
COMMUNITY SERVICES PREFACE

Introduction

Support for individuals and families in the community is provided by a wide range of institutions, organisations, individuals and other support networks. The majority of support is informally provided by family, friends and the community as a whole. This support is supplemented by formal services provided by both the government and non-government sectors.

Generally, community service activities are taken to include ‘activities which assist or support members of the community in personal functioning as individuals or as members of the wider community’ (AIHW 1997).

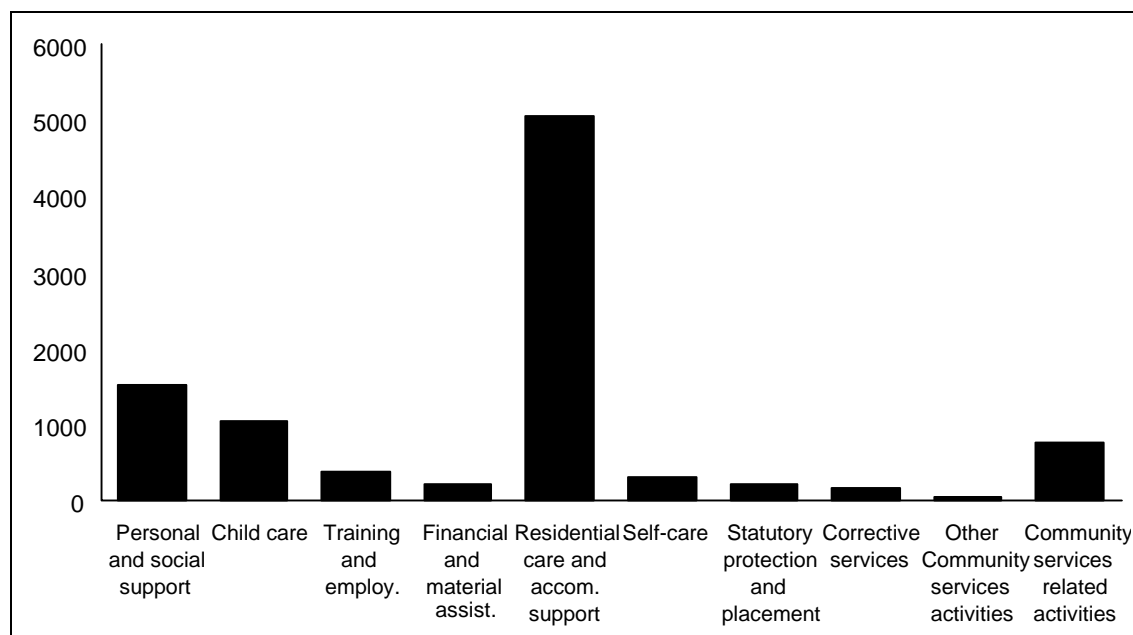
They encompass financial assistance to those in crisis and short-term or transitional housing support, but exclude acute health care services, long-term housing assistance, and transfer payments such as social security pensions and unemployment benefits.

The scope of community services in this Report is children’s services, aged care services, disability services and protection and support services (encompassing child protection, supported placements and supported accommodation and assistance).

Size and scope of the sector

Community services are provided by numerous organisations. In 1995–96, 8036 businesses and organisational employers were providing community services (ABS 1997).

Expenditure by all businesses and organisations on community services activities was \$9705 million in 1995–96. The major areas of expenditure were residential care and accommodation support (\$5062 million), personal and social support (\$1525 million) and child care (\$1043 million) (ABS 1997).

Community and related services expenditure, 1995–96 (\$ million)^a

a Includes only employing businesses and organisations.

Source: ABS 1997

The five largest community services industries¹ in 1996–97 employed approximately 257 000 people and had about the same number of volunteers. Nursing homes used the highest proportion of employees compared with volunteers (86 per cent) and non-residential care services used the lowest proportion (25 per cent). Sixty-nine per cent of all employees were involved in direct community service provision (ABS 1997).

Employees and volunteers of selected community services industries, June 1996 (persons)

	<i>End of June 1996</i>		<i>For the month of June 1996</i>
	<i>Full-time employees</i>	<i>Part-time employees</i>	<i>Volunteers</i>
Child care services	15 436	20 898	19 665
Accommodation for the aged	10 009	24 521	15 121
Residential care services n.e.c. ^a	8 475	11 126	13 756
Non-residential care services n.e.c. ^a	24 437	38 074	190 358
Nursing homes	22 185	81 889	16 527
Total	80 542	176 507	255 426

a Not elsewhere classified.

Source: ABS 1997

1 Child care services, accommodation for the aged, residential care services, non-residential care services and nursing homes.

Classification of community service activity

Personal and social support — services which provide support for personal and social functioning in daily life

Child care — the provision of care, by persons other than the user parents, under the supervision of a paid coordinator in a group setting

Training and employment — services which assist people who are disadvantaged in the labour market by providing services including training, job search skills, help in finding work, placement and support in open employment and, where appropriate, supported employment

Financial and material assistance — services which are designed to enhance personal functioning and facilitate access to community services through the provision of emergency, financial assistance and material goods

Residential care and accommodation support — services which help people who are disadvantaged (in terms of their capacity for independent living) to gain access to suitable community housing arrangements and to other appropriate community resources

Self care — provision and/or management of independent living units for the aged or disabled

Statutory protection and placement — services which provide protection from physical, sexual or emotional harm or physical neglect, through appropriate statutory intervention or other means

Corrective services — services which provide correctional and rehabilitative supervision and protection of public safety, through the provision of corrective arrangements and advice to courts and parole boards

Group advocacy, community and service development and support — services which provide support aimed at articulating and promoting improved social policies; promoting greater public awareness of social issues; developing and supporting local community-based activities, special interest and cultural groups; and developing and facilitating the delivery of quality community services

Other activities — services which cannot be classified to any other section. These services include domiciliary support services and administration of investments

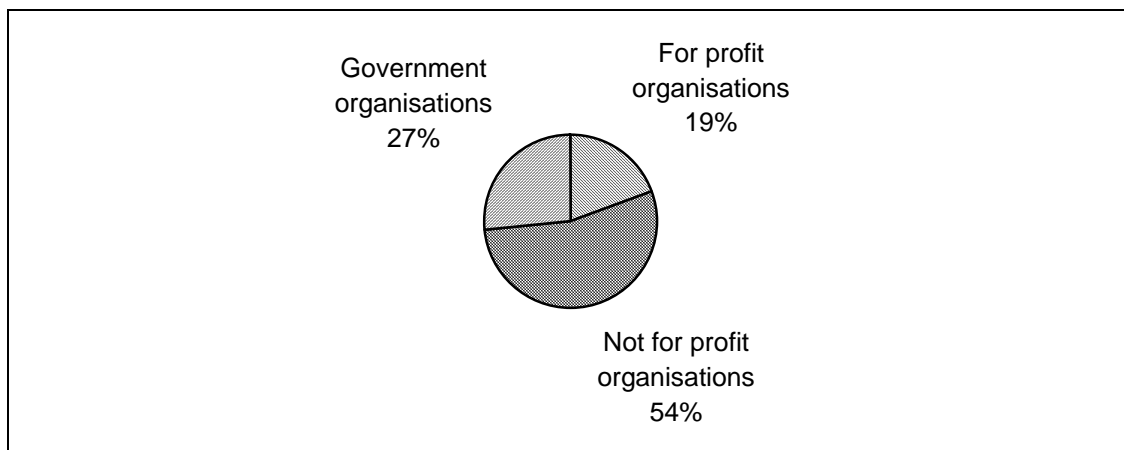
Source: AIHW 1997

Government involvement in community services

Not-for-profit organisations made up 54 per cent of direct service expenditure in 1995–96, while for-profit institutions made up a further 19 per cent. In addition, government is significantly involved in the community services sector, both as a producer of community services, and as a funder.

Only approximately 5 per cent of the 8036 employing businesses and organisations that provided community services in 1996 were government service providers (ABS 1997), although these organisations accounted for 27 per cent of all community service expenditure.

Community services industry direct service expenditure by sectors, 1995–96

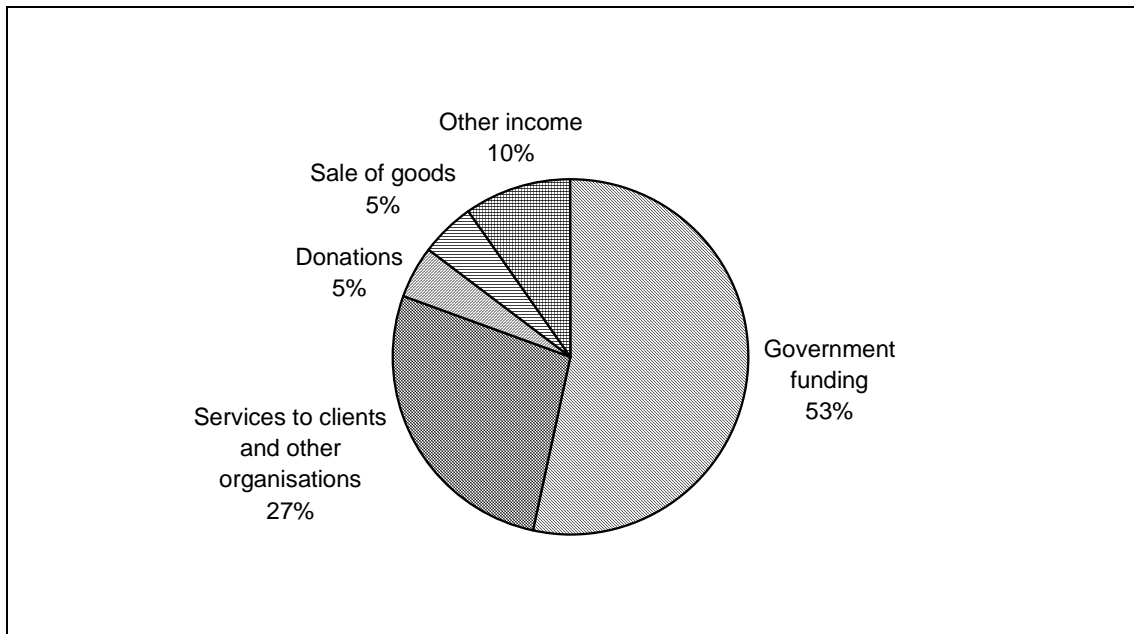


Source: ABS 1997

Government provided 53 per cent of the funding for the five largest community service industries as a whole. Sales of services to clients and other organisations provided 27 per cent of income, while only 5 per cent of income was from donations.

Interactions

Community services are provided through a range of different programs operated by various government departments throughout Australia. The needs of many clients in community services are fairly straightforward, but there are a number of clients with complex needs who rely on services provided by more than one organisation, funded through more than one program, and often administered by different departments.

Source of income of selected community service industries, 1995–96^a

a Selected industries included child care services, accommodation for the aged, residential care services (not elsewhere classified), non-residential care services (not elsewhere classified) and nursing homes.

Source: ABS 1997

Information on the performance of individual services is available, but there is no information on the performance of these services as a package. Often there is little coordination of these services even though the development of effective links between services is important in ensuring services meet client needs. The introduction of case management and the coordination of policy at a higher level are both developments which may improve the delivery of services.

It is also important to acknowledge the links that exist between the community services sector and other areas of service provision. The effectiveness of community services may substantially influence education, health, housing and the justice system. And, in return, those areas significantly affect the community services sector. The success of community services in dealing with such issues as child abuse and youth homelessness, for example, may have an impact on the likelihood that individuals will enter the criminal justice system. Similarly, the success of the criminal justice system may effect the demand for community services (for example, the success of prisons in rehabilitation will affect the need for community services by ex-prisoners).

