Non-Government Organisation Mental Health Service Provision

One of the key attributes of mental health NGOs is their ability to respond to the unique needs of individuals and to provide a broad service offering based on local community need. No two responding organisations to the Landscape Survey were the same in structure, service delivery or workforce. Key findings from the Landscape Survey of organisations, regarding mental health NGO service provision are described below:

Service mix (244 answered this section)

- 86% of organisations indicated that they provide mental health services, 46% reported this was their primary focus and 68% reported providing mental health plus another form of service such as welfare or other community services.
- 33% offered drug and alcohol services. Of those, 53% reported up to a quarter of their services were drug and alcohol related (18% of the total 244 respondents).

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.
33% offered physical and intellectual disability services. Of those, 48% reported up to a quarter of their services were physical and intellectual disability related (16% of the total 244 respondents). Smaller organisations were more likely to provide specialised services, concentrating on one type of service as opposed to providing a variety of service types.

**Who is supported by NGOs?**

- 31% of survey respondents reported directly supporting between 100 and 500 consumers annually, and 29% of organisations supported 1-50 carers directly (via phone or in person).
- 7% reported providing direct support to over 5,000 consumers annually.
- Approximately 3% provided services specifically to children and less than 1% provided services specifically to people aged 65+.
- It is estimated that survey respondents supported between 123,300 and over 264,350 consumers and between 32,600 and over 89,600 carers annually. As the survey captured only about 34% of mental health NGOs, this could be considered a small proportion of the total number of people supported by mental health NGOs.

**Service types (243 answered this section)**

**Rehabilitation and support services**

- 49% of organisations provided recovery planning/care coordination with other health/service providers. 44% provided education and training support for consumers and carers. 42% provided peer support.

**Therapeutic or “clinical” services**

- These are often seen as the remit of public mental health services or delivered by private providers. However, 27% of organisations described themselves as providing ‘talking therapies’ such as cognitive behaviour therapy or neurolinguistic programming.
- 44% of respondents provided individual therapeutic mental health services. 39% provided none, 37% provided counselling and 37% provided group therapy.

**Mental health education and public awareness.**

- 60% of survey respondents provided individual advocacy for consumers (e.g. accessing services), 60% provided community events for mental health awareness, 55% provided pamphlets or newsletters and only 29% provided web-based mental health information.

**Comorbidity programs**

- 60% of organisations reported providing one or more comorbidity programs.
- 41% provided a program for people with mental health problems and substance use.
- 28% provided a program for people with mental health problems and a complex or exceptional need.
- 22% provided a program for people with mental health problems and intellectual disability.

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
- Funding the Mental Health Non-Government Organisation Sector
- Mental Health Non-Government Organisation Workforce Characteristics