



youth affairs network qld



The Youth Sector in Queensland

February 2010

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Foreword

AS THE PEAK body for the youth sector in Queensland, YANQ has been advocating for a systemic approach to the development and maintenance of our workforce. This report outlines the first steps we have taken to bring together youth workers, employers, government and education/training providers in order to explore youth sector workforce issues. This research will provide the youth sector with the opportunity to collaborate with other key stakeholders in the implementation of the recommendations ensuring a vibrant and sustainable youth sector that protects and promotes the rights of young people.

YANQ is committed to making sure this report remains alive and is utilised by youth workers, employers, government and education/training providers in planning processes at all levels. Further validation of the report's findings will need to take place across Queensland to ensure regional variables are identified and to engage local level partners in shaping local action plans.

There is an urgent need for further discussion and debate within the youth sector and with government decision makers so that various issues identified in this research can be appropriately responded to. YANQ is committed to facilitating these discussions so youth work can get the recognition and support it deserves amongst the community service sector and in the broader community.

YANQ would like to thank the Department of Education & Training and the Department of Communities for funding this research project. YANQ would also like to acknowledge the survey respondents, youth workers and managers who attended focus groups, forums and various youth inter-agencies who helped the research group in so many ways. Special thanks also to the project Steering Group and the Industry Reference Group both of who provided guidance and assistance to YANQ throughout the project.

As well as providing a starting point/benchmark for the sector, this reports sets the scene for further discussion and collaboration on youth sector workforce issues. The report provides the evidence needed by the youth sector to seek further resources to support its development at a state wide level. YANQ will also use the research findings to form partnerships in regional areas and begin the task of reshaping the youth sector across Queensland.

Siyavash Doostkhah
Director
Youth Affairs Network of Queensland (YANQ)



THIS REPORT OUTLINES the conduct and findings of two significant research projects undertaken with youth services in Queensland. It presents a summary of themes and possibilities for future actions and research that have emerged from an evidence base that has not previously been documented on the profile and demographics of the youth sector in Queensland. The Youth Services Workforce Skilling and Training project explored workforce development issues and topics with the Department of Communities and Reconnect funded youth services workforce in south west and south east Queensland. The report also contains interim data generated from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Sector Skilling and Training project in Central, North West, Brisbane and Cherbourg areas of Queensland has also been included.

The report contains:

- **Findings** – a section that outlines the data gathered for both projects
- **Key Themes** – the major themes that have emerged as recommendations from the evidence
- **Youth Sector Development Plan** – with strategies for each recommendation that will be validated with other regions across the state

Youth Affairs Network of Queensland Inc (referred to as YANQ throughout this report) has spent several years advocating in relation to the need for a youth sector development strategy in Queensland and lobbying for funding towards this end, supported by the Health and Community Services Workforce Council (Workforce Council) in the need for strategic and systemic approaches to developing the workforce at a sector and industry level. Eventually funds contributed by the Department of Education and Training (referred to as DET throughout this report) and topped up by the Department of Communities, Office for Youth were provided to YANQ in early 2009 for the Youth Sector Workforce Skilling and Training Project. The level of available funding was less than that sought to implement an effective two year workforce development strategy and impacted on the time frame and scope of the project and the amount and depth of data that could be considered with capacity to include only two regions within Queensland. Only those youth services funded by Department of Communities through the Office for Youth along with Reconnect services in these geographical regions were included at this stage. However, the project outcomes go some way towards the goal of addressing systemic workforce development needs by creating an evidential platform to build and support a vibrant and sustainable youth sector workforce that protects and promotes young people's rights that can be presented to other regions across Queensland for validation or adaptation.

YANQ also received funding to conduct a second project, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Sector Skilling and Training Project (referred to as the Murri project throughout this report). Interim data generated through that project has been included in this report to provide some comparative analysis. A final report will be produced for this project once data collection is completed. Respecting the diversity within Indigenous cultures and between Indigenous people required designing, structuring and resourcing appropriate participation models that inform engagement strategies and influence how individual people are valued. Collection and analysis of further qualitative data is required to complete the picture for this part of the workforce.

These projects, while limited in scope and findings, position the Queensland youth sector to implement strategies that will build the current and future workforces. The health and community services sector is the third largest employer in the state and meeting current and future workforce needs is at times complex and difficult due to the varying drivers for skilling such as funding, policy and regulation. Current federal initiatives under the COAG reform agenda, Skilling for the Future and the Award Modernisation process outline priorities in workforce management, planning and skilling and, in particular, meeting needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people towards closing the gap. Q2 provides aspirational targets within Queensland to support growth and lead the smart state agenda with major goals in an increased uptake of higher education and Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualifications and skilling priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. While issues identified are not isolated to the youth sector alone, the outcome from these projects inform specific strategies to grow the state's youth sector in line with these initiatives and as it intersects with other sectors such as the community mental health and homelessness sectors.

Researching 'youth sector' workforce development needs posed its own dilemma, raising ongoing debate and discussion amongst youth workers themselves and the members of the projects' Industry Reference Group (IRG) as creating a definition of youth sector was struggled with over the course of the projects. While some definition was imposed through the funding agreement for the projects, an agreed on definition was not ultimately resolved. Indeed, responses to questions regarding work roles and what it means to be a youth worker provided a broad and sweeping scope even amongst a semi defined group leading to a recommendation for the need for people providing services to young people to come together to create a definition. A common thread however was the central tenant of the relationship between youth workers and young people.

In May 2009 the IRG was formed comprising youth sector workers, Peaks, Registered Training Organisations (RTO) and Universities to act as a think tank for the projects, providing guidance and advice regarding the methodology, implementation and final report. A sub committee was also formed to provide direct advice and guidance regarding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander project.

A major outcome of the projects has been to gather data through surveys and qualitative mechanisms to develop a profile of the youth sector workforce and the Indigenous youth sector workforce. While not all regions across Queensland were targeted due to funding constraints, the information generated has created an evidence based picture that has never before existed that acts as a platform to inform workforce development strategies at a skilling and policy level and as a benchmark to measure their effectiveness.

The general Queensland youth sector workforce is highly feminised with over 70% female workers. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds are under-represented in the youth sector. More than 83% of workers have some relevant qualification with 50% of these being at Bachelor degree level or higher. Youth workers are young and relatively inexperienced with more than 50% having been in the youth sector for less than two years; however managers are experienced with 50% of respondents having been in the sector for longer than 10 years. This creates a wonderful opportunity on which to build collaborative capacity and sector wide knowledge and skill transfer. Values are a key driver in recruitment decisions and in attracting workers to the sector however wage levels create the greatest barriers to both recruitment and retaining staff along with career paths. Importantly youth workers appear to have good access to training and skilling opportunities either within or external to their services and generally have a preference for face-to-face delivery. Time to participate in skilling is identified as the main barrier. Future themes concentrate on the increase of technology to communicate and to bully and harass and an increase in social isolation along with continued complex issues facing youth workers each day.

Interim data demonstrates that the Indigenous workforce has slightly more males and they are slightly older however the number of people with qualifications is less and the number with Bachelor degrees is greatly reduced at 17%. Indigenous workers and managers have been in the youth sector longer than non Indigenous workers. Providing culturally appropriate youth work is a key driver for workers in the sector as is working with their 'own mob' in many instances. Values are a key driver in recruitment decisions and in attracting workers to the sector however wage levels create the greatest barriers to both recruitment and retaining staff along with career paths and attrition of staff to government. Workers anecdotally report that access to appropriate training delivered by Indigenous trainers and in consultation with local communities is limited or non existent and any future skilling strategies need to successfully incorporate these factors. Future themes for young people do not veer far from current issues and problems.

Key themes and recommendations:

From the data generated and through advice and direction from the IRG a number of key broad strategies emerged that will contribute to and support development of the workforce.

- Strengthen youth sector strategic capacity for workforce development
- Strengthen partnership with government
- Create a responsive training and skilling system

- Define and promote the youth services sector
- Design and implement attraction and retention strategies
- Develop cultural competency
- Develop sector capacity to work with mental health matters

Draft recommendations emerging from the Murri project include:

- Strengthen leadership capacity to support sector development
- Build current and future capacity through skilling and training

Sector development plans and validation processes

Strategies that will contribute to implementation of recommendations have been drafted into the first stage of a sector development plan that will be used as part of the basis for validation processes in other regions. YANQ will lead engagement processes to allow youth sector members and other stakeholders in regions across Queensland to compare workplace profile findings against their own regions and develop the remainder of the youth sector development plan relevant to their regions and based on existing projects and possible alliances. The end result will be a Youth Sector Development Plan with regional appropriate strategies that has been developed and is owned by the sector.

There is still work to be done in developing a sector wide understanding of workforce planning and development, including with government, however these projects have initiated this process. It is important to initiate and implement activities identified by these projects to draw on the energy created through its implementation, and continue to develop this understanding, building on a sense of partnership and collaboration to ultimately provide quality services to young people.

The apparent division between the non-government service delivery sector and government as policy makers and drivers seems to be exacerbated by the view that government is able to attract experienced workers away from the sector and an artificial divide is created that must be overcome to achieve quality outcomes.

Working together on strategies emerging through these projects provides a vehicle for such collaboration.

How to Navigate this Report

This report is divided into three main sections.

Section One: provides an introduction to both projects and describes the methodology and project limitations, setting the context for the findings from this report.

Section Two: details the findings from the general youth sector project. It includes data and analysis from the workforce profile survey and focus groups and forums as well as providing some initial findings from the Murri project. This section has been broken into eight parts to arrange connected topics. The first three parts (1-3) cover broad workforce data, parts 4-7 cover specific key topics and the final section 8 identifies future trends and themes. In some cases additional research questions were immediately obvious and have been included to assist in future data collection.

Section Three: summarises the key themes that have emerged and contains the recommendations and strategies for the Youth Sector Development Plan that will now be further developed through an engagement and validation process across Queensland.



Acknowledgements

THIS REPORT IS the product of a collaborative effort of the youth sector services in South West Queensland and Brisbane and Brisbane South regions of the Department of Education and Training that are funded by Office for Youth, Department of Communities, Reconnect Services, Indigenous youth services in Brisbane, Central Queensland, Cherbourg and North West Queensland, the Youth Sector Workforce Training and Skilling Industry Reference Group and Indigenous Sub-Committee, Youth Affairs Network of Queensland and other key government stakeholders. It captures the data and findings that have been generated over a four month period during 2009 to create a youth service sector workforce profile and identifies key training and skilling priorities for current and future youth sector workforces that will be validated across Queensland.

Over the course of the projects the Industry Reference Group and the Indigenous Sub-Committee provided input and direction regarding the design, implementation and findings to ensure that this final report provides the views and priorities of the youth sector towards planning for and addressing workforce development priorities.

Industry Reference Group members included:

- Impact Youth Organisation
- Brisbane Youth Service
- Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ)
- Queensland Youth Housing Coalition (QYHC)
- Queensland Alliance
- Jabiru Youth Services
- Dovetail
- Office for Youth, Department of Communities
- Queensland Department of Education and Training
- Health and Community Services Workforce Council
- Metropolitan South Institute of TAFE
- The Bremer Institute of TAFE
- Queensland University of Technology
- Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland (ECCQ)
- Youth Affairs Network of Queensland Inc

Indigenous Sub-Committee group members included:

- Indigenous Youth Health Service
- First Contact
- Office for Youth, Department of Communities
- Darumbal Youth and Community Services
- Born Free

Interviewers were engaged to collect data to inform the Murri project and their advice and commitment has been invaluable in supporting this aspect of the project. Thanks go to Suzanne Thompson, Fred Binge, Sue Fox, Adrian Hepi, Lee George, Jacob George, John Anderson, Del Daly and Laurel Blow.

A project steering group convened by the Office for Youth provided formal guidance and sign-off of milestones in the projects. Membership included:

- Youth Affairs Network of Queensland Inc
- Queensland Department of Education and Training
- Office for Youth, Department of Communities
- Health and Community Services Workforce Council

We would also like to thank the many people who contributed to this report through participation in the Workplace Profile and Skills Audit Surveys 2009 and in interviews, focus groups and regional forums.

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The consultants

John Flanagan and Tracey Acton were contracted by YANQ to design and implement the projects in conjunction with the Industry Reference Group and the Steering Group. Both John and Tracey have extensive experience working in the youth sector in Queensland, in team and organisational development, writing training and learning resources and implementing workforce development initiatives.

SINCE 2006, YANQ has been working with the Health and Community Services Workforce Council to advocate and lobby for funding to develop a Youth Sector Workforce Development Strategy for Queensland that would recognise the vital and unique role played by this sector in supporting young people across Queensland and assist in preparing the sector for the future through targeted skilling and other development strategies.

In early 2009, the Department of Education and Training (DET) contributed funds to the Office for Youth (OFY), Department of Communities (DoC) that enabled YANQ to receive funding support from the Office for Youth, DoC to undertake a Youth Services Workforce Skills and Training Project. The level of available funding was less than that sought to implement an effective two year workforce development strategy and impacted on the time frame and scope of the project. Capacity was limited to the inclusion of only two regions within Queensland and only those youth services funded by DoC and Reconnect services impacting on the depth of data that could be considered in the timeframe. However the project goes some way towards the goal of addressing systemic workforce development needs by creating a platform to support initiatives towards a vibrant and sustainable youth sector workforce that protects and promotes young people's rights.

DET also provided funds directly to YANQ to conduct a second project, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Sector Skilling and Training Project (referred to as the Murri project throughout this report). Interim data generated through that project has been included in this report to provide some comparative analysis. A final report will be produced for this project once data collection is completed. Respecting the diversity within Indigenous cultures and between Indigenous people required designing, structuring and resourcing appropriate participation models that inform engagement strategies and influence how individual people are valued. Collection and analysis of further qualitative data is required to complete the picture for this part of the workforce.

The Queensland Government Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland platform with its 2020 vision for the state contains five key areas of focus; strong economy, smart, green environment, healthy and fair communities. This statement provides the framework to inform government priorities and initiatives towards 2020 and provides the policy guideposts in which to situate workforce development initiatives such as this project. 'Three out of four Queenslanders will hold trade, training or tertiary qualifications by 2020' provides a key message and avenue for workforce development initiatives in the area of 'smart' Queenslanders (www.thepremier.qld.gov.au).

Identified strategies to meet this target include funding and delivering flexible, high quality, post-school training, matching the provision of training places to the skill needs of particular regions and increasing the number of vocational education and training places available to Queenslanders. Recommendations and strategies that relate to skilling and training for a 'smarter' youth services sector that support healthy and fair communities have been identified through the recommendations developed for the Youth Sector Development Plan and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Sector Development Plan, outlining government's role in working towards these goals and the place of industry and organisations to support workforce skilling.

In addition, the Queensland Compact: Towards a fairer Queensland recognises the contribution of the Non-Profit Community Services Sector to a "Fair Queensland", in delivering services to vulnerable people, and promoting opportunities for Queenslanders to contribute to their communities through volunteering. Both of the Youth Sector Development Plans contribute directly to implementing aspects of the Compact through each of the four goals. In particular, improving engagement and in planning and policy through participation and engagement of service providers and evidence based decision making through the provision of information about the youth sector and improving the sector's capacity and sustainability towards a strong and competent workforce.

Relevant Australian Government priorities that are evident through the COAG Reform Agenda and the Productivity Agenda include the national commitment to close the gap on Indigenous disadvantage including a newly agreed on target of halving the gap in Indigenous employment outcomes within a decade. COAG discussion on further measures to overcome Indigenous disadvantage and the importance against the

background of the global economic and financial crises have included bolstering education, training and re-training efforts. Vocational education and training reform currently features in a COAG workplan which includes increasing the level of investment in nationally-accredited training and ensuring the training system, and the products of the training system, are responsive to the needs of individuals, businesses and industry.

The Australian Government has also re-affirmed the importance of young people and the youth sector through re-establishing a youth portfolio through the Office For Youth within the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and appointing a Minister for Youth. The role of the federal Office For Youth is to ensure that there is a coordinated approach to youth affairs across government. A major initial priority as announced on the DEEWR website is to establish baseline data that will capture policies and programs that are youth-specific and those that are not specific to youth but have a significant impact on young people. This process will present a comprehensive picture of efforts and resourcing being directed to youth affairs across the Government and assist to identify potential gaps and areas for future attention. A Melbourne based group has recently been contracted to commence a national youth workforce development project.

An evidence base that has not previously been documented on the profile and demographics of the Department of Communities funded youth services workforce and parts of the Indigenous youth sector has been created through these projects. The findings provide insight into parts of the Queensland youth sector and the strategies in the resulting Youth Sector Development Plan have been geared towards compatibility with broader state and commonwealth government goals.

This report provides a summary of the data gathered, key themes that emerged and recommendations that can be used to inform skilling and workforce development initiatives. Service providers in project target regions have been engaged to provide information and insight about the sector and suggestions about future needs, considerations and directions. A crucial next stage involves YANQ leading a sector engagement process over the next 12 months to allow regional review and comparison of data to enhance the evidence base and create the opportunity for regional stakeholders to validate workforce development strategies.

The Report and Youth Sector Development Plan:

- develops a baseline picture of the youth sector workforce for the identified target groups against which capacity and future workforce development strategies can be measured
- identifies important issues that impact on the development of the youth sector workforce
- identifies areas for further research and discussion towards systematic development of the youth sector
- provides a picture and strategies and recommendations that can be validated across all regions in Queensland to strengthen the rigour of the data and ensure regional variations and characteristics can be integrated into the plan

Both projects involved:

- **researching literature** about youth workforce skill development and vocational education and training requirements and products across Australia as well as internationally;
- **collecting some data** on the current skills, competencies and qualifications of youth workers
- **projecting future skills** needs in line with young people's needs, government priorities and contemporary practice frameworks;
- **beginning to identify preferred models** and potential alliances to support skill development.

The projects were designed to create opportunities for the respective targeted youth services' workforce to be engaged through surveys, workshops and discussions about the viability and sustainability of a vibrant youth sector in Queensland. This approach is based on the premise that sector engagement will ensure that a plan is developed by the sector, for the sector, paving the way for successful implementation of the plan. A key starting point was to gather data and create a profile of the sector in order to level further research and initiate projects that will work towards sustainable outcomes based on a clear and current benchmark. To maximise potential outcomes, the projects were designed to consider youth sector development needs

in the broader context of workforce development. Contemporary concepts of workforce development provide a framework for organisations, industry and the government to systematically approach industry or sector wide development. While workforce development typically incorporates the traditional focus of developing a workforce through training and professional development opportunities, it locates these type of strategies within a broader organisational and system approach that takes into account the range of factors that can impact on workforce capacity and effectiveness including, but greater than the individual and their development needs in their current role, to building capacity of the sector overall. Typical workforce development approaches consider systemic issues such as social, political and economic context, status and profile of the sector, size and organisations of the sector, job role and design, recruitment and retention, along with training and professional development and focus on both current and future workforce. Other projects such as the Youth Workforce Support Plan project are also investigating youth workforce support needs to contribute to the overall development of the sector.

A hybrid systems approach to workforce development takes into account aspects of a number of models by considering both current and future workers across individual, organisational and system layers to analyse the situation and then develop strategies and planning for the future for individuals, organisations and the sector. Listed in the table below are some of the areas contained within each layer as they apply to current or future workforce.

Workforce Development Areas			
	System	Organisational	Individual
Current and Future Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy • Legislation • Funding • Criteria for employment • Resources • Links with education providers • Research and evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of organisational policies, procedures and culture that support quality service delivery • Organisational capacity to recruit, retain and support staff • Career paths • Job design • Supervision • Mentoring support • Induction and orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation • Stress and burnout • Job satisfaction • Individual capacity and competency • Access to professional development • Access to effective team work
Underpinning values: good practice, effective strategies and sustainability			

The projects have gone some way towards identifying issues and themes more broadly than training needs and attempted to capture sector development needs of both current and future workforce.

Impact of timeframe parameters

It is widely acknowledged in similar community sector workforce development projects that genuine engagement of industry and key policy and practice decision makers in dialogue about workforce planning needs currently and into the future takes some time as busy people connect with and understand the broader workforce development agenda. The timeframe of the projects and the associated methodology has had impact on both the response rate as services struggled to get surveys completed and returned and participate in forums and focus groups and on the depth and detail of some data that will require further investigation.

It is the view of the consultants that the sector needs to 'warm up' to providing detailed, well thought through information about skilling and training particularly in relation to existing and required skills and competencies that are based on organisational, programs sector and industry requirements not immediate day to day operational needs. This data also needs to be considered and provided in the context of a broader understanding of the sector overall and projected future trends.

Within this limitation, the projects have provided an important step towards engaging with and preparing the sector for more detailed research and discussions to provide detailed information in some areas.

Target group and definition of the youth sector

The target group for the general youth sector project was defined through both funding program and geographical boundaries. The limited funding, timeframe and project scope as defined through the funding agreement meant that only two geographical locations in Queensland have been included in the data and profile. While they encompassed urban, metropolitan and regional areas, both were located in the south of the state.

The target group for the Murri project was less defined in that it included Indigenous specific organisations providing services to young people; however the origin of the funding was not a defining characteristic and project interviewers assisted in identifying the target group services through local knowledge and contacts. A 'final' number of target group services was not reached in order to compare number of participants against overall target group however a reasonable number of services were engaged in order to provide some data on which to build. Definition of the youth sector also takes on an added dimension given the cultural consideration of working with family and the concept of youth.

An issue raised in the IRG also related to the 'narrow' definition of youth service providers created through this definition given the broad range of organisations providing services to young people that are funded through other means and government departments. Ongoing discussion has occurred at the IRG level about who is the youth sector, how this is determined and what it means for a systematic workforce development strategy. It was identified that the term young people and with whom youth workers can work is becoming more and more defined by funding agreements (constraints) with the effect being the loss of the 'generalist' youth worker and a move towards specialisations that may actually be contributing to a reduced sense of a 'youth sector'. The question was raised in relation to the layering of terms over time to describe the current realities and if it is perhaps more accurate to refer to youth work as youth centred practice and that the target for workforce planning is those who engage in youth centred practice. While a defining characteristic remains those who work for the benefit of and towards outcomes for young people, the importance of talking about and identifying defining characteristics of the 'sector' was highlighted.

As the general project has had a defined target group this was resolved in one sense in that the funding agreement provided an arbitrary boundary and the implementation of this project has focused on the defined target group as a major stepping stone towards building a workforce development approach for the youth services sector. However the need for ongoing discussions in this area has been clearly identified and articulated in the project recommendations as clarity around who is the youth sector provides clarity around core skilling and training needs.

Response rate

The response rate for surveys and forums and focus groups, while adequate for developing a picture of the workforce profile of the sector, remains low despite efforts to increase completion through personal contact and followup. Consequently, the findings from the general project cannot be generalised or interpreted as valid for the entire youth sector and the validation process will be a critical step in determining the accuracy of the profile and emerging strategies. Anecdotally, this seems to be attributed to workload issues and the fact that other projects such as the Integrated Skills Development Strategy and the Community Services Workforce Profiling Project have recently requested similar information from services as well. As noted, attempts have been made within this project to integrate the information from other areas to create a more holistic picture however a more concerted effort to connect, coordinate and integrate workforce projects is required to enhance strategic planning and decision making and to reduce demands on sectors. Evidence from other projects of a similar nature such as the Child Protection Skills Formation Strategy indicates that it takes some time for services to engage with a project of this nature and the short time frame of this project may have had some impact on this rate.

As data is still being compiled from the Murri project at the time of release of this report, the response rate remains unclear.

Qualitative vs quantitative

In choosing a heavily qualitative approach the intention was to engage directly with as many services and workers as possible to reveal existing experiences and practices in the youth sector workforce. This approach provides insight and thematic 'grabs' however it is of course impossible to generalise the experiences of all workers in the youth sector. An emphasis of this research design, and the subsequent analysis, is that diversity matters and targeted mechanisms may provide voice to some key areas that may not emerge through a generalised quantitative approach. The outcome however remains a somewhat subjective picture. The strength of the projects and the approach utilised is that we have now developed a benchmark or picture from which to engage across the whole state, to make comparisons with other sectors and to revisit the state of the youth sector at points of time into the future.

Youth sector workforce skilling and training project

The methodology for this project was designed to actively engage service providers through the collection of data from youth service providers and other key stakeholders in the target group regions creating a workforce profile that includes workplace demographics, information about existing skills, competencies and qualifications, current skilling needs and projected future need. The intention was to strengthen ownership and buy in to the project recommendations through the processes used for data collection congruent with the Queensland Compact goal of improving engagement in planning and policy.

Changes were made to the methodology as this project was implemented in response to services ability to engage and participate within the project timeframe to improve the response rate, number of services that engaged with the project overall and depth and validity of the data collected and recommendations developed. These changes are documented below.

Overall summary of contacts with services

This table identifies the total number of services engaged with during this project. All services have been counted only once. Services that completed the survey and participated in forums and/or focus groups have been counted in the survey category only, while those that participated in forums or focus groups and did not complete a survey have been counted in that category only. Services have only been counted once to provide a picture of the breadth of engagement and a number of staff from different services participated in different processes. Non target group services have been counted separately.

Regions	Number of services by main contact type			
	Surveys	Focus groups	Forums	Total
South West Queensland	6	8	1	15
Brisbane and Brisbane South	17	16	8	41
Total Target Group Services	23	24	9	56
Outside target group - region or service type	6	19	30	55
Total Services working with Young People	29	43	39	111

With 56 services from the 90 target group services participating in this project, this table indicates that 62% of target group services were engaged in some way through the data collection phase.

Survey

Surveys attracted a 30% response rate from the overall target group.

Aim

The survey was the primary data collection tool within the timeframe of the project. It was designed to capture information that would provide a workforce profile snapshot and inform skills, competencies and qualifications of the existing youth sector workforce. Both managers of services and youth workers were targeted in two separate surveys. The manager survey was designed to capture demographic information for that service along with individual information about managers workforce development needs. Youth worker surveys provide both specific individual demographic information and workforce development related information for that worker. Collated survey results provide a quantitative snapshot of the current workforce context enabling comparison between regions, and other community service sectors as well as a benchmark against which data can be validated in other regions to enhance the evidential base being created through this project.

Process

The survey was made available to all identified target group services funded by the Department of Communities and Reconnect services funded by the Commonwealth. It was introduced by a letter about the project to the manager and was followed up by personal contact to encourage services to complete and return the survey. The survey was accessible online as well as a hard copy being provided for managers to copy and distribute to staff.

The data has been collated to create numerical analysis of quantitative data and collation and grouping of qualitative data at the regional and sector level. The results from the survey findings are of course not the whole picture however it provides a benchmark from which to move forward and the process has engaged the sector in thinking strategically about the workforce.

Participants

A specific regional target group list was not available so a mailing list was developed by cross referencing youth service contact details provided by Office for Youth, Integrated Skills Development Strategy (ISD) and the YANQ database within these geographical locations. A total of 90 services in the two target regions were sent letters and survey information.

Twenty four (24) managers surveys were returned, eight (8) youth worker surveys where the manager had not returned the survey and forty five (45) youth worker surveys where the manager had also completed a survey were returned - a total of 31 service responses. While it was optional to identify by name, respondents were asked to identify their services to assist with cross referencing of manager and worker surveys so that survey data could be appropriately collated to create a fuller picture. That is, where youth workers had completed surveys but managers had not, these figures were added to the total workforce demographic information where appropriate as they had not previously been counted. This represents a response rate of 30% of the total number of services included in this project.

Five (5) surveys were returned from services outside the target regions where services had accessed the survey online, from other services or by request. This data has been included and named as other regions in Queensland where useful.

Forums

Half day forums were conducted in four locations within the project regions, Gold Coast, Logan, Toowoomba and Brisbane.

Aim

Forums were specifically intended to promote dialogue and debate about what youth work is, the values underpinning youth work, what is currently happening in the sector and future workforce needs to maintain a

vibrant and healthy youth services sector. The intention was that through bringing a range of stakeholders with varying perspectives together and providing them with information and an environment to consider the future of the sector that both brilliant ideas and realistic possibilities would emerge.

Process

Forums were originally planned to be conducted after surveys had been collated so that initial themes and outcomes emerging from the data could be discussed and validated. However this was not possible within project timing. Facilitated discussion at forums still allowed the exploration of possible strategies for future workforce development and a range of recommendations have emerged as a result. Discussion forums were chosen as they focus on discussion, debate and consensus rather than individuals' experiences. Methodologically, the forums were similar to the qualitative focus groups in the way they were structured and the way discussion was facilitated. Forums also focused more specifically on discussions about what is possible in the future and strategies for achieving this.

Participants

Youth workers and managers from services within the target group as well as other key stakeholders such as education providers, other organisations providing services to young people and government departments within specific geographic locations were invited to forums. Promotion of forums occurred with all target group services and also relied on support of local service providers to promote participation. Participants primarily included a mix of managers, youth workers and TAFE personnel. Some services that provide services to young people who were not directly in the target group attended. While invited, government personnel and other education providers did not attend.

Forum Location	Number of Participants
Brisbane	10
Logan	5
Gold Coast	5
Toowoomba	4
TOTAL	24

Focus groups

Eleven (11) focus groups were conducted engaging with 124 participants in total.

Aim

Focus groups were conducted with specific groups based on service types or service users to provide more information to add to the complexity of the picture of the youth services sector developed through the survey. When it became obvious that focus groups would be conducted while surveys were also being completed some questions were adapted to provide a secondary avenue to collect specific data to strengthen the final report. Where additional data has been included this has been clearly identified in the report.

Process

Areas for focus groups were determined through consultation with IRG and steering committee members as well as who was able to participate. Networks across the Brisbane and Brisbane South regions were contacted to host focus group discussions however response was very limited or in some cases timeframes did not allow.

Members of the IRG were approached to organise and promote focus groups within their relevant networks as were key youth work contacts in regional areas.

Similar to discussion forums, focus groups were chosen as they provide a qualitative approach to gathering data to provide further detail and insight than the survey alone. They were similar to key aspects of the survey in the way they were structured and the way discussion was facilitated.

Participants

Focus Groups	Number of Participants
Beenleigh Youth Services Network	7
Workers in mainstream services with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people	9
Workers with young people with CALD backgrounds	5
Workers with Young People with Mental Health Issues - Brisbane	18
Workers with Young People with Mental Health Issues - Sunshine Coast	21
Charleville	7
Roma	4
Youth and Family Services Inc (Logan City)	4
TAFE youth work teachers - Metropolitan South Institute of TAFE (MSIT)	6
TOTAL	81
TAFE youth work students yr 1 (MSIT)	27
TAFE youth work students yr 2 (MSIT)	16
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS	124

A Steering Group meeting held on 2 September, 2009 with representatives from both Office for Youth and DET also acted as an avenue to explore and confirm government priorities and policy in relation to the youth services sector, establishing key information about the context in which workforce development needs to be considered.

Industry reference group

At the outset of the project an IRG was established to provide guidance and advice about project implementation and project outcomes. Terms of Reference were developed that outlined the group's role in acting as a 'think tank' for project ideas, insights and debate. Membership was invited from a wide range of categories including youth services, education providers (TAFE and universities), peak bodies and government departments. An underlying premise of establishing this group is to encourage and support the sector in initial development and ownership of an ongoing industry reference group which ultimately leads to ongoing sustainability, sector ownership and management.

The IRG met four times during the project providing advice about the overall project methodology, the survey instrument, issues and dilemmas in conceptualising a workforce development strategy for the youth sector and workshopping possibilities and themes as they have emerged from the data for the final report of the Youth Sector Development Plan.

Existing workforce data

Recent Queensland community services workforce data has been included where directly relevant to strengthen and highlight themes emerging and to inform the overall profile that is being developed.

Data has been included from:

- Queensland Community Services Workforce Profile Project commissioned by the Health and Community Services Workforce Council from Rimfire Resources (referred to as Community Services Workforce Profile)
- Child Protection Skills Formation Strategy

Aboriginal and torres strait islander youth sector workforce skilling and training project

This project target group was youth workers employed in community based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services. At an initial meeting of the Sub-Committee it was determined that the research phase of the project would be conducted in four regional areas in Queensland- Greater Brisbane, Central Queensland including Woorabinda, Cherbourg and North West Queensland. Design elements were implemented in this project to provide a more culturally appropriate approach to gathering and analysing data.

Methodology workshop

To implement this project YANQ contracted the services of culturally appropriate staff as project interviewers to assist in developing communication and engagement strategies specific to Indigenous communities. An Expression of Interest was distributed throughout Queensland using the YANQ email bulletin, ISD regional networks and other email groupings. Ten project interviewers were engaged to work across the regions based on their connection with those particular areas.

A one day workshop was conducted with project interviewers and some members of the sub committee to detail the methodology for the project including developing the tools to be used, discussing the best way to collect information, what should be asked and in what form eg survey, interviews, focus groups and which services need to be included. Strategies were specialised according to the characteristics of a particular region or area to ensure they are the most effective approach within the timeframes available.

Outcomes of the workshop included a draft set of interview questions, a forum process and questions, a set of principles about engagement, a draft media release to promote the project locally. It was identified at the workshop that appropriate engagement is a key cultural consideration and that attention and resources need to be dedicated to this aspect of the project. A media release was drafted for local use and resources were established in regional budgets for time for project interviewers to connect personally with services.

Interviews

Twenty-eight (28) interviews were conducted in total to date.

Aim

Interviews were the major data collection tool utilised in this project. Face to face semi-structured interviews provided an avenue to discuss experiences of working in the youth sector, future trends and needs and possible strategies to support workforce skilling. Interviews were either individual or small groups, depending on the individual services and what is most appropriate and in many cases managers of services were interviewed separately to staff to provide opportunity for both groups to provide their perspectives. The aim was to collect information about both managers' experiences of developing and supporting the youth services workforce and youth workers experiences of entering and remaining in the youth services workforce.

The aim of this approach was to provide deeper insight through detailed experiences of individuals and created the opportunity to tap into a greater sense of person or place, locating people in their community and their particular work situation to gain a better contextual understanding of their story in a workforce development framework.

Process

Project interviewers directly contacted all identified services to invite them to connect with project workers through individual and/or group interviews. In depth interviews were conducted in person with project interviewers asking questions and recording responses.

Interview questions were formulated during the methodology workshop and then compared against those used in the general project to maintain consistency of data collected. At the methodology workshop it was identified that project interviewers had a role as 'cultural navigators' and that questions may be formulated and posed differently to get the same type of information dependant on the target audience and what would hold meaning for them.

Participants

Target group lists were finalised at the methodology workshop by using contact details of services identified through the general project target group as Indigenous and then adding additional contacts known by project interviewers through local connections. Participants were primarily from services that have been identified as specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations providing services to young people.

Services Interviewed to date

Location	Service	Number of participants
Cherbourg	Barambah Aboriginal Community Care Agency (BACCA)	4
	Youth and Community Combined Action (YACCA) board member	1
	Jundah Women's' Shelter	2
	Barambah Medical Centre	1
	Beemar Yumba Hostel	1
	Cherbourg Shire Council	1
TOTAL	6 services	10 interviews
Greater Brisbane	Kurbingai	1
	Kids, Youth and Community (KYC)	2
	Jabiru	1
	Link-Up	1
	Children of the Dreaming	1
	Bahloo	2
	Indigenous Youth Health Service	1
	Deception Bay Community Youth Programs	1
TOTAL	8 services	10 interviews
North West Queensland		
Mornington Island	PCYC	3
Normanton	North West Queensland Primary Health Care (NWQPHC)	1
	Normanton Justice Group	1
	Oxfam Gulf Regional Health Service	2
Mount Isa	Mount Isa Community City Safe	1
TOTAL	5 services	8 interviews
TOTAL	19 services	28 interviews

Continued over page...

Services Interviewed to date (continued)

Location	Service	Number of participants
Central Queensland		
Rockhampton Forum was conducted with 22 participants in total	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Employment Australia • Education Department • Rockhampton Regional Council • Dept of Economic Development & Innovation • Central Qld Indigenous Development Ltd • Career Links • Capricornia Training Company • Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC) x 2 participants • Milbi x 3 participants • Bidgerdii • Youth Justice Services • Blackwater Youth Development Project • Qld Health • Department of Communities ATSI • Qld Health • Anglicare • Reconnect 	

Survey**Aim**

While not the primary data collection tool, the survey was designed to capture a workforce profile snapshot of the existing youth sector workforce as with the other project and both managers of services and youth workers were targeted in two separate surveys.

Process

As with the general project, the survey was made available to all managers and youth workers in identified services on the target group lists developed in the methodology workshop except in North West Queensland. The survey was introduced by a letter about the project and followed up with personal contact by project interviewers to encourage services to complete and return the survey. The survey was accessible online as well as a hard copy being provided for managers to copy and distribute to staff. Project interviewers encouraged workers to complete surveys in their direct contact with services. In North West Queensland project interviews informed services about the service during face to face contact.

Collated survey results provide a quantitative snapshot of the current workforce context as well as enabling comparison between regions and with the general project (if relevant)

Participants

Services on the target group lists generated at the methodology workshop were targeted.

Seven managers surveys were returned, six youth worker surveys where the manager had also completed a survey were returned. While it was optional to identify by name, respondents were asked to identify their services to assist with cross referencing of manager and worker surveys so that survey data could be appropriately collated to create the whole picture. That is, where youth workers had completed surveys but managers had not, these figures were added to the total workforce demographic information as they had not previously been counted.

Forums

Aim

At the methodology workshop, it was identified that forums may work better than interviews in some locations as they provide an opportunity to get a group of people together to 'yarn up' promoting dialogue and debate about what youth work is, the values underpinning it, what is currently happening in the sector and future workforce needs to maintain a vibrant and healthy youth services sector.

Process

Both Central Queensland and Brisbane were identified as regions to conduct forums. Forums were organised and promoted by email, mail, and fax and through personal contact with services. A forum process outline was developed along with a set of questions to gather data.

Participants

Forums were promoted in Rockhampton and two in Brisbane, one north and one south of the river. A short lead in time amongst other variables meant that the Brisbane forums did not go ahead and instead individual surveys were conducted with a number of services in this area. The Rockhampton forum attracted 22 participants from a broad range of services in the area.

Project sub-committee

A project sub-committee was formed as part of the IRG for the overall project to provide direct guidance and advice relating to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander project including which regions to include in the research and how to best implement the project. Membership of the sub-committee includes key Indigenous service providers and government representatives. The sub-committee met once at the beginning of the project and was invited to participate in both the methodology workshop and the data analysis and recommendation workshop held after the initial data collection phase. It is intended that the sub-committee will meet again to consider the Indigenous Youth Sector Development Plan and initiatives arising from this.



THE FINDINGS FROM both the general Youth Sector Workforce Skilling and Training Project (referred to as the general youth sector project) and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Sector Workforce Skilling and Training Project (referred to as the Murri project) have been included in the following section to enable comparison where relevant. In some cases not enough data has been generated through the Murri project to provide a clear theme or picture. Indigenous data has not been broken into regions for the same reason. Readers are cautioned that where survey information is presented it represents a small sample and is indicative of the youth sector workforce only.

Where it has been identified during implementation that it would be useful to seek additional data, either through further research or when the survey is next administered this has been captured in italics to inform future activities.

1. Workforce demographics

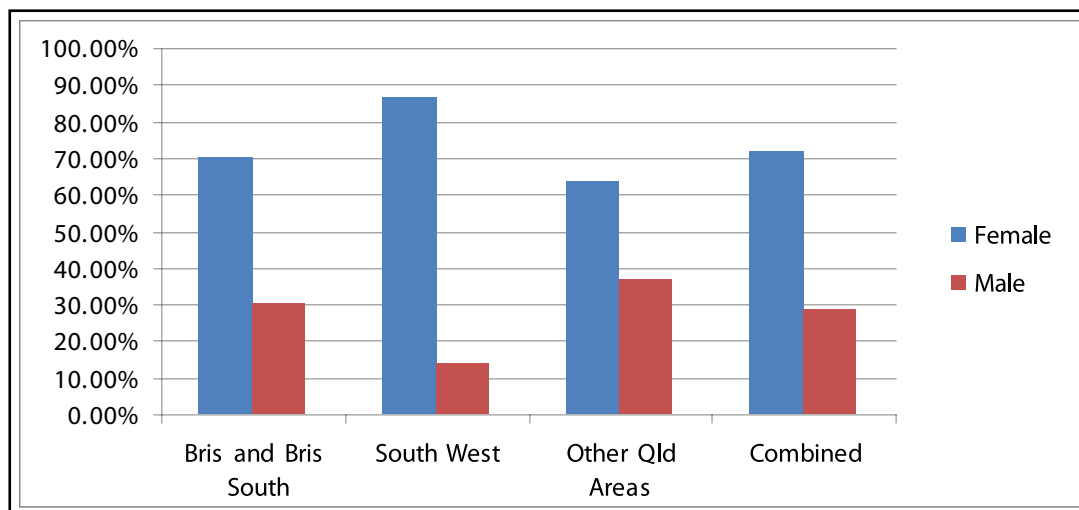
This section of the report provides a summary of workforce demographic data, creating a picture of the Department of Communities funded youth service sector and raising some interesting questions and themes that have fed into recommendations and strategies in the Youth Sector Development Plan. The information presented in this section comes from the collated survey data from managers' surveys and from surveys of youth workers where a survey was not completed by the service manager. It is augmented by data provided at focus groups and forums.

1.1 Gender, age and ethnic representation

Gendered workforce breakdown

Gender	General Project	Murri project
Female	71.59%	64.2%
Male	28.40%	35.8%

Table 1.1.1 Gendered workforce in general youth sector by project regions



From this information it is clear that there are a higher proportion of males within the Indigenous youth sector workforce than the general youth sector workforce with almost 36% male staff. Brisbane has a greater success rate than South West Queensland in attracting male workers to the sector. Notably other Queensland areas had a particularly high percentage of males which can be attributed to the fact that one large Central Queensland Indigenous service had a high number of male staff.

Increasing male participation in the workforce was raised specifically by participants at one South West focus group and also at one Brisbane and Brisbane South forum suggesting there were not enough males in the sector and that this needed attention when planning for the future workforce. Barriers to male participation in the workforce were not specifically explored at this stage of the projects. The focus group addressing working with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse young people noted the importance of how trust is established when working with these communities and differences that exist for workers of different genders, emphasising the importance of the role of male workers in some communities.

Data gathered in the Community Services Workforce Profile project across a range of service types in the community services sector in Queensland showed an average of 80% female employees amongst those participating in the review, indicating that there are generally more males in youth work than other sectors.

While youth justice was not a specific target group service for these projects, the Community Services Workforce Profile project data showed that there are by far a greater number of males in this work area than females. This may account for the higher proportion of males in the Indigenous workforce as a number identified that they deal with youth justice issues.

Workforce by age

Age Range	<25	26-35	36-45	46-55	>55
General Project	13.33%	46.19%	28.26%	11.41%	1.08%
Indigenous Project	13.5%	35.14%	35.14%	29.72%	13.5%

Comparative data across the two projects shows that workers are generally older in the Indigenous youth services sector than the general sector. Anecdotally Indigenous workers suggest that a challenge ahead is to attract young people into the sector.

Table 1.1.2 Indigenous workforce by age

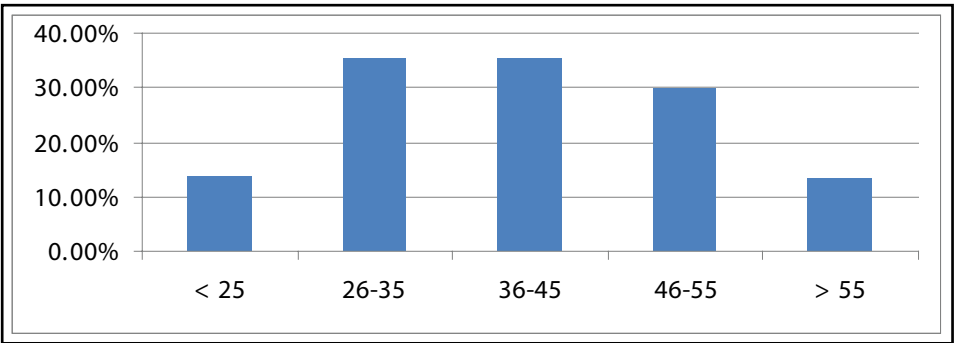
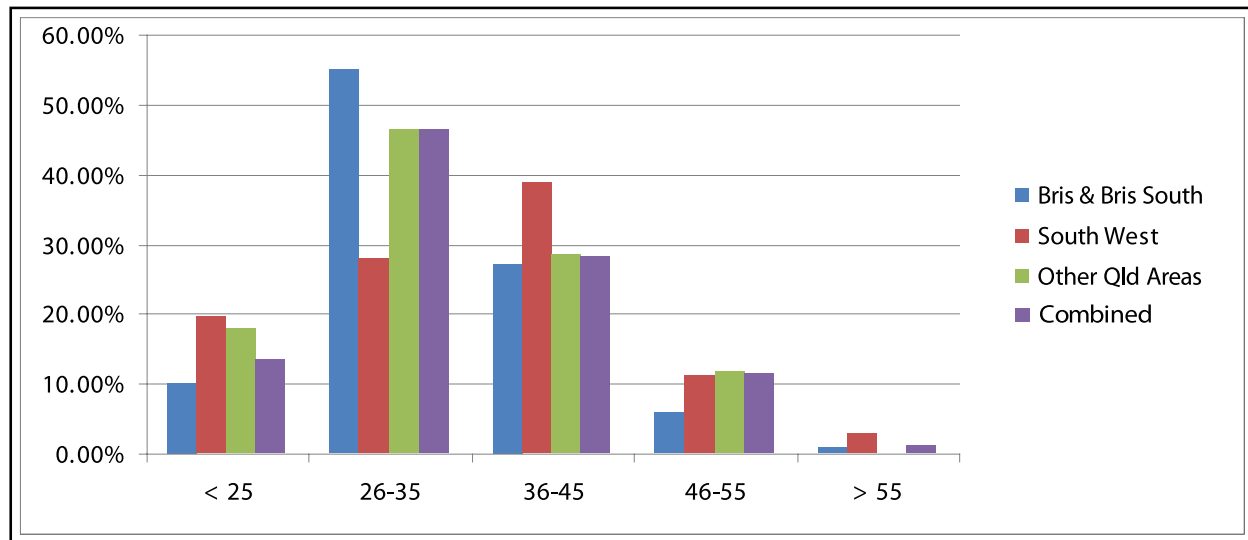


Table 1.1.3 General workforce by age by region



As may be expected in the general youth services sector, the responses show that the majority of workers are between 26-35 years, however as indicated, this trend is reversed in South West Queensland where almost 40% of workers for this region are in the 36-45 year category with a further 15% in the 46- 55 years and over 55 years categories. While Brisbane and Brisbane South seem to be able to attract a youthful workforce, defying typical community services and health workforce statistics, this is not evident in South West Queensland.

Data gathered in both the Child Protection Skills Formation Strategy and the Community Services Workforce Profile project showed a generally older workforce with a significant number of workers being located in 36-45 years age bracket in both projects.

Participants in both focus groups in South West reported difficulty in attracting staff to positions in their respective locations which may have an impact on the workforce age in these locations.

Table 1.1.4 Cultural background of the workforce

Cultural Background	General Project	Murri project
CALD background	4.81%	6.1%
Aboriginal	1.2%	64.1%
Torres Strait Islander	1.2%	10.25%
South Sea Islander	4.21%	10.25%
Other	n/a	10.25% - Anglo-Saxon

As may be expected from the regions examined in the Murri project, a large percentage of respondents identified as coming from an Aboriginal background. The 10.25% that identified as 'other' reported that they came from an Anglo Saxon background.

The minimal response to this question by the general youth sector workforce either indicates that very few workers are from a culturally and linguistically diverse background or Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or South Sea Islander decent or that this information is not collected in any systematic way by organisations in order to allow managers to provide this detail. Given the apparent small number of Indigenous people in the general

youth services workforce, initiatives such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Services Workforce Skilling and Training project are paramount to understanding their specific workforce development needs and ensuring appropriate and effective strategies are developed.

Focus groups in Brisbane and South West Queensland discussed the high representation of Indigenous young people in their services and the difficulty in attracting Indigenous staff to positions as well as the need for increased training and skill development for non-Indigenous staff in working effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. The importance of cultural awareness training and developing organisation's competencies in working cross-culturally in an integrated workplace approach rather than through a one day training event was emphasised in a number of locations. This has been further explored in the Key Themes section of this report.

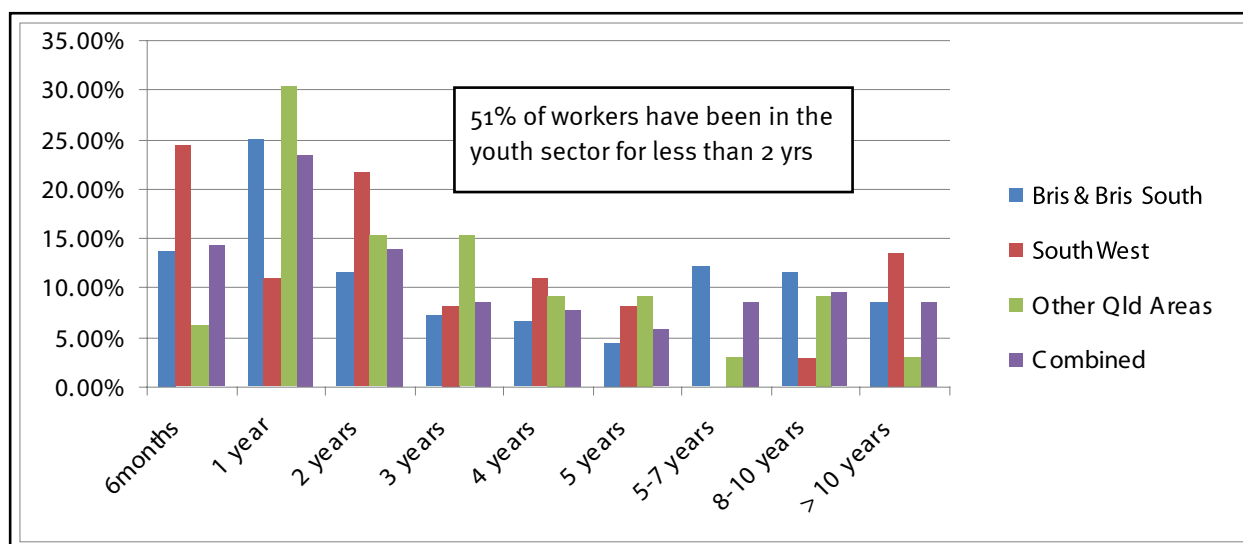
1.2 Experience in the youth services sector

The level of experience within the youth services sector is an important consideration in terms of the sustainability, health and depth of skills and knowledge that remain within the sector to influence quality of services provided to young people and quality of management skills and practice to support the sector.

Experience in the youth services sector

	6 mths	1 yr	2 yrs	3 yrs	4 yrs	5 yrs	5-7 yrs	8-10 yrs	>10 yrs
General Project	14.28%	23.33%	13.81%	8.57%	7.62%	5.71%	8.57%	9.52%	8.57%
Indigenous Project	6.5%	18.75%	10.94%	4.69%	9.38%	7.81%	23.44%	7.81%	10.94%

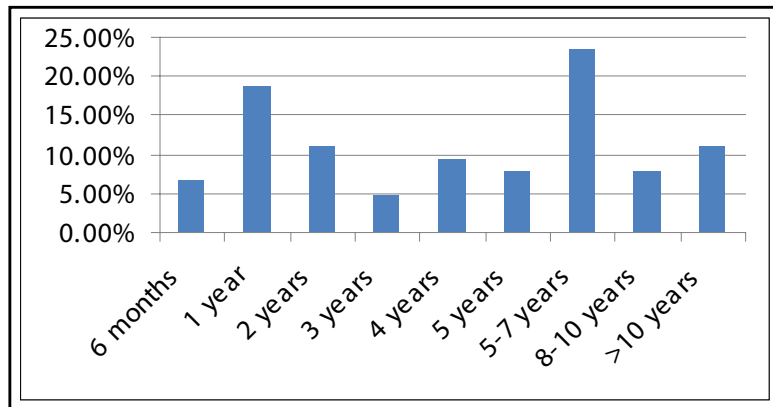
Table 1.2.1 General youth services experience in youth sector by region



Responses indicate that 51% of workers have been in the youth services sector for 2 years or less, with half of these showing that they have been in the sector for approximately 1 year indicating that there is considerable inexperience specifically in relation to the youth services sector. The small number of workers who have been in the sector for more than two years is notable. Interestingly, South West Queensland had 15% of workers who have been in the youth services sector for 10 years or longer. This appears to correlate with other data indicating that workers are generally older in the South West Queensland.

Participants at all forums and focus groups reported a distinct need to nurture, develop and harness leadership across the sector to increase sustainability of the sector through sharing of practice wisdoms and the 'youth sector narrative', providing an infrastructure that also contributes to other workforce development strategies such as retention of staff and status of the sector. A number of groups went further to identify the need to develop a senior practitioner type role within services, across services or access to workers in other services that could provide guidance, advice and support based on their practice experience.

Table 1.2.2 Indigenous workers experience in youth sector



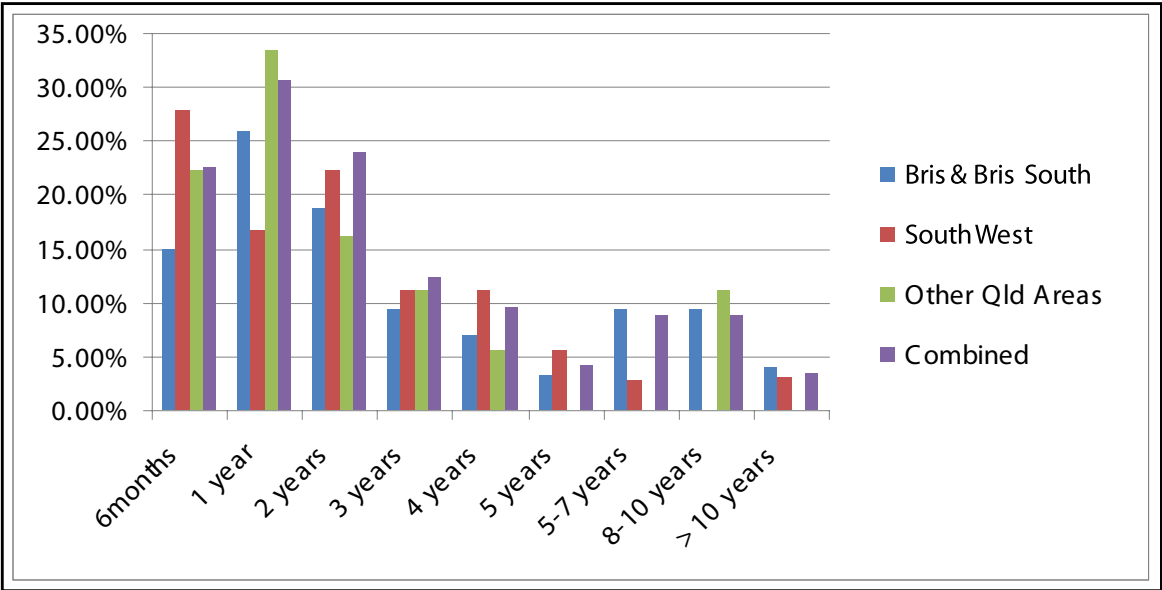
Responses show that experience in the sector is spread much more widely in the Indigenous youth sector with a spike at 5-7 years.

Experience in current organisation

Respondents were next asked to indicate how long they had been employed at their current organisation to demonstrate capacity at this level.

	6 mths	1 yr	2 yrs	3 yrs	4 yrs	5 yrs	5-7 yrs	8-10 yrs	>10 yrs
General Project	16.66%	26.78%	20.83%	10.12%	7.74%	2.97%	7.73%	7.14%	2.97%
Indigenous Project	10%	16%	10%	2%	10%	16%	12%	6%	8%

Table 1.2.3 General youth services experience in current organisation by region

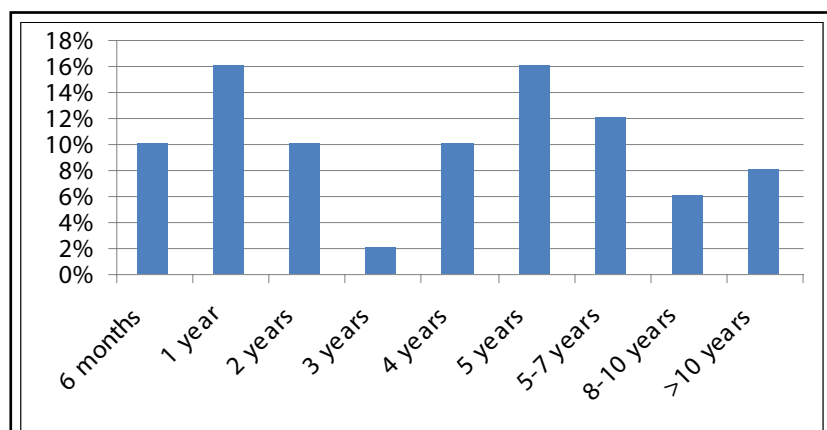


Findings show that 64% of respondents have been working in their current service for two years or less with a marked decline in numbers between the 2 and 3 year level (10%) and again between the 4 and 5 year level (5%). Interestingly, results in the Community Services Workforce Profile project showed that 46% of general community services workforce surveyed had been in their roles for 2 years or less, suggesting that workers are remaining in the youth sector longer than other sectors.

Implications for services in relation to workforce management and sustainability of services are evident given the reported difficulty in attracting and recruiting staff in some locations. Further, the need identified above for the development of infrastructure to support leadership development as well as the senior practitioner role is a critical consideration if staff turnover is reasonably frequent, to provide an ongoing avenue for new staff to access skills, knowledge and ideas and for experienced staff who move between services to be able to share this.

Members of the IRG noted that people moving between services and sectors is not necessarily a negative if infrastructure exists within organisations and within sectors to capture and manage sharing of knowledge, skills and information to provide a continually developing quality service to young people. Peer support networks and other similar structures such as YACCAN and the YSC hubs provide one existing avenue to take up the knowledge management challenge.

Table 1.2.4 Indigenous experience in current organisation



Responses again show that experience in current organisation is spread much more widely in the Indigenous youth sector.

1.3 Qualifications

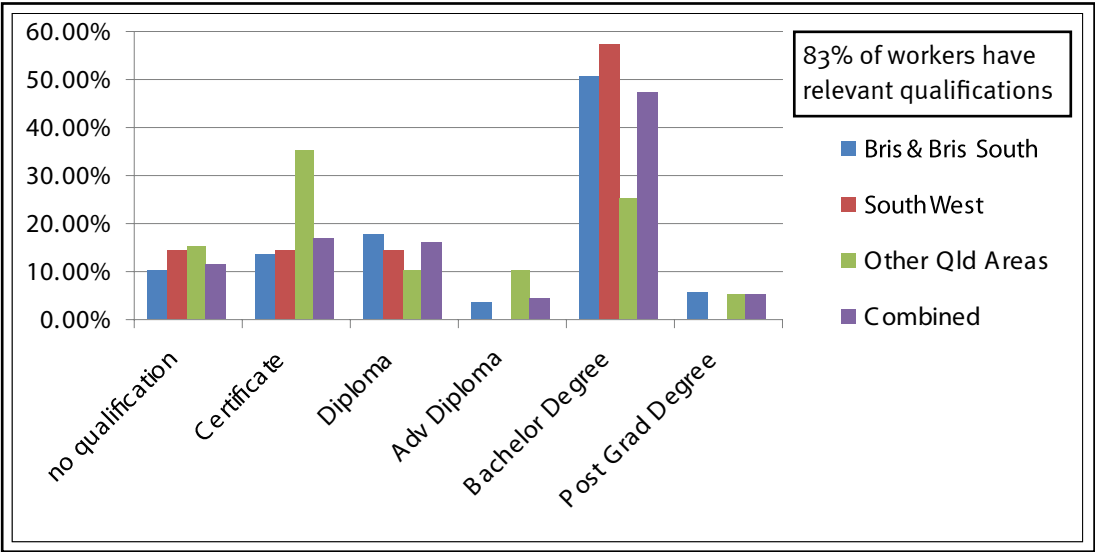
Highest relevant qualification in the workforce

Qualification Level	General Project	Murri project
No Qualification*	11.20%	17.05%
Certificate	16.80%	25%
Diploma	16%	13.66%
Advanced Diploma	4%	2.27%
Bachelor Degree	47.20%	13.66%
Post Graduate Degree	4.80%	3.4%

* it is important to note that one Indigenous organisation with a large number of staff also had a number of staff without qualifications skewing this percentage a little.

As can be seen from the data above there is a greater number of qualified staff in the general youth sector and these staff have higher levels of qualifications. Interestingly about 40% of Indigenous workforce has VET level qualifications. Further investigation is required to determine what articulation pathways exist between VET qualifications and higher education and if these could be promoted more effectively to increase Indigenous participation in higher education.

Table 1.3.1 Highest relevant qualification in the general youth services workforce by region



Responses show that 83% of workers have some form of relevant qualification, with the majority of 42% having a Bachelor’s degree. Community Services Workforce Profile project similarly found that 38% of respondents had Bachelor’s degrees while in comparison the Child Protection Skills Formation Strategy census reports that only 19% of staff in agencies that responded were qualified.

While respondents were asked to identify the area of their relevant qualification, minimal responses were provided. Data shows that the level of qualification is reasonably consistent across South West Queensland and Brisbane and Brisbane South regions. Data from other Queensland areas is skewed towards certificate qualifications due to results from one large service with many unqualified workers.

Additional research questions:
A differently structured question eliciting information about relevant qualifications areas that encourages more responses would be useful in identifying pathways into the sector.

When managers were asked about the content area of their staff’s highest relevant qualification they identified the following:

Content Area	General Project	Indigenous Project
Youth Work	26.5%	37.04%
Social Welfare/Community Work	29.35%	27.78%
Social Sciences	2.8%	5.56%
Human Services	6.4%	0%
Social Work	12%	1.85%
Psychology	8.25%	5.56%
Nursing/Health	2.5%	3.7%
Administration	4.6%	18.5%
Other-including education, trade and theology	7.5	7.40%

1.4 Employment profile

Table 1.4.1 Employment status

Employment type	General project	Murri project
Permanent Full Time	62.36%	33.87%
Permanent Part Time	23.6%	19.35%
Casual Full Time	0%	3.22%
Casual Part Time	7.3%	16.13%
Contract	7.74%	3.22%
Voluntary	0%	24.19%

The majority of workers in the general youth services sector, 85%, have indicated that they are permanent workers either full or part time. This is significantly lower in Indigenous services at 53%. It is notable that 24% of Indigenous staff are voluntary while no general youth services that responded to the survey used voluntary staff. This may be somewhat attributed to the fact that voluntary management committee members in Indigenous services sometimes are also involved in and considered part of service delivery staff.

Anecdotal information provided at focus groups suggests that this employment type is chosen based on permanency for the funding agreement period i.e services funded under three year funding agreements, however the accuracy of this perception was not tested through this survey. Issues regarding services and employees knowledge and understanding of the industrial relations area, their employment status and hence any potential benefits such as redundancy were noted particularly in this current funding climate where some services report they do not even have stability of three year funding.

The impact of funding on services' ability to provide career pathways and long term secure employment options, particularly for smaller services was noted during focus groups and forums and confirmed in data about difficulties in retaining staff.

1.5 Organisational profile

Table 1.5.1 Funding Source general youth services

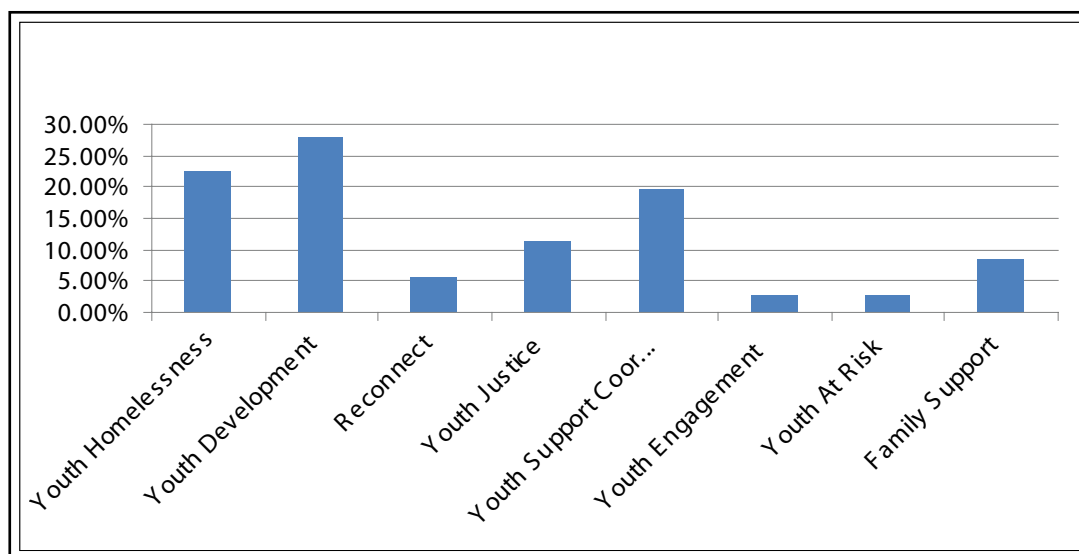
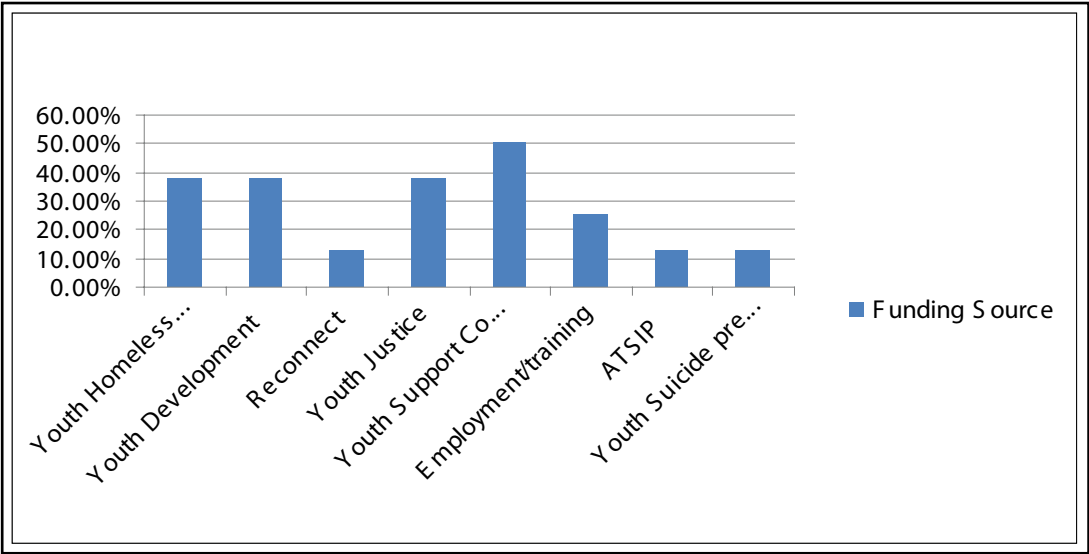


Table 1.5.2 Indigenous youth services



Managers were asked to identify their major funding source as a way to depict scope of respondents in this report. These tables depict the major funding program areas for the services that responded to the survey showing a cross section of youth service types.

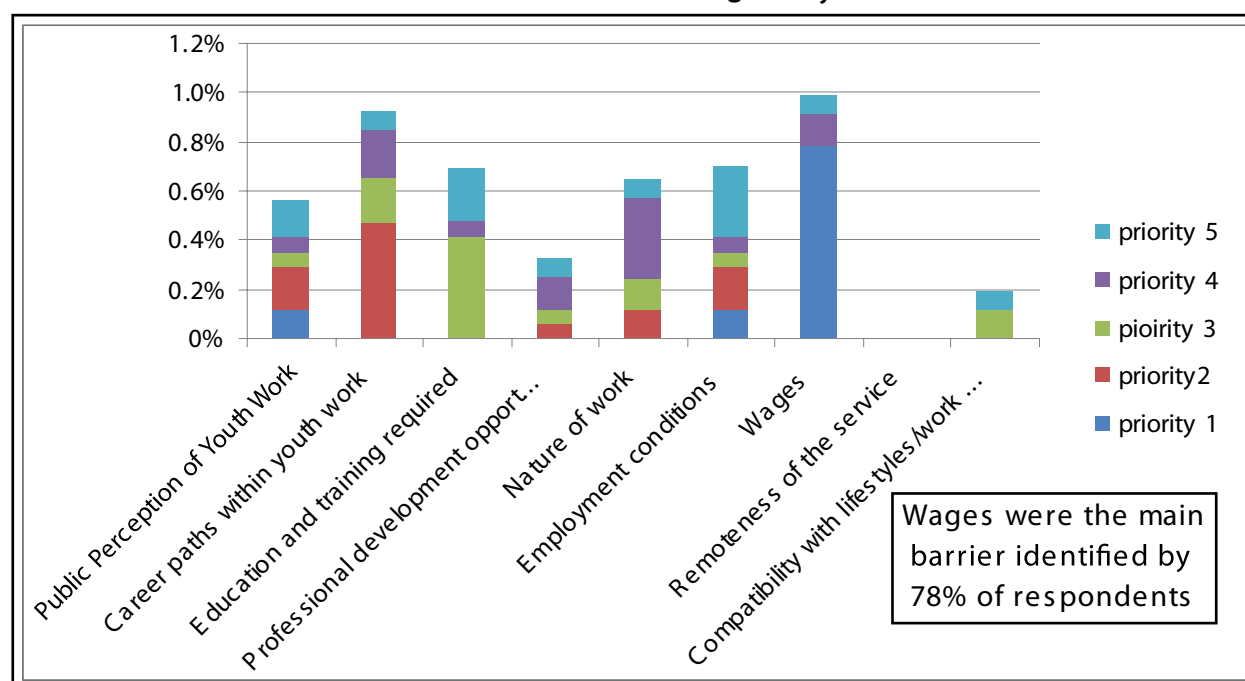
2. Recruitment and Retention

This section explores aspects of recruitment and retention with the view to understanding what it is that makes the youth sector appealing and what it is that keeps staff or that drives staff away to inform the development of future strategies in this area both as a whole of sector and within organisations.

2.1 Barriers to attraction and recruitment

Managers were asked to prioritise aspects that made it most difficult to attract and recruit staff from a list of nine options, with the capacity to offer other factors. The table below shows managers top five rankings against the criteria offered.

Table 2.1.1 Prioritised barriers to attraction and recruitment for general youth services



It is probably not surprising given the comments at all focus groups regarding the wages and conditions in the youth community services sector, that wage levels are the primary factor impacting on recruitment identified by 78% of all respondents. Qualitative data gathered during the general project identified issues regarding both recruitment of workers and also retention. The lack of parity between non government and government pay rates is well documented and the loss of skilled and experienced personnel to the government sector with their accompanying sector knowledge is often referred to. Given this it is also no surprise that the need to establish infrastructure to support leadership strategies and knowledge management within the sector has emerged as such a strong theme throughout. Opportunities exist in developing and enhancing networks and other sector 'infrastructure' to consider how to meaningfully connect the non government sector with excellent youth work practitioners who have moved on to government to assist with knowledge sharing and management. The 'bleed' to government as it was described by one group is possibly enhanced given the high numbers of workers in the sector with Bachelor degrees seeking better paying employment given wages were identified as a major recruitment issue.

Recent developments in relation to pay equity for workers on Queensland Awards have seen a significant increase in wage levels. While no specific data has been collected in this area, managers and workers report that some services are experiencing difficulty in implementing these changes without sufficient funding to do so, given the range of sources from which they receive program funds, thereby ultimately reducing service delivery hours and nature and types of job roles offered. Further investigation into the impact of these changes is required.

Interestingly employment conditions alone (without considering wages) were not seen as a top factor affecting recruitment. This is likely attributed to the fact that services often provide a level of flexibility to support work/life balance as well as offering additional benefits to complement wage levels.

Career pathways at 47% were the second major factor identified. Participants at focus groups identified the fact that very few, if any, career paths exist within the non government youth sector. It is widely seen, particularly in smaller services, that somebody has to leave a service in order to create the opportunity of career advancement with one worker noting that it was a case of filling ‘dead man’s shoes’.

Despite the fact that participants at focus groups in the South West Queensland identified recruitment issues in their localities, remoteness of service did not rate in the top five factors impacting on recruitment. This may be because of the lower response rate from services in this region.

Data gathered during the Child Protection Skills Formation Strategy census indicated that employment conditions and wages were cited by managers as the main reason for difficulty in attracting and retaining staff. These two factors were not separated as they were in the youth sector survey where results clearly indicated that wage levels are of far more significance than employment conditions when attracting and recruiting staff. Retention of staff in the youth sector has been dealt with below. While the nature of work rated quite highly as a recruitment barrier for Child Protection services this was not the case for youth services.

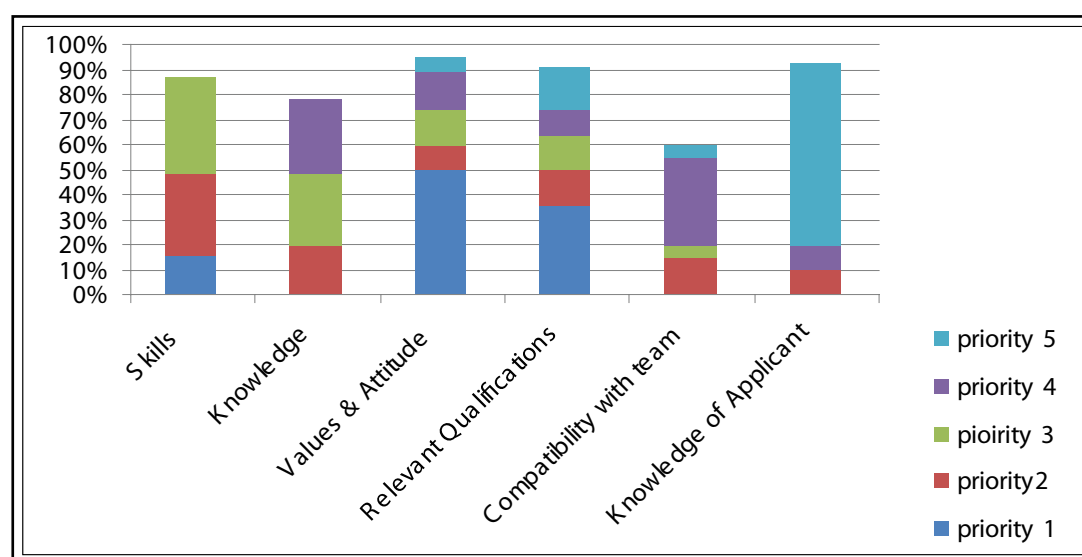
The managers’ perceptions in relation to recruitment provide some information about the issues faced by services, giving insight into areas for consideration when reviewing recruitment strategies at an organisational level, informing what strategies can be considered at a sector level to enhance options and what needs further exploration at government policy and funding levels. While managers identified wage levels as a significant factor in ability to attract staff almost half of the workforce surveyed indicated that they have Bachelor degrees suggesting that wage levels are not necessarily the only factor impacting on ability to recruit and suggesting other factors may impact on attracting staff. Further investigation of exactly what this is may be an opportunity to build on strengths.

Indigenous services

Limited data was provided by Indigenous services however key points raised in relation to attracting staff identified wage levels as the main factor, lack of experience and training, literacy skills and importantly a drainage of Indigenous workers to government agencies, reducing the available pool of skilled staff. A number of people interviewed noted that the biggest attraction to the position was “to be able to work with their own mob.”

Table 2.1.2 Priority areas of consideration when recruiting for general youth services

Managers were also asked to rank in priority order the areas they consider most important when recruiting new staff from a list of six options, with the capacity to offer other factors.



Skills and values/attitude proved to be the most significant considerations for managers when recruiting. Knowledge did not rank as highly and was often the next ranked factor after both values and attitude and skills. Relevant qualifications were of reasonable importance which is interesting given that many services do not have minimum qualification requirements.

Some data has been collected through the projects that identifies both the key skills and core values and attitudes (see below and the knowledge, skills and values section) that provide some further insight into what may be meant by each area. Given the high rankings and the difficulty for some services to recruit staff, it will be important to further articulate which skills and what values and attitudes are important and identify whether these areas are being addressed in youth training and education accordingly to prepare people for the sector and whether they are ‘packaged’ accurately and effectively in recruitment information and service recruitment processes and decision making.

For example, given that managers have ranked values and attitudes as the main priority 50% of the time, how is this articulated, measured and assessed during the recruitment and selection process and what is the importance of personal values versus alignment with organisational values.

Other factors that were identified included:

- cultural compatibility
- ability to articulate the needs of the target group
- literacy depending on the role
- referee reports
- passion and commitment to youth work

Indigenous services

Limited data was provided by Indigenous services however key points raised indicated that values and attitudes are the main priority for managers when recruiting with skills as the second priority and capacity to work in a team and knowledge also featuring. Culture and integrity were also identified as important.

Core youth work values and attitudes sought when recruiting new staff

Managers were asked an open ended question about the core youth work values and attitudes they are seeking when recruiting. These have been collated into the lists below representing all areas identified.

General youth services

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy and compassion • Respect for cultural differences • Creativity and flexibility • Valuing partnerships and networks • Client focused • Engagement driven • Social justice • Participation • Honesty • Respect | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive • Sincerity • Teamwork • Relationship based • Passion • Transparency • Ethics and professional boundaries • Non-judgmental • Integrity • Reflective |
|---|--|

Indigenous youth services

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value young people • Willingness to learn • Passionate • Valuing of cultural learning, protocols and engagement processes • Willing to be part of a team • Dedication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grass roots approach • Love and care for young people • Social justice • Humour • Wisdom • Patience |
|--|--|

The lists have not been prioritised in any way as there were a wide range of responses and this question was not completed on all surveys and not enough data was provided to enable such depth of analysis. No conflicting values or attitudes were identified. No apparent differences between Indigenous and non Indigenous services stood out.

As noted above, given that values and attitudes are the major factor of consideration during recruitment it is critical to start articulating and defining what this means; which values and attitudes are critical to work in the youth sector, how these are included in a youth work framework and how it is put into practice in recruitment practices in the sector. This list provides a point for further discussion in the validation process and beyond.

Additional research question

It would be useful to prioritise these values to determine importance and how they are measured or assessed during the recruitment process.

Table 2.1.3 Minimum training or qualification requirements

Managers were asked to indicate if their organisation has any minimum training or qualification requirements for employment as a youth worker. Responses to this question for general youth services included the following:

Qualification	Number of services
Minimum 3 year Bachelor degree in social sciences or a social work degree * note one service specified Social Work degree	7
Diploma in Community Services	2
Certificate in Community Services	2
Certificate IV in Youth Work	2
No qualifications	2
Depends on the role - may be TAFE qualifications or higher	2
General Degree or Diploma	1
Teaching qualifications	1

Other responses included:

- We do, but sometimes we waiver it
- Based on SACS award - prefer experience over qualifications

Responses indicate that 79% of managers indicated that some form of qualification is a minimum requirement for employment, with approximately 30% indicating that they seek some form of Bachelor degree. This data is consistent with the qualifications held within the workforce where 47% of respondents indicated that they hold a relevant Bachelor degree and a further 32% indicating that they hold a Vocational qualification at Certificate or Diploma level. As can be seen from the table above there is no consistent requirement across the sector. Community Services Workforce Profile data did not report specific numbers of how many services require minimum qualifications but it also indicated that where a minimum qualification was required it varied from no qualification through Certificate IV and Diploma to a Degree level.

The qualification profile of the youth services sector led to interesting feedback and debate during focus groups and forums with a somewhat divided view on whether entry level qualifications were an asset to the sector and if so what they should be. Qualitatively, there appeared to be a stronger leaning towards having entry level qualifications at the Certificate IV level as a minimum and preferably higher at Diploma or Bachelor providing workers with a framework for practice and theory and tools on which to base their practice. However there was also a strong argument that this should not limit the access of workers with extensive life skills and experience into the sector and that the same outcome can be achieved through effective access to on the job training and qualifications. This is also consistent with the recruitment data and information from participants that rates values and attitudes very highly as a recruitment selection factor.

Indigenous Services

Indigenous services did not generally identify minimum requirements. Some services noted that they offer on the job training and some stated that all they need 'is passion and commitment'.

Given the broad range of minimum qualifications where services had one, and the number of services that do not, the development of a youth sector career map or guide showing youth entry and exit points and qualifications or training against position types including movement opportunities across sectors would be of value to enhance and target recruitment.

Additional research questions:

It would be useful to map minimum qualification requirements against position and service types to identify any trends or patterns that may exist.

Joining the sector and intention to stay

Both managers and youth workers were asked about why they joined the sector and their intentions in relation to length of tenure and likely reasons for leaving.

Table 2.1.4 Reasons for joining the youth sector

Reason	Managers	Youth Workers
I want to make a difference in young people's lives	35.29%	34.09%
I want to improve services in my area	11.76%	2.27%
I want to serve my particular community in youth work	5.88%	4.55%
I want to support young people to fit better into society		11.36%
I want to help bring about social change to meet young people's needs and rights	29.41%	47.73%
Other - included working for a good organisation; involved in community development, skill set match with youth work	17.64%	

Respondents were asked to choose their main reason for joining the youth sector from a list of alternatives including the option of identifying other reasons. Response from managers and employees are identified and compared above. Participants at focus groups and forums when describing youth work and the youth worker role confirmed the desire to work with young people to make a difference in their lives as the major driving force behind youth work. They went on to identify the importance of the youth work relationship that is, the level of trust and engagement that is forged between youth workers and young people, in achieving this goal.

Interestingly almost 50% of youth workers indicated that their desire to bring about social change to meet young people's needs and rights was the main driving force behind their reason to join the youth sector. When asked a similar question during focus groups the response was that the role incorporates a bit of both social change and working towards helping young people fit better into society in all twelve (12) groups. Most groups also reported that they found this question difficult to answer. It is clear from the responses provided that youth work is a values driven sector and that an articulation of a broad youth work framework or other guideline to describe the strategic goals of the sector will need to incorporate this values base. Further research to identify and articulate specific core values as part of an evidence based framework will strengthen sector identity and overall status.

Table 2.1.5 Reasons for choosing current employer in general youth services

Reason	Managers	Youth Workers
The organisation's purpose and value statement align with my beliefs	44.45%	47.8%
The organisation's service is directed to areas where I have particular expertise	16.67%	13%
The organisation is active in the community in leading change	22.22%	26.1%
The organisation offered work / life balance which suits my family	11.11%	8.7%
Employment conditions	0%	2.2%
Limited availability of positions in this area	0%	2.2%
Other -relocation	5.55%	0%

Not surprisingly given the information above, close to 50% of managers and youth workers indicated that their main reason for choosing their current employer was the alignment of organisation purpose and values with personal ones. It is noteworthy that employment conditions were only identified by 2.2% of youth work respondents as the main reason for joining their current employer.

Table 2.1.6 Reasons for choosing current role

Managers were also asked to comment on the reason for choosing their management role.

I want to manage a team of people	22.22%
I want to lead the change in the organisation	16.67%
I want to lead change in the community	22.22%
Employment conditions	5.55%
Limited availability of positions in this area	5.55%
Other-	27.78%

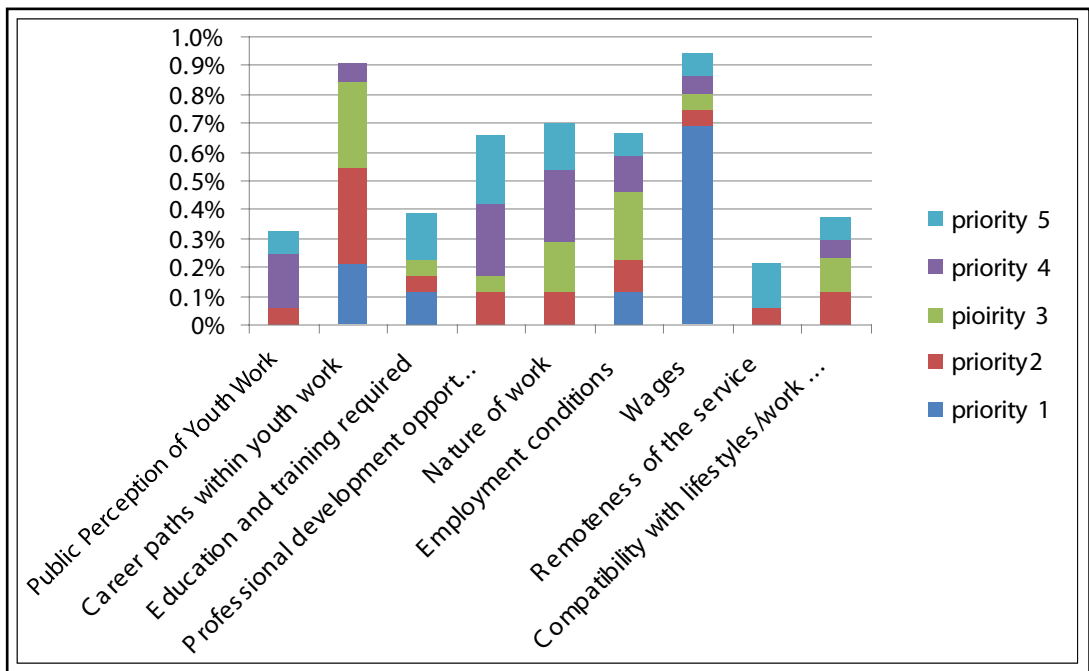
Other includes the following:

- Wanted to work in the private sector/community sector
- Experience in management
- Occurred through professional development
- Able to continue counselling as well as management

2.2 Barriers to retention

Table 2.2.1 Prioritised difficulties in retaining staff in general youth services

Managers were asked to prioritise aspects that made it most difficult to retain staff from a list of nine options, with the capacity to offer other factors. The table below shows managers top five rankings against the criteria offered.



Responses indicate that wages were by far the major factor in retaining staff from the managers' perspective at 68%. Similarly to recruitment factors, career pathways ranked as the second most significant factor impacting on retention. Employment conditions were the next factor however they ranked significantly lower than the first two, confirming anecdotal and qualitative data that services are able to provide other benefits within working conditions that assist in supporting and retaining staff.

Remoteness of service ranked in the top 5, albeit low down, probably reflecting the difficulties expressed by workers in the South West region in keeping workers.

Career advancement opportunities were canvassed as part of the Community Services Workforce Profile project with 49% of organisations reporting that they offer some form of career advancement to staff with policies covering areas such as succession planning, internal career pathways, job transition, management and leadership development program and mentoring. This data was not specific to any sector and has not been explored in this project.

Indigenous Services

As with non Indigenous services, wages were clearly the number one reason for difficulties in retaining staff with career pathways rating the second major reason. Funding and competition for Indigenous workers across the community sector and government was also raised with higher wages offered by government and private sectors also an issue.

Additional research questions:

The types and frequency of career advancement opportunities that are offered in organisations require further exploration.

This section of the survey provides a picture of the likely rate of turnover or attrition by asking people how long they intend staying in the sector. A sense of intention is created to project into the future rather than the reality of what will occur. Almost 30% of managers indicated they are likely to remain in the youth sector for at least 2-5 years whereas almost 50% of youth workers expected to only remain in the sector for one year. As noted earlier 51% of workers have only been in the sector for 2 years or less showing that about half the workforce leaves the sector after about three years.

Table 2.2.2 Managers intention to stay in the sector

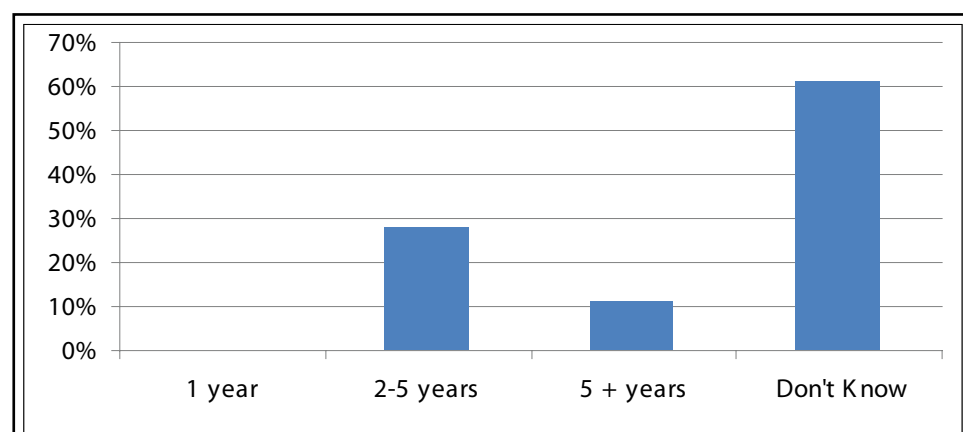
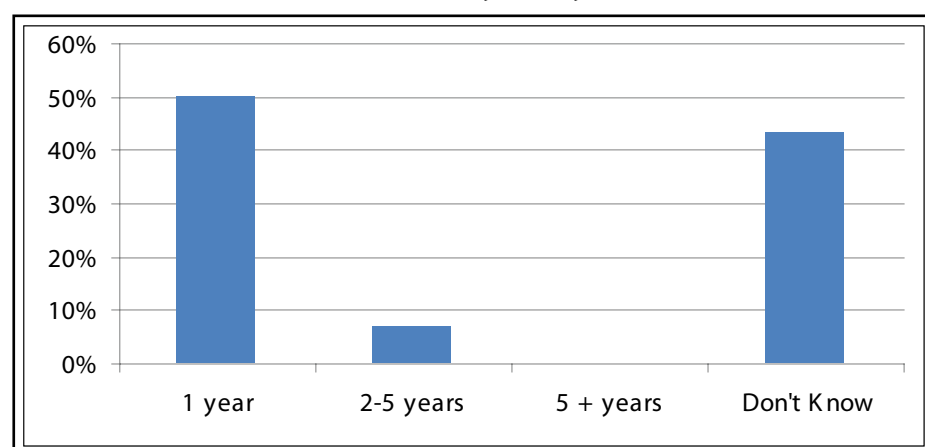


Table 2.2.3 Youth workers intention to stay in the youth



To add further to the picture developing regarding movement within and from the youth sector respondents were asked where they would most like to go when they leave their current position and then why - the likely reason for leaving.

Table 2.2.4 Managers preferred next position

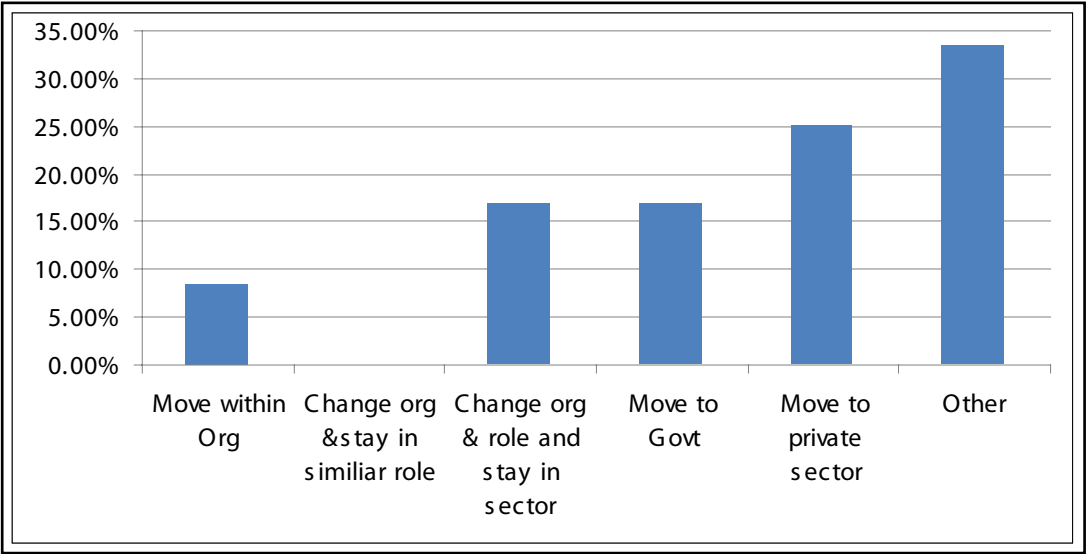
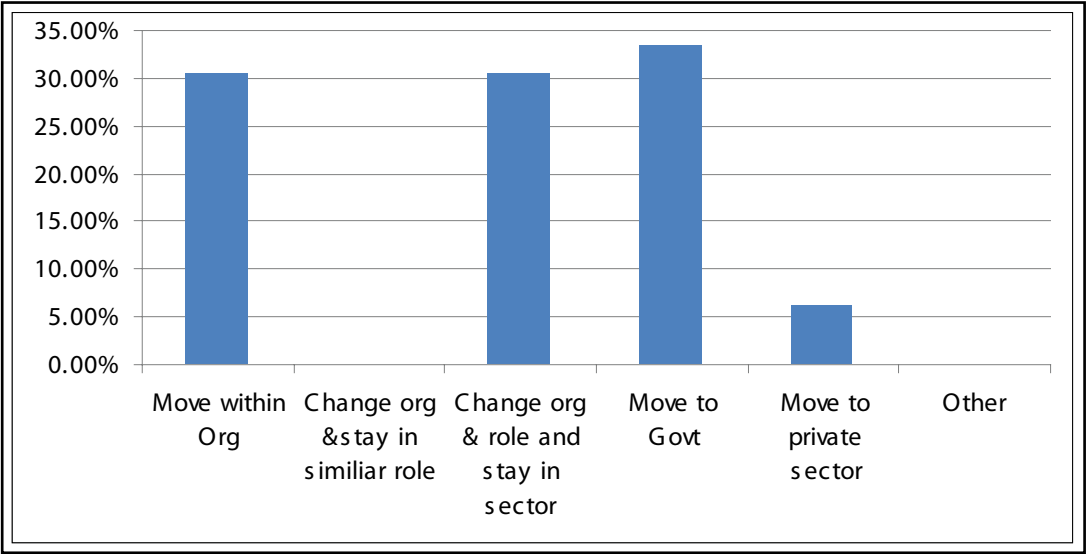


Table 2.2.5 Youth workers preferred next position



Slightly more than 60% of youth workers indicated that they would either move within the organisation or change organisation and role but remain in the sector.

Finally respondents were asked to nominate the most likely reason they would leave the youth sector.

Table 2.2.6 Managers likely reasons for leaving the youth sector

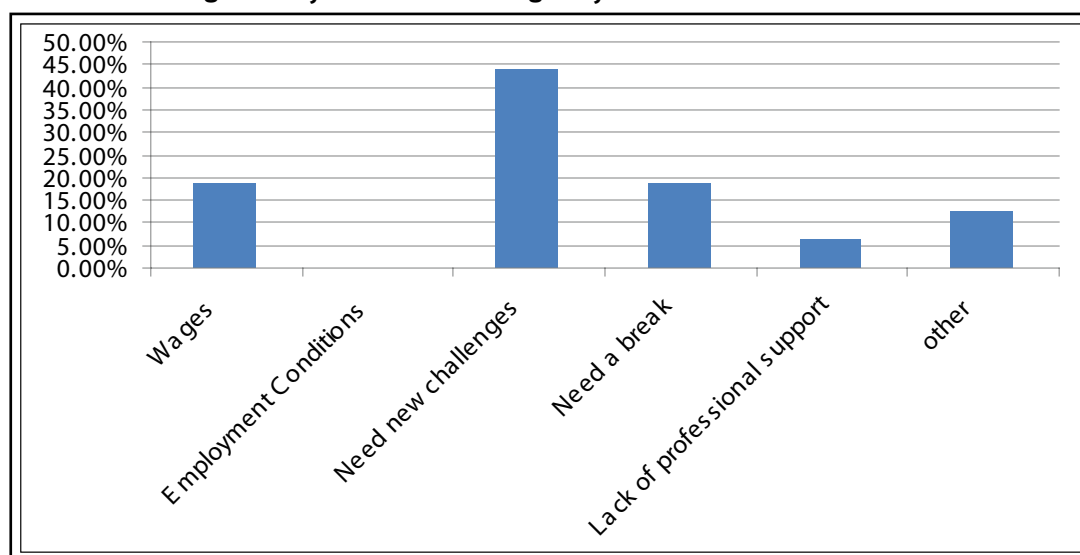
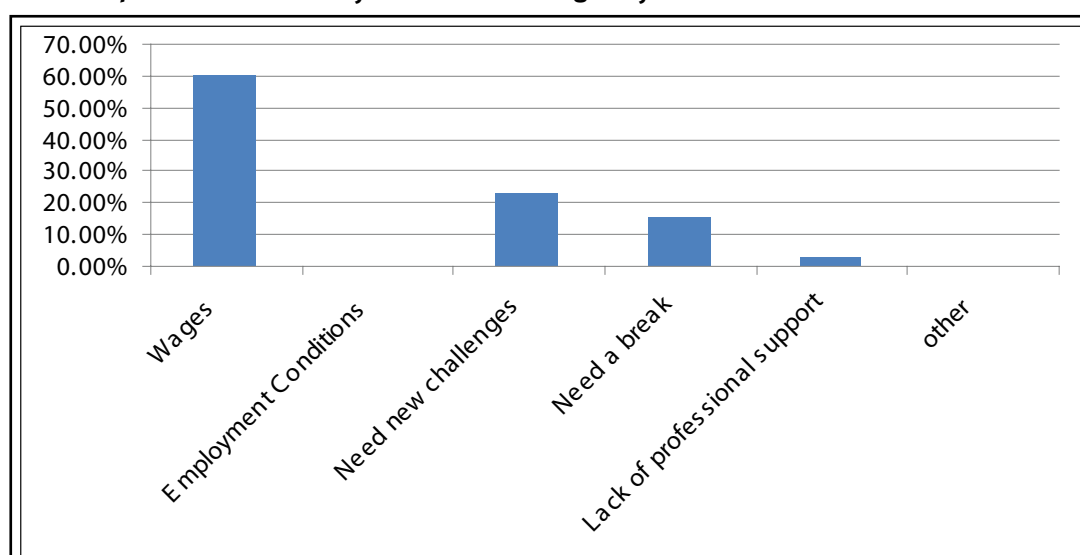


Table 2.2.7 Youth workers likely reasons for leaving the youth sector



Overwhelmingly, youth workers indicated that wages would be a key factor in a decision to leave the youth sector at 60% while managers identified the need for new challenges at 44%. It appears that the sector's ability to retain youth work employees can be linked to remuneration. This data correlates with the fact that 30% of youth workers said that they would prefer to move to government for their next position given that remuneration in government is higher than in the community services sector and that information gathered at focus groups confirmed that workers leave the sector to move to government because of wage levels. Whether there are other reasons for joining the government sector were not canvassed in this survey.

Key findings in the Community Services Workforce Profile project indicated that there is general dissatisfaction with remuneration levels with only 2.36% of participants in their employee review reporting that good salary packages are offered with 54.22% of respondents indicating that inadequate salaries are offered to staff. The Community Services Workforce Profile data showed that while employees stay in their jobs due to reasons other than salary, when they do leave it is mainly due to salary offered, they do not stay in positions due to salary packages or the role their position may have on career progression.

In this survey, employment conditions did not factor as the main reason for leaving for either youth workers or managers.

This section of the report adds to the developing picture of the youth sector in Queensland further exploring the youth sector by looking at work roles that make up the youth sector, what is culturally appropriate youth work for Indigenous services and who is managing our services.

3.1 Work roles

As noted earlier, definition of the 'youth sector' has emerged as a key point of dialogue during the projects and the need to explore what constitutes youth work practice, who is in the youth sector, and the framework for youth centred practice. This is confirmed through the scope of information provided by services when asked to identify direct service delivery work roles in their organisation. Below is the list of job titles that was provided in response.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Engagement Coordinator • Team Leader • Youth Support Coordinators • Youth Engagement Worker • Youth Support Advocate • Youth Support Worker • Case Worker • Family Support Worker • Youth Worker • Youth Development Worker • Youth and Family Worker • Senior Youth Worker • Youth and Family Counsellor • Young Women's Health Worker • Clinical Practice Coordinator • Tenancy Support Worker | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art Therapy Facilitator • Youth Info and Referral • Family Support Advocate • Youth Housing Worker • Youth Activity Worker • Volunteer Coordinator • Teacher • SAAP Youth Support Worker • Young Women's Residential Worker • Outreach Health Educator • Sports Coach • Youth Bail Accommodation Service Coordinator • Resource worker • Education support • VSM Youth Worker • Intake Youth Worker |
|---|--|

Primary client group/s worked

Services were also asked to identify the primary target group with whom they work as a way of gauging the spread and scope of services that have participated in the survey. The number of times the client group was identified is listed in the second column.

Client description	Number of services that identified this group
Pregnant young women and young parents	1
Homeless youth	2
General young people	9
Marginalised and disadvantaged young people	1
Homeless and at risk of homelessness	4
Young people (12 - 18 years) at risk of early school leaving and/or homelessness, and their families	1
Generalist service but doing lots of work with families from refugee back	1
Indigenous, CALD, Pacific Islanders and at risk Anglo young people	1
Young people under the age of 17, usually involved in the youth justice or child protection systems	1
Young People and their Families	1
Young people at risk of leaving school	3
Youth at Risk	1
Males 16-25 who have drug/alcohol issues and many are also homeless	1
Young People with intellectual cognitive or neurological disabilities who are vulnerable in the community	1
Young people at risk of offending or further involved in the JJ system	1
Young people 10-17 years with high to extreme complex needs	1

Some services included the age range of young people who are their primary clients. Where this was identified age ranges included; 12-25 years, 12-20 years, 13-19 years, 15-18 years, 10-17 years and 12-18 years demonstrating the broad scope of service types. These responses again demonstrate the diverse language used to describe work in the youth area as well as the range of service types that exist.

3.2 Culturally appropriate youth work

During interviews with Indigenous service providers, youth workers and managers were asked to describe aspects of culturally appropriate youth work practice to assist in understanding what may be unique about Indigenous youth work.

Youth workers saw that they have a major role in keeping culture alive and respondents identified the key components as workers knowing who they are, understanding their family and kinship background and connections and being able to articulate and share their cultural identity with young people they are working with. From this basis, using respectful and meaningful engagement processes with appropriate communication was seen as a key aspect of youth work.

In smaller communities working with 'your own mob' was a strong driver for people doing youth work and informed and culturally appropriate by workers having good understanding of their family background.

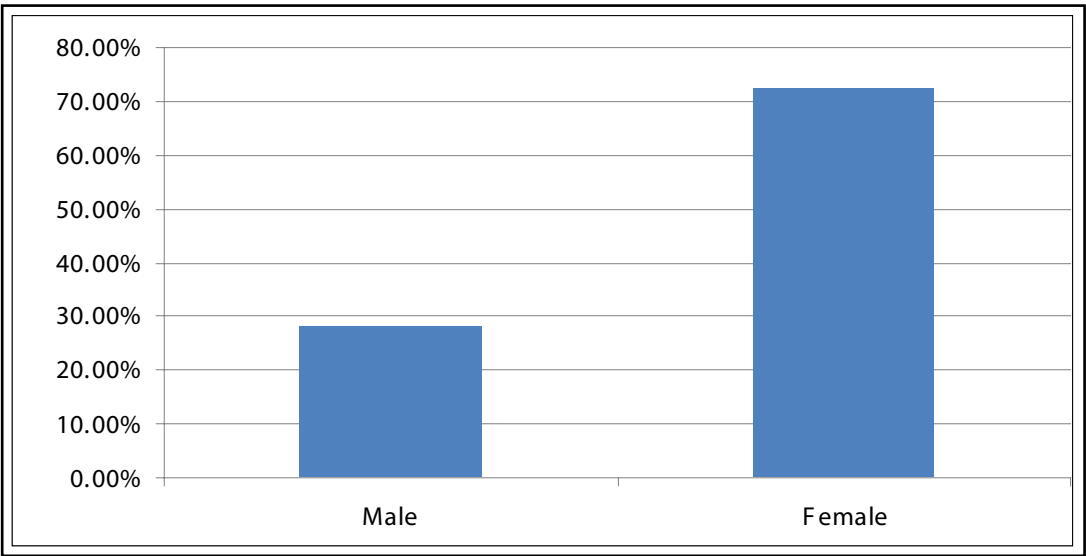
A strong sentiment emerged in the general project that while non Indigenous services can and do provide services to Indigenous young people that this was not the most culturally appropriate way for this to happen and that more emphasis needed to be placed on developing Indigenous services to do this work. Culturally appropriate services were described as being localised, understanding the context from where the young person is coming, and having capacity to bring it back to family and work outside of the confines of the '9am-5pm agency model'.

3.3 About managers

Creating a picture of who is managing our youth services is critical in the sense that sector development initiatives will focus at the organisational level as well as at individual workers and at government and more broadly. Given the implicit role of organisations to support, implement and initiate workforce development strategies, understanding who is managing our youth services is very important. Responsibility for implementing some strategies will fall to managers while, as noted above, the need to better harness and utilise sector leaders and managers through leadership groups/communities of practice has emerged as a key theme. Indigenous data was very limited in this area but has been referred to in the text relating to each table to offer some comparison.

Gender and age

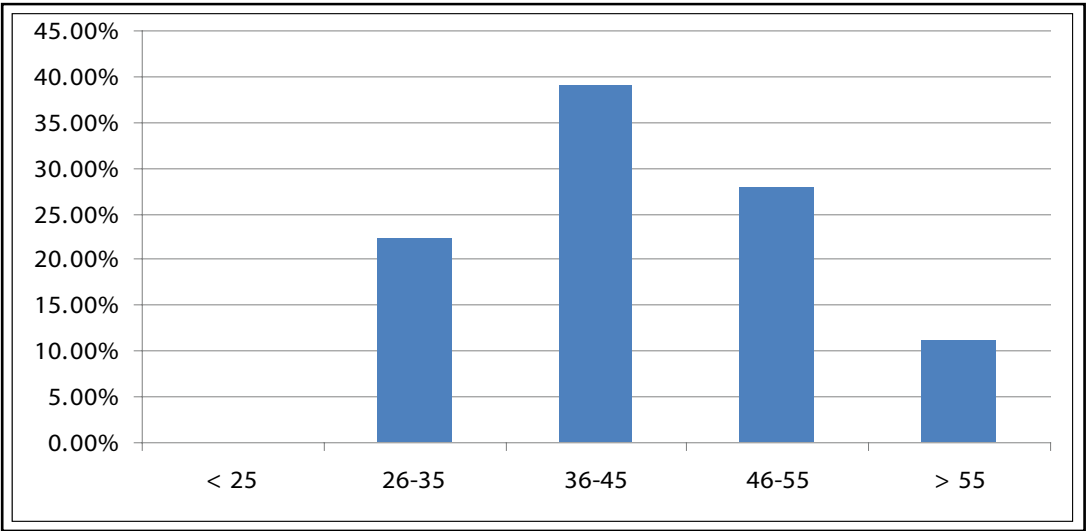
Table 3.3.1 Gender breakdown of managers in general youth sector



Data collected in this project confirms a similar breakdown of males and females in manager roles within the youth services sector as across the entire community sector workforce. The Community Services Workforce Profile data also showed that females occupy the majority of positions generally in the community services industry however the percentage of males increased in more senior management roles to 31% at the Executive level from 16% of professional direct support (which includes youth workers).

Data collected in the Murri project demonstrated a similar ratio of females to males.

Table 3.3.2 Age breakdown of managers in general youth sector



Compared to the overall workforce data where 40% of the workforce was aged 26-35 years, almost 40% of managers are aged 36-45 years with a further 28% aged 46-55 years. This correlates with the data below showing that 67% of managers have been with their present organisation for five years or more with 50% having been in the youth sector for 10 years or longer.

Indigenous data showed an even breakdown of managers in the 26-35 years, 36-45 years and 46-55 years age ranges.

Table 3.3.3 Manager's employment status in the general youth services workforce

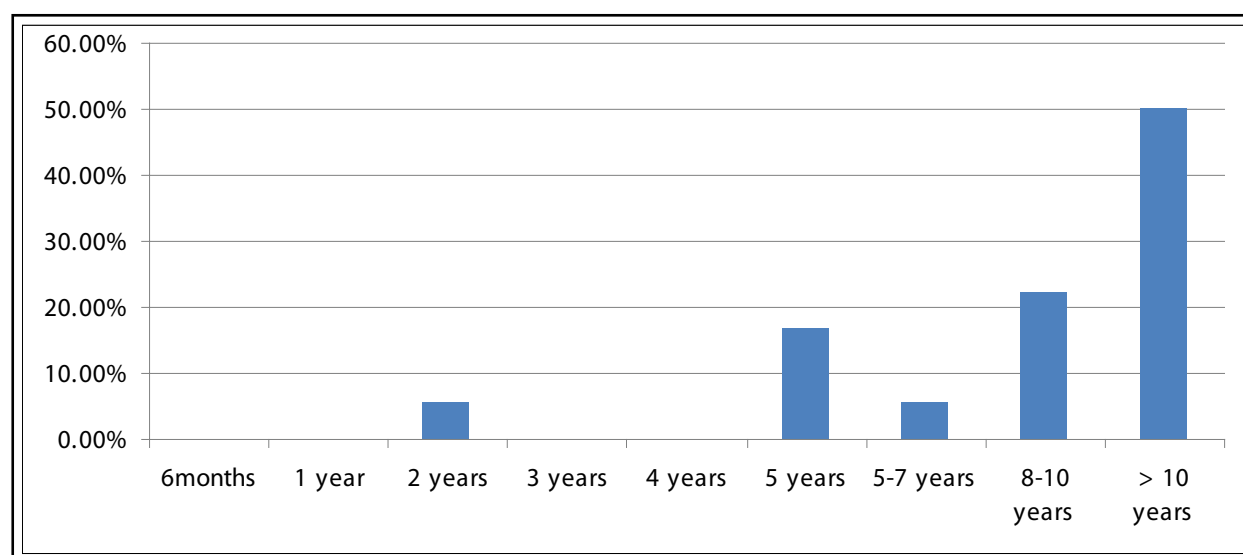
Permanent Full Time	Permanent Part Time	Casual Part Time	Contract
55.55%	27.77%	0%	16.66%

With 55% of managers indicating they are permanent full time this is 7% less than the overall workforce, and interestingly 17% of managers compared with 8% of the general workforce indicated that they are employed on a contract basis. Further investigation of what constitutes permanent full time versus contract given the triennial funding model under which most services are funded and as Manager positions are often funded through a combination of sources may be warranted to understand the security and sustainability of manager positions.

In the Murri project half the managers surveyed were permanent full time, one permanent part time however interestingly one was casual and one was voluntary.

Table 3.3.4 Manager's experience in the youth service sector

Managers were asked to indicate how long they had been in the youth services sector.



The level of experience of managers in the youth sector is an important pointer towards the longer term sustainability of skills and knowledge particularly given that findings in relation to the general workforce showed that 51% of the respondents had been in the workforce for 2 years or less. Results from managers showed that over 95% of managers had been in the youth sector for 5 years or longer with 50% having been in the sector longer than 10 years. Data below indicates that a significant number of managers had also been working in their current organisation for 5 years or more.

Indigenous service managers indicate that five out of six respondents had been in the youth sector for more than five years.

Table 3.3.5 Manager’s experience in present organisation

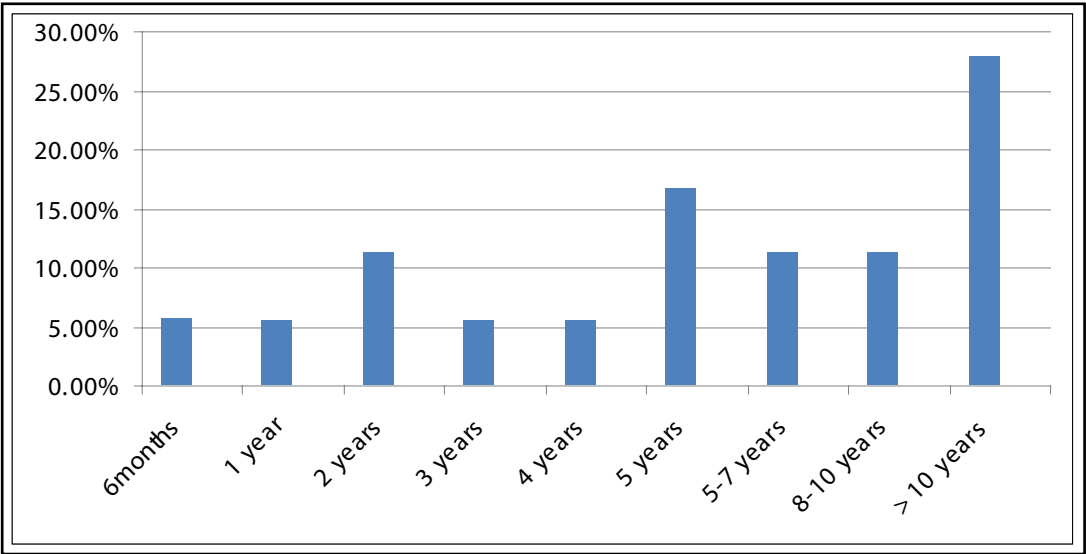
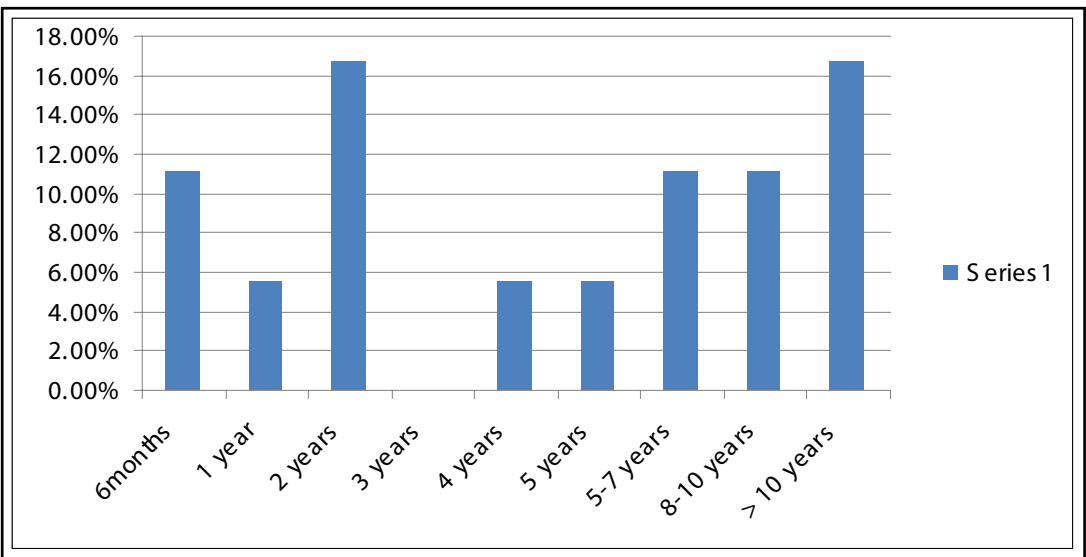


Table 3.3.6 Manager’s experience in current position



When asked about how long they had been in their current position, that is a manager position within their present organisation, responses showed a more even spread indicating that respondents had most likely progressed to manager level since being with their organisation in a number of cases.

Additional Research Questions

It would be useful to canvas whether people had progressed to management positions while with the service, and whether this was supported through HR policy and procedures to provide some insight into career progression strategies.

3.3.7 Manager employment contracts or other written agreement with employers

- 83.33% of managers surveyed were on employment contracts
- 57% of the managers with employment contracts are reviewed every year with other reviews tied to the length of the contract
- 55% of managers with employment contracts have reviews that are tied to a performance appraisal
- 91% of youth workers surveyed have employment contracts
- 100% of youth workers with contracts are reviewed, generally annually (84%) and this is tied to performance appraisal.

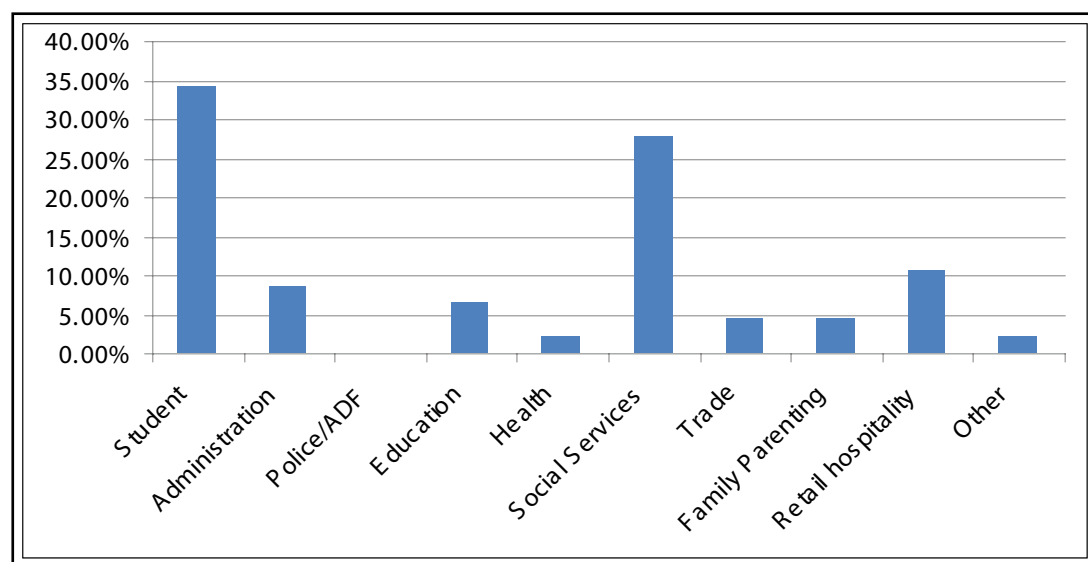
Table 3.3.8 Manager's highest qualification

No	Certificate	Diploma	Advanced Diploma	Bachelor Degree	Post Graduate Degree
5.9%	5.9%	5.9%	0%	64.7%	17.6%

While 53% of the overall workforce possessed Bachelor level qualification or higher this figure rose to 82% amongst managers. Of the managers with a qualification, 70.6% of managers have a relevant qualification related to youth work while 29.4% of managers have a qualification not related to youth work such as Bachelor of Marketing and Library Science.

Table 3.3.9 Manager's occupation before joining the youth sector

Managers were asked to indicate their profession prior to joining the youth sector in an attempt to understand where people are coming from and what this may mean for recruitment and skill development.



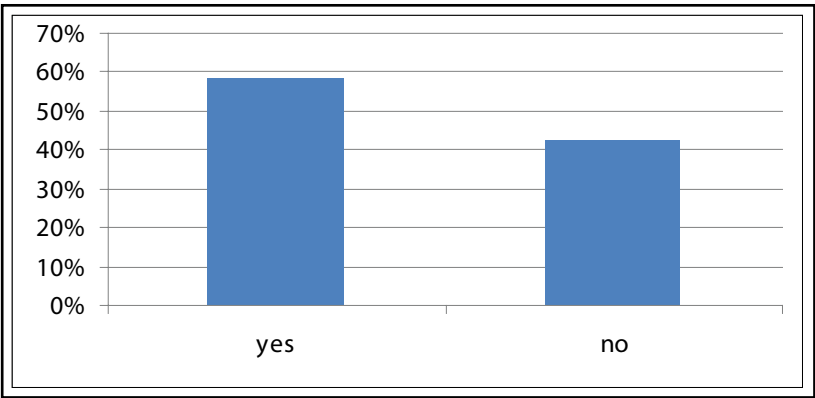
As is evident from the responses, a number of people come either from being students or working in another area of social service prior to entering the youth field. Interestingly 18% of people had come from other management roles however data on which industries these roles were in was not collected.

Indigenous service managers' occupation before joining the sector included student, trade, social science, health, admin and Indigenous Cultural organisation.

3.4 Human resource practices

Table 3.4.1 Recruitment practices that proactively seek to employ people from specific cultural backgrounds

In order to provide some insight into existing human resource policy and practices that support the development of cultural competency, managers were asked a series of questions. Managers were asked if they actively seek to employ people from specific cultural backgrounds.



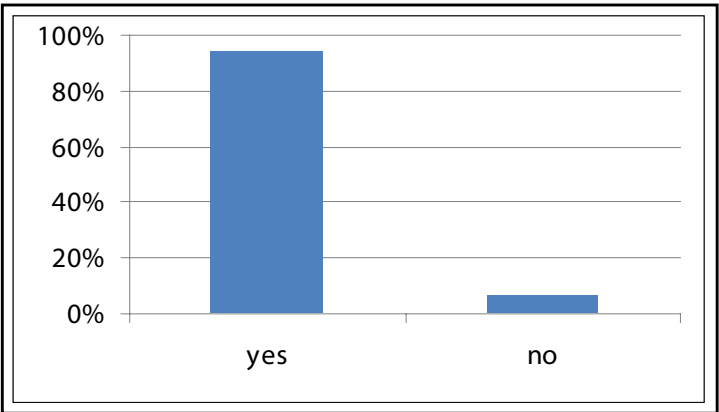
While almost 60% of managers indicated that they do work actively in this area, data in Section One of this report indicates that only 10% of the workforce is from either a CALD background or from Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or South Sea Islander backgrounds.

100% of respondents in the Murri project actively employ ATSI workers

Additional Research Questions

Further investigation is required in relation to whether recruitment practices are culturally appropriate or if they are not reaching their target in this area

Table 3.4.2 Necessary skills in managing staff from different cultural backgrounds

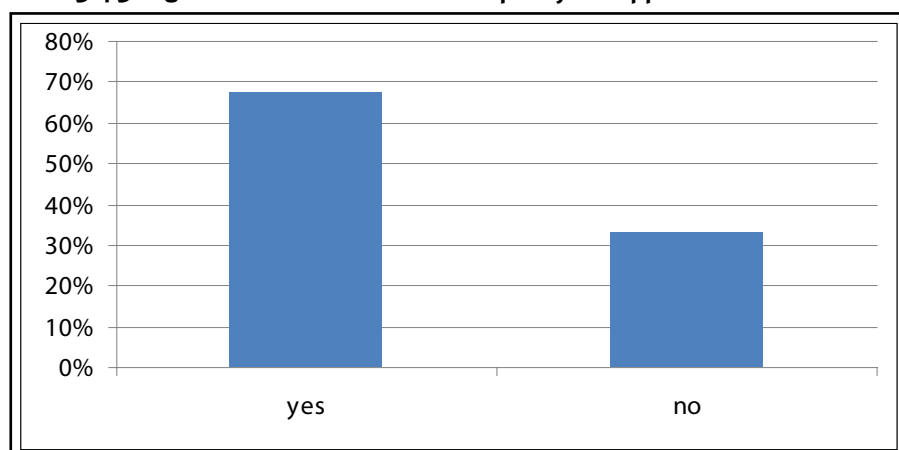


More than 90% of managers indicated that they felt that they had the necessary skills to manage staff from different cultural backgrounds. When asked to provide more detail in this area managers described their approaches, experiences and training in this area including:

- Have undertaken training in the area of working with diverse cultures.
- Long term experience working with and for people of diverse cultural and social heritage and experience in speaking Arabic
- Work with many families from different cultural backgrounds. All people have similarities and differences - if in doubt, ask! In fact, even when you think you are sure, still ask

- Treating people with respect and dignity seems to work for most backgrounds
- As an Aboriginal CEO, I value cultural diversity and the impact that people from different cultural background can bring to our service and our clients
- Have diverse background in management but would like to attend any management course in this area
- We work with other cultures regularly. We have training on other cultures and we also consult where necessary
- ISD cultural training by staff has impacted on policy and procedures
- Have lots of knowledge and experience but there are always new things to learn
- Management style embraces diversity as long as it supports universal rights and well being

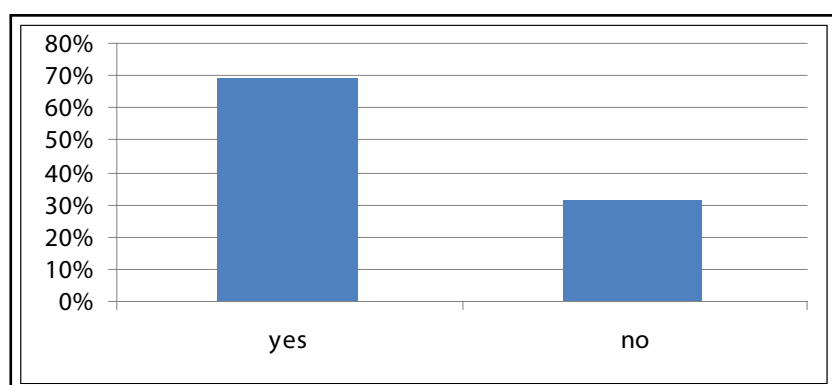
Table 3.4.3 Organisational human resource policy to support cultural inclusion



Close to 70% of managers indicated that their organisation has human resource policies that support cultural inclusion however this of course means that 30% of organisations do not have policies in this area or are not aware of these policies. Most respondents did not provide specific detail in relation to policy areas.

Table 3.4.4 Provision of student placements

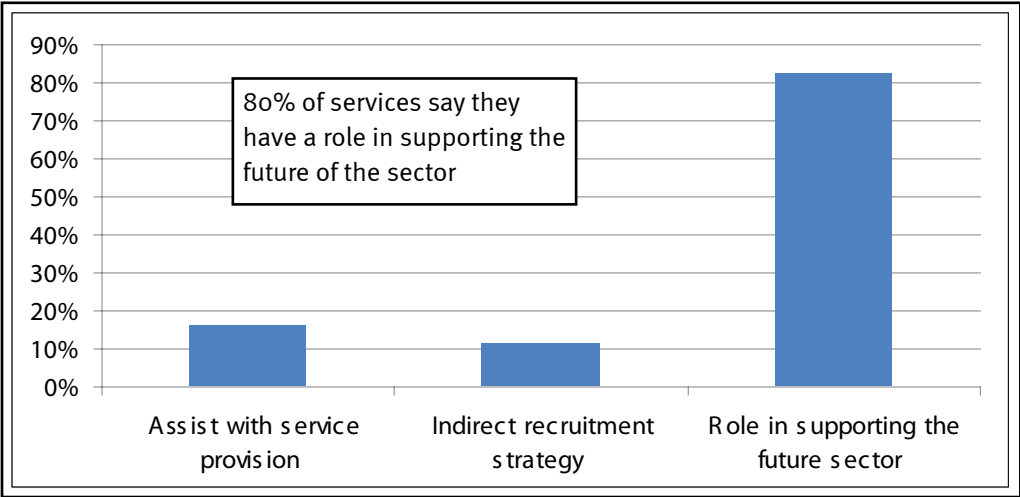
Student placements provide critical on the job learning opportunities to assist in preparing people to enter the sector while also providing an informal recruitment pathway.



Managers were asked if their organisation provides student placements with 70% of services indicating that they do and a wide range of institutions and courses from which student placements are accepted were identified. Institutions included a range of TAFEs, Teen Challenge, Job Networks and all Queensland universities and courses ranged from Certificates and Diplomas in Youth Work and Community Services to Human Services, Social Work, Social Sciences, Counselling and Midwifery.

Table 3.4.5 Organisational approach to student placements

Managers clearly identified that organisations have a role in supporting the future sector through the provision of student placements when asked which statement best describes their approach to providing student placements.



At focus groups with TAFE staff and students the importance of vocational placements in preparing students for work in the sector was identified as a major workforce development strategy; however the lack of resourcing of training providers to provide this function and support students and services effectively to enhance learning during the placement process was noted as a major issue and barrier in relation to placements.

Policies and procedures guiding the development of staff

100% of managers responded in the affirmative to having policies and procedures that guide the development of staff.

Types of organisational policy and procedures seen as guiding staff development in organisations
• Training funds/budget
• Staff are actively encouraged to seek out training opportunities
• Study leave
• Staff induction policy
• Staff training and development policy
• Qualification requirements
• In-service training
• Professional development policy
• Conference and other professional development opportunities
• Guided by broad organisation policies and procedures and then we have in-house priorities
• External supervision
• Recruitment policies

One organisation noted that they presently had policies under development in this area. Most respondents nominated training and professional development as key policy and procedure areas, activities that are associated with traditional notions of staff development. While many organisations probably have other policies and procedures that contribute to the development of their staff the challenge is to assist managers within organisations to think more broadly about what they do or could do to support ongoing development of their workforce. This could include policies and procedures that enshrine mentoring, peer support, job swapping across agencies and opportunity to act in other internal positions.

Professional memberships

To extend the picture of current or possible locations to initiate and implement workforce development strategies or where development may be supported people were asked to indicate membership of professional associations, unions and peak bodies. This data only represents non Indigenous services. Membership of all categories was significantly higher by managers than youth work staff. This may be expected in relation to peak bodies where it is likely that the organisation is the member and the manager by default is the contact member, however given the issues raised in relation to industrial matters such as wage levels and employment conditions it is interesting that only 27% of workers are members of a union.

Professional Association	Managers	Youth Workers
Professional Assoc	30.8%	24.2%
Union	53.8%	27.3%
State or National Peak Bodies	77%	9.1%

A BRIEF SECTION on information and communication technology was included in the survey to better understand to what extent organisations utilise technology and in what form and if there are any areas that require additional skilling, resourcing or supporting

4.1 Forms of communication technology used in day to day operations

Type of Communication Technology	General Service usage	Indigenous Service usage
Individual email	68%	100%
Group/network email	68%	100%
Online Chat	0%	0%
Skype	0%	0%
Web Forum/online group	22.6%	50%
Collaborative tools	12.9%	37.5%
Wikis	6.5%	12.5%
Blog	6.5%	12.5%
Twitter	3.2%	12.5%
VOIP	0%	0%
Facebook	3.2%	12.5%
My Space	0%	0%

Respondents could chose as many types of technology as relevant to their day to day work hence results do not total 100% and not all respondents completed this question. However the clear indication is that email is the main form of technology used. Both individual and group emails were rated as the communication technology that worked best for youth services. Although several respondents noted a concern about the shift away from more personal and direct communication forms such as telephone and face to face contact. SMS was also identified as a useful medium to communicate with young people.

In the main it is not possible to determine if respondents were referring to technology in relation to their work place, with colleagues or both as the questions were left open.

Organisational websites

57% of service respondents have active websites that are updated between weekly for some services and yearly for others with the most frequent response being the service updates their website irregularly. The main purpose of the organisations websites is to provide information about service delivery and programs to the community, consumers and other services.

Well over half of all respondents also indicated that they used one or more means of accessing resources and information such as internet searches, government website and other networks.

Given that the main theme identified for young peoples' issues in the future related directly to impacts of technology and social media as the major communication method and as the vehicle for bullying and other harassment and, that the corresponding youth worker skills requirements related to the use of technology to connect with young people and deal with this issues, it is a little surprising that the primary use of technology remains limited to emails in the main.

When asked what is stopping them using other technologies, the responses were as follows:

Reason for not using other technologies	Percentage
Lack of knowledge	36.67%
Lack of time	16.67%
Lack of need	26.67%
Lack of money	16.67%
*Other	13.33%

*Other includes policy guidelines about internet usage, availability, risk of viruses and abuse of technology, impersonal in a people profession

Additional Research Questions

It would be useful to explore what forms of technology (if any) are used in engaging and working with young people and how effective these are for workers. While people were asked about their organisational developmental needs very few responses were made and it would be useful to explore what kinds of resourcing and skill development would support youth workers to operate more confidently in this arena. Of the limited responses infrastructure such as software, phone lines etc was identified as a problem along with lack of regular access to an IT specialist for day to day support.

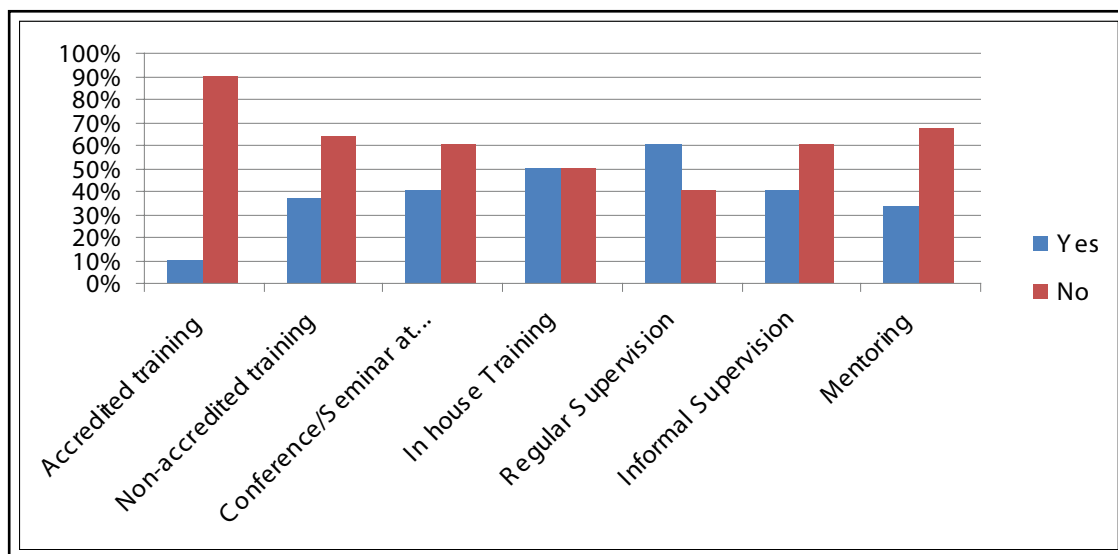
THIS SECTION CONTAINS information drawn from both managers' surveys and youth worker surveys regarding skilling and training provision, opportunities and needs. Where specific data has been drawn from has been indicated.

5.1 Training and skill development opportunities

Table 5.1.1 INTERNAL training and skills development activities offered to staff

Respondents were asked to identify which training and skilling opportunities were offered internally by the organisation from a list of possibilities, with an option of other provided.

Type of skilling	Yes	No
Accredited training	10%	90%
Non-accredited training	36.67%	63.33%
Conference/Seminar attendance	40%	60%
In House Training	50%	50%
Regular Supervision	60%	40%
Informal Supervision	40%	60%
Mentoring	33.33%	66.67%



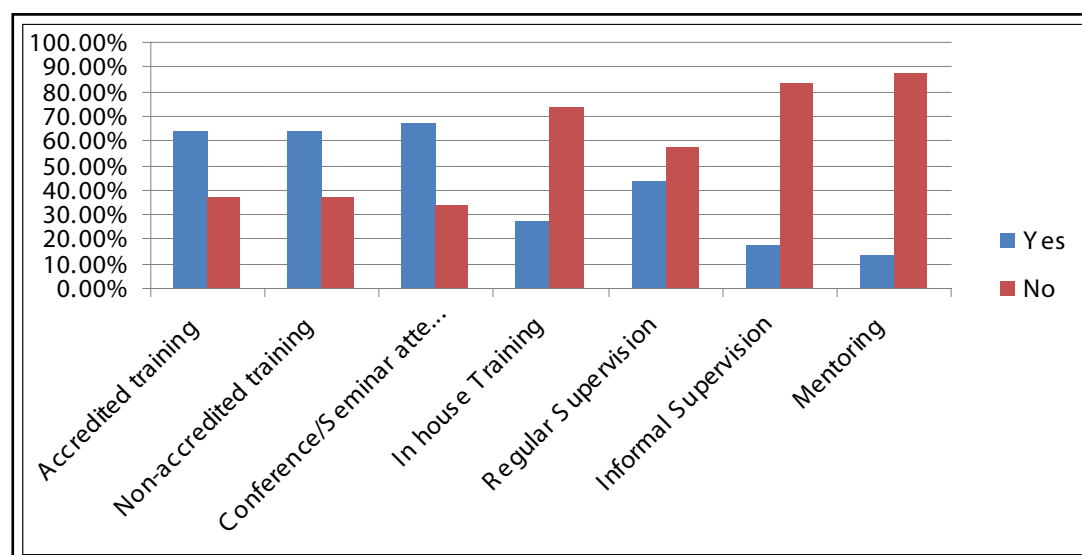
As may be expected, the primary sources of internal training are inhouse training and supervision both regular and informal. However, given the nature of the work in the youth sector and the increasing complexity of young people's needs the fact that 40% of respondents do not have access to regular supervision is a matter of concern. While informal supervision has rated at 40% it can be argued that this may be better described as case consultation or problem solving and managers with an 'open door' policy where staff can drop in for advice rather than a formal scheduled supervision process where staff are provided with feedback against work performance objectives, allowing structured and planned opportunity for professional development and growth. Recent work in the Child Protection area has focused on increasing resilience within the workforce and has identified supervision as a key workforce strategy in this area (Dickinson 2009).

It is noted data captured in non accredited training and in house training may relate to the same skilling opportunities.

Table 5.1.2 EXTERNAL training and skills development activities offered to staff

Respondents were asked to identify which training and skilling opportunities were offered externally from a list of possibilities, with an option of other provided.

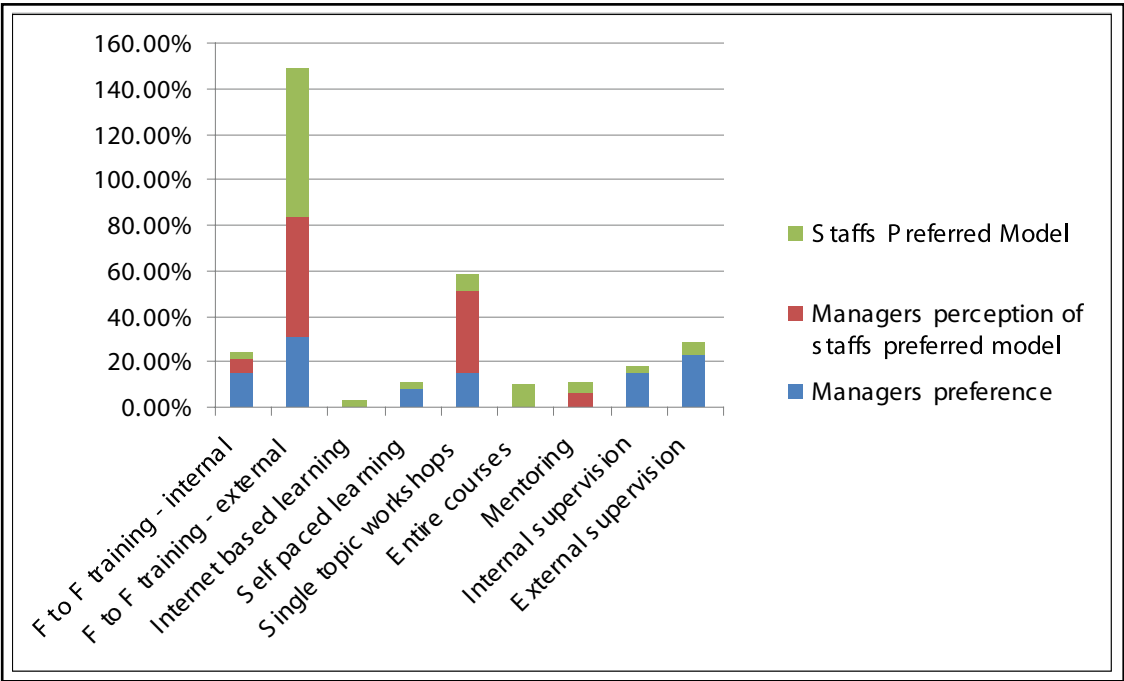
Type of skilling	Yes	No
Accredited training	63.33%	36.37%
Non-accredited training	63.33%	36.67%
Conference/Seminar attendance	66.67%	33.33%
In house Training	26.67%	73.33%
Regular Supervision	43.33%	56.67%
Informal Supervision	16.67%	83.33%
Mentoring	13.33%	86.66%



Access to external training and skilling opportunities appears to be reasonable for most services with over 60% of respondents reporting access to accredited and non accredited training and conference and seminars. Regular supervision rates reasonably well at 40% with respondents reporting that they have access to external supervision processes on a regular to semi-regular basis.

Table 5.1.3 Preferred model of acquiring skills and knowledge

Managers were asked to identify their preferred method for staff to acquire skills and knowledge, what they thought would be staff's preference and staff were asked to identify their preference in order to gather some understanding of whether managers and staff share views in this area.



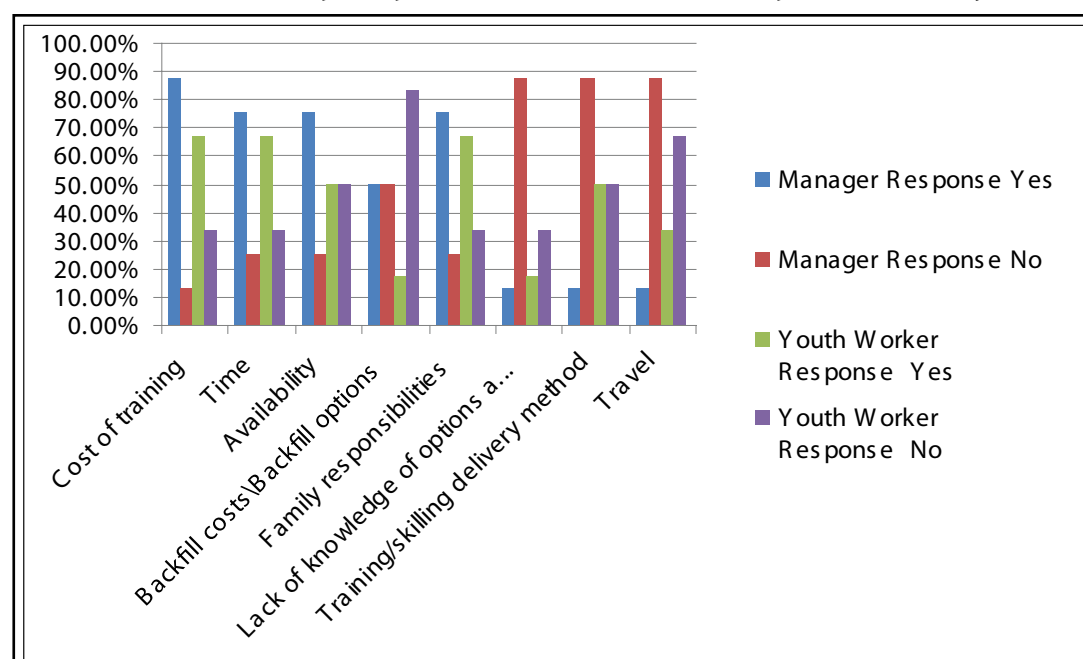
Results need to be read cautiously as those respondents that completed the survey online were prompted to choose one area as the preferred way while those that completed hard copies had not necessarily followed this instruction. Data rating options may have been useful in creating a picture as this informs what types of strategies are likely to work well.

Taking this into account, it is interesting to note that in 30% of cases, managers preferred way of staff acquiring skills and training is through face to face external training while this rated at 65% for staff. Managers had rated internal training at 15% and may see this as a more cost effective way of staff acquiring skills and knowledge while staff only rated it at 5%. Similarly, managers had rated internal and external supervision at 40% combined yet staff had only rated this at 5%. Single topic workshops showed managers rating this at 35% yet staff only rated it at 7% however this may be an anomaly given the cross over between this topic and external face to face training. Flexible learning methods such as internet based learning and self paced learning did not rate at all.

Indigenous services

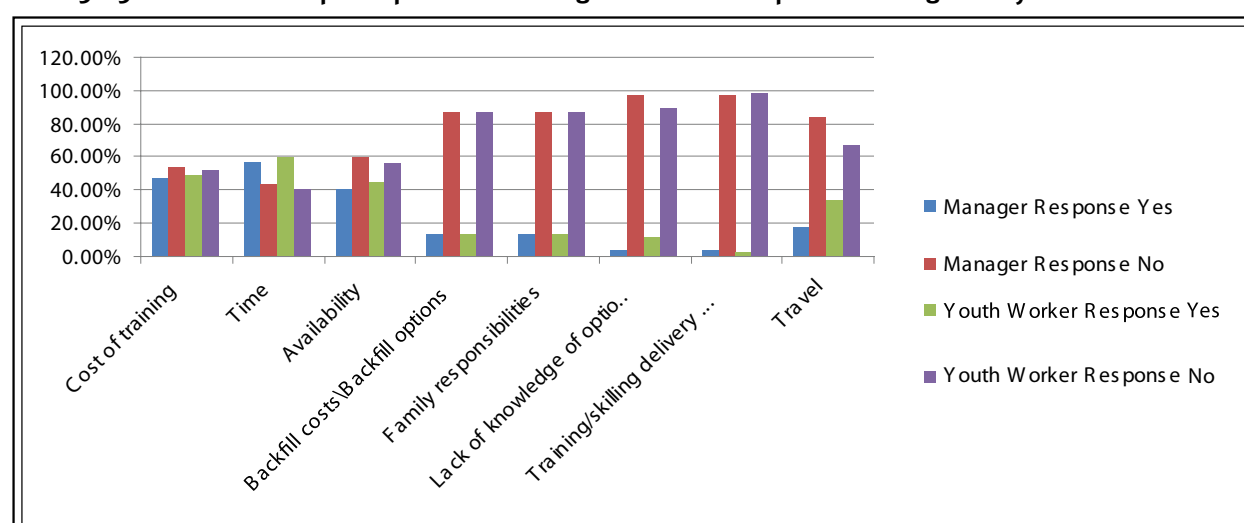
Interviews with Indigenous service providers clearly identified a preference for face to face training as well as a tendency towards residential style delivery completed in blocks of time. This seems to be attributed to both preferred learning style and that a number of services that are more regional or remote would prefer to get the training completed because of travel involved.

Table 5.1.4 Barriers to staff participation in training and skill development in general youth services



Both staff and managers were asked to identify barriers to participation in training and skilling. As evident from the table above both staff and managers commonly identified the same barrier with much the same level of impact on participation. Time available to participate in training and skilling rated as the biggest barrier followed closely by cost and availability of training. Atypically, based on anecdotal feedback, backfill costs and options were not rated as a major barrier although the fact that time to participate did is connected to this aspect in that if staff do not have time to attend it can be assumed that they have workload responsibilities. This is interesting as a conclusion can be drawn that if someone else was available to 'fill in' time may not be of such an issue.

Table 5.1.5 Barriers to staff participation in training and skill development in Indigenous youth services





Cost, time, backfill and family responsibilities all rated highly by both staff and managers in relation to barriers to participating in training and skilling. Many people interviewed (except those in Brisbane) noted that training was often not delivered locally and hence cost, time and backfill all come into play to attend any skilling opportunities. Given the importance of family and kinship connection within Indigenous communities it is of little surprise that family responsibilities ranked highly as a barrier to participation.

Table 5.1.6 Preference for staff to attend accredited or non accredited training and skills development

In order to identify the importance of access to accredited training, all respondents were asked about their preference in relation to accredited and non accredited training. While 155 of respondents preferred accredited training, 45% of respondents indicated that they had no preference suggesting that access to either type is seen as important.

Type of Training and Skills Development	Percentage
Accredited Training	15%
Non Accredited Training	0%
Combination of both	40%
No Preference	45%

5.2 Critical knowledge and skill areas

5.2.1 Critical knowledge and skill areas required by general youth workers

In order to provide some defining aspects to the notion of the youth service sector, staff and managers in the survey instrument and at forums and focus groups were asked to identify the critical or core knowledge and skill areas for youth services staff.

Responses have been collated and prioritised into key topic areas based on the number of times they were identified.

Priority Order	Skill and Knowledge Area
1	Communication Skills- includes engagement and rapport building as well as typical communication skills of listening, empathy, non judgmental approach, being genuine and real
2	Mental Health- skills and knowledge for working with these issues
3	Drug and Alcohol- skills and knowledge for working with these issues
4	Counselling skills- includes counselling in flexible settings
5	Working with families and family issues- including relationship breakdown, family violence
6	Crisis Intervention skills- conflict resolution and negotiation

The following list of skills and knowledge were identified as the next most important based on how often they were listed and ranked fairly evenly:

- Case management skills
- Understanding and working with youth development
- Working with cultural difference - including CALD and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) backgrounds
- Knowledge of legal and justice systems and young people's rights
- Homelessness and housing support
- Building resilience and working from strengths

A range of other topics were listed by a small number of respondents. Further investigation through a gap analysis process to identify what level of skill is required, if current workers have this and if they have had access to training. This will provide information about the current workforce but also about what is likely to be needed by the future workforce.

5.2.2 Critical knowledge and skill Areas required by Indigenous youth workers

Respondents, in surveys and during interviews were asked to identify the major skilling and training areas for Indigenous youth workers. Six clear topics areas emerged:

Priority Order	Skill and Knowledge Area
1	Practical cultural awareness and competency- this appeared to relate to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous workers in that not all workers are from the local community and hence culturally competent in relation to that community as well as personal awareness being critical to good youth work as noted above
2	Communication skills - this includes engagement, negotiation skills and Indigenous language skills, counselling techniques
3	Management and governance
4	Program development - in terms of developing programs to respond to young people's needs at an agency level and potentially beyond at a whole of community/sector level
5	Leadership and mentoring
6	Mental health – skills and knowledge in responding to issues such as substance abuse

Other topics included:

- Crisis intervention
- Counselling
- Knowledge of community issues and extended family structures
- Building resilience
- Knowledge of key and critical youth concepts
- Keeping up with technology, innovative and creative in dealing with youth issues
- Employment and training initiatives
- Ability to engage and cover a wide range of diverse and complex issues
- Family relationships and impacts of trans-generational trauma

5.2.3 Critical values and qualities required by Indigenous youth workers

Those interviewed were asked what makes a good youth worker and about the personal values that drive their work and that impact on how they work.

Not surprisingly given the description of culturally appropriate youth work as outlined above, cultural identity and learning from your own life experiences and upbringing rated as the most important by being nominated by the most people. The others most commonly identified were:

- respect, open mindedness and listening
- patience, tolerance and compassion
- working from the grassroots and walking alongside young people
- providing leadership and being role models
- passion
- honesty

5.2.4 Critical knowledge and skill areas required by general youth sector managers

In order to highlight differing requirements of managers and youth work staff, managers in the survey instrument were asked to identify the critical or core knowledge and skill areas they require.

Priority Order	Skill and Knowledge Area
1	Governance Skills - leadership, financial, attracting funding, industrial relations, risk management, asset management and maintenance
2	People management - nurture and support workers, processes to challenge for change, balance competing needs (staff, clients, organisational), training opportunities including the VET system, supervision of teams and individuals
3	Communication Skills - conflict management, compiling complex reports
4	Youth work content - legislation that affects young people, best practice and models of practice, relationship based frameworks, youth technology

5.2.5 Staff currently enrolled in a Youth Work or other relevant qualification

15.67% of current staff in general youth services sector and 12.5% of staff in the Indigenous youth sector indicated that they are enrolled in youth work or another relevant qualification. Where nominated, the qualifications identified included a wide range of levels and content areas demonstrating the complex pathways into and across the youth sector. Responses included:

- Master of Social Work
- Bachelor of Social Science
- Diploma Of Community Services
- Certificate III in Community Services
- Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)
- Certificate IV in Mental Health
- Master of Forensic Mental Health
- Teen Challenge Training
- Certificate III in Business
- Master of Psychology
- Bachelor of Law
- Bachelor of Community Development
- Bachelor of Human Services

5.6 Relevant course or qualifications

Staff and managers were asked to identify specific courses or qualifications that they see as the most beneficial or relevant to their work role in the youth sector to determine if a theme or trend stood out. However as can be noted from the comments below the responses were quite broad and specific to work specialisations. The number of times a response was made has not been recorded as this was not significant; rather the topics have been listed to show the scope of responses.

- Bachelor of Social Work and / or Community Development as these courses seem to provide graduates with a better grounding to develop a professional framework as beginning practitioners.
- Bachelor of Social Work or Human Services
- Community Services Training Package in qualifications in either youth work or juvenile justice
- Effective case work
- Child protection
- Mental Health
- Therapeutic Communities
- Managing Challenging Behaviour
- Group facilitation
- Strength based training
- Counselling
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)
- Case management
- Working with complex clients
- Alcohol and other Drugs
- Anger management strategies
- Aboriginal Counselling course
- Certificate III in Youth Justice
- Cultural integrity and knowledge

IN 2007, THE Queensland Alliance in conjunction with YANQ and other local services conducted a Youth Mental Health Summit at the Redcliffe Area Youth Space. The interest in the Summit from across Queensland indicated the intent of youth service providers along with other service providers to work with young people in their local communities to provide support including prevention, early intervention and crisis/ post crisis support. A series of recommendations were formed towards providing better service delivery in this area that included increased skilling opportunities for youth workers working with youth mental health issues and strategies to assist youth services and mental health providers to know about each other and connect and collaborate more effectively for better service provision.

Opportunity was taken during both the general and Murri projects to further explore the existing knowledge and connections between youth services and community mental health providers and the areas requiring additional skilling with additional resourcing from Queensland Alliance to support this process.

Two focus groups were conducted with a total of 39 general youth sector youth workers after they had participated in a half day training event about working with young people with mental health issues. Other information in relation to this topic area also emerged in general focus groups and forums.

As well, all of the 19 Indigenous services where interviews occurred were asked about what types of services and support they currently provide to young people experiencing mental health issues and if they would like to be able to provide more services or support in this area.

Types of service and support provided to young people experiencing mental health issues by youth services

The key areas identified were:

- Engagement strategies
- Referral processes
- Networks and coordinated/connected services
- Provision of navigational and implementation support
- Case management
- Advocacy

Youth workers distinguished between their role and that of mental health clinicians in that they described a significant role of their work in this area as utilising their existing relationship with young people and their services to meet other immediate needs of young people such as food, housing and general support so that they may be better placed to connect with mental health professionals. They said that they have a major role in referring to specialist services and then providing support to young people to navigate through the mental health system, demystifying aspects as required. Youth workers said that they work to engage young people and establish a relationship so that they can offer support and assistance in a non judgmental way. They also said that they contribute to ensuring a continuity of service through taking on a case management role across systems as this is essential for good quality services for young people. The major issue identified by Indigenous services in relation to where they need to provide support was substance and drug use, in particular alcohol, marijuana and petrol sniffing. Other issues requiring service support included depression and effects of abuse.

Services said that along with referring young people on, they provide specific services in this area such as:

- having guest speakers to share their life experiences with young people
- conducting weekly mental health clinics
- providing counselling and assistance in relation to substance and drug use
- mentoring programs for young people while accessing other services
- advocating for additional support and funding to government
- advocacy for young people in school and other areas
- working with young people to write a recovery plan.

General sector workers in more regional and remote areas noted that while access to specialist services may exist that often the positions were not filled or the person changed regularly leaving them in the position of being the key person with a working relationship with that young person. In relation to Indigenous services some remote services are well resourced to provide primary health care and with ongoing direct access to mental health services.

Provision of additional support to assist youth services to provide extra services

Workers were asked if they would like to provide more support and services than they do and, if so, in what area. Responses indicated not only that knowledge of services was important but the importance of existing relationships between services when making referrals and suggested that an increase in focused networking between youth services and the mental health sector would be very valuable. They also suggested that potential partnerships and collaborative efforts that draw on the qualities of both service systems need to be funded and supported. They commented that the funding cycle stifled service development in these areas through tight reporting requirements that did not allow for innovation as does the impact of funding changes once a program has been established.

Specifically, workers identified the need for the following strategies. These have been coded according to what can or should be addressed most immediately and what is most important to workers: **green** for immediate, followed by **yellow** and then **red** for those that require medium and longer term attention.

Strategies to increase youth services capacity to support young people experiencing mental health issues

Provision of additional skills in engaging young people experiencing mental health issues, building on existing skills in this area

Additional training at a tertiary education level in working with mental health issues

Cross sector professional development opportunities that will enhance relationship development and networking

Better articulate what youth workers do well in relation to working with young people experiencing mental health issues to affirm current practices

Access to professional supervision and development plans and funding that supports them to be undertaken and implemented

Regular and appropriate debriefing and reflective processes to reduce the likelihood of vicarious trauma and a burnt out workforce

Resources and infrastructure to support focused networking between youth services and mental health services towards information sharing, relationship building and case management

More flexibility in funding reporting arrangements to allow youth workers to respond in a flexible and adaptive way to emerging mental health needs

Opportunities to enhance learning and development through shadowing and job swaps that are embedded into workplans/professional development plans

Opportunities for youth workers to hear directly from young people with a lived experience of mental health issues.

Indigenous specific

When Indigenous workers were asked if they would like to provide more support and services than they do and, if so, in what area, all services (except one child protection referral service) indicated they would be keen to provide additional services and support in this area to better meet the needs of young people and that this could be achieved through:

Additional funding that would both allow for further program development

Ability to resource appropriate training and skilling for workers to deal directly with issues

Approximately 90% of the services said that staff have no training in working with these issues.

Services also identified that there was a need for better linkages between organisations to create the system for a more unified approach with stronger referral and service provision networks. Specifically, workers identified the need for greater government recognition that Indigenous services can effectively deliver services in this area and the opportunity through funding amounts and funding requirements such as reporting processes and service models to be able to do this ‘the Indigenous way’.

One specific strategy identified in the remote North West is to place more mental health outreach services for young people in places such as schools to provide an earlier intervention service.



TO SHED LIGHT on the current benefits of network membership, survey respondents were asked to identify if they regularly participate in networks and if so what type of sector development support was offered through this process. About 80% of respondents indicated that they participate in one or more networks based both on geographical and program or client group type variables. Some people noted that they do not have time to participate in networks but would be keen to do so. The sector development benefits of participating in networks were spread across the options provided including training and skilling, mentoring, debriefing, and peer supervision where a response was provided, however many respondents did not provide an answer to this question.

A concurrent and complementary project being undertaken in the area of youth sector workforce support brings together peak organisations and networks of youth service providers in Queensland to deliver products that provide support to workers who work with young people to increase the capacity of the youth services workforce to improve outcomes for vulnerable and marginalised young people in Queensland. The workforce support project has identified that strategies for ongoing professional learning have the capacity to address issues that impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of youth services. Research through the project affirms similar themes identified by youth workers in the Youth Sector Workforce Skills and Training project when discussing their experiences in the youth sector. In particular, they include building key partnerships, peer support and information sharing, professional development, better and more direct funding and valuing youth work. Evidence emerging has indicated that these benefits that workers equate with support could be gained through group interactions and learning environments that are created through participation in relevant networks.

Some key funded youth programs such as YACCA, YSCs and local government youth services have specifically funded networks that are resourced to provide some or all of these functions through regular meetings and other support and learning processes. A large number of other youth networks also exist across Queensland, typically formed on a geographical and interagency type basis where people primarily come together to provide each other with information.

Additional Research Question

Further research into what is currently gained from network participation and what could be gained in the future through provision of more resourcing, direction and/or support for networks is warranted given the initial findings from both projects and the potential sector development possibilities through networks.

FINALLY, SURVEY RESPONDENTS and participants at forums and focus groups were asked to envisage future trends and issues likely to feature for young people and hence identify the skills and knowledge that youth workers will need to work effectively.

Future Issues for Young People	Skills and Knowledge required by Youth Workers
Mental Health	Mental Health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased mental health issues such as suicide and self harming, depression • social isolation and a disconnection / disengagement from community • impact from increased consumerism and materialism- desire for unattainable things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased skills in working directly with mental health issues including social isolation, depression
Technology	Technology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased role of technology in communication leading to a change in the way young people connect, a decrease in personal communication skills and ability to express emotion • increase in cyber bullying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improved capacity, skills, knowledge and access in relation to different types and ways of using technology to both communicate with young people and to 'be on top of' issues and needs for young people
Societal Change	Societal Change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • change in society such as more urban sprawl affecting how people connect, need for transport, increased transience, access to and use of public space • the impact of population increase and pressure on social services and infrastructure, disadvantaged young people will miss out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skills in genuinely bringing young people into the planning process and moving beyond the limitations of youth participation that engage the seriously disadvantaged or the elite • community education skills to improve the perception, profile and understanding of young people and their needs and issues and of youth work as a profession • political advocacy skills
Cultural Competencies	Cultural Competencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • impacts of a rapidly expanding multicultural society in the sense of more people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, young people developing cultural awareness and skills and understanding where they fit in relation to others and more young people from CALD backgrounds to work with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop cultural competence to work better with Indigenous young people and young people from CALD background • skills in assisting young people to build resilience and relationship skills because of disengagement from family and community.
Specific Issues	Generic Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased legal issues due to stricter policing and government control • sexual health issues such as increase in teenage pregnancy, more sexually transmitted infections • increase in violence, young people needing more stimulation • housing and accommodation issues • impacts of living with increased family separations, multiple relationship and blended families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creative engagement skills and relationship building skills • early intervention and prevention skills • strategies for a holistic approach to youth work, family and community • access to quality professional development and supervision

Indigenous services

Trends or themes emerging that will impact on services included:

- Trend towards case management
- Partnerships and collaborations
- Advances in technology
- More compliance, reporting and documentation
- Shifting to consultancy driven, negotiation tables
- Shared responsibility agreements,
- Forced to compete against more resourced and established agencies for funding
- Changes in wages and the need for funding for this closing the gap policy undertaking a lot of child protection work with no recognition or funding
- Less Indigenous specific funding opportunities for community organisations
- Increased compliance and reporting
- Collection and analysis of data regarding service delivery

Opportunities for the development of the youth sector workforce

Finally survey respondents and participants at forums and focus groups were asked if one major opportunity for the development of the youth sector workforce was offered in the future, what it would be. Responses give some clues about current priorities and have been reflected in recommendations and strategies.

1. Working Conditions

- Portable long service leave and six weeks annual holidays
- Wages paid comparative to government positions so that we can recruit and retain quality workers

2. Trained and Skilled Workforce including accredited training and qualifications

- National skill and qualification standards for all youth workers
- More Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) opportunities
- All round workers with tertiary qualifications who can do professional and operational work
- Ongoing skills development in communication, relationship, conflict, goal setting
- More work/research/skills development in how to nurture young people to self determination

3. Improved Funding Levels and Flexibility

- Funding at a level to adequately operate services
- True costing to support both at home and out of home options that provide adequate staffing levels to meet growing needs
- Adequate staffing levels (and associated funding) so that staff could participate in training, mentoring and supervision

4. Improved Networking and Linkages across the sector

- Increased links with peak bodies - more opportunities for staff to attend forums to discuss these types of issues
- Professionalise youth work practice

THE YOUTH SECTOR has identified the urgent requirement of a broad ranging, capacity development approach to the complex and dynamic service delivery system it provides within the broader health and community services sector and the Queensland community.

This section of the report summarises the key themes that have emerged as a result of both the projects through surveys and focus groups and forums and outlines some of the implications for the ongoing strategic development of the youth sector in Queensland. The projects have laid the foundation stone for the implementation of strategies as outlined in the Youth Sector Development Plan as well as identifying areas that require additional research. While the findings are partial in the sense that they pertain to some regions in Queensland, they provide a clear picture from which to develop possibilities that will be validated in other regions to create the overall state picture.

As a partnership agreement designed to guide the relationship between the non-profit community services sector and the Queensland Government to achieve better outcomes for Queenslanders, the Queensland Compact: Towards a fairer Queensland provides the framework for the Queensland Government and the not for profit community services sector to work together towards productive outcomes to benefit the community.

Strategies that support the development of this partnership approach with government regarding future funding priorities and enabling capacity at a youth sector level were identified during the projects. Importantly participants did not yet necessarily recognise the Compact as a framework or the Compact Governance Committee as a vehicle towards strategic partnerships with government. Where relevant, recommendations have been linked directly to Queensland Compact goals to assist in further embedding this existing strategic alliance within the youth sector towards better workforce outcomes.

Strengthen youth sector strategic capacity for workforce development

Goal 3 of the Queensland Compact relates to improving the sector's capacity and sustainability and includes strengthening the systems and infrastructure for effective service delivery and development into the future (p 6). An effective workforce development strategy requires not only an overarching framework to provide guidance and direction but the capacity within organisations and the sector or industry overall to implement aspects of the framework as they relate to them to build current and future workforces. Therefore, the level of experience within the youth services sector is an important consideration in terms of the sustainability, health and depth of skills and knowledge available to influence quality of services provided to young people and quality of management skills and practice to support the sector. The capacity, willingness and support of key government stakeholders are also crucial factors that have been dealt with in Recommendation Two.

The absence of a clearly articulated capacity development strategy for the youth sector seems to have contributed to a somewhat disjointed group of youth services that struggle at times to recognise and work within their strengths, promote successes and confidently take a place within the broader service delivery system. A significant consequence of this is the struggle to attract and retain a vibrant workforce and the resulting loss of practice expertise, experience and wisdom to other health and community sectors and government.

Survey results showed that 51% of workers have been in the youth services sector for 2 years or less, with half of these showing that they have been in the sector for approximately 1 year, indicating there is considerable level of inexperience amongst youth workers. However, importantly, survey results from managers showed that over 95% of managers had been in the youth sector for 5 years or longer with 50% having been in the sector longer than 10 years. This is a wonderful resource and strength on which to build.

While implications for services in relation to workforce management and sustainability of services are evident given the apparent high turnover and reported difficulty in attracting and recruiting staff in some locations, the stability of managers in the sector provides a leverage point at which strategic capacity can be strengthened.

Participants in focus groups and forums have all identified the need for strengthened infrastructure to support leadership within the sector, provide access to practice wisdom, maintain critical skills and knowledge within the sector and offer guidance for new workers. Significant buy in from the youth sector throughout this engagement strategy has already been clearly identified. Services reported a distinct need to draw on the strength of managers' stability; nurturing and developing leadership across the sector to increase sustainability of the sector through sharing of practice wisdoms and the 'youth sector narrative'. The infrastructure will also contribute to other workforce development strategies such as retention of staff and status of the sector.

It was noted by the IRG that people moving between services and sectors is not necessarily negative where infrastructure exists at organisational and sector levels to capture and manage sharing of knowledge, skills and information to provide a continually developing quality service to young people. The development of leadership groups provides the environment and infrastructure for the development of the youth sectors capacity into the future, where practice expertise in all facets of the youth sector can be discussed and promoted and the opportunity for strategic thinking across the sector is created.

Developing a 'senior practitioner' role was also raised by a number of groups as a further method of addressing the issues raised, providing access to practice knowledge and skills and maintaining critical skills and knowledge within the sector. This type of role could assist in knowledge management and reducing the loss of experience from the sector, noting that this role could provide a practice mentor rather than a management function.

There is also opportunity to better utilise the strategic capacity of the sector by strengthening and formalising links between existing program-based networks and industry wide peaks such as YANQ and Queensland Youth Housing Coalition (QYHC) who are funded and structured to provide broad advocacy services to inform discussion, debate and advocacy with government on a range of broader youth sector issues raised by network members. Genuine commitment to strategic planning as a whole sector requires effective state Peak bodies that can provide a systemic view of youth sector issues and corresponding workforce needs. In delivering this function to varying degrees for many years, YANQ has been an asset for the sector and Government providing the youth sector lead in this strategic planning process.

Existing funded peer support networks such as YSC hubs, YACCAN and local government youth services provide support to a significant number of workers in the youth sector and offer an existing environment in which to situate expanded learning and support opportunities that will contribute to the ongoing development of the workforce. However, there are currently many workers who do not have access to peer support, funded or unfunded. Other networks are unfunded but may provide a similar support function for their members rather than acting simply as an interagency if adequately resourced and supported to do so.

Finally, building skills and knowledge of current managers and future managers within the youth sector through participation in training and skilling opportunities will not only provide greater individual levels of knowledge, skill and support but also develop a common shared experience and definition of management within the youth services sector. Training could be delivered against existing management competencies or qualifications in the Community Services Training Package.

Strengthen partnership with government

The resourcing and development of systems and structures that support direct youth sector input into broad strategic initiatives such as the Compact Governance Committee will assist in both building capacity in the sector and increasing engagement in planning and policy.

Utilising YANQ and other existing peaks to coordinate and collate sector input policy and funding discussions with government will contribute greatly to strengthen partnership with government and meeting Queensland Compact goals of building strong working relationships between the government and community sector and improving engagement in policy and planning.

Participants at forums and focus groups report a distinct lack of ‘strategic debate and discussion’ with government about youth services sector. Development of the future workforce requires sound planning and preparation to bed down new funding initiatives or major changes to program areas. Connections that bring government and the sector together to engage in discussions and debate about emerging needs, issues, policy directions and other drivers will create an environment of proactive growth and sustainability.

While the level of government funding was raised specifically in relation to organisations capacity to pay wages at a commensurate level to government to attract and retain skilled and experienced staff, the way governments fund organisations was discussed in relation to the impact on broader sector development. The negative impact of competitive funding on collaboration, sector development and working towards joined up service delivery was noted through surveys and in particular in the forums discussing future possibilities for the sector. Participants noted the difficulty for services that have traditionally competed for funding being expected to collaborate towards service integration without infrastructure support towards this, including the development of skills and relationships and the time and capacity for strategic planning. Smaller services noted that large organisations had the ‘luxury’ of this through specific positions dedicated to these areas, suggesting that opportunities need to be created to support the input of organisations across the service range.

The short term nature of funding and inflexibility of service agreements and reporting arrangements were also reported as impacting on organisations capacity for innovative service delivery, role re-design and long term strategic planning. While much of this is outside the scope of the projects, strategies have been offered for further consideration that can go some way towards response in this area. The development and signing of the Queensland Compact and current government projects such as the Youth Sector Support Plan and Funding Realignment project may provide the climate and opportunity to ‘seed’ some of these notions.

Create a responsive training and skilling system

Throughout the course of the projects a range of immediate and future training and skilling needs have been identified both directly by youth workers and managers and as a result of the broader themes and strategies that have emerged. While it is widely noted in literature that a strategic workforce development approach requires more than a focus on professional development, skilling and training, this still remains a crucial factor in ensuring both the capacity of the current workforce and preparing the capacity of the future workforce.

The need remains to identify an agreed on list of core youth work competencies that underpin a youth work practice framework. This will then allow a skills audit and gap analysis to be undertaken to identify capacity of current workforce. This tool could be utilised at an organisational, community or sector wide level as required. This could also be undertaken against existing qualifications to assess likely readiness of new graduates when entering the sector.

Six knowledge and skill areas were identified by project participants as core to youth work practice as well as a number of other generic topics that ranked fairly highly. It can be assumed that regular and ongoing training and skilling in these areas for existing workers will maintain a level of currency in terms of contemporary youth work practice with the current workforce. Importantly all project participants noted their preference for face to face workshop delivery to promote interactive group discussion, learning from each other and cross service networking.

The consideration of future issues and trends with young people and the corresponding skilling needs led to a list of training and skilling for consideration in the future to prepare our workforce. Interestingly many topics are those that already emerge as training needs with the noticeable difference being the increased use of technology both as a form of communication and of harassment and bullying, leading to the need for youth workers to be skilled in negotiating these systems and communicating this way as well as being current with research and information on the impacts and effects of this.



The integration of skills and knowledge gained through training and skilling back into the workplace was also raised as an important factor when considering workforce capacity. Recent developments such as learning circles in the ISD project were reported as assisting in this area. Six knowledge and skill areas were identified by managers as critical to their development and growth and could be packaged into management training that builds internal organisational capacity to support and integrate learning, professional development and reflective practice. This could include offering training to managers and experienced workers in supervision and action learning and supporting this process through resources and tools on the YANQ website.

Most respondents reported reasonable access to training and skilling opportunities internally and externally however significant opportunities exist to enhance and consolidate existing processes that support skilling and training such as peer support networks that provide infrastructure for collaboration between workers. These 'Communities of Practice' provide a learning environment for information-sharing about good practice, networking, critical reflection and professional development activity. They assist new workers to fit into the broader youth service environment and provide support for workers who are isolated geographically or through attachment to non youth-focussed organisations.

The strategic provision of information to existing education, training and skilling providers and projects such as ISD regarding emerging needs was identified as important to make the best use of information in a coordinated way. Investigating training and skilling options in areas identified as future needs in order to prepare and deliver skilling and learning (as outlined in the Future Trends section), in particular in the area of Information Technology Communication - uses and abuses will also be important.

Over 70% of services indicated that they provide student placements primarily as they believe they have a role in supporting the future sector. However TAFE staff report that vocational placements are not resourced and often lead to negative experiences for students when adequate resourcing and support cannot be provided to services for students to maximise their learning.

Define and promote the youth services sector

Successful development of the workforce does not lie only in the hands of government or peak agencies but requires the interest, commitment and capacity of services to respond at the organisational level.

The status and profile of youth work was actively discussed in forums and focus groups, the lack of sector recognition and status within and across sectors was identified as a significant barrier to the sector's overall development and in particular service delivery outcomes for young people and retention of staff.

The compartmentalisation of specific roles across the youth sector was viewed as a contributing factor in that the identity or professional profile of youth work and a youth worker is dispersed across a very broad practice spectrum and often attached to a service delivery system where youth work practice is a minor stream. This is evidenced in the broad range of work roles identified through the projects and the difficulty a group of youth sector stakeholders such as the IRG had in defining the youth sector. Within this service system the potential for professional isolation and silo practice becomes apparent.

It was identified by participants that a hierarchy exists within the health and community sectors with youth workers viewed on the lower end of that hierarchy. This has led to a reduction of practice and policy influence by youth workers who often do not acquire a seat at the table where decisions are made either regionally or at a broader state level. It was repeatedly discussed in forums and focus groups that youth work needs to confidently take a seat at the table and speak from a youth work framework that incorporates youth centred practice, social justice, and advocacy and human rights perspectives. For this to occur the status and profile of the youth sector requires attention and improvement and opportunities to network and connect on practice issues, policy debate and formal learning and growth opportunities were identified as central to creating a sector 'voice'. Formalised youth sector networking opportunities through regular youth forums, policy

symposiums, and youth conferences were suggested as ways to enhance connection and communication between services and stakeholders as well as offering a learning environment through peer supervision and sharing of knowledge and ideas.

There is an immediate need to define youth work, identify underpinning values and core competencies and articulate an evidence based framework for practice that strengthens the core role of relationship based practice, developing trust and engagement and connecting young people with other services and structures. This will provide a common language to describe the work and the outcomes that are required to promote the sector as a recruitment and retention strategy and also as a public awareness process that will lift the status of the sector overall. Providing services and workers with access to an ethics training program will provide individual skilling and build capacity to contribute to the development/articulation of values based youth work practice framework.

Enhancing and expanding existing infrastructure such as peer support networks and creating new processes where required to support localised leadership circles and communities of practice will provide a mechanism that can connect with the 'think tank' with government and other key stakeholders to influence broader strategic initiatives.

Develop cultural competency

Demographic data shows that both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds are significantly under represented in the youth sector workforce however both these groups make up part of the youth client group with large numbers in some areas. In accordance with the Queensland Compact goal to improve the sector's capacity and sustainability and encourage development and application of culturally appropriate approaches to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from different cultural backgrounds a recommendation area has been developed to progress sector development in this area.

Intercultural competence involves knowing about and understanding the potential impact of cultural difference in how we see the world in an ongoing process of learning and exploration. It also includes identifying and understanding the impact of the beliefs and values that shape the context in which we are operating at a project, organisational, governmental and broader social level in relation to participation of Indigenous people. Ongoing opportunities for connection, reflection, learning and changing practices need to be built into the day to day work of staff. The process of making sure what we are doing is connected to culture is critical and theory suggests the primary way to do this is through having Indigenous people or people from other cultural backgrounds involved in our organisations and in leadership of our sector.

The term cultural competence (Hepburn 2004, Katz and Miller 1996) refers to the ability of organisations and systems to function and perform effectively in cross cultural situations describing congruent behaviour, attitudes, policies, structures and practices to support this, usually in the form of a set of operational and practical indicators of what it means and how to get there. Strategies towards this end are crucial for the health of the youth sector in this area and need to consider:

- the governing declaration of the importance of cultural competence as in the Queensland Compact,
- policies and procedures practices including personal practices
- skilling and training and
- community consultation and communication

Despite the high proportion of Indigenous young people who access youth services the need for training and skilling in this area did not rank highly through the survey process however participants at focus groups and forums noted the need for cross cultural skill development that is more than a one off event but can be integrated into work practices towards genuine cultural competency that will genuinely assist to 'bridge the gap'.



The investigation and the implementation of training programs that can both develop individual's skills and knowledge in working effectively with Indigenous young people and their families along with managers and organisations capacity to integrate culturally competent processes into service delivery and human resource practices will be an underpinning factor.

Investigate the similarities between youth work values and those embedded in the way Indigenous services and workers, work in their own communities to increase learning opportunities and ways to connect better between the two parts of the sector and to ensure that underpinning values and core competencies of a youth work practice framework reflect the importance of diversity will support cultural competency.

70% of managers report that they have policies that support cultural inclusion however interestingly minimal responses were provided in relation to what these are and how they include recruitment practices. Further support for organisations to clearly articulate workforce practices and intentionally invite cultural diversity in workplaces is required. The YANQ workforce development website will provide one avenue for this. 90% of managers reported that they had skills in managing culturally diverse staff setting an environment for growth in this human resource area.

Developing sector capacity to work with mental health matters

Participants at all forums and focus groups identified the growing number of young people experiencing mental health issues and requiring support and intervention. Skills and training in this area also rated highly with survey respondents. When asked about provision of additional support to young people, youth workers from general and Indigenous services both emphasised the referral role they have, the necessity for effective collaborative relationships and networks to make this work and the ongoing role of support and case management they provide more broadly than the mental health system. Additional skilling and workforce development were identified for current workers and the increase of needs in this area was identified in future trends.

A number of strategies that grow sector capacity in this area have been suggested.

GENUINE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT is a long term process requiring interest, ownership and buy in from those within the sector both to inform what is required and how this is possible and from government to work collaboratively with sector leaders and other key stakeholders to implement and evaluate strategies and initiatives. Working in partnership, short and medium term contributions can be developed while seeds are planted for long term sustainable development and support.

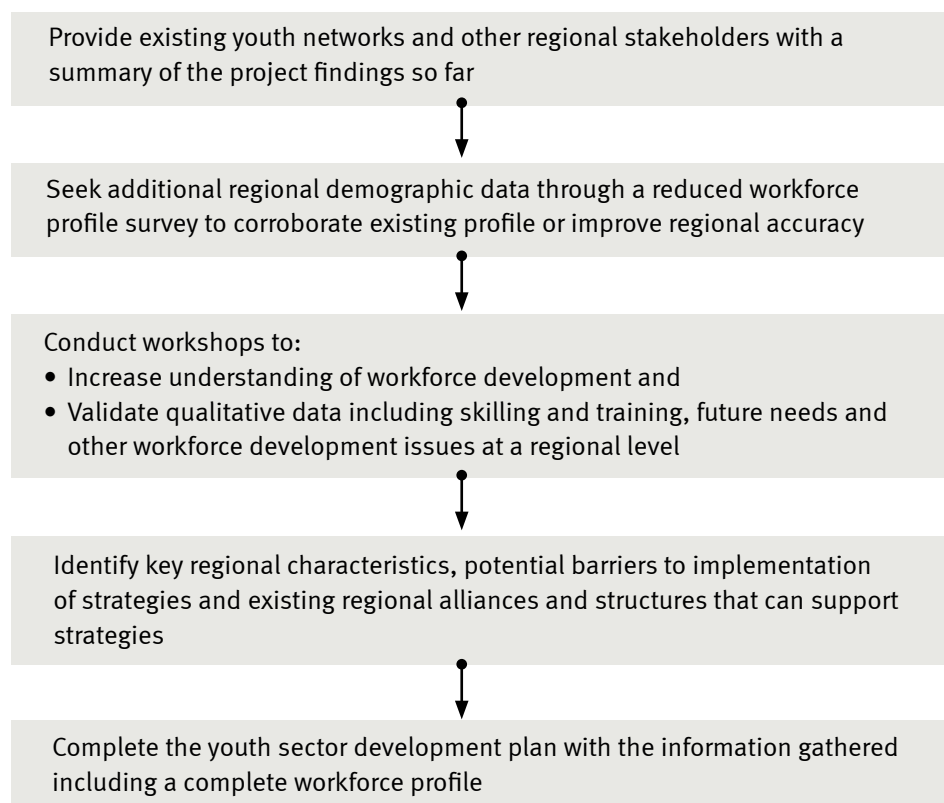
The next phase of the both projects involves the validation of both the data collected and the profile that has emerged with other regions across Queensland. This will create the opportunity to build in regional variations, identify regional specifics and increase interest and ownership across the sector and with government and other stakeholders at a local level. For the Murri project this will occur as soon as the data collection phase is completed.

YANQ will seek additional resources to engage the broader youth sector with this project. During 2010, YANQ will endeavour to lead a 12month sector engagement process whereby project outcomes will be workshopped at youth sector networks across the state. Reports will be presented and a discussion facilitated about how the data applies in this region, what is the same, what is different, if recommendations and strategies are relevant and what it would take for them to work.

The final product will be a detailed youth sector development plan containing strategies, projects and further research areas, relevant to each region and directly linked to development of the youth sector that has high sector and stakeholder ownership.

Information collected through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander project will be enhanced through further qualitative data collection and then validated both with the local communities from where it emerged to ensure accuracy and understanding of their story and then more widely across the state in a process similar to that discussed above.

2010 Regional validation process



Recommendation One: Strengthen youth sector strategic capacity for workforce development

Strategies	Major stakeholders	Regional considerations	Existing regional projects/strategies	Potential barriers
Establish Youth Sector Leadership Groups/Communities of Practice	YANQ Existing peer and other youth networks			
Expansion of existing peer support networks and network model to other funding program areas to provide ongoing youth sector support	Existing peer and other youth networks OFY			
Strengthen and formalise links between existing program based networks such as YACCAN and industry wide peaks such as YANQ	Existing peer and other youth networks YANQ			
Development and delivery of leadership and management training and skills development for current managers and future managers	YANQ Workforce Council DET			
Investigation of management models that support the critical skills and knowledge required for a 'Senior Practitioner/Practice Manager' role	YANQ IRG			
Integrate whole of sector development into needs analysis and skilling delivery processes	Workforce Council YANQ OFY			
Development of the YANQ Workforce Development website to provide a direct access point and portal for youth services to access information, tools, templates and articles	YANQ			

Recommendation Two: Strengthen partnership with government

Strategies	Major stakeholders	Regional considerations	Existing regional projects/strategies	Potential barriers
Develop systems and structures that support direct sector input into broad strategic initiatives such as the Compact Governance Committee increasing engagement in planning and policy	YANQ OFY			
Bring together key stakeholders such as government, youth peaks and youth sector leaders in a 'think tank' process to engage in a genuine exchange about social policy and practice implications	OFY YANQ			
When considering future funding priorities and program areas and as part of the funding realignment process government considers the possibility of the inclusion of a 'designated capacity component' that provides: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • resourcing towards initial and ongoing workforce development needs at a whole of sector level to prepare for and implement program initiatives • timely advice and resourcing to 'seed the project' and support the sector to assist in development of appropriate skills and knowledge within the current and future workforce to enhance the likelihood of successful and effective implementation of new initiatives • improved ongoing access to 'capacity enhancing possibilities' direct to services and codified in service agreements whereby services are able to effectively participate in and report on their participation in sector wide strategic planning and thinking through networks and other processes along with skilling and training opportunities 	OFY			
YANQ to engage with government and advocate on behalf of the youth sector to inform service system review processes to consider the continuum of service delivery from prevention through early intervention to crisis management	YANQ OFY			
Support services to make links between key strategic initiatives such as Queensland Compact and Community Services Standards, and day to day operations to position organisations and the sector for sustainable workforce development	YANQ			

Recommendation Three: Create a responsive training and skilling system

Strategies	Major stakeholders	Regional considerations	Existing regional projects/strategies	Potential barriers
Ensure ongoing availability and accessibility of training and skilling in core knowledge and skill areas	DET Workforce Council			
Investigate training and skilling options in areas identified as future needs including mapping to national training packages and actively promote to the sector	YANQ Workforce Council			
Liaise with training providers regarding emerging needs to inform training and skilling development	YANQ Workforce Council			
Determine agreed on youth sector core competencies from youth work framework and conduct a skills audit and gap analysis as a health check of the current sector	YANQ			
Pilot resourcing of vocational placements within the VET sector to improve learning experience of new workforce entrants	DET			
Provide information to inform strategic discussion regarding use of training and education resources and influence other developments that will support workforce development such as Community Services Training Package improvement	YANQ Workforce Council			
Enhance and consolidate existing processes that support skilling and training such as peer support networks that provide infrastructure for collaboration between workers through additional resourcing and recognition	OFY			
Build internal organisational capacity to support and integrate learning, professional development and reflective practice through offering training to managers and experienced workers in supervision and action learning and supporting this process through resources and tools on the YANQ website	YANQ Workforce Council			

Recommendation Four: Define and promote the youth services sector

Strategies	Major stakeholders	Regional considerations	Existing regional projects/strategies	Potential barriers
Utilise the IRG and other stakeholders to create a definition of youth work	YANQ IRG			
Engage young people in discussing and defining the concept of youth work	YANQ OFY			
Promote the core skills and practices and outcomes of youth work within the youth sector and across the health and community sector	YANQ OFY			
Create opportunities to work across the sector in a range of roles including secondment to relevant government positions and of government staff to organisations	YANQ IRG Youth networks			
Engage the sector in the development and articulation of a broad evidence based youth work practice framework, including identification of core values and competencies	YANQ			
Create formal youth sector networking opportunities through regular youth forums, policy symposiums, and youth conferences that can enhance existing networking and communication between services and stakeholders as well as offering a learning environment through peer supervision and sharing of knowledge and ideas	YANQ			
Resource and expand existing infrastructure and create new processes where required to support localised leadership circles and communities of practice that can connect with the 'think tank' with government and other key stakeholders and broader strategic initiatives	Existing peer and other youth network OFY YANQ			
Provide services and workers with access to an ethics training program to provide individual skilling and build capacity to contribute to the development/articulation of values based youth work practice and recruitment framework	YANQ			

Recommendation Five: Design and implement attraction and retention strategies

Strategies	Major stakeholders	Regional considerations	Existing regional projects/strategies	Potential barriers
Assist services to better understand and implement industrial changes	YANQ			
Lobby and advocate for adequate funding to meet pay equity requirements and improved working conditions to assist in the long term retention and sustainability of the sector	YANQ			
Create a 'career map' that shows entry points and qualifications, opportunities to cross sectors and career pathways to promote the youth sector	YANQ Workforce Council OFY			
Further research existing career pathways including across services and service types to inform future possibilities	YANQ OFY			

Recommendation Six: Develop cultural competency

Strategies	Major stakeholders	Regional considerations	Existing regional projects/strategies	Potential barriers
Investigate the implementation of training programs that can both: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop individuals skills and knowledge in working effectively with Indigenous young people and their families • build managers and organisations capacity to integrate culturally competent processes into service delivery and human resource practices 	YANQ Indigenous sub committee Workforce Council			
Investigate the similarities between youth work values and those embedded in the way Indigenous services and workers work in their own communities to increase learning opportunities and ways to connect better between the two parts of the sector	YANQ Indigenous sub committee IRG			
Develop tools to assist organisations to conduct audits and analysis of their organisational cultural competence including strategies and processes they use to increase Indigenous participation with the view to integrating effective strategies into organisational business and culture	YANQ Indigenous sub committee Workforce Council			
Development of the YANQ Workforce Development website to support to integrate culturally competent processes into day to day practice can be further supported and resourced through this process as a follow up to training	YANQ			

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Recommendation Seven: Developing sector capacity to work with mental health matters

Strategies	Major stakeholders	Regional considerations	Existing regional projects/strategies	Potential barriers
Resource the systematic roll out of training for the youth sector to build confidence and capacity of youth workers in supporting and advocating for young people experiencing mental health issues. This training is to include the voices of young people with lived experience of mental health issues	YANQ Qld Alliance DET			
Queensland Alliance and YANQ are funded to develop a framework and process for work shadowing and job swaps to enhance learning and development between the youth sector and the mental health community sector	YANQ Qld Alliance Qld Health DoC			

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ASIST	Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training
ATSI	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
BACCA	Barambah Aboriginal Community Care Agency
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DEEWER	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DET	Department of Education and Training
DoC	Department of Communities
IRG	Industry Reference Group
ISD	Integrated Skills Development Strategy
NWQPHC	North West Queensland Primary Health Care
OFY	Office for Youth (Queensland)
QCOSS	Queensland Council of Social Service
QYHC	Queensland Youth Housing Coalition
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
VET	Vocational Education and Training
Workforce Council	Health and Community Services Workforce Council
YACCAN	Youth and Community Combined Action Network
YSC	Youth Support Coordinators
YANQ	Youth Affairs Network Queensland Inc