

Family Relationship Services Program (FRSP) National Report

A snapshot of the FRSP based upon information drawn from FRSP service providers' Status Reports and FaCSLink data for the period from July 2005 to June 2006.

1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the third annual National Report of the Family Relationship Services Program (FRSP).

The FRSP is jointly funded by the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) and the Attorney-General's Department (AGD). The FRSP is administered by FaCSIA through its network of state and territory offices (STOs).

The aim of the FRSP is to improve the wellbeing of families and children by supporting positive family relationships through the full range of early intervention and post separation services.

This National Report provides an overview of the major aspects of FRSP service delivery for the 2005/06 financial year based on information provided by service providers through FaCSLink and annual Status Reports lodged with FaCSIA. The Report is divided into the following sections:

- Program Overview
- Client Profile
- Client Fees
- Target Groups
- Presenting Needs and Issues
- Demand for Services
- Factors Influencing Service Delivery
- Client Outcomes
- Referrals
- Relationships
- Workforce Issues
- Discrete Services
- Additional Issues
- Future Directions

The themes and emerging issues raised in this Report help to inform future approaches to service delivery and funding requirements by FaCSIA and AGD.

In the 2005/06 financial year, a considerable amount of expansion took place within the FRSP. For example, all services received a 30% increase in existing funding levels and funding for three new Parenting Orders Program services also became available.

As at 30 June 2006, funding of \$71.772m was provided through the FRSP to 105 organisations that are located throughout Australia.

INTRODUCTION

The Family Relationship Services Program (FRSP)

The Family Relationship Service Program (FRSP) is a national program that provides funding for not-for-profit organisations that are located across Australia.

The aim of the FRSP is to improve the wellbeing of families and children by supporting positive family relationships through the full range of early intervention and post separation services.

The FRSP is jointly funded by the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) and the Attorney-General's Department (AGD). The FRSP is administered by FaCSIA through its network of state and territory offices (STOs).

The 2005/06 National Report provides a snapshot of the FRSP based upon information drawn from FRSP service providers' Status Reports and FaCSLink data for the period from July 2005 to June 2006. Each section of the Report provides a summary of responses provided by service providers to questions contained in the Status Report template, and where appropriate, illustrates links with current FaCSIA activities.

During 2005/06, FaCSLink was the data collection system used to collect and collate information related to individual service types. The Status Reports submitted by service providers capture information related to an organisation's program administration. This information helps to inform the Departments about emerging trends and issues around service delivery as well as future approaches to service delivery and funding requirements.

The following diagram illustrates the relationship between the key FRSP Processes and Activities:

Figure 1: FRSP Processes and Activities



Status Reports

The FRSP comprised the following service types in 2005/06:

- Family Relationship Counselling*^
- Family Relationship Mediation*
- Conciliation Services*
- Primary Dispute Resolution*
- Children's Contact Services*
- Parenting Orders Program (previously Contact Orders Program)*
- Family Relationships Education^
- Family Relationships Skills Training^
- Adolescent Mediation and Family Therapy^
- Specialised Family Violence Services^
- Men and Family Relationships Services^
- Drought Counselling^
- Family Relationship Services for Humanitarian Entrants^
- Sugarcane Industry Counselling^

* Funded by AGD

^ Funded by FACSIA

The FRSP Funding Agreement requires that service providers report on their activities in an annual Status Report, specifically highlighting emerging trends, challenges and successes in the delivery of services. The Status Report template used as a basis for this Report is shown at Attachment 1.

Status Report responses varied considerably as some organisations are funded to provide more than one type of service and/or provide services at more than one location. As in previous years, there was a large variation in the way in which Status Reports were prepared. Understandably, the level of detail, understanding of issues and ability to convey information differed considerably across organisations. Where the organisation has provided responses based on their services/location rather than an overall response for the entire service provider, this has been noted in the report.

The format of the 2005/06 Status Report and the information that was sought from service providers differed from the last reporting period (2004/05). These changes were designed to provide FaCSIA, AGD and service providers with more relevant information to assist in improving and understanding the services provided.

1 Program Overview

1.1 Service Types

During 2005/06 Funding Agreements were signed with 105 service providers, providing services for one or more FRSP service types. Many funded organisations had more than one outlet providing services to a region.

Table 1 provides a breakdown of the service types provided and compares the figures with those from 2003-04 and 2004/05. The number of service providers and services offered over this time period has remained relatively consistent.

Table 1: Number of Organisations Funded for FRSP Service Types

Service Type	2003-04	2004/05	2005/06
Family Relationship Counselling	40	40	40
Family Relationship Mediation	17	17	17
Conciliation Services	7	7	7
Primary Dispute Resolution	25	25	25
Children's Contact Services	27	27	27
Contact Orders Program	5	5	6
Family Relationships Education	42	42	42
Family Relationships Skills Training	27	26	26
Adolescent Mediation and Family Therapy	12	12	12
Specialised Family Violence Services	9	9	9
Men and Family Relationship Services	44	44	44
Drought Counselling	29	0	31
Family Relationship Services for Humanitarian Entrants	0	6	6
Sugarcane Industry Counselling	6	6	6
Other	0	0	0
Total	290	266	298

Notes:

Drought Counselling was first provided in 2003/04 as once-only funding. However, in response to the worsening drought across Australia, further funding and additional services became available in 2005/06.

The Family Relationships Skills Training (FRST) reduction in 2004/05 carried over into 2005/06, as an established service provider continued to service the regional area where an earlier provider had ceased to provide services.

Three additional Contact Orders Program (COP) services were funded to meet the growing demand for this service type. Because funding for two of the three additional (COP) services was provided to an existing funded organisation, the increase in funded organisations providing a (COP) service amounted to one.

1.2 Provision of Services

FRSP service were provided to:

- 131,398 clients in 2005/06
- 124,320 clients in 2004/05, and
- 130,473 clients in 2003/04.

1.3 FaCSIA/AGD Funding Appropriations

FaCSIA

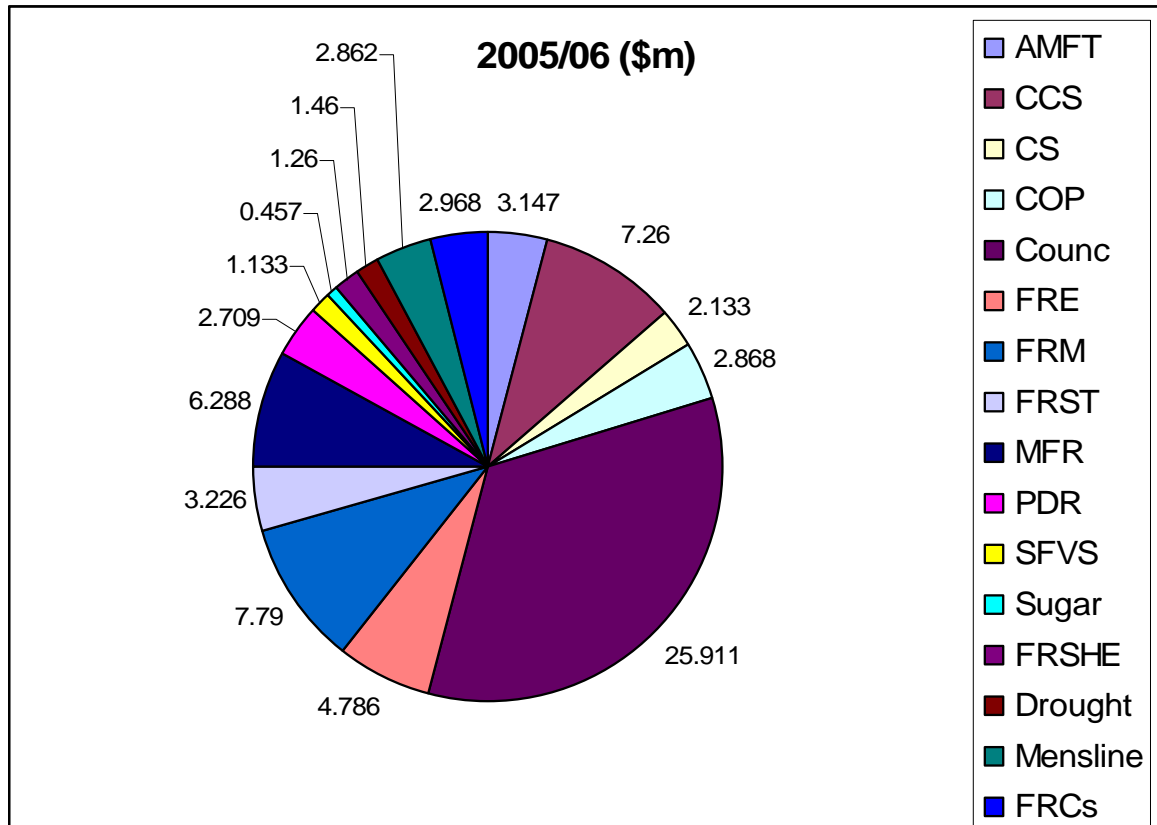
- \$39.555m for 2005/06
- \$37.186m for 2004/05, and
- \$27.152m for 2003/04.

AGD

- \$44.763m for 2005/06
- \$37.297m for 2004/05
- \$29.525m for 2003/04

Figure 2 outlines the distribution of FaCSIA and AGD funding for FRSP service types for 2005/06.

Figure 2: Proportion of Funding Provided by FRSP Service Type



1.4 Support for Industry Representative Bodies

FaCSIA was also responsible for providing funding to the three Industry Representative Bodies (IRB's). Core funding to the IRB's amounted to \$454,795 (incl GST), with an additional \$168,382 provided to assist service providers with training costs.

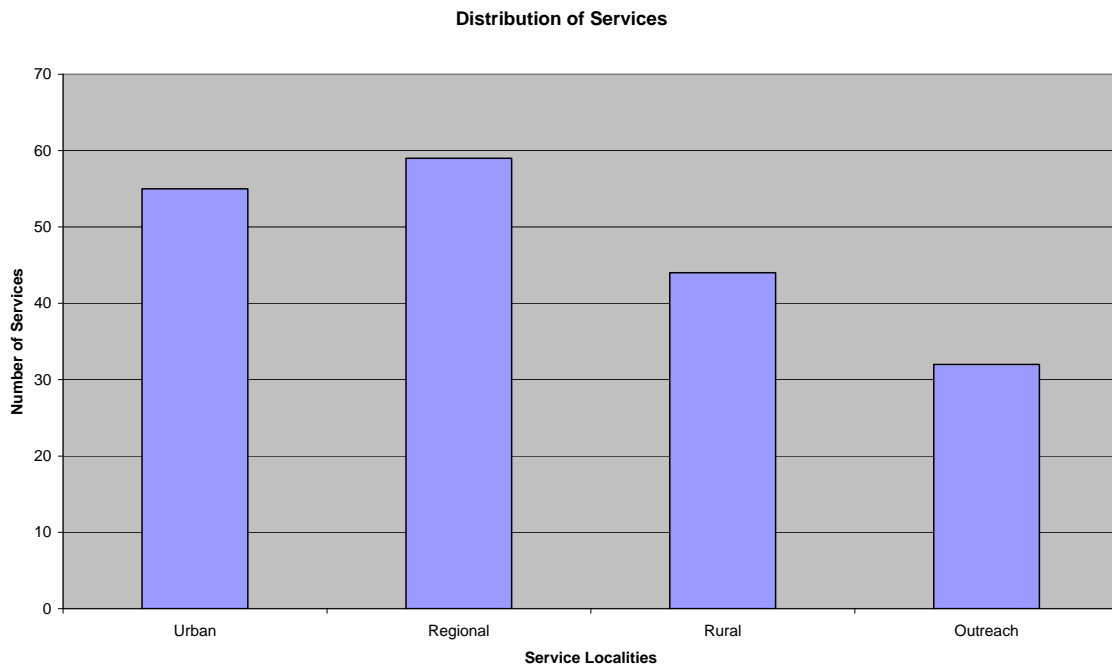
1.5 Distribution of Services

For statistical purposes, FRSP service delivery is broken into four geographic categories:

- urban,
- regional,
- remote and
- outreach.

Of the providers that recorded their geographical location, over half recorded having services in more than one of the geographical categories. A small number of service providers reported that they provide services in all four geographical categories. Figure 3 provides a breakdown of service providers across geographical locations.

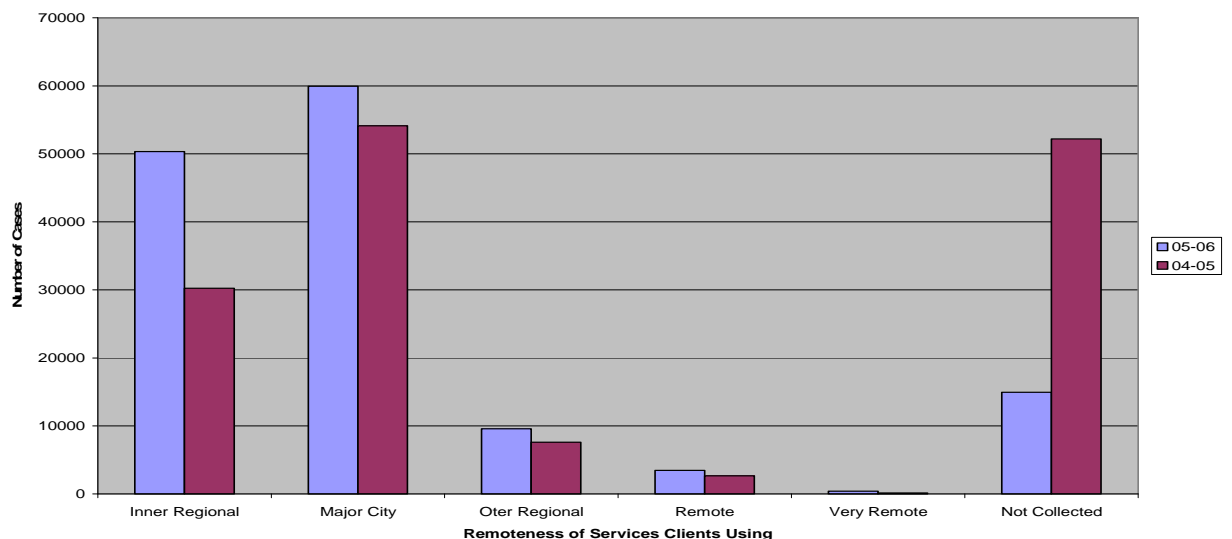
Figure 3: Service Providers Geographical Location of their Services



32 of the 105 funded service providers reported having outreach services. The average number of outreach services provided by service providers was between five and six. A number of service providers expressed the view that outreach funding was insufficient to cover the cost of service delivery, especially with the increasing cost of petrol. Petrol costs impact on clients travelling to visit regional service providers, as well as service providers travelling to meet clients. Service providers also noted that further funding would be required to support any increase in outreach services. It should be noted the 05/06 Budget package increased funding to all service providers by 30%, without increasing client target numbers, in recognition of increasing costs.

Figure 4 provides an analysis of clients accessing services based on the geographical location of the service for 2004/05 and 2005/06.

Figure 4: Clients seen by Geographical Remoteness 2004/05 and 2005/06.



2 Client Profile

In 2005/06 service providers recorded 131,398 clients who used FRSP services. As in previous years, service providers reported an increase in complex cases. Dealing with more complex cases, involving the use of more resources and lengthening the resolution time, reduced the number of new cases/clients that could be seen, and the number of activities that could be offered by service providers.

2.1 Client Categories:

2.1.1 Age Profiles

Figure 5 shows the age of clients accessing FRSP services. The majority of clients of FRSP are aged 30-49 (68 per cent) with other significant client groups being aged 21 and under (11 per cent) and 50+ (13 per cent). This is almost identical to 2004/05 and 2003/04 client data.

Figure 5: Age Group of FRSP Clients

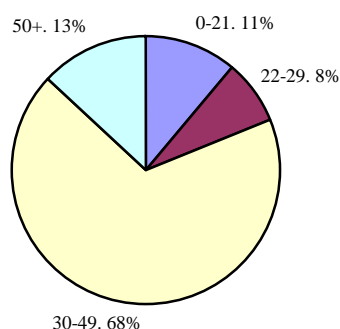
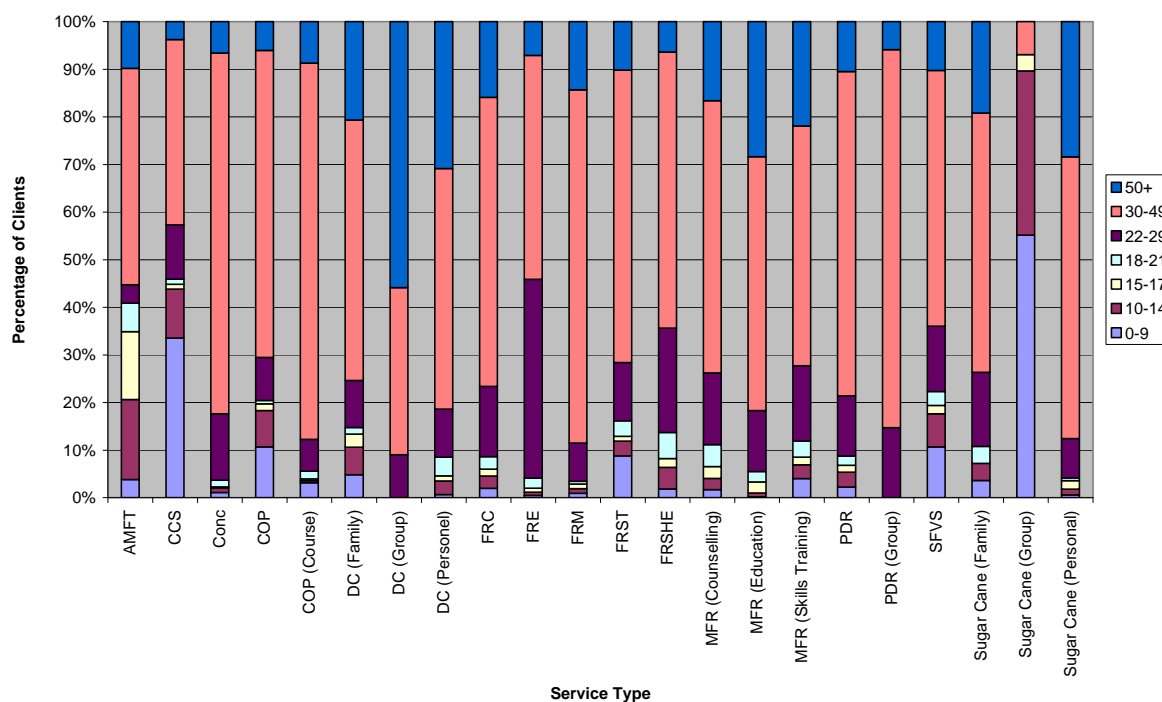


Figure 6, analysis by service type, shows variations in the age of clients and reflects the targeting of specific service interventions. For example, the dominant age range for Adolescent Mediation and Family Therapy services is children aged 10-17 years with parents in the 30-49 year age bracket. Primary Dispute Resolution (Group) is only accessed by clients aged over 22, and for Drought Counselling (Group), 50+ people represent over 50 per cent of clients. Once again, this data is almost identical to 2004/05 data.

Figure 6: Age Group of FRSP Clients by Service Type



2.1.2 Gender

Figure 7 provides an analysis of client service access by gender. In general, across all service types, the gender breakdown reveals an almost equal number of male and female clients accessing FRSP services. The gender breakdown is:

- 54% female, 46% male for 2005/06
- 54% female, 46% male for 2004/05
- 52% female, 45% male and 3% unknown for 2003/04.

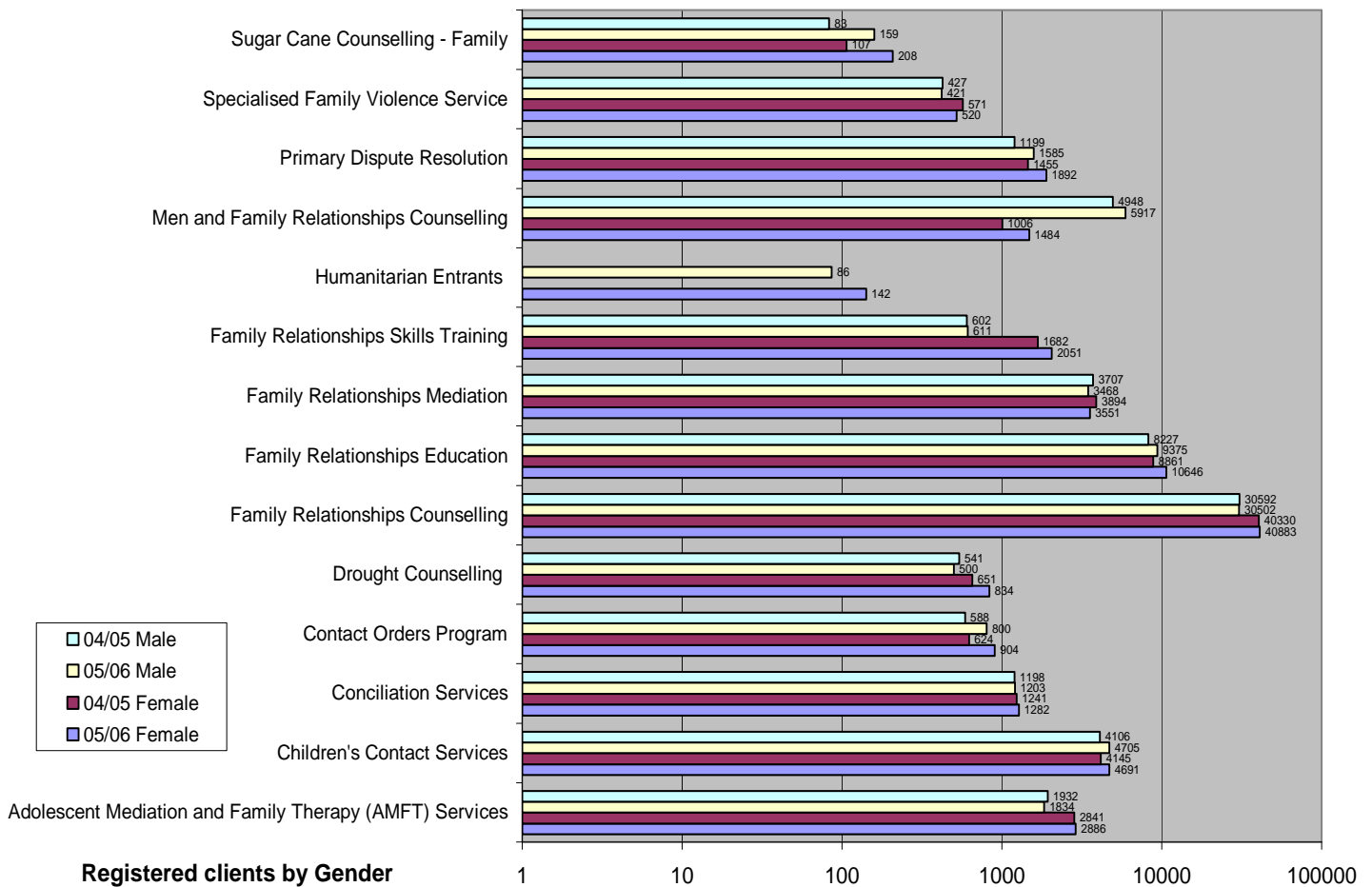
The service types with the largest variations in gender access are:

- Men and Family Relationship Services (including counselling, education and skills training), which is gender specific, with 80 per cent of the clients males; and
- Family Relationship Skills Training where 77 per cent of the clients were female.

There were slight variations between genders in accessing Drought Counselling where 62 per cent of the clients were female. 61 per cent of the clients attending Adolescent Mediation and Family Therapy Services were also female.

Comparing 2005/06 data with that of 2004/05 and 2005/06, Figure 8 shows that there has been little change in the proportion of male and female clients accessing specific service types across financial years.

Figure 7: Registered clients by Gender based on Service Types Accessed



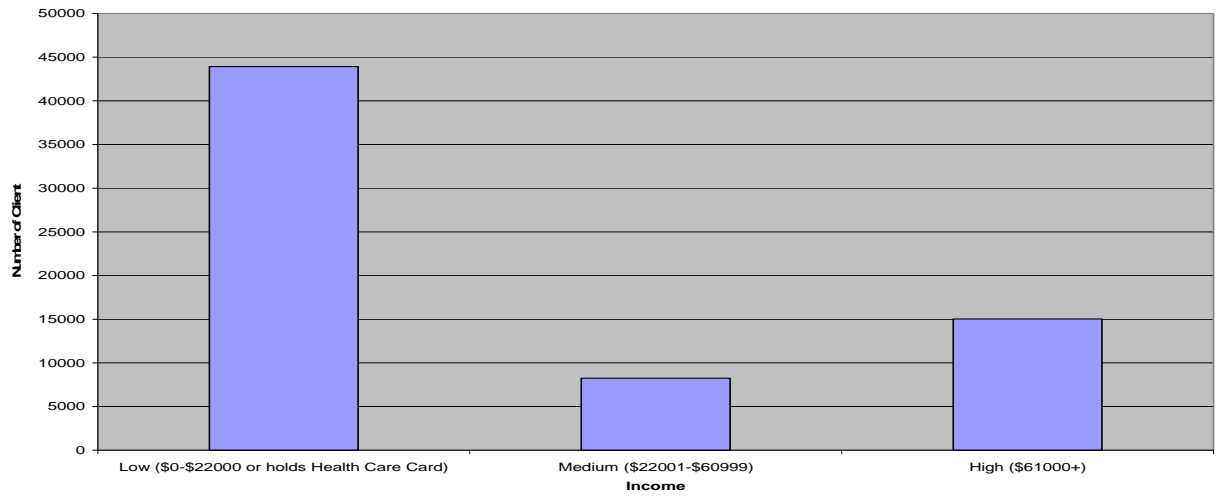
Note: Humanitarian Entrants did not have any recorded information for 04-05

2.1.3 Income

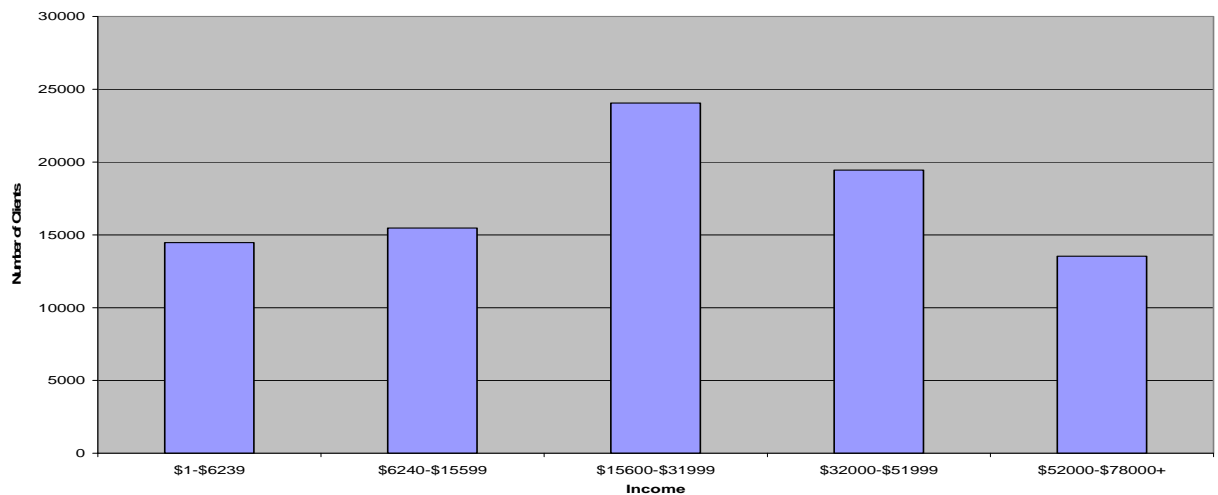
A large proportion of FRSP clients have a low income. Clients' income data is reported in two parts in Figure 8. Figure 8 Part A shows the information provided where the service providers use the older system of low, medium and high rating. Figure 8 Part B shows the newer system where income is measured through pay scales. Where service providers reported using the older system (Part A) over half of the clients were from low income households with income between \$0 to \$22,000. In Part B over one third of the clients indicated they were in the lower two income categories under \$15,599.

Figure 8: Income of FRSP clients

Part A



Part B



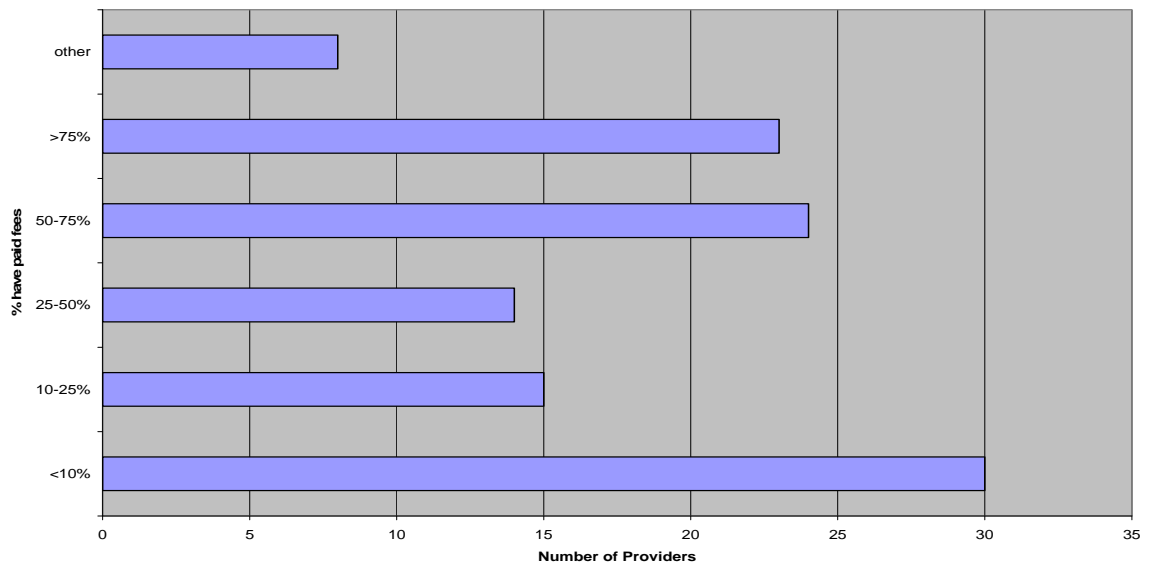
Note: 22801 clients were dependant child or young person and did not have to record an income; 3073 clients did not state their income and 28540 clients stated nil income.

3 Client Fees

3.1 Fee Paying Clients

Fee collection varies across providers, locations and service types. Figure 9 shows that around one quarter (26) of services collected fees from less than 10 per cent of clients, 55 services reported that they received fees from over 50 per cent of their clients. A number of services also reported that clients are not able to pay fees.

Figure 9: Proportion of Fee paying Clients



Note: Other represents service providers that did not provide a response or stated that they did not charge fees for certain service types.

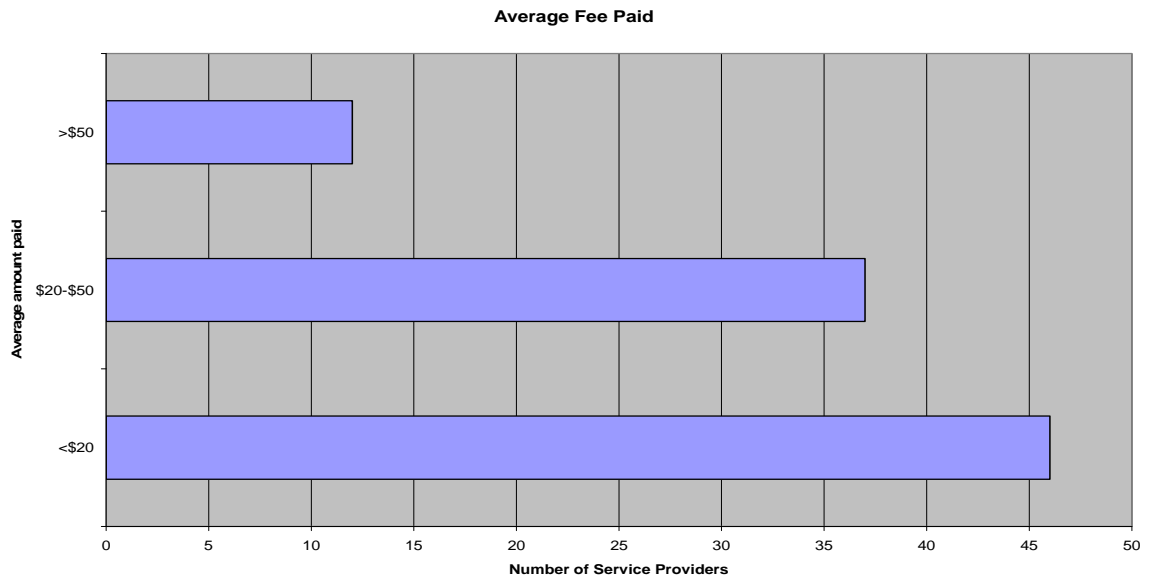
Many regional and rural service providers reported that the economic stress on clients as a consequence of the drought and increases in petrol prices has meant that many clients cannot afford to pay any fees. Service providers reported that although many were open about their willingness to waive or moderate fees according to the person’s financial position, the concept of having to pay fees is seen by many as a barrier, preventing clients from approaching the service providers for assistance.

“Financial challenges...including; increased costs of fuel, increased food costs and mortgage percentage increases are all impacting on clients and their ability to support their own counselling if a fee is regularly charged. Fee reductions have been reported to be on the increase in recent times.

3.2 Fee Collection

Figure 10 shows that 46 services have recorded that fees collected are for amounts less than \$20, supporting the view reported by service providers that many clients cannot afford to pay a larger fee.

Figure 10: Average Fee Charged



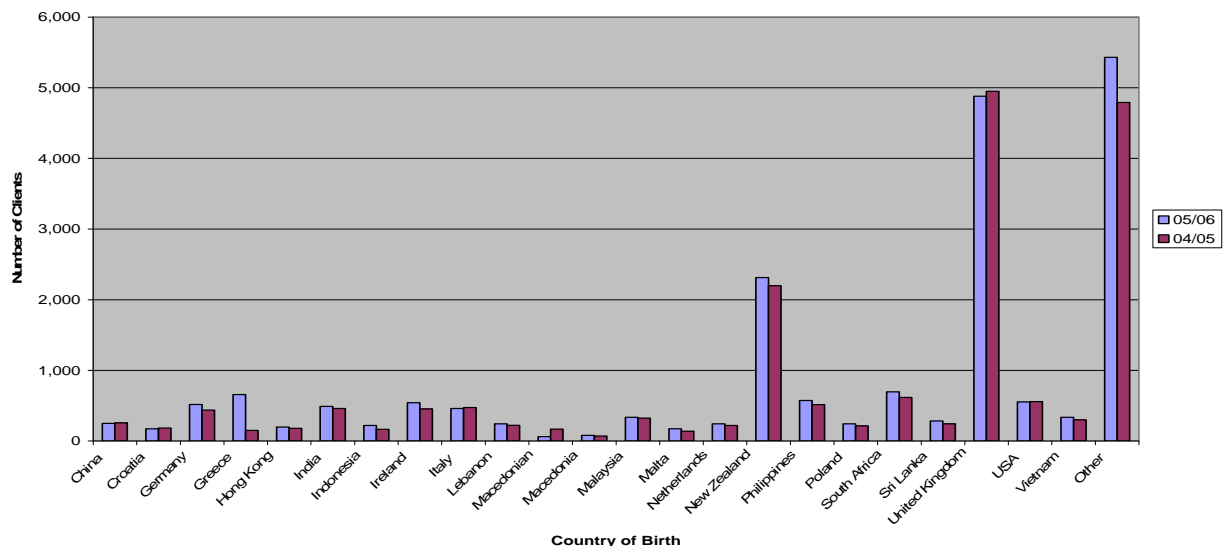
4 Target Groups

FRSP is known as a 'mainstream' service that is it predominantly meets the needs of clients from English speaking backgrounds. Services are required to meet the needs of the entire community and are increasingly focused on increasing access by Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) individuals, families and communities. Although many service providers have modified and adapted their services to better engage with these communities and those who reside within them, increasing the client base from these groups has been moderate.

4.1.1 Country of Birth

In 2005/06 the number of FRSP clients not born in Australia made up 15 per cent of registered clients, up from 10 per cent in 2004/05. As with 2004/05 the majority of those not born in Australia and using the FRSP services are from English speaking backgrounds. Figure 11 shows the country of birth for clients who accessed the services and were not born in Australia.

Figure 11: Country of Birth of FRSP Clients Not Born in Australia



The number of clients recording 'Other' as their country of birth continues to grow. This is supported by the information provided by a number of services in their Status Reports that reported increases in clients largely from African countries, especially Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia and Sierre Leone, all of which could not be chosen as a country of birth in FaCSLink. In response, a change to the reporting system (from FaCSLink to FRSP Online) is expected to include all countries as the possible country of birth choice for clients.

The services that are primarily used by clients not born in Australia are Family Relationship Counselling, Education, Mediation and Skills Training. There were also a number of clients using Men and Family Relationship services, especially those of Greek backgrounds.

4.1.2 Primary Language Spoken/ Non English Speaking Background

Figure 12 shows that in 2005/06 three per cent of clients were of non English speaking backgrounds (NESB). This is a slight increase from two per cent in 2004/05.

Figure 12: NESB FRSP clients 2005/06

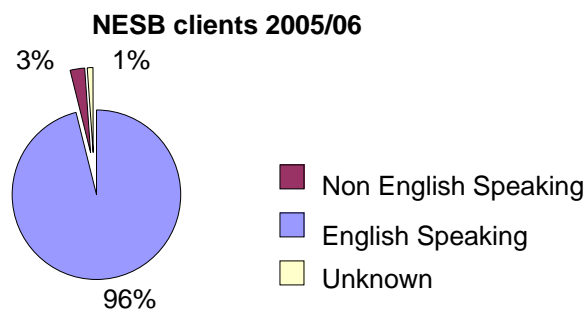
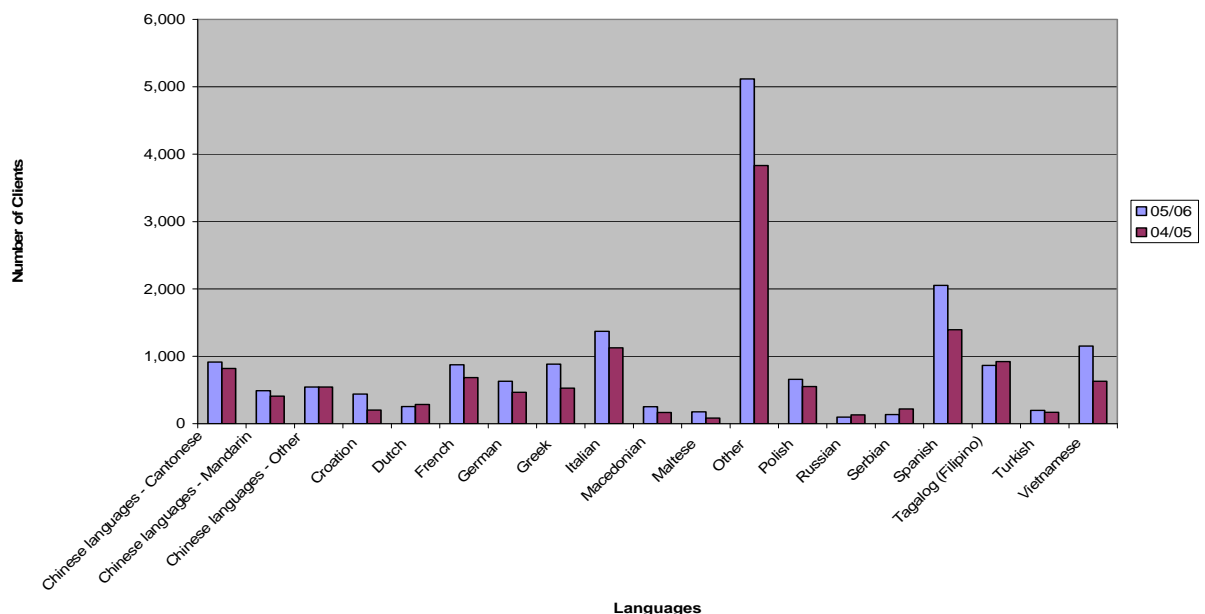


Figure 13 shows that the primary language spoken by NESB clients accessing the service are similar to those recorded in 2004/05 (Spanish, Italian, Tagalog (Filipino) and Cantonese). There have been slight increases in several of the languages, including Spanish, Vietnamese and Italian.

Figure 13: Languages Spoken by NESB Clients



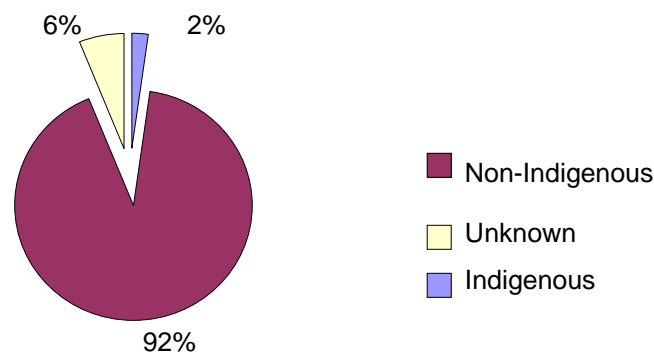
4.1.3 Indigenous

Similar to 2004/05, Indigenous clients continue to represent two per cent of clients, with a slightly higher number attending Men and Family Relationships and Family Relationships Skills Training.

FaCSLink data indicates that 67% of service providers provided services to Indigenous clients compared with 87% in 2004/05 and 74% in 2003/04.

Figure 14:

Registered Indigenous Clients 05/06



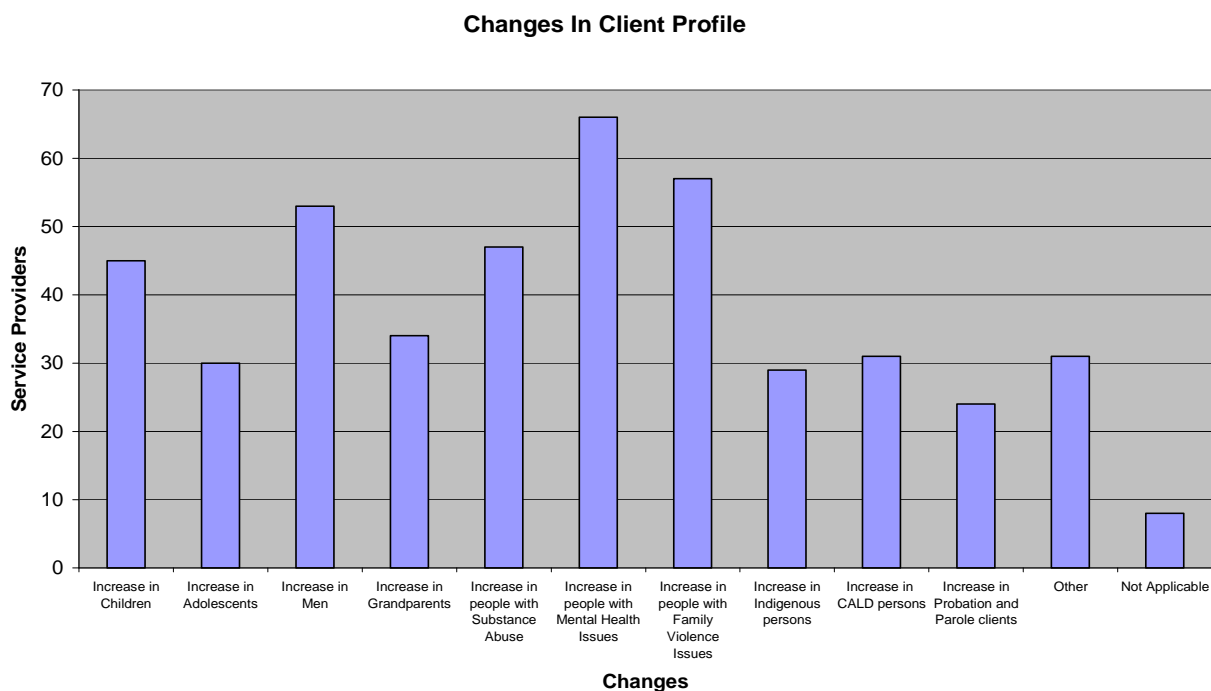
Despite the low percentage of Indigenous clients there continues to be an increase in service providers offering services and developing programs to target Indigenous clients. Service providers have reported taking steps to attract more Indigenous clients by appointing Indigenous counsellors and staff, providing training to staff to assist in developing their understanding of the culture, along with working collaboratively with the community and other agencies that provide services to the community.

4.2 Changes in Client Profile

Service providers reported changes in client profiles (refer Figure 15), predominately with increases in the number of people accessing the services from specific target groups. Of the service providers that reported changes in client profile:

- 66 reported an increase in number of people presenting with mental health issues;
- 57 report an increase in people presenting with family violence issues;
- 53 reported an increase in the number of men; and
- 45 reported an increase in number of children.

Figure 15: Changes in Client Profile



Service providers were also given the option of reporting changes that have occurred in client profiles due to decreasing numbers. Seven service providers reported a decrease in client profiles in a number of areas including adolescents (4), CALD (3) and Indigenous (3) clients.

Almost a third of service providers recorded “Other” as one of their changes in client profile. “Other” included an increase in clients that were:

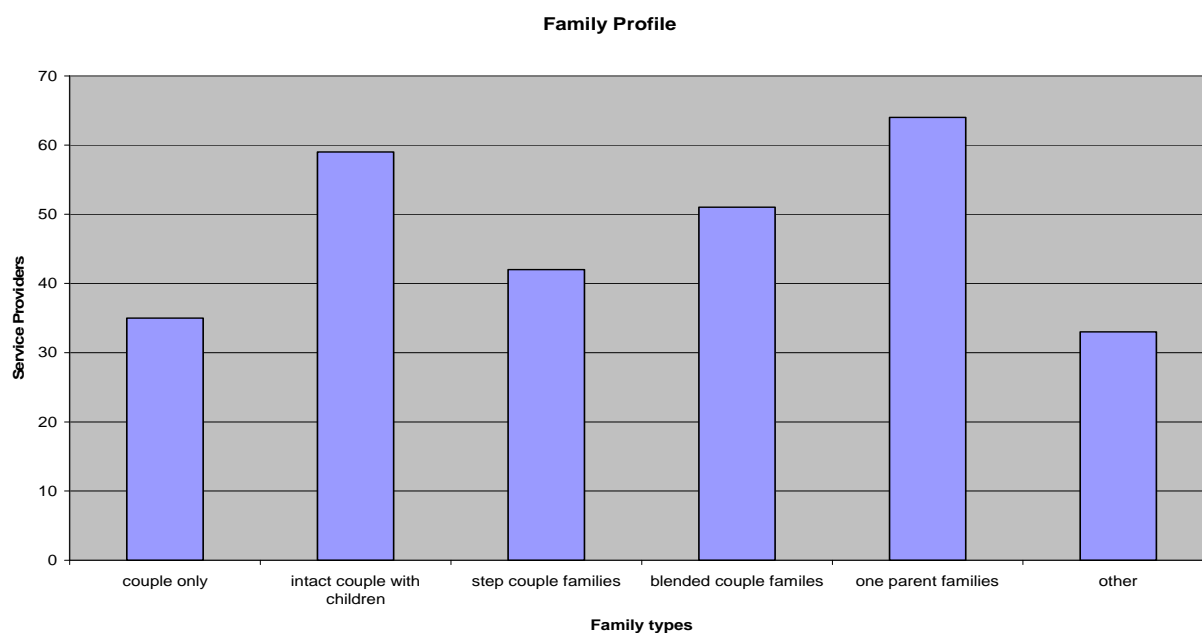
- parents ordered by a court to attend a service;
- clients referred from lawyers; and
- clients with co-morbid health and social issues.

There also was an increase in the types of families using the services. Blended and extended families with step children and parents becoming more prominent.

4.3 Profile of Families

Service providers reported that there are a variety of family types using their services, but that there is no one predominant family type. The two main family types were one parent families and intact couple with children that accessed FRSP services, slightly more than other family types. Figure 16 details the types of families that service providers reported are using their services.

Figure 16: Profile of Families Using FRSP services



Significantly, 32 service providers selected “Other” as the family types accessing their services. These family types included families in the process of separating (but not yet separated), grandparent families and families where a family member lives with other family members or other people within the community.

4.4 Change in Level of Service

Approximately 80 per cent of service providers reported that there had been changes in the level of service required by their clients.

4.4.1 Reasons for Change

Service providers reported information that reflected trends identified in the 2004/05 report. The 2004/05 report identified that changes in the level of service have been partly caused by an increase in clients with complex needs. Clients with complex needs have been identified as being those who present with mental health, substance abuse and/or family/domestic violence issues. Although service providers are reporting an increase in cases of this nature, they are also reporting that although there have always been clients with complex needs, clients are now becoming more open about these matters.

Changes were also reported because of an increase in cases being referred or mandated by the court system and the effect of changes to family law legislation. An increase in cases with multi-generational and inter-generational issues has also been reported where there are multiple partners and children from different relationships involved in the process. This trend appears to be more prevalent for Children’s Contact Services.

Public awareness has also had an impact on services. Service providers generally reported that the public has become more aware of counselling services and how counselling may be able to assist relationships. Accordingly more people are open to participating in counselling.

Anecdotal information provided by service providers shows that there were a number of other changes that have occurred, including an increase in clients experiencing financial difficulties,

clients who have been sex offenders or suffered childhood sexual abuse and an increase in clients from CALD backgrounds.

5. Presenting Needs and Issues

5.1 Presenting Needs

In 2005/06 the key needs addressed by service providers are reported as being similar to those recorded in 2004/05. The key needs largely depend upon the service type being accessed and the needs of clients within that service type. For example, over three quarters of clients that accessed Family Relationship Counselling reported that their presenting need was relationship maintenance or enhancement. Figure 17 outlines the key presenting needs that prevailed in 2005/06 compared with 2004/05.

Figure 17: Registered Clients Presenting Needs 2004/05 and 2005/06

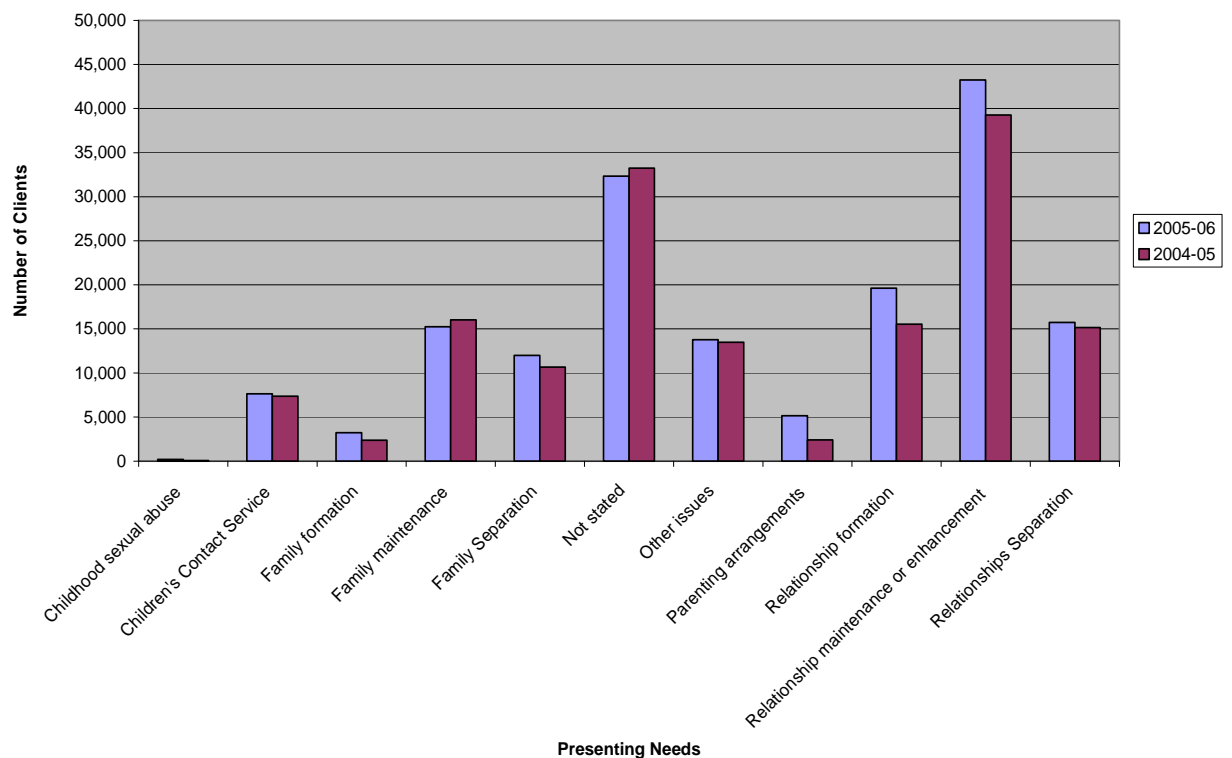
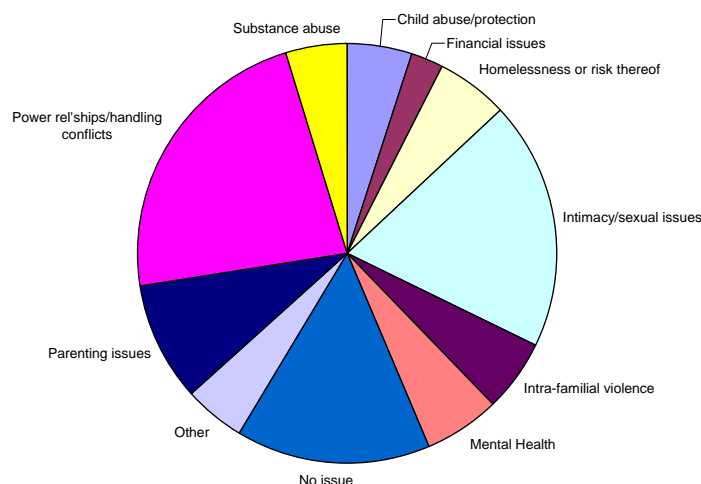


Figure 17 also shows that relationship formation is another key presenting need. Over half of clients with this presenting need accessed a Family Relationship Education service. Adolescent Mediation and Family Therapy and Family Relationships Skills Training clients account for a large proportion of clients who have family maintenance as their presenting needs.

4.5 Presenting Issues

Half of the clients that have accessed a service present only one issue as the presenting need. For the remaining clients, two to ten presenting issues were recorded. This data together with the qualitative information provided by service providers demonstrates that there are clearly more instances of complex cases presenting in 2005/06. The reasons for the number of cases being more complex, for example cases with a combination of mental health issues, substance abuse and family violence is not clearly evident, but service providers suggest that the cases have always been complex and it is now becoming more evident because people are more willing to discuss and record the multiple reasons for contacting FRSP services. Figure 19 outlines that primary presenting issues recorded by service providers:

Figure 18: Primary Presenting Issues for Clients Accessing services



Service providers reported the two key presenting issues are power relationships/handling conflict and intimacy/sexual issues. Both of these issues are presenting across the spectrum of services, although they are most prevalent in Family Relationship Counselling. Power relationship/handling conflict is also a key issue in those attending Men and Family Relationship Services.

In cases where more than one issue has been recorded, the most common second issues were intimacy/sexual issues, parenting issues and child abuse/protection, suggesting that relationship maintenance and ensuring the best interests of the child are the issues that are paramount for the clients that are attending the services.

Although mental health is not the most prominent first presenting issue (six per cent), it is listed as a subsidiary presenting issue through to the client's ninth issue, suggesting that although not the main issue for most clients, it is a subsidiary issue for many of the clients accessing the services.

5 Demand for Services

5.1 Waiting Lists

Almost three quarters of service providers reported that during the reporting period they had been required to compile a waiting list to meet client demands. Service providers reported that waiting lists can cause frustration for clients that must wait for services. Clients are not attending their appointments as a result, or in some cases because the issue was resolved before the appointment fell due. This in turn increases the number of 'no-show' clients and in effect increases waiting times for other clients.

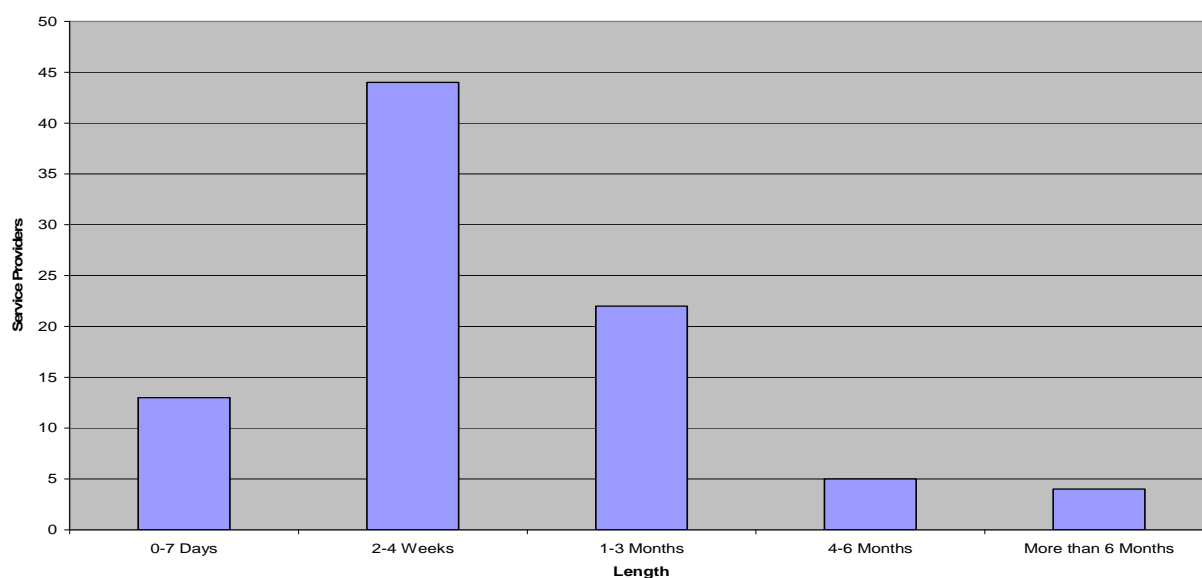
Although it could be presumed that these lists are formed because there are more clients than services available, several service providers have stated that the reason they cannot see all of the clients that access their services or are referred to them is due to the larger number of clients presenting with more complex issues. Workers spend more time with existing clients rather than being able to start to work with new clients. One service provider reported that they had formed

a waiting list for a course that would be running at a later date rather than the waiting list being formed because there were no available places in currently running courses.

5.1.1 Time

Of the service providers that recorded having a waiting list, the waiting time for those clients on the list varied. This can be seen in Figure 19.

Figure 19: Average Waiting times

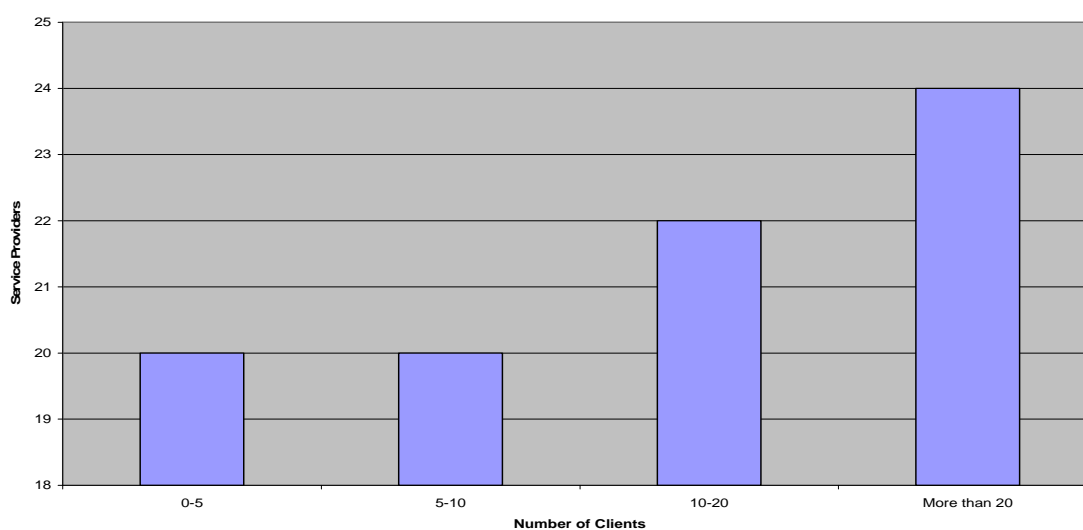


For the majority of service providers, the waiting time did not exceed three months, with only four service providers recording a waiting time of over six months. Anecdotal information provided by three of these services reported that although there were lengthy waiting lists, this was only for a specific location or service within the services that they provided. Those service providers that had waiting lists over six months reported that often the reason for the length of the waiting list was because there was not an appropriate service to refer the new client to, or because the request for a program was from a specific community group and the six month plus time period was required to organise the program to meet the specific needs of the group.

5.1.2 People on Waiting Lists

Those service providers that reported a waiting list during the 2005/06 reporting period also reported the number of people on the waiting list. Figure 20 shows that the waiting list number varied for service providers.

Figure 20: Numbers on Waiting Lists During the Reporting Period



Over a quarter of service providers reported that their waiting lists contained more than 20 people, with the majority of service providers who recorded this number providing an average for the whole of their organisation. One service provider observed that their high waiting list numbers occurred because people on waiting lists had registered for a specific group that would be running at a later date.

5.1.3 Closing of List

During the 2005/06 reporting year, almost a third of service providers reported the need to close their waiting lists. Anecdotal information provided by some service providers stated that on occasion there was a need to close the waiting lists because of staff shortages and the increase of staff workloads.

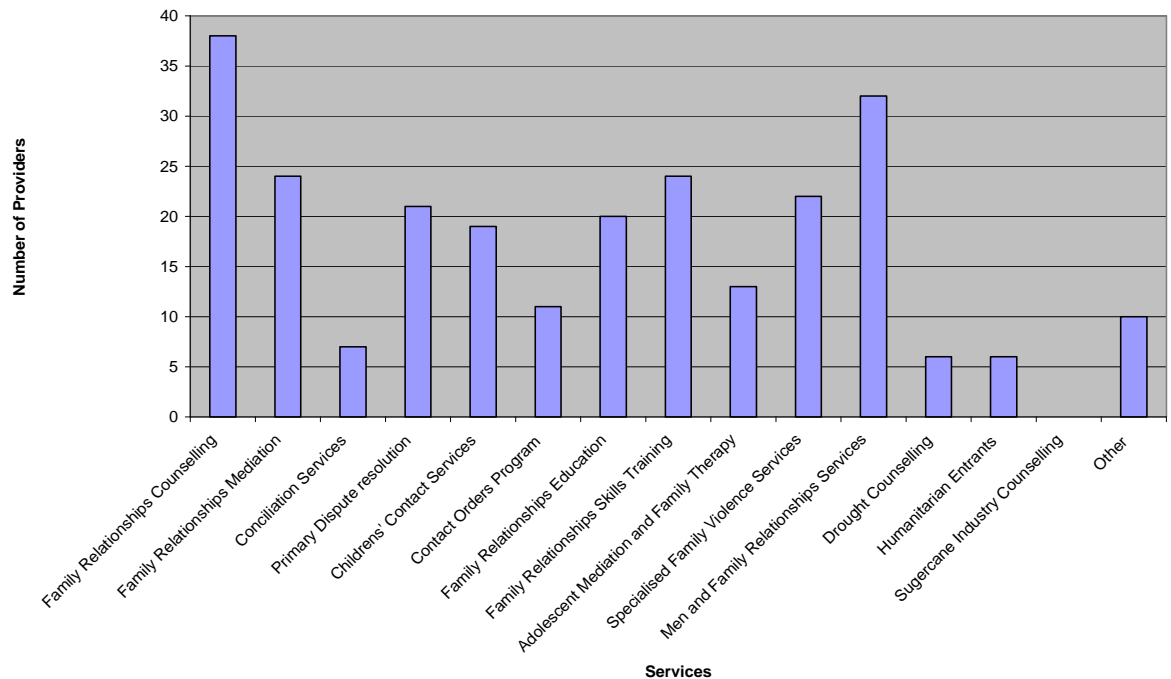
5.2 Unmet Demand

Fewer than 20 per cent of service providers reported that they were unable to meet community demand across several service types in 2005/06. This compared with 25 per cent in 2004/05 and 52 per cent in 2003/04.

Significant decreases in unmet demand levels in the years 2004/05 and 2005/06 correspond with the 30 per cent increase in existing funding levels that came into effect in 2004/05 and became ongoing in 2005/06.

Figure 21 shows the service types that service providers reported as having unmet demand. Family Relationships Counselling and Men and Family Relationships Services can be seen as key service types in relation to unmet demand.

Figure 21: Unmet Demand for Existing Service Providers

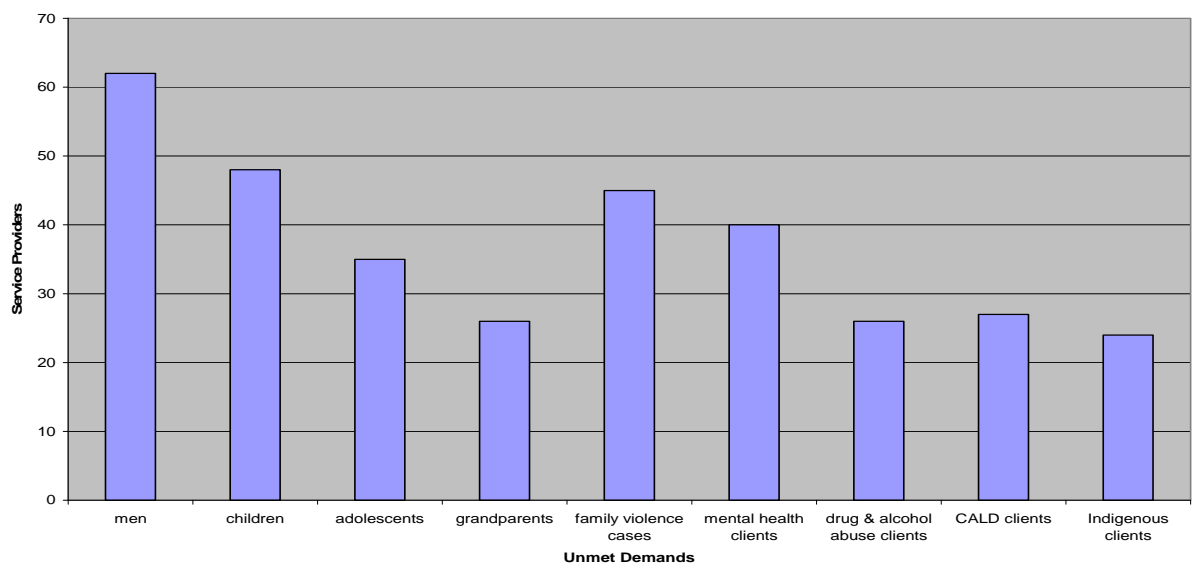


Of the service providers that reported “Other” as having unmet demand, the key demand was for clients with mental health issues and those with disabilities. Other issues also raised included the unmet demand around substance abuse needs, domestic violence matters and financial counselling.

5.2.1 Target Groups Demand Not Met

Unmet needs reported by service providers relate to all specified target groups. Figure 22 shows the target groups that have unmet demand, with the predominant groups being men, children, family violence cases and mental health clients.

Figure 22: Unmet Demand of Particular Target Groups



Note: In relation to the CALD clients, the main ethnicity of the groups that were reported by the service providers were clients from African and Asian nations, including Sudanese and Vietnamese clients. Also present amongst this group were Middle East clients of Arabic ethnicity.

5.3 Promotion and Advertising

Of service providers that reported about their use of promotion/advertising during the reporting period, only one service provider reported that they did not use any form of promotion/advertising. All other service providers reported using some form of promotion/advertising for their services. Almost half of service providers reported that they used all forms of promotion/advertising. The most popular forms of promotion/ advertising are linkages with compatible service providers and relationships with schools, legal services and other levels of government.

The importance of these forms of promotion/advertising support the comments made in the Status Reports by service providers. Providers believe it is important to have and maintain relationships with others, including community groups, government, schools and legal services, to ensure that the needs of clients are met. Working cooperatively enables them to improve the services they provide and ensure that the client receives the most appropriate service. It also enables service providers to promote their services to relevant and interested organisations.

6 Factors Influencing Service Delivery

6.1 Achievements

Service providers reported a range of areas where there have been significant achievements. Just over a third reported an increase in co-operation and collaboration with other agencies and local services. Anecdotal information showed that this collaboration has allowed for a greater level of networking and the development of advisory groups in a number of key areas. Examples provided include collaboration with CALD and Indigenous leaders and communities, universities and schools, other funded Family Relationship Services, local general practitioners and mental health workers, and local police and courts.

A significant achievement was reported for a number of service providers in the development of programs and working relationships with Indigenous and CALD communities. For many service providers, these communities have been targeted to ensure that the programs provided are diverse and meet the specific community needs.

Other significant achievements include the development of various media sources to promote services including websites, newsletters, development of reading material and the delivery of research papers to various forums. Service providers report that the promotion of services has allowed for an extension of services, an increase in workshops being developed and run and further development of seminars.

A number of service providers have also reported an increase in professional development and training. This has included the development of meetings for professional staff, to enable networking and sharing of information.

6.2 Barriers and Strategies

6.2.1 Workforce

Service providers identify inadequate resources as a key barrier to their providing adequate services and recruiting staff. This issue is particularly relevant for rural and remote services that are often perceived as not attractive positions and providing limited career development opportunities. Service providers have adopted a number of different strategies to address the problem, including intensive recruitment processes, increased training and orientation for new staff and the restructuring of services to more flexible hours of work. The difficulties faced in applying these strategies are a perceived lack of funding and the time spent on recruitment processes. The qualitative information provided by providers identifies that some have

considered renegotiating their Funding Agreements with FaCSIA or seeking funding from other sources.

“In order to maintain staff in the positions, the organisation offers above award conditions, salary sacrificing options, encourages training and professional development and significant team building and development”

“The current skills shortage combined with low unemployment...has had an impact on staff recruitment and retention. Agencies in the community sector are competing with each other for a shrinking pool of workers who may be attracted to higher wages in public service positions.”

Further barriers for staff retention included travelling time for staff, especially in rural and remote areas. Strategies that have been applied by various service providers include the introduction and use of outreach services or teleconferencing. These options allow for the provision of services across a larger geographical area and allow staff to avoid excessive travel within the areas that are covered by their service provider.

“Rising petrol costs have placed strain on budgets due to extensive travel for service delivery, training and supervision.”

“Offering more in home services reduces this cost to clients but adds strain to travel costs in our program budget.”

6.2.2 Fees

Service providers also identified issues facing their clients and their financial position. In many cases, economic stress has placed extra burdens on clients, because of the increase in petrol prices and the drought. The financial pressure has affected clients' ability to attend services, because they cannot afford child care and often feel hindered by their inability to pay the fees requested. Service providers acknowledged the difficulties that their clients face, especially those in rural and remote areas. In order to assist clients, they have applied a number of strategies, such as working in collaboration with other service providers, using telephone counselling, waiving or restructuring the pricing of fees in accordance with what the client can afford to pay, as provided for in the Funding Agreement. Providers have also provided or worked in partnership with private organisations to provide child care. Each of these options has meant a decrease in the cost to the client when using the service, but for some service providers, this has meant an increase in their expenses not covered by FRSP funding.

“As most clients are on the lower end of the income scale they have stated that they can either pay for petrol or pay the fees.”

“Rise in petrol prices has made it more costly to access service in rural areas.”

6.2.3 CALD/ATSI

A focus for many service providers has been the targeting of specific client groups, primarily from CALD and Indigenous communities. For several service providers, being able to attract and work with these target groups has been a barrier. The anecdotal information provided by the service providers identifies that in order to be more proactive, they have appointed workers and counsellors from the relevant communities, including Indigenous staff, Muslim staff and staff that are bicultural/bilingual, and have given their staff training to work with clients from these communities.

6.3 Locality Issues

Responses from providers indicate that there are three key issues that impact on the provision of services:

- the price of petrol,
- lack and expense of public transport, and
- the shortage of affordable accommodation.

“Geographic isolation, rising cost in fuel, low employment and no public transport, combined with high demand for affordable housing and long waiting period for public housing impact negatively on many families.”

“We are having trouble getting staff (particularly lower paid casual children’s workers) to drive any significant distance to work because of the price of petrol.”

6.4 Planned Priorities Not Met

Just over a third of service providers indicated that they had not implemented planned priorities. Several service providers reported variable responses depending on the different service types they were providing or the locations in which they provided their service. These have been included as one yes and one no in determining results (7). This was primarily because of insufficient time, money and/or resources and staffing issues. Anecdotal information provided by service providers identified that in some programs there was a lack of interest or insufficient referrals, and/or an inability to meet the specific needs of the targeted individuals and groups.

“...small numbers and often wide ranging needs of the participants made these programs difficult to deliver.”

6.5 Difficulties Meeting Client Targets

Approximately 40 per cent of service providers reported that they as an organisation (or at least one of their locations or service types) had had difficulties meeting their client targets. There was a degree of concern that the data collected through FaCSLink did not show a true indication of the number of registered clients and this was exacerbated by the time taken to record the data.

The other key difficulty in meeting client targets concerned staffing issues, primarily staff absence, recruitment and turnover within the service. Several service providers reported the impact of more complex cases which not only take more time but also often resulted in the

service having the inability and time to see new clients. In some areas, there was also a reduction in demand for services and for some areas the cultural attitude of groups had to be improved to encourage the use of services that they would not normally consider. In several cases, men were often more reluctant to use the services provided.

6.6 Specific Target Groups

6.6.1 Difficulties Meeting Targets

Almost half of service providers reported that they had difficulties meeting their targets for specific target groups. Service providers reported that the two main target groups are Indigenous and CALD clients whilst men and children have also been reported as target groups for a small number of service providers.

The difficulties that were reported are general difficulties such as attracting clients from these communities and developing culturally appropriate material and programs. There were also some concerns that there are several different organisations that are targeting these specific groups, including state funded or other community providers, potentially resulting in an over abundance of services for these specific target groups.

“For the new CALD and Indigenous communities there are numerous Federal and State funded agencies that have targets involving these communities. There is a real threat of over-servicing or inundating these communities with services simply to meet targets.”

The main strategies that are either being implemented or considered by a number of service providers are working collaboratively with other service providers and the community, as well as employing staff that are from a community or have specific language skills. A small number of providers have also approached the difficulties by providing professional development to their staff and developing an understanding of the different cultures in the community.

6.7 New Service Directions

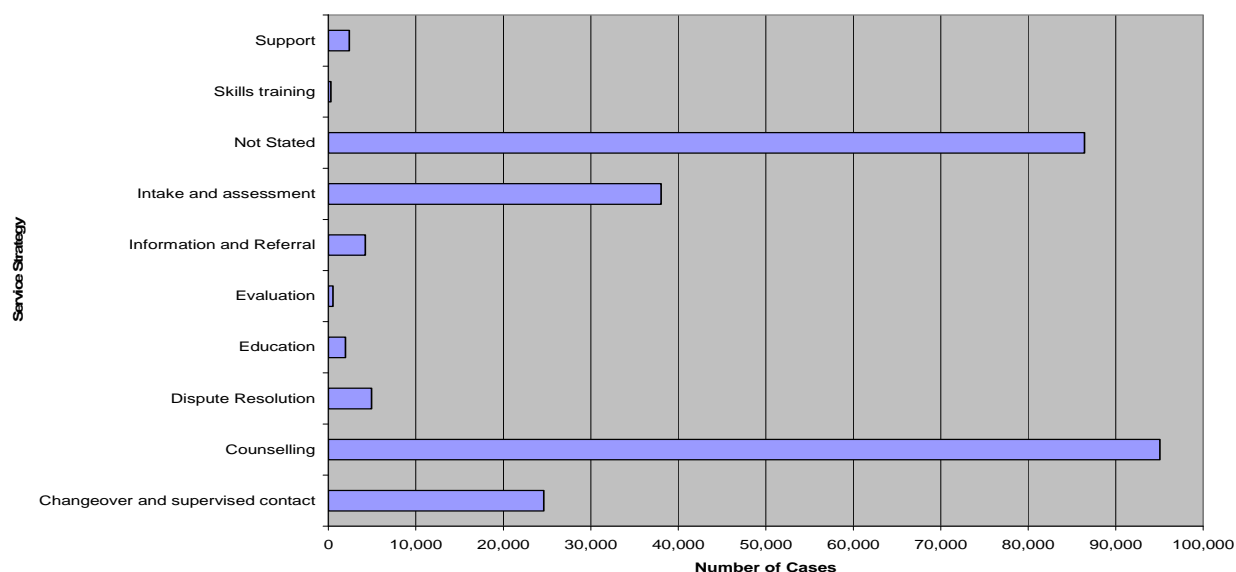
Fifty-five service providers reported that they have implemented more flexible models of service delivery and programs targeting particular groups, whilst 45 have implemented child inclusive practices and 42 have implemented outreach programs.

In respect of programs targeting particular client groups, providers indicated that these target groups include Indigenous, CALD, children, parenting dads, men, separated parents, young people, families affected by family violence and mental health clients.

The category of “Other” was reported as a service direction implemented by just under 30 per cent of service providers. “Other” included implementations such as working in collaboration with the community, other agencies and service providers, forming specialist social groups, and implementing more flexible working hours and services to assist clients to attend services. Providers reported employing specialist workers with skills in counselling gay or lesbian clients, or people with mental health issues, drug issues or effects from a CALD background, as well as developing programs that are family sensitive and inclusive.

6.7.1 Service Strategies Within Sessions by Case

Figure 23: Service Strategy within Sessions by Cases



As in 2004/05, a variety of service strategies used across all service types to address diverse clients' needs continued to be reported. The most predominant service strategies by cases are counselling, intake and assessment and changeover and supervised contact. The reason for counselling being one of the highest service strategies may be attributed to the fact that Family Relationship Counselling and Men and Family Relationship Counselling deliver services to over 65 per cent of the cases and for each of these service types their focus is counselling. These two service areas also have high numbers for intake and assessment, whilst changeover and supervised contact is a focus of Children's Contact Service which is approximately 20 per cent of the reported cases.

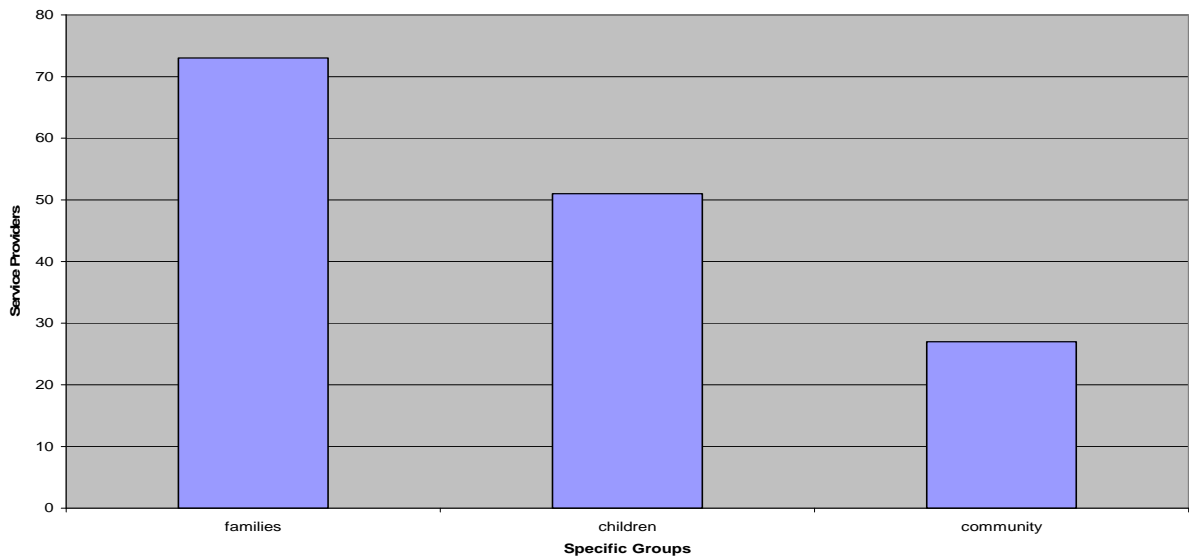
7 Client Outcomes

7.1 Evaluation Mechanisms

In the Status Reports, almost 90 per cent of providers reported that they use an evaluation tool. These usually take the format of a feedback or evaluation form/ survey/questionnaire. Several service providers also reported that they use observation of the services by internal staff or external sources such as university researchers.

Of those that reported using an evaluation mechanism, 69 reported that they used a mechanism specific to families, 48 that used a mechanism specific to children and 24 specific to the community. Seventeen reported that their evaluation mechanism was specific to all of the specific groups, whilst almost 30 reported that they collected information specifically about both families and children. Obviously, many providers used more than one mechanism.

Figure 24: Information Collected by Service Providers- specific to targeted groups



Note: Several service providers reported variable responses depending on the different service types they were providing or the locations in which they provided their service. These have been included in each of the recorded categories in determining results

7.1.1 Tools Used

The format of the feedback tool used by service providers varied across the sector, with several providers choosing to use the format provided by FaCSIA. Others used formats developed by researchers, universities or a format that they have developed to gain the best possible response from their specific clientele.

Providers reported that they used an evaluation tool which mostly included all clients who used the services, often providing the client with a form to complete at the conclusion of service delivery. It has been reported on several occasions, however, that the response or return of the forms from the clients is not thorough and often only a small number are in fact returned.

“The reliance on clients to return the evaluation means that only a small proportion are ever returned.”

Of the clients that do complete the evaluation tool, the majority provide a positive response to the service indicating that using the service has helped in improving any issues they previously had.

“...respondents report high levels of satisfaction and achievement of stated outcomes.”

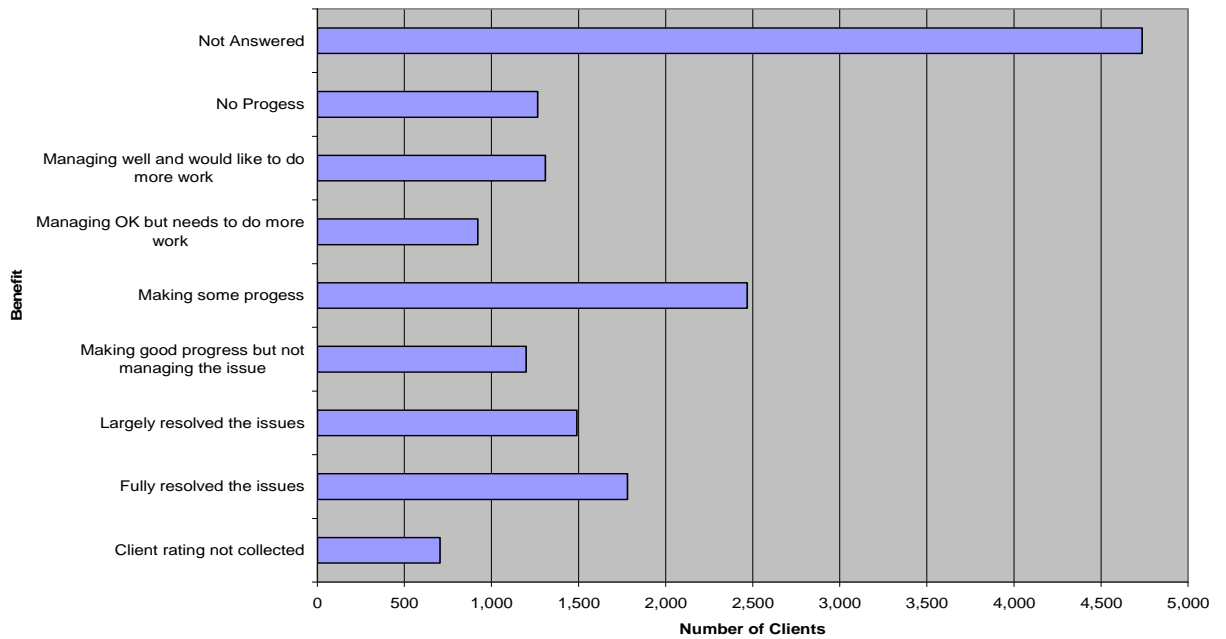
Providers also reported that the information provided in the returned evaluation is helpful in developing and improving the services and ensuring that they are effective.

7.2 Intended Client Benefit

7.2.1 By Client

Clients whose case has been closed have largely found that there has been some progress towards the issue being resolved or that the issue was resolved. Those clients that are making progress have reported that often more work is needed to manage the issues.

Figure 25: Intended Client Benefit Recorded by Clients

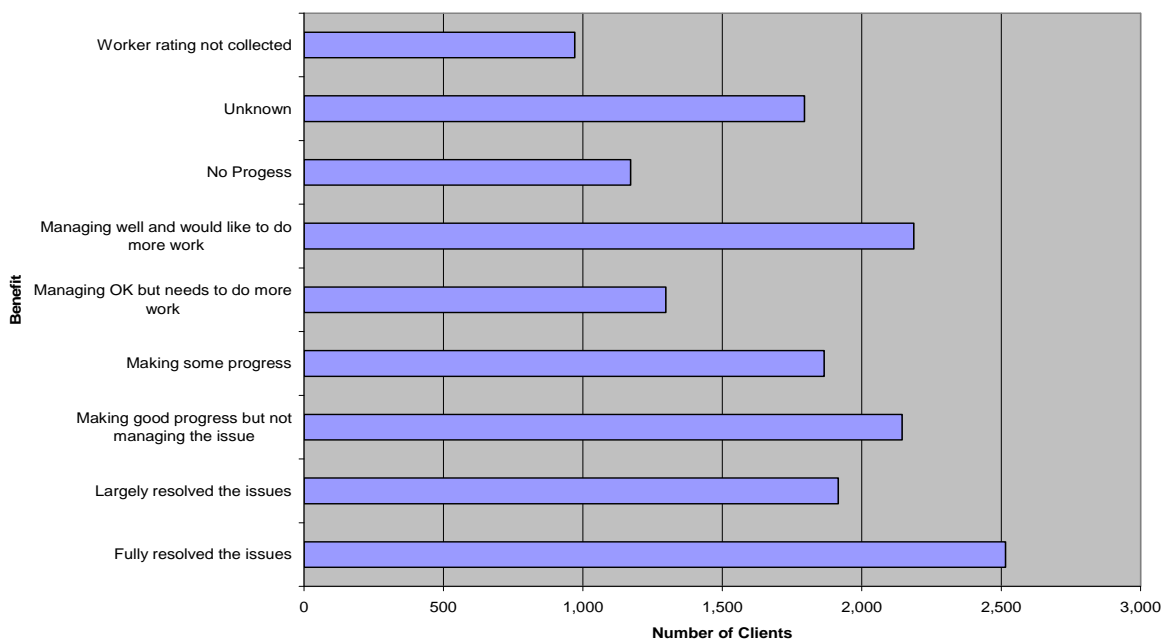


Despite the movement towards the resolution of the issues in a large number of the cases, close to 10 per cent of clients reported no progress was being made.

7.2.2 By Worker

Similar to the results recorded by clients, the service delivery workers indicate that most of the clients fully resolved the issues or were working towards resolution but needed more help to do more or manage the issue or issues.

Figure 26: Intended Client Benefit Recorded by Workers



7.3 Activities Opened and Closed

Service providers use different service delivery mechanisms according to the needs of their clients. The recording of activities already opened at the beginning of the reporting period (116,437) includes individual cases, but more predominately courses that run over a period of time or annually. These courses are not closed and remain open within the system despite clients attending the courses changing.

There were 71,323 new activities opened during the 2005/06 reporting period and 65,996 of these were closed within this period. At the end of 2005/06 121,764 activities remained open with the majority of these being courses.

8 Referrals

8.1.1 Referrals To

As seen in 2004/05 clients are continuing to be referred from a broad range of sources covering the legal sector, social support services, government agencies and churches.

Figure 27: Sources of Referral to FRSP services

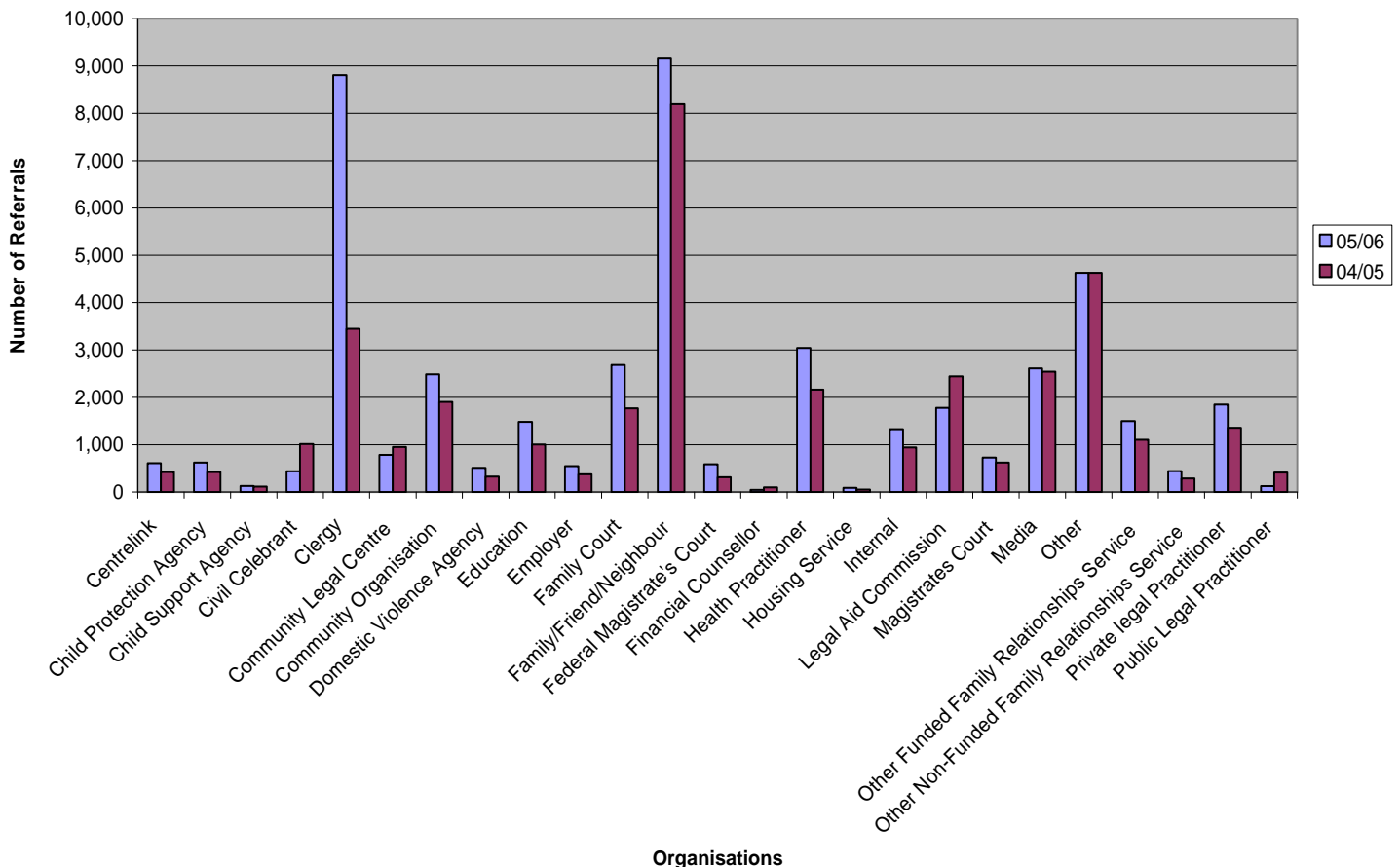
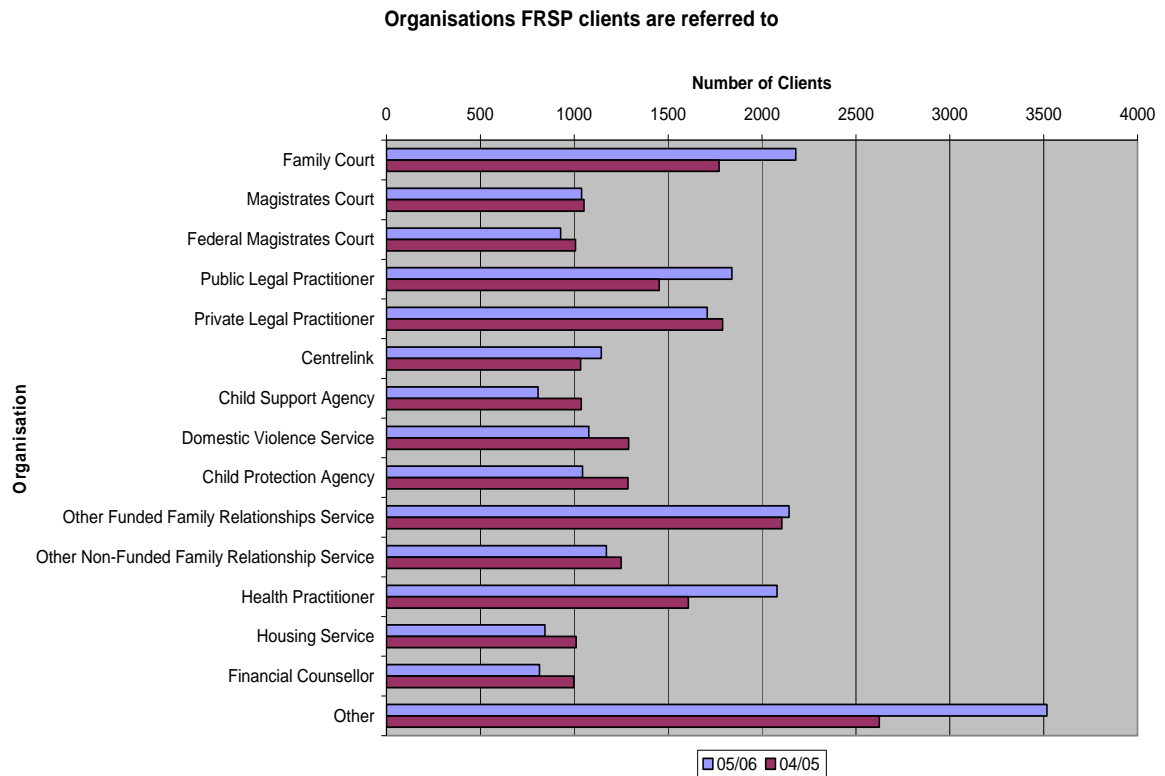


Figure 27 shows that of the 131,524 clients who registered with the services in 2005/06, 47,229 did not state if they were referred and 39,019 were self referred. Of the remaining clients, similar to 2004/05 the highest number of referrals continues to be from family/friend/neighbour. In 2005/06, there has been a significant increase in referrals from clergy, which has risen by more than 50 per cent since 2004/05. Of those being referred from clergy in 2005/06, 91 per cent are being referred for Family Relationship Education.

Other areas where the numbers of referrals continue to increase include those from community organisations, family court, health practitioners and private legal practitioners. Many of the areas of referrals have continued to increase, whilst there has also been a decrease in referrals from civil celebrants, legal aid commission and public legal practitioners.

8.1.2 Referrals From

Figure 28: Organisations FRSP clients are Referred to



The data recorded indicates that over two thirds of clients that use the services are not referred to other services or organisations. Figure 28 shows that of those clients that were referred in 2005/06. There has been an increase in referrals to the Family Court, health practitioners and public legal practitioners compared to referrals in 2004/05. As in 2004/05, there continues to be a significant number of referrals to other funded family relationship services, but there has been a decrease in referrals to child protection agencies and domestic violence services. There has also been a slight decrease in referrals to private legal practitioners.

8.2 Referral Issues

Figure 29: Issues Regarding the Referral Process

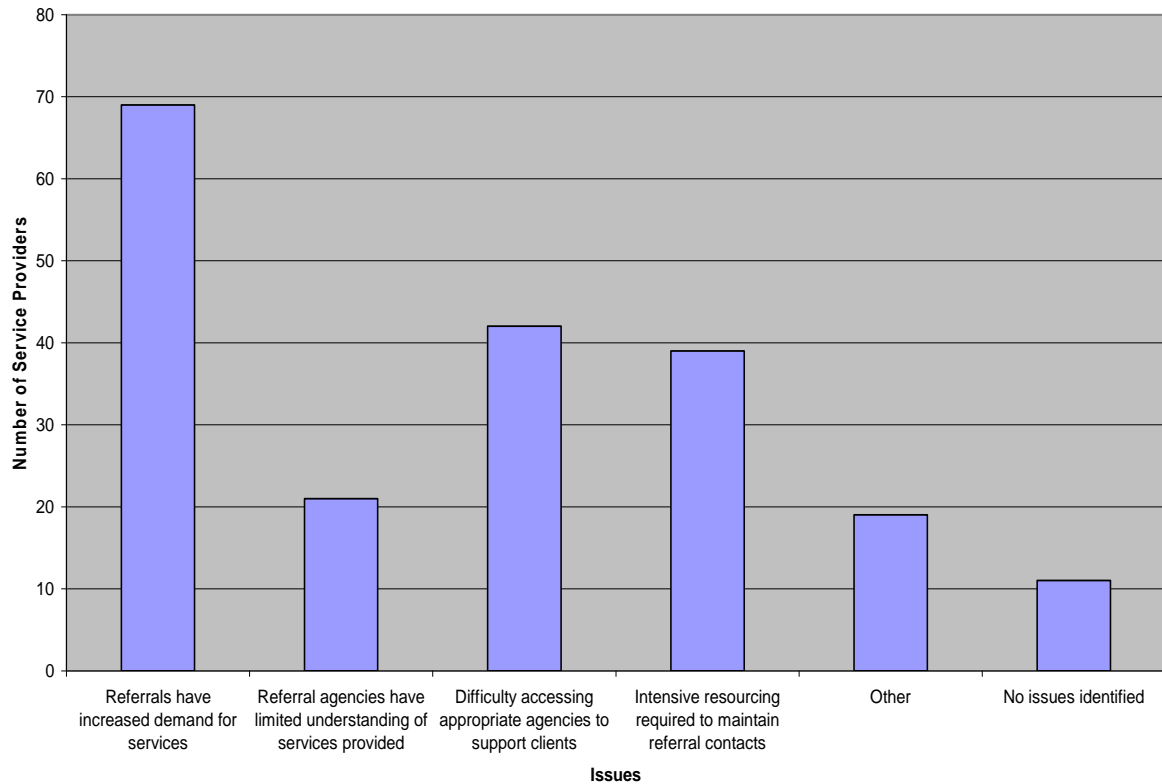


Figure 29 shows that most providers reported at least one of the issues as having an impact on their services, with only 11 per cent reporting no issues identified.

63 service providers report that a main issue arising from the current referral process is an increase in demand for services.

“The recent establishment of a Family Relationship Centre...may impact on the number of referrals to the PDR and then the Family Relationship programs.”

38 service providers reported difficulty in accessing appropriate agencies to support clients and 36 reported intensive resourcing required in maintaining referral contact. Nineteen service providers reported that referral agencies having limited understanding of services provided was an issue in regard to the referral process. Anecdotal information indicates that clients are being referred from courts where there is a history of family violence. There are multiple referrals because of multiple issues which require case planning and role clarity and there are concerns that the increase in referrals from FRCs may cause issues in the next reporting period.

For the service providers that reported “Other” as an issue, issues indicated included an increase in complex cases that require more resourcing, increase in lawyer referrals, (providers were concerned that this was done purely to appease the court, and that often lawyers fail to take into consideration the time required to complete the process of a client using the service). There was

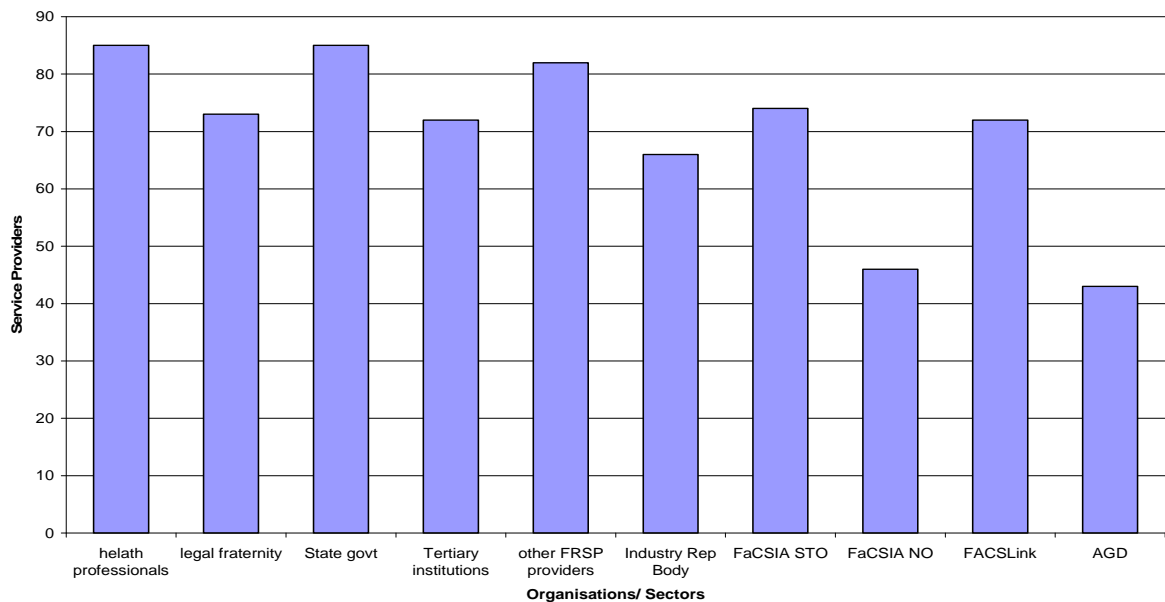
also a concern that there are not enough specific services in some areas to reflect and meet the referral needs.

9 Relationships

9.1 Organisations/ Sectors

Providers reported that there are a number of organisations and sectors with which they have established working relationships. The relationships are considered beneficial to all parties concerned, especially the clients, when the organisations work together to provide them with a more comprehensive service. Figure 30 outlines the relationships that service providers have reported forming. Most service providers reported that they had formed relationships with more than one of the organisations/ sectors for the benefit of their clients.

Figure 30: Relationships Services Providers have with Other Organisations/ Sectors



9.2 Benefits

The main benefit reported by the service providers is the use of the relationship for referrals between the services and the other organisations/sectors.

“A smoother referral process which has created an increase in clients accessing services.”

Service providers also reported the benefits of sharing information, experiences and their resources, the use of the other organisation/sectors to assist in personal development and training, along with planning and developing resources, consultation between groups and better coordination of services and management practice.

“They ensured that we stayed abreast of major policy changes, paradigm shifts in society, and practice and that we maintained a robust professional reputation.”

The relationship also helps in developing links within the wider community and an awareness of issues that are in the community. It allows all groups to have a better understanding of program requirements and services provided which assists in assuring improved outcomes for clients.

“These relationships link the organisation with the wider community, allowing us to access community needs and concerns.”

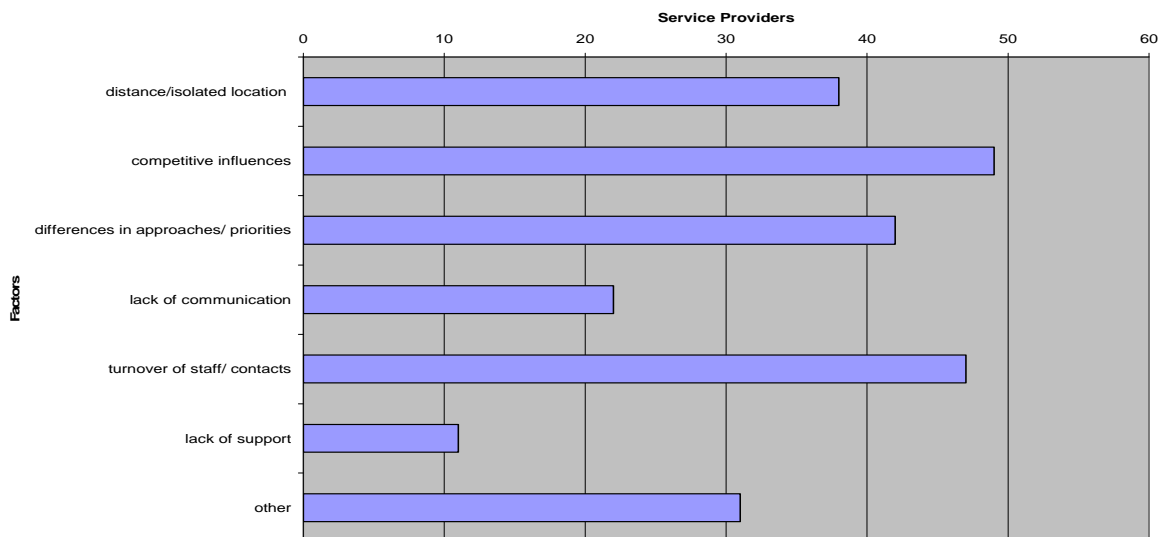
The reporting indicates that the relationships that have been formed can be considered beneficial to all of those involved and helps in developing a positive working environment with benefits for all.

9.3 Factors Impacting on Relationships

The service providers have reported a number of factors that influence their ability to foster and maintain relationships with other organisations and sectors. Almost half reported that competitive influences have impacted on their relationships. As one service provider reported:

“The tendering process for FRSP funding has created a climate of unproductive competition amongst service providers which has undermined the pre-existing spirit of collaboration, openness, professional sharing and the like which has taken many years to build.”

Figure 31: Factors Impacting and/ or Maintaining Relationships



“Other” issues that have been reported as impacting on the relationships of the service providers include lack of available time to be able to network and the limited funding and resources available to be able to interact with the other organisations and the sector, to improve the services being provided.

9.4 Research/ Evaluation

The reporting shows that almost half of service providers have research and/or evaluation activities that are covering several different issues, including the effect of services on issues involving Indigenous clients, young people, social policy, family violence, family breakdown, childhood sexual abuse, mental health, problem gambling, children and post natal depression. There are also a number of research activities considering the effectiveness of different types of therapy and/or services and the effect of male/father inclusive practice.

In completing these research/evaluation activities, various providers reported that on occasion they have worked in partnership with various universities, other service providers, government agencies and the community.

Primarily the timeframe for these activities has spread over two years, with some having been completed and others heading for completion by the end of 2007. The main resourcing required is financial and an increase in staffing to meet the needs and requirements of the research and evaluation.

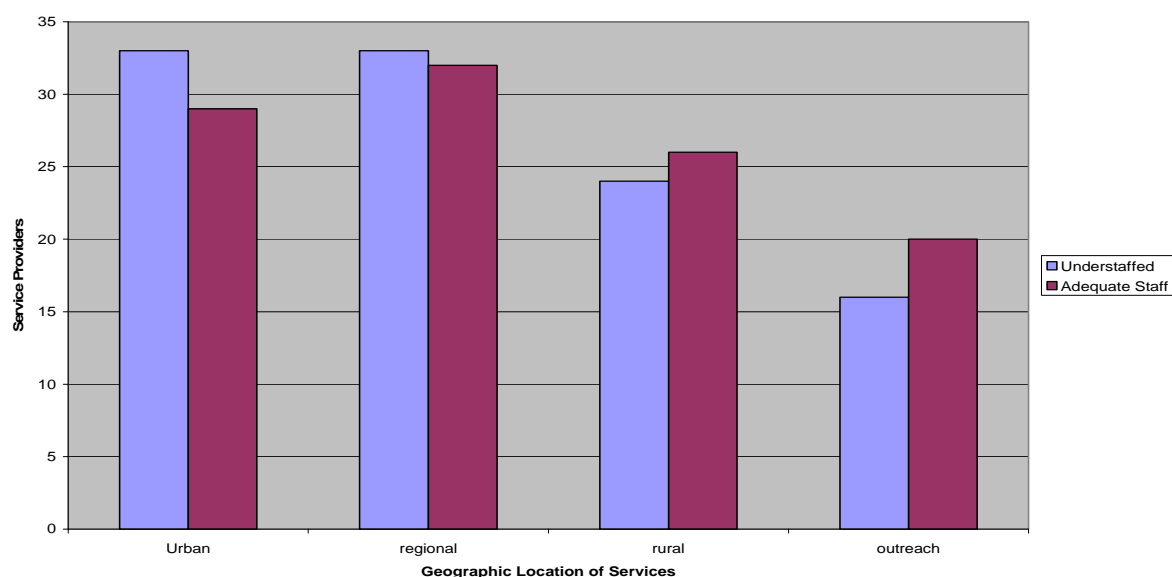
Where service providers have completed the research and/or evaluation, the general outcomes/finding reported relate to the findings indicating whether the services/treatment evaluated have been effective and whether the research has provided findings that have or will assist in delivering improved services.

10 Workforce Issues

10.1 Current Staffing Level

In 2005/06, service providers reported an almost equal response to staffing levels. Over half indicated that their staffing was adequate and just under half reporting that they were understaffed. Figure 32 shows the reported staffing levels compared to geographical location of the service types. The staff shortages are slightly higher in urban and regional areas, whilst slightly more providers are reporting adequate staffing in their rural and outreach services.

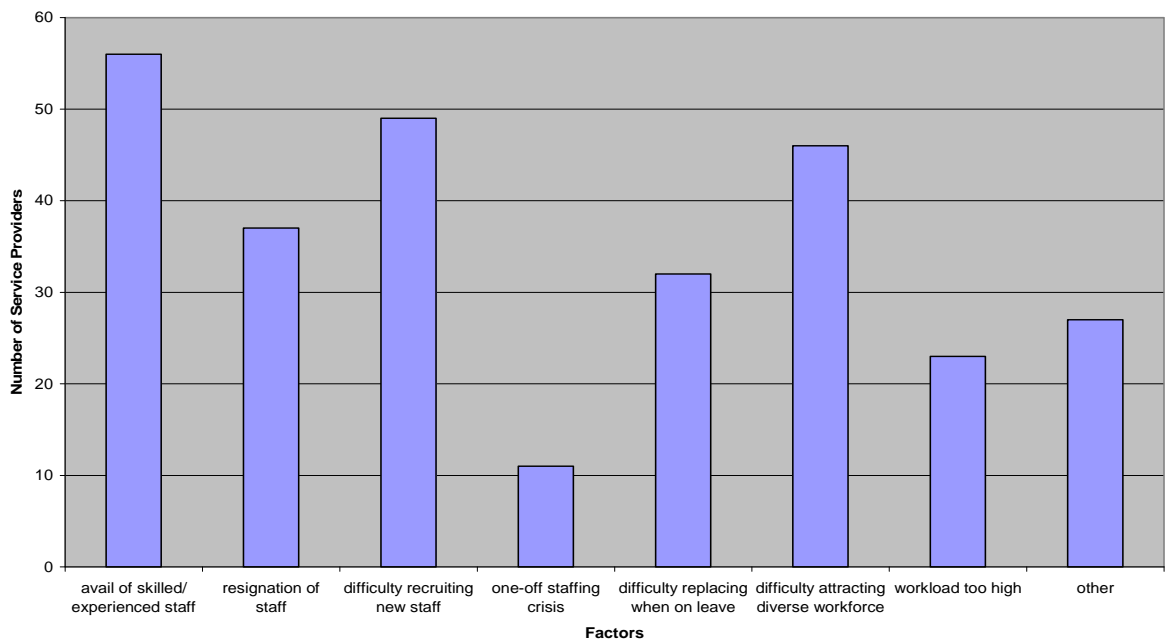
Figure 32: Staff Resources by Geographical Location



10.2 Staffing Issues

Over three quarters of service providers reported that they had staffing issues within the reporting period. Almost half of the service providers reported that their main staffing issue is the availability of skilled/ experienced staff. The other key issues are difficulty recruiting new staff and difficulty attracting a diverse workforce.

Figure 33: Factors Reflecting Staffing Issues

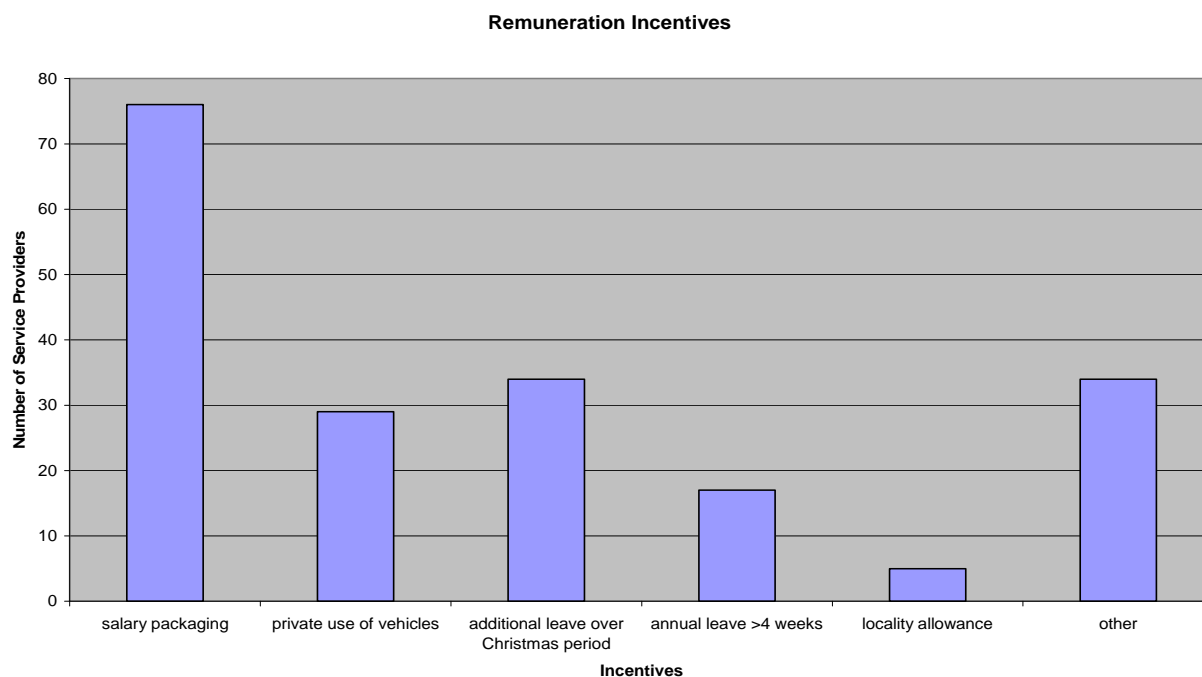


“Other” issues that were raised by service providers that impacted on staffing included the difficulties in recruiting staff to rural and remote regions, staff turnover, competing with government salaries and difficulties finding and keeping casual and weekend staff. In general, the concerns primarily relate to difficulties in attracting and maintaining staff in a competitive market.

10.2.1 Remuneration Incentives

Over three quarters of the service providers reported that they offered remuneration incentives to attract staff. There are several different incentives that they offer as figure 38 illustrates, with the most popular amongst the service providers being salary packaging.

Figure 34: Remuneration Incentives



“Other” incentives that several service providers offered included study leave, in-house training and professional development, providing a family friendly workplace and above award wages. Again, the incentives are intended to encourage a skilled workforce to be developed and for qualified staff to be employed in the sector, despite the more generous remuneration being offered in other sectors.

10.2.2 Issues with Incentives

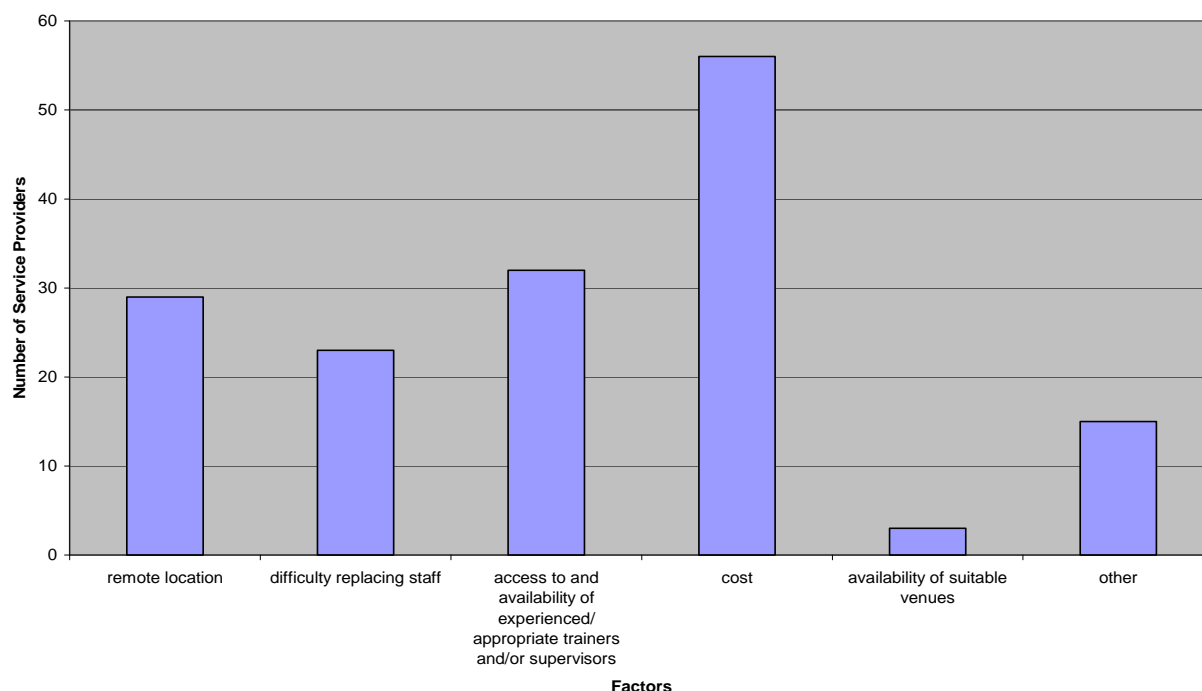
The main issues that are associated with offering remuneration incentives are financial limits and the difficulty with competing with the pay offered in the public sector and the differences in the Award entitlements.

There were also concerns raised that often salary packaging does not benefit single parents paying for child care, parents who are paying child support and graduates with a HECS debt. Finally, as a number of service providers do or are currently trying to achieve Public Benevolent Institution status, the uncertainty of this process means they often do not want to commit to packages which they cannot continue if they do not have PBI status.

10.2.3 Training and Personal Development Needs

When reporting about the professional development and training needs of their staff, almost half of service providers stated that they had difficulties meeting staffing needs. The main reason given for the difficulty was the costs involved which included the cost of travel as well as the cost of the course and costs involved in replacing the staff while they are absent from work.

Figure 35: Factors Affecting Training of Staff



Service providers also reported that it was difficult to have access to appropriate trainers and/or supervisors. This extended to concerns about finding appropriate training to meet the needs of their staff and training that was accessible to the staff. Whilst several service providers reported the achievement of increased and improved professional development and training, many reported the need for more training to be made available and worked with other organisations and the sector to improve the training that is currently available for their staff.

“These connections [with organisations/sector] also assist[s] us with our internal training.”

10.3 Registered Training Organisation

One fifth of service providers reported being a registered training organisation (RTO). One service provider reported that although not an RTO, employees of their organisation are registered trainers. Other service providers reported that currently they are not RTO’s but they are working towards their accreditation.

10.4 Volunteers

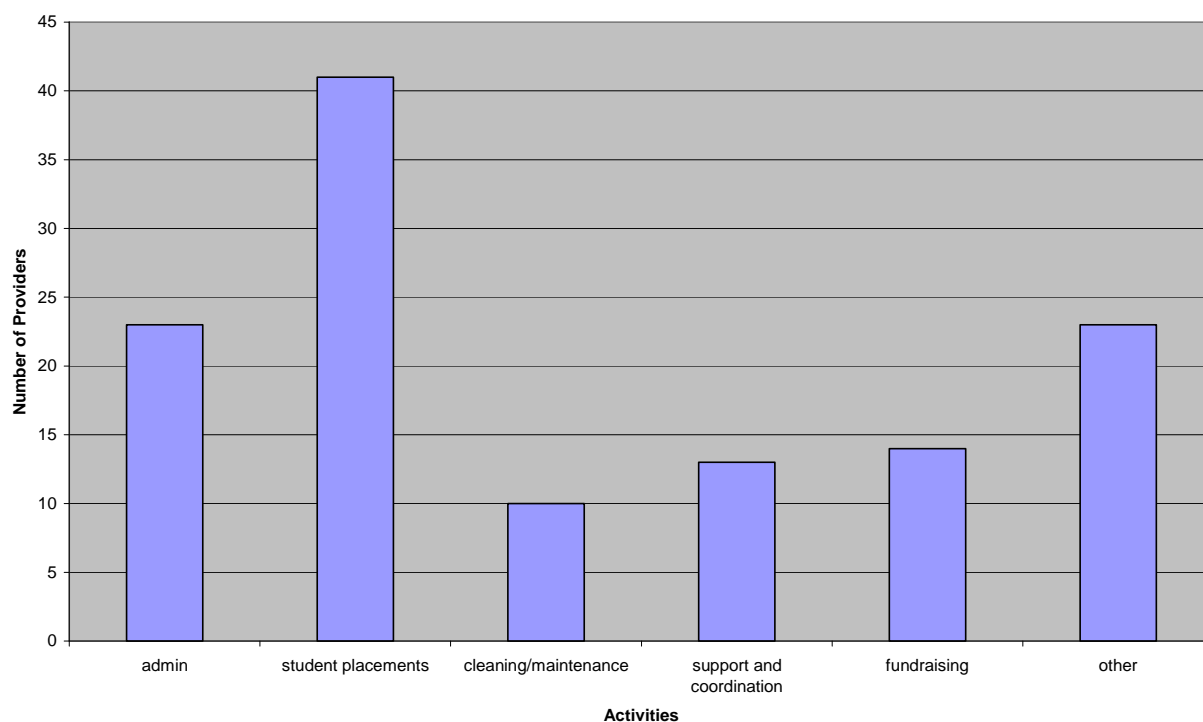
In 2004/05 service providers had a divergence of opinion regarding volunteers and some providers indicated very strongly that there is no role for volunteers in the FRSP, while others outlined the important role volunteers play in the delivery of their services. Note: Several service providers reported variable responses depending on the different service types they were providing or the locations in which they provided their service. These have been included as one yes and one no in determining results (1)

In 2005/06 just over half of the organisations reported that they used volunteers with the proportion of volunteers for each organisation varying greatly. Unlike 2004/05 there was no reporting in relation to the service provider’s views as to the role of volunteers.

Volunteers are involved in various activities within the different services, with those who use volunteers reporting that over one third are student placements and approximately 20 per cent are involved in administration of the organisation.

Figure 36: Volunteers Activities

“Other” activities that service providers reported volunteers completing included being on the board of management, assisting with education including pre-marriage, community and relationship education and assisting in the provision of childcare and transport.



12. Discrete Services (Mensline Australia)

Mensline Australia is a unique service that offers telephone counselling and advice for men. The service is available to men around Australia, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for the cost of a local call.

In reporting on their services Mensline focused on the calls that they have received and the areas within the country that need more focused advertising of the services to promote the assistance that the service can provide, especially to those living in drought affected regions. They have concerns about insufficient resources to undertake serious marketing of their services. Currently only 38 per cent of their calls are from outside city and metropolitan regions, and increased funding would enable them to widen access to their service.

Mensline Australia reported that they have increased their rate of calls received by recruiting more counsellors. Although there are still approximately 35 per cent of calls that are unanswered, this is spread over 30 days, 24/7 with no pattern as to when they will occur.

The benchmark for Mensline Australia is to answer 1.9 calls per an hour. This has fallen to 1.25 calls per an hour, which equates to 500 unanswered calls a week. Although this may appear to

be a large number of unanswered calls, the number can vary depending on the day and the time that the call occurs.

“...to ensure the service is operating at full capacity we need a call through-put greater than the 35 per cent of calls we are currently missing.”

Using the ABS Remoteness Classification system to determine the remoteness of calls, against a data extract of 17,402 calls, Mensline has determined that of the 42 per cent that were allocated a remoteness area code, 62 per cent were from major cities and immediate surroundings, whilst the remainder were from regional and remote areas. These numbers of phone calls roughly compares to the spread of the population across Australia.

11 Additional Issues

11.1 Emerging Issues

There are five main issues that service providers have qualitatively reported as important and impacting on their service. Firstly, the increase in complex cases and the need for an assessment tool for complex matters.

“Our counselling service is servicing clients with high and complex needs who are becoming medium-long term clients, which affects waiting lists and also reaching set target numbers.”

Secondly, inadequate funding and economic pressure on service providers, staff and clients.

“Insufficient funding levels are always an issue for our service.”

Thirdly the effect of the new Family Relationship Centres and the impact these will have on the current services. The issue is considered positively by some service providers who are looking forward to a positive interaction with the centres, whilst others are concerned about the impact they will have and how they will interact with the new Centres.

“Anticipating strong relationships between FRCs and our agency”

“We are working towards ... developing a relationship with the Family Relationship Centres.”

“The introduction of a Family Relationship Centre... may bring up issues around making referrals to and from that Centre, and the need for good communication with all services providing support to separated families.”

The fourth key issue concerns changes to the Family Law Act and the increase in referrals of people who will not be using the services effectively and negating the ability of others to use the services beneficially.

With “the new Family Law Act...service[s]... [are] conscious that referrals may increase within the next year...”

Finally, a number of services have raised concerns about the issue of staffing and the need to train new staff, especially in specific areas that they are targeting such as child focused and child inclusive practice.

Each of these issues have been raised by a number of service providers, but there are also a number of other issues raised by service providers, including inadequate and expensive workplaces, increase in refugee, CALD and Indigenous clients, increased funding required for children attending services and an increased demand for a variety of services especially counselling.

In general, the economic pressure of today’s society has meant an increase in costs for the service providers, together with an increase in people needing assistance from the service providers.

11.2 Any Other Issues

Almost one third of service providers reported concerns about the reporting facility FaCSLink and the need to be able to access training in relation to this facility. This was the primary issue identified, although several other issues were also raised by some service providers including a lack of funding, the need for training of staff in specific areas of expertise and the costs involved in using interpreters. It should be noted the reporting facility FaCSLink has since been replaced by the reporting facility FRSP Online.

12 Future Direction

12.1 Planned Changes

Service providers that responded to this question indicated that changes they intend to implement in the future revolve around developing programs and services for specific groups including men/boys, CALD and Indigenous clients. Several also reported that they intended to promote services to, and work with, the community and increase skills training for staff to deal with more complex cases.

“We are trialling more ‘short courses’ or one-off groups to fit with client demand.”

In general, the main changes are planned to offer new and more programs as required by the community.

13 Attachments

Attachment 1

Report on the Family Relationships Services Program to the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

**Status Report
of the
Xxxxx Organisation
1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006**

Prepared by XXXXX organisation
Key contact people who prepared report xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
Contact telephone number xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
[date] 2006

Glossary

Blended family – A blended family contains a couple family and two or more children, of whom at least one of whom is the natural or adopted child of both members of the couple, and at least one is the step child of either member of the couple. Blended families may also include other children who are not the natural children of either parent. (See also ‘Step family’).

Emerging trends – A significant or notable change in the incidence of issues affecting service delivery (for example, a significant increase or decrease in the number of clients presenting with particular needs [mental health, family violence, drug and alcohol issues, disability, grandparents/carers] or seeking assistance under a particular sub-program).

Family – For the purpose of the Family Relationships Services Program a family relates to any group of two or more people who perceive themselves as a family.

Outcome – The impact or effect on families and children of client activities delivered (Is anyone better off - what changed for clients as a result of what [outputs] we provided?).

Outputs – The goods or services provided to clients, or Client Service Activities. Additional information about the following FRSP client activities, or outputs, can be found in the FRSP Performance Framework:

- _ Information and referral
- _ Education and skills training
- _ Counselling (includes family therapy)
- _ Dispute resolution (includes mediation, conciliation and making post-separation agreements)
- _ Change-over and supervised contact
- _ Support
- _ Community development

Specific Target Groups –The Specific Target Groups identified in the FRSP Funding Agreement are:

- Clients who identify that they are Indigenous meaning that they are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander;
- Clients who identify that they are from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background (CALD); and
- Children under 18 years. Providing services to children may involve child inclusive or child focused practice. For the purpose of the Funding Agreement, child inclusive practice means interventions provided where children are participants, and child focused practice means interventions that focus on the needs of children.

Where an organisation provides service delivery to Specific Target Groups, the organisation agrees to develop targeting strategies and form partnerships with organisations or community leaders with relevant specialised skills. These strategies and partnerships shall be reported in the Status Reports. The FRSP is seeking to improve performance in relation to these Specific Target Groups.

Step family – A couple family containing one or more children, none of whom is the natural or adopted child of both members of the couple, and at least one of whom is the step child of either member of the couple. A step family may also include other children who are not the natural children of either parent.

Waiting list – An organisation’s register of clients (or potential clients) who have been unable to access immediate assistance under the Family Relationships Service

Program, but who will be assisted in order according to available resources. Waiting lists are usually kept for a specific amount of time as determined by individual organisations.

FRSP sub-programs

Detailed descriptions of the following FRSP sub-programs can be found in the FRSP Program Guidelines:

- Family Relationships Education
- Family Relationships Skills Training
- Adolescent Mediation and Family Therapy
- Men and Family Relationships
- Specialised Family Violence Services
- Family Relationships Counselling
- Family Relationships Mediation
- Children's Contact Services
- Regional Primary Dispute Resolution Services
- Conciliation
- Contact Orders Program

Other Initiatives Related to FRSP

FRSP's established infrastructure enables the program to respond to particular client groups experiencing crisis, including:

Drought Counselling – provides personal counselling and other support services for rural families in drought affected areas to reduce the stress on relationship breakdown during this crisis period.

Family Relationship Services for Humanitarian Entrants – provides increased support to families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, particularly humanitarian and refugee families, through the FRSP. Services with particular application to new settlers include:

_ Specialised Family Violence Services, offer a range of interventions which provide whole-of-family services to men, women and children affected by family violence;

_ Family Relationships Skills Training, promote positive parenting and problem solving by providing families with parenting and family functioning skills;

_ Men and Family Relationships services, address the relationships needs of men and fathers through culturally appropriate services that assist men to address relationship issues with their partners, ex-partners, children and step-children; and

_ Family Relationships Counselling assists with the resolution of couples' disputes and finding solutions to problems.

Sugarcane Industry Counselling (Sugar Industry Reform Program) – refers to the targeted improvement of access to family relationships and personal counselling services to individuals and families in the sugarcane industry. Services funded under Sugarcane Industry Counselling must be targeted to individuals and families affected by the downturn in the sugarcane industry.

Status Report Template 2006

1.0 Overview

The FRSP Status Report forms part of the reporting requirements specified in the Funding Agreement. The Status Report is to be completed by all service providers to provide a summary of activity, challenges and changes during the reporting period.

Status Reports are required on an annual (financial year) basis. Reports should reflect service delivery from 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006. FRSP Status Reports are to be submitted to FaCSIA by 1 September 2006.

2.0 Compilation of the Status Report

The Status Report template has been designed to simplify the process for service providers and provide an accurate foundation for FaCSIA to analyse and collate the information. The key areas covered in the report are:

- _ Scope of services
- _ Demand for services
- _ Service delivery
- _ Client profile
- _ Client outcomes
- _ Workforce issues
- _ Relationships
- _ Fees
- _ Future directions

The majority of questions provide an option to tick the relevant response/s throughout the template there are also opportunities to provide more detailed information or expand on the reporting period.

It is important that the person compiling the Status Report has a good understanding of the challenges, successes and issues confronting the service provider over the reporting period.

3.0 Submitting the Report

The Status Report template is designed to be submitted electronically. Please note that it should be lodged directly with the FaCSIA National Office at email:

frsp@facsia.gov.au.

It is a requirement of the Funding Agreement that Status Reports be submitted on time. Please note the completed Status Report is **due by COB 1 September 2006**.

4.0 National Report

In order to provide an overview of the delivery of FRSP, a National Report will be compiled based on information gathered from individual service providers in the Status Reports and FaCSLink analysis.

The National Report seeks to identify themes and emerging issues for service providers and inform FaCSIA's future approach to service delivery and funding requirements.

The National Report will serve as an important tool for FaCSIA to inform the refinement of the FRSP Strategic Plan. This process enables service providers to influence the priority projects and resourcing at a National Office level. The following illustrates the relationship between the key FRSP documents and activities.

5.0 Contacts and Queries

We welcome feedback on the design of this report. Feedback can be directed to frsp@facsia.gov.au.

If you have specific questions regarding the Status Report template, content or process, please contact the Section Manager, Program Services on 02 6212 9531 or email norman.collings@facsia.gov.au.

Status Report

Service Provider Template 2006

A. Scope of Services

1. Which of the following service/s do you currently provide?

- Family Relationships Counselling
- Family Relationships Mediation
- Conciliation Services
- Primary Dispute Resolution
- Children's Contact Services
- Contact Orders Program
- Family Relationships Education
- Family Relationships Skills Training
- Adolescent Mediation and Family Therapy
- Specialised Family Violence Services
- Men and Family Relationships Services
- Drought Counselling
- Family Relationship Services for Humanitarian Entrants
- Sugarcane Industry Counselling
- Other, please indicate.....

2. Indicate the geographic area in which you provide services.

- urban
- regional
- rural
- outreach localities, indicate number of localities.....

B. Demand for Services

3. Do you have a waiting list?

- Yes
- No

If yes,

4. What is the average waiting time?

- 0 – 7 days
- 2 – 4 weeks
- 1 – 3 months
- 4 – 6 months
- More than 6 months

5. On average, how many people are on the waiting list?

- 0 – 5 clients
- 5 – 10 clients
- 10 – 20 clients

More than 20 clients

6. Have you had to close the waiting list at any time in this reporting period?

Yes

No

7. Please indicate any unmet demand for existing services provided (you may indicate more than 1)

Family Relationships Counselling

Family Relationships Mediation

Conciliation Services

Primary Dispute Resolution

Children's Contact Services

Contact Orders Program

Family Relationships Education

Family Relationships Skills Training

Adolescent Mediation and Family Therapy

Specialised Family Violence Services

Men and Family Relationships Services

Drought Counselling

Family Relationship Services for Humanitarian Entrants

Sugarcane Industry Counselling

Other, please indicate.....

8. Does this unmet need relate to any of the following groups?

men

children

adolescents

grandparents

family violence cases

mental health clients

drug & alcohol abuse clients

culturally and linguistically diverse clients, please indicate ethnicity.....

Indigenous clients

9. What form of promotion/advertising do you use? (you may indicate more than 1)

none

local media (including newspapers, radio etc.)

linkages with compatible service providers

presence at local events (such as fetes, fairs etc.)

relationships with schools, legal services and other levels of government

C. Service Delivery

10. What have been the significant achievements of your service in the past year?

11. Since your last report have any significant barriers to successful service delivery been identified (including any significant events in the community or your organisation)?

Yes

No

If yes,

12. What were these barriers and what strategies have been planned to address them?

13. Outline any locality issues impacting on the provision of services, such as accommodation, access, transport etc.

14. Were there any priorities planned for the past year that were not implemented?

Yes

No

If yes,

15. Describe the reasons those priorities were not implemented.

16. Did you experience any difficulties meeting your client target numbers?

Yes

No

If yes,

17. What difficulties impacted on your ability to meet your target numbers?

18. Did you experience difficulties meeting your targets for specific target groups (eg, Indigenous, CALD, children)?

Yes

No

If yes,

19. Describe those difficulties and any strategies developed to address the needs of specific target groups?

20. Indicate any new service directions implemented in this reporting period to achieve improved client outcomes.

Child inclusive practice

More flexible models of service delivery

Outreach programs

Programs targeting particular client groups, please indicate.....

Other, please indicate.....

21. Which of the following issues do you have regarding the referral process?

Referrals have increased demand for services

Referral agencies have limited understanding of services provided

- Difficulty accessing appropriate agencies to support clients
- Intensive resourcing required to maintain referral contacts
- Other, please indicate.....
- No issues identified

D. Client Profile

22. Which of the following best describes the change/s in client profile? (delete relevant descriptor to reflect change pattern)

- increase/decrease in inclusion of children
- increase/decrease in number of adolescents
- increase/decrease in number of men
- increase/decrease in number of grandparents
- increase/decrease in number of people presenting with substance abuse
- increase/decrease in number of people presenting with mental health issues
- increase/decrease in number of people presenting with family violence issues
- increase/decrease in number of Indigenous persons
- increase/decrease in number of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- increase/decrease in number of probation and parole clients
- other, please indicate.....
- not applicable

23. What is the profile of the majority of families using the service/s?

- couple only families
- intact couple with children families
- step couple families
- blended couple families
- one parent families
- other families

24. Have there been any changes in the level of service required by clients? (eg, more intensive services or increasingly complex cases).

- Yes
- No

If yes,

25. Describe the changes and the reason(s) behind the changing requirements.

E. Client Outcomes

26. Do you use an evaluation mechanism to measure client outcomes?

- Yes
 - No
- If yes,*

27. Is any of the information you collect specific to:

- Families
- Children
- Community

28. Describe the evaluation mechanism(s), including:

- _ evaluation tool
- _ proportion of clients included
- _ outcomes/feedback

F. Workforce Issues

29. Which best describes current staffing levels?

- Adequate
- Under-staffed

30. Have you had any staffing issues in this reporting period?

- Yes
- No

If yes,

31. What factor/s best reflect these staffing issues?

- availability of skilled/experienced staff
- resignation of staff
- difficulty recruiting new staff
- one-off staffing crisis
- difficulty replacing staff while they are on leave
- difficulty attracting a diverse workforce (including male/female balance, CALD and Indigenous workers, etc.)
- workload too high
- other, please indicate.....

32. Does your organisation offer remuneration incentives to attract staff?

- Yes
- No

If yes,

33. Which of the following incentive/s are offered?

- salary packaging
- private use of vehicles
- additional leave over the Christmas period
- annual leave greater than 4 weeks
- locality allowance
- other, please indicate.....

34. Describe any issues associated with offering remuneration incentives.

35. Have you experienced difficulties meeting the training and professional development requirements of staff?

Yes

No

If yes,

36. What factors impact on your ability to deliver training/professional development?

remote location

difficulty replacing staff

access to and availability of experienced/appropriate trainers and/or supervisors

cost (including travel where applicable)

availability of suitable venues

other, please indicate.....

37. Are you a registered training organisation (RTO)?

Yes

No

38. Do you have volunteers?

Yes, what proportion of staff do volunteers represent?.....

No

If yes,

39. What activities do volunteers undertake?

administration

student placements (such as social work, psychology and community development streams)

cleaning/maintenance

support and coordination

fundraising

other, please indicate.....

G. Relationships

40. Which of the following organisations/sectors have you developed partnerships, collaboration or relationships with?

Health professionals

Legal fraternity

State Government (eg Corrections, Community Services, Child Safety, Police, Health)

Tertiary Institutions

Other FRSP providers

Industry Representative Body

FaCSIA State or Territory Office

FaCSIA National Office

FaCSLink

AGD

41. What were the benefits of these relationships?

42. Indicate what factors impact on your ability to foster and/or maintain relationships.

distance/isolated location

competitive influences

differences in approaches/priorities

lack of communication

turnover of staff / contacts

lack of support

other, please indicate.....

43. Are you involved in any research or evaluation activities, other than client outcomes?

Yes

No

If yes,

44. Outline the research and/or evaluation activities, including:

_ objectives

_ partners

_ timeframes

_ resourcing required

_ any outcomes/findings

H. Fees

45. What proportion of clients pay fees?

less than 10per cent

10 – 25per cent

25 – 50per cent

50 – 75per cent

more than 75per cent

46. For those clients charged a fee, indicate the average fee amount.

Less than \$20

\$20 - \$50

more than \$50

I. Future Directions

47. Outline any emerging issues your agency is experiencing.

48. Are you planning any changes to the way you provide services?

Yes

No

If yes,

49. Describe the changes in service provision you are seeking to implement in the future.

50. Advise any other issues about the FRSP that you would like to raise with the Department.

Thank you for completing the 2006 Status Report.

Please submit your report electronically to frsp@facsia.gov.au.

Attachment 2

Relationships Indicators Survey 2006 © Relationships Australia Inc.

The survey showcases the findings from a national survey of 1200 respondents commissioned by Relationships Australia. The results that this Survey reported are:

1. **The State of Australian Relationships:** the best thing about the relationship was 'friendship/companionship', whilst the negative influences include 'lack of time spent together'
More complex/ harder social problems such as alcohol and drugs, unemployment, gambling and violence were not commonly cited as issues
'inability to resolve conflict' decreased as a main negative impact on relationships, which "may reflect improved resources and awareness and/or improved help-seeking behaviour"
Nearly all respondents indicated doing something to enhance the relationship including communicating and spending time in each other's company. In these activities, men were more likely to be romantic and women practical.
2. **Marriage and Divorce:** marriage is perceived as a commitment. Women reported that marriage was considered because of religious beliefs, to provide security for children or they felt pressure for their families.
People did not get married because of fear, avoidance of commitment or not needing to show commitment because relationships strong, or not willing to sacrifice their current lifestyle.
3. **Balancing Work and Family:** "more relationships are in trouble because finding a balance between work and family life is so difficult" and "more relationships are in trouble because of a lack of compromise with both men and women wanting careers".
For 30-39 year olds, this balance can be improved by "...more child-friendly policies such as lower child care fees, more child care places and parental leave options...". Increase government support was important for those who did not have a choice about work and family balance.
4. **Relationship Support:** results positive and highlighted an increasing acceptance of use of professional services. 63per cent agreed with the statement: "If I had problems in a relationship, I would have no hesitation in seeking professional help", whilst 73per cent disagreed with "If you have to receive counselling about a relationship, it's probably too late". In comparison to 2001, there has been an increased acceptance of professional services.
Most commonly used resources were friends and other family members.
Women were more open to discussing their issues.
Just over one third had heard of Relationships Australia which is an increase from 1998 when it was 15per cent.
Just over a quarter were aware of changes to the family law system, with a higher amount of those being with children.
5. **The Impact of Technology:** Almost 9 in 10 reported that technology improved important relationships. New technology had also enabled 40per cent to form important relationships and the most common form used was SMS. The main technology that had caused problems was mobile phones, email/internet and SMS.

The most common form of communication was face-to-face, but other forms of technology were reported as important for those under 30 and over 60. This reflects “the fact that these youngest and oldest age groups were more likely to have an important ‘other’ living elsewhere”.