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Mapping the Catholic social services

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Mapping the Catholic social services

Abstract

Faith based agencies are the major providers of social services in Australia (Lyons, 2001: 34-35). The Industries Commission into Charitable Institutions in 1995 was the first major review of the role of charities (most of which are faith-based) within the Australian social welfare system. The role of charities has always been of central importance to the social welfare system. In 1995 according to the Industry Commissions Report on Charitable Services, around 11,000 community social welfare organisations received government funding in Australia. The same report recognised that there were an unknown number of other organisations, which relied entirely on volunteers and private donations to finance their social welfare activities (Industry Commission, 1995:XV11). An earlier study undertaken in 1981 (see Graycar and Jamrozik, 1993) estimated that between 25,400 and 48,500 Non- Government Welfare Organisations (NGWO) existed in Australia with about 37,000 being the estimate. It should be noted that they also estimated that about two thirds of these received some government funding. Perhaps most importantly more than thirty five per cent had an income of less than \$5,000 per year. Since these two studies the social welfare sector has undergone considerable changes. There have been fundamental shifts in funding arrangements between government and non-government providers including a move away from grants based funding to contractual arrangements with an emphasis on improving quality, accountability and value for money. The issue of separation of Church and State has been a 'sleeping' in Australian social policy debates. The scope and extent of services provided by the large faith based agencies is not routinely reported. This paper reports on one of the faith based sector - the Catholic Church. It is estimated that the Catholic Church is the largest provider of social welfare services in Australia (Cleary, 1994). The paper reports on an attempt to map this 'sector'.

Keywords

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Mapping the Catholic Social Services

*Peter Camilleri & Gail Winkworth**

Introduction

Faith based agencies are the major providers of social services in Australia (Lyons, 2001: 34-35). The *Industries Commission into Charitable Institutions* in 1995 was the first major review of the role of charities (most of which are faith-based) within the Australian social welfare system. The role of charities has always been of central importance to the social welfare system.

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Since these two studies the social welfare sector has undergone considerable changes. There have been fundamental shifts in funding arrangements between government and non-government providers including a move away from grants based funding to contractual arrangements with an emphasis on improving quality, accountability and value for money.

The issue of separation of Church and State has been a 'sleeping' in Australian social policy debates. The scope and extent of services provided by

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the large faith based agencies is not routinely reported. This paper reports on one of the faith based sector – the Catholic Church. It is estimated that the Catholic Church is the largest provider of social welfare services in Australia (Cleary, 1994). The paper reports on an attempt to map this ‘sector’.

It should be noted that the use of the term ‘Catholic sector’ is a misnomer. The Diocesan, Religious and Lay foundations of Catholic organisations and their organisational structures, governance arrangements and budgets suggest that the term ‘Catholic Social Services’ more appropriately refers to a loose network of organisations.

Mapping Project

The study sought to describe the number, range and scope of Catholic Social Services and the pressures currently facing the sector. The study design included survey research, discourse analysis and phenomenological research. A mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods were used, including a literature review, to determine the key issues in church based service delivery today, in particular, in the Catholic sector:

1. a questionnaire sent to all Catholic agencies on existing mailing lists to establish the size and current capacity of the sector and to elicit written responses to structured questions about a range of issues, including training needs and challenges facing the sector;
2. a series of in depth interviews with service providers from all parts of the hierarchy in Catholic social welfare agencies to add richness to the data gathered by survey research.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of 24 items covering the following topics: number of Catholic social service agencies in Australia; Extent and scope of programs undertaken by the sector; structure of agencies and accountability mechanisms; income and expenditure of the sector; number of staff employed on a full-time, part-time and casual basis; voluntary activity in the sector; qualifications and professional representation of staffing in the sector; professional development needs within the sector.

Semi-structured interviews

The purpose of this part of the research was to gain a more in depth understanding of the sector. The data gathered by survey research were enriched through in depth interviewing of managers of Catholic welfare agencies. To develop a sampling frame, ‘purposive sampling’ (Sarantakos, 1998:152) was used. The sampling was based on a theoretical analysis rather than a statistical or personal choice. The choice of informants was determined by critical thinking about the purpose of the study and the likely nature of information to be obtained from particular informants.

Findings

Response to census

The most important aim of this project was to determine the size and scope of the network of agencies which operate under a Catholic auspice. Existing mailing lists were used to reach Diocesan, Religious and Lay organisations. A small number of other agencies not on these lists contacted the research team because they had heard about the project. Surveys were sent out by means of the mailing lists of Catholic Welfare Australia, the Australian Catholic Leaders of Religious Institutes (ACLRI), and the National Council of the St Vincent de Paul Society. Catholic Social Services, Victoria also sent the survey to its member organisations, many of which were already represented on the other three mailing lists.

It is difficult to gauge the response rate to the survey accurately because mailing lists were not available to the Australian Catholic University researchers. While surveys were sent to 200 Religious congregations, many were of the view that they were not involved in Social Service activities and therefore did not return surveys. The majority of Diocesan agencies returned the survey. Unfortunately only three of the seven state offices of the St Vincent de Paul Society returned surveys despite the best efforts of the National Office to encourage return.

One hundred and fifty three surveys were returned, including 45 from the Sydney Centacare group of agencies. In all, this number of surveys provided data on 108 organisations (counting the 45 Sydney Centacare agencies as one.) The request to agency heads by the research team was to return the survey whether it was completed or not. Many surveys were returned incomplete, including 13 with no data from Religious Orders, which described themselves as 'purely contemplative'. The questions most often left blank on other surveys were the open-ended questions in relation to mission, social teachings, and challenges. It is also significant that a considerable number of surveys were returned without information about expenditure and budget.

The return achieved provided critical information about auspice, legal status, budget and programs for all the large Catholic agencies in Australia.

Profile of organisations

Organisations, which responded to the survey, operate services from 1032 different sites. The services are provided in virtually every part of Australia.

A total 85 of 108 organisations answered the question on year of establishment (counting the 45 Sydney Centacare agencies as one organisation only). The data has been grouped into 25 year periods since 1801. More than half of the organisations that responded to this question (52%, n=45) have been established since 1975 and of these 26 (30% of total) since 1990.

This mirrors the growth of the social welfare sector as it expanded in the 1970s. The growth of this Catholic sector also occurred at a time when many of the religious and congregations were not receiving as many vocations as previously and numbers of religious were leaving their orders. This was a

similar experience to the Catholic education system where lay teachers took on more responsibilities including leadership roles within the system, and has had implications for how the organisations are able to maintain and development their charism.

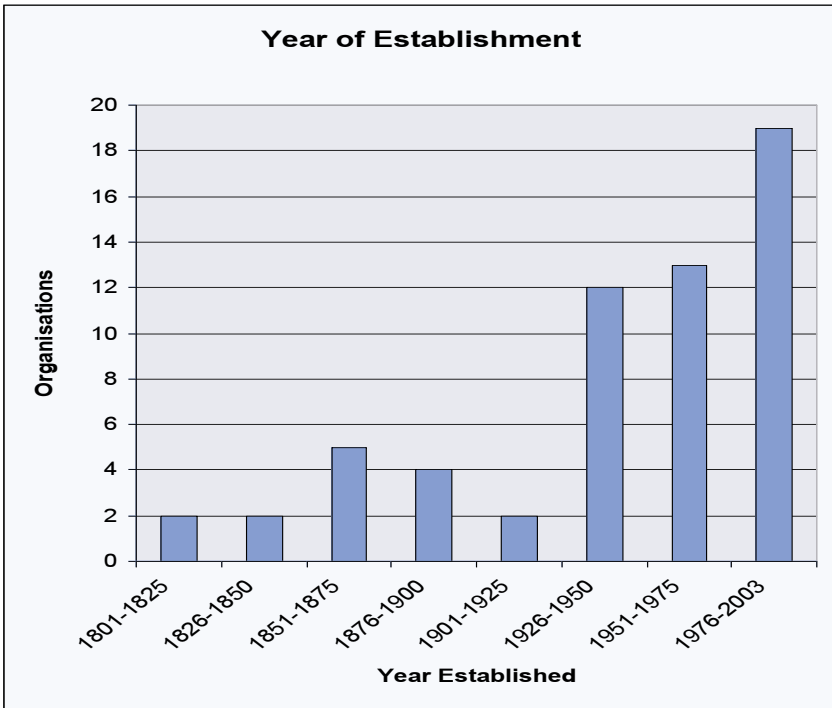


Table 1: Year of Organisations' Establishment

The majority of organisations, which responded to the survey, are owned by Religious Orders (59%, n=64). A further 34% (n=37) are under the auspice of the local Diocese and only 7% (7) are lay or parish owned organisations.

Auspice	Frequency	Percentage
Bishop/Diocese	37	34%
Religious Order	64	59%
Lay Association	4	4%
Parish	3	3%
Total	108	100%

The response from the Bishop/Diocese organisations is indicative of Centacare's network and follows the strong support received from CWA. The response from Religious Orders, which made up 59% of the survey response, provides recognition of the importance that Religious Orders play in providing

welfare services. Many of the Religious Orders have, over the last two decades, focused their activities away from teaching in Catholic schools to providing welfare services. This change in focus has not been well documented and needs further analysis. The role of Lay Associations and Parishes is under-researched and the research team is not confident that the survey provides an accurate picture of their activities.

The question on Legal Status was answered by 81 organisations. Of these the majority (n=38, 48%) are incorporated bodies. A further 26 (33%) are trustees of a Diocese or Archdiocese. Twelve are companies (15%), five are trustees of Religious Orders (6%) and five (6%) are unincorporated.

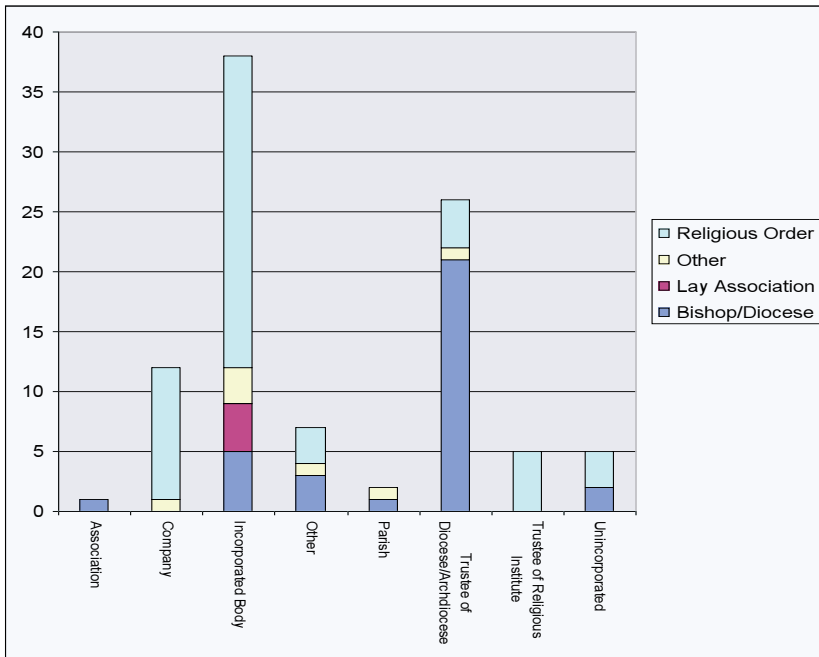


Table 2: Legal Status of Organisations

The results of the survey suggest that the sector has clear accountability guidelines and mechanisms. Data were not available on why agencies were either incorporated, companies or trustees. Governance is an important issue and more work may need to be undertaken to clarify the issues for Catholic agencies. Risk management and leadership development are important for the sector.

Funding

The total budget during the 2001-2002 financial year, for all organisations, which responded to this item of the survey, was \$333,987,357. The estimate of the expenditure for all the Catholic agencies providing social

welfare services is over *half a billion dollars*. This is based on the estimates for the St Vincent de Paul Society’s expenditure for the more than half of their State agencies which did not respond to the survey.

The contribution that the Catholic agencies are making to the Australian community through their service delivery, employment of staff and volunteers is significant. Without comparative data for other faith-based agencies, it is difficult to make ‘claims’ about the sector. However, governments need to be aware of the significance of the sector in terms of its expenditure in providing needed social welfare services. If the not-for-profit welfare sector is estimated to spend between one-and-a-half billion and three billion dollars in expenditure per year (Industry Commission Report, 1995), then the Catholic Church is one of the largest if not the largest provider of social welfare services in Australia.

The survey asked organisations about the sources of their funding. Of the organisations that responded to the question about budget (98), 26 (mostly Religious) did not provide any information about sources of income. Of the 72 organisations that did provide information, 31 (43%) obtained between 75-100% of their funding from the Commonwealth or State governments. A further 19 (26%) received between 26-50% of their funding from Government.

Of the 37 respondents to this question that are under the auspice of a Diocese or Archdiocese, government is overwhelmingly the main source of funding. Seventy-three per cent received more than half their funding and 54% received more than 75% of their funding from government. The majority of the Centacare agencies received more than 80% of their funding from government.

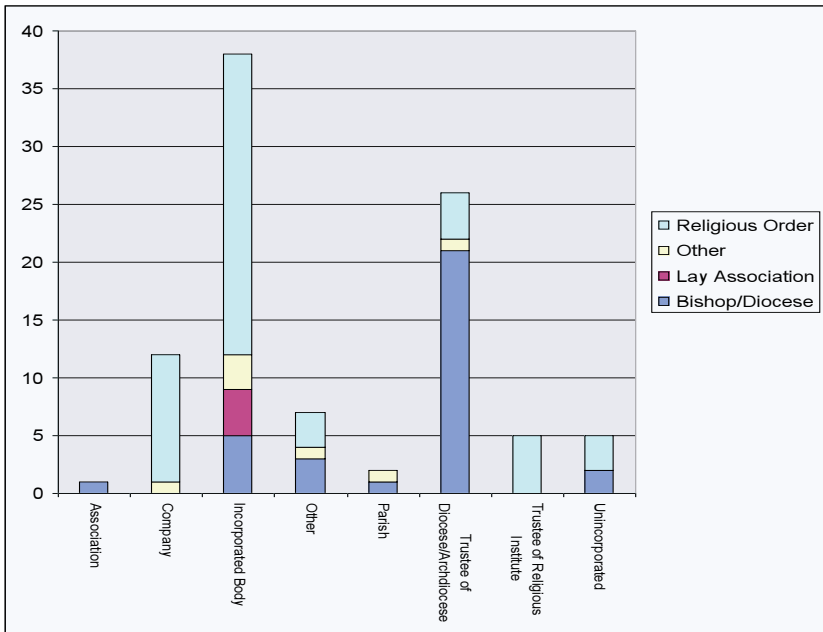


Table 3: Percentage of Funding Received from Government

The significance of this level of funding from government, in particular for Centacare agencies, is the role that they are now playing in the welfare sector. The reliance on government funding for the agencies has implications for the type of services offered, the clientele, standards of practice established and the mission of the agency.

Highlighting their dependency on government funding, 35 Diocesan organisations (95%) received less than 25 % of their funding from their local Diocese or Archdiocese. Seventeen (46%) received no funding and 28 (76%) received less than 10%. The data presented are for the financial year 2001-2002. What the survey was unable to determine was whether funding is decreasing as part of a historical trend or whether Diocesan funding has always been proportionally at this level.

The data, however, does raise for the Dioceses the issue of how much contribution they should be making to this sector. Given the demands on the Church's finance from so many quarters this is a very difficult question.

Sixty organisations (61%) received less than 10% of their funding through donations and fundraising, and 92 (94%) received less than 25% of funding from these sources. However, fundraising is still an important part of the non-profit sector. There are many agencies that received considerable funds through public donation. Without the full data from St Vincent de Paul it is difficult to see whether there are some Catholic agencies, which have 'appeal' outside the Church and are seen as general community services.

Only five organisations identified business as a source of funding for their programs. The business sector is an untapped resource for many welfare agencies and the sector may need to develop strategies for partnership with business.

Human Resources in Catholic Social Services organisations

A total of 8,337 employees work in the organisations that responded to this survey. The data show that approximately half of the staff are part-time with 20% of staff being casual employees.

Full Time	Part Time	Casual	Total
3,205	3,606	1,613	8,337

The following table provides a breakdown of staff in full-time, part-time and casual positions.

Position	Full time	Part time	Casual	Total
Managerial/Administrative support	652.5	281.1	42	890.6
Direct service provision including program managers and coordinators	1,935	2932.1	1366	6,233.1
Research officers devoted to social policy	17	12	2	30
Other	601	380.9	203	1183.9
All positions	3,205.5	3,606.1	1,613	8,337.6

Table 4: Profile of Staff in Terms of Participation and Category

It is interesting to note that the direct service staff are more likely to be in part-time employment. The vast majority of managerial and administrative support staff are in full-time employment. This would appear to be fairly typical of welfare organisations. Historically they have had large numbers of part-time employees, mainly women. The sector has historically paid low wages and utilised a high percentage of part-time employees (Camilleri, 1996). This survey was not able to provide data on the gender mix or qualifications of the staff employed in all the categories.

Forty-five organisations did not complete the question on women in management/leadership positions. A further 10 organisations said they had no women in management/leadership positions. In the remaining 32 organisations, 494 women are in management/leadership positions. This would indicate that women are in half the leadership and management positions within the organisations, which reported on this issue. It is estimated that women are numerically more dominate in the social welfare sector with some estimates of their participation being more than 80% of staff (Camilleri, 1996) and consequently it would appear that given their numbers they are under-represented in the leadership and management positions.

Survey responses indicate there are around 18,718 volunteers working in organisations, which responded to the survey. Volunteers typically work in total around 80,000 hours a week. The following table shows the breakdown of volunteers by auspicing organisations. It should be noted that the absence of figures from the St Vincent de Paul Society in four states affects the number of volunteers in Lay organisations and the data overall.

Auspice	Total Volunteers
Diocesan	3059
Religious	9429
Lay	5603
Other	627
Total	18,718

Table 5: Number of Volunteers

The number of volunteers demonstrates the considerable involvement of lay people in the Catholic agencies. It is an underestimation as the St Vincent de Paul Society is probably the largest volunteer organisation in Australia. The large involvement in the works of religious organisations is of particular interest. This area of service to the community through volunteering needs further analysis.

The following table shows the main activities of volunteers by auspice in agencies that responded to the questionnaire. As expected, the majority of work undertaken by volunteers in Lay organisations is directly client related, while in agencies owned by religious orders, it is administrative support.

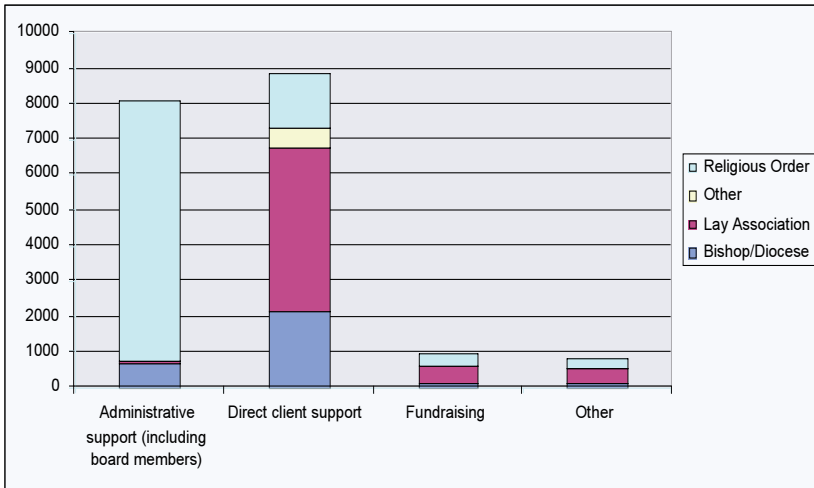


Table 6: Main Activities of Volunteers

There were 544 responses to the question about the qualifications of paid staff. Apart from those with health care qualifications the largest groups were social workers (n=70, 13%) and staff with ‘other welfare’ qualifications (n=73, 13%), followed by education (n=61, 11%) and psychology qualifications (n=57, 10%).

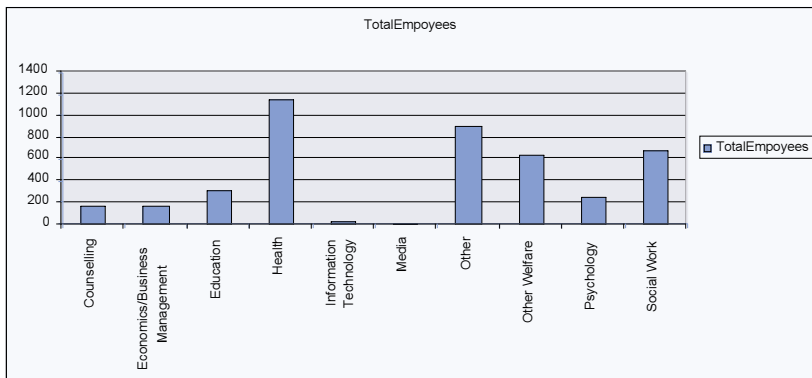


Table 7: Qualifications of Staff

Organisations, which responded to the question in the survey on staff who are deacons, priests and members of Religious Congregations, identified 394 of their staff as Diocesan Deacon or Priest or Religious Sister or Brother. Of these 195 staff are on stipends.

The role of religious in the Catholic agencies needs to be further researched. Issues include succession planning, the role of religious in formal welfare services delivery, and scope of the work undertaken by the congregations. The issue of stipends and the financial implications for

agencies as the number of stipend staff decrease also need further analysis across the sector.

Programs

The study sought to identify the range and scope of programs provided by Catholic agencies, including:

- the purpose of these programs
- the groups these programs seek to target
- the way in which programs are delivered
- the number of people who receive services each year from these programs.¹

Agencies were invited to provide information about programs so that categories could be developed which encompassed their full range and diversity. Unfortunately 56 organisations did not provide information about programs. This helps to explain the discrepancy between the number of sites from which programs are delivered (1,032) and the number of programs identified (732). The following table, however, provides some indication of the diversity of programs, the number of people these programs are reaching each year and the number of programs, by type, delivered by Catholic agencies.

From this table it is estimated that Catholic agencies are most often providing Counselling and Support (n=176), Training, Vocational and Employment Services (n=80), Out of Home Care for Children and Young People (n=64), Services for the Aged, and General Outreach and Support Services. The Training, Vocational and Employment Services offered by Catholic agencies are mostly relatively new services and indicate a significant shift in service provision as well as government contracting out of these services. Though it should be noted that some vocational and training programs have been a feature of many Catholic agencies and thus represent a continuation with past practices and traditions. Counselling and Support, Out of Home Care for Children and Young People and General Outreach and Support Services are core activities and represent the major service provision.

The programs which are reaching the most number of people each year are General Outreach and Support Services, Training, Vocational and Employment Services, Counselling and Support Services and School Focussed Services. It is significant that over half a million people were assisted by Catholic agencies in a year. While the numbers provided are an estimate from the agencies, the sector is clearly making a significant contribution to the community. With over half the agencies not providing data on this item, any figures presented is an under-reporting.

1. The numbers provided by agencies are assumed to include people who receive services more than once.

<i>Program Type</i>	<i>Number of people assisted each year (some people may be assisted more than once)</i>	<i>Number of programs</i>
Counselling and Support	68,330	176
General Family Support	16,811	39
Children's Services	5,000	4
General Outreach and Support Services	178,961	38
Youth Services	5,850	32
Services for the Aged	15,800	60
Services for Culturally and Linguistically diverse	3112	12
Services for Indigenous Australians	581	11
Training, Vocational and Employment Services	70,512	83
Financial and Material Assistance	14,410	20
Accommodation Placement Services	25,375	38
Child Protection and Intensive Family Support	4,774	22
Out of Home Care for Children and Young People	4,247	64
Correctional and Court Related Services	750	2
Disability Services	2,671	50
Community Development Programs	4,920	18
School Focussed Services	29,671	40
Mental Health	1034	8
Natural Family Planning and Sexuality Education	13,658	10
Research, Policy and Advocacy	110	5
Other	9,232	
TOTAL	513,397	732

Table 8: Number of People Assisted by Program Type

The most frequently offered programs and the main target groups of people receiving services are further explained in the following table. Sub

categories that reflect the main work of Catholic agencies are also provided. Thus, the table provides a detailed breakdown of each of the main program categories, and an overview of the major service delivery areas and the programs offered by these agencies. Many of the sub categories are quite significant in their own right.

The major program areas such as counselling and support provide quite diverse and important services to very large numbers of people. In this category historical services such as pre-marriage and marriage counselling and education are still quite significant and demonstrate that counselling and support services were at the centre of the development of Catholic Social Services.

<i>Program category (types of programs that are most often provided)</i>	<i>Number assisted each year</i>	<i>Number of programs</i>
Counselling and Support		
Individual and Family	22,152	31
Pre marriage and marriage counselling and education	13,955	29
Marriage and relationship counselling	15,499	25
Young people and their families	1,966	31
Employee assistance	4,822	9
Training, Vocational and Employment Services		
Intensive assistance	54,564	27
Programs for unemployed older women	516	19
Out of Home Care for Children and Young People		
Residential services	204	31
Respite care	2,509	15
Foster Care	1,282	14
Services for the Aged		
Outreach programs for the elderly living at home	5,190	20
Carer support	5,146	12
Residential	2,685	10
Disability		
Community support for adults with disabilities	464	19
Respite care	874	12
Group Homes	84	12
School Focused Services		
Wrap around services for students with high needs	1689	15
School counselling	14,280	12
Community strengthening programs from the school base	6,445	11
General outreach and support services		
Support for the homeless with alcohol, mental health and multiple problems	190,020	31
Young people from the DOCS system who are homeless	4,870	5

Table 9: Number of People Assisted by Sub Categories

Agencies were asked to specify the way in which programs are delivered from a list including:

- (a) casework (i.e.: work with individuals and families)
- (b) case management (i.e.: brokering services for individuals and families)
- (c) group work (i.e.: working with groups for educational and therapeutic purposes)
- (d) community development (networking and liaising with agencies and community groups)
- (e) other

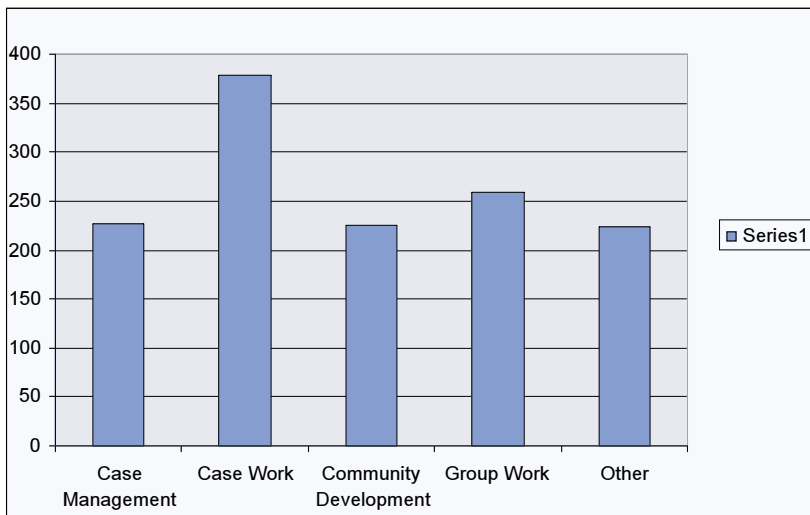


Table 10: Mode of Service Delivery

Conclusion

This paper has provided a descriptive analysis of the Catholic Social Services. As such it provides a benchmark on the range, scope and size of the services. The Sector provides services across Australia, to the most disadvantaged and does so increasingly on behalf of governments (State, Territory and Commonwealth). The data shows that more than half a million people are directly assisted by these agencies and that the sector expends more than half a billion dollars.

The Sector provides professional services and employs over 8000 people. Many of the professional staff are employed on a part-time basis. The gendered nature of the social welfare services is well documented. The reliance on women as part-time professional staff has implications for these agencies in developing leadership potential in their staff.

This paper has reported on only one part of the faith-based sector, the Catholic Church. The other large faiths, Anglican and Uniting Churches as

well as the Salvation Army with the Catholic Church, provide the majority of services from non-government agencies to the community. A clearer picture is needed on the range, scope and extent of services of these agencies. As governments of all political persuasions rely on the non-government sector to provide the majority of community services often through competitive tendering, the issue of Church and State becomes more problematic.

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