

CAREER PATHS IN THE COMMUNITY SECTOR

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Very little is known about the community sector labour market, or the work orientations and motivations of those who work in it. The central question to be addressed is "why do people choose to work in the community sector." While this study cannot offer definitive answers, it aims to explore the various dimensions of the question, and provide some initial empirical data. The emphasis in this paper is on the presentation of the data; it includes only a brief literature review and theoretical analysis.

There are two sides to the question. The first is the demand side, which examines the demands for labour made by employing bodies and the terms and conditions that apply. The second is the supply side, which examines the characteristics and requirements of people offering themselves for employment. Clearly the two sides are interdependent. Workers can only offer themselves to available positions; but employers can only draw on the available market. Nonetheless they are partially distinct in that a different set of requirements and dynamics may be operating in each. This study is primarily concerned with the second or supply side of the question but will examine this partly in terms of known characteristics of labour market demand.

Very little is known about the community sector labour market in Australia. The usual source of such information, the ABS, does not recognise the community or non-government/non profit sector as a distinct category. Industry classifications lump the majority (but not all) community sector workers in the "community services" category of "management industries", a category which is dominated by public sector employment of, for example, health and education personnel. Community services comprises "Health Services", Education, Libraries, Museums", "Welfare and religious organisations" and "Other Services (eg Police)". All Community services comprises approximately 1,280,300 workers in 1987, all of which 8.5% were in the "Welfare and Religious Organisations" category. Community services is identified as the fastest growing area of employment in Australia (Jamrozik, 1988).

This is about as far as we can go in tracking the size of the community sector labour force. A few scattered studies have attempted to estimate the parameters of the sector (eg. Hardwick and Graycar, 1983). Using unpublished ABS data, Lyons recently estimated that there were just under 400,000 people employed by nonprofit or community organisations Australia-wide. Over 81,000 or 21% of these were employed in community welfare services, the heart of the community sector (Lyons, 1993).

More has been written on the structure of the labour market. Wheeler conducted a detailed employment survey of the five organisations in each category of Home Care, Home nursing, Meals-on-wheels, Senior citizens centres, and community centres (Wheeler, 1989). She concludes, in broad, "The evidence summarised above illustrates that the restructuring of home support services under HACC is recreating a labour market characterised by divisions of workers into primary and secondary labour markets ... labour markets themselves divided by gender, ethnicity, race and age. It shows the importance of this traditional area of employment for adult women and pronounced barriers to women's rights to regular secure employment. Those barriers examined here included the nature of employment, pay and conditions, the lack of appropriate education, training and retraining, the lack of career structures and child-care facilities, and use of volunteers. These represent inequities in employment for women" (p226). She goes on to argue that these inequities represent the exploitation of women's traditional nurturing role.

A very similar conclusion is reached by Walker (1989), largely on the basis of census data and other available secondary sources. She notes, in part, "The nature of most paid jobs in the community services are characteristic of the secondary labour market: insecure, low paid, part-time, dead-end, industrially unorganised and with high labour turnover. There is rigid segmentation between "professional and non-professional jobs, and workers in secondary jobs have little possibility of progressing into professional jobs" (p108). She discusses the labour market in terms of core and periphery. Beyond the secondary labour market of paid positions, there lies a second peripheral group of unpaid workers and a third peripheral group of domestic labour; the presence of these other peripheral groups (mostly women) impacts on the paid labour market, keeping conditions at an artificially low level.

The implications of these findings is that no-one would freely and willingly enter a community services career. Women are forced to accept poor conditions, either because they have no choice (all available jobs for women have the same poor conditions) or because women have accepted the ideology of their own inferior status and allow themselves to be exploited in order to carry out their natural nurturing role. However, to date, no one seems to have asked them.

The other body of evidence is drawn from U.S. studies. These seem not to be concerned with documenting exploitation in community services but rather with exploring motivation. These studies are mainly concerned with the "supply" side of the labour market. The most recent and comprehensive analysis is provided by Mirvis (1992). In common with other studies, he was able to demonstrate that the nonprofit labour market was highly educated (43% college graduates) and predominantly female. On the basis of a large national sample of working people, he was able to construct a cross-sectional comparison of working conditions and attitudes to a variety of work related issues. He found that those working in the nonprofit sector had significantly more positive social attitudes than those working in government or for-profit organisations. They also had more favourable attitudes toward management and the decision-making process. While nonprofits have the highest percent of part-time employment, job tenure had significantly increased since the previous survey done in 1977.

Preston (1990) was able to demonstrate fairly conclusively that salary levels in nonprofits are on average 15% below that of other sectors for similar occupational gradings. She argues that, "on the supply side, some workers may be willing to supply labour at lower than market wages to organisations that generate social benefits. The lost wages are a "labor donation" and the donation is likely to increase with the worker's connection to the provision of social benefits. However, the proportion of lost earnings is greater for men (40%) than for women, reflecting the fact that women are greatly more discriminated against in the for-profit sector than in the nonprofit sector. Women also report that they are more likely to develop skills, less likely to do repetitive work and have higher chances of promotion in the nonprofit sector. All of this may change, however, as women make significant gains in the wider job market.

Putting all this together, we may generate a number of quite contradictory hypotheses concerning why workers enter and remain in the community/nonprofit sector in Australia. Various explanations encountered were:

- Only those who lack the skills or opportunity to enter the wider job market, work in the community sector. Those who have the skills leave quickly.
- Women work in the community sector because the structures of employment (including the feminisation of community services) leaves them little option. They do not chose part-time, insecure work, but have this imposed.
- Women chose to work in the community sector because it fits comfortably with their nurturing and homemaker role. Work that is part-time and close to home fits well with their family commitments.
- People (women and men) chose to work in the community sector because it fits well with their social values and commitment to service.
- People chose to work in the community sector because they derive social benefits that outweigh any loss in salary. These may include greater professional autonomy or collegiate decision making.

This study hopes to shed some light on these and related issues. The study reports what is, to our knowledge, the first empirical analysis of career paths among community sector workers in NSW. It examines career path decisions, characteristics of the three most recent positions and some of the reasons underlying various career choices.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The empirical study proceeded through several stages. Given the paucity of documented knowledge on the topic, it was necessary to begin in an exploratory way, looking for the likely dimensions and themes. This was done through in depth, exploratory interviews. The interviews provided a richness and depth of material that can only occur in this manner. However, interviews do not easily produce quantitative data. They cannot test the extent or typicality of patterns found in interviews. Therefore, in order to extend and systematise the findings, a questionnaire was also developed and administered.

2.1 The Instruments

A draft interview schedule was derived and modified several times in discussion with colleagues. Questions included a systematic documentation of work experience, working backward from the most recent position. Some questions explored the reasons for seeking a particular job and for leaving it. Other questions explored general attitudes to working in different sectors and types of organisational structure, as well as personal information about the respondents training and qualifications and family situation. During the course of the early interviews, other relevant information came to light, and these questions were then included in subsequent interviews. These additional questions related to voluntary work, to occasions in which the respondent took a drop in salary and to future career plans (see appendix A for final interview schedule). Each interview took approximately one hour to conduct. Respondents were invited to tell their own story in their own way. Where necessary, the interviewer followed up the general questions with specific questions to complete the information sought. Each author interviewed roughly equal numbers of people. At the commencement of each interview, respondents were given a copy of the interview schedule and its purpose explained. Interviews were audio taped and summary responses were written on the interview schedule.

The questionnaire was derived from the interview questions, after some 20 interviews had been completed. Those interview questions that had obtained a uniform response were not included. Other questions were too open ended and diverse to be easily translated into a questionnaire item. Most interview questions were open ended; these were transformed into coded response categories, based on the recurring patterns of interview

response. The draft questionnaire was circulated among several colleagues and a workshop seminar identified several potential problems in wording and new topic areas that should be included - eg the extent of union involvement. In the questionnaire, it was not possible to explore in depth each respondent's work history. However, it was decided to obtain some standard information concerning the present position and two previous positions for each respondent. The final questionnaire included some 128 questions (see Appendix B). All questionnaires were anonymous.

2.2 The Samples

The final sample included 40 interviews and 162 useable questionnaires, all from workers in the NSW community sector who had been engaged in the sector for roughly 10 years.

The boundaries of the community sector are sometimes ambiguous and changing. Examples of this are Local Government community services which are managed as community sector organisations but under (sometimes temporarily) the auspice of council. Other examples are found in State Government provided community services such as some community health services. Home Care is an example of an organisation which until recently was a non-government organisation but has recently been incorporated as a QUANGO. The criteria for inclusion in the sample of interviews were somewhat looser than that for inclusion in the questionnaire sample. The interviews included ten respondents who currently work in Local Government (community services) and one respondent who currently works in the state Public Service. All have extensive work experience in the community sector and we were interested in tracking movements into and out of the community sector as well as within it. However, these people were largely excluded from the questionnaire sample (ie, those whose experience lies in Local Government itself or State Government sponsored community services such as area health centres). Several Home Care workers have been left in the questionnaire sample, as have a small number currently employed in Local Government auspiced services.

Because the study aimed to track community sector workers' work history over several moves, it was necessary to restrict the sample to those who had an extended history. The benchmark criterion was some ten years experience of the sector, though some of that

may include voluntary work (as long as the current position is paid) and not all of the time need be within the community sector.

The interview sample was a purposive one and was initially drawn from the population of community management students attending undergraduate (associate diploma) and postgraduate courses at UTS. To augment that sample, additional respondents were located in the field, using community services networks. An additional small sample of experienced workers was located in Dubbo and interviewed there. While the interview sample was admittedly a purposive one, every attempt was made to include the known range of community sector workers, ie men and women of various ages and levels of qualifications, of various class and ethnic backgrounds (but not including aboriginal workers), both rural and urban, working in a variety of organisations in terms of size, organisational structure and philosophy, and target service group.

The questionnaire sample was drawn in a more systematic manner. Initially ten Local Government Areas were selected to represent the range of inner city, outer metropolitan, regional and rural centres. Those selected were:

- Hurstville
- Marrickville (later included other inner city areas)
- Kuring-gai (included some Hornsby services)
- Parramatta
- Penrith (later included some Fairfield/Liverpool services)
- Sutherland
- Wollongong
- Maitland
- Orange (included some from Young)
- Lismore

A community services worker of each council was approached and the project explained. Where appropriate the researcher also interviewed the council worker to give that person a better appreciation of the scope of the study. In some cases, the formal permission of Council was required, in others the arrangement was more informal. The researchers

asked for a copy of the local community services directory and together with the council worker, identified a range of up to ten community organisations within the area, being careful to include large and small, radical and conservative and the full range of service types and target groups. The council worker was then asked to identify or locate two or three persons within each of the nominated organisations who had been active in the community sector for roughly 10 years. The Council worker was then asked to approach the identified people, seek their co-operation, administer the questionnaire, and collect it.

Inevitably, the above process had to be modified to suit individual conditions. Some areas could not identify ten suitable organisations, or two to three workers with ten years experience in each. Sometimes less than ten years experience was accepted. Sometimes other organisations were included to replace the initially identified one, where that organisation failed to respond to requests. Sometimes the Council workers could not follow up the collection of questionnaires and so the follow up, including several reminder calls, was done by one of the researchers. When it proved impossible to work through Marrickville council, help was sought and obtained from Leichhardt Council and, in addition, several inner city organisations were approached directly. Similarly, the response rate from Penrith was not satisfactory, so that sample was supplemented with organisations from the Liverpool/Fairfield area, with the assistance of Fairfield council (who had also given active support in the identification of the interview sample).

In addition to those obtained through the assistance of Local Government, a further 26 useable questionnaires were obtained from students at UTS (not including those who had been interviewed) and from friends and colleagues of those students. This sample is drawn from throughout the metropolitan area and beyond.

2.3 The Analysis

Those interview questions for which categorised responses were provided, were collated by hand. Open ended questions were content analysed. Coding categories were derived separately by the two authors and then compared and discussed. This process was particularly important for the development of the questionnaire. However, it should be noted that the process of analysis began with the first few interviews and fed back into the

interview design so that the interview schedule itself was developed progressively as new areas of questioning emerged and other questions refined or dropped.

In addition to the more formal coding, the interviews were analysed in a more holistic way, as the authors worked over the tapes and annotated schedules. Particular themes and patterns were identified. Some themes occurred across all, or most, respondents. However, some quite distinct patterns appeared to relate to particular categories of respondents. Those were clustered together, and became the basis of a series of five composite case studies. Each case study attempts to capture the common elements of the three or more people within a cluster. The emphasis is on the overall shape of these peoples lives and career path choices, rather than an itemised dissection of specific questions and responses.

The questionnaire was subject to a statistical analysis using the SPSSX computer mainframe program. In addition to the identification of descriptive statistics, a number of crosstabs and ANOVAS were generated, in order to examine the potential effect on questionnaire responses, of the background or demographic variables, particularly gender, age, family circumstance, educational qualification and rural/urban location. One serious omission concerns ethnicity; while the sample included many NESB workers, we failed to identify this variable.

As the questionnaire survey was designed as an exploratory descriptive tool, no specific hypotheses were tested. Those relationships that reached statistical significance cannot therefore be taken as confirmatory evidence of a particular position. No attempt has been made at this stage to statistically control co-variates or to identify coherent factor/cluster structures. However, the findings, descriptive though they are, generate potential answers for future analysis and confirmation.

In addition to the statistical analysis, several open ended questions were coded for summary presentation. The answers to the final question asking respondents for any general comments they wished to make concerning their career in the community sector. This question generated a large number of insightful comments; these are reproduced (for the most part) in full, uncoded, in Appendix C.

3.0 INTERVIEW RESULTS

The final interview sample comprised 40 workers of whom 35, or 87% were female. The majority (35) were drawn from the Sydney metropolitan area, with an additional four from Dubbo and one from the Central Coast. The majority (56%) had a degree qualification or more while 18% held no post-secondary school qualification.

In terms of their current organisation, 12 (30%) were working in small, local organisations, while 10 or (25%) were currently working in Local Government. The remainder were distributed across other organisational forms, mainly as part of larger or peak community organisations, with one currently self employed and one currently in State Government.

3.1 Work History

The interview began with a documentation of each person's work history, beginning with the current position and then tracking backwards in time, usually back to the first paid employment. Information was thus obtained for a total of 132 jobs. A summary of the length of time spent in each is provided in Tables 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 below:

Table 3.1.1: Length of current job

Years	Female	Male	Total
1	9	0	9
2	9	0	9
3	6	3	9
4	4	0	4
5	1	0	1
6	3	0	3
7	1	0	1
8	1	0	1
9	0	1	1
10	1	0	1
10+	0	1	1
TOTAL: 40			
Average length: 3.4 years			

Table 3.1.2: Length of past jobs

Years	Female	Male	Total
1 or less	45	6	51
2	37	3	40
3	17	3	20
4	8	4	12
5	3	2	5
6	1	0	1
7	2	0	2
8	0	0	0
9	0	1	1
10+	0	0	0
TOTAL: 132			
Average length: 2.2 years			

Several of those interviewed had a succession of very short term jobs. This was more likely to occur when they were young and inexperienced. There seems to be a tendency to stay in a position for longer as people grew older or secured more senior positions.

Promotions

In over three quarters of the cases, internal promotion was possible (95%) and respondent had been promoted at least once in their working career internally (83%). Despite reporting gender discrimination (see below), women had fared slightly better than men in gaining internal promotions (note however, the small sample of men).

Table 3.1.3

Promoted	YES	33	83 %
	NO	7	17 %
Internal Promotion	YES	38	95 %
	NO	2	5 %

Movement Between Jobs

There are basically two different patterns for the career progression of the respondents in the interviews: upward progression to more senior positions or lots of sideways moves. These two patterns account for 18 plus 16 of career moves respectively (85% of the sample).

(i) Upward progression

Six people have moved up continuously in their careers (this included 4 of the 5 men). For instance, one man had gone from working as a welfare worker to a residential care program officer to a manager of accommodation services for handicapped people within different traditional voluntary associations, mostly Christian ones. His level of responsibility had been downgraded once, which prompted him to move on to a new job with the old level of responsibility. This required moving to the country. His family moved with him.

Twelve moved up once they were established, particularly within Local Government (though some but not all went down in salary or responsibility to make the move). One person, for instance, worked her way up from kindergarten teacher to kindergarten director then moved into Local Government with a drop in salary and responsibility for a short time before moving up again within local government. The shift to community work was itself a career move for her, as for some of the others, because it gave her a longer career structure.

(ii) Sideways

This group of 16 had lots of job changes, moving sideways into different jobs at the same level. There was no one pattern in these sideways moves. Some were changes of client groups and some were moves to different sectors of employers, e.g. Local Government to Non-Government local community groups. This group included the youngest respondents (under 25) who moved around because their jobs were short-term or not quite full time.

A substantial number (seven out of the 16) moved sideways because of the demands of their family, because husband changed jobs forcing family to move or accommodate him in other ways, or undertake some child care responsibilities (whether they had a partner or not). One woman had gone from a part-time bookkeeper for a local community group to their co-ordinator. She had had to move because of family and financial reasons (as a single mother, the offer of a bigger house in the town where her mother lived and could help with child care was very attractive) to another rural town where she got another job at the same level co-ordinating a housing project. She had a short break doing some consulting for a government agency and returned to this job. She believed her lack of formal qualifications would make it hard for her to progress in the community sector, noting that younger people coming in to the sector with tertiary qualifications. Like this woman, three others of this group were also limited by living in rural areas where there were fewer job opportunities.

Some of this group moved sideways out of restlessness, changing jobs every few years at the same level. They mostly held multiple jobs at a fairly low level of responsibility (category 2) each lasting about one to two years. One woman had been at category two over six jobs with different client groups in State Government, Local Government and Community Organisations. Her motives for these changes included lifestyle changes (outer Sydney semi-rural/rural moves, slowing down), unhappiness with the employing agency and (only for the last two moves) adjustments for kids. Another (with no children) had moved from various short-term almost full-time jobs (4 days a week) on the central coast for the same reasons of restlessness and looking for new interests. Many appeared to be seeking new challenges, more personally satisfying work.

(iii) The rest

Of the rest, four had had only one (lengthy) job in the community sector so no pattern had yet emerged. Two had gone up and had now gone down in levels of responsibility. They did not believe they would advance again because they lacked formal qualifications.

3.2 Factors Influencing Job Choice

Respondents were asked to indicate how important a number of reasons were in influencing their decision to apply for particular jobs. They had a choice of indicating a reason by "Very important", "Important", "Not Relevant" or a "Negative". Table 3.2.1 indicates the frequency particular reasons were chosen as "Very important".

Table 3.2.1: Very Important Reasons for Applying

	Total	%	Female	%	Male	%
Increase in salary	12	14	8	11	4	31
Better hours	12	14	10	12	2	15
Better hours for me	21	25	18	21	3	23
More flexible for family	10	12	10	12	0	0
More Secure	7	8	7	10	0	0
More staff responsibility	12	14	9	13	3	23
More budget responsibility	6	7	4	6	2	15
More prestige	2	2	1	1	1	8
Career opportunities	32	38	27	38	5	38
Good group of people	23	27	22	31	1	8
Work indirectly	24	28	18	21	6	46
Training opportunities	8	9	7	10	1	8
Extend skills	38	48	33	46	5	38
Good management strategy	9	11	9	13	0	0
Good organis'l philosophy	14	16	13	18	1	8
More interest/challenging job	53	62	44	61	9	69
Influence policy development	23	27	17	24	6	46
Chance social change	21	25	18	24	3	23
New service	27	32	23	32	4	31
New client group	23	27	21	29	2	15
Network other ags?	17	20	16	22	1	8
<u>Others added</u>	1		1		0	
Control over own work					0	
Senior job vacant	1				0	
Broader impact with local govt.	1		1			
Local gov. experience	1		1		0	
lifestyle	2		1		1	
TOTAL POSSIBLE RESPONSES	85		72		13	

The most frequent reason for applying by far was "a more interesting challenging job" (62%). This was the most popular reason for men as well as women. Next was a chance to extend personal skills (48%) and to improve future career options (38%) and the chance to create a new service (32%). The expected or traditional reasons of wanting more money or prestige were very low. The need for job security was also low (8%). This would be expected to increase in the current recession times rather than the eighties (the last ten years).

Some gender differences emerged although the sample of men is too small to draw firm conclusions. A chance to enhance personal skills was second with women but third with men after the chance to influence policy development and chance to work independently. Among the top five reasons for women only were chance to create a new service and a good group of people to work with (27%). In the top five for men only, was increased salary (31%). This was only very important for 14% of the women and ranked much lower. However, overall the two groups were more similar than different.

On the other side of the same coin, were those reasons regarded as not important, or "a negative", i.e. reasons which were not available and hence detracted from the attractiveness of the job. The results are summarised in Table 3.2.2 The responses are largely consistent with the pattern above.

Table 3.2.2: Reasons Not Important

	Not important		Negative	
	F	%	F	%
Increase in salary	28	33	14	16
Better hours	51	60	11	13
Better hours for me	39	46	7	8
More flexible for family	60	71	6	7
More Secure	49	58	8	9
More staff responsibility	61	72	1	1
More budget responsibility	64	75	1	1
More prestige	59	69	3	4
Career opportunities	17	20	0	0
Good group of people	35	41	1	1
Work indirectly	36	42	1	1
Training opportunities	56	66	2	2
Extend skills	12	14	0	
Good management strategy	56	66	0	
Good organis'l philosophy	34	40	0	
More interest/challenge	9	11	0	
Influence policy development	38	45	0	
Chance social change	36	42	0	
New service	43	51	0	
New client group	37	44	0	
Network other ags?	33	39	0	
TOTAL POSSIBLE RESPONSES	85			

Reasons for Changing Jobs - Were there problems with the old job?

The most common reasons for changing was that the next job was better (53%) rather than that there were problems with the old job. However 42% did leave because there were problems with the old job. 27% also left the old job because of family and/or personal commitments. Note that for some, more than one reason applied. Of those who left the most common problems were a lack of support from the management (70%), followed by too heavy a workload (39%) and work with clients too stressful (25%).

Other typical comments for moving on were that they were bored or that it was "time to move on".

Table 3.2.3: Reasons

	Female	%
Next job better	45	53
Problems with old job	36	42
Family/personal commitments	23	27

Table 3.2.4: If there were problems with the old job, what were they?

	Female	%
Workload too heavy	14	39
Work with clients too stressful	8	23
Management not supportive	25	70
Insufficient admin. support	9	25
Funding ran out	6	17
Conflict with other staff	8	23
Conflict with other agencies	0	

<u>Other Responses</u>	
Bored/time to move	3
Future uncertain	1
Health-passive smoking	1
Different philosophy	1
Head office not supportive	1
Hours too long inc. weekends	2

Reasons for entering the Community Sector

As well as exploring reasons for applying for particular jobs, the interviews explored the reasons for entering the community sector in the first place. The most popular reasons were idealistic: either wanting to improve things for people (25%) or wanting to help others because of personal experiences (33%). Most described the community sector as giving them the opportunity to effect "social change" or to change the system rather than being caught up in the individual situations of case work. In the altruistic group, several saw the opportunity of repaying or using their experiences to help others since they or their families had been fortunate or had survived difficult experiences to (as migrants, refugees, family, using their second language, or being unemployed). Religious upbringing or commitment was a very minor part. A secular emphasis on social justice in family upbringing where the need to fight injustice was spoken about, was a factor for two people and the experience of the South African system was significant for another respondent.

Although most people had made a conscious decision to enter the community sector, a sizeable number had entered for reasons of convenience or chance (35%). The reasons were rather that they had heard about it from a friend, that community work was open to unqualified women or that the job was available. 18% decided on community work

after being exposed to it through voluntary work in playgroups or through the Community Employment Program (CEP). Convenience (the hours) was also a determinant in 13% of the cases.

A number entered community work because they were dissatisfied with their current jobs (13%). One woman saw community work as giving her life meaning compared to her eight years of secretarial work - "to get down where life was really happening". Another was pleased that she had identified a need to "work with people" which was satisfied in community work.

15% of the sample had already made up their mind to be involved in some sort of caring profession when they decided on the course of study. Their choice was the narrower one of defining their field of work down to community work rather than social work or teaching in a private kindergarten. Student placements decided some of them.

Table 3.2.5: Why did you enter Community Sector?

(T=40)

	F	%
1. Decision largely made by time studying		
<u>Decision while studying</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>15%</u>
Did not like private centre placement	2	
Social work uni p'ment in community work	2	
Interest in community work at uni (not social)	2	
Wanted community work not case work	1	
2. Chance/convenience		
<u>Seemed interesting</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>10%</u>
Seemed interesting	2	
Lots of new services starting - community work seemed exciting	1	
Job for self-starter alone - suited	1	
<u>Chance - what was available</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>25%</u>
Community service job available	5	
By chance	2	
Training with job	1	
Heard about community work from friend	1	
Community work had opportunities for unqualified women	1	
<u>Got interested in community sector from unpaid contact</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>18%</u>
Interested in community work while volunteer (playgroups, tutoring, etc.)	4	
Opportunity from networks in city towns for community work jobs	1	
By chance through CEP	1	
Opportunity to train in community work from CEP	1	
<u>Hours suited</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>13%</u>
Flexible - suited family commitments	3	
Help support husband - started own business	1	
Work flexible and varied	1	
3. Wanted a change		
<u>Dissatisfied with non community sector work experience</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>13%</u>
More satisfying job	1	
Dissatisfied with clerical work in business world	1	
Challenge	1	
New direction needed for pastoral work	1	
"To get down where life really happening"	1	
<u>Recognised a "people" orientation</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>10%</u>
To work with people	3	
To avoid bureaucratic environment	1	

4 Altruism		
<u>Achieve change for others</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>25%</u>
Affect change for particular group	4	
Social change	3	
Opportunity to change system rather than case work	1	
Enhance users' rights	1	
Provided politically oriented work	1	
5. Altruism: Personal experiences led to choice		<u>33%</u>
<u>Influenced by a personal experience to help others</u>	<u>13</u>	
Experience of South Africa system	1	
Experience with NESB women - disadvantaged	1	
Family upbringing - fighting injustice	2	
Religious upbringing	1	
Family experience as migrants - want to help others	1	
Using bilingualism	1	
Wanting to give to others because fortunate	1	
Wanting to give to others because survived different experiences	1	
Conversion to Christianity	1	
Family problems - contact with community work	1	
Participant in community work projects so wanted to help others.	1	

3.3 Perceptions of Career

We were interested in identifying how people perceived their own career and how (and why) this perception might have changed. To this end, the interview explored early career goals, and how these had changed.

Career goals

35% had a career goal at twenty (including two out of the five men); 65% had none. For those who did, most had an orientation towards teaching or caring for others (nursing, prison service, social work), all jobs with a lot of what they defined as "people" contact. The few unfulfilled career goals which represented a more extreme change of direction were barrister and actress.

Most of those who did not have a career goal at twenty, saw themselves as aimless: "Never had any sense of what I was going to do", "nothing firm in my mind - men have it all planned out" (which was not true for this sample). Others just wanted to have a good time: "I just wanted to drop-out, live in a hippie commune" or "live fast, die young". The men were more like the women than the stereotype of career oriented men. Three of the five men had the same lack of goals and aimlessness as the majority of the women.

However, the greater lack of career orientation in the women is not surprising. Some of the women could see as far as getting educated or travelling overseas but that was all. Some of the women had their options denied them by their family, e.g. a father or a husband who did not believe university was for girls. Age seemed relevant to aspirations. The older women's lack of goals besides marrying reflects the more restricted lives of women born in the 1930s and 40s. Female respondents under 35 had lifted their sights, but only a little. They aimed at getting educated and most had done this but they had no career aims beyond that. Just gaining education was an end in itself and one their mothers could barely dream of. This is a significant advance but it is still not as focussed as the male stereotype. These younger women also had greater freedom to travel and most had taken this. However, even those younger workers with education had had their careers interrupted by having children, although the length of time taken off had decreased significantly from around ten years to one.

Table 3.3.1: Career Goals

Career plan/goal at 20?	F Female	M Male
YES	12	2
NO	23	3

<u>If so, what was it?</u>	Frequency	%(T=40)
Community Sector Work Social worker, supervising Work with migrant community, particular own ethnic group Work with community	3	8
Related "caring" progression Kindergarten teacher Work in day care centre Nun and teacher Nursing Go to college to be a dental hygienist - before the kids Prison service - work with people	8	20
Different Direction Librarian Academic Barrister Actress	4	10
Just Work - no idea at what Just assumed I'd work Secure job	2	5

No Career Direction "Never had any sense of what I was going to do" Only plan was to go overseas "Nothing firm in my mind" "Nothing firm in my mind - men have it all planned out" No direction "future problematic" Get a degree, but nothing after that	6	15
Family only "Marry, have kids and stop working" "Get a job for a few years, marry that was it"	3	8
Dropouts Drop-out, in hippie commune" Live fast, die young "No clue"	3	8
Career Aspirations hindered "Uni but father did not believe in it for girls" Goal stopped by marriage - husband opposed education for women	2	5

Did your Perception of your Career Change at any Point?

Some people's career goals were shaped by their work experience, e.g. finding out about management jobs. A small number of women had got more focussed on their career now their children were older or they were single parents. As one woman with high school age children said, "my work and career is for my needs now", after having fitted her work into her need to be home when her three children came home from school and support her husband's career moves.

Probably the biggest group were those who found their work more satisfying once they got into community sector by chance, found it more satisfying than their previous work (teaching or clerical work) and gave them a sense of direction. A small number (all women) still felt they had no direction in their career.

Some had had their view on the usefulness of social work or how to achieve social change changed by their work experience.

Table 3.3.2
Did Your Perception of your Career Change at Any Time?

YES	30
NO	8

(Two did not respond)

IF YES EXPLAIN	Frequency	%(T=38)
Changes in Family Commitments Divorce so secure \$ needed Kids older, husband own career no identified goals for self - not too late More interest in women's issues Career is for my needs now	4	11
Dissatisfied with Chosen Career/ Work Dissatisfied with schools, not concerned about people. No good at chosen career (acting) Want to do more counselling now, had training - started in clerical capacity	3	8
Opportunity to do Different Jobs at Work Admin/ m'ment at Councils Working for Amnesty Change with job restructuring	4	11
Life Experience Changes Views After overseas travel, say could work for social change not just voluntary Changed in orientation, planning not community work (partner a planner) Working in Alice Springs - community work, got interest in community and saw "how people fitted in" Having a disabled child	4	11
Because found Community Work more Satisfying Once in welfare, committed to work meaningful and personal growth Changed from teaching (only alternative for girls) to community work and got very committed to work. Sense of direction once in community work Once a CEO didn't want to do social work Once in management more attractive than being an academic Believe seen as "credible" as marriage counsellor in country town because have realistic view of marriage (competency?) Trade to prisons and working with people to trade again From law to community work	8	21
New Directions now yet taken See social problems in political context, not individual problems Want to work overseas with kids	2	5
Spiritual Experience changed me Spiritual experience - saw things differently, wanted to work with people Family and church	2	5
No change Seen as all a consistent development	1	3
Still aimless Still not in control, no direction No perception of career Worried about slide back to dependency full time to part time	3	8

3.4 Other Variables that Affected Career Paths

A range of variables that may affect career paths were explored. These include family commitment, voluntary work, periods spent outside paid employment and training.

Have family commitments have influenced your career?

Yes, they have	26 (65%) (3 males and 23 females)
No influence	14 (35%) (2 males and 12 females)

Of those who said NO

The most common characteristic was that 11 of the 14 had tertiary qualifications. Five out of the fourteen were single women whereas both men were married. In an example of how having family commitments does not hinder men's careers, one of the men made the point that "the family had to take second place while I was studying". This was for the first nine years of his married life. He was catching up on the degree he had not been able to get while single since he had dropped out of university under stress. It is very unlikely a woman could get her degree and have several children and continue to work full-time as he had.

Of those who said YES

The most common family influence (on women only) was the suitability of community sector work to meeting their family commitments, e.g. working part-time, being home after school, flexible hours, sympathetic work environment, e.g. can bring sick kids to work. This group was 11 out of the 26. After that, there was a small group (4) who worked in the community sector because of a sick family member or because of the hardship their family had endured (3). A group had had to work particular hours or stay in their current jobs longer rather than move around because of being single parents (3 women) or the sole breadwinner (1 male). Several people identified the freedom no family commitments gave them. Lack of family commitments had given one woman the "freedom to do what I liked" in terms of work, she could travel which allowed her to do a lot of interstate consultancy and she could take a drop in salary and sustain the differing income.

Has the lack of training opportunities been a problem for you?

YES 6

NO 34

The large majority had had access to appropriate training to assist their career. Four complained that they had not been able to take it up at times when offered because there was no study leave or they were too busy. Of those who had not had enough training opportunities, four noted that this was more than four years ago and there had been a vast improvement since then.

Have you ever lacked the confidence to apply for a job you really wanted?

YES 18

NO 22

The most common reason given for those who had lacked confidence was stated as a lack of confidence. Most reported they needed encouragement to apply for jobs at times (six out of the 18 - all women). The other less common reason was their judgement that they lacked the appropriate training or experience (4/18). This could be rationalisation.

What obstacles, if any, have you experienced?

YES 18

NO 22

Of those who had experienced obstacles, by far the most common was gender (7/18 - all females). More senior men were seen as prejudiced against women and two complained that less experienced men were groomed as successors. Other reasons were lack of appropriate qualifications (3/18) and a lack of encouragement by family members (3/18 all women). One woman said in this context that "when you are a woman you don't ask for help". Another woman said the biggest obstacle was that since she did not want to go into "the bureaucracy" there was no long career path open to her. She said "this sector is not about high prestige jobs". (Though many women are achieving some progression in our sample).

Voluntary Work

The most common forms of voluntary work were on management committees of community organisations (55%) and direct service delivery (48%). Men and women participated at much the same rate. A sizeable proportion of the sample did no voluntary work (23%). All of these were women and nearly all had degrees. Only the women were involved in the children's schools which was a family obligation rather than one related to their community sector work. Similarly, one of the men was involved in sport and scouting groups but not community sector voluntary work. The next most significant group were involved in political action (15%); one man and five women. A significant number (23%) did voluntary work when they were not in paid employment.

Table 3.4.1: Volunteer Work

Type	Female	Male	Total	%
In own organisation	2	0	2	6
Management committees	15	2	17	55
Direct service delivery	12	3	15	48
Political action/advocacy	5	1	6	19
Clubs, sport/scouts	0	1	1	3
Church	1	1	2	6
Kids school, P&C	4	0	4	13
None	9*	0	9	29

* One had kids and another had kids plus study

Periods when not in paid work

The most common reasons for breaks in paid employment were travel (55%), care of young children (43%) and study (30%). Travel for less than one year was the most common break but only for younger more educated women. Care of children was the most disruptive of any of the breaks with eight women having breaks of more than five years and three of more than ten years for this reason. These were the older, less highly educated women in the sample. Four people in the sample were unemployed in the break and two on maternity leave.

Table 3.4.2: Time out of Work Force

	Female	Male	Total	%
Study	12	3		30
Travel	22	1		55
Child-rearing	17			43
Care aged/disabled family member	3			8
Sickness/stress	4	2		10
Volunteer work	9	2		23
<u>Other</u>				
Maternity leave	2			6
Unemployed	4	2		13
	<u>40</u>			
Note: can be multiple episodes per person				

The men had breaks to their career as well as the women. However, they were shorter and none had the huge year plus breaks women had. Having children did not necessitate any break to working at all for the men. Despite working in a "caring" employment sector, all the men took breaks for their own benefit not out of altruism. The women in the sample responded to the familiar pressures on women to nurture others and put others before themselves (be they children or aged or disabled relatives). Many did volunteer work while out of paid work, though they did not usually leave for that purpose.

Taking a drop in salary

This question was added in to the survey as they progressed so only 25 were asked this. Nearly three quarters (72%) had taken a drop in salary. Only eight were asked were they happy with this and all were.

The most common reason was to take on more interesting job, (consistent with other responses) (40%). Necessity (no other job, husband had to move for work, retrenched, suited family commitments - mostly the care of children) was the factor for 28% all but one of whom were women. Some did it to get experience they wanted for their future career, e.g. working in another sector of community work with Local Government (12%). 12% did it to decrease stress at work.

3.5 Organisational/Sector Variables

We were interested in exploring the extent to which people's career choices were influenced by the organisational structure in which they worked. The answers to the following questions were so consistent that they are taken to represent a general community sector perception. The questions were not repeated in the questionnaire.

What kind of organisations would you prefer to work in?

By far the most popular type of organisation was the medium sized one with a team leader. Typical reasons were that it was small enough to avoid the disadvantages of a large bureaucracy (first option) but still structure: "team work is important" and "I believe hierarchical structures work well". It would be "closer to the ground, more involved, broader not locked in" yet there would be a team, "need others for support". Four respondents said they preferred this provided they were the team leader, recognising that they preferred having power and that this was important to their experience of the organisation. The second choice, the team without a leader, was chosen for the peer support it offered - "support each other plus initiative and independence" - and responsibility. The last option (working independently) was chosen because it would allow them "to make your own mark". "I prefer to work with people but like to be independent". Some thought it could still be a team situation but chose it because independence was more important. Several men indicated that they preferred having greater independence rather than the support of a team.

Table 3.5.1: Preferred organisational form

	F
Long established hierarchy, etc	1
Medium organisation/unit - team leader	33
Small, loosely structured - no leader	14
An organisation where can work independently	6
(Some chose more than one)	

Perceptions of other sectors - public, private, private consultant

Over half the sample had worked for the public sector (mostly in community sector related departments), 68% had worked in the private sector (mostly in low paid clerical work or as shop assistants and a small number in private nursing or dental nursing) and a quarter had worked as a private consultant at some stage (though rarely for as long as a year).

Table 3.5.2: Experience in other sectors

	Yes	No
Have you ever worked for the public sector?	27	13
Have you ever worked for the private (for profit) sector?	22	18
Have you ever worked as a private consultant?	10	30

Perceptions of these three sectors were remarkably consistent whether the respondent had worked in that sector or not and whether they were male or female. Negative views were often the reason for preferring the community sector.

Typical answers are given in Table 3.5.3 given below. They confirm answers to other questions about what the respondents want from their work (stimulation, flexibility, autonomy) as much as what they think of these sectors they have chosen not to work in. Some answers were stereotypes but a substantial number had worked in the sector so were presumably reflecting their experience as well.

Table 3.5.3: Perception of other Sectors - Typical Responses

<p>1. The Public Sector</p> <p><u>Positives:</u> No budgeting responsibility Job security Support from the system More innovative employment practices (eg, leave) Pay levels "None"</p> <p><u>Negatives:</u> Fewer responsibilities Too bureaucratic Size - too big Rigid processes Job inflexible very defined No diversity of experience Lack of flexibility Boring Inefficient sector "Waste of individual skills and talents within its staff"</p>
<p>2. The Private Sector</p> <p><u>Positives:</u> "None" (from experience) In medium organisation, good that lacks bureaucracy and offers internal cohesion Not as insecure as community service "No management committees" "None" "Easy, undemanding (secretarial work), pays okay"</p> <p><u>Negatives:</u> Service delivery is affected by cost considerations "No sense of contributing to the world" Couldn't do it myself Lack of flexibility Conflict of interests if working in private community services, eg, how to provide rehabilitative care and yet be concerned about profit. Incompetent decision-makers Boring</p>

3. Private consultancy

Positives:

Stimulating

Challenge of different environments and what you can do in a short time

Specific goals

More leeway, more money, more freedom

Like to evaluate or set something up and then get out

Freedom to structure your work

Flexible

Negatives:

Professionally isolated - always working in another organisation's workplace

Not having the support of an organisation

Income uncertain

Need qualifications to do it regularly

Work is insecure

No continuing relationship with people and don't get to live with the results of your work

Does not pay well

3.6 The Future

The interviews were intended to explore past career decisions and current attitudes. However, we became interested in the extent to which community sector workers had a future career plan. To explore this we added the question "where do you see yourself in 5 years time". We asked this of half the sample (20 people).

Several women could not even contemplate it: "I live from day to day and don't think about it"; "Here still or something like it"; "Men have it all planned out but I've never done that". Several of the women in their fifties were hoping to have retired (who perhaps had never expected to have to work all their lives but be kept by their husbands.) Those wanting to progress mostly saw themselves in management positions. The several who did not expect to stay in community sector were still pursuing interesting work and did not see it lying in the sector for them (because of their lack of training).

Table 3.6.1: Future Plans

"Absolutely no idea"/"can't think about it"	3
Community sector with more responsibility	6
Community sector but don't know doing what	3
Same place	1
Not in the community sector	4
Want to have retired	3

3.7 Case Studies

Analysing responses to a standardised question across many people provides one kind of information, but loses the sense of the whole person and the way many factors and decisions impinge on that person. At one level each person is unique but at another level we identified recurring patterns in the life stories, patterns we felt could be at least partly captured in a holistic way through a series of composite case studies. Composite case studies have the potential of capturing the larger pattern, being more "real" while protecting individual confidentiality. However, there is no suggestion that all workers fit into one of these cases nor that a case study necessarily matches all characteristics of any one person.

Older, family women

There were nine of these women in the interview sample. Their stories of course differed from each other, but also showed some recurring patterns. The following composite case study highlights those recurring patterns while preserving anonymity of individual respondents.

Women in this group are all currently working in the community sector. Ages range from 35 to 52, with most in their mid to late 40s. They include women from Sydney and Dubbo. Let us call the prototypical woman from this group, Grace.

Grace left high school and worked in a secretarial or paramedical capacity, not in the community sector. She subsequently married, had children, and left full-time employment. She remained out of the workforce for an extended period, about 10 years. During this period she became very active in various community activities involving her children: playgroup, mothers club, school canteen, children's sport and leisure activities. This was all voluntary work, though Grace took on responsible positions extending beyond the support of her own children.

When she was ready to re-enter paid employment, she did so with the community sector. There were several reasons for this decision:

- The decision was a pragmatic one. She needed a job that fitted into her continuing family responsibilities. "It was easier to raise a family and work in family welfare, because it is local and the employing organisation is flexible". She needed flexible hours and somewhere close to home.
- She did not want to return to her original occupation, which she felt she had outgrown, but was searching for something more interesting and challenging. She sought "a more satisfying job and a chance to affect change for people".
- She was able to draw on her life experience in raising a family, as well as her recent volunteer community experience. Her personal skills from this experience more than made up for her lack of formal qualifications.
- She had a strongly altruistic value system and a desire to help others. This partly came as a result of her own life experience of disadvantage and was reflected in her active voluntary work from way back.

Grace entered the community sector about ten years ago, in a reasonably responsible position (about the equivalent of category two under the NSW SACS award) and since then has moved to a slightly more responsible, co-ordinating position. Once she was established in her job, she began to seek more formal training and accreditation of her skills.

However, Grace is continuing to try to juggle or balance family and career, and that has not been easy. "The family comes first, but it is hard to come to terms with ... it is very difficult to go home from work and be a mother ...". She sees family expectations as her main obstacle to her career. She not only has the children to contend with but must also respond to her husband's needs, to move when he wants to move, assist him when he sets up his own business, and so on.

She also finds her lack of formal qualifications to be a barrier, both because this limits her formal opportunities and because she has at times lacked the confidence to try new opportunities. Nonetheless, she is not seeking major advancement. She hopes to

continue working in the community sector, perhaps obtaining a slightly more challenging job. She is still committed to family responsibilities, and realistically sees that that limits her career future. Sometimes she has fantasies of retiring...

Older professional women with children

We interviewed five women that fitted this pattern. Ages ranged from 38 to 49. All were in Sydney. We will call this prototype woman, Wendy.

Wendy completed her university professional training, in social work or social science, following high school when she was in her early 20s. She moved immediately into a professional, full-time case work position at a base level. While in this position she married, became pregnant, and left her full-time position. She did some casual or part-time work between children, but remained essentially out of the workforce for several years (about 5 years). She returned to paid work as soon as possible, returning in the first instance to a part-time position for several years. By about 1985, ie in her mid 30s, Wendy took on full-time employment, in a moderately responsible position (about category three of the NSW SACS award).

Since then her life has taken several turns. She divorced but remained responsible for the care and support of growing children. Her attitude to work changed. Whereas early on she had looked to her job for personal interest and the development of personal skills, she now developed a much more hard headed sense of economic survival; "I became much more career oriented, especially after becoming single ... I couldn't afford the luxury of an interesting job" (unless it also paid well). She deliberately sought promotions, or positions that provided potential future career opportunities. She sought, and obtained additional formal training to fill gaps in her expertise. She still prefers interesting, challenging work, and prefers to work independently, or where she has control. She has a clear sense of her own future direction which will be into a more senior position, not necessarily in the community sector. She continues to take her career seriously.

Younger professional women

We interviewed nine women who followed this pattern, all of them in Sydney. Ages range from 27 to 35. We will call the prototypical woman, Anne.

Anne completed her degree in social work after high school, ie in her early 20s. She preferred community work to case work in her work placements, and after graduating sought this type of job. However, she had no clear career plan apart from finding an interesting job with opportunities to expand her experience. Her first positions were temporary or part-time. She tended to take whatever was available and "sounded interesting". After saving a bit of money, she then went overseas for about a year, doing a bit of casual work overseas. She returned to Australia, again taking a series of part-time, or short-term contracts. Finally, some three years after graduating, she settled into her first full-time, permanent position, at a moderately senior position (about category three of the NSW SACS award).

Anne remains single and optimistic. She has done no volunteer work but neither is she particularly ambitious. She has experienced some promotion but equally she can and does accept new positions for lower salary if the job is worth it. She wants "work that is appealing but challenging ...". "I need to feel stretched a bit ... to respond to challenge". Anne prefers to work as part of a team but needs to have control over her own work: "teamwork is important ... but also independence and responsibility". Her future career plans are vague, although she wants to remain in the community sector, extend her personal skills, improve her career prospects and explore new opportunities.

NESB women entered community sector through work with migrants

We interviewed three women from NESB background though educated in Australia. All were young, aged between 23 and 27. Two were single and one had a partner and young child.

Cathy is 24. She is Australian born to a South American family. Her first language was Spanish. She is single with no children. She is still strongly involved with her family's life and lives at home with them. She has been in the paid workforce six years.

Her first job after high school was clerical and lasted a year. After that she left to do part-time casework/interpreting base-level direct service work with Spanish-speaking families after finding out about the work from a friend. She started doing short "ethnic welfare" course at TAFE to increase her skills.

She did several such jobs at category 2 level, casual or part-time, for the next few years. Keeping in migrant services but moving towards community work and other language groups as well as hers.

Her first full-time job came after four years in paid work-force and was for a limited period because of funding, not permanent. She is currently in another full-time but not permanent job, filling in for someone on maternity leave.

She had entered community sector work because of her family's experience of the problems of being migrants. She had an orientation to helping others with similar problems and wanted to put her Spanish "to use". Faced with the alternative of continuing in clerical work, which she found boring and which meant enduring sexist patronising comments, she much preferred the purpose and relative freedom of community work. Because she is still living at home, she is subject to emotional and nurturing demands of family and sees work as an escape legitimised by its helping aspect.

She has a strong desire to help others and prefers work where "I could do more and help more and be happy for myself" in doing so. She has seen her family struggle and wants to make it easier for others. She tends to work a lot of extra hours for nothing even when working part-time because of this helping ethic.

Her altruism was probably reinforced by her family's expectations of a daughter. There was a much stronger tie to home and social groups derived from her upbringing (than with the younger professional Anglo women). She was heavily involved in voluntary welfare/counselling/youth camps and even political campaigns relating to her parents' country of origin.

In her attitude to work, the chance to work with a new client group (which meant broadening out beyond her immediate ethnic group) and career opportunities were the most important reason for changing jobs. Future career opportunities, a good group of people to work with and more interesting/challenging work were also extremely important. The philosophy of the employing organisation and the opportunity to effect some change either through policy or through new services was also very important. On the other hand, increased salary, better hours, more secure tenure and increased responsibilities were not very important. This reflects her work experience with a string of short term jobs and as yet no permanency. She has taken a drop in salary to get a better job.

She has never taken time off to travel overseas nor stopped work to study. She has been in paid work since leaving high school but not full-time work necessarily.

Although she started out in the community sector unqualified, she has done a range of short course training programs both in-service and at TAFE to equip her to do the community work she wanted to do. She has obtained a TAFE welfare certificate while working.

Her goal at twenty has been to work with migrant community especially Spanish speakers. She sees herself in community sector work in five years time but in a higher position.

Older NESB women

Three of the older women from NESB background (40 to 46), two unqualified) had a similar orientation to work when they entered community sector work. All three started in clerical type work. They had no career paths though one wanted to go to university. All were bound down by several children and family commitments for many years of unpaid work, then several years of part-time. For two of them their family's expectations of girls had limited their education and career options and a caring profession had been encouraged. These people fitted in with other patterns, eg older unqualified women.

Men

We interviewed five men. All were in their 40s and currently in senior, responsible positions as co-ordinators or chief executive officers. Ted (we will call him) has professional qualifications, though these were not obtained in his youth. In fact Ted experienced a fairly dramatic career change some time in his late 20s/early 30s. His early work life was somewhat aimless, lacking a clear direction or sense of purpose. The change was accompanied by a personal re-assessment and an explicit social and Christian commitment. Initially, the change in direction required some sacrifice-studying part-time, volunteer work, accepting temporary or unsatisfying positions.

The family played a different role in the case of Ted than it did for any of the women. They had to make career sacrifices for the sake of the family. In Ted's case, his study took primary place and the rest of the family made sacrifices for his sake. Ted readily admits that he experienced strong emotional support from his wife in particular during the period of career transition. Ted has remained in stable employment for the past 10 years, within the same or similar organisation. He has achieved several promotions.

Ted acknowledges that the choice of career in the community sector has entailed some sacrifice in terms of salary and conditions. However he enjoys the independence offered, and the sense of commitment and responsibility. This commitment is expected to continue into the future.

4.0 QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

4.1 The Sample

The final questionnaire sample comprised 162 useable forms. Note however, that this number varies for particular analyses where some data is incomplete. The sample had the following characteristics:

Location
Table 4.1.1: LGA

	F	%
Hurstville	7	4
Inner west	9	6
Kuring-gai	14	9
Lismore	18	11
Maitland	10	6
Orange	20	12
Parramatta	10	6
Penrith	11	7
Sutherland	11	7
Wollongong	26	16
Students (Metropolitan Sydney)	26	16
N	162	100

Table 4.1.2: Urban/Rural

	F	%
City *	66	41
Outer metropolitan	22	14
Regional	36	22
Rural	38	24

* This includes students, some of whom are drawn from outer metropolitan areas.

Table 4.1.3: Gender

	F	%
Female	126	79
Male	34	21
N	160	100

Table 1.04: Age

	F	%
Younger (-34)	38	34
Middle (35-44)	61	39
Older (45 +)	59	37
Mean age	42 years	

Table 4.1.5: Domestic Situation

	F	%
Single	23	14
Single, with dependents	15	9
Partnered (who is employed)	103	64
Partnered (unemployed)	19	12

Table 4.1.6: Children

	F	%
No children	40	25
1-2 "	60	43
3-4 "	48	30
5-6 "	4	2

Table 4.1.7: Family

	F	%
Female, children under 12	30	19
Female, no child or over 12	95	59
Male, children under 12	13	8
Male, no child or over 12	21	13

Table 4.1.8: Highest Qualifications

	F	%
No response	4	3
Below HSC	10	6
HSC	18	11
TAFE certificate	23	14
Associate Diploma	34	21
Degree	53	33
Post Graduate	20	12

The sample is predominantly female, middle aged, partnered, with older children and some form of post secondary educational qualifications. The 79% of women in the sample correspond well with the estimated ABS figure of 76% women in private sector community services in NSW. There are somewhat smaller groups of young single women and of women with young children. The sample is drawn equally from Metropolitan Sydney and other areas of NSW.

4.2 A Profile of Organisations

Table 4.2.1 summarises the types of organisations in which people work.

Table 4.2.1: Organisation Type

	F	%
Small local organisations	75	46
Peak or umbrella organisations	20	12
Local branch of large state/national organisation	34	21
Central office of large state/national organisation	13	8
Large, semi-autonomous organisation	13	8
Other (local government)	7	4
Total	162	100

Staffing levels of these organisations are summarised in Table 4.2.2

Table 4.2.2: Staffing Levels

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range
Full-time staff	8.5	18.4	0-99
Part-time staff	6.5	12.2	0-80
Casual staff	2.8	7.3	0-60
Volunteer staff	14.9	28.3	0-99

There is clearly an enormous variation in numbers and type of staff from one organisation to another. The following tables give a clearer summary of this range.

Table 4.2.3: Number of Organisations

Number of Staff	Full-Time		Part-Time		Volunteers	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
None	38	24	34	21	87	54
One only	24	15	27	17	7	4
2-4	43	26	48	30	7	4
5-9	24	15	26	16	10	6
10-19	20	12	11	7	15	9
20 plus	13	8	16	4	36	22
N = 162						

Nearly a quarter of all organisations have no full-time staff. Most organisations appear to employ a mixture of full-time and part-time staff. The majority of organisations are small local ones, employing between 0 and 5 full-time staff and between 0 and 5 part-time staff. However, there are a few organisations employing a great many full-time and part-time staff. The use of volunteers is especially diverse; while 54% of organisations use none, a further 22% use over 20 (some, hundreds of) volunteers.

There was no consistent difference in pattern of staff levels according to rural/urban location.

4.3. A Profile of Recent Work History

4.3.1 Length of Stay

Respondents have remained in their current position for an average 4.1 years and in their current organisation for an average 5.3 years. Table 4.3.1 provides a summary of length of time spent in the last three positions.

Table 4.3.1: Years in Position

	Current	Last	Previous
Mean years	4.15	3.22	2.66
Standard Deviation	3.8	2.3	2.1
Range (in years)	1-22	1-9	1-9

Table 4.3.2: Number of Positions in Past 10 years

	Mean positions	% None
State/Commonwealth Public Service	.7	62
Local Government	.2	86
Private, for Profit	.3	81
Community	2.5	4 *
Total	3.6	-

* 4% of respondents are in boundary organisations such as child care auspiced by Local Government and Home Care which is now a State Government Instrumentality.

Contrary to expectations, respondents tend to remain with the same organisation for an extended period. There is some movement between sectors but not a great deal. Most job changes remain within the community sector. Note, however, that the sample was limited to experienced workers.

There is no difference in length of time spent in the current position or in the current organisation regardless of whether respondents are working in a rural or urban setting. However, there is a significant difference in the number of different positions held in the community sector over the past 10 years, with inner city workers having the most and rural workers the least number of different positions.

Table 4.3.3

	Mean
Urban	3.06
Outer metropolitan	2.00
Regional	2.51
Rural	1.79
F = 3,299 p < .02	

Older workers remained in one position for a longer period than younger workers, with older workers averaging 4.11 years and the youngest group 2.47 years (F = 6.988, p < .001).

Those with lower qualifications also tended to stay longer (F = 2.92, p < .015).

(Note: There is no significant relationship between age and rural/urban location, between location and qualification or between age and qualifications.)

There is no observed difference in length of position by gender or family situation. Of those workers that have changed positions, 20% remained within the same organisation. Of those who changed organisations, the majority (43.70% of the total sample) moved from a large organisation to a smaller one. These results are summarised in table 4.3.4.

Table 4.3.4: Changes in organisation

	F	%
The same organisation	32	20
Previous organisation was similar in size	12	8
Previous organisation was smaller	45	29
Previous organisation was larger	68	43
Total	157	100

Position Level

Respondents were asked to identify, for each of their three most recent positions, whether it was full-time, part-time or casual and what their formal level of responsibility was.

Five position levels were identified, based on the SACS (NSW) award. These were described as:

- **level one:** Assistant under the direct supervision of another person;
- **level two:** May include direct service delivery on an individual or community basis under general supervision;
- **level three:** Takes substantial responsibility for service delivery and co-ordination. May contribute to social policy;
- **level four:** Overall administration and co-ordination. Develops and implements policy;
- **level five:** Higher management of large unit or organisation.

The results are presented in tables 4.3.5 and 4.3.6 below.

Table 4.3.5: Job Status

	Current position	Past position	Previous position
Full-time	69 %	59 %	59 %
Part-time	29 %	32 %	33 %
Casual	2 %	9 %	8 %
Number responding	(160)	(158)	(146)

Table 4.3.6: Position Level

	Current position	Past position	Previous position
Level one (assistant)	4 %	12 %	18 %
Level two (direct service)	7 %	25 %	30 %
Level three (substantial responsibility)	37 %	36 %	36 %
Level four (co-ordination)	45 %	19 %	12 %
Level five (higher management)	6 %	7 %	4 %
Number responding	(159)	(154)	(141)

In order to obtain a clearer picture of job progression over time, the designated level and job status of the three most recent positions was combined in a single analysis. The results may be summarised as follows:

- Of those who are now at position level 4 or 5 (i.e. in relatively senior positions, a total of 75 persons),
 - 11 or 15% have consistently held senior positions over 3 occasions
 - 29 or 39% moved up from level 3 (intermediate)
 - 23 or 31% moved up from level 1 or 2 (a relatively junior position)
 - 12 or 16% previously moved down one or more levels and subsequently moved up to a senior position.

- Of those who are now at position level 3 (i.e. in an intermediate position, a total of 49 persons),
 - 7 or 14% have remained consistently in an intermediate position over 3 occasions
 - 28 or 57% moved up from level 1 or 2 (junior position)
 - 5 or 10% previously moved down one or more levels and then up to 3
 - 9 or 18% moved down from level 4 or 5.

- Of those who are now at position level 1 or 2 (i.e. relatively junior, of which there are 14 persons)
 - 9 or 64% consistently held junior positions over 3 occasions
 - 5 or 36% moved down from a more senior position.

Over the 138 cases for which there is a complete record over 3 occasions,

- 27 or 20% stayed the same
- 80 or 58% improved their position
- 17 or 12% moved down but subsequently improved their position
- 14 or 10% moved down

A similar analysis for job status was made for the three most recent positions.

Of the 143 cases for whom complete data is available,

- 55 or 38% were consistently full-time
- 15 or 10% were consistently part-time

- 1 or 1% were consistently casual
- 47 or 33% moved from a part-time or casual position to current full-time
- 22 or 15% moved from a full-time position into a current part-time or casual position
- 3 or 2% moved between part-time and casual.

The overall picture is of a great deal of movement in job status and position level. While the majority of workers (60-70%) at any one time are full-time, at least 48% of workers had moved from part-time to full-time or from full time to part-time.

There is a strong association between job status and gender and between job status and the presence of children. As might be expected, women are more likely than males to be part-time ($X^2 = 6.91, p < .01$) and those with children under 12 are more likely to be part-time ($X^2 = 14.97, p < .02$).

There does not appear to be any association between job status on the one hand and location or qualification or organisation type on the other hand.

Similarly with position level, there is a great deal of movement, with the majority of workers having improved their status. However, at least 22% experienced a drop in status at some time.

It is more difficult to determine the association between position level and other variables, as too many small cell sizes were generated for reliable analysis. However, there appears to be no clear association between position level on the one hand, and age, education level, gender, presence of children or rural/urban location on the other hand. It is not the case that males have consistently higher status nor that senior positions are more likely to be filled by more (formally) qualified workers. Such trends are at best marginal. Table 3.2.3 below illustrates the point.

Table 4.3.7: Educational Qualifications

Position Level	Educational Qualifications Low (1 & 2)	Educational Qualifications Medium (3 & 4)	Educational Qualifications High (5 & 6)
Low (1 & 2)	5	8	3
Medium (3)	7	25	26
High (4 & 5)	15	24	42

Shifts in Responsibility

Respondents were asked for each of the previous two changes in position, whether the move had entailed an increase or decrease in status and responsibility. Those results are summarised in tables 4.3.8 and 4.3.9 below.

Table 4.3.8: Moving from last to present position (percent response)

	Increase	Same	Decrease	Number responding
Salary	58	20	22	(152)
Budget responsibility	61	20	19	(139)
Staff responsibility	59	24	17	(143)
Access to decision making	72	19	9	(148)
Prestige	51	34	15	(130)

Table 4.3.9: Moving from previous to last position (percent response)

	Increase	Same	Decrease	Number responding
Salary	58	24	17	(144)
Budget responsibility	50	34	16	(130)
Staff responsibility	54	28	18	(130)
Access to decision making	61	26	14	(133)
Prestige	52	40	7	(122)

In order to get a clearer idea of the impact of change on status and responsibility, the last two changes were combined in the following analysis.

Table 4.3.10

	Salary		Budget Responsibility		Staff Responsibility		Decision making		Prestige	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Down Twice	4	3	2	2	3	2	0	-	0	-
Down 1, Same 1	9	6	7	6	6	5	4	3	6	5
Down 1, Up 1	35	25	33	26	31	25	25	19	17	15
Same Twice	13	9	16	13	16	13	11	9	25	22
Up 1, Same 1	28	20	29	23	30	24	32	25	26	23
Up Twice	51	36	39	31	40	32	57	44	38	34
N	140		126		126		129		112	

The vast majority of respondents in fact experienced an overall increase in salary, status, and responsibility over the past two changes in position. However, it is also clear that some 34% of respondents accepted at least one drop in salary.

In terms of promotion within the same organisation, the results indicate:

Table 4.3.11

	F	%
Never promoted	58	36
Within community organisation	53	33
Within other organisation	28	17
Both	7	4
No response	16	10

There was NO apparent association between change in responsibility/status on the one hand and the variables gender and age, education qualifications, the presence of children, or by urban/rural location.

There was some differences evident by age. Older people were more likely to experience an increase in staff responsibility when they moved to their present job ($X^2 = 16.00$, $p < .003$). The younger group was also less likely to experience an increase in salary, budget responsibility and prestige but these trends while consistent, were not significant.

4.4 Factors Influencing Job Choice

Reasons for Applying to Current Position

Respondents were asked how important each of a number of reasons was in influencing their decision to apply for their current job. An overall summary of responses, given in percentage terms, is provided in table 4.4.1 below.

Table 4.4.1: Job Influences

Percent (N = 162)

	A strong attraction	somewhat relevant	not relevant	not offered	no response
Increased salary rate	19	30	35	14	3
Secure tenure	17	23	34	24	3
More hours	8	17	59	12	4
Fewer hours	5	11	61	17	7
More flexible hours	17	20	48	9	5
Convenient location	30	27	33	7	3
Increased staff responsibility	24	30	35	7	4
Increased budget responsibility	21	28	38	9	4
More access to decision making	41	26	26	4	3
Greater Prestige	14	17	57	7	4
Future career opportunities	24	25	35	14	3
Good management structure	30	35	27	6	4
Good organisational philosophy	46	33	14	4	3
A good group of people to work with	53	28	14	2	3
The chance to work independently	44	36	16	1	3
To extend personal skill	65	24	8	-	3
Formal training opportunities	21	24	31	20	5
More interesting, challenging work	66	23	9	1	1
To influence policy development	35	32	26	6	3
To contribute to social change	52	27	14	5	2
To create a new service	37	23	32	6	3
To work with a new client group	45	27	23	3	2
To network with other agencies	36	41	22	1	1

The reason may be roughly clustered, in descending order of importance, as follows:

- * Strongest attraction for most workers was the opportunity for "interesting, challenging work" and the opportunity to "extend personal skills". These may be indicative of a strong personal development motivation.
- * Almost as important was the social interaction; the position provided "a good group of people to work with".
- * A social action motivation was moderate to strong for many. Items include (in descending order importance): "the chance to contribute to social change"; "to work with a new client group"; to "create a new service"; to "network with other agencies", to "influence policy development".
- * Moderately strong were reasons associated with work mode: "the chance to work independently", "good organisational philosophy", and "access to decision making".
- * Less important for most but important for about a quarter of all respondents were reasons associated with career development; "future career opportunity"; "increased staff and budget responsibilities"; "formal training opportunities".
- * Again less important for most but important for some were the pragmatics of working conditions: "convenient location"; "increased salary"; "flexible hours"; "secure tenure".
- * Least important to most was "greater prestige".

Of interest is the extent to which these reasons vary for certain categories of people. Analyses were carried out by gender, age, educational qualifications, location, organisation type and position level. Very few significant differences emerged. In general, the ordering of importance remains much the same for all community sector workers.

No significant differences were found for gender. There was a trend for more women to note the strong attraction of flexible hours (20% F, vs 12% M) and convenient location (33% F vs 24% M, this goes to 40% for women with children under 12) but neither of these differences reached significance.

Several variables differed by age. "Security of tenure" was regarded as most relevant for the middle aged, less relevant for the old and not offered to the young ($X^2 = 16.01$, $p < .01$). "Greater prestige" was least relevant to the youngest group ($X^2 = 13.96$, $p < .03$). There was also a marginally significant difference for "organisational philosophy" (the older group split into the two extremes) and for "interesting challenging work" (less important for the young).

There was also a consistent tendency for the younger group to be more concerned with "increased salary" and "flexible hours" and less concerned with "staff and budget responsibilities", "access to decision making" and "good group of people". However, none of these trends reached significance.

There was very little observable difference in response by location. The only significant difference was in terms of "extending personal skills", this was more relevant for city (including student sample) and less relevant for rural areas ($X^2 = 14.95$, $p < .02$).

There were some observable trends according to current position level but all sizes were too small for any reliable conclusions. The trends were for those in relatively junior positions to be more concerned with "convenient location", "flexible hours" and "training opportunities" while those in relatively senior positions to be more concerned with "budget and staff responsibility", "access to decision making", "greater prestige", "working independently" and "policy development", "social change", "creating new service" and "networking with other agencies".

Education level did not appear to influence the reasons for applying.

The type of organisation may be an important intervening variable but the cell numbers were too small for any reliable conclusion. It does appear that those in small local

organisations were more attracted by "increased staff responsibility" and by "interesting, challenging work", while those in large, semi autonomous organisations were more attracted by the "management structure" and "organisational philosophy".

Reasons for Leaving Previous Position

People may apply for a job for positive reasons that attract them to the new position or for negative reasons that repel them from their previous position. To explore the negative motivations, respondents were asked to indicate how serious a number of potential reasons were for leaving their last position. The percent results are provided in table 4.4.2.

Table 4.4.2: Reasons for Leaving

(N = 162)

	Serious	Somewhat	Not at all	No Response
Workload too heavy	16	18	57	9
Work with clients too stressful	8	19	64	9
Management committee/board not supportive	17	22	51	11
Management staff not supportive	16	17	57	10
Insufficient admin. support	12	20	59	9
Conflict with staff	7	10	74	10
Conflict with other agencies	1	7	82	10
Funding ran out	14	4	71	11
Family commitments	14	15	61	9
Other (explain) <u>48% gave other reason</u>				

The most common reason for leaving was lack of support from the management committee or board; 39% of respondents acknowledged this as a contributing reason. Other common complaints were "workload too heavy" (34%) and management staff not supportive (33%) Family commitments were relevant for 29% of respondents.

Nearly half of all respondents gave some other response. An analysis of the open ended answers indicated a similar pattern, as indicated in table 4.4.3 below.

Table 4.2.3: Open Ended Responses - Reasons for Leaving

	F
Issues about personal development (lack of challenge, not using skills, needing to change direction)	15
Issues about the organisation (conflict of philosophy, restructuring, change in focus)	10
Position gone (temporary position, agency moved or closed)	8
Family moved/had a child/travelled	14
New position attractive (promotion, new challenge)	11
Burnout/exhaustion/poor health	4
Poor work conditions (salary, shifts, travelling)	5
Left the public service	3

(A further 8 responses were elaborations of previous responses.)

The obtained pattern of reasons for leaving did not differ significantly by location (whether urban or rural) or by educational level.

Reasons for Entering Community Sector

Respondents to the questionnaire entered the community sector at a mean age of 30.4 (range 15-58), that is, some 12 years ago.

They were asked for their reasons for entering the community sector. A summary of responses is presented in table 4.4.4.

Table 4.3.4: Reasons for entering Community Sector (N=162)

Reason	F	%
Influence of Family (parents)	6	4
Religious Commitment	30	19
Philosophical/Political commitment	91	56
Commitment to Social change	101	62
Personal Life Experience (e.g. former service user)	36	22
Volunteer Experience	38	24
Study Placement	15	9
Hours/location convenient for family commitment/lifestyle	51	32
Only job available (or by chance)	27	17
Other	14	9

There appear to be three kinds of common reason. The first and strongest reason held by nearly everyone in some form concerns a personal commitment to the work itself, and particularly a commitment to making a difference to social change. The second reason, one held by roughly a third of respondents, is the pragmatic reason of convenience. The third reason, held by about a quarter of all respondents, is their earlier life experience either as a volunteer or as a service user. Very few moved into the community sector by chance or necessity or through family or study influences.

There are some differences in this pattern for different groups of workers. Gender is important for two reasons. Men are more likely than women to enter the community sector for "religious commitment" ($X^2 = 19.66$, $p < .001$). Women are more likely than men to enter because "the hours/location is convenient for family commitment" ($X^2 = 7.63$, $p < .006$). This effect is particularly strong for women with children under 12.

Men and women are equally likely to endorse other reasons.

Age is also a relevant variable. Younger workers are more likely to have entered the community sector for reasons of "philosophical/political commitment" ($X^2 = 11.59$, $p < .003$). Those who entered the community sector at a younger age were also more likely to have entered for reasons of "philosophical/political commitment" ($X^2 = 10.66$, $p < .005$) and "commitment to social change" ($X^2 = 8.07$, $p < .02$). On the other hand the older group is more likely to have entered for "hours/location convenient for family commitment/lifestyle" ($X^2 = 5.97$, $p < .05$). There was no significant difference by age for the other reasons. Educational level had little effect, although small cell sizes makes conclusions unreliable. However, those with higher education are significantly more likely to enter for reasons of "philosophical/political commitment" ($X^2 = 16.53$, $p < .005$).

There is also an effect for position level. People in more senior positions are more likely to give as reasons for entering the community sector, "religious commitment" ($X^2 = 9.53$, $p < .05$), "philosophical/political commitment" ($X^2 = 13.26$, $p < .01$) and "commitment to social change" ($X^2 = 12.25$, $p < .02$).

There was NO observable difference by rural/urban location or organisational type.

4.5. The Impact of Volunteer Work

This is a study of career paths for paid workers within the community sector. However, a great deal of work in the community sector is carried out by volunteers. It is, therefore, important to examine the boundaries between paid and unpaid work, between volunteers and paid workers.

As indicated in section 4.2 above, the respondents organisations use an average 14.9 volunteers. And as indicated in section 4.4 above, nearly one quarter of all workers cite previous volunteer experience as one reason for entering the community sector.

Further direct evidence of the overlap between paid and unpaid work was sought. Respondents were asked to estimate the number of hours of unpaid work per month over the past year for a variety of categories. The results are summarised in table 4.5.1.

Table 4.5.1: Unpaid hours per month

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range	N	% saying "none"
Within employing organisation	25.0	26.8	1-99	115	29
Management committees of other organisations	10.8	15.2	1-99	75	54
Direct service delivery	17.9	27.3	2-99	32	80
Political Action/advocacy	9.9	12.7	1-72	36	78
Club activities (Lions, scouts, sport)	13.4	19.1	1-99	33	80
Other	29.4	35.7	2-99	32	80
Total	31.6 hrs say 23.7			162	13%

There appeared to be some confusion in responding to this question. Some people ticked a category without specifying the number of hours. Some 17 people indicated a total of over 99 hours - probably referring to the total for the year rather than a monthly average.

If these are removed from the calculations, the total average hours per month is 23.7 hours or just over 5 hours per week.

Even so there appears to be an enormous variation in the type and amount of unpaid work. For most categories, most workers do not volunteer, while a minority of people provide large numbers of unpaid hours. However, nearly everyone (71%) contributes some additional unpaid hours to their employing organisation and nearly half (46%) contributes unpaid hours, to management committees of other organisations.

Other variables do affect the relationship between paid and unpaid work. Gender has NO significant effect. Age does have some effect; younger workers are less likely to do unpaid service delivery ($X^2 = 6.97, p < .03$). They are also more likely to be involved in political action and less involved in management committees but these trends are not significant. There is no difference by age for other categories of unpaid work. Both men and women with children under 12 are more likely to be involved in "club activities, (Lions, Scouts, sport)" ($X^2 = 7.54, p < .05$). Educational level has no apparent effect, however, position level does. Those in more senior positions are more likely to be involved on management committees of other organisations ($X^2 = 16.82, p < .002$).

There does not appear to be any consistent effect of rural/urban location except that workers in outer metropolitan areas are more likely to be on management committees of other organisations ($F = 5.98, p < .001$). Type of organisation may be relevant in that unpaid work is more likely within the employing organisation for small local organisations, less likely for local branches or peaks ($X^2 = 12.66, p < .03$). However, small cell sizes renders conclusions unreliable.

4.6 Salary Drop

Interpolating from questionnaire responses, it appears that some 34% of respondents experienced a salary drop sometime in the past two career moves. Respondents were also asked to indicate (if they had experienced a salary drop why they had done so. Some 61 respondents (37.7%) of the total sample) responded to this question. The reasons given are summarised in table 4.6.1.

Table 4.6.1: Reasons for Accepting a Salary Drop

	F *	% Overall	% of salary droppers
Only job available	5	3	5
Long term career advantages	14	9	23
Opportunity for new skills	36	22	59
Good experience	28	17	46
Convenient for family	16	10	26
Convenient for self	27	17	44
Religious/philosophical commitment	25	15	41
Challenging/interesting job	43	27	70
Less stress	15	9	25
More autonomy	21	13	34
Other	12	7	20

* Note: Numbers are not cumulative as respondents frequently gave more than one reason

Very few respondents admitted to accepting a salary drop from necessity. On the other hand, 70% of all those who had accepted a salary drop did so because it was an interesting/challenging job; nearly 60% did so because of the opportunity to develop new skills. That is, where there is a conflict between maintaining salary and personal development, many community sector workers place a higher priority on personal development. Religious or philosophical commitment was also important for 40%.

Not for all, however. Some respondents accepted a drop in salary for pragmatic reasons; the lower paying job was more convenient for themselves (44%) or their families (26%) or it offered a less stressful environment (25%). For some (23%) it was a short term step towards a longer term career advantage.

The relatively small subsample of salary droppers renders further analyses unreliable. There does appear to be consistent patterns of response concerning reasons for applying for jobs, for leaving jobs, and for accepting a salary drop. So, for instance, those who accepted a drop in salary for reasons of family convenience were also more likely to

apply for a job with flexible hours and convenient location and to have spent time out of the paid workforce for child rearing purposes.

Similarly, those who took a salary drop for interesting/challenging work, were also more likely to have the same reason for applying for a job and to be less interested in salary or secure tenure. Those who accepted a salary drop to preserve their autonomy, also valued the chance to work independently as a reason for applying for a job. Those who accepted a drop for less stress were also more likely to have left their last position because of heavy workload, stressful clients and lack of management support.

There does not appear to be any clear pattern by age, gender, education level or rural/urban location. However, workers of both genders were more likely to accept a salary drop to gain a new skill or experience if they did not have young children, while workers of both genders who had young children, but especially women, were more likely to accept a salary drop because it was "convenient for family". This effect is very strong; it accounts for 86% of women with young children who accepted a salary drop ($X^2 = 15.45, p < .02$).

However, in general, while the obtained patterns of response were consistent, meaningful and statistically significant, the large number of small cell sizes renders reliable conclusions impossible without further confirmation with larger samples.

4.7 Out of Paid Workforce

Respondents were asked how many months they had been out of the paid workforce over the past 10 years for a number of possible reasons. This proved too difficult a task for many respondents. However, the following table summarises the percentage of all respondents who were out of the paid workforce for at least two months.

Table 4.7.1: Out of Paid Workforce

	Percent response
Unemployed (seeking work)	17
Child rearing	19
Care of aged/disabled family	2
Study	15
Travel	16
Sick/burnt-out	5
volunteer work	15
Other	4

Some of these reasons significantly varied according to age group. The younger workers were more likely to be out for reasons of study ($X^2 = 7.46, p < .02$) and travel ($X^2 = 17.17, p < .0002$). The middle age group was more likely to be involved in child rearing ($X^2 = 13.59, p < .001$). There was no significant variation by age for sickness or volunteer work.

Workers with higher education levels were more likely to spend time out of the workforce for purposes of study and travel. (Note: the younger were also slightly more qualified but this relationship is not significant).

There was a slight tendency for unemployment to be a more important reason in rural areas ($X^2 = 7.7, p < .05$) but no other rural/urban differences were apparent.

While gender per se did not appear to have a direct effect on leaving the paid workforce, the combination of gender and children clearly did. Women with young children were much more likely than all men or women without young children to stay out of the paid workforce for child rearing ($X^2 = 85, p < .000$) and for volunteer work ($X^2 = 19.5, p < .0002$).

4.8 Employment Support

Several other factors may impact on the working conditions of community sector workers and render their position more or less attractive. The questionnaire examined two of these factors: the availability of short course training and union affiliation.

Short Course Training

Respondents claimed to have attended an average of 9.45 days training over the past two years. Of the total sample, 24 or 15% claimed to have received no training during this period. For the remaining 136 workers, the average was 11.12 days, with a standard deviation of 8.5 and a range of 1-45 days. A distribution of number of days training is provided in table 4.8.1.

Table 4.8.1: Days Training in Past Two Years

No. of Days	F	Percent
None	24	15
1-4	30	19
5-9	38	23
10-14	33	20
15-19	8	5
20-24	16	4
25 +	11	7

Perhaps of more interest is the question of why workers may miss out on training. Table 4.8.2 summarises the pattern of missed training. Responses are non additive as 33% of all respondents offered multiple reasons.

Table 4.8.2: Reasons for Missed Training

	F	Percent
Not missed/no need	42	26
Training not offered	20	12
Available but not accessible (wrong time, too far)	50	31
Available but too expensive	50	31
No relief staff/no time	56	35
Other	11	7

Training appears to be offered in most cases but is often regarded as inaccessible either because it is too far away or at the wrong times, too expensive and/or workers cannot take the time off to attend.

The total number of days training actually taken does not appear to vary by organisation type, by domestic situation, by level of formal qualification or by rural/urban location. However, the amount of training does appear to vary from one Local Government area to another, with workers in Orange and Sutherland receiving the most, Kuring-gai and Lismore receiving the least ($F = 1.896, p < .05$).

Access to training may vary by organisational type, though there are too many small cells to be confident. The complaint of "no relief staff/no time" was most likely to be expressed in small local organisations or peaks, least likely in large organisations.

Union Affiliation

Of the total sample, 65 respondents (41%) claimed to belong to a union and 95, (59%) did not.

The reasons given for not belonging are summarised in table 4.8.3.

Table 4.8.3: Reasons for not Belonging to Union

	F	% (of those not belonging)
Don't believe in unions	17	18
Don't know how/which one	5	5
Management would not like it	1	1
The union doesn't achieve anything	11	11
Other	54	56

N = 97

"Other" reasons given included:

- Not appropriate or relevant because higher management (4), specific social/religious commitment to community work (6), work is outside award (5)

- No need for union (10)
- Not considered/apathy (12)
- No suitable union/looking for more suitable union (9)
- Cost (7)
- Critical of unions past performance (4)

"Union consciousness" is probably greater now than it was five years ago but is still not strong. 60% of this sample of community sector workers do not belong to a union. Many respondents do not perceive that a union is appropriate or necessary particularly given the philosophy and structure of the community sector. Several noted that they had previously belonged to a union but dropped any union affiliation when they moved into the community sector.

Union affiliation varies according to organisational type, as illustrated in table 4.8.4.

Table 4.8.4: Union Affiliation

Organisation type	F	%
Small, local	35	47
Peak or umbrella	14	74
Local branch of large	6	18
Central office of large	4	31
Large, semi-autonomous	3	23

$$X^2 = 19.70, p < .001$$

Membership is clearly highest in peak bodies and moderately high in small local organisations but low in large organisations and particularly low in local branches of large organisations.

There does not appear to be any relationship between union affiliation and position level, formal qualifications, gender and presence of children or rural/urban location. However, rate of unionisation varies considerably between Local Government Areas with low participation in Maitland (11%) and Kuring-gai (14%) and high participation rate in the city (67%) Wollongong, (65%) Penrith, (54%) and Parramatta (50%)

4.9. Future Plans

Respondents were asked to indicate where they saw themselves in two years time. The percent response is summarised in table 4.9.1.

Table 4.9.1: Future Expectations (percent response)

Options	highly likely	likely	not likely	no response
In the same position	29	33	22	15
In a more interesting/challenging job, even if conditions (e.g. salary) are lower	15	19	29	38
In a higher position even if the job is less interesting	6	9	41	45
Still in the community sector	40	20	9	31
In Local Government	4	7	40	49
In State/Commonwealth Govt.	7	10	35	48
Out of the workforce	7	7	28	58

Table 4.9.2: Expected Retirement Age

	F	%
60-65	50	31
50-59	48	30
Soon	22	14
Never	32	20
No response	10	6

People appeared to find these questions difficult to answer, perhaps reflecting uncertainty about the future. The most likely scenario appears to be continued employment in the community sector, probably in the same position. Those considering a change are more likely to seek a more interesting/challenging job rather than one offering improved status. Very few are contemplating leaving the community sector or leaving the workforce. Retirement does not appear to be a major preoccupation; roughly equal numbers intend to retire in their 50's and 60's, with a further 20% intending to never retire.

Age has little effect on future expectations except that the young are less likely to see themselves in the same position in two years time ($X^2 = 11.66, p < .02$). There is also

an age variation in retirement plans ($X^2 = 22.11$, $p < .001$) but the pattern is unclear. The responses are presented in table 4.9.3.

Table 4.9.3: Retirement Plans by Age (frequency)

	Young	Middle	Old
60-65	9	13	27
50-59	7	23	18
Soon	11	7	3
Never	6	16	9

$X^2 = 22.11$, $p < .001$

It appears that the youngest group is more likely to be attracted to an early retirement while the oldest group is pushing their retirement age further away.

There appears to be no significant effect on future expectations by gender, formal qualifications, presence of young children or by position level.

There is one significant effect of rural/urban location; those working in city and (especially) rural areas are more likely to expect to stay in the same position in two years time while workers in outer metropolitan Sydney are the least likely to stay ($X^2 = 15.34$, $p < .02$). This finding reflects the high turnover and difficulty in recruiting people in outer Sydney, particularly among the young.

4.10 Perception of Career Obstacles

As an open ended question, respondents were asked "Looking back over your working life, what obstacles, if any, have you experienced". The responses to this question were coded and are summarised in table 4.10.1.

Table 4.10.1: Career Obstacles

	F	% of Total
Gender	26	16
Sexuality	5	3
Education (Lack of formal qualifications)	26	16
Education (Lack of opportunities, usually because of finance, gender)	13	8
Family commitments (especially child care)	23 *	14
Class/family background (poor)	6	4
Age: Too young 8} Too old 8}	16	10
Ethnicity (racism, language, overseas qualifications not recognised)	12	7
Poor job opportunities (rural)	4	2
Limited self expectations/low self confidence	9	6

* Includes 8 who mention difficulties of being a sole parent.

Fourteen respondents claimed to have experienced no obstacles in their career. However, the majority, 114 respondents or 70% of the total did perceive obstacles and volunteered a comment.

The most commonly perceived obstacles were gender, lack of formal education and the difficulty of juggling family commitments. Most of these related back to gender. Family commitments focussed mainly on the difficulty of finding appropriate child care, particularly for single parents. Many of the comments about the lack of formal qualifications indicated they lacked opportunities to study. A number of women currently in their 50's and 60's commented that when they were young, women were not expected to study.

4.11 Open ended Comments about Community Sector Career

At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were invited to make any additional comments they wished concerning their career in the community sector. A great many accepted this offer; many of their comments are listed in Appendix C.

The main themes of these comments are identified as follows:

- It has been a valuable, rewarding, challenging experience;
- I have had the opportunity to contribute in a worthwhile way to social change, the community;
- I have never (until recently) seen my work in terms of a career;
- The work is frustrating, stressful and difficult as well as challenging;
- Career paths still rarely exist in the community sector; salary is low, hours long, conditions poor;
- There is very little security of employment; in such conditions it is difficult to plan a long term career.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The research question guiding this project was why people enter the community sector, and, once in it, why they stay. While the results do not have all the answers and often raise more questions than they answer, nonetheless, we are now in a better position to suggest some tentative answers.

The research was concerned with supply side of the labour market, rather than the demand side. It was not designed to examine characteristics of the community sector jobs nor to assess the extent to which they fulfil characteristics of a secondary labour market. Nonetheless, there is plentiful evidence from the interview and questionnaire protocols of poor work conditions. These include a large proportion of part-time and volunteer positions, many hours of unpaid overtime, uncertain funding leading to insecure job tenure, poor support from management committee and senior management. These together add up to a picture of considerable exploitation and occupational stress. On the other hand, there is also some evidence of long term job tenure, increased salary levels and participatory decision-making. There is evidence that part-time work is regarded as both necessary and desirable by those with young children, provided that they are able to re-enter full time employment at a later time. To the extent that this is possible, and the evidence here is that it is, then conditions, far from being exploitative, are, in fact, responsive to women's needs.

However, given that employment conditions within the community sector are, at best, difficult, the question remains why do people choose to work in it. The word "choose" itself begs the question. A common suggestion by those outside the sector is that community sector employees have little choice, that it is a negative rather than a positive choice, that people take such jobs because they have little choice or they take them by accident. The evidence against this possibility is strong for all but a small minority of workers. The overwhelming majority of respondents made a clear and conscious decision both to enter the community sector and to apply for their current position. All claimed to have had other real choices which were, however, not as appealing as community sector employment. Again, however, there were a minority of mainly women with young

children who selected community sector employment, not because of intrinsic qualities of community sector work but for pragmatic reasons of convenience to other family obligations.

There were strong positive motivations for working in the community sector and these reasons created a personal commitment by over 50% of all community sector workers (including most women with young children). The common motivation was two-fold. On the one hand, workers had a strong and abiding commitment to social values, usually expressed either as a desire to improve the lot of their client group or to contribute to broader social change. On the other hand, workers translated this commitment into a personal quest for self development, for personal growth, challenge, the development of new skills and understanding. There was very little talk of "Christian duty" or the expectation of self sacrifice. Preston (1990) suggests that some workers may be willing to supply labour at lower than market wages to organisations that generate social benefits. The lost wages are a "labour donation" and the donation is likely to increase with the workers connection to the provision of social benefits. There was ample evidence in both the interviews and questionnaire responses that people were quite willing to accept a drop in salary and other working conditions provided that the position in question offered an opportunity to meet their larger objectives. However, equally clearly, they did not feel constrained to continue to make this sacrifice if those social benefits were not realised. The greatest resentment held by many was that employers, funding bodies and sometimes the community at large did not understand the terms of the trade-off and either devalued the work done, or attempted to exploit the commitment offered. The implications of this is obvious: to the extent that community sector organisations attempt to impose "business practice" on their employees, to that extent, employees will withdraw their preparedness to sacrifice salary and other working conditions, as they perceive the social benefit of the work eroded. Indeed this prediction accords well with those of Mirvis (1992) who found some evidence for an erosion of social values in community sector workers in U.S. over the past 13 years.

Other factors that may influence career choice or that may make the community sector more or less attractive were explored in the study. Training was one. The majority of respondents were well qualified. Many appeared to have obtained their qualifications

after entering the sector. Training seems to have been fairly accessible when required and did not feature as a major reason for choosing a particular job. Personal autonomy, the opportunity to work independently or to control their own work practices appeared to be a strong ingredient for many. Many workers appeared to be attracted to small organisations for this reason. Those interviewed almost unanimously preferred to work alone or in a small unit rather than in a large bureaucracy or under line management. On the other hand, a frequent source of dissatisfaction expressed by 15-20% of respondents was the lack of support received from management committees or management staff. Those working in rural areas complained of the difficulty of finding jobs at all. Mobility was severely limited.

The other major finding of the research is diversity. There is not one career path or career path orientation but several. Within the one sector, there are several quite distinct career orientations. This is so while acknowledging the strong common motivation of most community sector workers. In order to explore this finding further, further research is needed, using cluster analysis techniques not appropriate in the present study. However, the present study provides direct and indirect evidence of at least four or five quite distinct patterns, each pattern partly shaped by the demographic factors operating and partly by the pattern of values and objectives held by those workers. The patterns may be expressed partly in terms of the five case studies derived from the interviews. There are the men and probably four distinct groups of women: the young "professionals", the mothers with young children; the older women; a group of NESB women. Three of these groups appear to represent a specific cohort. Their lives are probably shaped by quite specific combinations of life cycle events and socio-historical conditions (see for example Allat and Keil, 1987). Women of non English speaking background probably share many of the same conditions as their age-mates but in addition experience other constraints and motivations. However, this study was not designed to explore these adequately.

Men in the sample were very similar to the women in most respects. By and large the men in the sample did not conform to male stereotypes, either in terms of the attitudes expressed or in terms of their work history. They were not more likely than women to experience salary and status increase or to occupy senior positions. They entered the

sector for much the same reasons and were as committed to social values and personal development. The difference is that their career paths do not experience the conflict of split expectations that women experience. Many men appeared to experience some sense of confusion or aimlessness in their youth. However, once committed to a community sector career they tended to be much more focused than most women. They experienced fewer interruptions and changes in direction. They did not take time off for children. Many undertook further study or made geographical moves; in doing so they had the physical and emotional support of their families. Many men commented that they could not have achieved what they have without this support. Most women with families, by contrast, were expected to sacrifice their own career goals for the good of the family, to leave their job so their husband could move to a new one, to take part - time or voluntary work to fit in with child care demands. Men, by and large, were free of the "juggling act".

Probably about 20% of the sample comprised women who made their career choices largely around family and child care obligations. Many of these women were also strongly committed to community sector social values. However, such personal commitment took second place to family commitment. These women tended not to think in terms of having a career at all. They made career choices on pragmatic grounds, choosing jobs that were conveniently located, that offered part-time hours, that fitted into family needs.

The sample included a large number of older women whose children no longer required constant care. Many (some 35% of the sample) were over 45 years of age. Some of these women had achieved professional qualifications when they were young, took several years off to care for children and then returned first part-time then full-time to work at a senior level. But many of these women entered the community sector as volunteers and/or doing part-time work while their children were young. Very few had any concept of career for themselves when they were young. In fact, a number specifically commented that they were discouraged from further study when young, as their role in life was seen to be that of mother and homemaker, not careerist. But having discovered community sector work, they found themselves increasingly absorbed by it. They found that community sector work, by and large, fitted their broader social values while

facilitating their own personal development. More importantly, they found that they were good at it; the skills developed as mother, homemaker, volunteer, were put to good use and recognised. As their children grew older, they turned more attention to their own career, often recognising it as a career for the first time. Many turned to some sort of further study to gain recognised qualifications and to extend their knowledge and skill base. As they gained in experience and confidence, they began to apply for and obtain more senior positions.

The "young professional" women provides quite a different profile. We are probably referring to about 15-20% of the sample. Typically these women are in their twenties or early thirties, single or without children, highly qualified and clearly career oriented. They are fairly hard-headed about their work conditions. They are unlikely to do voluntary work except for specific political causes and are not willing to be exploited. They are quite confident about their own skills and their right to a meaningful career. However this is not to say that they are motivated by money, prestige or status. On the contrary, they hold strong social and political commitments, change jobs fairly frequently in search of challenge and take time off for study and travel.

These are probably not the only career patterns but the more common ones. We found some evidence, for example, of older childless women who seemed to have continued a career (not identified as such) of dedication and service. There was also a group of women who were single parents; this status appeared to be related to a stronger consciousness of the need to be the "breadwinner". And, as mentioned previously, they are probably distinctive features of the career path of those from a NESB background. Clarification of these patterns awaits further research. What is important to note here, however, is that within the one sector there exist quite different career trajectories, with corresponding different patterns of motivation.

One potentially important theoretical outcome of the study is the problematising of the concept of "career". A study of career paths assumes a common understanding and acceptance of the concept of "career". It is typically defined as "an ordered sequence of development extending over a period of years and involving progressively more responsible roles within an occupation" (Slocum, 1966, in Dex, 1987). Underlying this

definition is an assumption of linear upward progression, ie, a continuous movement from a position of relatively low status, responsibility and remuneration, to a higher position. The image is usually one of "climbing a career ladder".

Very few respondents in this study subscribed to this image of "career" and this may explain why many respondents specifically rejected the notion that they had a career at all. There was evidence of an overall increase in salary and responsibility but this increase appears to have been achieved by a rather circuitous route involving many sideways shifts, often of a fairly radical kind, as well as the more than occasional drop in salary and status for the sake of other gains. Many respondents moved into the sector from quite different occupations, though this issue was not pursued systematically in the questionnaire. Within the sector, many workers, perhaps as many as 50%, appeared to seek a new job primarily because it provided opportunities to work with a new client group or to develop a new service. Other chose to move from service delivery to policy work or management; other moved across sectors, often into Local Government. And as already discussed, women frequently made a break in their career path to care for children, often returning to a quite different career later. Altogether, there was very little evidence of a linear career path or of any expectation or desire for one.

Recent work in the U.S. has indicated a shift in the conceptualisation of career (Driver, 1988). Of particular interest is the identification (among professional men) of at least four different career patterns. These are identified as "linear", "steady state", "spiral", and "transitory" (Brousseau, 1990; Driver, 1988). Each is distinguished both by a different trajectory and a different pattern of motivation. The linear pattern is characterised by fairly rapid, consistent moves upwards to positions of higher authority and is characterised by a concern for power and achievement. The steady state pattern is characterised by very few moves of any sort; the concern is for security and becoming increasingly respected for one's expertise. The spiral pattern is characterised by fairly frequent major changes of a primarily lateral sort, moves which build on current skills and develop new ones. The concerns are for personal growth, creativity, and developing others. The transitory pattern is characterised by frequent moves into entirely new jobs or fields with a concern for variety and independence. Brousseau argues that each of

these career patterns is quite valid and each offers a different set of advantages to the employer but requires a different sort of treatment.

It would appear from the evidence of this study that there are relatively few workers in the community sector who pursue or aspire to a steady state career or a linear career pattern. The description of spiral and transitory patterns appear to provide a much better fit with the data. Further research may clarify this issue. Why this may be so is a matter of further conjecture. Perhaps the conditions of employment within the sector are such that only people who hold these kind of career orientations are attracted to it. Perhaps it is people with these kinds of career orientations who have shaped the development of the sector. Whatever the reason, we are once again forced to reject the notion of a single or conventional notion of career path within the community sector.

The task of this research was to explore largely unknown territory. It aimed to explore very broad research questions concerning the motivations and factors shaping career path orientations within the community sector. Any useful exploratory study will raise far more questions than it answers and this is no exception. We have not attempted to test specific hypotheses but rather explore a variety of issues and directions and in the process generate the beginnings of a data base. It remains for future research to confirm and clarify the issues raised here.

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APPENDIX A

CAREER PATH INTERVIEW SCHEDULE - DRAFT 4

AGE _____ GENDER _____ QUALIFICATIONS _____
HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN YOU BEGAN YOUR PROFESSIONAL TRAINING _____
TOTAL YEARS PAID WORK EXPERIENCE _____
TOTAL YEARS IN COMMUNITY SECTOR _____
TOTAL NUMBER OF POSITIONS HELD _____ TOTAL IN COMM. SECTOR _____

PLEASE DOCUMENT YOUR WORK HISTORY, STARTING WITH YOUR CURRENT POSITION AND WORKING BACK IN TIME.

Starting with the most recent (current) job,
ORGANISATION _____
POSITION _____ P/T, F/T, CASUAL _____
HOW SHOULD THIS POSITION BE CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO THE NSW SACS AWARD (Higher Management/Category 3/Cat 2/Cat 1/Welfare Assistant) _____ WAS THIS A HIGHER LEVEL POSITION THAN YOUR PREVIOUS ONE (in terms of salary and responsibility), THE SAME LEVEL OR A LOWER LEVEL POSITION _____
LENGTH OF TENURE (Months) _____ DATE COMMENCED/LEFT _____
MAIN REASON FOR APPLYING _____
MAIN REASON FOR LEAVING _____
ANY OTHER COMMITMENTS (e.g. family) HELD AT THE TIME _____

ANY VOLUNTEER WORK DURING THIS TIME _____

Next most recent job:
ORGANISATION _____
POSITION _____ P/T, F/T, CASUAL _____
HOW SHOULD THIS POSITION BE CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO THE NSW SACS AWARD (Higher Management/Category 3/Cat 2/Cat 1/Welfare Assistant) _____ WAS THIS A HIGHER LEVEL POSITION THAN YOUR PREVIOUS ONE (in terms of salary and responsibility), THE SAME LEVEL OR A LOWER LEVEL POSITION _____
LENGTH OF TENURE (Months) _____ DATE COMMENCED/LEFT _____
MAIN REASON FOR APPLYING _____
MAIN REASON FOR LEAVING _____
ANY OTHER COMMITMENTS (e.g. family) HELD AT THE TIME _____
ANY VOLUNTEER WORK DURING THIS TIME _____

Previous Job:

ORGANISATION _____

POSITION _____ P/T, F/T, CASUAL _____

HOW SHOULD THIS POSITION BE CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO THE NSW SACS
AWARD (Higher Management/Category 3/Cat 2/Cat 1/Welfare
Assistant) _____ DATE COMMENCED/LEFT _____

WAS THIS A HIGHER LEVEL POSITION THAN YOUR PREVIOUS ONE (in terms
of salary and responsibility), THE SAME LEVEL OR A LOWER LEVEL
POSITION _____ LENGTH OF TENURE (Months) _____

MAIN REASON FOR APPLYING _____

MAIN REASON FOR LEAVING _____

ANY OTHER COMMITMENTS (e.g. family) HELD AT THE TIME _____

ANY VOLUNTEER WORK DURING THIS TIME _____

Previous Job:

ORGANISATION _____

POSITION _____ P/T, F/T, CASUAL _____

HOW SHOULD THIS POSITION BE CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO THE NSW SACS
AWARD (Higher Management/Category 3/Cat 2/Cat 1/Welfare
Assistant) _____

WAS THIS A HIGHER LEVEL POSITION THAN YOUR PREVIOUS ONE (in terms
of salary and responsibility), THE SAME LEVEL OR A LOWER LEVEL
POSITION _____

LENGTH OF TENURE (Months) _____ DATE COMMENCED/LEFT _____

MAIN REASON FOR APPLYING _____

MAIN REASON FOR LEAVING _____

ANY OTHER COMMITMENTS (e.g. family) HELD AT THE TIME _____

ANY VOLUNTEER WORK DURING THIS TIME _____

FOR THOSE PERIODS WHEN YOU WERE NOT IN PAID EMPLOYMENT OR WHEN YOU WERE WORKING PART-TIME, WHAT ELSE WERE YOU DOING AND WHAT OTHER COMMITMENTS DID YOU HAVE AND FOR HOW LONG.

	Time Period
* STUDY	_____
* TRAVEL	_____
* CHILD REARING	_____
* CARE OF AGED/DISABLED FAMILY	_____
* SICKNESS/STRESS LEAVE	_____
* VOLUNTEER WORK	_____
* OTHER	_____

IF YOU WERE DOING VOLUNTEER WORK, DESCRIBE WHAT IT WAS

IN ANY OF YOUR CAREER SHIFTS, DID YOU EVER MOVE TO A JOB WITH A LOWER SALARY _____ WHY?

ARE YOU HAPPY WITH THE CHOICE YOU MADE NOW (Was it worth it)?

CAN WE LOOK AT EACH CAREER MOVE MORE CLOSELY. THE MOST RECENT CAREER CHANGE, A MIDDLE ONE AND AN EARLY CAREER CHANGE (Whether community sector or not, but at least one within the community sector).

HERE ARE A NUMBER OF REASONS THAT MAY HAVE INFLUENCED YOUR CHOICE
 IN APPLYING FOR THE JOB, PLEASE CONSIDER HOW IMPORTANT EACH
 REASON MAY HAVE BEEN:

VERY IMPORTANT (++)
 SOMEWHAT (+)
 NOT IMPORTANT (0)
 A NEGATIVE (-)

REASON	POSITION:	1	2	3
1 increased salary				
2 better hours -more				
3 more flexible/appropriate hours for me				
<hr/>				
4 more flexible for family				
5 more secure tenure				
6 increased staff responsibility				
<hr/>				
7 increased budget responsibility				
8 greater prestige				
9 future career opportunities				
<hr/>				
10 a good group of people to work with				
11 chance to work independently				
12 formal training opportunities				
<hr/>				
13 chance to extend personal skills				
14 good management structure				
15 good organisational philosophy				
<hr/>				
16 more interesting/challenging work				
17 chance to influence policy devpt.				
18 chance for social change				
<hr/>				
19 chance to create a new service				
20 chance to work with new client group				
21 chance to network with other agencies				
<hr/>				
22 Other _____				
23 Other _____				

EXPLORE FURTHER THOSE REASONS REGARDED AS VERY IMPORTANT.
WHY WAS THIS VERY IMPORTANT TO YOU _____

LOOKING AT THE SAME POSITIONS AS DISCUSSED ABOVE (With the exception of the current job), WHAT WERE YOUR REASONS FOR LEAVING THE JOB?

REASONS	POSITION	2	3
---------	----------	---	---

the next job was better

problems with your old job

family/personal commitments

Explain _____

IF THERE WERE PROBLEMS WITH THE OLD JOB, WHAT WERE THEY?

workload too heavy

work with clients too stressful

management not supportive

insufficient administrative support

funding ran out

conflict with other staff

conflict with other agencies

Other _____

General Questions

DID YOU HAVE A CAREER PLAN OR GOAL WHEN YOU WERE YOUNG, I.E WHEN YOU WERE ABOUT TWENTY? _____ WHAT WAS IT? _____

WHY DID YOU ENTER THE COMMUNITY SECTOR? _____

DID YOUR PERCEPTION OF YOUR OWN CAREER CHANGE AT ANY POINT? _____
EXPLAIN _____

WOULD YOU SAY THERE WERE IMPORTANT CONNECTIONS BETWEEN YOUR PERSONAL LIFE EXPERIENCES AND YOUR WORKING LIFE? _____
EXPLAIN _____

WHAT KIND OF FAMILY COMMITMENTS HAVE INFLUENCED YOUR CAREER CHOICES? _____

WHAT KIND OF TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES HAVE YOU HAD? _____

HAVE YOU HAD ACCESS TO TRAINING THAT WOULD HELP YOUR CAREER DEVELOPMENT _____ EXPLAIN _____

HAVE YOU EVER LACKED THE CONFIDENCE TO APPLY FOR A JOB YOU WOULD REALLY HAVE LIKED? _____ EXPLAIN (Give example)

CAN YOU IDENTIFY ANY OTHER OBSTACLES YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED IN YOUR CAREER _____

DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE BEEN DISADVANTAGED BY YOUR GENDER? _____
EXPLAIN _____

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS TIME? _____

WHAT KIND OF ORGANISATION WOULD YOU PREFER TO WORK IN -

* LARGE ESTABLISHED ORGANISATION WITH CLEAR HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURE AND MULTIPLE LEVELS?

* MEDIUM ORGANISATION (OR UNIT) WHICH HAS A CLEAR STRUCTURE BUT WORKS AS A CLOSE-KNIT TEAM WITH A TEAM LEADER/ CO-ORDINATOR?

* SMALL, LOOSELY STRUCTURED ORGANISATION (OR UNIT) WHICH WORKS AS A TEAM OR COLLECTIVE WITHOUT A LEADER?

* AN ORGANISATION WHERE YOU CAN WORK ALONE, INDEPENDENTLY?

EXPLAIN PREFERENCE _____

HAS THIS BEEN A FACTOR IN YOUR CHOICE OF JOB? _____

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN PROMOTED WITHIN THE SAME ORGANISATION? _____

EXPLAIN _____

IS INTERNAL PROMOTION POSSIBLE ? _____

EXPLAIN _____

HAVE YOU EVER WORKED IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR OR CONSIDERED IT? _____
EXPLAIN _____

WHAT ARE THE POSITIVES ABOUT WORKING IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR FOR YOU? _____

WHAT ARE THE NEGATIVES? _____

HAVE YOU EVER WORKED IN THE PRIVATE (FOR PROFIT) SECTOR? OR CONSIDERED IT? _____

EXPLAIN _____

WHAT ARE THE POSITIVES ABOUT WORKING IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR? _____

WHAT ARE THE NEGATIVES? _____

HAVE YOU EVER WORKED AS A PRIVATE CONSULTANT OR CONSIDERED IT? _____
EXPLAIN _____

WHAT ARE THE POSITIVES OF THIS KIND OF WORK FOR YOU? _____

WHAT ARE THE NEGATIVES? _____

APPENDIX B

WORK HISTORY QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is part of a research project that looks at career paths in the community sector. We hope to document the kinds of opportunities and obstacles, choices and challenges that workers face in the community sector in Australia. That has never been done before.

This project is being carried out by the Centre for Australian Community Organisations and Management (CACOM) at the University of Technology, Sydney.

The questionnaire is for people who work in community based or non-profit, or church based organisations in NSW. Specifically it is for people who first entered the community sector at least 10 years ago (though you may have done other things in between).

DURING THE PAST 10 YEARS, HOW MANY DIFFERENT POSITIONS HAVE YOU HAD:

- | | | |
|----|---|-------|
| 1 | Within the State/Commonwealth public service | _____ |
| 2 | Within Local Government | _____ |
| 3 | Within private, for profit organisations | _____ |
| 4 | Within Community organisations
(non government, nonprofit) | _____ |
| 5. | TOTAL | _____ |

HERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR THREE MOST RECENT POSITIONS:

Name your current organisation _____

DESCRIBE YOUR CURRENT POSITION:

- | | | | |
|---|--------|-----------|-------|
| 6 | Is it: | full-time | _____ |
| | | part-time | _____ |
| | | casual | _____ |

CAN YOU IDENTIFY THE LEVEL OF YOUR CURRENT POSITION. IS IT:

- | | | |
|---|-------|--|
| 7 | _____ | Level 1: Assistant under the direct supervision of another person; |
| | _____ | Level 2: May include direct service delivery on individual or community basis under general supervision; |
| | _____ | Level 3: Takes substantial responsibility for service delivery and co-ordination. May contribute to social policy; |
| | _____ | Level 4: Overall administration and co-ordination. Develops and implements policy; |
| | _____ | Level 5: Higher Management of large unit or organisation. |

8 HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN THIS CURRENT POSITION _____ years _____ months

9 HOW LONG HAVE YOU WORKED IN THIS ORGANISATION _____

10 IS YOUR ORGANISATION:

- | | |
|-------|---|
| _____ | A small, local organisation |
| _____ | A peak, or umbrella organisation |
| _____ | A local branch of a large state/national org. |
| _____ | A central office of a large state/national organisation |
| _____ | A large, semi-autonomous centre. |

ESTIMATE THE NUMBER OF STAFF IN YOUR CENTRE OR BRANCH:

- 11 Full-time _____
- 12 Part-time _____
- 13 Casual _____
- 14 Volunteer _____

DID THE MOVE FROM YOUR LAST POSITION INTO YOUR PRESENT POSITION GIVE YOU

	Yes, an increase	No, the same	No, a decrease
15 Increase in salary	_____	_____	_____
16 Increased responsibility for budget	_____	_____	_____
17 Increased responsibility for staff	_____	_____	_____
18 Increased access to decision making	_____	_____	_____
19 Increased prestige	_____	_____	_____

DESCRIBE YOUR LAST POSITION.

- 20 WAS IT: Full-time _____
 Part-time _____
 Casual _____

21 AT WHAT LEVEL WERE YOU EMPLOYED IN YOUR LAST POSITION: (These are the same levels as described in Question 7)

- _____ Level 1
- _____ Level 2
- _____ Level 3
- _____ Level 4
- _____ Level 5

22 HOW LONG DID YOU WORK IN THAT POSITION _____

23 HOW DID THAT ORGANISATION COMPARE WITH THE ONE YOU ARE NOW EMPLOYED IN?

- _____ The same organisation
- _____ Previous organisation was similar in size
- _____ Previous organisation was smaller
- _____ Previous organisation was larger

DID THE MOVE INTO YOUR LAST POSITION FROM THE PREVIOUS ONE GIVE YOU:

	Yes, an increase	No, the same	No, a decrease
24 Increase in salary	_____	_____	_____
25 Increased responsibility for budget	_____	_____	_____
26 Increased responsibility for staff	_____	_____	_____
27 Increased access to decision making	_____	_____	_____
28 Increased prestige	_____	_____	_____

CAN YOU NOW DESCRIBE THAT PREVIOUS POSITION. (The one before last).

- 29 WAS IT: Full-time _____
 Part-time _____
 Casual _____

30 AT WHAT LEVEL WERE YOU EMPLOYED IN THAT PREVIOUS POSITION: (These are the same levels as described in Question 7)

- _____ Level 1
- _____ Level 2
- _____ Level 3
- _____ Level 4
- _____ Level 5

31 HOW LONG DID YOU WORK IN THAT POSITION _____

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF REASONS THAT MAY HAVE INFLUENCED YOUR DECISION TO APPLY FOR YOUR CURRENT JOB. PLEASE COMMENT ON EACH OF THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

	a strong attraction	somewhat relevant	not relevant	not offered
32 Increased salary rate	_____	_____	_____	_____
33 Secure tenure	_____	_____	_____	_____
34 More hours	_____	_____	_____	_____
35 Fewer hours	_____	_____	_____	_____
36 More flexible hours	_____	_____	_____	_____
37 Convenient location	_____	_____	_____	_____
38 Increased staff responsibility	_____	_____	_____	_____
39 Increased budget responsibility	_____	_____	_____	_____
40 More access to decision making	_____	_____	_____	_____
41 Greater Prestige	_____	_____	_____	_____
42 Future career opportunities	_____	_____	_____	_____
43 Good management structure	_____	_____	_____	_____
44 Good organisational philosophy	_____	_____	_____	_____
45 A good group of people to work with	_____	_____	_____	_____
46 The chance to work independently	_____	_____	_____	_____
47 To extend personal skills	_____	_____	_____	_____
48 Formal training opportunities	_____	_____	_____	_____
49 More interesting, challenging work	_____	_____	_____	_____
50 To influence policy development	_____	_____	_____	_____
51 To contribute to social change	_____	_____	_____	_____
52 To create a new service	_____	_____	_____	_____
53 To work with a new client group	_____	_____	_____	_____
54 To network with other agencies	_____	_____	_____	_____

THERE ARE ALSO VARIOUS REASONS THAT MAY HAVE INFLUENCED YOUR DECISION TO LEAVE YOUR LAST POSITION. PLEASE INDICATE HOW SERIOUS EACH OF THE FOLLOWING PROBLEMS WAS IN YOUR LAST POSITION:

	serious	somewhat	not at all
55 Workload too heavy	_____	_____	_____
56 Work with clients too stressful	_____	_____	_____
57 Management committee/board not supportive	_____	_____	_____
58 Management staff not supportive	_____	_____	_____
59 Insufficient admin. support	_____	_____	_____
60 Conflict with staff	_____	_____	_____
61 Conflict with other agencies	_____	_____	_____
62 Funding ran out	_____	_____	_____
63 Family commitments	_____	_____	_____
64 Other (explain)	_____	_____	_____

IF YOU HAVE ACCEPTED A DROP IN SALARY IN THE LAST TWO MOVES, CAN YOU EXPLAIN WHY? (You may tick more than one reason)

- 65 Only job available
- 66 Long term career advantages
- 67 Opportunity for new skills
- 68 Good experience
- 69 Convenient for family
- 70 Convenient for self
- 71 Religious/ philosophical commitment
- 72 Challenging/ interesting job
- 73 Less Stress
- 74 More autonomy
- 75 Other (explain) _____

76 HAVE YOU EVER BEEN PROMOTED WITHIN THE SAME ORGANISATION (whether application required or not)? IF SO WHERE WAS IT?

- Never promoted
- Within a community organisation
- Within some other (government or private) organisation

77 HAVE YOU EVER STAYED MORE THAN TWO YEARS IN THE SAME POSITION WITHIN THE COMMUNITY SECTOR?

- Yes, in current position
- Yes, within last 5 years
- Yes, before that
- No, never.

IF YES, WHY DID YOU STAY? (You may tick more than one reason)

- 78 The job continued to be interesting/challenging
- 79 Suited family commitment/lifestyle
- 80 Good career prospects
- 81 Nowhere to go/couldn't get another job
- 82 Other (Explain) _____

OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS, HAVE YOU BEEN OUT OF THE PAID WORKFORCE FOR MORE THAN TWO MONTHS? IF SO, WHY, AND FOR HOW LONG:

- | | No. of months |
|---------------------------------|---------------|
| 83 Unemployed (seeking work) | _____ |
| 84 Child rearing | _____ |
| 85 Care of aged/disabled family | _____ |
| 86 Study | _____ |
| 87 Travel | _____ |
| 88 Sick/ burnt-out | _____ |
| 89 Volunteer work | _____ |
| 90 Other (explain) _____ | _____ |

ESTIMATE YOUR AVERAGE NUMBER OF HOURS OF UNPAID WORK PER MONTH OVER THE PAST YEAR:

- | | No. of Hours |
|---|--------------|
| 91 Within your employing organisation | _____ |
| 92 Management committees of other orgs. | _____ |
| 93 Direct service delivery | _____ |
| 94 Political action/ advocacy | _____ |
| 95 Club activities (Lions, scouts, sport) | _____ |
| 96 Other voluntary work (explain) | _____ |
| _____ TOTAL | _____ |

WHY DID YOU ENTER THE COMMUNITY SECTOR (you may tick more than one response)?

- 97 Influence of family (parents)
- 98 Religious commitment
- 99 Philosophical/ political commitment
- 100 Commitment to social change
- 101 Personal life experience (eg as former service user)
- 102 Volunteer experience
- 103 Study placement
- 104 Hours/ location convenient for family commitment/lifestyle
- 105 Only job available (or by chance)
- 106 Other (explain) _____

107 AT WHAT AGE WERE YOU FIRST EMPLOYED IN THE COMMUNITY SECTOR _____

108 AT WHAT AGE DID YOU BEGIN YOUR POST SECONDARY TRAINING (if any) _____

109 WHAT ARE YOUR HIGHEST QUALIFICATIONS NOW?

- Below HSC
- HSC (or equivalent)
- TAFE certificate
- Associate Diploma
- Degree
- Post Graduate

110 HOW MANY DAYS OF SHORT COURSE TRAINING HAVE YOU RECEIVED IN THE PAST TWO YEARS _____

111 HAVE YOU MISSED OUT ON TRAINING THAT YOU REALLY NEED? IF SO, WHY?

- Not missed out/ no need
- Training not offered
- Training available but not accessible (eg too far, wrong times)
- Training available but too expensive
- No relief staff/no time
- Other (explain) _____

112 DO YOU BELONG TO A UNION OR PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION?

- No
- Yes (name the union) _____

113 IF YOU DO NOT BELONG TO A UNION, WHY NOT?

- Don't believe in unions
- Don't know how/ don't know which one
- Management would not like it
- The union doesn't achieve anything
- Other (explain) _____

LOOKING AHEAD, WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN TWO YEARS TIME?

	highly likely	likely	not likely
114 In the same position	_____	_____	_____
115 In a more interesting/challenging job even if conditions (eg salary) are lower	_____	_____	_____
116 In a higher position even if the job is less interesting	_____	_____	_____
117 Still in the community sector	_____	_____	_____
118 In Local Government	_____	_____	_____
119 In State/ Commonwealth Govt.	_____	_____	_____
120 Out of the workforce (explain)	_____	_____	_____
121 Other (explain) _____ _____	_____	_____	_____

122 WHEN DO YOU PLAN TO RETIRE?

- Between 60-65
- Between 50-59
- As soon as possible
- Never

123 LOOKING BACK OVER YOUR WORKING LIFE, WHAT OBSTACLES, IF ANY, HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED (eg age, sex, ethnicity, education, disability). Please comment:

ARE THERE OTHER COMMENTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE ABOUT YOUR CAREER IN THE COMMUNITY SECTOR?

FINALLY, IT WOULD HELP US IF YOU COULD PROVIDE SOME PERSONAL INFORMATION (but no names please):

124 Your age now _____

125 Your sex _____

126 Current domestic situation:

_____single

_____single, with dependents

_____partnered, and partner is employed

_____partnered, and partner is unemployed

127 Number of children _____

128 Age of youngest child _____

Thank you for your support in this research project. The personal information that you have provided will remain confidential. But the overall results will be collated and returned to your local contact person for you to see.

GOOD LUCK IN YOU FUTURE CAREER!!!

APPENDIX C

GENERAL COMMENTS CONCERNING CAREER IN COMMUNITY SECTOR

Sydney woman age 54: "I didn't see myself as having a 'career' - more a series of interesting worthwhile jobs".

F 43 Orange: "In the rural sector, there is currently little available choice of suitably interesting work".

F 50 Sydney: "It makes sense of life and it's fun".

M 33 Sydney: "Fortunate to work with organisation with good career path - in the right place at the right time".

F 42 Sydney: "It's been fascinating and enjoyable but frustrating too. There is never time to come to terms with the political implications of decisions/programs"

F 48 Sydney: "I have worked where there has been a job I can be committed to and in an organisation I feel is reasonably compatible with my ideology".

F 35 Sydney: "It is only recently that I have seen my work in terms of a 'career' and identified the need to gain more qualifications".

F 51 Sydney: "Failure to plan a 'career' because of limited self-expectations".

F 49 Sydney: "Pleased that I had other career (teaching) and entered the community sector later with life experiences".

F 50 Wollongong: "Overall it has been and still is a valuable and rewarding experience, with the opportunity to meet many interesting people".

M 48 Hunter: "I believe that the level of stress and potential burn out are higher than just about any vocation I know".

F 42 Young (Orange): Rewarding area to work in, challenging ..."

F 56 Orange: "Very fulfilling and providing a positive input into structure of workplace".

F 56 Orange: Great opportunities ... able to use own initiative and not as much hierarchy as government sector".

F 39 Orange: "Has allowed greater variety and balance in my life".

F 40 Orange: "Career advancement opportunities are limited in country areas".

M 63 Orange: "Most rewarding and satisfying".

M 41 Orange: "Been rewarding but you would never become rich ... Lack of remuneration places pressure on families".

F 53 Orange: "Expectation that casual paid job must become a full time commitment or else organisation is not viable".

M 36 Orange: "It's good to know I've helped some people".

F 31 Orange: "Interesting if nothing else".

F 44 Orange: "I enjoy my work very much".

F 44 Lismore: "I am proud of the opportunity to assist the elderly and disadvantaged in our community".

M 37 Lismore: "If we all downed tools for just 1 hour the nation would fall apart". "Community sector is incomparably the most cost-effective way to deliver services". "Volunteers by and large get screwed".

F 44 : "Relies too heavily on support and good will of volunteer workers".

F 36 Lismore: "A lack of jobs and career opportunities exists in the country for myself and partner ... I have to drive a long way to work which impacts on ability to find childcare. I don't see myself following a 'career', more developing personal learning goals".

"Working in the community sector is a continual struggle on all fronts: 1) to be recognised as professional person, 2) to have ones work valued, 3) to maintain funding, 4) to have management understand the complexities of the job, 5) to be supported. The result of this can be a feeling of burnout, low moral, frustration. The other people working in community services often help to make the job worthwhile".

F 33 Lismore: "Very rewarding".

F 42 Kuring-gai: "Great to know that you can help people in the community and use your skills whether voluntary or paid".

F 65 Kuring-gai: "My work in the community sector has been through my personal life involvement in disability and commitment to seek changes for people with disabilities".

F 48 Kuring-gai: My career has been challenging, rewarding, and sometimes frustrating (due to somewhat reactive role of Welfare Agencies)".

F 48 Kuring-gai: "I enjoy the feeling of living and belonging in the community in which I work".

M 37 Kuring-gai: "Career aspirations not politically motivated nor do they strive to achieve prestige at the expense of those that require support".

F 45 Kuring-gai: "My career in community sector worked well for me with the family commitment being my main focus.

I did not consider it to be a career until I was in my 40th year and then realised that my work was an important part of my life".

F 60 Kuring-gai: "A great deal of personal satisfaction in community sector. It feels good not to work for only the pay packet.

F Kuring-gai (older): "Enormous reward in terms of personal development and satisfaction ... putting back into the community some of the benefit accorded me".

F 30 Kuring-gai: "Good opportunities for developing job description, widening experiences, however, limited opportunities for career development and advancement in organisation".

F 31 Hurstville: "It's enabled me to gain skills ... that bureaucracy or private sector would not have encouraged". "In line with my philosophical, political/ideological beliefs".

F 27 Hurstville: "Undervalued".

F 36 Hurstville: Great commitment of co-workers but so little money ... lack of government support".

F 63 Penrith: "It has been satisfying and I hope helpful to others".

F 62 Penrith: "It is rewarding satisfying work".

F 45 Sutherland: " I do not have a degree ... restricts future job opportunities. We are awfully underpaid, overworked and no security in this work".

F 32 Sutherland: "Very limited career opportunities ... low income, lack of security ... in community unaware of industrial issues, basic rights of workers".

F 30 Sutherland: "10 years will be my limit. It is too taxing and hard to keep up enthusiasm as one hardly ever sees the results of their labour".

F 59 Sutherland: "I have always enjoyed the support of my family together with volunteers and staff".

F 40 Sutherland: "Community work can be enjoyable especially when you have freedom to introduce programs ... it can also be very demanding and stressful ... constant battle to secure funding and generally does not have high profile.

F 42 Sutherland: "My career path has been via nursing. I find this background has been helpful...".

F 43 Maitland: "My life has been enriched, horizons broadened ... opportunity to develop professional skills ...".

M 33 Maitland: "You have to build good personal network to survive ... not good ... to have state government changing policy directions every 2 years".

M 49 Maitland: "I have enjoyed working with people who enjoy helping others in need but lack of funding ... unable to provide good working conditions".

M 35 Maitland: "It's good to be involved with people".

F 26 Parramatta: "Community sector doesn't really have career structure ... award doesn't recognise previous experience".

F 48 Parramatta: "Very stimulating ... opportunity to develop skills ... danger of allowing exploitation because of caring role".

F 28 Parramatta: "Feels pretty insecure a lot of the time".

F 36 Parramatta: "It would be nice if community work were more highly valued and this reflected in rates of pay and working conditions".

F 36 Wollongong: "Difficult to pursue further training while working in community sector ... many outside work commitments, uncertain funding ..."

M 41 Wollongong: "The same salary rates and employment conditions should apply ...".

F 53 Wollongong: "Needs to be more recognition of value of community organisations/workers in supportive and financial terms in meeting needs ...".

F 47 Wollongong: "More consultation from State/Federal governments ...".

F 52 Wollongong: "Thank heavens I've never had to rely on my money to raise my family. There is no security in the community sector".

F 30 Wollongong: "Career in community sector was not available when I joined. I got out of Public sector as I believed people in community sector could effect more change ...".

F 33 Wollongong: "Career in community sector is one that is extremely insecure and unstable given year to year funding and a source of continual anxiety".

F 31 Wollongong: "Career paths/alternatives not very secure or available".

F 37 Wollongong: "Reliance on qualifications applied to most positions now recruiting does not encompass people who are multi skilled ...".

F 31 Wollongong: "No career paths ... interesting, challenging often with new ideas ways of working".

F 34 Wollongong: "Community sector is dynamic, vital creative work ... pay is poor, hours long, resources scarce".

F 42 Wollongong: "Little recognition of high standards maintained in community sector ... poor remuneration, poor management (committees), lack of career opportunities".

F 39 Wollongong: "No opportunities for advancement beyond current position without entering Public Service or Local Government".

M 43 Young: "I think it's an addiction".

F 58 Wollongong: "Challenging and very rewarding. Sometimes overloaded - physically long hours".

F 48 Wollongong: "(Organisation) does not have a career structure - with them it's a matter of the first person available".

M 35 Sydney: "Big problems with real community work, lost in the grab for professionalism ...".

M 45 Fairfield (NESB): "I was employed 3 years ago but ... funds ran out ... we are on the edge of closing the centre".

F 40 Fairfield: "There is a limit within the community sector with regards to career development and training ... these things can only really be achieved if you move on".

M 31 City: "Looked into careers in public and private sector but felt bureaucratic organisations were too inflexible and not people orientated. Prefer the flexibility of community organisations and the opportunity to have a degree of control over work".

F 40 City: "The fight to be involved in social change not social control is getting harder ...".