

Steering Committee of the Australian Paid Care Research Network

## **Submission to the Australian Bureau of Statistics on Community Service Industry Survey Requirements**

### **Summary statement**

1. The Australian Paid Care Research Network (APCRN) supports the maintenance of the Community Services Survey (CSS) program (Cat. No. 8696.0).
2. APCRN recommends some changes to the CSS, in line with developments in the industry and with emerging data needs.
3. APCRN also recommends some revisions to the ANZSIC for community services.

### **Information about the Australian Paid Care Research Network**

This submission has been prepared by the Steering Committee of the Australian Paid Care Research Network. The APCRN is an outcome of a workshop called 'Paid Care: Now and in the Future', convened at Flinders University with the support of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia. (A list of presenters at and participants in the workshop is appended to this submission.

The Network aims to:

- Enhance communication and cooperation between researchers, industry stakeholders and others with an interest in research on paid care;
- Act as a clearinghouse for information about Australian and overseas research on paid care;
- Facilitate the organisation of workshops, conferences and other events focused on paid care.

### **APCRN Steering Committee**

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# Submission to the Australian Bureau of Statistics on Community Service Industry Survey Requirements

## Introduction

The community care sector has grown significantly over the last 10 years. Growth and change have been particularly rapid in the last five years. Population ageing and changing female patterns of workforce participation are impacting substantially on the shape of the community services industry, influencing both the demand for assistance and the available supply of community services labour force. Structural change on the supply side of the industry, including the changing public-private mix and, within the private sector, the changing mix of for-profit and not-for-profit providers, are also reshaping patterns of service provision and affecting opportunities and outcomes in the community services labour force.

These developments highlight the need for good data about the community services labour force. Current sources of data on this labour force include the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Labour Force Survey, the Census of Population and Housing, and the Community Services Survey. However, each of these sources has some limitations:

- The Labour Force Survey is not currently coded at a level of detail that would enable analysis to distinguish employees in what the CSS calls 'direct community services provision' in community service industry sub-divisions.
- The Census of Population and Housing is coded to the level of detail required to distinguish direct service providers in community service industry sub-division by occupation at the 4-digit level. The Census also contains very useful information about levels and fields of education, and other significant demographic variables. However, the Census records information only about the main job.
- The Community Services Survey reports data on the number of employees in direct community services provision and in other occupations, as well as the number of volunteers, by industry sub-division and by organisation type (for profit, not for profit). However, it collects little information about the demographic and educational characteristics of the employees in community service organizations.

In addition to these limitations are problems arising from the industry coding frame for community services. In the remainder of this submission, we make a case for maintaining the Community Services Survey, and recommend some changes to the reporting of data at the industry sub-division level. We believe that by implementing these recommendations, the ABS will enhance the value of an already extremely useful resource for community services organisations, policy-makers, and researchers.

## 1. Case for maintaining the Community Services Survey

We strongly support the maintenance of the Community Services Survey. Two previous Community Services Surveys, fielded in 1995-96 and 1999-2000, offered important sources of data on the community services industry not obtainable elsewhere. The CSS provides:

- Detailed information about the organisational structure and activities of the industry detail not available from other ABS data sources. Information about expenditures, activities, and the distribution of organisations into government, for profit, and not for profit is particularly valuable.
- The required level of geographic detail on many data items necessary to assist work force and industry planning.
- Statistical information useful for projecting likely future shortfalls in the community services labour force arising from the current characteristics of this labour force and projected changes in population structure overall.

Maintaining this survey is a vital service to all interested in community services policy and delivery in Australia.

## 2. Recommended changes to the Community Services Survey

Recommended changes fall into three categories: a) enhanced information about the community services labour force, b) the level of detail and precision in reporting on community services industry sub-divisions, c) comprehensive and more detailed coverage of all community service providers and d) geographical scale of reporting.

### **a) Labour force information**

Because community services are labour-intensive, more information about the workers in direct community service provision would be extremely useful for workforce planning and training development strategies. One concern, for example, is that the community services labour force is relatively old, and ageing. Given rising demand for services, maintaining and replenishing the labour force is now central to community services policy making.

There is also other evidence that human capital is less well developed in community services than in other human service industries such as health and education. For example, levels of qualifications among community service workers are relatively low, and growth in the community services workforce has been stronger among lower skilled occupations (see Meagher and Healy, 2006). The qualifications and occupation profile of the workforce may have implications for quality of services offered. Therefore collecting information about the qualifications and occupations of employees would be extremely useful.

Information about pay, working conditions, and industrial relations arrangements would also be of considerable benefit for workforce planners and researchers. For example, there is some evidence that relatively poor rates of pay in community service organisations, especially in aged care, are driving nurses out of community services into the health industry. The capacity for intra- and cross-industry

comparison of pay rates and scales would enable stakeholders to better understand the dynamics of the human services labour market, and to develop strategies to recruit and retain a high quality workforce in community service industries.

Thus, data on the age and qualifications of community service workers is a highly desirable addition to the CSS. Healy and Richardson (2004) document the limits of existing sources, including the Census of Population and Housing, in providing this data. Some additions to the CSS would respond to a pressing need.

#### **b) Reporting on community services industry sub-divisions**

The move towards community care has had a profound impact on the internal structure of the community services industry, particularly in the areas of care for the aged and people with disabilities. Many changes to the funding, administration, and delivery of services are not well captured by the traditional industry subdivisions.

One problem is that it is not clear what should be counted under two of the existing sub-divisions: 'nursing homes' and 'accommodation for the aged'. The old distinction between nursing homes and hostels is no longer in use in funding and administering aged care. It has been replaced by a distinction between low care and high care residential services, but these are not necessarily separated into different service providing organisations: high care residents can be accommodated in facilities designated as low care. Historically, high care residential services were equated with nursing home care, but this distinction may be outdated. It is also unclear how self contained accommodation for older people is best treated.

It may be that disaggregation and reorganisation of residential care services that shows categories of cared accommodation for the aged, people with disabilities, young people, and the homeless would be more useful, with minimal use of residual categories (such as 'Other' and 'Not elsewhere classified').

The use of 'Not elsewhere classified' is a particular problem in the case of non-residential care services (nec). Strong growth in home and community care for the aged and people with disabilities is the most likely cause of very strong growth in employment in this industry sub-division in the second half of the 1990s. Yet the sub-categories do not allow users of data to make the rather basic distinction between home and community care services (such as home care for the aged) and other non-residential welfare services (such as welfare counselling, marriage guidance and child protection). This difficulty could be resolved by disaggregated reporting of non-residential care services along the following lines:

- *Home and community care services*, which would include personal care and domestic support for the frail aged and disabled in their own homes, emergency housekeeping, meals on wheels, and adult day care centres.
- *Non-residential welfare services*, which would include welfare counseling, marriage guidance, adoption service, family support services, child protection services
- *A genuinely residual category for other services*, which would include welfare fund raising and parole or probationary services, etcetera.

Growth and developments in the funding and provision of child care services have also raised some questions and concerns about data on the child care industry reported in the CSS. The ANZSIC distinguishes preschool education (which is

classified under education) from child-minding and day nursery services (which are classified under 'child care services' in community services). It is not clear that this distinction remains useful for policy makers and researchers in the field. Does the child care data in the CSS include those preschool services that are not designated as also 'providing child minding or day nursery services',<sup>1</sup> or do these remain designated as 'education' and omitted? It is likely that patterns of usage of preschool may not differ much from patterns of part-time use of 'child-minding and day nursery services', even if the latter are not provided by the preschool facility in question. Further, child care services now routinely offer educational and developmental programs for the children they serve, rendering the education-child-minding distinction increasingly redundant.

Thus, including preschool services in CSS reports on the child care industry would improve the usefulness of the data. Preschools could simply be consolidated into the child care industry for the purposes of the CSS, or reported as a separate component of the childcare industry.

### **c) Comprehensive and more detailed coverage of all community service providers**

Community services are provided within a complex 'mixed economy'. Public and private sector organisations are involved; among private sector organisations, both for-profit and not-for-profit providers operate. Further, the contributions of public and private (both for- and not-for-profit) organisations varies between community service industry subdivisions, and between states. Finally, the economic structure of the community services industry is evolving rapidly, with changes in government policy (for example, in services for the unemployed) and with emerging developments in community service markets (for example, the emergence of corporate child care providers). Policy-makers and researchers need more detailed information about the evolving 'economic structure' of community service industry sub-divisions to support policy development, policy evaluation, and workforce planning.

### **d) Geographical scale of reporting**

State and territory governments are primarily responsible for the provision and regulation of many community services, even in areas such as aged care, where federal government funding is very significant. Further, the needs profiles of the populations of the states and territories differ because of their diverse demographic profiles. Thus, reporting state level data in the CSS would enhance its usefulness to stakeholders on both the 'demand' and 'supply sides of the community services industries.

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<sup>1</sup> See ANZSIC (1993), classification 8410 Preschool Education.

### 3. Recommended changes to the ANZSIC for community services.

Some of our recommendations have broader significance for the classification of organisations under the ANZSIC, and we ask the Australian Bureau of Statistics and Statistics New Zealand to consider them in the normal process of classification updating.

First, we have noted that the existing divisions between nursing homes and accommodation for the aged may no longer be the most useful way to organise data about the range of services offered in the residential aged care field.

Second, we have noted that the increasing dominance of community rather than institutional care means that 'non-residential care services (nec)' is no longer a genuinely residual category. We have proposed some quite specific changes there, which have the benefit of posing no concordance problems, because they would involve the introduction of three new 6-digit codes under the existing 4-digit classification.

Third, we query the reporting of preschool education separately from child care services, given that patterns of usage of these services are likely convergent, and that child care services now routinely offer educational and developmental programs.

### References

- Healy, J. & Richardson, S. (2003) *Who Cares for Elders? What We Can and Can't Know from Existing Data*, National Institute of Labour Studies, Flinders University, Adelaide.
- Meagher, G. & Healy, K. (2006) *Who Cares? Vol. 2 Employment Structure and Incomes in the Australian Care Workforce*, Australian Council of Social Service Paper 141, ACOSS, Sydney.

## Paid Care: Now and in the Future

A workshop sponsored by the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, April 11-12 2006, convened by Dr Deb King and Dr Bill Mitchell of Flinders University.

### Presenters

Professor	<b>Michael Bittman</b>	Social Science	University of New England
Associate Professor	<b>Deborah Brennan</b>	Government and International Relations	University of Sydney
Professor	<b>Bettina Cass</b>	Social Policy Research Centre	The University of NSW
Associate Professor	<b>Susan Dodds</b>	English Literatures, Philosophy and Languages	University of Wollongong
Dr	<b>Michael Fine</b>	Sociology	Macquarie University
Dr	<b>Diane Gibson</b>	Welfare Division	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
Professor	<b>Graeme Hugo</b>	Geography	Adelaide University
Dr	<b>Debra King</b>	Sociology	Flinders University
Associate Professor	<b>Bill Martin</b>	National Institute of Labour Studies	Flinders University
Dr	<b>Gabrielle Meagher</b>	Economics and Political Science	The University of Sydney
Dr	<b>Ian Ravenscroft</b>	Philosophy	Flinders University
Professor	<b>Sue Richardson</b>	National Institute of Labour Studies	Flinders University
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### Other participants

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