Studying the mental health NGO workforce is complex as the workforce is difficult to define. There is a lack of data about the sector and so a specialized survey was appropriate for this project. A key objective of this project and the two surveys it used was to see what data collection tools and methods need to be developed and explored, as well as provide some indicative information about the sector. Key findings of the Landscape Survey regarding the mental health NGO workforce are below:

**Paid employees**
- 42% of responding organisations had 0-10 paid employees, 27% had 11-50, and 31% had over 50 paid employees.
- Of the organisations that reported mental health employee numbers, 62% had 0-10 paid mental health employees.
- A significant proportion of organisations had paid support workers on staff – 31% employed consumer workers, 19% employed carer workers and 55% employed support workers.

**Landscape Survey**
The Landscape Survey asked organisations about their characteristics and the services they offer and was conducted between 16 December 2009 and 7 May 2010. The focus of the project was the testing of a methodology for future workforce studies of the sector, however a range of data on the sector’s size, services and workforce was gathered in the process. This was a targeted and voluntary survey, and most likely not all mental health service providers or NGOs providing some level of support to mental health consumers and carers were captured through this sample. This, combined with challenges in defining mental health NGOs and their services, means that the results are not necessarily definitive, but provide some indicative information which will be of benefit to the sector and help develop future data collection. 268 valid responses were received and survey coverage was estimated at 34% of the sector.
• 31% of respondents were large organisations which consisted of over 50 paid employees.
• A component of the mental health NGO workforce is the emerging role of paid peer support workers, consumer workers and carer workers. 54% of respondents who completed that element of the question indicated that they employed consumer workers and 34% employed carer workers for their lived-experience of mental illness.

Volunteers
• The vital role and contribution of volunteers is particularly strong in the sector with 77% of organisations reporting volunteers as part of their workforce.
• 54% of organisations with volunteers had 0-10 volunteers, 26% had 11-50 volunteers, and 21% had over 50 volunteers.
• 9% of organisations had no paid employees.

Staff qualifications
• The majority (60%) of organisations indicated that they employed some clinical/health professionals on the basis of their health qualifications and others (80%) on the basis of their broader professional backgrounds.
• Clinical/health professionals employed in mental health NGOs included, psychologists (21% of organisations), occupational therapists (8%), social workers (24%) and registered nurses (13%). 21% employed one or more psychologists but only 3% of organisations reported having one or more psychiatrists employed.
• 84% of organisations with volunteers indicated they had only 5 or fewer volunteers with a formal clinical health qualification.
• 56% of the 243 who answered questions about service provision provided staff training and professional development services.
• The average staff turnover rate reported in the Landscape Survey was 7.9%-16.5%, which is close to other studies and lower than other similar sectors.

This series of fact sheets summarises some of the findings from the Mental Health Non-Government Organisation Workforce Report. All results are indicative and cannot be generalised beyond the scope of this study. For a copy of the full report and other fact sheets go to www.ahwo.gov.au/publications.asp or www.hwa.gov.au.

Other fact sheets in this series:
A Snapshot of the Mental Health Non-Government Organisation Sector
Non-Government Organisation Mental Health Service Provision
Funding the Mental Health Non-Government Organisation Sector

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