

5.4 Client support and agency site characteristics

The mean number of direct support hours provided by one full-year full-time equivalent support staff was 999 (Table 5.25). This varied greatly from State to State, from 802 for the Northern Territory to 1,268 for Western Australia. Support for both workers and non-workers in Western Australia and South Australia and was well above average. Tasmania had the lowest mean level of support for workers but a comparatively high level for non-workers, and was the only State for which support per week was about equal for workers and non-workers.

Table 5.25: Mean hours of individual support per support staff full-time equivalent, and per client for workers and non-workers, by State of agency site, 1995

State	Paid staff	Non-workers		Workers			
	Mean hours per support staff	Mean hours	Mean hours per week	Mean hours	Mean hours per week	Per 100 hours of work	Per \$100 of wages
New South Wales	878	21.6	0.8	87.2	2.1	9.0	1.0
Victoria	824	18.4	0.7	71.3	1.7	8.6	1.0
Queensland	1,030	30.2	1.0	98.6	2.4	12.2	1.5
Western Australia	1,268	47.4	1.5	143.2	3.2	16.3	2.1
South Australia	1,067	49.4	1.7	137.9	3.1	11.5	1.2
Tasmania	1,229	52.0	1.3	54.4	1.3	7.8	0.8
Australian Capital Territory	919	22.9	0.7	123.9	2.5	11.4	1.2
Northern Territory	802	16.8	0.7	86.2	2.4	7.9	0.8
Australia	999	26.1	0.9	95.8	2.3	10.7	1.3

Non-workers in remote areas received less support per week on average than non-workers in other areas, but the converse was true for workers (Table 5.26). Both workers and non-workers in urban areas received more support per week than those in rural areas.

The amount of direct support per staff member was highest for sites in remote areas and lowest for those in rural areas.

Table 5.26: Mean hours of individual support per support staff full-time equivalent, and per client for workers and non-workers, by location of agency site, 1995

Location	Paid staff	Non-workers		Workers			
	Mean hours per support staff	Mean hours	Mean hours per week	Mean hours	Mean hours per week	Per 100 hours of work	Per \$100 of wages
Urban	981	28.3	1.0	100.1	2.3	10.5	1.2
Rural	939	21.0	0.7	85.1	2.0	11.3	1.3
Remote	1,061	11.2	0.5	86.6	2.4	13.1	1.8

Note: Location is classified according to the Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services Rural and Remote Areas classification.

The amount of support per non-working client varied with the number of staff per site but not in any systematic manner. Sites with 10 to 15 staff stood out as having provided the most support per non-working client (Table 5.27). For workers, the average amount of support per client increased with the number of staff per site. The largest sites, with more than 15 staff, had particularly high levels of support per worker, at one-and-a-half or more times the average for all four measures.

The mean number of support hours per full-time support staff position was largest for sites with 3 or less staff, followed by sites with more than 15 staff.

Table 5.27: Mean hours of individual support per support staff full-time equivalent, and per client for workers and non-workers, by number of paid staff at agency site, 1995

Number of paid staff	Paid staff	Non-workers		Workers			
	Mean hours per support staff	Mean hours	Mean hours per week	Mean hours	Mean hours per week	Per 100 hours of work	Per \$100 of wages
<3	1,205	21.2	0.8	67.3	1.7	8.4	1.0
3–5	928	21.2	0.7	74.1	1.9	9.5	1.1
5.1–10	898	25.1	1.0	89.1	2.1	10.5	1.2
10.1–15	963	40.7	1.2	106.6	2.5	9.8	1.2
>15	1,078	23.6	0.9	153.6	3.4	17.0	2.2
Not known	.	14.9	0.6	16.2	0.4	1.2	0.1

The mean support time per staff member was highest for sites serving mostly (75% or more) clients with a vision disability, followed by sites with a clientele of whom 25–74% had an acquired brain injury (Table 5.28). Sites for which 75% or more of clients had a psychiatric disability had the lowest mean for this measure.

Sites which had 25–74% of clients with acquired brain injury stand out as having given the highest levels of support to both workers and non-workers, while those predominantly supporting clients with a vision disability had by far the lowest support per worker. The most striking difference was between workers supported by sites with 75% or more of clients with a psychiatric disability and those with 25–74% of clients with this disability, with the latter receiving almost twice the amount of support on all measures.

In general, the variation with the type of site was less for non-workers than for workers.

Table 5.28: Mean hours of individual support per support staff full-time equivalent, and per client for workers and non-workers, by type of site, 1995

Type of site (proportion of clients with each disability type)	Paid staff	Non-workers		Workers			
	Mean hours per support staff	Mean hours	Mean hours per week	Mean hours	Mean hours per week	Per 100 hours of work	Per \$100 of wages
Predominate disability type (≥75%)							
Intellectual/learning	1,074	35.8	1.2	127.7	2.9	12.5	1.5
Physical	628	29.8	0.9	60.1	1.3	5.3	0.6
Vision	1,912	20.1	0.6	23.7	0.5	1.6	0.4
Hearing	780	37.9	1.0	53.9	1.4	7.8	0.7
Psychiatric	595	17.0	0.8	42.1	1.1	6.1	0.6
Neurological	1,208	77.1	1.8	144.9	3.0	11.2	6.2
Substantial proportion of disability type (25–74%, not Intellectual/learning)							
Physical	716	20.3	0.8	69.7	1.7	7.7	0.8
Acquired brain injury	1,233	63.0	2.2	202.6	4.9	28.6	4.1
Psychiatric	879	15.8	0.6	77.5	2.0	12.2	1.4
Neurological	737	16.8	0.5	50.8	1.3	6.1	0.7
Other							
Intellectual/learning ≥50%	973	24.0	0.9	91.6	2.2	10.5	1.2
Intellectual/learning <50%	1,034	31.2	1.1	93.7	2.3	11.7	1.3

5.5 Regression analyses of support hours per week for workers and non-workers

Linear regression analyses of the mean hours of support received per week were carried out separately for workers and non-workers (Tables 5.29 and 5.30). In both cases, support hours were transformed to natural logarithms before analysis to give an approximately normal distribution (see Appendix 2 for further details). The results of the two analyses generally reflect the two-way tables in this chapter (from Table 5.9 onwards) and are summarised below. Primary disability type is the one factor for which the results are substantially affected by controlling for other variables.

Support per client decreased with the number of clients supported by the client's agency site and increased with the number of staff. Taking these two terms together, this meant that support decreased as the client-to-staff ratio increased. For non-workers, and to a lesser extent workers, there was a particularly strong association between high support and a low client-to-staff ratio, such that an additional term for a client-to-staff ratio of less than 7.5 was highly statistically significant. This parallels the trend for the likelihood of having had a job. There was also a statistically significant association between support received and the type of agency site, particularly for workers.

The amount of support received per week did not vary statistically significantly with sex for workers or non-workers. (Because it is a basic demographic variable sex has been retained as a term in the models for information purposes.) For both groups, the 15 to 19 age group received the most support on average. For workers, there was a consistent and definite decline in support with increasing age group. For non-workers, there was a tendency for support to decrease with age but the trend was not so clear.

There were no statistically significant differences for Indigenous status, except that non-workers whose status was not known appeared to receive less support than others. The meaning of this result is not clear. For clients without a job, those from a non-English-speaking background tended to receive slightly more support than others, but this was not true for workers ($F_{1,8865} = 2.1, p > 0.05$).

Without controlling for any other factors, the mean support for both workers and non-workers with a psychiatric disability was among the lowest of the primary disability groups (see Table 5.13). However, in both regression models, clients with a psychiatric disability had the highest support levels of all primary disability groups (with the exception of non-workers with an acquired brain injury, who had a slightly higher level).

This appears to be mainly a result of adjusting for age, client-to-staff ratio and, for workers, possibly also the frequency of assistance required for activities of daily living. As the regression and Table 5.10 both show, the amount of support decreased with age. On average, a client with a psychiatric disability had less support than other non-workers of the same age and supported by a similar site. However, in the regression this was partly controlled for because clients with a psychiatric disability were generally older than other clients. The mean age of clients with a psychiatric disability is 34.0 compared with 27.8 for all other clients, and 25.8 for clients with an intellectual/learning disability.

Similarly, as discussed in Section 4.16, clients with a psychiatric disability were more likely to be supported by a site with a high client-to-staff ratio. They were also somewhat less likely to require frequent or continual ADL assistance (27% of clients with a psychiatric disability compared with 33% of all other clients). These results suggest that there may be particular differences between clients with a psychiatric disability and other clients which may result in them receiving less support.

For workers there was also an effect due to controlling for type of site, in particular for sites with 75% or more of clients with psychiatric disabilities. After controlling for other factors, workers with a psychiatric disability who were supported by these sites on average received much less support than workers with a psychiatric disability supported by other sites. About 41% of clients with a psychiatric disability were supported by these sites (Table 2.10).

Table 5.29: Linear regression model for mean hours of support per week for workers, 1995 (8,924 clients)

Variable	Category ^(a)	F-statistic ^(b)	Regression coefficients			
			Log scale		Linear scale	
			Estimate	Standard error	Estimate with 95% confidence interval	
Intercept			0.55	0.13	1.73	(1.34, 2.22)
Sex	<i>Male</i>	0.9 ^{ns}				
	<i>Female</i>		0.03	0.03	1.03	(0.97, 1.09)
Age	<i>15–19</i>	16.1 ^{***}				
	<i>20–24</i>		-0.36	0.05	0.70	(0.64, 0.76)
	<i>25–29</i>		-0.43	0.05	0.65	(0.59, 0.72)
	<i>30–44</i>		-0.47	0.05	0.63	(0.57, 0.69)
	<i>45–59</i>		-0.57	0.07	0.57	(0.50, 0.65)
	<i>60–64</i>		-0.59	0.31	0.56	(0.30, 1.02)
	<i>65–69</i>		-1.38	0.67	0.25	(0.07, 0.94)
	<i>Not known</i>		-0.70	0.34	0.50	(0.25, 0.98)
Indigenous status ^(c)	<i>No</i>	0.5 ^{ns}				
	<i>Yes</i>		0.10	0.11	1.11	(0.89, 1.38)
	<i>Not known</i>		-0.02	0.05	0.98	(0.88, 1.09)
Primary disability type	<i>intellectual/learning</i>	8.5 ^{***}				
	<i>Physical</i>		-0.25	0.05	0.78	(0.70, 0.86)
	<i>Acquired brain injury</i>		-0.03	0.08	0.97	(0.82, 1.14)
	<i>Deaf and blind</i>		-1.11	0.48	0.33	(0.13, 0.84)
	<i>Vision</i>		-0.22	0.09	0.80	(0.68, 0.95)
	<i>Hearing</i>		-0.46	0.07	0.63	(0.54, 0.73)
	<i>Speech</i>		-0.15	0.22	0.86	(0.56, 1.32)
	<i>Psychiatric</i>		0.11	0.05	1.12	(1.00, 1.24)
	<i>Neurological</i>		0.01	0.09	1.01	(0.85, 1.19)
	<i>Not specified</i>		0.32	1.05	1.38	(0.18, 10.72)
Other disability	<i>No</i>	23.5 ^{***}				
	<i>Yes</i>		0.17	0.04	1.19	(1.11, 1.28)
Frequency of ADL assistance required	<i>Other</i>	185.9 ^{***}				
	<i>Frequently/continually</i>		0.45	0.03	1.57	(1.47, 1.67)
Type of living arrangements	<i>Other</i>	8.0 ^{**}				
	<i>Lives alone or with family</i>		-0.13	0.04	0.88	(0.81, 0.96)
Disability panel	<i>Referred</i>	56.1 ^{***}				
	<i>Endorsed</i>		-0.04	0.05	0.96	(0.87, 1.07)
	<i>Rejected</i>		-0.74	0.20	0.48	(0.32, 0.71)
	<i>None of the above</i>		-0.51	0.05	0.60	(0.54, 0.67)
	<i>Not known</i>		-1.16	0.97	0.31	(0.05, 2.11)
Funding type	<i>Other</i>	45.4 ^{***}				
	<i>ISJ</i>		0.25	0.04	1.29	(1.20, 1.39)

(continued)

Table 5.29 (continued): Linear regression model for mean hours of support per week for workers, 1995

Variable	Category ^(a)	F-statistic ^(b)	Regression coefficients		
			Log scale		Linear scale
			Estimate	Standard error	Estimate with 95% confidence interval
Referral source	<i>Self or family</i>	4.9***			
	Education system		-0.04	0.05	0.96 (0.86, 1.06)
	DEET programs		0.06	0.06	1.07 (0.95, 1.19)
	Health & Family Services		0.13	0.04	1.14 (1.05, 1.23)
	Other		0.14	0.04	1.15 (1.06, 1.25)
	Not known		0.94	0.48	2.56 (1.01, 6.50)
Income source	<i>Other</i>	71.9***			
	Disability Support Pension		0.46	0.03	1.59 (1.49, 1.69)
	Other pension/benefit		0.49	0.07	1.63 (1.42, 1.87)
	Jobsearch/Newstart		0.31	0.05	1.37 (1.24, 1.51)
State	<i>New South Wales</i>	8.7***			
	Victoria		0.05	0.04	1.06 (0.97, 1.15)
	Queensland		0.15	0.04	1.17 (1.07, 1.27)
	Western Australia		0.18	0.05	1.20 (1.08, 1.33)
	South Australia		0.13	0.08	1.14 (0.98, 1.34)
	Tasmania		0.33	0.14	1.39 (1.07, 1.81)
	ACT		0.05	0.10	1.05 (0.87, 1.27)
	Northern Territory		-0.87	0.16	0.42 (0.31, 0.58)
Agency site location	<i>Urban or rural</i>	13.2***			
	Remote		0.37	0.10	1.45 (1.19, 1.77)
Number of staff	<3	47.1***			
	3–5		0.29	0.07	1.34 (1.17, 1.54)
	5.1–10		0.65	0.07	1.91 (1.67, 2.20)
	10.1–15		0.87	0.08	2.40 (2.05, 2.80)
	>15		1.17	0.09	3.23 (2.72, 3.84)
	Not known		0.06	0.17	1.06 (0.76, 1.49)
Number of clients	<i>1 to 25</i>	48.9***			
	26 to 50		-0.29	0.10	0.75 (0.62, 0.91)
	51 to 75		-0.70	0.10	0.50 (0.41, 0.61)
	76 to 150		-1.00	0.11	0.37 (0.30, 0.45)
	More than 150		-1.23	0.12	0.29 (0.23, 0.37)
Client-to-staff ratio	<i>7.5 or more</i>	10.0**			
	Less than 7.5		0.20	0.06	1.22 (1.08, 1.37)
Type of site	<i>Other</i>	20.8***			
	Physical 75%+		-0.60	0.14	0.55 (0.42, 0.72)
	Psychiatric 75%+		-0.45	0.08	0.64 (0.55, 0.74)
	Physical 25–74%		-0.50	0.07	0.61 (0.53, 0.70)
	Neurological 25–74%		-0.58	0.18	0.56 (0.40, 0.79)
	Intellectual/learning ≥50%		-0.16	0.03	0.85 (0.79, 0.91)

(a) An italic entry indicates the reference category.

(b) F statistic is $F_{n-1,8876}$ where n is the number of categories for the variable.

Statistical significance of F-test is indicated as *** $p < 0.001$, ** $0.001 < p < 0.01$, * $0.01 < p < 0.05$, ns = not significant ($p > 0.05$).

(c) Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or South Sea Islander.

Table 5.30: Linear regression model for mean hours of support per week for non-workers, 1995 (9,603 clients)

			Regression coefficients			
			Log scale		Linear scale	
			Standard		Estimate with 95%	
Intercept			-0.35	0.13	0.71	(0.55, 0.91)
Sex	<i>Male</i>	0.2 ^{ns}				
	<i>Female</i>		0.01	0.03	1.01	(0.96, 1.07)
Age	<i>15–19</i>	8.2 ^{***}				
	<i>20–24</i>		-0.17	0.04	0.84	(0.77, 0.92)
	<i>25–29</i>		-0.13	0.05	0.88	(0.80, 0.97)
	<i>30–44</i>		-0.20	0.04	0.82	(0.75, 0.89)
	<i>45–59</i>		-0.29	0.06	0.75	(0.66, 0.84)
	<i>60–64</i>		-0.29	0.33	0.75	(0.39, 1.44)
	<i>65–69</i>		-0.78	1.37	0.46	(0.03, 6.70)
	<i>Not known</i>		1.02	0.24	2.76	(1.73, 4.42)
Indigenous status ^(c)	<i>No</i>	9.7 ^{***}				
	<i>Yes</i>		0.02	0.10	1.02	(0.84, 1.23)
	<i>Not known</i>		-0.25	0.06	0.78	(0.69, 0.87)
Non-English-speaking	<i>No</i>	1.1 ^{***}				
	<i>Yes</i>		0.17	0.06	1.18	(1.05, 1.36)
Primary disability type	<i>Intellectual/learning</i>	3.0 ^{***}				
	<i>Physical</i>		0.03	0.05	1.03	(0.94, 1.13)
	<i>Acquired brain injury</i>		0.19	0.08	1.22	(1.05, 1.41)
	<i>Deaf and blind</i>		0.07	0.40	1.08	(0.50, 2.34)
	<i>Vision</i>		0.09	0.09	1.09	(0.92, 1.30)
	<i>Hearing</i>		-0.04	0.08	0.96	(0.82, 1.13)
	<i>Speech</i>		0.07	0.27	1.07	(0.62, 1.83)
	<i>Psychiatric</i>		0.18	0.05	1.20	(1.09, 1.32)
	<i>Neurological</i>		-0.06	0.08	0.94	(0.81, 1.09)
<i>Not specified</i>		-1.17	0.46	0.31	(0.13, 0.77)	
Frequency of ADL	<i>Never</i>	22.0 ^{***}				
	<i>Frequently</i>		0.32	0.04	1.37	(1.28, 1.47)
	<i>Continually</i>		0.44	0.05	1.55	(1.41, 1.71)
Type of living	<i>Alone</i>	1.0 ^{***}				
	<i>Lives alone or with family</i>		0.13	0.04	1.14	(1.05, 1.23)
	<i>Other community</i>		0.24	0.08	1.27	(1.09, 1.49)
Disability panel	<i>Referred</i>	27.1 ^{***}				
	<i>Endorsed</i>		0.00	0.05	1.00	(0.91, 1.10)
	<i>Rejected</i>		-0.20	0.19	0.82	(0.56, 1.19)
	<i>None of the above</i>		-0.30	0.05	0.74	(0.67, 0.81)
	<i>Not known</i>		-1.47	0.75	0.23	(0.05, 1.00)

(continued)

Table 5.30 (continued): Linear regression model for mean hours of support per week for non-workers, 1995

Variable	Category ^(a)	F-statistic ^(b)	Regression coefficients			
			Log scale		Linear scale	
			Estimate	Standard error	Estimate with 95% confidence interval	
Funding type	<i>CETP</i>	11.2***				
	ISJ		0.03	0.04	1.03	(0.95, 1.10)
	Supported Wage System		0.06	0.06	1.06	(0.94, 1.20)
	Other		-0.77	0.15	0.46	(0.35, 0.62)
State	Not known		0.65	0.18	1.91	(1.34, 2.71)
	<i>New South Wales</i>	16.2***				
	Victoria		-0.02	0.04	0.98	(0.90, 1.07)
	Queensland		0.07	0.04	1.08	(0.99, 1.17)
	Western Australia		0.49	0.06	1.64	(1.46, 1.84)
	South Australia		0.36	0.08	1.44	(1.22, 1.69)
	Tasmania		0.32	0.13	1.38	(1.08, 1.76)
	ACT		-0.38	0.12	0.68	(0.54, 0.87)
Agency site location	Northern Territory		0.53	0.36	1.71	(0.84, 3.45)
	<i>Urban</i>	41.3***				
	Rural		-0.24	0.04	0.78	(0.73, 0.84)
Number of staff	Remote		-0.78	0.12	0.46	(0.36, 0.58)
	≤5	67.3***				
	5.1–10		0.38	0.04	1.47	(1.35, 1.60)
	>10		0.76	0.05	2.14	(1.92, 2.38)
Number of clients	Not known		-0.12	0.21	0.88	(0.59, 1.33)
	<i>1 to 25</i>	43.8***				
	26 to 50		-0.39	0.10	0.68	(0.56, 0.82)
	51 to 75		-0.80	0.10	0.45	(0.37, 0.55)
	76 to 100		-0.92	0.10	0.40	(0.33, 0.48)
	101 to 150		-0.95	0.10	0.39	(0.32, 0.47)
	151 to 200		-1.42	0.11	0.24	(0.20, 0.30)
	More than 200		-1.18	0.11	0.31	(0.25, 0.38)
Client-to-staff ratio	<i>7.5 or more</i>	97.06***				
	Less than 7.5		0.49	0.07	1.63	(1.43, 1.87)
Type of site	<i>Other</i>	10.5***				
	Physical 75%+		-0.28	0.13	0.75	(0.59, 0.96)
	Vision 75%+		0.80	0.22	2.22	(1.45, 3.39)
	Psychiatric 75%+		0.21	0.07	1.24	(1.09, 1.41)
	Psychiatric 25–74%		0.22	0.05	1.25	(1.14, 1.38)

(a) An italic entry indicates the reference category.

(b) F statistic is $F_{n-1,8876}$ where n is the number of categories for the variable.

Statistical significance of F-test is indicated as *** $p < 0.001$, ** $0.001 < p < 0.01$, * $0.01 < p < 0.05$, ns = not significant ($p > 0.05$).

(c) Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or South Sea Islander.

In contrast, for non-workers, clients at sites where 25% or more of the clientele had a psychiatric disability received more support than clients of other sites, after controlling for other factors. Two-thirds (66%) of clients with a psychiatric disability were supported by such sites. Thus, there appears to be a complex interaction between clients with a psychiatric disability and the size and type of site which was supporting them.

For the remaining disability groups with substantial numbers the results were generally similar to those in Table 5.13. For these groups, the two major differences were that workers with a physical disability received significantly less support than other workers, and non-workers with an acquired brain injury received significantly more support than other non-workers.

Clients of some other types of sites also had less support than expected, particularly for workers. These included sites with 25% or more clients with a physical disability, those with 25–74% of clients with a neurological disability, and to a lesser extent sites with a mixed clientele of whom 50% or more had an intellectual/learning disability. These differences between agency site types did not have a substantial effect on other results, because clients with a physical disability or a neurological disability were much more spread across various types of sites than clients with a psychiatric disability (for example, only 12% of clients with a physical disability were supported by a site with 75% or more of clients with this disability; Table 2.10). Finally for non-workers, the two sites whose clientele was mostly in the vision primary disability group again appeared to be somewhat anomalous.

As for the regression analyses of job variables (see section 4.17), the episodic nature of the primary disability was not statistically significant at the 1% level, because it was so strongly associated with having a psychiatric disability (for workers, $F_{1,8865} = 0.1$, $p > 0.05$; for non-workers, $F_{1,9545} = 3.3$, $p = 0.04$).

Workers with more than one disability received more support per week than other workers, but this was not so for non-workers. Both workers and non-workers who needed frequent or continual ADL assistance received more support.

Workers living alone or with family received less support than those with other living arrangements. However, after controlling for other factors, non-workers in this situation received more support per week than other non-workers, except for those living in other community accommodation who received the most support.

Clients who had been either referred or endorsed by a disability panel received more support than those who had been rejected or not considered by a panel. This appeared to be true for both workers and non-workers; however, the difference was more marked for the former.

ISJ workers received more support than CETP and other workers. For non-workers there was no statistically significant difference between ISJ and CETP clients, but both groups appeared to have received less support than clients in the 'other' group.

There was evidence that support received varied with the referral source of the worker, although the variation was not great. Workers referred by Health and Family Services or by 'other' sources tended to have slightly higher levels of support than other clients. This factor was not statistically significant for non-workers ($F_{5,9545} = 2.0$, $p > 0.05$).

Those workers who stated that their primary source of income was a disability support pension, other pension or benefit, or a Jobsearch or Newstart allowance received more support than other workers. For non-workers, the primary source of income did not appear to be associated with the amount of support received ($F_{7,9545} = 1.2$, $p > 0.05$).

The amount of support varied by State or Territory after controlling for other factors. On average, clients of remote sites who were workers received more support than those of urban or rural sites. The situation was reversed for non-workers, with clients of urban sites receiving the most support followed by clients of rural sites and clients of remote sites.

Thus, as was found for workers' income, for workers and non-workers the amount of support received per week was associated with a wide range of factors.