supply of workers providing the service. The projected ageing of the Australian population, increasing the demand for aged care services, is also likely to increase the proportion of community services workers approaching and reaching retirement age. Similarly, greater

participation by women in a broad range of occupations and industries creates greater competition for these workers from other sectors due to their increased skill levels.

Low unemployment in Australia increases competition among employers for skilled workers and has implications for the community services sector, particularly not-for-profit organisations which pay comparatively low wages (Meagher 2007). This can cause attraction and retention issues where sectors that offer more attractive wages and conditions for similar roles compete for workers.

It is within this context that Fair Work Australia has been hearing an equal remuneration case that is considering wages for community services workers in relation to those of the general labour market and in regard to issues of gender equity (FWA 2011).

Skills and career pathways

Reforms in community services include shifts towards more person-centred care and community-based service delivery, coordinated across more than one program area (CSHISC 2011). These changes require the redesign of roles, the acquisition of new and more sophisticated skills and changes to training programs by vocational and higher education providers. Increased competition for skilled workers can constrain the capacity of service providers to recruit workers with the qualifications and skills that these reforms require (CSHISC 2011).

When suitably qualified workers are attracted to community services work, there is evidence that limited opportunities for career development and lack of permanent roles in the industry, particularly in small service organisations, can lead to the workers becoming overqualified for their current position but unable to progress to advanced roles and therefore potentially difficult to retain (Meagher 2007).

Limited organisational capacity

While large government or non-government organisations deliver many community services, they are also delivered by small, non-government organisations, typically not-for-profit organisations that are funded on a short-term basis, with limited access to the corporate resources often found in larger organisations (Cortis et al. 2009). For example, these services may have fewer staff to devote to human resource management.

10.3 Overview of the community services sector workforce

The community services sector has two components, the 'community services industry' and 'other industries' that support the provision of community services. The community services industry consists of four sub-industries: residential aged care services, other residential care, child care services and other social assistance services (Box 10.2).

Employees of other industries are involved with community service activities but do not work directly in the four sub-industries that define the community services industry (ABS 2010a:32). These other industries include employment placement and recruitment services (of people with disabilities); government agencies with a significant role in funding and/or directly providing community services; and interest groups such as peak bodies or agencies providing advocacy services. In this chapter, the combined community services industries workforce and the other industries workforce is referred to the 'community services sector workforce'.

Box 10.2: The community services industry in the ABS Community Services Survey

Information about the size and characteristics of the community services sector workforce is based on the 2008–09 ABS Community Services Survey, which obtained data from businesses and other organisations primarily engaged in the provision of community services. This included information about employees collected from the employer, and therefore employees with multiple jobs are counted for each job they hold. Therefore, estimates of employees from this survey are not directly comparable with those from the ABS Labour Force Survey, which obtains information about workforce characteristics directly from individuals.

For the purposes of this Community Services Survey, the community services industry was defined to comprise four groups from the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) (ABS 2006b:349–351): aged care residential services; other residential care services; child care services; and other social assistance services.

Aged care residential services

Organisations mainly engaged in providing residential aged care combined with either nursing, supervisory or other types of care as required (including medical). Primary activities include: accommodation for the aged operation; aged care hostel operation, nursing home operation; residential care for the aged.

Other residential care services

Organisations mainly engaged in providing residential care (except aged care) combined with either nursing, supervisory or other types of care as required (including medical). Primary activities include: children's home operation (excluding juvenile corrective services); community mental health hospital; crisis care accommodation operation; hospice operation; residential refuge operation; respite residential care operation.

Child care services

Organisations mainly engaged in providing day care of infants or children. Primary activities include: before and/or after school care service; child care service; child minding service; children's nursery operation (except preschool education); family day care service.

Other social assistance services

Organisations mainly engaged in providing a wide variety of social support services directly to their clients, excluding those involved with raising funds for welfare purposes. These services do not include accommodation services, except on a short-stay basis.

Sources: ABS 2006b; ABS 2010a.

Total workforce

Organisations providing community services employed approximately 571,000 people at the end of June 2009. This workforce equated to 362,200 full-time equivalent (FTE) workers in the community services sector. The difference between the FTE and head count numbers reflects the fact that many workers work fewer hours than the 35-hour standard working week (ABS 1996:8).

Employer organisations

There were 11,000 organisations involved in the provision of community services at the end of June 2009 (ABS 2010a:8). The large majority of these organisations (90%) were in the community services industry, while 4.7% were Australian, state/territory and local government agencies, and 5.3% were in other industries.

Nearly nine in 10 organisations employed fewer than 50 workers and seven in 10 employed fewer than 20 workers (Table A10.1). Organisations with more than 100 employees accounted for 7% of all organisations in the community services industry, but employed almost two-thirds of all workers (280,000). These large organisations also had the largest proportion of volunteers (43%) (ABS 2010a).

Just over half (53%) the organisations that performed community service activities operated on a 'not-for-profit' basis (Table 10.1). Not-for-profit organisations employed nearly three-fifths (59%) of the community services sector workforce (tables 10.1 and A10.1).

Organisations run for profit accounted for 42% of all community services organisations, and employed one-quarter (26%) of all workers in the community services sector. Government organisations, which represented 5% of organisations involved in community services, employed 15% of all workers in the sector.

Regional distribution

At the end of June 2009, organisations involved in the provision of community services operated from about 30,100 locations, of which 58% (around 17,500) were in capital cities and suburban areas (Table A10.5). Nearly two-thirds (63%) of the workers in the community services sector worked in capital cities and suburban areas.

Demographics

In June 2009, women accounted for 78% of people that organisations providing community services employed, compared to 46% in the overall workforce in the same period (ABS 2011:6). The predominance of female workers was most apparent in for-profit organisations, where they accounted for 88% of workers. They accounted for three-quarters of those working in not-for-profit and government organisations (Table 10.1).

Workers in the sector were predominately aged between 26 and 45 years (43%) with 28% aged 46–55 years and 15% aged over 55 years.

Workers tended to be younger in organisations run for profit than those in not-for-profit and government organisations: 66% of workers in for-profit organisations were aged 45 years or less compared to 56% in not-for-profit organisations and 48% in government (Table 10.1). Government organisations' employees were the oldest, with half of the workers (52%) aged over 45 years and, in particular, one in five aged over 55 years.

Table 10.1: Selected characteristics of organisations and persons employed in community services sector, by profit status, 2008–09 (number and per cent)

Selected characteristics	For-profit^(a)	Not-for-profit^(a)	Government	Total
Organisations at end of June				
Businesses/organisations (no.)	4,638	5,809	520	10,967
Employment				
Total employees at end of June (no.)	147,242	336,032	87,372	570,646
Volunteers during the year (no.) ^(b)	n.p.	288,723	..	325,440
Capital cities/suburbs at end of June (%)	70.7	60.6	60.7	63.2
Demographics at end of June				
Female (%)	87.7	75.0	75.9	78.4
Age group ^(c)				
Under 26 years (%)	23.4	11.2	7.8	14.0
26–45 years (%)	42.1	44.4	40.2	43.1
46–55 years (%)	23.1	28.7	31.8	27.6
Over 55 years (%)	11.4	15.8	20.1	15.2
Employment status at end of June				
Permanent full-time (%) ^(d)	30.5	28.6	51.1	32.5
Permanent part-time (%)	39.3	47.4	28.5	42.4
Casual or temporary (%)	30.2	24.0	20.4	25.0
Qualifications at end of June^(e)				
Non-school qualification (%) ^(f)	62.9	57.3	54.0	58.3
Bachelor degree or higher (%)	13.2	14.7	22.2	15.4
Diploma/certificate or equivalent (%)	49.7	42.6	31.8	42.9
Other qualification ^(g) (%)	12.9	13.4	21.9	14.5
No qualification (%) ^(h)	24.2	29.2	24.1	27.1

(a) Includes government trading enterprises.

(b) Volunteer data not collected for Commonwealth and state/and territory governments. Total includes volunteers assisting for-profit organisations and local government.

(c) Age group of person providing direct community services.

(d) Includes working proprietors and partners of unincorporated businesses.

(e) Qualification status of person providing direct community services.

(f) Non-school qualification includes diploma, certificate, bachelor degree or higher.

(g) Educational qualification other than a diploma, certificate, bachelor degree or higher.

(h) No recognised accreditation for any post-secondary education undertaken.

Source: AIHW analysis of ABS Community Services Survey, 2008–09; Table A10.5.

Qualifications

At June 2009 almost three in five (58%) direct care workers (those who spend the majority of their time on direct community services provision) within the community services sector had a non-school qualification (Table 10.1). A similar proportion of workers aged 15–64 years in the total workforce had a non-school qualification in 2009 (ABS 2010b:29–30).

A diploma, certificate or equivalent was the most commonly held qualification in the community services sector (43%), followed by a bachelor degree or higher qualification (15%) (Table 10.1).

Community service workers were less likely to have a bachelor degree or higher qualification than the overall workforce aged 15–64 years (15% compared to 26%) (ABS 2010b:29–30). In contrast, the proportion of community services workers with a diploma, certificate or equivalent qualification was greater than the overall workforce aged 15–64 years (43% compared to 33%).

Those that held no post-secondary education qualification made up 27% of the community services sector's workforce (Table 10.1).

Government organisations (22%) had the largest proportion of workers with a bachelor degree or higher, followed by not-for-profit organisations (15%) and then businesses run for profit (13%). For-profit and not-for-profit organisations had the largest proportions of workers with a diploma, certificate or equivalent qualification, at 50% and 43%, respectively.

Employment status

Relatively few workers in the community services sector were employed full time—around one-third (33%) of the workforce, or 186,000 people. The most common arrangement was permanent part-time, with 42% of workers (around 242,000 people) employed under this arrangement. Casual and temporary workers represented a quarter of the workforce (tables 10.1 and A10.5).

Permanent part-time employees comprised the largest proportions of both the for-profit and not-for-profit community service workforce, at 39% and 47% of the workforce respectively. In contrast, half (51%) of workers in government organisations in the sector were permanent full-time (Table 10.1). For-profit organisations had the highest proportion of workers on casual or temporary employment arrangements at 30%, compared with 24% for not-for-profit and 20% for government organisations.

Volunteers

In the context of the community services workforce, volunteers are defined as people who willingly provided community services, businesses or organisations unpaid help in the form of time, service or skills in the provision of direct and non-direct community services. It includes volunteers who sat on boards of management or were members of fundraising committees (ABS 2010a).

Many organisations in the community, particularly those that provide community services, depend heavily on volunteers. In 2008–09, organisations in the community services sector were assisted by more than 325,000 volunteers who provided, on average, 78.3 hours of voluntary services each (tables 10.1 and A10.1). The majority (66%) of volunteers provided direct community services. These volunteers worked an average of 82.5 hours during 2008–09, compared to an average 70.4 hours worked by volunteers providing non-direct services (ABS 2010a:10).

Almost 289,000 volunteers assisted not-for-profit organisations in the community services sector during 2008–09, representing 89% of the total volunteer workforce.

Nearly two-fifths of all volunteers in the community services industry provided services on behalf of small organisations (that is, those employing less than 20 workers).

10.4 Selected workforces in the community services sector

There are distinct differences in how particular workforces in the community services sector are structured, and these lead to unique workforce characteristics and challenges.

The information presented in this section is based on the National Institute of Labour Studies (NILS) surveys of child protection, juvenile justice, disability support services and other general community service agencies in 2009, and the survey of aged care services in 2007 (Martin & King 2008; Martin & Healy 2010). Details on the type of organisations surveyed are presented in Box 10.3.

Residential and community aged care workforce

The aged care workforce is large, with almost 175,000 people working in residential aged care services and an additional 87,500 providing community aged care in 2007 (Figure 10.1). Around four in five aged care workers were employed directly providing or managing care—133,000 in residential aged care and 74,100 in community aged care. Direct employees were defined as those that directly provided or managed service delivery, as opposed to those employees that provided or managed other services or administered the organisation. After taking into account the average hours worked, this was equivalent to around 78,800 and 46,100 full-time direct workers, respectively.

Aged care workers were primarily employed in not-for-profit organisations—almost three-quarters (73%) of staff in community aged care services and 58% in residential aged care. However, one in three residential aged care workers were in the for-profit sector; a higher proportion than any of the other selected community service workforce.

In 2007, more than 90% of aged care employees were female—the highest proportion of all selected community services workforces. Around one in three residential aged care workers, and more than one in four community aged care workers, were born outside Australia.

An estimated 70% of community aged care workers and 60% of residential aged care workers were aged 45 years or older, including 29% and 23%, respectively, who were 55 years or older (Martin & King 2008). These workers tended to join the aged care workforce relatively late in their working life, with around one in three (26% of community aged care and 37% of residential aged care workers) having entered before the age of 30 years. However, they also spent relatively long periods in the workforce. In particular, 70% of residential aged care workers had been employed in that sector for 5 years or more—a higher proportion than other community services workforces examined (Figure 10.1).

Permanent part-time employment was the most common employment arrangement in the community and residential aged care workforces (59% and 69% respectively). Aged care workers were less likely than any other workforce shown in Figure 10.1 to be employed on a permanent full-time basis, and more likely than most to be casual or contractors.

Only 17% of the residential workforce and 14% of the community workforce held a bachelor or higher degree. With the aim of further professionalising the aged care workforce, the Australian Government has introduced range of workforce development initiatives, including additional enrolled and registered nurse training places and scholarships (DoHA 2010).

Box 10.3: Community services workforces in the NILS surveys

The NILS studies used a two-stage survey process. The first stage involved selecting and surveying a sample of organisations to collect information on their workforce. In the second stage, a sample of workers from the selected organisations was also surveyed to collect more detailed individual information.

For the purposes of the NILS surveys, the workforce surveyed worked in organisations providing the following services: juvenile justice services; child protection services; disability support services; general community services; residential aged care; and community aged care. The activities of these organisations were defined as follows:

Child protection

Providing social support and social assistance services to children and young people who have experienced, or are at risk of, abuse, neglect or other harm. Such services include out-of-home care services that provide care for children and young people who are placed away from their parents or family home for reasons of safety or family crisis. Receiving and assessing allegations of child abuse, neglect or other harm to children.

Juvenile justice

Managing and operating correctional institutions and detention centres for juveniles, and providing social support and social assistance services targeted at juvenile offenders. This includes a range of social support and assistance services, including specifically targeted educational services, psychological services, work services and sport/recreation services. It also includes case management and youth conferencing.

Disability support service

Providing social support and social assistance services to people requiring support or assistance because of a disability. Such services assist people with a disability to participate in the community. They include providing support to people with a disability in institutional settings (hostels, group homes) or in the disabled person's own home (including HACC), and respite services.

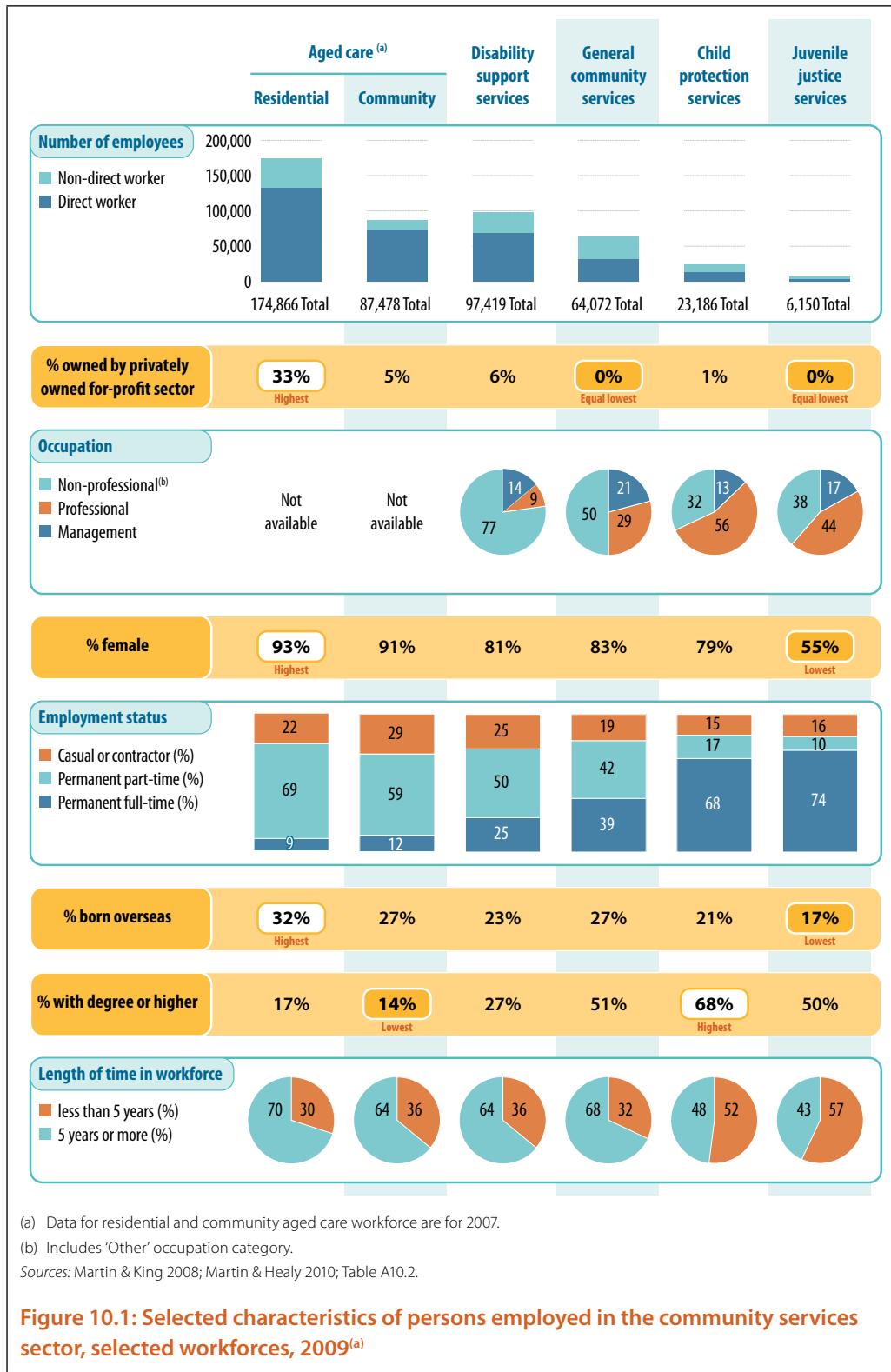
General community service

Social support and assistance services provided directly to children and families. These activities include only services that are not covered by definitions of other sectors in this report, and are not directed specifically at the aged, at providing housing or supported accommodation, or crisis services.

Residential and community aged care

Providing care at all Australian residential aged care facilities funded by the Commonwealth, and all community-based service outlets which provided services under a set of Commonwealth supported programs. Community-based organisations providing aged care services were included on the basis that they were funded to provide services under one of six programs to which the Commonwealth contributes funds.

Sources: Martin & King 2008; Martin & Healy 2010.



Disability support services workforce

In 2009, an estimated 97,400 people were employed in the Australian disability support services workforce, including 68,700 (70%) directly providing services or managing those who provide these services (Figure 10.1 and Table A10.2). Adjusting for the average hours worked, this was equivalent to a little over 34,000 full-time direct workers. Almost three-quarters of disability service workers worked in non-profit organisations. Most of the remainder were employed directly by government, with about 6% working for profit-making enterprises.

The disability services workforce was predominately female (81%). Compared with the Australian female workforce, the disability services workforce had an older age profile. Only 14% of disability workers were under 30 years, whereas 29% of all Australian female employees were in this age group.

This workforce was not highly professionalised, with fewer than one in four (23%) workers being employed in professional and management roles. Professional roles included allied health workers, social workers and disability case managers. Non-professional roles, including personal carers, home care workers, community care workers and disability and residential support workers, accounted for 77% of the workforce.

Just over one quarter (27%) of the workforce held a bachelor or higher degree. Disability services workers were twice as likely to have a qualification at the Certificate III or IV level as Australian workers generally. These qualifications were mainly in fields such as social work, psychology, counselling and community work.

Permanent part-time employment was the most common arrangement in the disability support services workforce, with half of all workers being employed on this basis. Casual or contract employment accounted for a quarter (25%) of the workforce—higher than any of the workforces examined in Figure 10.1 apart from community aged care.

Two in five disability service workers entered the disability support services workforce before the age of 30 years. Close to two-thirds had been in the workforce for 5 years or more.

General community services workforce

In 2009, the general community services workforce had around 64,000 employees in total, including an estimated 32,200 workers (or 18,100 FTEs) directly providing services or managing those who do (Figure 10.1 and Table A10.2). Not-for-profit organisations employed most of these workers (85%). There was no general community service employment in privately owned for-profit organisations.

Workers in the general community services workforce were primarily women (83%). Compared to the Australian female workforce, the general community services workforce has an older age profile. For example, 15% of general community service workers were aged less than 30 years, compared with 29% of Australian female workers.

Professional workers made up 29% of the workforce. Professional roles included social workers, case managers, psychologists and counsellors. Non-professional roles included carers, referral and information workers, and youth and child support workers.

In comparison to the overall Australian workforce, the general community services workforce was more highly educated. Half of community services workers held a bachelor or higher degree. Workers in this sector were about twice as likely as other employed Australians to have a diploma, and about three times as likely to have a postgraduate degree.

Within the general community services workforce, permanent part-time employment was the most common employment arrangement, with about 42% of workers being employed on this basis. The extent of casual or contract employment was comparable with other community services workforces.

Almost half of these workers (47%) entered the community services workforce before the age of 30 years. They tended to have been in the workforce for some time, with only 32% employed less than five years in the general community services workforce.

Child protection workforce

The child protection workforce in Australia was a comparatively small one, with an estimated 23,200 employees in 2009 (Figure 10.1). Of these, 13,000 (56%) were employed in providing direct child protection services or managing those who provide these services (Table A10.2). After taking into account the average hours worked, this was equivalent to almost 10,000 full-time workers.

Governments employed almost 60% of child protection workers, while 40% worked in non-profit organisations.

The majority of child protection workers were female (79%). In contrast to the aged care and disability support workforces, the child protection workforce had a relatively young age structure. Around one-quarter of employees were aged under 30 years, and only 3% were aged 60 years or over.

Indigenous Australians were well-represented in the child protection workforce, with 9% of workers being Indigenous Australians. Indigenous Australians were more likely to work for non-government employers, with almost 20% of non-government child protection workers being Indigenous, compared with 7% of government workers (Martin & Healy 2010).

The majority (56%) of the child protection workforce in 2009 were classified as professional workers—a higher proportion than any of the other selected workforces. Professional roles including child protection workers, social workers, psychologists and case managers. Non-professional roles included direct care workers and family, youth or child support workers.

Child protection workers were also more likely than other community services workforces discussed here to have a bachelor or higher degree (68% overall, and 81% of those employed in a professional capacity). Three in four (77%) non-professionals in this workforce had at least a Certificate III qualification (Martin & Healy 2010). Qualifications were generally in areas such as social work, psychology or counselling, community work or youth work.

The child protection workforce had high levels of permanent full-time employment (68%). The proportion of permanent full-time workers was higher in the government sector than in the non-government sector, with employers in the latter group relying more on permanent part-time arrangements. Casual employment was also more common in the non-government sector, mainly because of the greater numbers of casual workers among non-professional workers (Martin & Healy 2010).

Child protection workers tend to commence work early in their careers and do not appear to remain in the child protection workforce for long. Almost half of child protection professionals commenced in that field before 30 years of age, and half of child protection workers reported working in child protection for less than 5 years. Of those employed in the government, 36% had been with their current employer for 5 years or more, compared with 20% of non-government workers (Martin & Healy 2010).

Juvenile justice workforce

The juvenile justice workforce in Australia was relatively small, with an estimated 6,200 employees in 2009. Around half of these (3,400 people or 3,000 FTEs) were employed to provide juvenile justice services directly, or to manage those providing the services (Figure 10.1 and Table A10.2). The government primarily employed these workers (83%), with none employed in privately owned for-profit organisations.

In contrast to much of the community services workforce, juvenile justice services employed almost equal numbers of men and women. The workforce was also a comparatively young one, with 23% of workers less than 30 years old. Indigenous Australians made up a substantial proportion of the juvenile justice workforce—one in nine workers.

Compared with other community services workforces, the juvenile justice workforce was relatively professionalised, with 44% being professional workers. Professional roles included juvenile justice officers, social workers, case managers and psychologists. Non-professional roles included residential care workers and youth workers.

Juvenile justice workers also tended to have relatively high levels of education: half held a bachelor or higher degree. Non-professional juvenile justice workers were more likely to have obtained post-school qualifications than other Australian workers, especially at the Certificate 3 or 4 and diploma levels.

Permanent full-time employment was the predominant form of employment in the juvenile justice workforce (74%)—the highest percentage of all the workforces shown in Figure 10.1.

Similar to child protection workers, juvenile justice workers appear to commence work in the workforce early in their careers and many do not remain for long. Over half of workers joined the juvenile justice workforce before 30 years of age and 57% reported being in the workforce for less than 5 years.

Child care workforce

Organisations mainly engaged in providing day care to infants and children employ child care workers. Lower staff-to-child ratios and increased staff qualification requirements are being gradually phased in under the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care (COAG 2009:19). These changes could result in significant growth in the need for additional child care workers and for the delivery of relevant training.

Given that no data on the child care workforce were available from the recent NILS surveys, this section presents data on the child care workforce drawn from the 2008–09 ABS Community Services Survey (ABS 2010a).

At June 2009, around 86,900 people were employed in the Australian child care workforce directly providing services or managing those who provide these services (Table A10.1). Adjusting for the average hours worked by part-time workers, this was equivalent to almost 57,000 full-time workers. The number of child care workers grew 9% per year between June 2000 and June 2009 (ABS 2010a; Table A10.4).

Two-thirds of child care workers (67%) worked in for-profit organisations, with not-for-profit organisations employing the remainder (Table A10.1).

The child care workforce was predominately female in all occupations with an estimated 92% of child care workers being female. Only 6% of the child care workforce was aged 56 years or over compared with 15% for the community services sector generally.

Only 12% of the workforce held a bachelor or higher degree with the majority holding a diploma, certificate or equivalent qualification (47%). Permanent full-time employment was the most common employment arrangement in the child care workforce with about 40% of workers being employed on this basis. Permanent part-time and casual/temporary employment arrangements accounted for around 30% of the workforce each (Table A10.1).

There are many occupations that play a key role in the workforce for the community services sector. This section examines the characteristics, earnings and education of those occupations that make up a large part of the community services sector workforce.

10.5 Key occupations for the community services sector

Selected occupations from the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) are profiled here as major contributors to the community services workforce (Box 10.4). While they have been categorised here as community services-related occupations, some categories (for example, drug and alcohol counsellor, Indigenous health worker, psychologist, registered nurse) could also be regarded as health- or education-related occupations for other purposes.

Box 10.4: Community services-related occupations

Thirteen categories of community services-related occupations, based on the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ABS 2006a), are used in the analysis in this section:

- Child care centre manager—plans, organises, directs, controls and coordinates the activities of child care centres and services including physical and human resources.
- Early childhood (pre-primary school) teacher—teaches the basics of numeracy, literacy, music, art and literature to early childhood (pre-primary) students and promotes students' social, emotional, intellectual and physical development.
- Registered nurse—provides nursing care to patients in hospitals, aged care and other health care facilities, and in the community; includes nurse practitioner, registered nurse specialising in aged care.
- Counsellor—provides information on vocational, relationship, social and educational difficulties and issues, and works with people to help them to identify and define their emotional issues through therapies such as cognitive behaviour therapy, interpersonal therapy and other talking therapies; includes drug and alcohol, family and marriage, careers, rehabilitation and student counsellor.
- Psychologist—investigates, assesses and provides treatment and counselling to foster optimal personal, social, educational and occupational adjustment and development. This category includes psychotherapist, clinical psychologist, educational psychologist, organisational psychologist.

- Social worker—assesses the social needs of individuals, families and groups; assists and empowers people to develop and use the skills and resources needed to resolve social and other problems, and further human wellbeing and human rights, social justice and social development.
- Welfare, recreation and community arts worker—designs and implements strategies and programs to meet community and individual needs and assists individuals, families and groups with social, emotional and financial difficulties to improve quality of life by educating and supporting them and working towards change in their social environment.
- Enrolled and mothercraft nurses—provides nursing care to patients in hospitals, aged care and other health care facilities and in the community, and assists patients in providing care to newborn infants under the supervision of a registered nurse or midwife.
- Welfare support worker—provides support, information and advice to clients on emotional, financial, recreational, health, housing and other social welfare matters; and evaluates and coordinates the services of welfare and community service agencies. This category includes parole or probation officer, youth worker, residential care officer, disability services officer and family support worker.
- Child care worker—provides care and supervision for children in residential homes and non-residential childcare centres. This category includes child care centre manager, child care worker, family day care worker, nanny and outside-school-hours care worker.
- Aged and disabled care worker—provides general household assistance, emotional support, care and companionship for aged and disabled persons in their own homes.
- Nursing support and personal care workers—provides assistance, support and direct care to patients in a variety of health, welfare and community settings.
- Special care worker—provides care and supervision for children in residential child care establishments and correctional institutions; general household assistance, emotional support, care and companionship for aged and disabled persons in their own homes; assists therapists in providing therapy programs and in the direct care of their patients in a variety of health, welfare and community settings; and care and support to people in refuges. This category includes hostel parent, child or youth residential care assistant, refuge worker, aged or disabled person carer and therapy aide.

In addition to these categories, four smaller categories are included in the total numbers for community services-related occupations: diversional therapist; education aide; special education teacher and Indigenous health worker. The latter is included among community services workers because much of their work involves liaising on behalf of patients and their families with the health care or education systems.

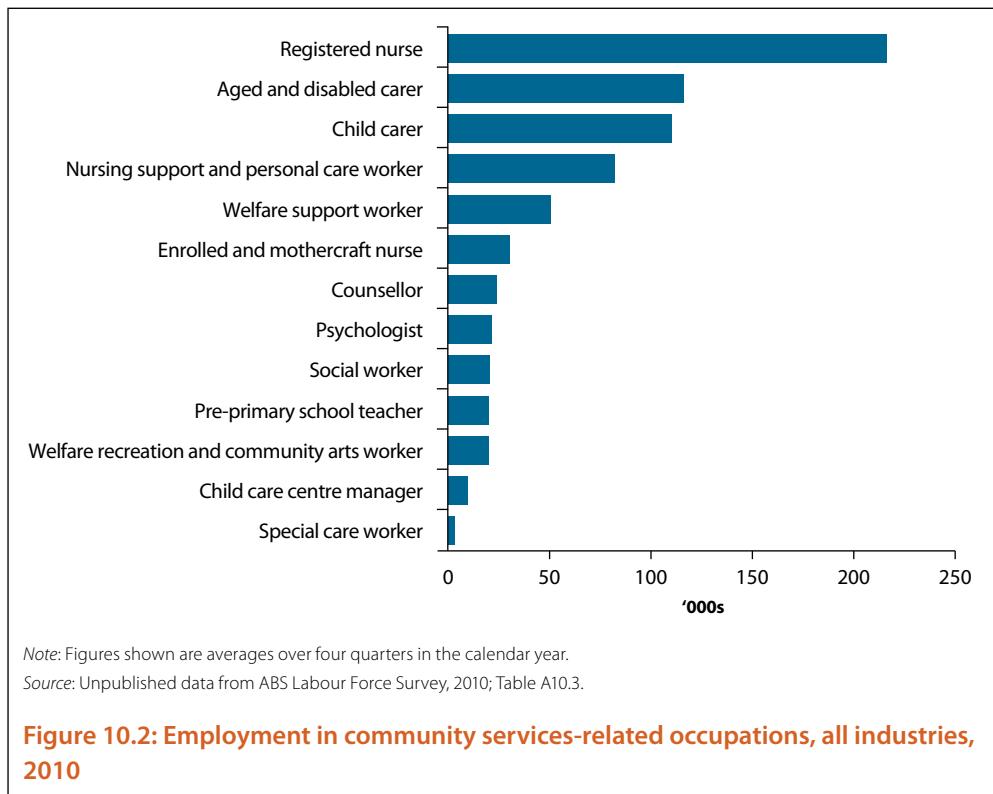
Some relevant occupations have not been included due to the absence of appropriate occupation categories in ANZSCO (e.g. people working for community housing and disability employment placement services).

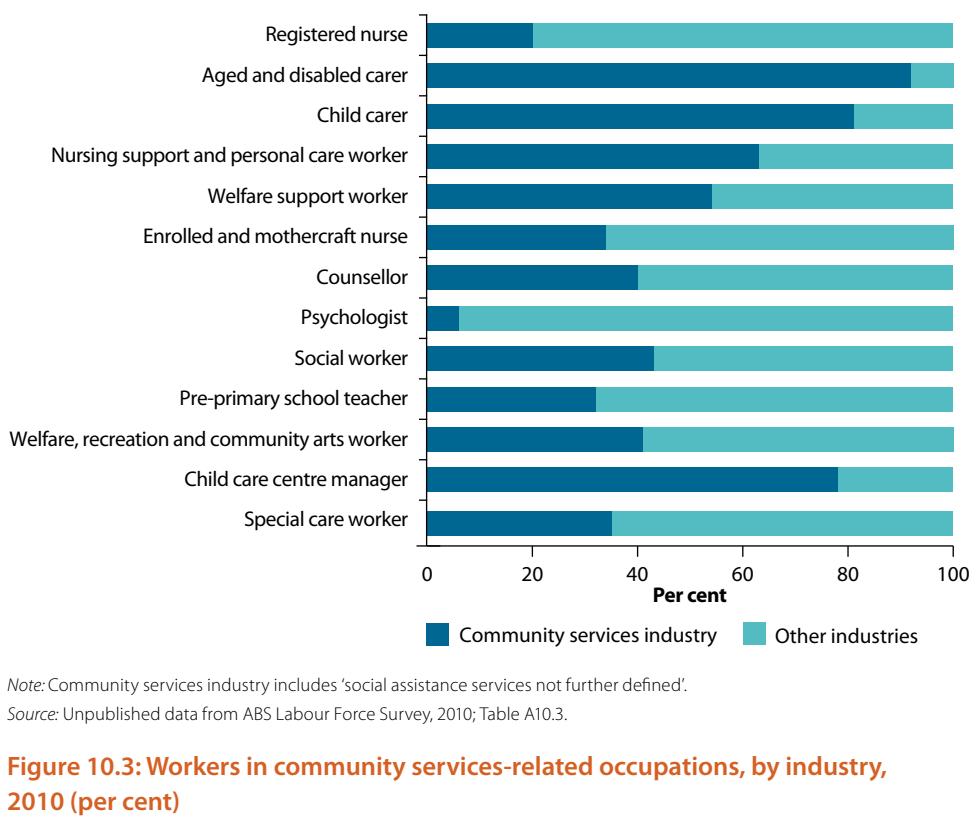
Source: ABS 2006a.

Workers in community services-related occupations provide various types of care and social assistance. They may be employed in the community services industry or in other industries such as medical and other health services. In 2010, there were around 811,000 people employed in the community services-related occupations described in Box 10.4. Fewer than half (46%) were employed in the community services industry (Table A10.3).

The largest occupational group was registered nurses, with around 216,000 workers (Figure 10.2). However, only one in five (20%) were employed in the community services industry (Figure 10.3). The largest occupational groups with a majority of their workers employed in the community services industry were aged and disabled carers (116,000 workers in total, with 92% working in the community services industry) and child carers (110,000 workers, with 81% in the community services industry) (figures 10.2 and 10.3).

Psychologists were most likely of the selected community services-related occupations to be working outside the community services industry. In 2010, 94% of the approximately 21,500 employed psychologists in Australia worked outside the community services industry.





Earnings

The relatively low earnings of community services workers are shown in the results of the ABS Survey of Employee Earnings and Hours, which collects weekly earnings data for various categories of employees by occupation and industry. According to the 2010 survey, the average total weekly earnings of full-time non-managerial employees working in community services-related occupations of \$1,180 per week were lower than the average for all occupations (\$1,266). The exceptions were psychologists (\$1,705), registered nurses (\$1,509) and social workers (\$1,352), all occupations with the majority employed outside the community services industry (Table 10.2).

Earnings of workers in community services-related occupations also varied depending on whether they worked in the community services industry or in another industry. In 2010, the average total weekly earnings of those working in the community services industry was less than the earnings of workers in other industries (\$968 compared with \$1,304 per week respectively) despite working, on average, similar hours (37.7 compared to 37.5 hours).

Social workers experienced the greatest difference, where those working in the community services industry earned \$574 less per week, on average, than those working in other industries. In comparison, enrolled and mothercraft nurses had the least difference in average weekly earnings, with those in the community services industry earning \$5 more per week than their counterparts in other industries.

Table 10.2: Average hours paid for^(a) and average weekly earnings^(b), full-time non-managerial adults, selected community services-related occupations, by industry, May 2010

Occupation	Community services industry^(c)		Other industries^(d)		All industries	
	Average hours paid for	Average weekly earnings (\$)	Average hours paid for	Average weekly earnings (\$)	Average hours paid for	Average weekly earnings (\$)
Child care centre manager	37.9	1,114.7	38.7	1,072.2	38.1	1,105.7
Pre-primary school teacher	38.9	1,005.7	36.9	1,217.8	38.3	1,068.8
Registered nurse	43.2	1,622.5	38.3	1,503.4	38.5	1,509.3
Counsellor	37.5	904.9	36.8	1,276.5	37.0	1,148.1
Psychologist ^(e)	n.p.	n.p.	36.9	1,713.7	36.9	1,704.5
Social worker	37.7	1,044.8	36.9	1,619.1	37.2	1,352.0
Welfare, recreation and community arts workers	32.2	964.0	35.7	1,306.4	34.5	1,183.5
Enrolled and mothercraft nurse	41.1	1,120.6	37.5	1,115.4	38.1	1,116.2
Welfare support worker	37.9	1,041.7	37.7	1,242.9	37.8	1,140.9
Child carer	37.6	744.3	37.2	770.6	37.5	753.5
Aged and disabled carer	38.2	869.7	35.0	906.5	37.4	879.3
Nursing support and personal care worker	39.1	897.5	38.1	941.7	38.5	922.5
Special care worker	31.4	804.4	39.0	842.8	32.2	808.5
<i>All community services-related occupations^(f)</i>	37.7	968.2	37.5	1,303.6	37.6	1,179.8
All occupations	37.7	982.3	39.4	1,274.0	39.4	1,265.7

(a) Includes ordinary time and overtime hours.

(b) Average weekly total cash earnings comprises regular wages and salaries in cash, including amounts salary sacrificed, ordinary time cash earnings and overtime earnings.

(c) Includes ANZSIC groups 860 (Residential care services), 871 (Child care services) and 879 (Other social assistance services).

(d) Includes all ANZSIC groups except 860 (Residential care services), 871 (Child care services) and 879 (Other social assistance services).

(e) Data for community services industry not published as estimates from the ABS Survey of Employee Earnings and Hours have relative standard errors greater than 50% and are considered too unreliable for general use.

(f) Includes diversional therapists; education aides; Indigenous health workers; and special education teachers.

Source: Unpublished data from ABS Survey of Employee Earnings and Hours, May 2010.

A comparison of community services-related occupations with all occupations within the community services industry shows an equal number of hours worked (37.7 hours) but the average weekly earnings of community services-related occupations were lower than those of other occupations (\$968 compared with \$982 per week respectively). In other industries, those working in community services-related occupations worked fewer hours on average and received higher weekly earnings compared with all workers.

Overall, workers in the community services industry earned on average \$982 per week compared with \$1,274 per week for workers in all other industries (for a 37.7- and 39.4- hour working week, respectively). For comparative purposes, this would equal \$1,219 for the community services industry for a 37.7-hour week if paid at the 'all other industries' rate.

Workforce shortages

The Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) publishes information on workforce shortages in a number of community services-related occupations. DEEWR monitors occupational labour markets in Australia and assesses whether skill shortages exist by consulting with employers, industry peak bodies, employer and employee organisations, and education and training providers. DEEWR does not quantify the skill shortage of the occupations that it identifies are in shortage.

A number of community service-related occupations that DEEWR reports on (Table 10.3) are not directly comparable with occupations used for ABS labour force data in this chapter (ABS 2006a).

In 2010, DEEWR identified shortages of registered nurses for aged care in every Australian jurisdiction (Table 10.3).

Table 10.3: Shortages in community services-related occupations, states and territories, 2010

Client group/occupation	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT
Child care centre manager	S	D	S	S	N	R	S	N
Child care worker	D	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Clinical psychologist	R-D	D	S	S	S	S	N	S
Early childhood teacher	S	S	S	N	N	N	N	D
Enrolled nurse	S	N	S	D	D	N	S	S
Registered nurse (aged care)	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Social worker	D	N	R	S	N	N	N	N
Special needs teacher	D	D	N	R-D	N	N	N	D
Student counsellor	R-D	N	N	N	N	N	N	D
Welfare worker	S	N	N	R	S	N	N	S

Note: S = state- or territory-wide shortage, R = shortage in regional areas, D = recruitment difficulty, R-D = recruitment difficulty in regional areas, N = no shortage assessed.

Source: DEEWR 2011.

DEEWR also identified widespread shortages in early childhood-related occupations. There were shortages in child care workers across all jurisdictions except New South Wales. In addition, there were shortages or recruitment difficulty for managers of child care centres in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory. Also, the three most populous states (New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland) reported state-wide shortages in early childhood teachers.

10.6 Community service-related education and training

For those who have completed secondary education, undertaking further study can provide opportunities to enter higher paying community service-related occupations. The education system also provides skill development for community services workers and workers in other industries who are interested in working in higher skilled community services-related occupations.

Higher education sector

Between 2004 and 2008, the number of students completing courses related to community services-related occupations increased from 5,416 to 5,826, a rise of 8% (Table 10.4). In 2008, almost two-thirds (65%) of completed courses were undergraduate degrees, a fall from 72% in 2004.

Like those employed in community services-related occupations, students completing community services-related courses were predominantly females (about 89% in both 2004 and 2008).

Table 10.4: Australian citizens/permanent residents completing selected community services-related higher education courses, sex and course level, 2004 and 2008

Field of education	2004			2008			% change in number
	Number	% female	% under-graduate	Number	% female	% under-graduate	
Teacher education: early childhood	1,828	97.4	91.8	2,026	97.5	88.4	10.8
Teacher education: special education	555	87.9	29.7	586	88.1	18.8	5.6
Human welfare studies & services	441	83.0	71.7	279	87.1	69.5	-36.7
Social work	1,354	85.6	86.6	1,298	86.2	82.5	-4.1
Children's services	17	100.0	88.2	40	97.5	42.5	135.3
Youth work	97	84.5	100.0	91	71.4	100.0	-6.2
Care for the aged	40	90.0	52.5	18	77.8	—	-55.0
Care for the disabled	123	90.2	91.1	56	92.9	96.4	-54.5
Counselling	645	77.2	21.6	1,134	82.2	22.2	75.8
Welfare studies	173	86.7	79.8	166	83.1	84.9	-4.0
Human welfare studies & services, nec	139	73.4	36.7	131	83.2	48.9	-5.8
Total	5,416	88.5	72.2	5,826	89.3	65.0	7.6

Source: AIHW analysis of DEEWR Higher education data, 2004 and 2008.

Early childhood teacher education and social work were the two most frequently completed courses in both 2004 and 2008. There was an 11% increase in early childhood teacher education course completions from 1,828 in 2004 to 2,026 in 2008. In contrast, despite the overall popularity of social work as a field of study, there was a 4% decrease in course completions from 1,354 to 1,298 over the same period.

Course completions in the fields of aged and disabled care have decreased by more than half between 2004 and 2008. However, course completions in the field of counselling have increased by three-quarters (76%) from 645 to 1,134.

Vocational education and training sector

In 2009, a total of 54,317 community services-related vocational education and training (VET) courses were completed, and there were 175,110 student enrolments in 2010 (Table 10.5).

Courses in fields of study related to aged and disabled carer (25%), welfare support worker (24%) and child carer (20%) occupations made up most of the course completions for 2009. The welfare support worker courses were primarily at the Certificate IV level (62%) whereas child carer and aged and disabled carer courses were mainly at the Certificate III level (98% and 93% respectively) (Table A10.7).

A large proportion of community services-related enrolments were for female students (85%). Over 95% of students enrolled in child care centre manager and child carer courses were female.

Table 10.5: Student completions and enrolments in selected community services-related VET courses, by field of study^(a), 2009 and 2010

Field of study	2009 completions	2010 enrolments		
		Number	% female	% rural/remote localities^(b)
Child care centre managers	4,261	24,514	97.2	16.8
Special education teachers	—	700	37.9	4.9
Counsellors	180	1,130	66.7	24.8
Psychologists	—	25	84.0	—
Social workers	1	86	67.4	19.8
Enrolled and mothercraft nurses	3,875	17,911	86.6	18.3
Indigenous health workers	326	1,386	67.2	69.1
Welfare support workers	13,182	45,633	75.9	19.1
Child carers	10,663	31,218	96.1	21.2
Education aides	1,897	8,427	92.4	32.1
Aged and disabled carers	13,549	27,491	82.0	24.4
Nursing support and personal care workers	5,999	16,353	79.8	26.5
Special care workers	384	236	67.4	22.6
Total	54,317	175,110	85.4	21.6

(a) Field of study describes the intended occupational outcome after course completion. Fields are classified using the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ABS 2006a).

(b) Based on the combined Remoteness Area classifications: Outer regional, Remote and Very remote.

Source: AIHW analysis of NCVER National VET Provider Collection data, 2009 and 2010.

Indigenous health worker-related courses had the highest level of rural and remote area enrolments, at 69% compared with 22% for community services-related courses generally (Table 10.5).

10.7 Data development

In recent years there has been a concerted effort nationally to identify and address the gaps in the information available on the community services workforce (AIHW: Vaughan 2006; Martin & Moskos 2006). As a result there is a considerable amount of data available on the characteristics of community services workforce, with the recent release of the findings from both the ABS 2008-09 Community Services Survey and the NILS community services workforce profile (ABS 2010a; Martin & Healy 2010). However gaps remain in the data available and work is underway to address them.

Occupation-based data

Data on community services-related occupations are useful for exploring the potential labour force and for comparing the characteristics of those working in the community services industry with those in other industries (e.g. regarding earnings). These data are also used at times as a proxy for workforce size when industry-based data are not available.

Australia has been well served with occupation data from the ABS Census of Population and Housing and the ABS Labour Force Survey. Most occupation data collections, including all ABS collections, use the ANZSCO which has some limitations in relation to the lack of some separately identifiable occupation categories, such as community housing workers and disability employment placement services workers.

A notable development has been the implementation of a single national registration scheme for health professionals which may present opportunities in the future to obtain more detailed data on health professionals working in community service industries. The current scope includes some community service-related occupations such as nurses and psychologists and may expand to include more community service-related occupations in the future.

Industry-based data

Many data collections, including the ABS Census of Population and Housing, the ABS Labour Force Survey and the ABS Community Services Survey, collect data based on the ANZSIC. Using this classification it is not possible to obtain data for key sub-industries. The most detailed level of information available is for aged care residential, other residential, child care and other social assistance services. The NILS studies attempt to fill this gap by providing data on the disability services, juvenile justice services and child protection services workforces. National administrative data sets such as the Commonwealth State and Territory Disability Agreement Minimum Data Set (CSTDA MDS) and the FaHCSIA Child Care Census also provide some limited workforce data for these industries. The CSTDA MDS is currently under redevelopment.

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