

2 Service providers

2.1 Numbers of open employment NIMS sites

The NIMS system was installed in 260 sites nationally by the end of June 1996 and 282 sites by the end of June 1997. The information presented in this report refers only to data received from 239 sites in 1995–96 (or 92% of all sites with NIMS installed in that period), and 268 sites in 1996–97 (or 95% of all sites with NIMS installed in that period). Complete data were not received from the remaining sites in time for inclusion in the respective databases for 1995–96 and 1996–97.

It should be noted that the use of the term ‘site’ here does not correspond exactly to the term ‘outlet’ as used by the Department of Health and Family Services.* For instance, the 268 NIMS ‘sites’ providing 1996–97 data correspond to approximately 310 or 95% of the open employment service ‘outlets’ funded by the Department in that period.

Of the 29 NIMS sites which provided data in 1996–97 but not in 1995–96, 24 were new sites that did not begin providing open employment support to clients until some time during 1996–97. Another two of these sites did not provide client support records for 1996–97 and so only their agency details are included for this year. The remaining three sites, which had a total of 99 clients in 1996–97, were also active in 1995–96 but had data missing for this year. There was one such site in each of Victoria, Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

The number of NIMS sites increased in every State and Territory in Australia from 1995–96 to 1996–97 (Table 2.1). The increase in sites was particularly significant in the Northern Territory which moved from 2 to 5 sites (one site had missing data in 1995–96), and South Australia which moved from 8 to 14 sites between 1995–96 and 1996–97. Over three-quarters of all sites were located in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland in both 1995–96 (80%) and 1996–97 (76%), although the concentration of sites in the larger jurisdictions was somewhat reduced in the latter year.

In both 1995–96 and 1996–97, the largest number of NIMS sites was in New South Wales and the largest number of clients was in Victoria. The average number of clients per site increased from 86 in 1995–96 to 92 in 1996–97. This average varied widely across the jurisdictions and between the reporting periods. In 1995–96, the average number of clients

* A ‘site’ refers to any location or agency where a NIMS system has been installed, whereas an ‘outlet’ is a body funded by the Department of Health and Family Services to perform a discrete activity under Section 10, 12A or 13 of the Disability Services Act, from a distinct physical site. In the majority of cases there is a one to one relationship between NIMS ‘sites’ and open employment ‘outlets’, as each outlet operates a single NIMS system for its own use. However in some cases, an overarching organisation may prefer to use only one NIMS system for a number of its outlets, in which case only one ‘site’ will represent the collection of data from several ‘outlets’. In rarer instances, an outlet may operate more than one NIMS system due to a perceived administrative need, resulting in multiple ‘sites’ being recorded for the one ‘outlet’. It is hoped that the current NIMS reporting system can be adapted so that future publications may be able to report in terms of ‘outlets’.

per site ranged from a low of 47 in Tasmania and the Northern Territory, to a high of 113 clients per site in South Australia while, in 1996–97, this average ranged from 32 clients per site in the Northern Territory to 122 per site in Victoria.

Table 2.1: Number of sites and clients by State and Territory, 1995–96, 1996–97

State	1995–96					1996–97				
	Sites		Clients		Average clients per site	Sites		Clients		Average clients per site ^(a)
	n	%	n	%		n	%	n	%	
New South Wales	72	30.1	5,608	27.2	77.9	77	28.7	6,446	26.2	84.8
Victoria	60	25.1	6,613	32.1	110.2	66	24.6	8,063	32.8	122.2
Queensland	59	24.7	4,625	22.4	78.4	61	22.8	5,563	22.6	91.2
Western Australia	25	10.5	1,970	9.6	78.8	28	10.4	2,147	8.7	76.7
South Australia	8	3.3	906	4.4	113.3	14	5.2	1,120	4.6	86.2
Tasmania	6	2.5	281	1.4	46.8	8	3.0	360	1.5	45.0
Australian Capital Territory	7	2.9	527	2.6	75.3	9	3.4	730	3.0	81.1
Northern Territory	2	0.8	94	0.5	47.0	5	1.9	161	0.7	32.2
Australia	239	100.0	20,624	100.0	86.3	268	100.0	24,590	100.0	92.4

(a) When calculating the average number of clients per site, 1 site from New South Wales and 1 site from South Australia were omitted as records of support given were missing for all clients.

NIMS sites operated in a range of locations around Australia. In 1996–97, over two-thirds (68%) of all sites were in urban locations, with 29% in rural and 4% in remote locations (Table 2.2). The proportion of sites in remote locations had increased slightly from 3% in 1995–96 with a corresponding 1% decrease in the proportion of sites in rural areas.

Table 2.2: Number of sites by location, 1995–96, 1996–97

Location	1995–96		1996–97	
	Number	%	Number	%
Urban	161	67.4	181	67.6
Rural	71	29.7	77	28.7
Remote	7	2.9	10	3.7
Total	239	100.0	268	100.0

Note: Location is classified according to the 1996 Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services Rural and Remote Areas classification.

2.2 Staff numbers

During 1996–97 there were approximately 1,751 equivalent full-time* staff working in services across Australia, of whom 46 received no wages (Table 2.3). There were 1,403 paid support staff, with an average of 5 per site, and 339 paid administration staff, with an average of 1 per site. While the overall number of staff in 1996–97 had increased from 1,635 in 1995–96, the average number of staff per site fell marginally over this period. This small decrease in the average reflects a number of small changes in paid and unpaid support and administrative staff numbers, detailed below.

* Full-time hours are determined according to the award under which staff are employed or taken to be 35 hours where staff are not employed according to an award.

Table 2.3: Number of equivalent full-time staff, 1995–96, 1996–97

	Paid staff		Unpaid staff		Total staff
	Support	Administration	Support	Administration	
1995–96					
Range (per site)	0.5–32.0	0.1–6.0	0.0–8.0	0.0–7.0	1.0–33.8
Average (per site)	5.4	1.2	0.1	0.2	6.8
Total	1,281.8	294.2	18.3	40.5	1,634.8
1996–97					
Range (per site)	0.3–32.0	0.1–6.5	0.0–2.7	0.0–7.0	1.0–33.8
Average (per site)	5.3	1.2	0.0	0.1	6.6
Total	1,402.9	339.4	11.0	34.7	1,751.0

The average number of *paid* staff per site fell marginally from 6.6 in 1995–96 to 6.5 in 1996–97 (Table 2.3). There was substantial variation in the number of paid staff employed in open employment services. In 1996–97, about one-third (34%) of sites employed more than 5 and up to 10 paid staff, 22% employed more than 3 and up to 5 paid staff and 27% employed 1 to 3 paid staff (Table 2.4). Compared with 1995–96, there was a slightly higher percentage of sites with 1 to 3 paid staff and a correspondingly lower percentage of sites with more than 10 paid staff in 1996–97.

The average number of *unpaid* staff per site also fell from 0.3 in 1995–96 to 0.1 in 1996–97. The percentage of sites with less than one equivalent full-time unpaid staff member rose slightly between 1995–96 (222 of 239 or 93%) and 1996–97 (252 of 268 or 94%; Table 2.4).

Table 2.4: Number of sites: distribution of paid and unpaid staff, 1995–96, 1996–97

Total paid staff (equivalent full-time)	Total unpaid staff (equivalent full-time)				% Total
	<1	1–3	5.1–10	Total ^(a)	
1995–96					
1–3	56	3	—	59	24.7
3.1–5	51	2	1	54	22.6
5.1–10	77	5	1	83	34.7
10.1–15	27	1	1	29	12.1
>15	11	1	2	14	5.9
Total	222	12	5	239	100.0
1996–97					
1–3	68	3	—	72	26.7
3.1–5	58	2	—	60	22.4
5.1–10	86	4	2	92	34.3
10.1–15	28	—	1	29	10.8
>15	12	1	1	14	5.2
Total	252	10	4	268	100.0

(a) In 1996–97 the total includes 2 sites with missing staff details (1 missing both paid and unpaid details and one missing only unpaid details).

In both 1995–96 and 1996–97 most NIMS sites employed between 1 and 10 paid equivalent full-time *support* staff (87% and 86% respectively; Table 2.5). In 1996–97, over 37% of all sites had 1 to 3 paid support staff, 21% had more than 3 and up to 5 paid support staff and 28%

had more than 5 and up to 10 paid support staff. Compared with 1995–96, there was a slightly lower proportion of sites employing 5 to 10 support staff (30%) and a slightly higher proportion employing 3 to 5 support staff (19%) in 1996–97.

In 1996–97, over half (53%, 143 from 268) the NIMS sites employed 1 to 3 paid *administration* staff while 42% (113 from 268) had less than one equivalent full-time administration position. A higher proportion of sites had less than one equivalent full-time administration position in 1996–97 compared with 1995–96 (89 from 239 or 37%) and a correspondingly higher percentage had between 1 and 3 administration staff compared to the earlier period (141 from 239 or 59%).

In 1996–97, the most frequent combination of support and administration staff was 1 to 3 support staff and less than one administration staff member (67 of 268 or 25%), followed by 5 to 10 support staff and 1 to 3 administration staff (59 of 268 or 22%). In 1995–96, the most frequent combination was 5 to 10 support staff and 1 to 3 administration staff (62 from 239 or 26%).

Table 2.5: Number of sites: equivalent full-time paid staff, support and administration, 1995–96, 1996–97

Paid support staff (equivalent full-time)	Paid administration staff (equivalent full-time)					% Total
	<1	1–3	3.1–5	5.1–10	Total ^(a)	
1995–96						
<1	6	—	—	—	6	2.5
1–3	56	34	—	—	90	37.7
3.1–5	17	29	—	—	46	19.3
5.1–10	9	62	1	—	72	30.1
10.1–15	1	12	3	1	17	7.1
>15	—	4	4	—	8	3.4
Total	89	141	8	1	239	100.0
1996–97						
<1	6	2	—	—	8	3.0
1–3	67	33	—	—	100	37.3
3.1–5	24	31	—	—	55	20.5
5.1–10	15	59	2	—	76	28.4
10.1–15	1	14	5	1	21	7.8
>15	—	4	2	1	7	3.0
Total	113	143	9	2	268	100.0

(a) In 1996–97 the total includes 1 site with unknown staff details.

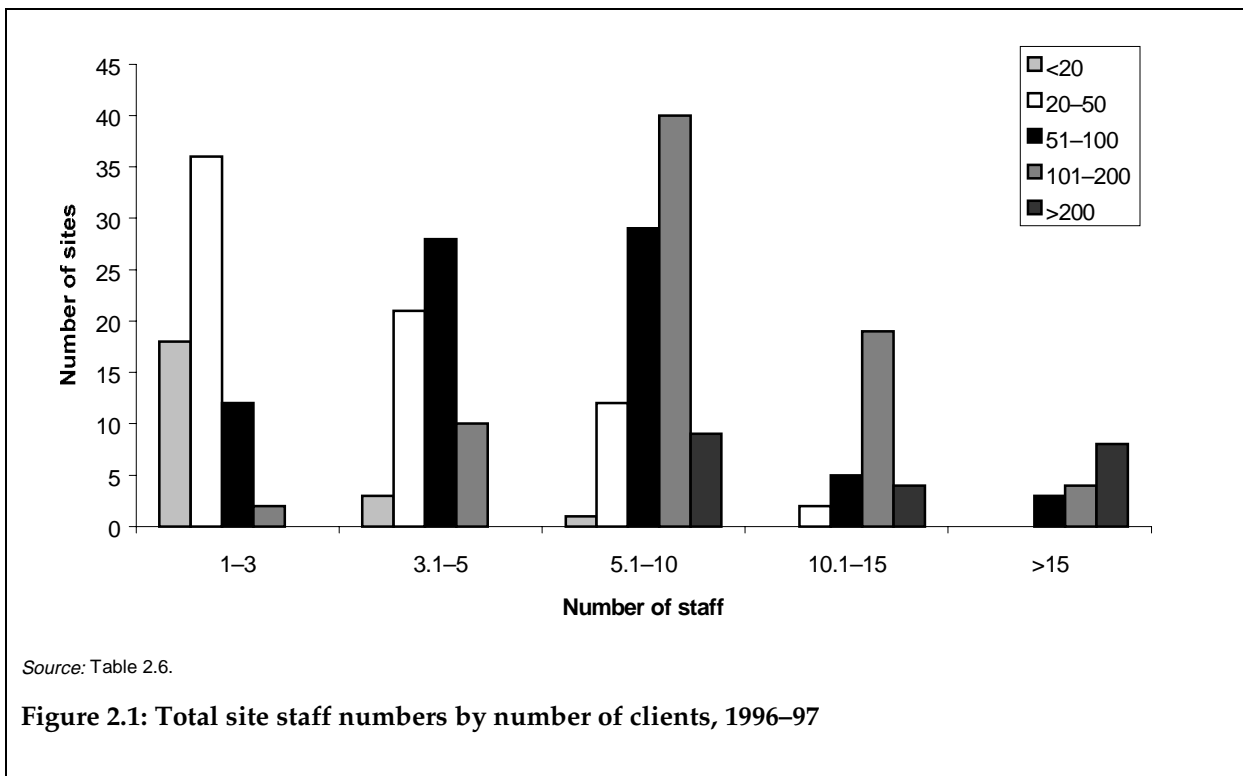
2.3 Staff and client numbers

In 1995–96, about a third (33%) of sites had between 20 and 50 clients, about a third (32%) had between 51 and 100 clients and 16% had over 100 clients (Table 2.6, Figure 2.1). In 1996–97 these percentages changed quite markedly, with a much higher percentage of sites having over 100 clients (37%) and lower percentages having client numbers less than 50.

In 1996–97, the most common combination of the number of staff and the number of clients was 40 sites with 101 to 200 clients and 5 to 10 staff (Figure 2.1). In 1995–96, the most common situation was 43 sites with 51 to 100 clients and 5 to 10 staff.

Table 2.6: Sites: total site staff numbers by number of clients, 1995–96, 1996–97

All staff	Number of clients					Total	% Total
	<20	20–50	51–100	101–200	>200		
1995–96							
1–3	29	25	1	1	—	56	23.4
3.1–5	9	31	14	2	—	56	23.4
5.1–10	3	20	43	15	—	81	33.9
10.1–15	2	2	14	13	—	31	13.0
>15	—	1	5	6	3	15	6.3
Total	43	79	77	37	3	239	100.0
1996–97							
1–3	18	36	12	2	—	68	25.4
3.1–5	3	21	28	10	—	62	23.1
5.1–10	1	12	29	40	9	91	34.0
10.1–15	—	2	5	19	4	30	11.2
>15	—	—	3	4	8	15	5.6
Unknown	1	1	—	—	—	2	0.8
Total	23	72	77	75	21	268	100.0



2.4 Open employment NIMS sites and predominant disability types

All clients of an open employment service are recorded as having one primary disability type. Nine different primary disability types may be recorded in NIMS (intellectual/learning, psychiatric, physical, acquired brain injury, neurological, vision, hearing, speech, and deaf and blind).

The information contained in Table 2.7 was calculated to determine whether NIMS sites tend to specialise in a particular primary disability group, or cater for a mixture of primary disability groups. Considering that the proportion of clients with an intellectual/learning disability as their primary disability was 25% or more for almost four-fifths of all sites (208 or 78%), sites were grouped into three broad categories:

- those that had 75% or more of their clients with a particular primary disability type (e.g. the group titled 'intellectual/learning' $\geq 75\%$);
- those where the most common primary disability type or types other than intellectual/learning occurred for 25–74% of clients (e.g. the group titled 'neurological' 25–74%); and
- of the remainder with a mixed clientele, those with more than 50%, but less than 75%, of clients with primary disability type 'intellectual/learning' and those with less than 50% of clients with primary disability type 'intellectual/learning'.

Table 2.7 illustrates the number of sites in each category, the number of clients who received support during 1996–97, and the average number of clients per site. Over a third (36% or 8,854) of clients attended an open employment service with 75% or greater from a particular primary disability group, and 23% (5,547) of clients attended an open employment service with 25–74% from a particular disability group other than intellectual/learning (Figure 2.2). The average number of clients per site varied from relatively small sites with 26 to 54 clients (for site groups neurological $\geq 75\%$, acquired brain injury 25–74% and hearing $\geq 75\%$), to large sites with well over 100 clients per site (vision $\geq 75\%$ and psychiatric 25–74%).

A substantial minority (45%) of clients with the primary disability type 'vision' were receiving services from a site that had 75% or more of their clients with this disability type (Figure 2.2). This was also the case for clients with the primary disability type 'psychiatric' (46% attended a site where 75% or more of the clients had a psychiatric disability), and clients with the primary disability type 'intellectual/learning' (38% attended a site where 75% or more of the clients had the primary disability type 'intellectual/learning').

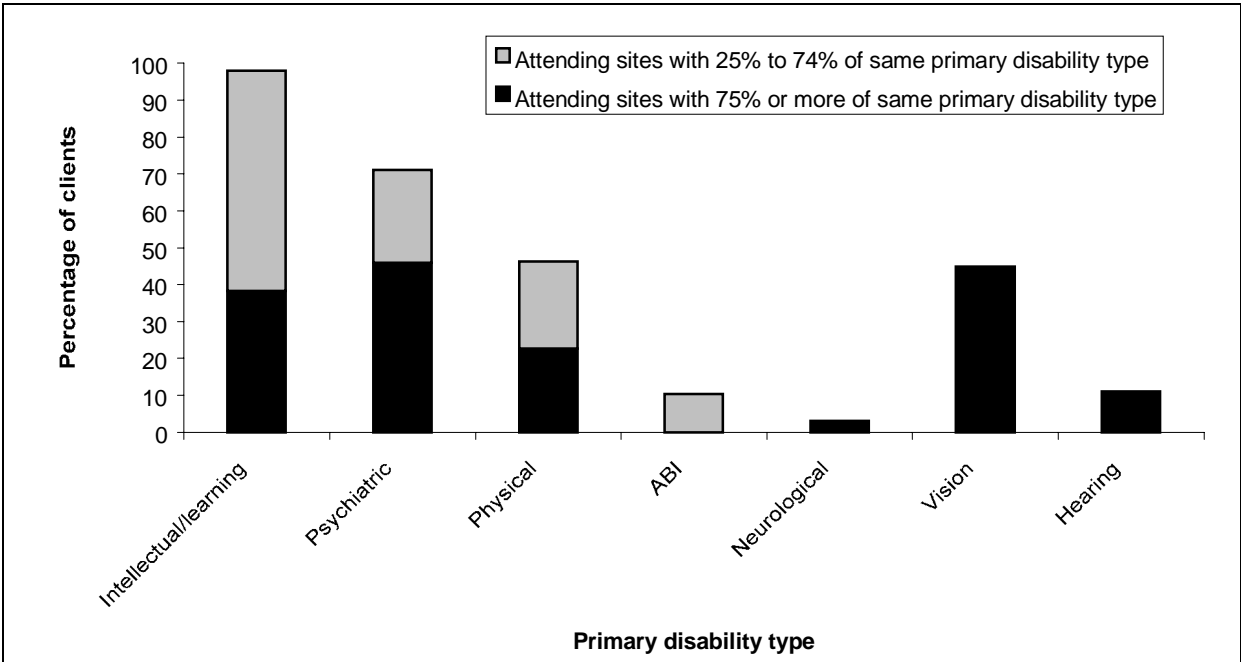
A further 60% of clients with an intellectual/disability as their primary disability attended a site where 25–74% of clients had this disability type, which means that almost all (98%) clients with this disability attended a site that had at least a quarter of such clients (Figure 2.2). For clients with the primary disability type 'psychiatric', an additional 25% attended sites where 25–74% of clients had this disability type. Clients with a physical disability also had a relatively high likelihood of attending sites where 25–74% of clients had the same primary disability (25%). Clients with other disability types tended to be receiving services at sites catering for a wider mixture of disability types.

Table 2.7: Sites grouped by client primary disability type: numbers of sites and clients, 1996–97

Type of site—grouping according to clients' disability type	No. of sites ^(a)	Total clients	Mean clients per site	Intellectual/learning		Psychiatric		Physical		Acquired brain injury		Neurological		Vision		Hearing		Speech		Deaf and blind	
				n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Predominant disability type (≥75%)																					
Intellectual/learning ≥75%	68	5,123	75.3	4,529	38.3	94	1.7	187	5.7	111	11.5	69	8.0	47	4.3	84	8.8	—	—	2	6.7
Psychiatric ≥75%	28	2,645	94.5	34	0.3	2,535	46.0	39	1.2	11	1.1	9	1.0	3	0.3	11	1.2	3	4.2	—	—
Physical ≥75%	7	446	63.7	12	0.1	1	0.0	410	12.6	2	0.2	15	1.7	4	0.4	2	0.2	—	—	—	—
Neurological ≥75%	1	26	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	26	3.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Vision ≥75%	3	507	169.0	4	—	—	—	—	—	1	0.1	1	0.1	492	44.9	—	—	7	9.7	2	6.7
Hearing ≥75%	2	107	53.5	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	105	11.0	—	—	—	—
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>109</i>	<i>8,854</i>	<i>81.2</i>	<i>4,581</i>	<i>38.7</i>	<i>2,630</i>	<i>47.7</i>	<i>636</i>	<i>19.5</i>	<i>125</i>	<i>13.0</i>	<i>120</i>	<i>13.9</i>	<i>546</i>	<i>49.8</i>	<i>202</i>	<i>21.2</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>13.9</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>13.3</i>
Substantial proportion of disability type (25–74%), not intellectual/learning^(b)																					
Psychiatric 25–74%	28	3,082	110.1	979	8.3	1,198	21.7	416	12.8	149	15.5	127	14.7	88	8.0	111	11.7	13	18.1	1	3.3
Physical 25–74%	30	1,842	61.4	605	5.1	225	4.1	629	19.3	80	8.3	94	10.9	95	8.7	101	10.6	10	13.9	3	10.0
ABI 25–74%	3	139	46.3	49	0.4	6	0.1	6	0.2	73	7.6	5	0.6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Psychiatric and physical each 25–74%	2	418	209.0	59	0.5	186	3.4	110	3.4	11	1.1	10	1.2	19	1.7	22	2.3	—	—	1	3.3
Physical and Acquired Brain Injury each 25–74%	1	66	—	5	0.0	—	—	32	1.0	26	2.7	3	0.2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>64</i>	<i>5,547</i>	<i>86.7</i>	<i>1,697</i>	<i>14.3</i>	<i>1,615</i>	<i>29.3</i>	<i>1,193</i>	<i>36.6</i>	<i>339</i>	<i>35.2</i>	<i>239</i>	<i>27.7</i>	<i>202</i>	<i>18.4</i>	<i>234</i>	<i>24.6</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>32.0</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>16.7</i>
Other																					
Intellectual/learning 50–74%	66	7,252	109.9	4,386	37.1	790	14.3	893	27.4	303	31.4	308	35.7	220	20.1	316	33.2	27	37.5	9	30.0
Intellectual/learning <50%	27	2,937	108.8	1,174	9.9	480	8.7	538	16.5	197	20.4	197	22.8	128	11.7	199	20.9	12	16.7	12	40.0
Total	266	24,590	92.4	11,838	100.0	5,515	100.0	3,260	100.0	964	100.0	864	100.0	1,096	100.0	951	100.0	72	100.0	30	100.0

(a) Total excludes 2 sites where records of support given were missing for all clients.

(b) 59.6% of clients (7,055) with an intellectual/learning disability were supported by sites that had 25–74% of clients with an intellectual/learning disability.



Source: Table 2.7.

Figure 2.2: Percentage of clients attending sites with 25% or more of client’s disability type, 1996–97