

Community services occupations

In this section, occupations are grouped in categories that reflect the service or clients dealt with by that occupation and relate to other statistics published by AIHW. The distinction between the client group of an occupation is not always clear. For example, the ASCO job description of residential care officer is one who 'provides care and supervision for *children or disabled persons* in group homes or government institutions'. An aged or disabled person carer 'provides care for *aged or disabled people* in their homes' (ABS 1997). These occupations have been allocated to the group that other AIHW data would indicate is the main client group, that is, residential care officer has been allocated to 'disability services' and aged and disabled person carer has not been grouped with another occupation.

There were 237,055 persons employed in the 29 community services occupations shown in this publication. Of those employed persons, 130,664 (56.8%) are in the general group of occupations called 'carers and aides'. These occupations are predominantly female and characterised by relatively low income and large numbers in part-time work.

Comparison of community services occupation data between the 1996 and 2001 censuses lend additional support to trends discussed in the chapter on de-institutionalisation in the AIHW publication *Australia's welfare 2001* (AIHW 2001).

This chapter provides a brief summary for each of the broad community services occupations, including growth between 1996 and 2001, hours worked, gross income according to the 2001 census, and earnings where available from the ABS Survey of Employee Earnings and Hours.

Child and youth services workers

Pre-primary and special education are in the education industry in ANZSIC but perform functions classified as community service activities or are directed at community services special needs target groups.

Overall, the workforce increased by 8,418 (9.0%) workers to 101,691 workers. Structural change appeared to have occurred in the child, youth and family services workforce between 1996 and 2001. A move of day care services for children from either the child's or carer's home, by carers who may not have relevant qualifications, to childcare centres with qualified staff was evident. There was a decrease of 7,558 in family day care worker, nanny and childcare coordinator and an increase of 13,989 child care workers, for an overall increase of 10.5% in workers providing day care services for children. In pre-primary schooling, there was a 12.5% increase in pre-primary teachers and a 52.3% increase in pre-school aides so that the ratio was one aide to three teachers in 2001 – up from 1:4 in 1996 (Table A.21).

Child or youth residential carers decreased by 3,108 (86.5%) between 1996 and 2001. These workers provided care for children in correctional service institutions. This decline, along with an increase of 777 (14.4%) in the number of youth workers (who provide care in the community) indicates possible restructure in this industry.

In the 2001 census, child and youth workers had relatively low incomes, with 8.1% of the overall group (mainly the pre-primary teachers) receiving more than \$41,600 and half (50.1%) less than \$20,800 (Table A.23). The distribution is largely related to the hours worked, as

49.7% of the group worked part-time (Table A.17). Base pay for full-time adult child care workers was around \$511 per week in May 2002 – an increase of about 10% from May 1996.

Family services workers

Welfare workers and family support workers in this group increased 44.3% and 38.2% respectively between 1996 and 2001. The exception was family counsellor (provides marriage or relationship counselling) that decreased 6.4% in the same period (Table A.21).

The workers in these occupations do not generally work long hours, with only 7.2% overall working 49 or more hours per week. A little more than one-third (35.5%) of welfare workers worked part-time, and over half the family counsellors and family support workers worked part-time – 52.4% and 57.4% respectively (Table A.17).

In May 2002, the average full-time adult base pay for social welfare professionals, which includes family counsellors, was around \$811 per week, and that for family support workers was around \$670 per week (Table A.24 and unpublished data from the ABS Survey of Employee Earnings and Hours, 2002).

Disability services workers

Between censuses, the most notable change was the 7,519 (261.3%) increase in integration aides to 10,396; these aides assist children with developmental disabilities in mainstream schools. Residential care officers (who provide care and supervision for children or disabled people in group housing) increased by 178.3% to 2,825 persons and disabilities services officer increased by 26.4% to 6,232 persons between 1996 and 2001. Special education teachers had an overall increase of 741 (6.9%) (Table A.21).

The distribution of income for special education teachers and integration aides is related to hours worked. There were 59.8% of special needs teachers working full-time and 54.9% with incomes over \$41,600 per year. Some 85.4% of integration aides worked part-time and 64.3% received incomes of less than \$20,800 (Tables A.17 and A.23).

Most residential care and disabilities services officers had incomes below \$41,600 per year, with 83.3% in this category – with 32.8% working part-time. Some 16.5% received more than \$41,600 – and 9.1% of these officers worked long hours (49 hours per week or more). In May 2002, the average base pay for full-time adult welfare associate professionals, which includes these officers, was around \$670 per week (Table A.24).

Aged or disabled care workers

Home and Community Care (HACC), Community Aged Care Packages (CACP) and, since January 2001, Veterans' Home Care, are all programs that provide care in the home of an aged or disabled person. Around 70% of HACC clients are aged 70 or over. The number of CACPs almost quadrupled in number between 1997 and 2001 to 24,430 packages (AIHW 2001a).

The occupation of aged and disabled carer performs the task of providing 'general household assistance, emotional support, care and companionship for aged and disabled in their homes'

(ABS 1997). A number of workers providing home care may be in other occupations but the majority of home care is provided by workers in this occupation.

Between 1996 and 2001, the number of aged and disabled carers increased by 44.1% to 51,792. At the 2001 census, 70.0% reported working part-time hours and 5.9% reported working long hours. Reflecting the relatively large proportion of part-time workers in this group, 40.1% reported incomes between \$20,800 and \$40,599 per year, 39.7% between \$10,400 and \$20,799, and 14.4% less than \$10,400 per year (Tables A.17, A.21 and A.23).

In May 2002, the full-time adult base pay for special care workers was around \$665 per week but the average pay of all these workers, including those working part-time, was around \$370 per week (Table A.24).

Other community services workers

Welfare, social and community worker numbers increased by 38.5% between the 1996 and 2001 censuses. The 17,113 community workers are the largest occupation in the group and, together with the 9,302 social security assessors and the 9,110 social workers, comprise 86.7% of the group in 2001. In 2001, there were 1,532 rehabilitation counsellors and 1,099 drug and alcohol counsellors, an increase of 326 (27.0%) and 343 (45.4%) respectively since 1996. The 368 refuge workers are the smallest occupation in the group (Table A.21).

In the 2001 census, 43.6% of social workers and 33.2% of community workers reported incomes greater than \$41,600, and 9.5% and 15.6%, respectively, reported incomes under \$20,800. Large differences in incomes were evident in 2001 between rehabilitation counsellors and drug and alcohol counsellors. Of rehabilitation counsellors, 58.2% received more than \$41,600, compared with 24.8% of drug and alcohol counsellors. Most (62.2%) drug and alcohol counsellors had incomes in the range \$20,800–\$41,599 (Table A.23). This disparity is not explained by a difference in hours worked, as similar proportions of each occupation worked part-time and long hours (Table A.17).

In May 2002, the average full-time adult base pay for social welfare professionals, which includes social and community workers, and rehabilitation and drug and alcohol counsellors, was around \$810 per week – about 6% above the health and community services industry average (Table A.24).