

# Facts and Figures Community-based mental health

**This fact sheet covers the work done, issues faced and current policy developments in the community-based mental health sector in New South Wales.**

Community-based mental health is a key pillar of Australia's mental health system, providing services and supports to people living with mental health conditions. However, the value of the work done by the sector is not well understood. This Facts and Figures document from Mental Health Coordinating Council (MHCC) helps explain the sector, its contribution and funding needs. Of course, they should be supplemented with information about your own organisation and the difference it makes in your local community. Local services, people and issues will always be of more interest to an MP than state-wide information.



## Mental health overview

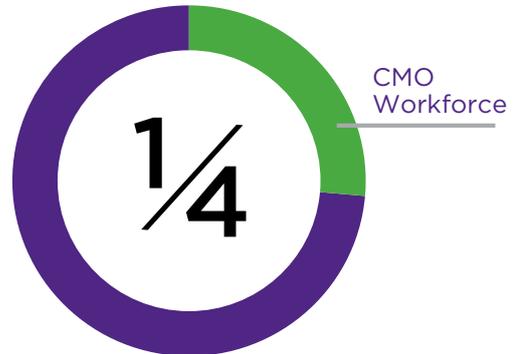
- **1 in 5** people experience a mental health condition every year.
- Almost half, **45%**, of Australians will experience a mental health condition in their lifetime.
- The Productivity Commission estimates the cost to Australia of mental ill-health and suicide is around **\$200 to \$220 billion** per year.
- NSW Government spends over **\$2.1 billion** per year on mental health services.
- Around **244,000** people in NSW experience a severe mental health condition each year, **374,133** a moderate mental health condition and **732,000** a mild condition.

## Facts and Figures: Community-based mental health

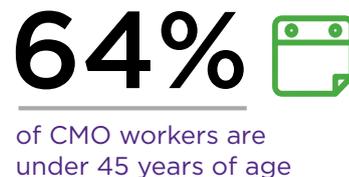
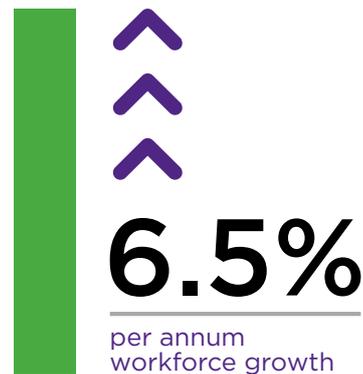


### Information on community-based mental health in New South Wales

- The community-based mental health workforce makes up more than **25%** of the total mental health workforce in NSW, with nearly **6,000** paid workers.
- Our workforce is growing at a significant pace, increasing by **6.5% each year**. This is one of the fastest workforce growth rates in the economy.
- **14%** of all workers in the sector are Peer Workers, with lived experience of mental health conditions. This number is growing rapidly.
- The community-based workforce is better qualified than the general Australian workforce, female dominated (**72%**) and youthful (**64%** aged under 45).
- **48%** of all workers in the sector are employed on temporary contract or casual basis, due largely to short term funding arrangements.
- Spending on services delivered by community managed mental health organisations makes up only **8.5%** of the total NSW mental health budget.
- In NSW **\$14.30 per capita** is invested in community managed organisations.



of the entire mental health workforce in NSW works at a CMO



\* Details are available in Mental Health Workforce Profile: Community Managed Organisations Report 2021 and Mental Health Matters, Mental Health Coordinating Council.

## Facts and Figures: Community-based mental health



### Sector overview

Community-managed mental health organisations support people to live well in the community and meet everyday challenges when and where they need it most. Most community-managed mental health organisations are non-government, not-for-profits who deliver services across a wide range of core areas.

- Accommodation support and outreach
- Employment and education
- Leisure and recreation
- Family and carer support
- Self-help and peer support
- Helpline and counselling services
- Promotion, information and advocacy

There is significant evidence that quality services delivered in the community provide better outcomes for people, carers and their families, and take pressure off other parts of the health system. Increased access to community-based supports can support people with mental health conditions to live well, avoid crises and stay out of hospital.



### Productivity Commission recommendations: Psychosocial Support Services

In late 2020, the Productivity Commission handed down a wide-ranging Inquiry Report into mental health. The Report identifies that the delivery of psychosocial supports is a key enabler of recovery, yet there are significant service gaps. The Productivity Commission estimated that 154, 000 people across Australia who would benefit from psychosocial support services are missing out.

The Commission recommends, as a priority, that governments improve the availability of psychosocial support. The Report also recommends funding cycles for all psychosocial supports be extended to minimum five-year contracts and that access to psychosocial supports be streamlined between State and Territory Governments and the federal National Disability Insurance Agency.

MHCC is calling on the NSW Government to work with the Australian Government to implement recommendations of the [Productivity Commission Inquiry Report](#).

#### What is psychosocial support

Psychosocial supports are an incredibly important, yet overlooked and misunderstood part of the mental health ecosystem. These supports are primarily delivered by community-based, non-government organisations and enable people living with severe and complex mental health conditions to live well and recover in their communities. The supports assist people to manage daily tasks, undertake work or study, find housing, get involved in activities and make connections.

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### A National Agreement

In March 2022, the Australian and NSW Governments announced additional funding for mental health services and signed the [National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement](#). MHCC welcomes the signing of the Agreement. The Agreement sets out the way the Australia, state and territory governments will work in partnership to improve the mental health of all Australians. This is a major opportunity to clarify responsibilities and additional funding for psychosocial services by each level of government.

Within 12 months of the Agreement being signed, the Agreement requires governments to estimate demand for psychosocial supports, outside the NDIS, compared to what is currently availability. Governments will then work together to agree on future psychosocial support arrangements.

### Action on the Agreement

The National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement is an important opportunity to address mental health service gaps and make sure that people with mental health conditions receive support when and where they need it.

Ask your local member to write to the Minister for Mental Health, the Hon Bronnie Taylor and request the NSW Government establish a roundtable - including MHCC, service providers, consumers and carers - to begin the analysis to identify the gap in NSW immediately.



### Four top investment priorities

MHCC is the peak body for community managed mental health organisations in NSW. Together with our members and the sector, MHCC makes a positive difference in the mental health sector by driving reform, sustainability and system improvements.

MHCC has identified four key mental health priorities for the NSW Government to invest in:

- 1. 5,000** additional housing and accommodation support packages for people living with a mental health condition.
- 2. 13** new 'Step-up Step-down' prevention and recovery programs to establish a State-wide service.
- 3. 10** extra specialist youth services across NSW to increase the availability of psychosocial support for young people.
- 4.** Urgently address the significant **workforce shortages** in the community-based mental health workforce, including developing the peer workforce.

Read the full details of MHCC's recommendations in [NSW Budget Mental Health Investment Priorities](#).