

# MEDIA RELEASE

30 September 2021

## Community mental health sector growing at pace in New South Wales

**For immediate release:** A new report highlights significant growth in the non-government community mental health workforce in New South Wales.

Mental Health Coordinating Council's latest **Mental Health Workforce Profile: Community Managed Organisations Mental Health Workforce Report 2021** shows the workforce is growing at 6.5% annually, outstripping increases in other workforces in the mental health system.

The data confirms the community mental health sector's significant contribution to mental health service delivery in New South Wales, with the sector accounting for just over one-quarter of the total mental health workforce in NSW.

However, greater investment in community-based mental health services is needed to meet forecasted future demand for mental health services.

MHCC CEO Carmel Tebbutt says the recent [Productivity Commission Inquiry into Mental Health](#) identified the need to expand community treatment and supports for the "missing middle" - people who do not require hospital care but do need more support than can be provided by a GP.

"The Productivity Commission estimates 154,000 people across Australia are missing out on crucial psychosocial support services and it identified that spending on these services, delivered in the community by non-government services, is still far too low," Ms Tebbutt says.

**To help address demand for services in the community, MHCC is calling for additional funding for psychosocial support services as part of the upcoming National Agreement on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, currently being negotiated between State and Federal Governments.**

"Any transfer of psychosocial supports to the NSW government as part of the impending National Agreement must be accompanied by sufficient funding to address the growing demand for mental health services.

**"Despite increased investment by both the NSW and Australian Governments in additional mental health services during the pandemic, COVID-19 is having a profound impact on demand for services. It's paramount we have the services and workers in the community sector for Australians seeking mental health support, now and into the future," Ms Tebbutt says.**

### Key findings in the Mental Health Workforce Profile 2021

- Annual workforce growth of 6.5%. By comparison, the total mental health nursing workforce is increasing by around 1.5% per year.
- Community managed organisations employ one in four people of the entire mental health workforce (25%).
- 48% of all community mental health workers are employed on a temporary contract or casual basis.
- 72% of all workers in the not-for-profit community sector are female.

- 64% of workers are aged under 45 years.
- Peer Workers have grown to make up 14% of the workforce, compared to 11.3% in 2019.
- Overall, the mental health community managed workforce is better qualified than the general Australian workforce.
- Demand for a larger and more skilled workforce is forecast in the report.
- Organisations surveyed identify future demand coming from Primary Health Networks commissioning mental health services, alongside ongoing demand from the NDIS.
- More organisations are delivering services through online and telephone services in the two years been 2019 and 2021.

Community mental health organisations support thousands of people in NSW experiencing mental health concerns.

The not-for-profit sector specialises in practical psychosocial support and plays a vital role in supporting the recovery of people with enduring mental health conditions.

View the **Mental Health Workforce Profile 2021** [here](#).

Find out more about **Mental Health Coordinating Council** [here](#).

**For media queries or to request an interview with Carmel Tebbutt**, contact Lara Cole at [lara.c@mhcc.org.au](mailto:lara.c@mhcc.org.au) or 0421 202 643