A Bloke shed or a ...?.. Men Working in the Human Services/Community Sector

In Rural Queensland

A Research Project

By

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A Bloke Shed or a …?:
Men Working in the
Human Services/Community
Sector in Rural Queensland

Executive Summary

This project began in the township of Ingham. Service providers in the Human Services/Community Sector (the Sector), recognised that the professional development of staff is crucial to service delivery. Women form the majority of workers in the field, with men being a small percentage of the workforce. It was felt that many of the professional-development opportunities available to staff may not meet the needs of men working in the Sector. One initiative to emerge was a small research project: How to retain, support and attract men to work in the Sector in rural Queensland? The research consisted of a survey which was distributed throughout rural Queensland using formal and informal networks and a small number of semi-structured interviews. One-hundred-and-four surveys were returned and three semi-structured interviews were conducted in Ingham.

Why Men Join the Sector

The surveys revealed that altruism is the driving force for a significant number of men joining the Sector. Altruism is particularly strong in the younger age groups. In the older age group, career and life-style changes have influenced the men’s decision to work in the Sector.

The Rewards and Challenges

The research found that ‘making a difference’ was a key reward for men working in the Sector. A positive, professional work environment, where the men could use their skills and learn from others, was valued by the men. The challenges cited were industry related, with lack of support and training as major issues. Low pay, lack of funding and resources, and managerialism with a focus on outcomes also were seen as challenges. Approximately half of the survey respondents felt that there were disadvantages and advantages in being male in a female-dominated industry.

Supports Needed

The assistance that most men said they required was related to education, training, professional supervision and support from peers, mentors and managers. Given that almost half of the men who responded to the survey had been employed in the Sector for five years or less, it is not surprising that industry-related training and education were identified as issues. The majority of the men reported that their preferred learning style was hands-on and/or workshops.
Recommendations in Brief

It is recommended that the Sector:

1. Develops and/or maintains good organisational practices.
2. Provides access to a variety of professional development opportunities.
3. Encourages and provides mentoring opportunities.
4. Develops specific training.
5. Develops recruitment strategies to attract men to the Sector.

Conclusion

This report is being provided to encourage service providers and the men working in the Sector to work together to enhance staff retention and to attract other men to the Sector who ‘want to make a difference’.
INTRODUCTION

The Human Services/Community Sector (the Sector) is a diverse industry which employs approximately over one-million people (Victorian Council of Social Service, 2007). Women form the majority of workers in this field; men being approximately 13% of the workforce (Australian Services Union, 2007, p25). As noted by the Australian Service Union (ASU) (2007) the percentage of men working in the Sector varies according to the field of work, for example, men number less than 4% in the area of child care, although in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health services almost 58% of employees are male. In rural Queensland, the Sector provides vital services to the general community and those who are most vulnerable: disadvantaged youth, the elderly and people with disabilities. In addition, these services provide valuable employment opportunities. One issue for rural service providers is the attraction, retention and professional development of staff (Australian Services Union, 2007; Cheers, 1998; Precision Consultancy, 2007). It is against this background that a meeting took place in the township of Ingham, North Queensland.

DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY

The author of this report has worked for approximately three years as a consultant, specializing in the professional development of staff with Ingham service providers. In March 2010 the author facilitated a meeting with the managers of Hinchinbrook Employment Service (HES), Hinchinbrook Community Support Centre (HCSC) and Ingham Parents Support Group (IPSG). The group met to identify the needs of their organisations in relation to supporting and growing staff. A full-day professional-development workshop was developed from this conversation with staff attending from the three organizations. Five of these workshops were run with an excellent response.

Evaluation and further discussions highlighted a number of issues; the personal and professional development needs of women and men are very different. Therefore, different strategies are required to attract and retain professional staff, especially male staff. To date, little attention has been paid to men working in the Sector because women and children are considered, in the main, to be the client group. However, IPDSG, a disability service and HES, an employment service, report that more than half of their clients are male. Furthermore, that male staff enhance the ability of these organizations to provide a service. Accordingly, two funding applications were submitted by the Ingham Disability Support Service (IDSS) (formerly IPSG) to the Building Rural Communities Fund. One application was to provide workshops for women working in the Sector, the other to fund a small research project focusing on men employed in the Sector. The applications were successful. This report focuses on the research project, A Bloke Shed or a …? Men Working in the Human Services/Community Sector in Rural Queensland.
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Question

How to retain, support and attract men to work in the Sector in rural Queensland?

Overview of the Project- Project description

Needs analysis and implementation of a strategy to support the employment and professional development of men working in the Hinchinbrook community Sector.

Project Goal

To attract, support and retain men working in non-managerial roles in the Hinchinbrook community Sector.

Project objectives

The project objectives are to identify:

- Why do men seek employment in the Sector?
- What keeps men working in the Sector when other areas of employment are more financially rewarding?
- What supports are needed to retain and support men working in the Sector?

Project Methodology

The following methods were used in the project:

- Literature review.
- A small, mainly qualitative, research project consisting of a survey and semi-structured interviews.
- Data collection and analysis.
- Writing up of the projects and presentation of the findings.
- The development and implementation of at-least-one finding from the research.

Anticipated Project Benefits

The anticipated project benefits are to:

- Assist in the professional development of males in the Sector.
- Enhance the capacity of rural services to attract, support and retain male workers.
- Increase the capacity of rural services to meet the needs of men accessing their organization.
- Increase the participation of men in the Sector.

Project Time Frame

15/10/11 to 15/10/12

The Process

The managers of four Ingham service providers support this project and form the reference group known as the Community Advisory Group (CAG):
• HES – Hinchinbrook Employment Services
• HCSC – Hinchinbrook Community Support Centre
• IDSS – Ingham Disability Support Services
• Canossa Nursing Home.

These services have encouraged their male workers to fill in the survey and to participate in the semi-structured interviews.

The original idea was to design a survey to give a profile of men working in the Sector and to glean information pertaining to the project objectives. It was anticipated that the response to the survey would be small and the bulk of the research would consist of five to ten semi-structured interviews.

At one of the first CAG meetings, it was decided that while the funding covered only the Hinchinbrook area, in order to add value to the research the survey needed to be distributed throughout Queensland. Formal and informal networks were utilized by CAG members and the researcher. Particular mention needs to go to the ASU, Indigenous Professional Support Unit, Queensland Council of Social Services and the Australian Community Workers Association for their assistance in distributing the survey. It was due to these networks that a good return rate was achieved, however, the response necessitated many unanticipated hours of data collation and analysis. Accordingly, it was not possible to conduct more than three semi-structured interviews.

Limitations and Challenges

The survey was not a random sample, thus the findings cannot be taken to represent all of the men working in the Sector in rural Queensland. However, much still can be learned from this research as men have taken the opportunity to express the rewards, challenges and their needs in relation to their work. As it stands, the research can give valuable insights into why men join the Sector and can suggest strategies regarding retention and attracting men to the Sector. This research can lay the foundations for future research and new professional-development initiatives.

A number of challenges are associated with this research:

• limited funding,
• time frame,
• gender and academic background of the researcher,
• gender inequalities in society, and
• the number of surveys returned.

Even so, a number of strengths are present:

• collaboration of Ingham service providers,
• collaboration and assistance of a number of organizations and individuals,
• experienced grass-roots practitioners and researcher, and
• a huge response to the survey.
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For a study which aimed to focus on hearing men’s experiences of working in the Sector, it was appropriate to adopt a theoretical framework drawn from both gender studies and standpoint theory.

Standpoint Theory focuses on exploration of life experience from the standpoint of a particular group. Accordingly, feminist researchers have found standpoint theory to be particularly useful for exploring the life experience of women, especially vis-à-vis their experience of power and powerlessness in their relations with men (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002; Rogers, 2008).

With regard to research with men, however, Pease, (2001, p20) asserts that using ‘a traditional men’s standpoint’ ignores the sense of entitlement and ‘the privileges and power men have’ based solely on their gender, as identified in Gender Studies. Thus, morally and ethically, Pease (2001) argues for a more critical analysis and identifies ‘pro-feminist men’s standpoint theory’ as an appropriate theoretical framework to adopt in research with men. This said, however, Flood and Pease later acknowledge that not all men experience the same levels of power and privilege, that ‘particular men may receive or practise forms of privilege in some social contexts and/or in relation to some social divisions, while lacking these in other contexts’ (2005, p133).

The implication of this more nuanced perspective for research with men is that it is important not to presume that men in all contexts are dominant and hold power. Thus, for example, in his study of men in prison, Cowburn adopted ‘a non-sexist attitude’ in preference to an explicit pro-feminist standpoint, arguing that in order to move forward on issues of inequality the first step is to hear men’s stories (2007, p276).

In similar vein, given that men are a minority in the Sector - and thus, rather than holding privilege and power, may instead feel isolated and silenced - it was considered important in this exploratory study to adopt a commitment to hearing the stories of the men currently working in the Sector. Thus, standpoint theory and adopting ‘a non-sexist’ (ie, non-gender biased) research practice were deemed the most useful theoretical framework for this project.

The qualitative data from the survey have been recorded and form part of the appendix. The research analysis consists of drawing meaning from the raw data. While this research is essentially qualitative, the analysis is limited as surveys by their nature are blunt instruments; it is not possible to ask further questions nor is the reader aware of the circumstances in which events occur. Although the semi-structured interviews did allow for in-depth questioning, only three interviews will be drawn upon. Regardless of the limitations, it is believed that the analysis provides valuable information and contributes to the scant body of knowledge currently available.

Reflexivity

This project developed out of a need expressed by service providers. It is challenging for both service providers and researchers as little work has been done in this area. The challenges are heightened given that many inequalities exist in contemporary
society; men, especially educated Anglo-Saxon men, are not usually seen as disadvantaged. The work of Pease, (2010) acted as a guide to this research as it enabled the acknowledgement of gender inequality while at the same time hearing the views and thoughts of men working in the field. What became very evident is that the survey touched a chord with many men working in the Sector and service providers wanting to attract workers to rural areas. A number of men noted in their responses that they believed that the research was long overdue.

Data Analysis

The survey questions (Appendix 1) were developed after consulting with CAG members and Peter Cookson, PhD Candidate, Flinders University. Peter surveyed Adelaide residential workers in the intellectual disability field; therefore, using similar questions was appropriate and could provide links for further research. The survey data was divided into two sections: data such as age and length of service that could be placed into a table, and data for analysis such as responses to open-ended questions (Appendix 2 & 3). Tables were compiled to provide a profile of the respondents and the remaining data were analyzed by identifying common themes and noting differences.

The semi-structured interview questions were taken from the survey and participants were asked to expand on questions relating to why they joined the industry, their rewards, challenges and professional development needs. Interviews ranged from one hour to one-and-a-half hours. The information from these interviews has been used to provide depth to the themes emerging from the survey data.

Ethics

The ethical considerations of the research were discussed with the CAG and Emeritus Professor Rosamund Thorpe, Adjunct Professor, Social Work and Community Welfare, James Cook University. In research, informed consent, confidentiality and participant’s welfare must be paramount; how these issues were dealt with is outlined in the following section.

Survey

The survey was circulated as widely as possible and men were invited to participate. Men had the option of returning the surveys anonymously to IDSS or emailing to the researcher. If men had any questions or concerns they were invited to contact the researcher.

Interested parties wanting to be kept informed of the progress of the research were placed on an email list. While responses have been detailed in the appendix and a number assigned to each respondent, it is not possible to identify a person from the data. These measures have ensured that the men’s comments remain confidential.

Semi-structured Interview

Men were identified by the Ingham service providers involved in the research. The men were approached by the author and asked if they would like to participate in an interview. A letter of introduction explaining the purpose of the research was provided. Before each interview an informed-consent form, covering confidentiality and their voluntary involvement in the research was given to the men to read and
sign. Thus, the men’s participation was voluntary and they knew that they could withdraw from the process at any stage. Although the men interviewed were asked to choose an alias it was decided that due to the small number of interviews, the information obtained would be used only to add depth to the survey material obtained. Thus, the interviews added valuable information while protecting the identity of the men interviewed. The men involved were aware of the counselling services available to them either via their workplace or in the community if issues were discussed during the interviews that were sensitive or challenging for them.

**Scrutiny of the Research**

The CAG met regularly to review the progress of the research and to provide information and feedback. The raw data from the surveys and graphs were emailed, inviting feedback, to those expressing an interest in the research. Given the limitations and challenges of the project, Emeritus Professor Rosamund Thorpe was asked to provide professional supervision to the researcher and author of the report.

**Definition of Terms**

The Human Services/Community Sector (the Sector) is a broad term which in this context covers men and women working in caring roles:

- disability support worker,
- age care worker,
- child care worker,
- youth support worker,
- community care worker,
- workers in community centre’s,
- health and well-being workers,
- workers who support vulnerable members of the community to reach their goals, and
- advocates.
Challenges and Limitations

As noted, some challenges are associated with this project, in particular the limitation of time and funding. Even so, the author has conducted a wide search of the literature and contacted researchers working in related fields. The literature review has revealed studies from a number of disciplines: health, social work, nursing and the community. In addition, findings from industry-based research, rural research and works exploring non-traditional occupations will be drawn upon to inform this project. While this body of research does not address the goals and aims of the project directly, the research findings do provide valuable information. Accordingly, a brief summary of the various areas of research will be presented.

The Occupation of Caring

Reports and studies focusing on working conditions, recruitment and retention of workers in the Sector within Australia have been published in the last decade (Lime Management Group, 2006; Precision Consultancy, 2007; Victorian Council of Social Service, 2007). Three studies have been chosen to provide an overview of the occupation of caring. In addition, research focusing on rural areas, males working in non-traditional roles, recruitment and retention strategies will be examined.

1 Human Services/Community Sector

The ASU published Building Social Inclusion In Australia (2007) which provides a snapshot of the issues affecting their members working in the Sector. The report characterized the Sector as being affected by:

- low wages, uncertain funding,
- short-term contracts or part-time wages, and
- lack of adequate training and opportunities for advancement.

Despite the challenges associated with employment in the Sector, 56.39% of respondents said that they stayed in the Sector because they believed ‘in the work of the non-government community services sector’ (Australian Services Union, 2007, p19). One respondent commented ‘I know so many workers who work in the industry because they love it, they are passionate about caring for people, so they sacrifice money and volunteer to do more hours’ (Australian Services Union 2007, p1). The statistics provided showed that the workforce was predominantly female (80.62%) with 64.74% of the workforce being over-40 years of age.

2 Disability Workers

Cookson’s survey of residential workers in the intellectual disability field revealed that of the 188 respondents, 70.2% were women with 72.4% over-40 years of age (Cookson, 2009a). Similar to the ASU (2007) report, Cookson’s (2009b, p11-13) respondents cited ‘poor wages’, ‘lack of funding to the sector’ and ‘poor training opportunities for support staff’ amongst others, as problems relating to their Sector. Forty-eight per cent (48.3%) of Cookson’s (2009b, p18,19) respondents also reported that ‘love’ of their work and ‘making a difference in [people’s] lives’ were the motivating factors to ‘continuing working as a disability support worker’.
3 Community Care Work

The Home and Community Care (HACC) New Entrant Development Project (2003) came about due to the concerns of HAC-funded agencies with retaining, recruiting and training community-care workers. The final report noted that the majority of community-care workers were women over-35 years of age working as casuals or working part-time. A general perception was that community-care positions - home care, property maintenance, personal care, respite, delivering meals - were seen as low-status positions with little value and low pay. The report recommended that in order to respond to population and industry demands, it was desirable to recruit a number of under-represented groups into the industry: men were cited as one group. It was noted that with an aging population many male clients preferred to have a male worker to assist them with personal and home care (Home and Community Care (HACC) New Entrant Development Project, 2003).

These three studies outline a number of commonalities; a predominately-female workforce with most woman being over-35 years of age, low pay, often low status, lack of training and lack of funding. The workers in general cite that they love their work and being able to make a difference in people’s lives.
Rural Social Work

Cheers, (1998) states that ‘community-based organizations are a key component of rural social care’. While community-based organizations are an integral part of many rural communities they face a number of challenges in relation to attracting and retaining staff. Reasons that have been cited are low salaries, high workloads, working conditions, lack of career advancement and limited access to training and professional development (Cheers, 1998).

Pugh and Cheers, (2010, p177) state that ‘there are no national studies, published that provide general profiles of the rural work and social care workforce, and certainly no comprehensive data for international comparisons’. Pugh and Cheers, (2010, p177) define the term ‘social work’ as ‘both qualified and unqualified social workers, and other social care and welfare workers’. However, the Australian body of research that they have drawn upon has examined the areas of child protection, health and counselling which are often viewed as social-work roles. While there may be limitations to the work of Pugh and Cheers, (2010), it does provide some insights into the dynamics of rural communities and the challenges that social workers and their employers may face.

Recruitment Strategies in Rural Areas

In examining retention rates, Pugh and Cheers, (2010) claim that while there may be a number of challenges associated with working in rural areas, staff retention rates were increased by good organizational practices. Good organizational practices include adequate internal and external supervision, manageable workloads, flexible work practices and providing opportunities for advancement. In addition, organizations need to ‘encourage worker autonomy and responsibility, and minimize workplace conflict’ (Pugh and Cheers, 2010).

In a similar vein the ASU, (2007, p3) report recommended the development of Australia-wide ‘attraction and retention strategy’ including ‘strategies to address the shortage of rural/remote/regional workers’. While the ASU, (2007) report mentions a number of recruitment strategies, of particular interest is a recommendation to attract people who have a value base consistent with the industry:

‘a promotional strategy based on altruism and similar values should be developed aimed at both young school leavers and those older workers looking to or forced to change careers. Such a promotional strategy needs to include public advertising as well as specific targeted programs, for example in schools.’

To address the shortages of workers in rural/remote/regional areas the report recommends developing strategies to enhance training and educational opportunities.
Camilleri and Pease, (2001, p1) state that ‘historically, the study of men has had little place in mainstream human services literature’. The authors (Camilleri & Pease, 2001, p7) believe that it is time to ‘redress the invisibility of men’ in the Sector in order to enhance professional practice and service delivery. As noted in the ASU (2007) report and Cookson’s (2009) study, women form the majority of workers in the Sector. Indeed, the caring professions, especially direct care, have been seen historically as the province of women and often have been associated with femininity (Camilleri and Pease, 2001; O’Lyn, 2007). Camilleri and Jones, (2001, p25) state that when men are employed in the human services they ‘are clustered in certain areas of practice and in particular positions such as management’.

Even so, O’Lyn, (2007, p128) argues that ‘caring is an essential feature and expression of being human’ and that there has been a ‘neglect of the recognition of the caring qualities of men’. O’Lyn, (2007) argues that males are capable of caring and working in the caring profession; however, their method of care will be different from female methods of care. Some studies have noted that male nurses tend to adopt a ‘friendship’ approach when caring for patients (O’Lyn, 2007; Paterson, 1996; Williams, 1989). Paterson (cited in O’Lyn, 2007, p130) found the male junior nurses in his study believed that ‘women are socialized to care for others by freely showing emotions and touching clients, skills that came naturally to women but not to them’. Accordingly as the men progressed through their nursing career they ‘identified masculine caring as the development of relationships with clients more akin to friendship than to the maternal relationship they perceived as developing between their female colleagues and clients’ (O’Lyn, 2007, p130). In Williamses’ (1989) study, one respondent stated: ‘men have the capacity to care – I think it’s definitively in a different way … I think the two work well together’.

Camilleri and Jones, (2001, p28) in examining the gendered nature of care, discuss the difference between ‘caring for’ and ‘caring about’. ‘Caring for’ requires a more intimate relationship while ‘caring about’ is seen as an intellectual activity. Camilleri and Jones, (2001, p28) believe that women fall into the ‘caring for’ category and as such their work in ‘caring for’ may be ‘undervalued and ignored’ in society. In comparison, men’s care work, often in management positions, is categorized as ‘caring about’ and as such is more emotionally detached and fits in with the construct of masculinity (Camilleri and Jones, 2001, p28). Camilleri and Jones, (2001) do not discuss men working in direct-care positions.

Gillingham, (2004) in focusing on the lack of male social workers in child and family welfare, believes that males have a lot to contribute to the caring professions and that research in the area is long overdue. Although the professions of social work and nursing are not the focus of this research, a brief overview of the research will be discussed as it provides information relating to men working in non-traditional areas.
MALES WORKING IN NON-TRADITIONAL ROLES

Men in Nursing

In the twenty-first century, nursing is seen by some as ‘a ladies job’ and a ‘female occupation’ even though in Hippocratic writings ‘men have been identified as care providers’ (Armstrong, 2002, p26 & p24). In Australia men comprise 9% of registered nurses and 6% of enrolled nurses. Male nurses are found largely in emergency and intensive care, mental health and management with smaller percentages in aged care, schools and midwifery. The available research suggests that in general men feel supported in their nursing roles, however, the issue of masculinity and gender roles did impact upon their work from time to time (Armstrong, 2002; Nurse Uncut, 2011; McKay Wilson, 2011). While stereotypical attitudes may be found in the general public and in nursing itself, some men have identified that being male in a female-dominated industry had opened up a number of career opportunities. Management and a diversity of positions in rural and remote areas were cited as opportunities being made available due to their gender.

Male nurses found also that their gender had assisted them in their roles

‘you need to have male nurses to work with the male population. It’s good to have a man to talk to the men about sexual health... Many indigenous men would not talk to a female nurse’ (Armstrong, 2002, p25).

A characteristic of men in nursing is that ‘men often come to nursing as a second career, having worked for a decade or so in another job’ (Armstrong, 2002, p25). Tom, who had a previous career in corporate sales, said

‘I wanted to do nursing 20 years ago, I did not have the support to follow nursing...I decided four years ago it was time to pursue my dreams and I started university studies as a mature age student. This time I am doing exactly what I want to do’ (Nurse Uncut, 2011).

Men who had joined nursing either as a first career or as a mature worker, reported high job satisfaction and felt that the flexibility and career opportunities afforded to them made nursing an excellent career (Armstrong, 2002; Nurse Uncut, 2011; McKay Wilson, 2011). Even so, one man interviewed by Armstrong, (2002) believed that nursing was relatively lowly paid in comparison to other industries and that earning ‘money was more important to men, particularly if they were supporting a family’ (Armstrong, 2002, p25).

Men in Social Work

Jerry Sweeting, a PhD candidate from James Cook University is researching Men as Social Work Students and as Social Work Practitioners: Place and Role. What makes them do it and why do they stay? Sweeting, (2010a) interviewed a number of social workers both in the United Kingdom and in Australia. Sweeting, (2010b) describes his unpublished thesis as a ‘work in progress’. Participants were asked, ‘How did you come to choose social work as a career, and what have you done for work before?’(Sweeting, 2010a). Sweeting, (2010a) found that
‘men enter the social work profession under three main premises; as seekers, finders, or settlers. Seekers are those that deliberately decided on a career in social work and had worked towards it, finders are people that choose the profession after making general career decisions, and settlers who being dissatisfied with their more “masculine” job decide on a non-traditional career’.

He reports that this finding was in line with Simpson, (2005) who first coined the terms seekers, finders and settlers. Simpson, (2005) interviewed ‘male workers from four occupational groups: librarians, cabin crew, nurses and primary school teachers’. In addition to seekers, finders and settlers, Sweeting, (2010b) found that men often were drawn to the profession due to personal experiences and wanting to make a difference. He also found that older mature men who were ‘more comfortable in their skin’ were able to engage in social work as a profession (Sweeting, 2010b).

Sweeting, (2011a) reported that some participants felt that being a male did have advantages, however, being a male also brought challenges. These challenges included ‘being mindful of how they present their gendered-self…, to avoid any criticism’ (Sweeting, 2010a). Also, the men were wary of being accused of saying or doing something wrong. In order to protect themselves some men created a parallel construction of self where the persona in the workplace was often different from the persona outside of the workplace (Sweeting, 2011b). He did note that the men’s fears were often perceptions and not necessarily reality.

Sweeting, (2010a) found that male social workers were more likely to stay when they had:

a) ‘Commitment to the role they have in their workplace,

b) Belief that they can make a difference,

c) Relative job security,

d) Workplace flexibility (flexible hours, part-time options),

e) Sense of belonging to the team within which they work’.

While Sweeting’s (2010) research is based on male social workers, it mirrors some of the findings of the inquiry into The Male Workforce in Intellectual Disability Services (McConkey, McAuley, Simpson and Collins, 2007).

**Men in Intellectual Disability Services**

McConkey, McAuley, Simpson and Collin’s (2007) research was conducted in urban and rural Northern Ireland and consisted of three studies of intellectual disability services. The studies comprised of a census and survey of men and women in both managerial and non-managerial roles and a series of focus groups for men. The survey revealed that 37.8% of the men had been employed previously in ‘non-care roles’ (McConkey, 2007, p3).
Male support workers in the focus groups reported a number of reasons for entering the industry ‘but a career in caring and looking after people was the most frequently mentioned’ (McConkey, 2007, p3). Other reasons cited were:

- ‘past involvement with people who had an ID either in their family or through voluntary work’,
- ‘a career change’,
- or they had a family member employed in the industry (McConkey, 2007, p3).

The best aspects of the men’s work were cited as working with clients and building relationships, varied work, empowering clients and ‘feeling you are making a difference to people’s lives’ (McConkey, 2007, p3). The men reported that their jobs could be improved by better training opportunities, positive reinforcement from managers and the valuing of staff. One of the issues for men was the perception by their friends that their work was ‘women’s work’ or that they had ‘easy jobs’ (McConkey, 2007, p3).

It was noted that a number of male clients preferred male support workers and responded better to them. However, for some of the men being male did present challenges:

‘This job can be very stressful. As a male member of staff I am constantly called to do personal care and other duties because I am a man. Workload stress can really increase because of this. The service needs many more men’. (McConkey, 2007, p3).
Support Workers Intellectual Disability Services

The male support workers in McConkey’s (2007, p3) focus groups made a number of suggestions to recruit more men into intellectual disability services:

- ‘profile male staff in promotional literature about services’,
- ‘engage more with school leavers and college students’ to promote support work as a career option,
- ‘build a greater understanding within the general public about…the jobs available within local communities’,
- ‘more public events to promote awareness in community’,
- ‘Possibly more training and more effective means of communication with people who have disabilities’.

In an interview with Peter Cookson, (2011) regarding his research, he mentioned a number of work practices which may assist in retaining male support workers in the disability field. Cookson interviewed male support workers who had years of experience working in other occupations; bank manager, chief executive officer, farmer. Cookson, (2011) said that often they are ‘just being told’ to do something even though the men concerned had problem-solving skills. Given the large skills base of these workers it was advantageous to the services, and the clients, to utilize the skills of these men. He said ‘men take great pride in doing things differently (better)’ – ‘thinking that I can invent or do this another way’ (Cookson, 2011).

Cookson, (2011) went on to say that in order for services to retain staff, workers needed to feel ‘part of the process’, ‘that they were part of a team’ and services needed to ‘encourage staff to be involved with the training they need’.

Home and Community Care

The report, The Home and Community Care (HACC) New Entrant Development Project (2003), made a number of recommendations for attracting males into the aged care and disability sector. One strategy was to focus on the following groups of men:

- ‘Men who want to work part-time’
- ‘Men who are “underemployed”’
- ‘Discouraged job seekers’

It was felt that low wages and part-time hours may suit this group of men as their wages would be ‘supplementing superannuation or other payments’, or assist them through TAFE or university (The Home and Community Care (HACC) New Entrant Development Project, 2003, p52). Thus, both younger males and older men without dependents may find the work attractive.
Men currently working in the industry expressed a ‘high level of job satisfaction’ and held

‘a belief that more men would willingly move into positions if men were firstly aware that the jobs existed and secondly, that men would be hired and could be trained for this work.’ (The Home and Community Care (HACC) New Entrant Development Project, 2003, p52).

Marketing to Promote Nursing to Men

Nursing has, and is in the process of marketing the profession to men. In Oregon, USA a marketing strategy was undertaken to ‘recruit men into nursing and correct inaccurate public images of men nursing’ (Burton & Misener, 2007, p255). The campaign was designed to capture the attention of men by showing visual images of male nurses as ‘strong, powerful, caring, self-assured, confident, smart, successful, technically astute and very masculine’ (Burton & Misener, 2007, p261). The first slogan chosen was ‘Are you Man Enough to be a Nurse’ which was followed by another slogan ‘Real Men, Real Nurses’. A number of other strategies were adopted in other States: mentoring, web sites, stories of men’s nursing experiences, calendars featuring male nurses and other visual images and slogans, ‘Caring Knows No Boundaries’.

In the following evaluations it was noted that it was too soon to measure the success of the recruitment strategy. However, the campaign did receive criticism as it was felt that ‘the macho image was overemphasized, thus paradoxically reinforcing’ stereotypes (Burton & Misener, 2007, p267). Even so, the campaigns did capture the public’s attention and future campaigns will work towards promoting nursing as a career option for men.

In Australia, Nurse Uncut, supported by the NSW Nurses Association is a website which features male students’ nursing experiences. When asked how to encourage men into nursing the four men featured suggested the following:

- ‘the profession of nursing needs to be marketed to men as a rewarding career’
- ‘more advertising, getting out into schools, TAFEs, targeting more of the male population toward a nursing career’
- ‘community education via public media...Men make great nurses, let’s tell those stories’.

‘Nursing is a great profession it should be a choice for all persons no matter what sex they are’ (Nurse Uncut, 2011).

Literature Review Conclusion

Although short, this literature review gives a picture of the work being done to date. It offers some insight into why men work in non-traditional areas and offers suggestions for attracting men to non-traditional areas of employment and retaining them.
FINDINGS

Collation of Data

One-hundred-and-four surveys were returned from men working in the Sector. The original intent of the research was to receive feedback from men working in rural/remote areas of Queensland. It was anticipated that these men would work in non-managerial roles. However, some responses were received from managers working in rural areas, and from men working in regional centres (11) and Brisbane (2). Given that little research has been done in this area, it was decided to include these surveys in the study.

The raw data from this survey have been included as an appendix. The responses were colour coded:

- rural responses – blue
- remote - ochre,
- regional – purple,
- Brisbane - green,
- Managers - orange.

Each survey was given a number (Appendix 2). Thus, it is possible to track each respondent across the different questions. These data plus the information gleaned from the semi-structured interviews have been analysed to provide information in relation to the aims of the research. Information collated in the tables is used to provide a profile of men working in the Sector (Appendix 3).

Profile

Surveys were returned from seven regions across Queensland. Good responses were received from most of the districts with a smaller number of responses from the north-west and central-west. This may be due to the scarcity of services in these areas in comparison to the rural towns on the coast and in the south-east corner, or it may be due to the abundance of employment opportunities in the mines in these regions. Approximately 22% of men identified as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Island or CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse). Fifty-nine per cent of the respondents were in the 35 – 54 age brackets. Although in examining when men joined the Sector, it appears that the age group when men joined was spread relatively evenly (22% - 25%) across the four age brackets: 25 and under, 26 - 34, 35 - 44, 45 -54.

Over three-quarters of the men provide direct support to clients. Their client group is diverse; children, adolescents, adults, elderly. The respondents provide support to indigenous groups, CALD and the general community. Even though most men are working in a hands-on position, many of them have additional roles: case managers, advocates or work in community development. Fifty per cent of men reported that
they had faced challenges or issues because of their gender, while 56% believed that being a male was an advantage in their work.

**Employment Status**

The men worked in a wide range of services; youth worker, domestic violence, health and housing. The largest group of respondents was from disability (22%). Forty-four per cent of the respondents had been in the Sector for less-than-five years. Ninety-three per cent of respondents had worked in other occupations before joining the Sector. Almost two-thirds of the men had worked in various occupations which may not have required them to have qualifications such as a certificate or apprenticeship, i.e., hospitality, fisherman, labourer, administration. Approximately one-fifth of the men had worked in trades such as a chef, welder and electrician. Under 10% of respondents previously had worked in a professional capacity; nurse, engineer or teacher.

Sixty-seven per cent of respondents were working in full-time positions with most being happy with full-time work. The remaining 33% were working part-time or as casuals. A little over half of the men working part-time or as casuals were happy with their hours, while the remainders were looking to increase their hours of work.

**Education and Study**

Sixty per cent of the survey participants had attended secondary school to either Grade 11 or Grade 12. Forty-four per cent of respondents had TAFE qualifications, while 34% had either undergraduate or postgraduate qualifications. Thirty per cent of the men have started courses but had not completed the qualification. Forty per cent of the men were currently engaged in study.

**Semi-structured Interviews**

Three men in the 45 - 54 age brackets volunteered to be interviewed for this research project. The men work in the Hinchinbrook area and have worked in the Sector for five years or less. The men are David, Franco and Tony. All of the men worked part-time; two of the men were happy with the part-time work, while one would like more hours.
PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. To identify why men seek employment in the Sector.

Simpson, (2005, p363) in exploring men’s employment in non-traditional occupations, identified three categories of participation:

- Seekers – men who ‘actively chose the “female” occupation’.
- Finders – men who ‘found the occupation in the process of making general career decisions’.
- Settlers – men who ‘actively chose the occupation…as a result of dissatisfaction with more “masculine” jobs’.

Like Simpson, (2005), Sweeting, (2010a, 210b) found that men entered the social work profession as seekers, finders and settlers. In addition, Sweeting found that personal experiences and wanting to make a difference played a part in men’s decision to become social workers. He also believes that older mature men who were ‘more comfortable in their skin’, i.e., comfortable with their masculinity, were able to engage in this profession (Sweeting, 2010b).

All of these themes were evident in the survey responses. Even so, in examining why men joined the Sector, six themes emerged from the survey:

- Altruism - wanting to make a difference, giving back to society, helping people and social justice.
- Career/life-style changes - new, different, challenging or more fulfilling.
- Influence - other people invited them or sparked their interest.
- Opportunity - fell into it.
- Lack of opportunity - needed a job.
- Conditions - flexibility and/or the job itself.

Some men gave reasons which were recorded as multiple.

In the youngest age group (25 and under) altruism was high with a 70% recording. Altruism remained high in the next two groups (26 - 34 and 35 – 44), although the percentage fell as career/life-style changes started to emerge. In the older age group, (45 - 54), 56% cited career/life-style change as the main reason for joining the Sector. Lack of opportunity was evident in the older groups. Influence, opportunity and conditions were recorded in all age groups but remained as minor themes.

25 Years and under (23 respondents)

Altruism 70%

Seventy-per cent of respondents reported being drawn to the Sector as they wanted ‘to make a difference to people’s lives’ (11) or ‘give back to the world’ (63). Three respondents gave a multiple of reasons, even so, ‘personal belief’ (23) and wanting ‘to make a difference’ (23) featured in their decision to work in the Sector. Thus eighty-three per cent of young men started working in the Sector due to an awareness of ‘social justice’ issues (4 11, 67) and an interest in people (1, 9, 6).
26 – 34 Years of Age (24 respondents)

Altruism 66%

Sixty-six per cent of this age group cited wanting ‘to help people’ (2) or ‘to help my mob’ (2) and work ‘within the community’ (33) as reasons for joining the Sector. Five other respondents, who were compelled by different reasons, said that once they had entered the Sector they ‘enjoyed the work’ (12). Two of the men spoke of finding the work ‘satisfying’ (47) and rewarding, personally and professionally (13).

35 – 44 Years of Age (26 respondents)

Altruism 61 % and career/life-style change 30%

They ‘wanted to make a positive contribution to society’ (59). A remote worker believed that it was his ‘life calling’ (4), while a rural worker said ‘It’s in my nature’ (68). In all, 61% gave altruistic responses. A further 30%, who, in the main, reported needing changes in career or ‘life style’ (3), mentioned the need to make a difference and contribute to a better society. However, the tone of the responses differed in that the respondents were indicating that their previous employment was not fulfilling: ‘I wanted a career change that would give me more personal satisfaction from my work’ (40). Personal experience had motivated others, ‘a new challenge, having lost a family member to suicide’ (15).

45 – 54 Years of Age (26 respondents)

Career/life-style change 56% and altruism 40%

In this age group the need for a career change and to some degree lack of other options prompted 56% of the respondents to join the Sector:

- ‘Change of career direction. Lack of Technical positions’ (10).
- ‘I needed a part-time job and needed a challenge so I applied for the position …’ (17).
- ‘Change of job from Vic public service. Like to provide opportunities for people, enjoy the social interaction and derive satisfaction from helping people and creating sound programs’ (14).

Forty per cent reported wanting to make a ‘difference’ (9) and having an interest in the Sector (6, 5), with two men reflecting on their age and the need to contribute to others:

- ‘Had a foster daughter with mild ID (intellectual disability) and challenging behaviours’, and had desire to help more in later years of my life’ (44).
- ‘Wanted to return to society some of the benefits I had and I saw that many people had not been able to control their life. I was doing well and I had noticed that some people did not do well. I was also interested in exploring my own psyche’ (54).
55 – 64 Years of Age (5 respondents)

The five men in this age group had various reasons for joining the Sector. Once again lack of opportunities and age played a part:

- ‘Change of career direction. Lack of engineering positions’ (65).
- ‘Employment that an elder male can contribute to’ (45).

Like their younger counterparts, men in this age group reported joining the Sector because

2 To identify what keeps men working in the Sector when other areas of employment are more financially rewarding.

What keeps men in the Sector is related to why men join the Sector and the rewards that they receive from their employment.

Support Workers

Disability

Men working in the disability field overwhelmingly cited their clients’ happiness and their clients’ achievements as the most rewarding aspect of their work:

- ‘Seeing my clients happy and their confidence grow’ (5).
- ‘Assisting service users to achieve a meaningful and fulfilling lifestyle’ (61).
- ‘Helping clients deal positively with stigma’ (57).

Having evidence of making a difference is part of the reward for these workers:

- ‘The most rewarding aspect of my work is being able to spend my life building people up in all areas of their lives, through kindness and understanding and seeing the difference I’ve made’ (32).
- ‘A smile or comment from service user at ends of shift’ (25).

The most challenging aspect of their work, in the main, is industry related:

- ‘Challenging behaviour’ (59).
- ‘Dealing with physically aggressive clients and not having proper strategies to handle them while the stakeholders ignore the problem and hope it goes away because no-one wants to make the hard calls’ (30).
- ‘Getting the rhetoric and theory to work in practice and within a suitable time to benefit the service user’ (31).
- ‘Controlling staff who still take an institutionalised approach’ (44).
- ‘Lack of resources and funding’ (61).

Aggressive and abusive behaviour from high-needs clients as well as lack of support and resources were the predominant challenges.
While some of the respondents did not record a response, most were clear on the assistance they required:

- ‘Better guidelines of procedures to assist in working in this environment’ (45).
- ‘More funding to ease overcrowding in Residential homes’ (25)
- ‘Education, extra staff’ (42).
- ‘Following pubs plans’ (59).
- ‘Better staff recruitment including the involvement of the Service Users in the selection process. Better training and less tolerance of institutionalized abuse’ (44).

Their needs can be summarized as support and leadership from management, ‘more efficient allocation of funding’ (61) and quality training in dealing with abuse and aggression.

**Other Support Workers**

Assisting clients was the most rewarding aspect to these support workers:

- ‘Being able to support a man to make changes that improve his life and his relationships’ (55).
- ‘Being able to assist someone to break the cycle of homelessness, get a job, win a court case, gain Australian residency or just overcome any obstacle that is hindering their humanity or ability to move forward in life’ (29.)
- ‘Assisting older people to have some quality of life’ (2).
- ‘Working with and making a difference in a young person’s life’ (6).
- ‘The impact and the positive influence I have with my male clients’ (2).

Their challenges were reported as:

- ‘Working with DV (domestic violence) is a challenging role. Most challenging is working against structures of society as a whole’ (64).
- ‘Encouraging people to engage themselves in a more positive way’ (34).
- ‘Catching clients out in their lies then supporting them next time they need assistance’ (2).
- ‘Losing clients’ (aged care) (35)
- ‘Dealing with the admissions of violence and the disregard for the impact this has on other people’ (7).
- ‘Not being able to find a suitable carer for a child’ (8).

The assistance they required to deal with their challenges:

- ‘Any courses or seminars’ (19).
- ‘Training and awareness with other organisations’ (41).
- ‘Increased funding/resources allocation to both the geographical area, and the area of mental health’ (40).
- ‘Finding a better way to hear about the violence without taking it in and questioning that behaviour in a respectful way’ (7).
‘Office Politics and procedures’ (6).

Training featured predominantly in this field as well as the need to enhance skills in dealing with the impact of violence, grief, loss and frustration.

Health

In the health field, the rewards were ‘knowing that you’re making a difference’ (67):

- ‘The impact on the community, we see changes in lives of individuals and whole families’ (24).
- ‘Supporting clients needs as most are alone and unsupported by families and the greater community’ (65).

And for some, it was the job itself:

- ‘The variety and diversity of the work, the working hours and the opportunity to work in an area I have an interest in and enjoy. I also enjoy working in a diverse team with people who have a professional approach to their work and have skills and abilities I admire and can learn from’ (13)

Challenges were once again tied to the field of work or geography:

- ‘Residents with dementia, both challenging and rewarding’ (16).
- ‘Being lulled into a false sense of security, believing people have ‘got it’ (anti-racist; anti-sexist; non-judgmental practice; etc) only to be blindsided by proof of the contrary’ (21).
- ‘Tyranny of distance combined with natural disasters and being unable to help’ (15).

In order to meet the challenges, training, mentoring, role models and enlisting more people to make a difference were deemed necessary:

- ‘Provide more in-service training professionals’ (48).
- ‘Education, on-job training’ (16).
- ‘Discussing with other males positive and negatives of positions, being resilient in a job’ (39).
- ‘I think it is … important to role model and to ensure efficiencies within my own work practices’ (13).
- ‘Have more people fighting the good fight. Changing one mind at a time to shape a more inclusive society’ (21).

Training/Education

Rewards for this section were:

- ‘Teaching and inspiring people to make positive changes in their personal and other people’s lives’ (63).
- ‘Seeing confidence and improvement in staff abilities’ (50)

The challenges reported were broad:
• ‘Poor money, no recognition of experience/skills/knowledge by management, governmental red tape, lack of resources and funding for social empowerment’ (63).

• ‘Negotiating and/or communicating with ‘wider community’, especially regarding barrier removal’ (22).

As with previous responses, professional development was mentioned along with wider societal changes:

• ‘Commitment in real sense by ‘authorities’ to address issues/barriers. Funding can be an issue but not greatly so (22).

• ‘Supervision and professional development’ (6).

Coordinators

Although a diverse group, the coordinators’ rewards were consistent with each other and the preceding groups, ‘making a positive difference’ (9):

• ‘Seeing the light bulb go on over someone’s head when they finally understood something that they had struggled with understanding until that moment’ (26).

Their challenges were diverse but included, ‘petty jealousies’ (26), ‘intellectual snobbery’ (26), fitting in and being accepted, and not enough hours in the day:

• ‘Finding enough hours to do the jobs I want to do @ 20hrs per week. Putting up with tacky politics from NGO Boards of management which don’t seem to understand how I do my job and what skills it entails. The other major hurdle in FNQ is trying to be accepted by the indigenous communities- I’m not racist at all, but often feel that any effort is wasted in what appears to be a lack of willingness for many indigenous people to help themselves- it’s like a take mentality which seems firmly set in many communities’ (11).

Assistance needed:

• ‘Ensuring that all staff treat one another (not to mention clients) with unconditional positive regard’ (26).

• ‘I am very happy the way it is as long as my manager understands that I work best when not micro-managed’ (9.)

• ‘more training and more hours’ (9)

Case Manager/Worker

The rewards in short were; ‘to see a client reach their goals’ (14).

The challenges for case managers/workers mainly related to their client group:

• ‘Working with people dealing with drug and alcohol issues’ (5).

• ‘Achieving positive change in young people’ (4).

The assistance they sought:
‘In-depth course in topics such as trauma, attachment, counselling skills’ (53).
‘Stepping backwards and returning to ‘hands-on’ duties (11).

Counsellor/Psychotherapists/Social Worker/Solicitor

The rewards can be summed up as, ‘seeing people find strength and new skills’ (37).

A strong theme which emerged as a challenge for this group was management practices:

- ‘Working with social service systems, managerialism and outcome focus to the detriment of engagement with clients’ (51).
- ‘Dealing with poor managerial support’ (4).

Some of the assistance sought was cited as:

- ‘Better vetting of applicants for managerial positions’ (4).
- ‘Less of a rush or focus on meeting targets for funders’ (1).
- ‘Educate the management committee …’ (54).

Other respondents asked for ‘training’ (37) and ‘education’ (66).

General

This group covered a broad area of employment from bookkeeper to project officer. Even so, there was a commonality in relation to the rewards, challenges and assistance needed.

As with other workers, ‘helping people’ (38) featured as a reward:

- ‘Helping young people’ (12).
- ‘Working with people and sharing the outcomes and witnessing the positive changes created through the work completed. Receiving pictures for the children of their new homes’ (1).

However, for the majority of this group, the job itself and the opportunities it offered were the reward:

- ‘Being a member of an organisation that directly helps the community and being inspired by the number and diversity of our volunteers’ (3).
- ‘Contact and interaction with a wide variety of people and services’ (47).
- ‘Getting a positive outcome in partnership with Community’ (3).
- ‘Personal and professional development’ (10).

Industry-related challenges were reported, such as:

- ‘The selfishness of some of the clients who cannot see the bigger picture’ (38).
- ‘Having to help those who don’t want to change their lives’ (60).
- ‘Making young indigenous people understand the importance of getting a qualification and the commitment and sacrifice needed to do so’ (12).
‘Working with families that are homeless due to DV or FV. Watching people not ready to bring about change struggle through homelessness, housing stress back to homelessness’ (1).

However, for this group some of the challenges related to being in a new field of employment or lack of support and training:

- ‘Limited pay and support and training’ (33).
- ‘Coming to terms with private-sector operation compared to not-for-profit’ (3).
- ‘My primary challenge at the moment is adjusting to a completely new industry’ (47).

The majority of this group cited professional development via ‘training’ (17), resources and ‘support’ (36), as the assistance needed:

- ‘More hands-on training and a longer direct supervision when I first started would have been a great help and caused less stress’ (3).
- ‘Networking and more educational workshops’ (62).
- ‘Better training options, better funding for government programs’ (33).
- ‘More training to handle trouble cases. Less paperwork. Everything is in triplicate and so much time is crossing I’s and T’s that the effort to do some things for a chance outcome is hard’ (43).
- ‘External supervision’ (10).

Some respondents felt that assistance from the community, business and government was needed:

- ‘I think that with the people I’m dealing with, support needs to come from the home front, not only post school, but during school years and pre-school years. This lack of support contributes to the majority of poor education levels and unemployment’ (12).
- ‘More feedback from clients/families/partner agencies’ (3).
- ‘Increase resources available for early intervention...Increase capacity of private sector to work with NGOs and Government to resolve homelessness’ (1).

**Managers**

‘The ability to make a difference in lives of others’ (1) was the reward for managers:

- ‘Being able to see our fellas' grow and become leaders in their own right’ (2).

In addition, being able to offer previously-gained skills and experience to the Sector:

- ‘I am in a unique position where I am able to combine the skills I have from my previous working life and use them together with skills/knowledge gained from working in the social sector to see housing provided and managed in a sustainable manner for homeless people’ (3).
The challenges reflected the large task that many managers have in running a community service organisation in a rural setting:

- ‘Red Tape’ (6).
- ‘Being all things to all people’ (3).
- ‘Human resource issues and dealing with Critical Incidents involving issues outside our service which are reported to us by Service Users’ (7).
- ‘Being a small organisation, with the small number of employees, the staff have to perform everything from admin to community engagement, submission writing, and advocacy. The whole lot’ (2).
- ‘Bureaucracy and managers or leaders that don’t take the time to know why we do what we do!’ (4).

The responses for the assistance needed were broad:

- ‘Work load management’ (5).
- ‘Be given permission to ignore organisational change and be left to do our funded work’ (4).
- ‘Change the government’ (6).
- ‘More resources’ (2).

The statement ‘do they bottle patience?’ (4), perhaps sums up the frustration that many managers may feel working within the current economic, political and social frameworks.

Summary

Overwhelmingly, the reward for working in the Sector is making a difference. Even so, for some workers the reward is working in a positive, professional environment where they can use their skills and learn from others. The challenge for many workers is industry related, with lack of support and training in general as a major issue. As well, low pay, lack of funding and resources, and managerialism with a focus on outcomes were seen as challenges. Although not reported to any great degree in the survey, bullying and abusive practices by workers were recorded as challenges. The assistance required by most workers related to education, training, professional supervision and support from peers, mentors and managers.
THE DISADVANTAGES AND ADVANTAGES OF BEING MALE

As the respondents are working in a female-dominated industry, two questions were asked:

1. Do you face any challenges or issues because you are a male worker?
2. Do you feel being a male is an advantage in your work?

Fifty per cent of the men said that they faced issues due to their gender while (56%) of men said that they felt being a male was an advantage in their work.

Do you face any challenges or issues because you are a male worker?

A variety of responses was received with the main themes identified as:

- Stereotyping.
- Work stress.
- The view that women are better able to meet the needs of clients.
- Preference for female workers.
- Mistrust of men.
- Isolation.
- Discrimination.
- Working with women.
- The need to be vigilant.

Stereotyping:

- ‘Gender stereotyping’ (32)
- ‘I often get criticised by friends and family because I advocate for disadvantaged groups and people in society’ (63).
- ‘Being accepted as a male who works in a female industry’ (54).
- ‘I am not a bully, I am not a sexist, I am not a racist, I am not a homophobe, but all of these presumptions have been made about me based on the prejudices of staff who have dealt with overweight middle aged North Queensland men and then projected those negative experiences on to me for apparently no reason other than their lack of ability to differentiate between their expectations of me and the reality of a given situation...’ (26).

Work Stress:

- ‘Providing the only male contact to a lot of the service users created quite a bit of stress at times’ (31).
- ‘As I am the only male in the team I get to work with...clients including the extremely complex needs’ (52).
- ‘Being the only one who is called upon to defuse volatile situations when we have aggressive male clients can be very challenging’ (60).
- ‘The more difficult cases are often given to blokes (Violent and sex offenders). This is unfair’ (6).
The View That Women Are Better Able To Meet The Needs Of Clients:

- ‘Mild perception the female workers are more successful with the male SU’s (service users) that I currently support’ (64).
- ‘Being told that I am not as caring as females and as such cannot be an asset in the industry and am only good for manual labour’ (30).

Preference for Female Workers:

- ‘Some females prefer females for assistance’ (41).
- ‘Some indigenous females do not like working with a man (cultural reasons)’ (2).
- ‘They (clients) ask specifically for female support workers’ (40).
- ‘Female clients do not like male personal care attendants’ (2).

Mistrust of Men:

- ‘Query/distrust of male workers’ (22).
- ‘Trust with young murri women’ (9).
- ‘Clients may not always feel safe working with a male worker due to historic violence and negative relationships’ (1).

Isolation:

- ‘I can sometimes feel some isolation and come up against some bias from others’ (64).
- ‘When going to networking things, feel like the odd one out’ (2).
- ‘Not many options for male peer support’ (47).

Discrimination:

- ‘I sometimes feel a bit picked on by my female manager’ (31).
- ‘Discrimination experienced by self and victims by a predominantly female support staff (in a domestic violence service)’ (29).
- ‘Degrading comments towards males, applying for positions of employment and told a female would be a better choice’ (66).
- ‘In a ‘rural’ area people look down on men that work in office roles’ (7).
- ‘As this sector is dominated by women, the prejudices and stereotypes colleagues hold have often gone untested and/or unchallenged for a long time and are...bordering on sexism’ (15).

Working With Women:

- ‘I can see things in a more logical way whereas the female staff are often caught up in the emotion of the moment this can often be confronting’ (31).
- ‘Feminised approach to resolving issues’ (57).
- ‘Feminist views about men are often discouraging’ (12).
- ‘Female politics and fitting in’ (6).
- ‘Female-dominated industry often not aware of male inclusive factors such as - counselling facilities are often feminised’ (37).
- ‘Working with women in a cross-cultural and cross-gender context’ (8).
• ‘Relating to women’s issues’ (1).

The Need to Be Vigilant:

• ‘Have to be more transparent and open in terms of practice’ (64).
• ‘Being able to assist men without being seen to agree with or condone their beliefs and remain respectful’ (7).
• ‘Requiring to take extra precautions during a one-on-one engagement with the opposite sex to avoid allegations of a sexual nature’ (21).
• ‘Being wary of boundaries around sexually abused children’ (53).

Perhaps the strongest theme was working with women. The issues ranged from finding it difficult to relate ‘to women’s issues’ to a generalised feeling that the feminisation of the industry resulted in marginalisation of some male workers and clients. Some felt that men, just like women, needed support:

‘What we would like to see happen is support systems put in place for the male workers as...we all know that females and males have different needs. We have a job to do, to help those in need, so let’s start by helping each other regardless of our gender, colour or religious beliefs etc’ (66).
DO YOU FEEL BEING A MALE IS AN ADVANTAGE IN YOUR WORK?

In contrast to the previous questions the responses were more uniform with five themes emerging:

- We are in demand.
- Easier to develop relationships and rapport with clients.
- Providing a role model.
- Diversity and balance.
- Authority and respect.

**We are in demand:**

- ‘I feel we are more in demand’ (32).
- ‘There is a demand for us’ (1).

**Easier to develop relationships and rapport with clients:**

- ‘Males tend to be open to discussion to another male’s personal issues, feelings’ (41).
- ‘Being a male within the Health stream of (human services/community sector) is very important, due to males do find it hard to access any services or most of the time are too stubborn to get a Health Check or see a GP because they are ashamed of talking about their private life or parts!!!’ (8).
- ‘Men with mental health issues more willing to disclose personal issues with me, and more at ease to discuss some “men’s issues”’ (4).
- ‘Aboriginal men find it easier to confide in another man’ (14).
- ‘Majority of clients are male and this assists with connection’ (5).

**Providing a role model:**

- ‘Exposure of SUs (Service Users) to male role models. More choices of activities including sports related ones that females have been known not to provide’ (44).
- ‘Positive male role modeling is always an assisting factor to challenge stereotypes’ (12).
- ‘Working with young men, who need a role model’ (6).
- ‘At times I can have stronger conversations with other men about appropriate behaviour and problem solving with both clients - what may happen and what may reduce risk’ (1).

**Diversity and balance:**

- ‘It is about providing balance’ (31).
- ‘Being able to bring a different view to the table, and making certain clients more comfortable with having “guy time” instead of sitting around reading women’s mags’ (30).
- ‘It can be... I have been given opportunities to develop areas of professional interest, e.g., Men’s Health, which value adds to the diversity of the service. I also think that managers feel that there may be benefits...’
to the team dynamics by having a man health professional on the team as opposed to a totally female workforce. It potentially enhances the skill mix and diversity of the team and offers flexibility in service delivery’ (13).

- ‘Not many male counsellors so gives clients more choice’ (37).

**Authority and Respect:**

- ‘Service Users seem to respond to male support workers better, possibly there is an intrinsic authoritarian view of male support workers by service users...often they just “comply” with directions without question when supported by a male support worker’ (49). ‘I work with sex offenders that should not work with female workers: when they have the outcomes have been disastrous. Some Service Users have been physically violent as well. No place for the faint hearted’ (45).
- ‘Reduced sexual harassment and respect’ (34).
- ‘The clients seem to view male workers as more like father figures therefore perceived authority’ (11).
- ‘Different approach to young people and they respond differently and more respectfully. Female workers also seem more respectful to males than they are towards each other’ (4).
- ‘Women continue to be under-represented in key leadership roles in rural areas (although that is changing); so it can be (not always) easier for me to engage and work with a traditional community.’ (4).

The two strong themes to emerge from this were easier to develop relationships and rapport with male clients and authority and respect. A preference for male workers by male clients is noted in the literature (Armstrong, 2002; McConkey, 2007; HAAC, 2004). The theme of being afforded authority and respect due to their gender has been discussed by Pease in his research (2001). The other three themes - in demand, providing a role model, diversity and balance - are areas or roles that women cannot provide. These areas are of particular interest to service providers, as employing male workers enables services to provide diversity, thus catering to the needs of male clients.
Development and Training Requirements

The personal/professional development and training opportunities that men sought were varied, however a number of themes emerged from the survey:

- Industry or program-specific training.
- Mental health or working with disadvantaged or marginalised populations.
- Communication skills.
- Financial constraints.
- Professional supervision.
- Mentoring, networking and sharing of ideas.

Industry or program-specific training

Industry or program-specific training and development were requested:

- ‘Being new to the sector there is a lot for me to learn’ (62)
- ‘Industry specific re-skilling program...I feel comfortable with the work, but I am working quite hard to learn more about how my industry works and grows’ (47)
- ‘Training in Makaton would be extremely helpful in my position’ (32)
- ‘More information relating to the clients I deal with, i.e., Dementia or any aged based info’ (10).

In addition, the need to gain formal qualifications was mentioned:

- ‘Not having a formal education leaves you lacking in all these skills and it has taken me a long time to get close to this but I still have not achieved’ (36).
- ‘Cert IV OAD and Mental Health Cert IV or a diploma’ (8).
- ‘On-the-job training program that fits in with University qualifications at the end’ (62).
- ‘Those relevant to the sector, Cert/Dip Community Services or any of the many across the sector’ (1).

Mental Health or Working With Disadvantaged or Marginalised Populations

Information, especially in relation to mental health and training in dealing with a diverse client group, was requested:

- ‘Mental health training – alcohol & other drug training’ (34).
- ‘There can never be enough on Mental Health particularly where the diagnosis is behavioural’ (29).
- ‘Depression, domestic violence...people experiencing mental illness’ (12).
- ‘More training with regards to indigenous communities. More involvement in community activities, as this would help towards community acceptance and trust’ (12).
- ‘Health research, community development, project management, cultural competency with indigenous and NESB’ (67).
**Communication Skills**

The need for communication skills was mentioned numerous times. In the majority of cases, the need to develop better communication skills was not expanded on, however, some respondents mentioned:

- ‘Anything that would help communicate with terminally sick patients would help’ (10).
- ‘Better communication skills at being an advocate’ (1).
- ‘Definitely communication skills and an understanding of adolescent behaviour’ (7).
- ‘Communication in the context of training’ (6).
- ‘I think some skills training around particular communication strategies to work effectively in a female dominated work environment’ (13).

Counselling skills and managing conflict were asked for by some workers. This included workers who were not employed in counselling roles:

- ‘Counselling, in working with difficult clients’ (55).
- ‘Basic counselling skills’ (2).

**Professional Supervision**

As with communication skills, professional supervision was mentioned by a number of respondents. Like communication skills, the need for professional supervision was not expanded upon although some respondents did mention that they required ‘external’ supervision (46).

**Financial Constraints**

Some workers reported being happy with their training opportunities, ‘most of the training is provided in the sector’ (7). However, financial constraints either personal or agency budget, were an issue for other workers:

- ‘More money available to attend training courses’ (55).
- ‘It is not the training opportunities, there are plenty of those, it’s the funding to support this learning’ (9).
- ‘Anything would help. Usually told there isn’t any money in the budget’ (38).
- ‘Further sponsorship for tertiary studies’ (5).
Mentoring, Networking and Sharing Of Ideas

Networking and sharing of ideas was sought after by some respondents:

- ‘To be involved in a think tank where new and innovative ideas can be developed’ (31).
- ‘Community Sector education/information sessions’ (40).
- ‘Greater interagency coordination and liaison’ (11).

Mentoring, either by more experienced workers or mentoring by peers was suggested to enhance personal and professional development:

- ‘I think I would enjoy the opportunity to provide mentorship to other men setting out to work in the field. I think it may well be helpful for myself to network with other experienced males for peer support and personal and professional mentorship. I have access to a broad range of training opportunities within Q Health however I think I may benefit from a network of other men in similar professional circumstances to examine more closely the issues involved.’ (13).

Learning Formats

Several learning styles were cited by respondents including ‘self paced study’ (32) and ‘external studies’ (54) while others mentioned that they ‘can adapt to any method...depending on the content of the material’ (10). However, most respondents reported their preferred learning styles were hands-on or workshops, with some respondents citing both. One respondent said ‘I’m a practical person’ (14) while another commented that he learnt ‘by doing, getting in and doing’ (6). Hands on included ‘one-on-one’ (9) and ‘on-the-job training where you learn in context’ (10). Workshops and small group activities was considered ‘beneficial’ (31).
DISCUSSION

1 TO IDENTIFY WHY MEN SEEK EMPLOYMENT IN THE SECTOR

It is clear that altruism is the driving force for a significant number of men joining the Sector. This quality is particularly strong in the younger age groups (25 years and younger – 44 years). In the older age group (45 – 64 years) career and life-style changes have influenced the men’s decision to work in the Sector. Minor themes, which are evident in all age groups, are the influence of others, opportunity and working conditions.

The three men interviewed (45 - 54 years); David, Franco and Tony joined the Sector for a variety of reasons. David joined the Sector because he needed a part-time position to complement other work. He had never considered working in the Sector, but applied and to his ‘surprise...was fortunate enough to have been given the job’. Both Franco and Tony were influenced by other people to consider employment in the Sector.

Tony was ‘approached’ by an acquaintance working in the Sector, ‘Look, you’d be great for this job’. He said, ‘At first I was a bit stand-offish and then she’d see me again and say ‘Why don’t you give it a try?’ and then eventually I thought, well why not?’

Franco was encouraged to change his career direction and undertake a TAFE course. He was told by women who worked in the Sector, ‘Look, you’ll have Buckley’s chance of getting here coz they only hire females here’. However, he did get a phone call to come in for an interview and was offered a position.

The men who were interviewed believed that most men don’t think about joining the Sector because they have little knowledge of the work being done. They also felt that fear sometimes played a part in men’s reluctance to join the Sector: ‘I just think that if more guys knew what it actually was like, once you got over that first little hump. It’s hard and I go home exhausted at times, but the other side is very rewarding’ (Tony).

2 TO IDENTIFY WHAT KEEPS MEN WORKING IN THE SECTOR WHEN OTHER AREAS OF EMPLOYMENT ARE MORE FINANCIALLY REWARDING.

The overwhelming survey response was that men continue to work in the Sector because they feel they are making a difference. This was also evident with the three men who were interviewed. When Franco was encouraged to consider a new career direction, he thought, ‘It wouldn’t be hard work’. He said, ‘I thought looking after...would be a challenge but not...hard work and it is hard work. I didn’t expect it to be so hard work for so little pay. I was earning this when I first left school (mines)’. He went on to say that his current position was the most rewarding and the most challenging of all his occupations. It is challenging because he is ‘dealing with people; dealing with people’s feelings and emotions and their well-being’.

Another factor which assisted to keep men in the industry was the opportunity to work in a positive, professional environment where they could use their skills and learn from others. The men interviewed said that they felt valued in their employment: ‘once you’ve gone through the courses and you’ve worked for a while
they value your...judgment...they treat you like an adult; they know that you’re going to make the right decisions and they trust you...if you want to do something, they don’t second question you’ (Tony). David said that the environment is which he worked was, ‘positive ... very supportive in a lot of different ways, very encouraging’.

A number of challenges were reported and these challenges will be addressed in the next section.

**3 TO IDENTIFY WHAT SUPPORTS ARE NEEDED TO RETAIN AND SUPPORT MEN WORKING IN THE SECTOR.**

**Challenges and Assistance Need**

The major issue for many of the men working in non-managerial positions is education, training, professional supervision and support from peers, mentors and managers. Given that almost half of the men responding to the survey had been employed in the Sector for five years or less, it is not surprising that industry-related training and education is an issue. Support to assist them in their day-to-day work and to build their skills as professionals was another issue of importance; professional supervision, mentoring. Good management practices which supported the men in their work and were in the best interest of the clients, were cited, as well as low pay and lack of resources. Bureaucracy and red tape were subjects of concerns to workers, in particular the managers of rural services. Another theme was the unprofessional behaviour of some colleagues. Harassment and mobbing was an issue not only mentioned in the survey but in email and telephone conversations with men who responded to the survey. While harassing behaviour was not noted to a large degree it is important to discuss the issue as it does impact upon staff retention.

Bullying, mobbing and harassment are evident in all areas of society. Shallcross, (2003a, b, 2008) an Australian researcher, notes that mobbing behaviour, exists in, but is not exclusive to female-dominated industries. Shallcross, (2008, p56) describes the behaviour as ‘covert forms of rumour, gossip and innuendo that are used to discredit and demonise targeted co-workers until they are forced to leave their employment’. Mobbing is due to a number of factors, even so, difference or the perception of difference is a key component. Given that the recognition of and respect for difference is a value espoused by many working in the Sector, the presence of mobbing is destructive. Mobbing, bullying or harassment in any organisation is toxic, thus an awareness of the issue and good policies and procedures to deal with these issues is essential (Rogers, 2010).

*Franco* reported that he had been harassed, ‘she was stalking me...verbally abusing me, you know, and I was trying to keep pulling her up and ah. She was a young girl too...’ Franco had attempted to ignore her and when that failed he confronted her
saying, ‘... you need to grow up and get a life’. With the support of co-workers and a friend, he spoke to management and wrote a formal complaint to resolve the issue.

Another issue which is crucial to the development of the Sector is men working in domestic violence. Various informal conversations have taken place with men during the course of this research. One issue discussed was working in the domestic violence field; believing that men should be working in the field but unclear as to the practicality and framework of professional practice. The survey feedback is limited, however, it does indicate that some male workers find working with perpetrators of violence emotionally and professionally challenging. What is clear is that this sensitive topic requires further investigation.

Grief, loss and frustration were other themes from the survey. While not strong themes, the ability to deal with grief, loss and frustration does impact upon retention rates in organisations. In the interview with one of the men, the issue of loss and grief was discussed: to find better ways, personally and professionally to sit with a client in their grief and distress. Exploring this topic and developing ways to support men in this area would provide the Sector with a valuable asset.

Disadvantages and advantages of being male in a female-dominated industry

This topic is a difficult one to sift through as the subject matter is embedded in broader society themes. Nevertheless, an important topic if retention and attracting men to the Sector is to be taken seriously. Half the survey respondents said that they faced issues because they were male, while a slightly higher percentage said that being a male was an advantage in their work.

Disadvantages

Of the men who reported being disadvantaged a number of themes emerged:

- Stereotyping.
- Work stress.
- The view that women are better able to meet the needs of clients.
- Preference for female workers.
- Mistrust of men.
- Isolation.
- Discrimination.
- Working with women.
- The need to be vigilant.

Working with women was identified as the strongest theme. The comments suggest that some men had difficulty adjusting to a female-dominated environment and some of the work practices. Communication may be an issue and will be discussed further in the training and development section. David stated:
Women handle things a little differently in, like men are probably a bit more a smack in the head sometimes whereas women go around it the other way... probably it’s a nicer way of resolving things than the male in some ways but sometimes the bloke will just say things the way it is and walk away from it, whereas,...sometimes I think ladies chew on it a little bit more than the men do, just get over it and move on but it’s just different’.

Even so, it appears that these men find feminised work practices and feminist frameworks alienating to both themselves and male clients. Theoretical frameworks which inform professional practice are beyond the scope of this research. However, the comments suggest that women and men view and experience the world differently and that this difference is not always acknowledged, nor valued. The discussion below may add insight to several of the points raised by the men.

Some of the other themes appear to stem from the traditional roles that men and women have been assigned to in society and the inability of some to see beyond these barriers. Furthermore, there is a mistrust of men. Given that women and children have been victims of men abusing their power and authority (Pease, 2001) it is not surprising that fear is present (Wilson, 2011). In a study conducted in the disability field it was found that ‘men lacked women’s wider awareness and fear of men’s violent sexual behaviour’ (cited in Wilson, 2011, p347).

As noted previously this is a difficult issue to resolve. Violence at the hands of men is an issue widely reported in the media and is the experience of many women and needs to be taken seriously. The question is how can individual men or groups of men who are not perpetrators of violence be identified? Pease, (2001, p15) states that at a personal level, men, like women and children, can and do suffer from ‘patriarchy’ and the ‘dominant masculinity’. Even so, Pease, (2001, p16) comments that ‘most men ... approve and support the overall system ... they simply want more benefits and less burdens’. Pease, (2001, p19) believes that men have ‘choices’ and urges men to work collectively against men’s abuse of power and work with women and other men to change society to make it more equitable.

In reading the survey responses, it is clear that some men feel discriminated against and experience isolation. Men may feel isolated because they are not always able to find male peer support, however, the tone of some comments is of experiencing discrimination and being treated as the outsider. This may arise from men being in positions of privilege and power (Pease, 2001) in wider society and not experiencing the same position of privilege and power in the female-dominated workforce. Even so, other explanations do exist. Foucault’s (1980) work on power is particularly useful here as he states that there are many forms of power and that power can, and is used by different groups and in different circumstances. Thus, while men have access to power (Pease, 2001) in wider society, in the Sector they are in the minority and some may experience abuses of power. Given the limitations of the survey it is difficult to make a comprehensive analysis, however the issues raised cannot be ignored. Clearly more discussion needs to occur to ensure that the Sector has fair and equitable work practices, while at the same time not dismissing broader societal issues.

Advantages

Interestingly, some of the difficulties associated with gender mentioned in the above section worked in the favour of some men. The advantages seen by men were:
We are in demand.
Easier to develop relationships and rapport with clients.
Providing a role model.
Diversity and balance.
Authority and respect.

The men felt that it was easier to develop relationships with clients and that they were afforded authority and respect. Pease, (2001) states that by the nature of their gender men are privileged, in this instance, offered respect whereas a woman may not be afforded the same. As noted by one respondent (45), this is particularly important when dealing with clients who have a history of violence. This is not to say that men find dealing with violence easy, as it is clear from the survey that men find dealing with violence a very challenging aspect of their work. What is evident is that men are able to provide an alternative to female-dominated care provision. Thus providing a balance and filling a gap in service provision.

Tony felt that one of the advantages of being male was that he was able to relate to other men, in particular the clients of the service:

‘most of the guys like to be guys; I’m more or less like a big brother to them at times, or, you know, a friend or an uncle or, and they can talk to me about guys’ stuff and sometimes they feel, quite often they feel that they are a little bit henpecked, if they get different types of carers with different personalities, and if they get lady after lady after lady, do this, do this, do this, do this, and with this sort of guy they can come and relax and be a guy’.

Development and Training Requirements

The themes extracted were:

- Industry or program-specific training.
- Mental health or working with disadvantaged or marginalised populations.
- Communication skills.
- Financial constraints.
- Professional supervision.
- Mentoring, networking and sharing of ideas.

As many of the respondents (44%) were new to the Sector, five years of less, it is not surprising that men are requesting training specific to their industry or program. In addition, obtaining formal qualifications, i.e., certificate, diploma, degree, was important to some of the men. Financial constraints, in particular the employer’s inability to provide an adequate training budget, were cited as a hindrance to training and professional-development opportunities. Further training was requested in mental health issues and working cross-culturally.

Communication was mentioned a number of times both in the survey responses and in the semi-structured interviews. Two areas were identified; communicating with clients and communicating with female colleagues. The need for more training in communicating with clients was mentioned by the male workers in McConkey’s (2007) research. Basic counselling and conflict resolution skills formed part of the requests.
Franco felt that he needed more skills and knowledge in dealing with clients who are distressed or needing comfort, ‘how to come across, the right words to say’. Tony also felt the need to ‘communicate’ more effectively, so that you’re more rounded when it comes to looking after’ clients. David provides an example of the differences in the communication styles of men and women.

David said that the women he worked with were ‘supportive’ and ‘encouraging’; ‘like, a bloke will go ‘You flaming idiot. What are you doing? I told you that yesterday, and you’re doing it again today. Come on mate, lift your game’. That’d be a ‘bloke’ sort of way’. As where the women say, ‘OK David, did you try that, did you do that’. He felt that this way of communicating was positive; however he did find a negative side when dealing with a conflict in the workforce.

David stated that if he had a problem with someone he would ‘tend to say it just how it is, like...you give me the shits’. If the issue persisted he would approach management, ‘mate, I can’t put up with that...any more, he’s a pain in the you-know-what, you’ve got to do something otherwise....you know, so maybe that’s more of, like I have worked in that sort of environment a fair bit so...’ On the other hand the women he worked with were not so direct and that had a ‘corrosive’ effect; ‘it becomes a little bit tribal then, the different groups ... and then when it’s passed it all heals and away it goes again’.

When asked why communication skills were being identified David replied, ‘my opinion...I think men are probably less confident...oh, they’re very confident in nuts and bolts and screwdrivers at the right size and, right brackets of this and that...’.

Research by a number of authors (Tannen, 1997; Yoshimura, 2007) indicates that there are gender differences in the way in which women and men express themselves and the purpose of their communication. It is not possible to explore these differences in this report, however this topic is relevant to the Sector and requires further investigation.

Professional supervision, in particular external supervision, was requested by a number of the respondents. Professional supervision provides an opportunity to debrief, reflect, discuss effective ways of working with clients and colleagues, to formulate ideas and identify values and theories. It is an essential component for developing a framework of practice and supporting workers in their roles. External supervision assists to ensure confidentiality and impartiality.

Mentoring, networking and the sharing of ideas were seen as being beneficial. A gentle undercurrent, constant throughout this research is one of isolated men doing the best that they can in foreign territory. There is evidence of experienced men or women, some unknowingly, acting as role models. Tony spoke about being new to the job, ‘when I first came in, like I would always go to the senior guys or ladies to get advice and you’d pick out the ones you’d like, that’s the guy, not the smart one but...the one you could relate to’. He identified one man as his mentor, ‘if I had any questions I’d ask him, you know, and just watch the way...he carried himself around people’. Providing or encouraging mentors, especially more experienced men would be a useful strategy to enhance professional development in the Sector.

Networking and sharing ideas was deemed essential by David. David explained that when he began his position it was a new area and probably no amount of formal training would have prepared him for the job. Accordingly, ‘I tried very hard to keep
our networks up....Another fellow soldier lived in Ayr...we get on very well and she was a great assistance to pulling things together as well as...who lived in Townsville,...I done my best to connect all the dots with the networking available’. 

**Tony** mentioned that there were a handful of male workers in his service with whom he spoke to from time to time. More opportunities to network or provide peer support would be ‘a good idea...guys like to sit around and yak with other guys. Also then, other guys from different...organisations’. Like **Tony, Franco** welcomed the idea, ‘you could get together, have a talk, bring out ideas, you know, any problems’.

As noted by a respondent (13):

‘There are not too many males working in similar roles so networking and peer support is limited. This I believe is improving and I was recently encouraged by meeting of indigenous men who are working actively with other men to improve outcomes for their people’.

Historically, networking and peer support have been crucial to sustaining women in their many roles (Barber, 1991; Rogers 2008, 2012a & b). While traditionally men don’t seek out the same level of intimacy, it is evident that mentoring, networking and peer support can assist with professional development and retaining men in the Sector.

**Learning Formats**

Varied responses were received with regard to learning styles, however the majority of respondents identified hands-on and/or workshops as their preferred learning style. This theme was mirrored by the men who were interviewed. To **David** hands-on meant ‘a lot of sitting there beside...a lot of mentoring...constant reinforcement...men enjoy feedback...that things are good...reinforcement...without making it too obvious’. Reading a book is ‘not the best way I learn’ (**David**).

**Franco** stated that when he first started work his employer put him with a more experienced worker, ‘she’s been there for 24 years, took me under her wing, showed me everything for a few months till I was settled in and now I’m well and truly settled in’.

Good training for **Tony** was ‘getting people...not educated, but with a lot of experience in the field to explain things...how to handle certain situations’. The trainer had to be ‘very experienced and someone who (was)...a good communicator, plain English’. Workshops and group activities were seen as worthwhile, ‘it’s good to get together in a group situation to talk and pass information...to hear other people’s takes on things because everyone sees things differently’ (**Tony**).

The above information indicates that when recruiting men to the Sector a hands-on approach, e.g., one-on-one, may be the most effective way of training new workers. Refreshers and up-skilling need to take into account the different learning styles of workers, with thought given to how the training can be delivered via hands-on or group activities in workshops.

**David, Franco and Tony’s view on attracting more men to the Sector**

During the course of the interviews **David, Franco** and **Tony** were asked about attracting more men to the Sector. They felt that awareness raising was necessary to promote working in the Sector, ‘people just don’t understand what you do and
the engagement’ (David). Franco said, ‘well, I just like to...get more males in there. The industry is critical; you need more males in the industry and work out how to do it, how to draw men into doing it. I think, the stigma, I think the stigma is what they think is: oh, shitty nappies, and you know, that’s it. It just puts them off and they don’t see the rest of it’.

Tony believed that more men could be attracted to the Sector by male workers acting as advocates and tapping other men on the shoulder, ‘by existing carers like myself and younger guys, by word of mouth and talking to, I’ve tried, talked to a couple of guys,...he’s thinking about it...he’s like me (before he joined), he’s got that fear thing...’. Tony said that before he joined the Sector he was fearful, he feared that he could not do the job; that he would be out of his depth. The literature review cites similar strategies, much of which will be considered in the recommendations section.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Retention of staff

1 The Sector develops and/or maintains good organisational practices:
   - Provision of a training budget for each worker.
   - Develop and provide industry-specific training.
   - Flexible work practices.
   - Provide regular constructive feedback on job performance.
   - Encourage worker initiative and provide opportunities for workers to use and develop skills.
   - Development of harmonious and effective teams.
   - Policies and procedures to prevent and deal with harassment, bullying and mobbing.
   - Cultivate a culture which values and respects a diversity of ideas and work practices consistent with the values of the organisation/Sector.
   - Appoint mentors to assist men entering the industry.

2 Provide access to a variety of professional-development opportunities:
   - Professional supervision (in addition to organisational line-management), including external supervision.
   - Group discussions on work practices.
   - Forums where men can problem solve.
   - Peer support.

3 Encourage and provide mentoring opportunities:
   - Sector conferences/forums providing opportunities for men to network with other men, share their experiences and discuss work practices.
   - Encourage and enable men to establish Sector networks.
   - Encourage and enable individual men to provide mentoring to less experienced men.

4 Specific Training:
   - On-the-job-one-on-one.
   - The valuing of difference and strengths, e.g., gender, culture, personality.
   - Exploring the development of values and application to professional practice.
   - Communication skills—working with clients.
   - Communication skills for men and women, i.e., the way in which men and women communicate and the purpose of communication.
   - Harassment, bullying and mobbing.
   - Basic counselling skills.
   - Dealing with conflict and conflict resolution.
   - Dealing with aggressive and abusive behaviour.
   - Enhancing the ability to lessen the impact of violence, grief, loss and frustration.
• Assisting clients experiencing grief and loss.
• Mental health.
• Working with disadvantaged or marginalised populations.

Consultation with men needs to occur as to the training that they require and the delivery method.

Attracting Men to the Sector

The development of recruitment strategies needs to be done at a Sector level (Work Force Council), an industry level (disability, housing, domestic violence), a local level (township or district) and an agency level. Central to any development strategy is the leadership and participation of men working in hands-on positions. These projects, regardless of how small, need to be documented, evaluated and shared with others in the Sector through network meetings, forums, conferences, newsletters, reports. The emphasis should be on small undertakings, one step at a time and building on positive outcomes. Action Research is an ideal method of developing and documenting grass roots and/or Sector-driven initiatives.

The Development of Recruitment Strategies:

• Community awareness raising – the career opportunities available to men.
• Attracting men who ‘want to make a difference’ (altruism and social justice values).
• Targeting schools, TAFE, universities to attract part-time workers.
• To attract young men, older men and men looking for a career change
• Encourage men to tell their employment stories through websites, social media, stories to the media (disability week, mental health week), calendars, newsletters.
• Portray men as well as women in promotional material such as flyers, posters, newsletters.
• Enlisting men currently working in the Sector as advocates, i.e., tapping other men on the shoulder or word of mouth.

CONCLUSION

David’s closing comments were insightful, ‘I’m fairly interested in “The Men’s Shed”...that’s a good concept’. The development of men’s sheds is based on encouraging men to be active in managing ‘their own health and wellbeing’ (Men’s Sheds, 2012) and nurturing the talents of men. In a similar vein, this project A Bloke Shed or a …? is giving men the opportunity to find their voice. This report is being provided to encourage service providers and the men working in the Sector to work together to enhance staff retention and to attract other men to the Sector who ‘want to make a difference’.
REFERENCES


Shallcross, L. (2003b, 12th December). ‘Mobbing in the Workforce’. Presentation at James Cook University, Townsville.


Appendix 1

A Bloke Shed or a …?: Men Working in the Human Services/Community Sector in Rural Queensland

A Bloke Shed or a …?: Men Working in the Human Services/Community Sector in Rural Queensland (the project) is a small research project which seeks ways to support men who are employed in the human services/community sector in rural Queensland (the sector). The majority of workers in this field are women, with men being a small percentage of the workforce. While small in number, men do contribute significantly to supporting clients and enhancing service provision. Research into men’s participation in the industry and their professional-development needs, is sparse and long overdue.

This project, funded by Blue Print for the Bush, originates from Ingham, North Queensland and has three objectives. These are to identify:

- why men seek employment in the sector;
- what keeps men working in the sector; and
- what supports are needed to retain and assist men who are working in the sector.

I am looking for men who are employed in the sector and who are working in non-managerial roles. It is anticipated that these men will be front-line workers, who are employed in the areas of disability support, aged care, community centres, drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, employment and advocacy. This survey* has been designed to provide a profile of the men who are working in the sector.

If you wish to participate in this project, please fill out the attached survey. If you know of men who are working within the sector, please pass on this survey to them.

Completed surveys can be emailed to diannemrogers@bigpond.com or posted to Ingham Disability Support Service, PO Box 1067, Ingham 4850.

If you need any more information or would like to be kept informed of the outcome of the project, please contact Dr Dianne Rogers – diannemrogers@bigpond.com or phone 07 47519440.

*I would like to thank Peter Cookson, PhD Candidate, Flinders University for his contribution to this survey.
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Survey

(If you require more space to answer the questions please attach a separate sheet of paper)

1a Do you work in a

☐ Rural ☐ Remote area

1b In which region of Queensland do you work?

☐ Far North ☐ North ☐ North West
☐ Central Coast ☐ Central West ☐ South East Coast
☐ South West

2 Do you identify as

☐ Non Indigenous ☐ Aboriginal
☐ Torres Strait Islander ☐ CALD (Culturally/Linguistically Diverse)

3 How old are you?

☐ 25 years or under ☐ 26 – 34 ☐ 35 – 44 ☐ 45 - 54 ☐ 55 - 64 ☐ 56 – 64 ☐ 65 years and over

4a In which area of the human services/community sector do you work?

☐ Disability ☐ Community Centre ☐ Aged Care
☐ Employment ☐ Child Care ☐ Drug & Alcohol
☐ Domestic Violence ☐ Advocacy ☐ Other

4b What is your job title?

5 What is the total length of time you have worked in the human services/community sector?

Years and/or Months

6 What made you decide to work in this sector?
7 How old were you when you entered the human services/community sector?

Years of Age

8 Did you work in another occupation before coming to the human services/community sector?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

If Yes what was your occupation/occupations?

9 Do you work providing ‘hands on’ support directly to people?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

10 Do you work in another role or roles (community development, case manager, advocate)?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

11 Which group best describes the people you support in your work?

☐ Children  ☐ Adolescents  ☐ Adults

☐ Elderly  ☐ Combination of these

☐ Indigenous Groups  ☐ CALD Groups  ☐ General Community

☐ Combination of these

12 Which of the following best describes your current employment status?

☐ Full-time  ☐ Part-time  ☐ Casual

13a Is this level of employment of your choosing?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

13b If no, what would be your ideal employment status?

14 What was the highest year/grade level you achieved at secondary school?

Year

15 What is the highest post school study you have done?

☐ None  ☐ Trade  ☐ TAFE Qualification partially completed
16 Are you currently studying for any formal qualification?
☑ Yes ☐ No

17 What is the most rewarding aspect of your work?

18 What is the most challenging aspect of your work?

19 How could you be assisted to meet these challenges?

20 Do you face any challenges or issues because you are a male worker?
☑ Yes ☐ No
If Yes, what are the challenges or issues?

21 Do you feel being a male is an advantage in your work?
☑ Yes ☐ No
If Yes, how does being a male worker assist your in your work?

22 What personal or professional development opportunities would enhance your ability to perform your job, i.e. communication skills, professional supervision, conferences etc?
23 What training opportunities would enhance your ability to perform your job?

24 Which format best suits your learning style, i.e. workshops, hands on training, group work, one on one etc? Please describe

Thank you for completing this survey. If you have any questions please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Dr Dianne Rogers

Appendix 2

4b What is your job title?

Rural
Support Worker (R29, R4, R3, B1 = 37)
32, 49, 5, 68 Disability Support Workers.
45, 27, 25, 28, 20, 44, 61, 30, 31, 57, 42, 69 Support Worker (Disability).
59 Support Professional (Disability).
19 Support Worker (Employment).
55 Men and Families Support Worker (Domestic Violence).
64 Men’s Worker (Domestic Violence).
34 Support Worker (Men’s Hostel/Crisis Accommodation).
29 Support Worker.
52 Youth Worker.
12 Well-being Worker.
41, 2 Community Support Worker.
35 Home Care Worker (Aged Care).
40 Mental Health Support Worker.
6 (2 x P/T Roles) Community Support Worker & Community Recovery Worker/Community Development.

Remote
2 Relief Support Worker.
10 Primary Care Worker (Community Centre).
7 Men’s Program Worker (Domestic Violence).
6 Youth Worker.

Regional
8 Placement Support Worker.
7 Youth Worker.
11 Senior Support Worker.

Brisbane
2 Residential Support Worker.

Health (R10, R1, R1 = 12)
Rural
24 Health Worker.
39 Allied Health Worker.
48 Allied Health Nutrition.
13 Clinical Nurse (Community Health).
16 Assistant in Nursing.
8 ATODS Indigenous Prevention Worker.
21 Needle & Syringe Program Officer.
65 Senior Medical Alarms Officer.
10 Medical Alarms Officer.
67 Program Coordinator & Health Researcher.

Remote
15 Senior Indigenous Mental Health Worker.

Regional
9 Information Support Officer, Personal Care Worker & Student Nurse.

Training/Education (R3, R1 = 4)

Rural
22 Special Education Teacher (Disability).
63 Teacher (TAFE – Community Services).
50 Senior Trainer (Disability).

Regional
6 Recruitment, Training and Assessment Worker, Foster & Kinship Care.

Coordinator (R4, R2, = 6)

Rural
56 DV (Domestic Violence) Court Volunteer Coordinator.
46 Youth Support Coordinator.
26 Training Coordinator.
9 Coordinator (Disability).

Remote
11 Coordinator – 60’s and Better Healthy Ageing Program.
9 Elders Coordinator.

Case Manager/Worker (R3, R1, R1 = 5)

Rural
53 Intensive Intervention Placement Service Caseworker (Child Care).
14 Case Worker.
11 Case Manager – Out of Home Care (Child Care).

Remote
5 Case Manager – Homelessness.
Regional
4 Case Worker.

Counsellor/Psychotherapist/Social Worker/Solicitor (R8, R4, B1 = 13)

Rural
1, 37 Counsellor.
58, 7, 66 Financial Counsellor.
51 Family Counsellor.
54 Consultant Psychotherapist.
4 Social Worker.

Remote
14 Financial Counsellor.
4 Senior Counsellor.
8 Psychologist (Drug & Alcohol).
1 Solicitor (Domestic Violence).

Brisbane
1 Counsellor and clinical supervisor.

General (R11, R2, RS = 18)

Rural
3 Bookkeeper.
38 Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner (Mediator).
62 Community Development Officer.
33 Service Delivery Officer (Employment).
60 Industry Placement Mentor (Employment).
43 Employment Advisor.
17 Housing Worker & Transport Development Officer.
36 Corrective Service Officer.
23 Placement Services Officer, TAIHS Placement Services.
18 Project Officer/Client Service Officer.
47 Information Referral and Assessment Service Worker.

Remote
3 Senior Project Officer (Advocacy).
12 Field Officer (Employment).

Regional
3 Youth Development Officer.
2 Reception.
1 Rent Connect Officer.
5 Community Housing Officer.
10 AOD Worker.

Managers (7)
5, 6 Manager.
1, 7 Service Manager.
3 General Manager.
2 CEO.
4 Health Promotion Manager.

No Response (2)
Regional
15

Remote
13

6 What made you decide to work in this sector?
7 How old were you when you entered the human services/community sector?

25 Years and Under

Rural
4 Keen on social justice.
11 Interested in social justice and a desire to make a difference to people's lives.
23 I joined the Ambulance Service of NSW in 2002 as a Patient Transport Officer with the intention of progressing into being a Paramedic. During my three years as a Patient Transport Officer, helping people became my vocation but I became somewhat disillusioned with the politics associated with working in the emergency services sector and when my relationship with my daughters’ mother broke down I decided to leave the service. Whilst bouncing around in a few jobs over the next couple of years I decided to move to Newcastle and when canvassing the area
for work came across a Youth Worker position which I applied for and to my surprise got. I worked with Allambi Youth Services for approx six months and my eyes really opened up to how children in care are being set up for failure and the challenges that are ahead of them. My particular interest is in how they are going to transition into adulthood and what supports they will need to do it successfully. Skip forward a few years, new relationship, new child, my family unit moved to Townsville I was back in the job market. Having gotten out of working to help people, I decided that if ever I was going to make a difference it would have to be at this point and was fortunate enough to work for a year with Anglicare, St James house which is a long term residential setting. I then moved over to working for TAIHS in the Youth Shelter and at the same time I applied for my current position in Placement Services. My motivation for going from working with complex and extreme behaved children to supporting foster and kinship carers came down to personal belief. I believe the only way to break the cycle of Indigenous Australian children being removed from their parents is man management. Individual education on the development of basic living skills with children in care and education to carers in regards to subject children and how to manage challenging behaviours to reduce the amount of placement breakdowns and ultimately reduce the amount of anxiety which is a product of pain based trauma.

30 Wanted to try something new.
32 I wanted to do something meaningful in my life, and contribute positive to the world.
48 Personal choice.
50 Religious Beliefs.
15 I became interested in Social Work as my wife was studying it at the time.
52 I wanted to work with young people and I had great skills getting the best out of young people.
63 I like to help people and try to give back to the world!
1 An interest in people.
53 To allow other children the same opportunities I have had growing up.
49 Kind of just fell into it...
67 Altruism - exposure to politically proactive parents and other social active groups during adolescent years promoted a pathway to seeking and advocating social justice for marginalised sections of community. It was a logical & natural progression to become involved with groups concerned with indigenous issues, people with disabilities, child protection and more recently indigenous health.

Remote
2 Have previously worked in nursing homes in Brisbane and have been seeking employment within the community services Industry in the town I live in. As the town does not have a nursing home I work for the Home and Community Care service.

Regional
3 Wanting to support young people who aren’t as fortunate in their upbringing as I was.
9 I enjoy working with people.
1 Opportunity to be involved in making real changes to our community.
2 Lack of options.

Managers
5 Wanted to make a difference.
6 Was fascinated by human behaviour and needed the money
4 I started hospital based nursing training in 1983. The clinical stuff was enjoyable and I was very good with patients and all manner of sickness generally. The bureaucracy of large institutions got to me though and I left and found regular work in Nursing homes largely because of my ability to lift people. Realising I could be there for a lifetime I became a Residential Care Officer, Disability Support worker and went on to study Sociology when I was 28. I found my contribution to the field/s has always been valued and people are genuine and grateful for any support received.
3 Originally my passion for working with Youth & Homeless People on the street!

26 – 34 Years of Age

Rural
8 A change from working in the rain and hot sun?
33 Helping people, working within the community.
2 Wanted to help people, give back to the community.
As I looked seriously at my career prospects I was very disinterested with my options. A friend suggested to me that human services might be a good fit for my skills. I then applied for a job opportunity that came up, got the job and have found the work satisfying and interesting ever since.

Love working for people with the people.

Initially just a job opening but then came to enjoy working with PWID (People with Intellectual Disability). No decision, stumbled in and enjoyed the work.

Family Friendly working conditions and I have a strong interest in the issues that affect health outcomes in the broader community. I enjoy the diversity of the role and working with a broad cross section of the community, e.g., Indigenous people, CALD Community groups. I also find personal and professional satisfaction in being able to contribute directly to improving health outcomes in my local community through health promotion and primary health care initiatives.

My wife.

A desire to help provide social, and natural justice to chosen target groups.

Human interest and social justice.

Desire to make a positive difference in other people’s lives, to share in the celebration when people have their own personal victories.

Drawn to it. Sense of working for the community.

Employment & Opportunity.

A concern and interest in helping people who are disadvantaged.

To help my mob.

Remote

Love trying to make a difference for my people.

 Desire to assist those in need and a willingness to help others.

To work with murri people.

To help yp (young people) going through a tough time.

Regional

To make the most of personal experience.

Brisbane

My initial reason was to help others. Now all I know is I was subconsciously trying to help myself in becoming more emotionally connected and resourceful.

Managers

Needed work locally that paid well. Ongoing interest in Human Services after working as Work for the Dole Coordinator.

35 - 44 Years of Age

Rural

I wanted a career change that would give me more personal satisfaction from my work.

Satisfaction and gratitude from clients and other work employees.

I wanted to make a positive contribution to society.

Lifestyle Change.

Seeking employment that was flexible to fit in around the care of my family. I also wanted a job where I could help others achieve positive outcomes.

I wanted to be involved in building more resilient local communities. After working in big cities I felt and I could use my skills and experience in my local community.

Personal Commitment.

Professional interest upon reaching certain limitations in standard approaches.

To be of service and really engage with others.

Providing assistance to people with Mental Health issues.

The opportunity to be involve in training in a hands-on way.

The need/want to contribute to make a better society.
It’s in my nature.
Passion to help others.
Social Justice.

Remote
- Working with men.
- Life calling.
- Love working in this area.
- A new challenge, having lost a family member to suicide.

Regional
- Disability in my family.
- Always had an interest in youth work and community work generally.
- Seeking work related to psych degree completed in 2009.

Brisbane
- I like helping people.

Managers
- Finished my degree and wanted to support and assist our Lads with their social and emotional welfare.

45 - 54 Years of Age

Rural
- I needed a part time job and needed a challenge so I applied for the position as Transport Development.
- The position itself.
- Had a foster daughter with mild ID (intellectual disability) and challenging behaviours, and had desire to help more in later years of my life.
- Change in job – Need a challenge.
- Wanting to provide a more positive outlook for people.
- Change of career direction. Lack of Technical positions.
- First job applied for after long absence from workforce, in general previous work was administration.
- I enjoyed the work.
- Personal family welfare crisis.
- Wanting to make a difference in others’ lives.
- Wanted to help people.
- Took a career change due to shortage of work in my trade which I have not regretted.
- Took redundancy from telecommunication sector. Family member has intellectual impairment and I was encouraged to apply for a position.
- Work autonomously.
- I wanted to return to society some of the benefits I had and I saw that many people had not been able to control their life. I was doing well and I had noticed that some people did not do well. I was also interested in exploring my own psyche.

Remote
- Change of job from Vic public service. Like to provide opportunities for people, enjoy the social interaction and derive satisfaction from helping people and creating sound programs.
- I needed the money.
- To help people in need.
- The work is rewarding & conditions flexible.
- Wanted to do something different.

Regional
- Interest in child safety and related human services.
- Wanted to help children in care.
Interest in housing and desire to make a difference in people’s lives.

Managers
1 The need to have a change in my life.

55 – 64 Years of Age
Rural
55 Approached.
38 I enjoyed mediation work and had been a counsellor.
65 Change of career direction. Lack of engineering positions.
28 –
45 Employment that an elder male can contribute to.

65 Years and Over

8 Did you work in another occupation before coming to the human services/community sector?
If yes what was your occupation/occupations

Rural
Support Worker (R29, R4, R3, B1, = 37)

Disability Support Workers
32 No.
49 Cleaner.
5 Auto Electrician.
68 Machine Operator/Horse Riding.
45 Hospital.
27 Administration at QR/Taxi Driver/Mail Contractor.
25 Boilermaker/welder.
28 Farm Hand/Commercial Fisherman/Cook/Commercial Representative.
20 Driver Trainer.
44 Electronic R&D/Sales of Computerised Technologies (Process Control, Computer Systems, Communications)/Later studies in Cultural Anthropology and Applied Linguistic leading to tutor work.
61 Telecommunications Technical Officer.
30 Security/Apprentice Painter/Store Clerk.
31 Fitter/Oyster Farmer/Junk Mail Delivery/ Labouring/Fast Food Cook/Several Others.
57 Biochemist.
42 Postal Worker.
69 Maintenance.

Other Support Workers
59 Numerous jack of all trades master of none.
19 Labourer/Locomotive Driver/Plant Operator/Retail Sales/Sales/Employment Advisor (DES).
55 Farm Worker/Agricultural Economist/Farmer/Company Director/Publican/Taxi Driver/Hospital Orderly.
64 Earthmoving.
34 Transport/Farm Labourer.
29 Fibreglass Aircraft Components (Plug and Mould Producer & Fabricator).
52 Martial Arts Instructor
12 Labouring/Hospitality/etc.
41 Cabinet Maker.
2 Greenkeeper/Apprentice Chef/Produce Retail/Labourer.
35 Hospital Wardsman.
40 Electrical Fitter/Mechanic & Telecommunications Tradesperson.
6 Electrician/Commercial Traveller/Employment Consultant/Teacher (Adult Education).
Remote
2 Administration Roles.
10 Transport Management/Retail.
7 Boilermaker/Yardsman/Painter.

6 Swimming Coach.

Regional
8 Security Officer.
7 I currently work in two different positions – one as a Youth Worker and one as a Correctional Officer.
11 Retail/Forestry/Agricultural/Mining.

Brisbane
2 Church Minister.

Health (R10, R1, R1 = 12)
Rural
24 Teacher Aid Worker.
39 No.
48 Water Treatment.
13 Paediatric and Midwife Nurse in a hospital.
16 Administration Officer for the National Parks and Wild Life Services.
8 Health Worker.
21 Farm Labourer/Fisherman/Hospitality/Trades Assistant/Groundskeeper.
65 Engineering Manager.
10 Technician/Massage Therapist/Self Employed.
67 No response.

Remote
15 No Response.

Regional
9 International communications operator with telstra.

Training/Education (R3, R1 = 4)
Rural
22 Security Consultant/Transport Driver/Farmer/Police Constable.
63 Butcher/Meat Processing.
50 WHS-RAF
Regional
6 Real Estate/Tourism/Navy.

Coordinator (R4, R2, = 6)
Rural
56 Foundry Moulder.
46 Project Officer Federal Government.
26 Police/Hospitality/Transport/Education.
9 Hospitality.
Remote
11 Fisheries Officer/Training Officer/Wildlife Investigator/Land Protection Officer.
9 Self Employed Builder – Manager of Aboriginal Housing co.

Case Manager/Worker (R3, R1, R1 = 5)
Rural
53 No.
14 Line Man.
11 Fitness Industry.

Remote
5 Dairy Farming/Teaching and Research.

Regional
4 Ambulance communications officer then Student.

**Counsellor/Psychotherapist/Social Worker/Solicitor (R8, R4, B1 = 13)**

Rural
1 Pizza delivery/Gardening/Farming.
37 Retail.
58 Generally in Finance in the private sector.
7 Pilot.
66 Union Official/Police/Defence/Security/Medical/Cleaner etc.
51 Horticulture/Nurses assistant.
54 I was in sales training management and real estate.
4 No - Holiday jobs – Factory Work/Kitchen Hand/Bookshop Assistant/Administration Work.

Remote
14 Finance Broker.
4 Training.
8 Building Management.
1 Pay TV Installer/Barman/Truck Driver/Fisherman/Professional Soldier.

Brisbane
1 Civil Engineer.

**General (R11, R2, R5 = 18)**

Remote
3 No.
38 Teaching/Counselling.
62 Outdoor Education and Retail.
33 Financial Planner.
60 Youth Worker, previous to this I was in Security.
43 Information Technology.
17 Many e.g. small Business/QLD Railways and Sugar Industry to name a few.
36 Trades Man (Bricklayer).
23 Warehousing/Forklift/Truck Driving/Labouring/Deckhand plus many other things.
18 Hospitality.
47 I was initially sucked into the construction industry, as so many men are. I have worked with various trades & labouring positions. For the last 4 years however I have been working as a building design draftsman/project manager.

Remote
3 Chef.
12 Electrician (mining industry).

Regional
3 No.
2 Sheet Metal Fabricator.
1 Wool Classer/Station Manager.
5 Bus Driver.
10 Delivery driving.
Managers (7)
5 Police.
6 No.
1 Business Manager within the Water Industry (Sydney & Brisbane Water) Operations and then Business Development.
7 Operations and purchasing for Wholesale Fruit and Vegetables, and similar role in pharmacy products.
3 Self Employed Carpenter/Builder and Business Manager.
2 Student Liaison Officer.
4 Animal Attendant/Car Details/Bank Clerk.

No Response (2)
Rural
15 Radio & TV Technician.

Remote

17 What is the most rewarding aspect of your work?
18 What is the most challenging aspect of your work?
19 How could you be assisted to meet these challenges?

Support Workers
Rural

Disability
32 Rewards – The most rewarding aspect of my work is being able to spend my life building people up in all areas of their lives, through kindness and understanding and seeing the difference I’ve made. Challenges - The most challenging aspect of my work is living on a fairly low income, trying to believe it is worth it because I can make a real and meaningful impact in life, when I feel frustrated with the increasing emphasis on paperwork and procedure instead of truly focusing on the people we support. Assistance needed - Better wages, and generally an industry wide return to client centred support.
49 Rewards - Opportunities for professional advancements. Challenges - Direct contact with service users. Assistance needed - Less contact time with service users (however that is my job), possibly more broken up shifts i.e. less time more often.
68 Rewards - Like the people I work for. Challenges - Fixing a problem. Assistance needed – left alone.
25 Rewards – A smile or comment from service user at ends of shift. Challenges – Challenging behaviour, eg, insulting verbal behaviour, bed wetting, lashing out, violent behaviour. Assistance needed – More funding to ease over-crowding in Residential homes.
28 Rewards – To achieve clients entering main stream of society. Challenges – The repetitious procedure one has to go through to reach goals. Assistance needed – No response.
20 Rewards – Helping others. Challenges – Trying to meet clients needs.
Assistance needed – Continued training.
44 Rewards – Making a difference in lives of people with an ID.
Challenges – Controlling staff who still take an institutionalised approach.
Assistance needed – Better staff recruitment including the involvement of the Service Users in the selection process. Better training and less tolerance of institutionalised abuse.
61 Rewards – Assisting service users to achieve a meaningful and fulfilling lifestyle.
Challenges – Lack of resources and funding.
Assistance needed – Increased funding and more efficient allocation of funding.
30 Rewards – Seeing the people I work with become more comfortable asking and doing what they want.
Challenges – Dealing with physically aggressive clients and not having proper strategies to handle them while the stakeholders ignore the problem and hope it goes away because no-one wants to make the hard calls.
Assistance Needed – Have a person who would make the call and not be criticised if it doesn’t go to plan, but would be able to be supported to keep trying until we came to a solution without being afraid for their job.
31 Rewards – Assisting a service user to accomplish a task and particularly when they blow you away by picking up on something way quicker than you anticipated.
Challenges – Getting the rhetoric and theory to work in practice and within a suitable time to benefit the service user.
Assistance needed – Less paperwork, justification – more action.
57 Rewards – Helping clients deal positively with stigma.
Challenges – Advocacy.
Assistance needed – No response.
42 Rewards – Service.
Challenges - challenging behaviour.
Assistance needed - Education, extra staff.

Other Support Workers
19 Rewards – Having a medical condition that is a barrier, it is rewarding helping someone else who also has a barrier to be able to work.
Challenges – Keeping client focused on job, keeping job interesting for client.
Assistance needed – Any courses or seminars.
55 Rewards - Being able to support a man to make changes that improve his life and his relationships.
Challenges – Working with mandated clients who are trying to avoid change.
Assistance needed – No response.
64 Rewards – Privilege of hearing people’s stories and struggles. People opening themselves up.
Challenges – Working with DV is a challenging role. Most challenging is working against structures of society as a whole.
Assistance needed – Training, skills and application of these.
34 Rewards – Helping people move on in a more positive manner.
Challenges – Encouraging people to engage themselves in a more positive way.
Assistance needed – Better access to referrals, more outreach services, better contact with clients when required.
29 Rewards – Being able to assist someone to break the cycle of Homelessness, get a job, win a Court case, gain Australian residency or just overcome any obstacles that is hindering their humanity or ability to move forward in life.
Challenges - Keeping up with legal aspects, eg immigration law, Domestic Violence law, Finding accommodation and supports - outlets for clients with Disabilities under 65 or those who are not on full DSQ Pensions (Younger people) who require long term supported accommodation.
Assistance needed - Better training particularly in legal areas, be part of an advisory panel on local welfare gaps/challenges.
52 Rewards – Seeing young people succeed overcoming obstacles.
Challenges – Lack of resources and support for youth workers and services.
Assistance needed – more support workers.
12 Rewards – Interactions with people and seeing positive outcomes.
Challenges – Case management and progressive work with clients to achieve goals.
Assistance needed – Training I guess.
41 Rewards – To assist people in their everyday needs.
Challenges – To distinguish what works and doesn’t work with each client.
Assistance needed – Training and awareness with other organisations.
2 Rewards – Advocating for clients, educating, basic financial skills and success stories.
Challenges – Catching clients out in their lies then supporting them next time they need assistance.
Assistance needed – Copious amounts of FREE cigarettes and alcohol (joke unsure).
35 Rewards – Helping people.
Challenges – Losing clients (aged care).
Assistance needed – None.
40 Rewards – Seeing someone make a positive change in their life.
Challenges – Lack of resources.
Assistance needed – Increased funding/resource allocation to both the geographical area, and the area of mental health.
6 Rewards – Hands-on support and advocacy role.
Challenges – Trying to establish a new NGO to provide non-clinical mental health support and recovery services.
Assistance needed - Funding to enable the establishment of the service to meet huge needs in the community.

Remote
2 Rewards – Assisting older people to have some quality of life.
Challenges – No response.
Assistance needed – No response.
10 Rewards - Providing a service that is needed to someone who might otherwise have to leave their independent home based life.
Challenges – Remaining patient and tolerant with clients who may be slow when you need to move fast!
Assistance needed – Try getting doctors and clinics to keep their appointment times.
7 Rewards – Assisting people to help themselves and to address their issues of DV.
Challenges – Dealing with the admissions of violence and the disregard for the impact this has on other people.
Assistance needed – Finding a way to hear about the violence without taking it in and questioning that behaviour in a respectful way.
6 Rewards – Working with and making a difference in a young person’s life.
Challenges – Office politics and procedures.
Assistance needed – No response.

Regional
8 Rewards - Finding foster children a good family to live with.
Challenges - Not being able to find a suitable carer for a child.
Assistance needed – More carers.
7 Rewards - Seeing young people succeed in reaching their goals.
Challenges - Adolescent behaviour! The number of barriers that young people face. Most young people have no family support and lack confidence in themselves.
Assistance needed – Unsure.
11 Rewards - Working with clients.
Challenges - Working with other staff who have different work ethics.
Assistance needed – Prefer to work alone.

Brisbane
2 Rewards - The impact and the positive influence I have with my male clients.
Challenges - The lack of true recognition of the work that we do.
Assistance needed – A career future. That we can actually stay in the industry and not take our very broad skills elsewhere.

Health
Rural
Rewards – The impact on the community, we see changes in lives of individuals and whole families.

Challenges – Not being able to do anything because I don’t have the qualifications.

Assistance needed – Financial support for courses I need to develop in.

Rewards – Providing assistance to people where possible.

Challenges – Encouraging people to accept recovery.

Assistance needed – Discussing with other males positive and negatives of positions, being resilient in a job.

Rewards – Supporting functional independence.

Challenges – Communications.

Assistance needed – Provide more in-service training professionals.

Rewards – The variety and diversity of the work, the working hours and the opportunity to work in an area I have an interest in and enjoy. I also enjoy working in a diverse team with people who have a professional approach to their work and have skills and abilities I admire and can learn from. I enjoy the opportunity to contribute to a team and to learn from others.

Challenges – Community expectations of what a health service should and can provide without an appreciation of the costs or the complexities involved.

Assistance needed – To be realistic about what is achievable. To understand why communities have such expectations and to communicate the limitations carefully and clearly back to the community when the opportunities arise. I think it is also important to role model and to ensure efficiencies within my own work practices.

Rewards – Job satisfaction by caring for the elderly.

Challenges – Residents with dementia, both challenging and rewarding.

Assistance needed – Education, on job training.

Rewards – When I have helped one person turn their life around for the better.

Challenges – Paper work.

Assistance needed – Having an administration officer.

Rewards – Witnessing ‘light bulb’ moments in clients’ lives. Watching information given, become a catalyst for change.

Challenges – Being lulled into a false sense of security, believing people have ‘got it’ (anti-racist; anti-sexist; non-judgemental practice; etc) only to be blind-sided by proof to the contrary.

Assistance needed - Have more people fighting the good fight. Changing one mind at a time to shape a more inclusive society.

Rewards – Supporting clients needs as most are alone and unsupported by families and the greater community.

Challenges – Getting the aged to accept technology which can help their later life to be more comfortable.

Assistance needed – No response.

Rewards – Providing a service to clients who live alone thereby helping them to stay in their own homes.

Challenges – Working with colleagues who think having meetings is real work. Dealing with poor Government bureaucratic policies.

Assistance needed - ???

Rewards - Knowing that you’re making a difference to people’s health and quality of life.

Challenges – Getting people eligible, people to engage in making and maintaining lifestyle changes.

Assistance needed – Have more indigenous workers in this field.

Remote

Rewards – Knowing that you have supported those most vulnerable and seeing them develop into stronger individuals than they were when you first engaged with them.

Challenges – Tyranny of distance combined with natural disasters and being unable to help.

Assistance needed – Management are very supportive and in particular in relation to implementing an IES – Indigenous Employment Strategy for the RFDS (Royal Flying Doctor Service) in Queensland.

Regional

Rewards – The staff and people of course.

Challenges – The staff and people of course.

Assistance needed – More money.

Training/Education

Rural

Rewards - Observing progress and seeing individuals gain own levels of satisfaction/happiness/contentment.

Challenges – Negotiating and/or communicating with ‘wider community’, especially regarding barrier removal.
Assistance needed – Commitment in real sense by ‘authorities’ to address issues/barriers. Funding can be an issue but not greatly so.

Rewards – Teaching and inspiring people to make positive changes in their personal and other people’s lives!
Challenges – Poor money, no recognition of experience/skills/knowledge by management, governmental red tape, lack of resources and funding for social empowerment.

Assistance needed – More funding allocated to training and empowering people to make positive changes. To raise awareness of issues confronting Australian society and for politicians to listen and do what the people on the ground and community want.

Rewards – Seeing confidence and improvement is staff abilities.
Challenges – Long hours.
Assistance needed – More time to meet targets.

Regional
Rewards – Training prospective carers.
Challenges – Training and assessing carers.
Assistance needed – Supervision and professional development.

Coordinator

Rural
Rewards – Behavioural changes in clients.
Challenges – Having people recognise best engagement methods.
Assistance needed – Explaining the benefits.
Rewards – Student completion of year 12 certification.
Challenges – No response.
Assistance needed – No response.
Rewards - Seeing the light bulb go on over someone’s head when they finally understood something that they had struggled with understanding until that moment.
Challenges - Dealing with the petty jealousies that exist between various professional groups, and surviving the intellectual snobbery that comes with the majority university graduates until they gain a level of maturity in life that matches their educational qualifications.
Assistance needed – Ensuring that all staff treat one another (not to mention clients) with unconditional positive regard. (Best of luck with that...)
Rewards – Making a positive difference in supporting people to live independently.
Challenges – N/A – I love it all!
Assistance needed – I am very happy the way it is as long as my manager understands that I work best when not micro-managed.

Remote
Rewards - Creating programs that keep people fit and well, which has a huge social inclusion component in FNQ. Gaining great satisfaction from seeing programs grow and be recognised in the community as stable, well attended and well regarded programs, like aqua aerobics, garden club, health info workshops. Having the work freedom to do creative stuff involving helping people and the local community. This includes a great social inclusion aspect which took me by surprise when I first developed a few programs.
Challenges - Finding enough hours to do the jobs I want to do @ 20hrs per week. Putting up with tacky politics from NGO Boards of management which don’t seem to understand how I do my job and what skills it entails. The other major hurdle in FNQ is trying to be accepted by the Indigenous communities – I’m not racist at all, but often feel that any effort is wasted in what appears to be a lack of willingness for many indigenous people to help themselves - its like a ‘take’ mentality which seems firmly set in many communities.
Assistance needed - Work more hours - but that doesn’t suit my work/life balance. Be assisted more by senior members of indigenous communities so I/we can interact more to achieve better outcomes for all peoples.
Rewards – Knowing that my skills can be used to help people.
Challenges – Not enough hours to help people.
Assistance needed – By more training and more hours.

Case Manager/Worker

Rural
Rewards – Assisting and supporting people to change for the better and meet the need of child/young people in their care.
Challenges – The level of ‘knowingness’ we are supposed to have.
Assistance needed – In-depth course in topics such as trauma, attachment, counselling skills.

14 Rewards – To see a client reach their goals.
Challenges – No resources and lack of training.
Assistance needed – train workforce properly and make sure programs are funded.

11 Rewards – Building enduring relationships with clients.
Challenges – 95% of my job revolves around bureaucracy and paperwork.
Assistance needed – Stepping backwards and returning to ‘hands-on’ duties.

Remote

5 Rewards – To see people achieving their goals.
Challenges – Working with people dealing with drug and alcohol issues.
Assistance needed – Training.

Regional

4 Rewards - Observing positive change in young people.
Challenges - Achieving positive change in young people.
Assistance needed - Extra staff and resources.

Counsellor/Psychotherapists/Social Worker/Solicitor

Rural

1 Rewards – Getting to know so many different people.
Challenges – Getting to know so many different people.
Assistance needed – Less of a rush or focus on meeting targets for funders.

37 Rewards – Seeing people find strengths and new skills.
Challenges – Working with violence.
Assistance Needed – Training.

58 Rewards - Helping people.
Challenges – Some of the circumstances clients face.
Assistance needed – Peer support generally.

7 Rewards – Getting results.
Challenges – Low Pay.
Assistance needed – More pay.

66 Rewards – Seeing people at an appointment stressed and thinking there is no way out and then leaving the appointment not stressed with solutions to empower them.
Challenges – Dealing with creditors, debt collectors, lawyers, data entry and the public.
Assistance needed – Education and sound advice.

51 Rewards - Relational dialogue.
Challenges – Working with social service systems, managerialism and outcome focus to the detriment of engagement with clients.
Assistance needed – Some admin support and less focus on documentation, sometimes multiple layers.

54 Rewards – Working hands-on with people and seeing them have a better quality of life.
Challenges – Working with people in a management position who have no understanding of the work I do and the commitment I bring to my work.
Assistance needed – Educate the management committee by getting more contact and participation for them in doing some hands-on training themselves.

4 Rewards – Relieving stress in clients; training and supporting less experienced workers.
Challenges – Dealing with poor managerial support.
Assistance needed – Better vetting of applicants for managerial positions.

Remote

14 Rewards – Helping people achieve their goals.
Challenges – Time management for clients.
Assistance needed – More remote travel.

4 Rewards - Helping people.
Challenges – Abusive clients.
Assistance needed – N/A
8 Rewards – Seeing change in Aboriginal communities and assisting families to work towards their chosen goals. Challenges – Working within a cross-cultural context.
Assistance needed – Additional paid training and travel to conferences in capital cities.
1 Rewards – Seeing people being treated fairly. Challenges – Seeing people not helping them themselves.
Assistance needed – Seeing remote community councils actually assisting their own people rather than ignore it.

Brisbane
1 Rewards - Growing personal insight for self in the process of facilitating insight for clients. Challenges - Sometimes it’s hard to know what is the most appropriate way to facilitate with clients.
Assistance needed - No response.

General
Rural
3 Rewards – Being a member of an organisation that directly helps the community and being inspired by the number and diversity of our volunteers. Challenges – Coming to terms with private sector operation compared to not-for-profit operation.
Assistance needed – More hands-on training and a longer direct supervision when I first started would have been a great help and caused less stress.
38 Rewards – Helping people resolve some of their issues and providing a platform to improve children’s lifestyle. Challenges – The selfishness of some of the clients who cannot see the bigger picture.
Assistance needed – NA.
62 Rewards – Assisting people in achieving positive outcomes in their lives. Challenges – The unpredictability.
Assistance needed – With networking and more educational workshops.
33 Rewards – Thanks from people I have helped. Challenges – Limited pay and support and training.
Assistance needed – Better training options, better funding for government programs.
60 Rewards – Helping those who want to change their lives! Challenges – Having to help those who don’t want to change their lives! Assistance needed – Not being forced to help those who don’t want help in changing their lives and being allowed more time to focus on those who do want to change their lives.
43 Rewards – Helping jobseekers set goal and work with them on building a pathway to achieve them. Often I don’t see them complete longer term goals as getting employment is just one of the first ones. Challenges – Working in a system that seems to reward failure and not having the tools available to help people with attitude issues that hold them back. Not enough adequate training for myself and co-workers to tackle these challenges.
Assistance needed – More training to handle trouble cases. Less paperwork. Everything is in triplicate and so much time is crossing Is and Ts that the effort to do some things for a chance outcome is hard.
17 Rewards – Working with people in need. Challenges – Trying to match the need.
Assistance needed – Training.
36 Rewards – Working with non indigenous people and helping them understand it’s not as easy to stereotype people because of social economic standings, Black or White. Challenges – Walking in two worlds Black and White.
Assistance needed – Support and Training of relevancy to my position.
23 Rewards - All the carers I support are really and truly awesome people who open not only their homes but their hearts to disadvantaged children. Challenges - The reality of the situation some times appears to be beyond repair and seeing people scramble to create control measurers rather than putting themselves out of time and energy formulating solutions. Assistance needed - I’m here for the challenges hahahaha.
18 Rewards – When people admire and praise what you have done for them. Challenges – Not being able to do more for clients as there is not enough funding available.
Assistance needed – By applying for more funding.
47 Rewards – Contact and interaction with a wide variety of people and services.
Challenges – My primary challenge at the moment is adjusting to a completely new industry. After that I suspect my biggest difficulty will be attaining the training and certificates necessary to advance my career.

Assistance needed – Career advice on what positions are available in this industry. As well as school advice, when necessary, on how to qualify for the positions that interest me. Then support in my studies, particularly in regards to time and availability, working around a full time work load and family life and support.

Remote
3 Rewards – Getting a positive outcome in partnership with Community.

Challenges – Getting government agencies to do their job.

Assistance needed – Make regional directors/managers responsible for outcomes under Closing the Gap by employing them on outcome based contacts.

12 Rewards – Helping young people.

Challenges – Making young Indigenous people understand the importance of getting a qualification and the commitment and sacrifice needed to do so.

Assistance needed – I think that with the people I’m dealing with, support needs to come from the home front, not only post school, but during school years and pre-school years. This lack of support contributes to the majority of poor education levels and unemployment.

Regional
3 Rewards - Feedback from your people/parents/schools etc that gives you a sign you’re really making a difference.

Challenges - The feedback is rare. Worse still it’s often difficult to even know what your funding bodies really think of how you’re running programs and your outcomes. It’s generally a case of well I didn’t get a slap on the wrist this quarter so I must be travelling alright, or well I got re-funded so I guess they like what I’m doing.

Assistance needed – More feedback from clients/families/partner agencies (a lot of that you have to find yourself) and clearer targets and more feedback from funding bodies.

2 Rewards - NA.

Challenges - Impatient and abusive people.

Assistance needed – NA

1 Rewards - Working with people and sharing the outcomes and witnessing the positive changes created through the work completed. Receiving pictures from the children of their new homes.

Challenges - Working with families that are homeless due to DV or FV. Watching people not ready to bring about change struggle through homelessness, housing stress back to homelessness.

Top down policy development not understanding the reality of the work and needs of clients or me as a worker. Funding not meeting the demand and not focusing on achievable outcomes but on numbers.

Assistance needed – Increase resources available for early intervention and ongoing support to maintain case management. Increase capacity of private sector to work with NGOs and Government to resolve homelessness.

5 Rewards - Making a difference in people’s lives.

Challenges - Assisting tenants to move through the social housing section to private rental.

Assistance needed - All the assistance needed is already in place, e.g. TAASQ, Rent Connect.

10 Rewards – Personal and professional development.

Challenges – Managing my own emotional reactions.

Assistance needed – External supervision.

Managers
5 Rewards - Better outcomes for clients.

Challenges – The human element, dealing with people lives and not a building or park etc.

Assistance Needed – Workload management.

6 Rewards - Seeing people change.

Challenges – Red Tape.

Assistance Needed – Change the government.

1 Rewards - The ability to make a difference in the lives of others.

Challenges - Lack of understanding of disabilities and mental health across the community.

Assistance Needed - Education, advertising acceptance with the communities.

7 Rewards - No response
Challenges – Human Resource issues and dealing with Critical Incidents involving issues outside of our service which are reported to us by Service Users.
Assistance Needed – Funding for an HR officer so they can be delegated the HR issues that continually come to me.
Second point... I have no idea...
3 Rewards - I am in a unique position where I am able to combine the skills I have from my previous working life and use them together with skills/knowledge gained from working in the social sector to see housing provided and managed in a sustainable manner for homeless people.
Challenges – Being all things to all people. It is very difficult to attract highly skilled workers into our sector with the result being an ambitious team of staff that require micro-management to meet the outcomes required.
Assistance Needed - No response.
2 Rewards - Being able to see our fellas grow and become leaders in their own right.
Challenges – Being a small organisation, with the small number of employees, the staff have to perform everything from admin to community engagement, submission writing, advocacy. The whole lot.
Assistance Needed – More resources.
4 Rewards - Having the permission of people to enter their community as a trusted person (acceptance) and being afforded the opportunity to discuss and work collaboratively on a full range of community needs.
Challenges – Bureaucracy and managers or leaders that don’t take the time to know why we do what we do!
Assistance Needed – Do they bottle patience? Be given permission to ignore organisational change and be left to do our funded work.

No Response (2)
Regional
15 Rewards – Being able to assist people in solving their problems and gain a greater quality of life.
Challenges – In two previous positions I had to deal with bullies.
Assistance needed – Not sure, it seems resigning is the only viable option.

Remote
13 Rewards – Getting more back than you put in.
Challenges – Nothing.
Assistance needed – N/A

20 Do you face any challenges or issues because you are a male worker
YES

Support Workers
Disability
Rural
32 Dealing with gender stereotyping.
64 Mild perception that female workers are more successful with the male SUs (Service Users) that I currently support.
30 Being told that I can’t work with another male worker (in general) because the job won’t be done properly. Being told that I am not as caring as females and as such cannot be an asset in the industry and am only good for manual labour. Having female workers treating male clients as they do male workers and stamp out any activity that they don’t want to do because it isn’t comfortable for them to do it. If I have a complaint against another worker I’m automatically put into anger management when I raise my voice to the same level to the person I am having mediation with.
31 Having been the only male working with six female staff and providing the only male contact to a lot of the service users created quite a bit of stress at times. I can see things in a more logical way whereas the female staff are often caught up in the emotion of the moment this can often be confronting. I sometimes feel a bit picked on by my female manager also, as I have been working here way longer than anyone else and may be seen as a bit domineering.
57 I get a majority of male clients, with male-specific issues. Much of the ancillary support services are run by women with a feminised approach to resolving issues.
Other Support Workers
Rural
I am the only Male worker amongst 10 in a workplace. Whilst I fit in well and have worked within mostly female driven organisations I can sometimes feel some isolation and come up against some bias from others. Have to be more transparent and open in terms of practice.

Being a male we tend to think we have to fix everything.

Supports for men are limited in the Rockhampton Region, limited Court support especially for men with Domestic Violence issues, supports are centred mainly around women. Discrimination experienced by self and victims by a predominantly female support staff area.

Some clients prefer working with a male support worker. As I am the only male in the team I get to work with many of these clients including the extremely complex needs. I am also used to help with moving young people (furniture) taking me away from my own case load helping out other staff with their young people.

Feminist views about men are often discouraging.

Some females prefer females for assistance.

Clients can presume that the females in Centre are the ones that can help, not a man. Also some indigenous females do not like working with a man (cultural reasons). When going to networking things, feel like the odd one out.

I and my male colleagues have found that many clients who have been involved with services for quite a while do not feel comfortable with male workers. They ask specifically for female support workers.

Female clients do not like male personal care attendants.

Dealing with my own beliefs and not imposing my concepts onto the men I work with. Being able to assist men without being seen to agree with or condone their beliefs and remain respectful.

Female politics and fitting in.

Regional – Nil Responses

Brisbane

Female colleagues who mother the male clients and not see it.

Most of the workforce is of the other gender.

I think that there is an assumption or an expectation that as a male I am skilled or have ambitions to move into a management role. I have found myself being expected to take up this role even though I have little ambition or desire. There is the potential to disappoint some people if you don’t take up this encouragement from others. Sometimes leadership skills can be misinterpreted as management skills.

There are not too many males working in similar roles so networking and peer support is limited. This I believe is improving and I was recently encouraged by meeting of Indigenous men who are working actively with other men to improve outcomes for their people.

Having female client, that’s culturally inappropriate.

Expected to be a quasi security guard and handy man because of my gender. Requiring to take extra precautions during a one-on-one engagement with the opposite sex to avoid allegations of a sexual nature.

No – Frontline health care is dominated by female workers and more males in the industry would be a positive change.

Inequality in everything.

Community perceptions at the extremes! Query/distrust of male workers; expectation any older males must be authority in charge.

I often get criticised by friends and family because I advocate for disadvantaged groups and people in society. The money is not there, particularly when I can go and get $20000 more a year doing a trade with my hands, It is
hard as a non indigenous male because a lot of the new jobs that I would really like to apply for and have experience in requires candidates to be indigenous.

Coordinator
Rural
26 All the standard male stereotypes are projected on me regardless of actions I do or don’t carry out. For example - I am not a bully, I am not a sexist, I am not a racist, I am not a homophobe, but all of these presumptions have been made about me based on the prejudices of staff who have dealt with overweight middle aged North Queensland men and then projected those negative experiences on to me for apparently no reason other than their lack of ability to differentiate between their expectations of me and the reality of a given situation...
9 Some female clients, particularly indigenous, find it sometimes hard to open up to a male when being assessed.

Remote
9 Some i.e. trust with young murri women.

Case Manager/Worker
Rural
53 Being wary of boundaries around sexually abused children.
11 Myriad of issues to consider when working with young women, including negative public perceptions of this, and the risks of malicious allegations.
Regional (1)
4 Missing job opportunities simply by being male.

Counsellor/Psychotherapists/Social Worker/Solicitor
Rural
1 Can’t see some clients, expected to work well with others.
37 Female dominated industry often not aware of male inclusive factors such as counselling, facilities are often feminised.
7 Low pay compared to other industries and an unwillingness from the employer to move up to the SACS award.
66 Degrading comments towards males, applying for positions of employment and told a female would be a better choice. Remember the men who are in the community services sector mostly do not have an issue with women, they see no gender problems other wise we would have picked another career. Consider this - 80% of this sector is female and 20% male. We also have and do support any support systems for females within the work place. What we would like to see happen is support systems put in place for the male workers as well for we all know that females and males have different needs. We have a job to do, to help those in need, so let’s start by helping each other regardless of our gender, colour or religious beliefs etc.
51 Difficult being co-located in my counselling role with a women’s domestic violence service. Often men are seen as abusive and everything is seen through a DV lens to the detriment of the clients.
54 Being accepted as a male who works in a female industry, earning enough money.
4 Some clients only want a female worker.

Remote
8 Working with women in a cross-cultural and cross-gender context.
1 Relating to women’s issues.

General
Rural
38 Perceptions of bias.
62 We also offer a Women’s Support Service. I do feel uncertain sometimes if I have a negative influence on these clients just because I am male.
60 Having to keep a low head around the office when it’s that time of the month! Being the only male worker in an office of 11 women this can be very tricky!!! Also being the only one who is called upon to defuse volatile situations when we have aggressive male clients can be very challenging.
43 Only minor. But because it is so female dominated as a male I am often sidelined and my thought processes may tackle issues from a different perspective and aren’t given merit.
17 Restricted in what you can do within the organisation.
Remote
3 Senior and executive management seem to be scared of ‘Black’ men.

Regional
1 At times clients may not always feel safe working with a male worker due to historic violence and negative relationships. Access to women’s shelters to complete housing work is not possible always. Some female workers do not think male staff understand DV or should work with survivors of DV. Some situations can have a higher risk for me driving long distances with clients by myself or been left with children while the client toilets another child. Some clients are not offered high levels of support due to risk assessment that it is not safe for me due to the client’s history with violent partners. Where if I was female that risk may have reduced.
5 Not always of course but on occasions I come across the ‘women can do anything’ attitude resulting in difficulty in working as a team.

Managers
6 The more difficult cases are often given to blokes (violent and sex offenders). This is unfair.
1 Not in my position but support workers are often challenged by female service users as they prefer females, they don’t see men as appropriate in the role.
7 Outnumbered by women, but in reality that is not an issue. Biggest issues for me that in a ‘rural’ area people look down on men that work in office roles.
3 Office politics due to imbalance of male/female ratio. Expectations within the sector that males automatically assume protection roles during incidents of high risk when working with clients. Greater risk to male workers when working with female clients (majority are female). Male clients occasionally challenge for superiority against male workers.
4 Being expected to be the most resilient and lead all that time. As a male you’re also the first (I believe) to get the proverbial kick up the bum and these become more regular the closer one gets to retirement.

No Response
Regional
15 As this sector is dominated by women, the prejudices and stereotypes colleagues hold have often gone untested and/or unchallenges for a long time and are by the time I am employed often entrenched and bordering on sexism. Also, some women do not like to have men in their team. There was one occasion where I applied for a (government) job for which I had ample qualifications and experience. To prevent me from getting the job the manager went so far as to engage in unlawful deceptive manoeuvres.

21 Do you feel being a male is an advantage in your work?
YES

Support Workers
Disability
Rural
32 As there are fewer men in the industry than women, I feel we are more in demand.
49 Service users seem to respond to male support workers better, possibly there is an intrinsic authoritarian view of male support workers by service users... often they just 'comply' with directions without question when supported by a male support worker.
5 Helps with dealing with male clients, build a better bond with them.
45 I work with sex offenders that should not work with female workers: when they have the the outcomes has been disastrous. Some service users have been physically violent as well. No place for the faint hearted.
28 Because clients are also male.
20 Can relate to other males more easily.
44 Exposure of SU’s (Service Users)to male role models. More choices of activites including sports related ones that females have been known not to provide.
30 Being able to bring a different view to the table, and making certain clients more comfortable with having guy time’ instead of sitting around reading womens mags.
31 It about providing balance. It's not so much just being a male but it has to do with previously learnt skills and abilities that the female staff and the service users themselves recognise as a male domain. Being perceived as
somewhat of a father figure also helps to provide a sense of family and belonging, balanced of course by the female staff as mother figures.

57 Rapport with male clients is easier to establish. Sexual violence is less frequently a safety concern for workers. Male specific issues are easier to discuss – male clients are often less likely to share sexual or relationships concerns with female workers.

Other Support Workers

55 Can more easily listen empathetically to clients stories and give respectful feedback.

64 Depensing what it means by this question. From a clients perspective (mostly male) I think it is imperative to have a social justice issue being addressed from a Male’s perspective.

34 Clients do relate to being in a men’s-only hostel. Able to understand clients on this gender basis. Reduced sexual harassment and respect.

29 Being a male-only crisis hostel it is easier and the fellows feel more relaxed talking with another bloke, predominantly.

52 Some male clients may respond better and open up more with another male.

12 Able to talk with lots of different people in a way that does not marginalise or isolate people. Also positive male role modelling is always an assisting factor to challenge stereotypes.

41 Males tend to be open to discussion to another male personal issues, feelings.

35 Yes – No Response.

40 I am able to relate to many clients in a different way than they are used to and I am not as emotionally reactive as some support staff.

6 Better able to relate to male issues. May be disadvantage when working with some female-related issues.

Remote (3)

2 Male clients find it more comfortable to connect and interact with a male worker. Female clients also like the variety at times and with most services.

10 Sometimes a deal of physical strength is required to move or help.

6 Working with young men, who need a role model.

Regional (2)

8 I am the first male to work in the team, I am told it is good to bring a male perspective to an all female workplace.

11 The clients seem to view male workers as more like father figures therefore perceived authority.

Brisbane (1)

2 I am able to be a great ‘mate’ to my male clients, for they see me differently. I am able to assist them and empower them because there is such a shortage of male role models. There is such a need for us.

Health

Rural (5)

24 Yes, there are advantages and non-advantages, being a male worker helps us to connect with the fathers and males of the family which in most cases are left out when it comes to health checks.

39 Some men or women prefer assistance of male workers.

13 It can be...I have been given opportunities to develop areas of professional interest, eg, Men’s Health, which value adds to the diversity of the service. I also think that managers feel that there may be benefits to the team dynamics by having a man health professional on the team as opposed to a totally female workforce. It potentially enhances the skill mix and diversity of the team and offers flexibility in service delivery.

8 Being a male within the Health stream (of human services/community sector) is very important. Males do find it hard to access any services or most of the time are too stubborn to get a health check or see a GP because they are ashamed of talking about their private life or parts!!!

21 From my perspective, the glass is on the floor, not on the ceiling!

Regional (1)

9 They know you are consistent and reliable.

Training/Education

Rural (1)
Specific perspectives.

**Coordinator**
**Rural**
56 Because of the gender imbalance, I have found clients appreciate the different perspective and parents are looking for positive male role models for their kids.
9 Can be with some male clients – however, I look at work qualities in regards of being competent or not, which in my opinion has got nothing to do with gender.

**Remote**
11 I have just started a Mens Shed, so relate well to males- talk the talk so to speak. I have been lucky in my life experience as a male so I find it easy to relate to females and males. I pride myself on good communication skills and am pretty fit so this helps me in my role with an aqua-aerobics program as I’m in the pool with the punters as a assistant/support person. I think people feel safe with me if they get into difficulty. My work centre is primarily female so I believe a balance of male energy is a good thing. Males accept that everybody looks at things differently so some male input is a bit more balanced. I have accepted a role in my community centre as a bit of a Mr Fix It, so my male abilities help get things done and people respect me for that- helping out. I have done much on human behaviour re a police trainer in avoiding conflict so in crisis situations I’m confident I can usually talk problems down pretty effectively, without conflict.
9 Can be seen as role model for younger boys.

**Case Manager/Worker**
**Rural (3)**
53 There are so few of us it brings a fresh perspective for people we work with.
14 There are more males needing service and being male gives me an understanding.
11 Providing male role models and modelling healthy interactions with women.

**Regional**
4 Different approach to young people and they respond differently and more respectfully. Female workers also seem more respectful to male than they are towards each other.

**Counsellor/Psychotherapist/Social Worker/Solicitor**
**Rural**
1 There is a demand for us.
37 Not many male counsellors so gives clients more choice.
7 Sometimes males want to deal with males.
51 As so many of our clients are male and nearly all our staff are female. Obviously I provide some balance.
54 I bring a strength of character that helps me work and manage upwards. I am more assertive and am able to negotiate my salary and conditions. I am able to take more responsibility to respond outside of the accepted confines of what is excepted and I have very clear boundaries about saying no when I have to.
4 Men with mental health issues more willing to disclose personal issues with me, and more at ease to discuss some ‘men’s issues’.

**Remote**
14 Aboriginal men find it easier to confide in another man.
8 Due to the limited numbers of male clinicians in this sector, it can be an advantage as male clinicians can see other men, and some women are also happy to see a male clinician, whereas often Indigenous men have cultural/gender barriers that prevent them from accessing support from a female clinician.

**General**
**Rural**
62 There are services that I can help with relating to other males.
60 It can be advantageous when it comes to certain administration tasks that are beyond my capabilities but that’s about it.
43 A different perspective. Able to relate to different clients. Some males need a ‘mate’ to help them out with ideas for jobs as opposed to a mother figure or nagging wife.
36 Some times it can get physical, in saying that communication is a key element.
47 Able to give male peer support (when/if required) to clients.
This may sound stereotypical but I run very physical programs and there aren’t many women in community services that could do what I do. It also helps being male to be able to relate to some of the very disengaged males we work with who can relate well to a positive male role model. At times I can have stronger conversations with other men about appropriate behaviour and problem solve with both clients what my happen and what may reduce risk. A male is (or from experience seems to be) able to make decisions with less chance of allowing emotions to influence the decision. Majority of our clients are male, this aids with rapport building and empathising.

Managers
5 Majority of clients are male and this assists with connection.
6 In some cases, I can have a better rapport with male clients than female case workers.
7 I feel having myself has reduced some of the constant henpecking and back-stabbing that occurs in an organisation full of females, although there are still ongoing ‘pecking order’ battles which increases the amount of human resource impacts on my time.
3 Job Security – generally there are so few males in the workplace the employer will do anything to retain the male workers (for 6 years I was the only male employee out of 15 staff). Many stakeholders can tend to seek out the male workers to communicate with, not sure why, just an observation.
4 Women continue to be under-represented in key leadership roles in rural areas (although that is changing); so it can be (not always) easier for me to engage and work with a traditional community. Mind you this is a very different dynamic to when I was a male nurse in 1983.

No Response
Regional
15 From Kindergarten to Aged Care, wherever men get in contact with Social Services they most likely get their service delivered by women, whether they like it or not. Over the years, many males (and some females) I have worked with seem to have welcomed the fact that I was male.

Remote
13 Sometimes

22 What personal or professional development opportunities would enhance your ability to perform your job, i.e., communication skills, professional supervision, conferences etc?
23 What training opportunities would enhance your ability to perform your job?
24 Which format best suits your learning style, i.e. workshops, hands-on training, group work, one-on-one etc?
Please describe

Support Workers

Disability
Rural
32 Developmental – Financial assistance with further relevant, specialised study.
Training – Training in Makaton would be extremely helpful in my position.
Learning style – Self paced study.
49 Developmental - Extra training, anything in addition to the minimum job qualifications would benefit staff and service users.
Training – More training relevant to service.
Learning style – Workshops, nationally recognised training through TAFE etc.
5 Developmental – Don’t know.
Training – Easier TAFE courses to get into (more run from Ingham).
Learning style – Hands-on training is better suited to me.
68 Developmental – Like to be left alone
Training – Nil
Learning style – Hands-on training
45 Developmental – All training opportunities have had value to working smarter.
Training – Workshops to do with autism would assist.
Learning style – Workshops.
27 Developmental – Attending more conference, workshops delivered by health or clinical professionals.
Training – I have the opportunity to attend quite a lot of training through my employer.
Learning Style – Workshops and group work.
25 Developmental – Better trained professional supervision and more support workers.
Training – Having better training for all support workers e.g. Cert 111 disability worker minimum.
Learning Style – Group Work.
28 Developmental – N/A
Training – N/A
Learning Style – N/A
20 Developmental – Training & Conferences
Training – Training that covers the areas of importance of the position.
Learning style – All of the above.
44 Developmental – Conferences on best practice, active support, and behaviour management.
Training – I am currently applying to Sydney University to do research.
Learning styles – Hands-on is best, but workshops are OK.
61 Developmental – Current training is adequate.
Training – Current training is adequate.
Learning style – Current classroom and online training suits me.
30 Developmental – Having a psychologist attend weekly training and being able to ask him about an issue we were having that week or something we want to brush up on and have a mini training session to support the person better.
Training – T.C.I training.  Conflict resolution training (similar to the security industry) for aggressive/abusive clients.
Learning style – One-on-one, because then you know what has to be done for that one client.
31 Developmental – I attended a ‘Sharing the Road’ conference many years ago which was brilliant as it provides for a huge information exchange and learning opportunity for people working in the same fields.  Aside from that we are provided with opportunities to refresh and develop our skills with in-house training.
Training – To be involved in a think tank where new and innovative ideas can be developed.
Learning style – It may depend on the topic but small-group work is often beneficial.
57 Developmental - Interagency forums/discussions about presented topics related to recovery.
Training - Workshops related to mentoring.
Learning style - Workshops.
42 Developmental – More specific training, especially with the specialist doctors.
Training - No response.
Learning style – Workshops.
69 Developmental - No response.
Training - I’m happy with what I have.
Learning style - Hands-on training.
59 Developmental – I would like further pc training.
Training – No response.
Learning style – Hands-on.

Other Support Workers
19 Developmental – Any activities in outside support work.
Training – Any workshops/courses that pertain to working with people who have barriers (like e.g. positive behaviour reinforcement seminar I attended).
55 Developmental – More money available to attend training courses.
Training – In counselling, in working with difficult clients, in group facilitation.
Learning Style – One-on-one preferably with group involvement if they are willing to participate.
64 Developmental – I have regular opportunity for supervision and training that is supported by my organisation.  Happy in this area.
Training – Access to anything that is deemed supportive and relevant to the work.  I think I get enough.
Learning style – collective of the above. I do like hands-on.

34 Developmental – Mental health training – alcohol & other drug training. Consultancy through transfer within company. Networking.

Training – Computer skills, physiological skills, indigenous & cultural.

Learning Style – Hands-on training. Gaining experience on a day-by-day basis, real time.

29 Developmental - Skills enhancement through on the Job and RPL assessment. Put Skilling Solutions into the field for busy people.

Training – Body language training, more on borderline personality disorder and there can never be enough on Mental Health particularly where the diagnosis is behavioural.

Learning style – Hands-on or academic paper based, time is the factor though, on the job would be ideal but with a case load of 15 people time can be an issue.

52 Developmental – Leadership courses.

Training – Supervising other staff members.

Learning style – Any of the above.

12 Developmental – Communication skills, business skills, acquired knowledge about issues like depression, domestic violence, couple counselling, family therapy skills, counselling and work with people experiencing mental illness etc.

Training – I have employed a research regimen and am at this point working through selected readings as part of workplace research activities. I would like to acquire diploma level training across areas like community services and business.

Learning style – Accredited workshops at this stage would be most suitable with lots of different topics around counselling and support.

41 Developmental – Communication skills, professional supervision.

Training - Communication skills, professional supervision.

Learning style – More hands-on training to develop valuable skills and workshops are great too.

2 Developmental – Probably professional supervision/debriefing with Centre Manager/Coordinator.

Training - Basic counselling skills.

Learning style – One-on-one, distance education.

35 Developmental – Nil.

Learning style – Nil.

40 Developmental – Community sector education/information sessions, professional supervisor.

Training – No response.

Learning style – As an active learner I get the best results from workshops-based training activities.

6 Developmental – Please – no more conferences. Put the money into service provision and especially mental health support and recovery services. Short, accredited courses to keep skills up-dated and relevant are useful.

Training – Course relating to mental health, community wellness, trauma, counselling skills and event and activity planning are always useful.

Learning style – Workshops.

Remote

2 Developmental – Professional supervision and mentoring.

Training – Group training face-to-face sessions, distance education only goes so far.

Learning style – Workshops and hands-on training.

10 Developmental – More information relating to the clients I deal with i.e. Dementia or any ‘aged’ based info.

Training – Anything that would help communicate with terminally sick patients would help.

Learning style – Probably ‘on the job’ type training where you learn in context.

7 Developmental – Being better able to communicate/interview clients – able to draw out more useful information that allows the client to identify issues. Remaining respectful – not closing or derailing conversation due to personal reactions relating to disclosures of violence.

Training – Training in interviewing people – this would help to draw out better information from clients. Dealing with difficult feelings/emotions – This might help me find ways of staying respectful.

Learning style – I learn equally well in all forms of training, though I think in this instance workshop or hands-on training would be bettered suited.

6 Developmental – Counselling.

Training – Dip of Counselling.
Learning style – Learn by doing, getting in and doing it.

Regional
8 I am almost completed my Diploma in Child Youth and Family Intervention through TAFE. On the job training is offered as well.
Training – Any further training in the Placement Support Worker role would be beneficial.
Learning style – Workshops are good, hands-on and group work are all good.
7 Developmental – Definitely communication skills and an understanding of adolescent behaviour.
Training – Unsure.
Learning style – Workshops and group work.
11 Developmental – More autonomy. This was how it was previously.
Training – Unsure.
Learning style – Hands-on training.

Brisbane
2 Developmental – Conferences.
Training – I have done all the training as well as my yearly training. I am more qualified for my role classification. Unless I am at a higher classification, it is not really necessary.
Learning style – Workshops.

Health
Rural
24 Developmental – Combination of these things (communication skills, professional supervision, conferences etc).
Training – Team leadership development training and diploma in health.
Learning style – Workshops and hands-on training.
39 Developmental - Supervision, training.
Training - Understanding mental health diagnosis and evidence based interventions.
Learning style - Workshops.
48 Developmental – Professional supervision.
Training - Higher education including post graduate studies.
Learning style - Group work.
13 Developmental - I think some skills training around particular communication strategies to work effectively in a female dominated work environment. I think I would enjoy the opportunity to provide mentorship to other men setting out to working in the field. I think it may well be helpful for myself to network with other experienced males for peer support and personal and professional mentorship.
Training - I have access to a broad range of training opportunities within Q Health however I think I may benefit from a network of other men in similar professional circumstance to examine more closely the issues involved.
Learning style - I respond to a range of learning styles depending on the information being presented. I enjoy the conference environment where information is presented in different formats.
16 Developmental - Communication skills; update on skills training; further TAFE course improve your skills (Communication – grief and loss, what to say – aged care setting)
Training - Higher level courses
Learning style - Workshops; hands-on training; further your higher level certificate – health programs, such as doing TAFE courses for improvement.
8 Developmental - More support and training? Having another Indigenous female worker or even another worker to cover such a wide area.
Training - Cert IV OAD and Mental Health Cert IV or a Diploma.
Learning style - Group work, hands-on training.
21 Developmental - Better time management skills
Training – Advanced Project Management, time management.
Learning style – Video pod cast workshops – distance ed.
65 Developmental – Communication skills.
Training – Advocacy.
Learning style – Hands-on training.
10 Developmental – Communication skills.
Training – No response.
Learning style – Hands-on training.
67 Developmental - Health research, community development, project management, cultural competency with indigenous and NESB.
Training – Maintaining or updating skills and new knowledge.
Learning style – Workshops and seminars that also engage participants rather than a completely didactic lecture format.

Remote
15 Developmental – AT PRESENT, I have all the necessary skills and training to equip me with the role that I am in now.
Training – RPL all the training and workshops, conferences and so forth to see what could expire from that exercise, i.e. could contribute to a masters in PHC or counselling.
Learning style – Direct instruction – Lectures/tutorials as well as the practical.

Regional
9 Developmental – Professional mentors.
Training – Again it’s not the training opportunities there are plenty of those it’s the funding to support this learning.
Learning style – All of the above (workshops, hands-on training, group work, one-on-one).

Training/Education
Rural
22 Developmental – Constant upgrades/PD re comm. Skills, conferences, ability (time, money) to access...streams.
Learning style – Any.
63 Developmental – More funded/free 1 or 2 days PD sessions on common issues from across the Community/Human services.
Training – More recognition of experience/skills/knowledge by training organisations AND universities through the RPL process and a simplified cost effective RPL process.
Learning style – Workshops and small group activities.
50 Developmental – Organisation currently puts me through training and personal developmental opportunities.
Training – As above.
Learning style – Hands-on training – practice new skills.

Regional
6 Developmental – Communication in the context of training.
Training – Instructional skills training.
Learning style – Hands-on and one-on-one.

Coordinator
Rural
56 Developmental – Attending conferences and to network.
Training – Engagement methods workshops.
Learning style – Workshop group work.
46 Developmental – Professional External supervision.
Training – No response.
Learning style – Group work.
26 Developmental – Conferences with an emphasis on building ongoing networking opportunities with others in the sector.
Training – Provided they were free...any opportunity...
Learning style – As long as the standard Adult Learning Principles are applied any mode will work, but I do prefer personal interaction at some point.
9 Developmental – Certificate IV in Mental Health.
Training – Certificate IV in Mental Health.
Learning style – Workshops.

Remote
11 Developmental- The odd conference for relevant stuff, but generally I’s confident with my gig.
Training – A bit more re engagement with Indigenous communities and overcoming the difficulties I mentioned earlier.
Learning style – Workshops are good with an experienced facilitator who knows their gig.

9 Developmental – Guidance from a trained counsellor.
Training – I’d like to study for a degree in counselling or at the very least a mentor.
Learning style – Group work or one-on-one.

**Case Manager/Worker**

**Rural**

53 Developmental - Regular Supervision. Access to study grants earlier in one’s work for an organisation to facilitate up skilling.
Training - Training in trauma, attachment, counselling skills.
Learning style – A mix of all the above. I get bored if I have to do more than one all the time.
14 Developmental – Training (eg) cert 4 mental health & atods counselling courses.
Training – as above.
Learning style – Hands-on and group work – I’m a practical person.
11 Developmental – Greater interagency coordination and liaison.
Training – Therapeutic Crisis Intervention.
Learning style – Workshops, hands-on training.

**Remote**

5 Developmental – Conferences.
Training – Mediation and Conflict Resolution.
Learning style – All of the above.

**Regional**

4 Developmental – External supervision, training for psychologist registration.
Training - Courses & seminars relevant to work.
Learning style – Hands-on training and observation of those with experience in the field. Feedback from supervisors.

**Counsellor/Psychotherapist/Social Worker/Solicitor**

**Rural**

1 Developmental – Assistance developing professional qualifications e.g. getting master or 2 year supervision.
Training – General Training.
Learning style – Workshops.
37 Developmental – No response.
Training – Relationship counselling training.
Learning style – Hands-on – Kinaesthetic.
58 Developmental – Continuity of all the above.
Training – Anything that increases or assists current knowledge and skills.
Learning style – Respond to all.
7 Developmental – Supervision.
Training – Most of the training is provided in the sector.
Learning style – Workshops.
66 Developmental – Communication modules, counselling short courses, professional supervision, conferences.
Training – Management, communication and organisational courses.
Learning style – All of the above.
51 Developmental – I have external supervision and this helps. More men as colleagues would definitely help.
Training – I don’t think training is always helpful although it appears to be a direction you may advocate. More helpful would be respect from female colleagues around what a male perspective can add of value. A little more interest and curiosity in what male workers have to offer. Perhaps more training with female workers on this point would be less pathologising of male workers.
Learning style – No response.
54 Developmental – I would need professional supervision from a qualified and trained non line supervisor.
Training – Access to training in my field to improve my professional qualifications.
Learning style - I enjoy learning and I get a lot from hands-on but really enjoy taking on external studies through uni.
4 Developmental – None really. Getting too old to stay on the roundabout of training.
Training – Can’t think of any.
Learning style – Any format would be OK.

**Remote**

14 I believe we need ongoing training to keep up with community needs and changes to laws and legislation.
Training – No response.
Learning style – Workshops due to time restraints.
4 Developmental – Masters degree in counselling.
Training – N/A.
Learning style – Group work.
8 Developmental – Being supported financially to attend conferences and professional development workshops, further education etc.
Training – Specific training for working with men, together with adolescent boys and children.
Learning style – Workshops, short courses.
1 Developmental – Better communication skills at being an advocate, professional supervision by a specialist.
Training – Masters Degree.
Learning style – Workshops, one-on-one.

**Brisbane**

1 Developmental – Counselling/psychology conferences and workshops on counselling and supervision.
Training – Not sure how this questions differs to Q22.
Learning style – All of the above.

**General**

**Rural**

3 Developmental – Communication skills and conferences/workshops directly related to payroll and accounting.
Training – See above.
Learning style – Mixture of workshop and hands-on job training.
38 Outside professional supervision – at the moment it is internal.
Training – Anything would help. Usually told there isn’t any money in the budget. I haven’t been to one training seminar (cost involved) of my own choice.
Learning style – Hands-on. Practice.
62 Developmental - I feel conferences are the main one. Being new to the sector there is a lot for me to learn.
While I can relate to most people on an emotional level due to my life experience, there is a lot of administrative knowledge I need to accumulate. For example which avenue of appeal will suit the client better or what services they qualify for.
Training - An on the job training program that fits in with University qualifications at the end. I suppose it would be more like a traineeship or trade.
Learning style – I personally gain more from workshop and hands-on training.
33 Developmental – Formal Training.
Training – Human Services qualifications.
Learning style – Workshops.
60 Developmental – Being offered training to further enhance my career development within the industry. I haven’t been offered any in the last 6 years of working in the industry!!
Training – A monthly training day out of the office and away from clients to fully absorb any changes that pertain to my roles in the Employment Industry.
Learning style – Workshops and hands-on.
43 Developmental - Mediation skills. Some skills with working with supervisors. Perhaps supervisors need management training as often they are promoted purely on length of time in role without significant new skills.
Training - Systems training. So much of the government systems are ‘learn-as-you-run-into-trouble’ as opposed to using effectively all the tools. Information on screens has real world implications that sometimes go unrecognised.
Learning style - Workshops with independent study between regularly scheduled sessions.
17 Developmental – No response.
Training – Housing
Learning style – Hands-on training.
36 Developmental – Not having a formal education leaves you lacking in all these skills and it has taken me a long time to get close to this but I still have not achieved.
Training – Certificate IV in Indigenous Leadership.
Learning style – Workshops, group work.

23 Developmental – Training.
Training – It has been discussed which training regime will best suit my personal development, in my case I will be undertaking Cert IV Training and Assessment to allow me to conduct Pre-service Training to newly recruited carers.
Learning style – I’m fairly open but I feel a few courses could have been more productive if the facilitators controlled the group and reduced the amount of ‘war stories’ being told.

18 Developmental – No response.
Training – Refresher courses, and take more trainings that are available and networking.
Learning style – Hands-on.

47 Developmental – Professional supervision would be most helpful. This has been very well supplied to me by my current employer. It is standard policy for their probation period.
Training – Industry specific re-skilling program. By that I mean, I feel comfortable with the work, but I am working quite hard to learn more about how my industry works and grows.
Learning style – Hands-on training.

Remote
3 Developmental – Attending conference that provide the opportunity to learn and share information regarding our area of work.
Training – I am skilled enough for what I do in Community.
Learning style – Hands-on.

12 More training with regards to Indigenous communities. More involvement in community activities, as this would help towards community acceptance and trust.
Training – Knowing what programs were previously conducted in the community and why they succeeded/failed and knowing the full extent of the program that is trying to be delivered.
Learning style – Hands-on training, as this allows you to experience first-hand what the job expectations are.

Regional
3 Developmental – I’d just like to see my training/PD budget expanded. It barely covers the minimum requirements for my role at the moment and when interesting/useful things come up they’re often too expensive.
Training - The ability to better travel for training. With a tight budget it’s often a case of training being too expensive and having to wait for training to come to us, which in a regional area doesn't always happen.
Learning style - I’d say a combination of conference style workshops and hands-on stuff over several days. Any longer than a week would be impossible, any shorter than a few days limits learning opportunities.

2 Developmental - N/A.
Training – N/A.
Learning style – All.

1 Developmental – Marketing training branding and building relationships with the private sector.
Training – As above.
Learning style – A blend of all these models. Mentoring also is an area I’m very keen to use. Formal and informal learning opportunities.

5 Developmental – Communication, time management.
Training – All of the community housing training opportunities that are currently available.
Learning style – Workshops.

10 Developmental – Professional external supervision.
Training – Indigenous cultural training, different intervention models/strategies.
Learning style – I can adapt to any method, for me it depends on the content of the material.

Managers
5 Developmental – Further sponsorship for tertiary studies.
Training – Management courses.
Learning style – Group work.

6 Developmental – Conferences.
Training – No response.
Learning style – All.

1 Developmental – Access to appropriate training at a cost that is reasonable and in an attempt to lift the profile of workers in the sector in general.
Training – Those relevant to the sector, Cert/Dip Community Services or any of the many across the sector.
Learning style – Self-paced learning.
7 Developmental – I wish I knew because if I did I would attend to them.
Training - ????I simply do not know at the moment.
Learning style – Workshops that are hands-on, and group work, on the proviso that they do not degenerate into bitching sessions about the participants’ workplaces which I have to say is what I have seen in this sector time and time again.
3 Developmental – Professional supervision.
Training – Asset management.
Learning style- One-on-one.
2 Developmental – Mentoring, supervision, professional training.
Training – No response.
Learning style – Workshops, one-on-one.
4 Developmental – Some admin support – less of the bureaucracy that generates the need.
Training – Supporting (experienced) older males to make bold career changes. Currently we can stay in jobs for superannuation and family reasons even though we might be longing for a new role.
Learning style – Group work – experience is the best teacher.

No Response (2)
Regional
15 Developmental – There are PD opportunities for me.
Training - There are PD opportunities for me.
Learning style – Happy with most.

Remote
13 Developmental – N/A.
Training – N/A.
Learning style – Workshops, hands-on training, group work.
### Appendix 3

1a Do you work in a rural or remote area?  
1b In which region of Queensland do you work in?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Returned Surveys</th>
<th>Number of Surveys</th>
<th>Far North</th>
<th>North</th>
<th>North West</th>
<th>Central Coast</th>
<th>Central West</th>
<th>South East Coast</th>
<th>South West</th>
<th>No region indicated</th>
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| **Managers**     |                   |          |       |           |               |              |                  |           |                      |                                 |
| Rural            | 7                 | 1        | 1     | 1         | 1             | 1            | 1                | 2         |                      |                                 |
| **Total**        | 104               | 22       | 16    | 6         | 17            | 3            | 24               | 14        | 1                    | 1                               |

[Graphs showing numbers by region and role]
2 Do you identify as Non–Indigenous, Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or CALD?

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<th>Returned Surveys</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Non Indigenous</th>
<th>Aboriginal</th>
<th>Torres Strait Islander</th>
<th>CALD</th>
<th>No Response</th>
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- Returned Surveys: The number of surveys returned.
- Non Indigenous: The number of respondents identifying as Non-Indigenous.
- Aboriginal: The number of respondents identifying as Aboriginal.
- Torres Strait Islander: The number of respondents identifying as Torres Strait Islander.
- CALD: The number of respondents identifying as CALD.
- No Response: The number of respondents indicating no response.
- Identified with one than one group: The number of respondents identifying with more than one group.

The diagrams illustrate the distribution of responses across different categories such as Returned Surveys, Regional, Brisbane, and Sub Total.
### 3 How old are you?

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<th>Numbers</th>
<th>25 years or under</th>
<th>26 – 34</th>
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### 4a In which area of the human services/community sector do you work in?

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<th>Aged Care</th>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Child Care</th>
<th>Drug &amp; Alcohol</th>
<th>Domestic Violence</th>
<th>Advocacy</th>
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*Other
Rural - Family Counsellor, Youth Support Co-ordinator, Support Worker (Men’s Hostel), Financial Counsellor (2), Housing Worker & Transport Development Officer, Health Worker, Placement Officer (Health), Youth Worker, Counsellor, Corrective Services Officer, Case Worker, Mental Health Support Worker, - , Social Worker, Consultant psychotherapist.
Remote – Youth Worker, Case Manager (Homelessness), Elders Coordinator, Senior Indigenous Mental Health Worker.
Regional – Rent Connect Officer, Youth Development Officer, Community Housing Officer, Reception, Youth Worker, Case Worker
Brisbane – Counsellor and Clinical Supervisor
Manager – Health Promotions, Housing, non specific (2)
4a In which area of the human services/community sector do you work in?

Returned Surveys

Managers

Rural

4a In which area of the human services/community sector do you work in?

Returned Surveys

Regional

Brisbane

Non Managerial Roles

Rural

Remote

Sub Total
5 What is the total length of time you have worked in the human services/community sector?

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<th>1 - 2 years</th>
<th>3 – 5 years</th>
<th>6 - 10 years</th>
<th>11 - 15 years</th>
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7 How old were you when you entered the human services/community sector?

<table>
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<th>Returned Surveys</th>
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<th>26 – 34</th>
<th>35 - 44</th>
<th>45 - 54</th>
<th>55 - 64</th>
<th>65 years and older</th>
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8 Did you work in another occupation before coming to the human services/community sector?

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9 Do you work providing ‘hands on’ support directly to people?

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<th>Yes &amp; No</th>
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9 Do you work providing ‘hands on’ support directly to people?

- Returned Surveys
  - Non Managerial Roles
    - Rural: 69 (54 Yes, 13 Yes & No, 2 No Response)
    - Remote: 15 (15 Yes, 2 No Response)
    - Sub Total: 84 (69 Yes, 13 Yes & No, 2 No Response)
  - Regional: 11 (8 Yes, 2 Yes & No, 1 No Response)
  - Brisbane: 2 (1 Yes, 1 No Response)
  - Sub Total: 13 (9 Yes, 3 Yes & No, 1 No Response)

- Managers
  - Rural: 7 (3 Yes, 4 Yes & No)
  - Total: 104 (81 Yes, 20 Yes & No, 1 No Response, 2 No Response)

[Bar chart showing the distribution of responses across different categories.]
Do you work in another role or roles (community development, case manager, advocate)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Returned Surveys</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No Response</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Non Managerial Roles</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Sub Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>104</strong></td>
<td><strong>62</strong></td>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
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</table>

10 Do you work in another role or roles (community development, case manager, advocate)?

- **Non Managerial Roles**
  - Rural: 69 Yes, 43 No, 23 No Response
  - Remote: 15 Yes, 9 No
  - Sub Total: 84 Yes, 52 No, 29 No Response
  - Regional: 11 Yes, 6 No, 5 No Response
  - Brisbane: 2 Yes, 1 No
  - Sub Total: 13 Yes, 7 No, 6 No Response

- **Managers**
  - Rural: 7 Yes, 3 No, 4 No Response
  - Sub Total: 104 Yes, 62 No, 39 No Response
11 Which group* best describes the people you support in your work? (*more than one response can be given)

This table is not divided into rural, regional, Brisbane or Manager but given as a whole

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<th>Adults</th>
<th>Elderly</th>
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<th>CALD</th>
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[Bar chart showing the distribution of returned surveys by group and role, with bars for non-managerial roles, regional roles, and managers, and detailed numbers for each category.]
12 Which of the following best describes your current employment status – Full time, Part time, Casual?
13a Is this level of employment of your choosing? 13b If no, what would be your ideal employment status?

*Symbols: + = more hours, - = less hours, # = different position or role.*

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15 What is the highest post school study* you have done? (*more than one response can be given)

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<th>TAFE Qualifications</th>
<th>Incomplete Undergraduate Degree</th>
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<td>16</td>
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</table>

15 What is the highest post school study* you have done? (*more than one response can be given)

- Returned Surveys
- Managers
### 16 Are you currently studying for any formal qualifications?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Returned Surveys</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Currently Studying Yes</th>
<th>Currently Studying No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>62</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>16 Are you currently studying for any formal qualifications?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
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![Bar Chart](image-url)
Do you face any challenges or issues because you are a male worker?

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Yes &amp; No Response</th>
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<td><strong>104</strong></td>
<td><strong>52 (50%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>50 (48%)</strong></td>
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Q 20 - Yes & No Response

- **Total**
  - Series1: 31
  - Series2: 8
  - Series3: 39 (46%)
  - Series4: 43 (51%)

- **Non Managerial Roles**
  - Rural: 69
  - Remote: 15
  - Sub Total: 84

- **Managers**
  - Rural: 7
  - Remote: 4
  - Sub Total: 11

Q 20 - Returned Surveys

- **Yes & No Response**
  - Yes: 43 (51%)
  - No: 39 (46%)
  - Yes & No: 2
21 Do you feel being a male is an advantage in your work?

<table>
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