



Gippsland  
Family Violence  
Alliance

[www.gippslandfamilyviolencealliance.com.au](http://www.gippslandfamilyviolencealliance.com.au)

# 2024 Gippsland Workforce Survey

**Prepared By:**

Gippsland Family Violence Alliance



# Acknowledgements.

The Gippsland Family Violence Alliance (GFVA) acknowledges the Gunai/Kurnai, Bunurong, Bidewell & Ngarigo/Monero people as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands now also known as Gippsland. We pay our respects to elders past, present and visiting and acknowledge they hold the stories, traditions, spiritual connection and living cultures of this Country.

We recognise the Gunai/Kurnai, Bunurong, Bidewell & Ngarigo/Monero people's long and continued connection and protection of the beautiful coastline from the oceans through inland areas and to the rugged southern slopes of the mountain ranges. We recognise their continued connection to these lands and waters and acknowledge that they have never ceded sovereignty. Always Was Always Will Be, Aboriginal Land!

The GFVA acknowledges that the systemic impacts of colonisation still exist today and that we are committed to respectful truth telling and working with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities to improve women's, children's and men's health, wellbeing and self-determination and to achieving reconciliation as a nation.

The GFVA would like to acknowledge the victims and survivors of family violence, whose tenacity, advocacy and courage have shaped the family violence service sector and provided us with the evidence base for our work. We would also like to acknowledge those who have lost their lives due to family violence and the families, friends and communities who have been impacted by these devastating crimes.

The GFVA would like to acknowledge our practitioners both current and those who have pioneered the sector who have worked with both victim/survivors of family violence and with people who use violence in the home. These practitioners have supported people in difficult periods of their lives and we wish to acknowledge that vicarious trauma has an impact not only on the workforce but on their family members. Without practitioners we wouldn't have a service system and we thank these workers every day.



# Contents.

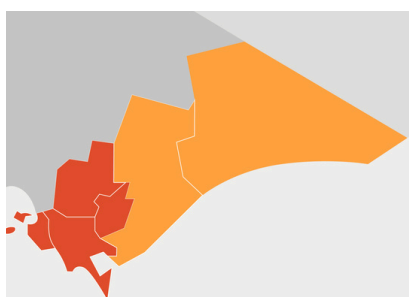
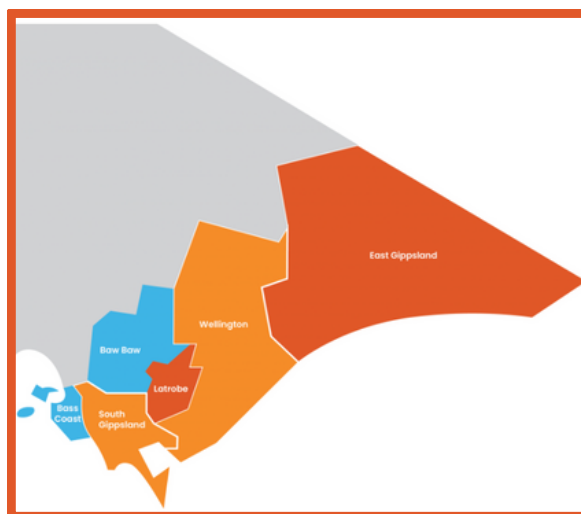
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# Executive Summary

**Gippsland comprises of six local government area's in the south east of Victoria:**

- Baw Baw
- Bass Coast
- South Gippsland
- Latrobe
- Wellington
- East Gippsland

We have regional, rural and the only remote area of the state.



**Gippsland has two Service Systems, as defined by the Department of Families Fairness and Housing, **Inner Gippsland** and **Outer Gippsland**.**

## About the Workforce Survey

The Workforce Survey was a joint partnership between the Gippsland Family Violence Alliance, Homelessness Network and the Inner and Outer Family Service Alliance's.

It was done in partnership, in recognition that practitioners often move between sectors and do not see the sector in the binary in which we're typically funded. This results in practitioners with a broad skillset, who are influenced by factors not just occurring within one sector, but across many.

We also recognise that many services and practitioners in Gippsland work across Inner and Outer, and that having significantly different initiatives in each area would force agencies to choose between each region, which isn't a productive use of resources nor take into consideration the nuances of the region.

The survey was designed to understand the views of both the practitioners and leaders within the sector, to inform planning and initiatives for the next four years.



# Summary of Results.

**242**

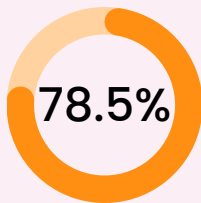
People  
completed the  
Practitioner  
Survey

**62**

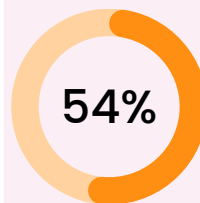
People  
completed the  
Leadership  
Survey

**25**

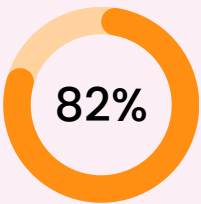
Agencies  
participated



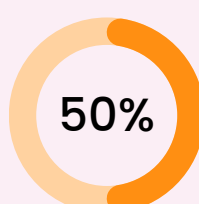
of practitioners  
surveyed hold a  
Diploma or higher  
qualification



of practitioners surveyed  
stated that they intend to  
stay in their current role for  
the next 5 years



of practitioners surveyed  
were satisfied with the  
hours they were offered



of practitioners surveyed  
held intentions to work in  
one sector for their career



**62.9%**

of leaders surveyed felt that it was  
difficult or extremely difficult to fill  
positions in the last 12 months



**88%**

of leaders surveyed anticipate a  
demand for staff in the next 5 years



**51%**

of leaders surveyed felt that vicarious  
trauma and discrepancy in pay scale  
between sectors impact on retention



**88%**

of leaders surveyed preferred an  
applicant with a diploma or higher  
qualification

# Summary of Key Themes

## **Theme One: Flexible Work**

Practitioners overwhelmingly felt that flexible work added to the work environment which allowed them to have a healthy work/life balance. Leaders had more varied opinions which demonstrate the need for greater support, particularly with middle management to enable flexible work in an equitable way.

## **Theme Two: Qualifications**

Gippsland practitioners, overwhelmingly hold qualifications in the more generalised community service/welfare stream than their statewide counterparts. This demonstrates we have a more versatile workforce within Gippsland.

## **Theme Three: Continued Education**

27% of those surveyed wish to pursue a formal degree, while a further 26% wish to pursue an informal qualification. This demonstrates a continued need for organisational support to allow practitioners to upskill.

## **Theme Four: Leadership Opportunities**

Both Leaders and practitioners largely reported that pathways into leadership was happenstance, outside of a couple of organisations. This demonstrates the need for greater transparency and support into leadership opportunities.

## **Theme Five: Fixed Term Funding**

The impact of fixed term funding was outlined by both leaders and practitioners, with leaders noting that many of their prior pathways to maintain practitioners between funding periods slowly disappearing as funding is reduced. This indicates the need for greater advocacy in this area with Government.

## **Theme Six: Impact of Demand on Retention**

We did not ask specifically about demand on practitioners, however demand multiple practitioners noted the impact of demand on their wellbeing, as well the pressure being a leading cause of disengagement from the work. This demonstrates the need for advocacy to ensure we're providing practitioners what they need to be able to support clients.



# Practitioner Survey

## Full Report



# Practitioner Survey

**242**

**Participants**

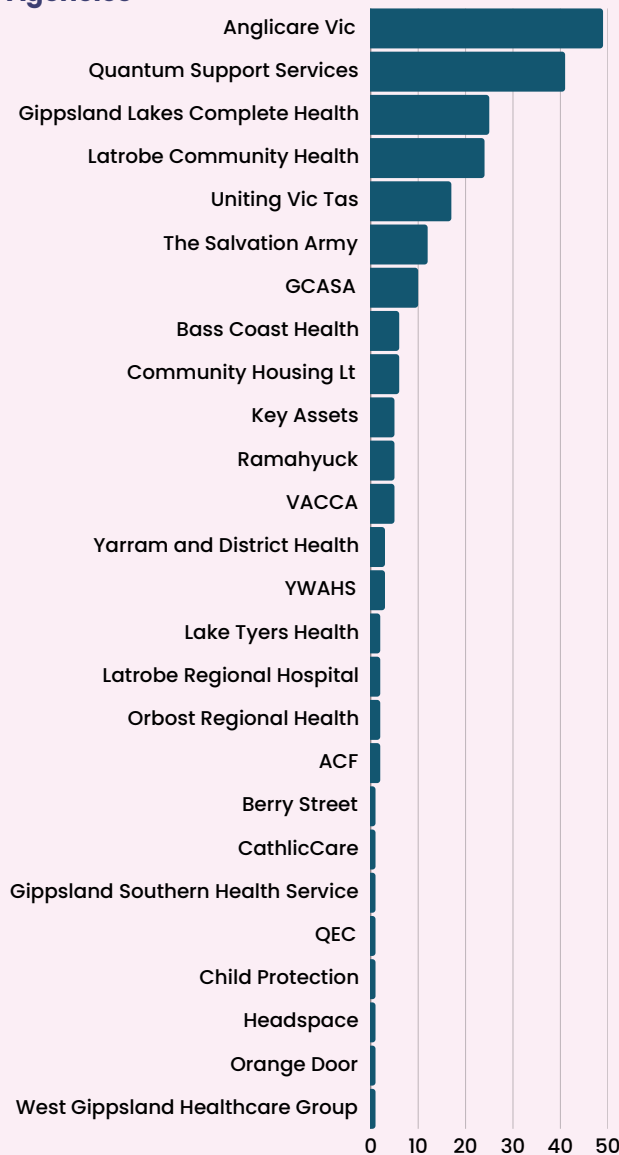
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**Agencies**

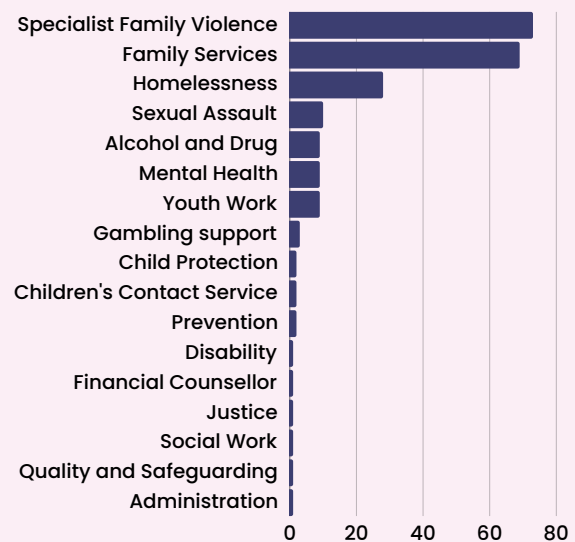
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**Sectors**

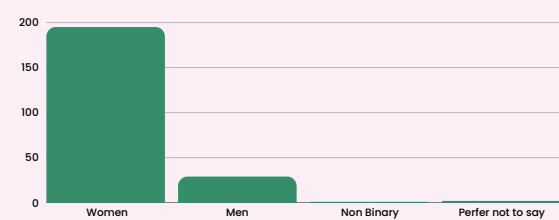
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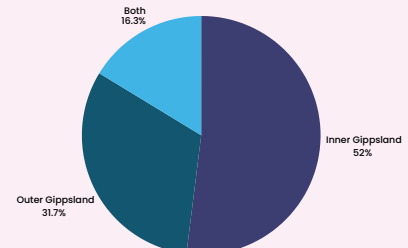
## Sector:



## Gender:



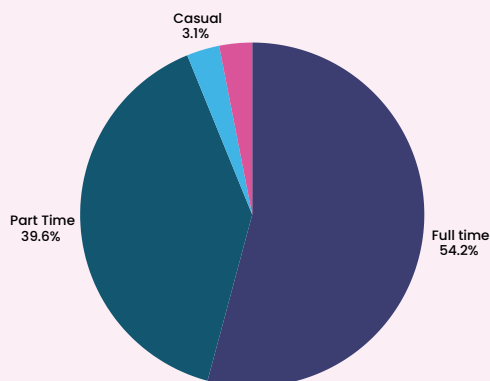
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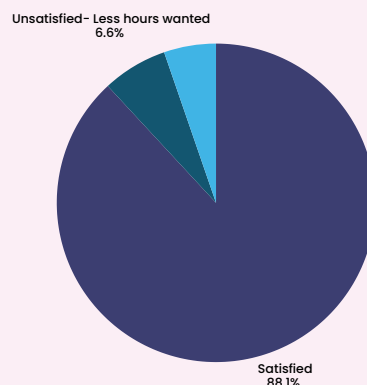


# Practitioner Survey cont.

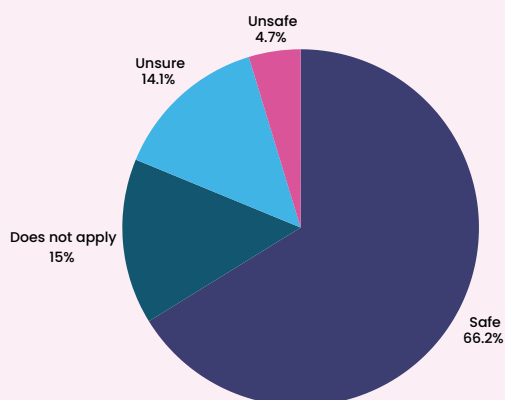
## Employment by EFT:



## Satisfaction with hours offered:



## Felt safe at work to disclose identities:



## Intention to move between workforces:

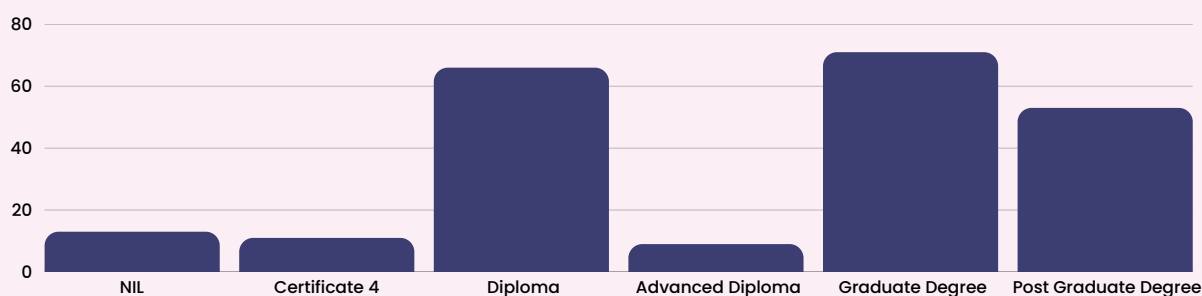
Work in one sector:



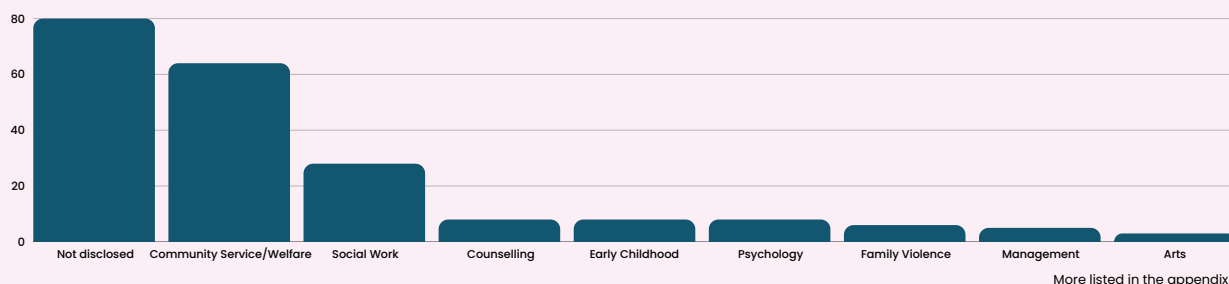
Work in multiple sectors:



## Highest level of education obtained:



## Qualification type:



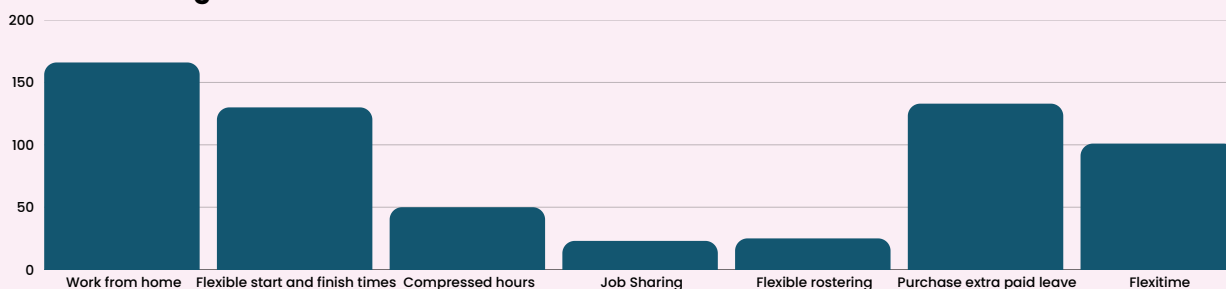
More listed in the appendix

# Practitioner Survey | Flexible Work

There were **213 comments** on flexible work arrangements, with the below being a sample of the comments. **Positive** comments did consistently come from practitioners employed at several specific agencies, and they focused on the benefits of flexible work for those with **families**, but also the desire to have **home/life balance** where no family was mentioned. Positive comments also consistently mentioned the benefits on **mental health and stress** levels.

Comments where their could be **improvement** all focused on the **inequity / inconsistent** messaging of the current organisational arrangements, as well as the consequences, in terms of **turnover**.

## Flexible arrangements offered:



### Positive reflections:

*Currently I work more hours to acquire a day off every fortnight. This flexible working arrangement allows for better work/life balance.*

*I am so thankful my employee offer's flexible working arrangements. This makes being a working Mum more manageable.*

*Flexible working arrangements meet my needs and enable me to meet my client's needs too.*

*The ability to work flexible hours means I am able to meet family commitments without eating up all my leave, therefore able to use it to rest.*

*I appreciate being able to work from home some days of the week or part days that link in with my travel to see clients around the Gippsland area.*

### Room for improvement reflections:

*I don't believe the working arrangements are adequately flexible for staff, leading to burn out and high staff turnover.*

*My workplace has previously been very flexible with the above considerations, however, with a change in supervisors, this has become much less so.*

*I think it depends on who is your leader and how flexible they are in supporting you.*

*I don't like that I am sent emails from my team leader about working in the office more when they and their managers do not attend the office often.*

*Confusing messages from management, verses the team leader. Management discusses flexible working arrangements, however team leader does not seem to support these.*

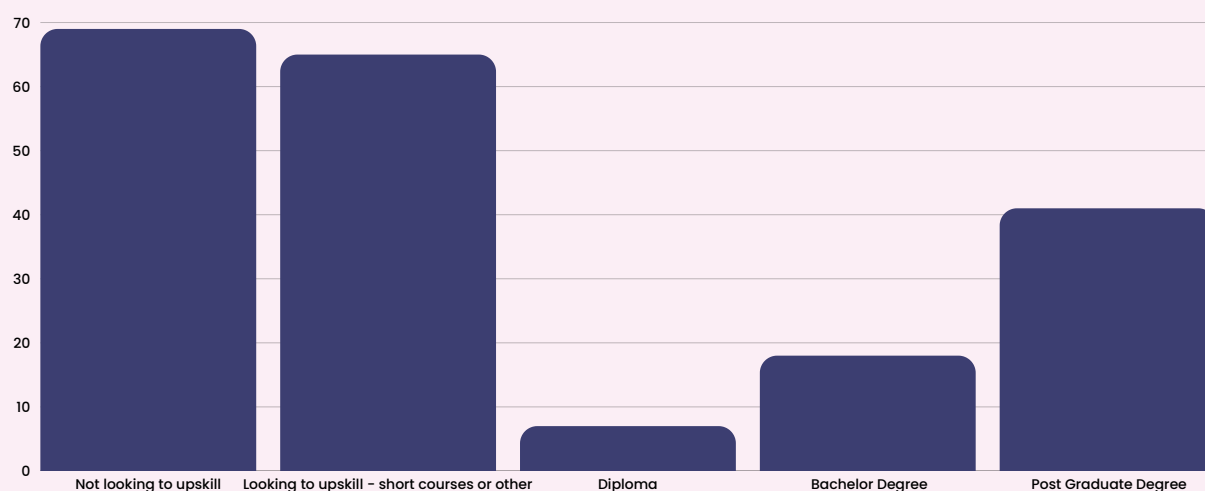
# Practitioner Survey | Upskilling

**Overall, 27% of respondents to the survey were planning on furthering their education through a formal qualification, such as a diploma or high qualification. When including those who were unsure, but wanted to further their study or complete accreditations, that number increased to 54% of the workforce.**

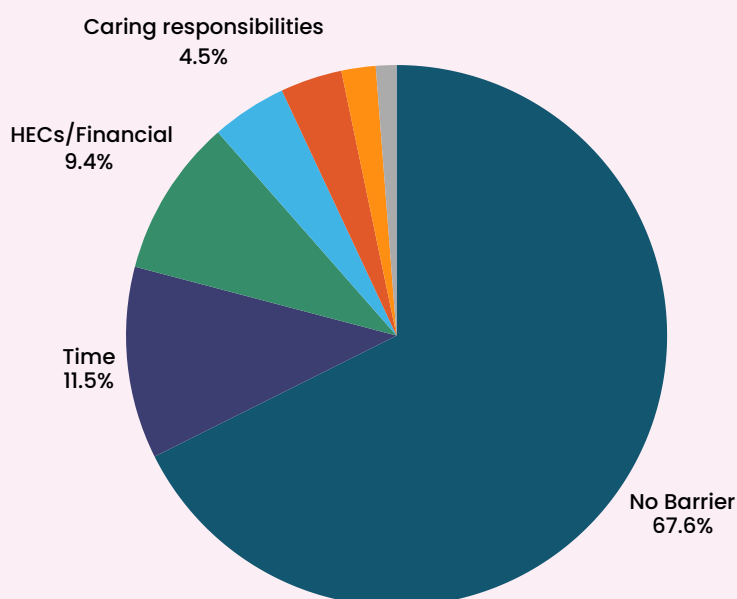
In terms of barriers to upskilling, time was the largest factor when considering further training, however reading the comments, there was overlap between time and caring responsibilities, as some people denoted time to mean time away from their family, while others denoted time as finding time to study. Financial/HECs was the next largest concern, with comments mentioning the cost of living crisis and mortgage rates.

Lack of organisational support, the limited guarantee they would secure a wage increase by increasing their qualification and concerns about placement were also mentioned. However, overwhelmingly most people did not mention barriers.

## Intentions to upskill:



## Barriers to upskilling:



# Practitioner Survey | Future Plans

**54% of respondents to the survey indicated that they planned on remaining in their position for the next (five) 5 years. However, the comments indicated less certainty in their plans.**

Comments specifically mentioned the impact of demand, feeling of being undervalued by the organisation, or culture issues as reasons they would leave.

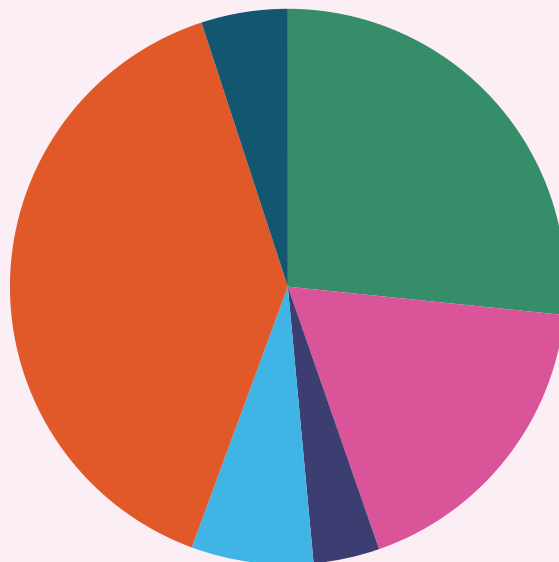
Many comments mentioned moving, retiring or seeking to reduce working hours due to caring responsibilities as grandparents/parents. Almost 10% of the respondents indicated that they would be retiring.

25% indicated that they would be looking at moving positions-within the same sector, 37% indicated that they would be looking to move positions but remain within the community services sector.

5% indicated they wanted to leave the sector entirely.

## Future plans in the next 5 years:

- Leaving current position, remaining in community sec...
- Leaving current position but remaining in same sector
- Leaving community sector entirely
- Retiring
- Remaining in current position
- Leaving Gippsland



## Reflections on future plans:

*No solid plans to move on, may consider leaving Gippsland for family reasons, however happy to progress experience and professional development through current role and organisation.*

*I would like to work part time in my role then in the future work for myself as a counsellor and art therapist in family violence.*

*I'm content, challenged and happy in my current role.*

*I don't think I can do this work for forever without a break.*

*I am open to all experiences but would prefer a more hands on approach such as advocacy.*

*I currently enjoy my role immensely and love the team that I work in. I would also like to gain further experience and knowledge of the sector before eventually going into policy design/development.*

*I need a break from the pressure of the sector and the way that staff are treated.*

*If our sector continues to be undervalued and underfunded and the workload continues to increase, I will leave. Mine and my families wellbeing are the most important thing to me.*

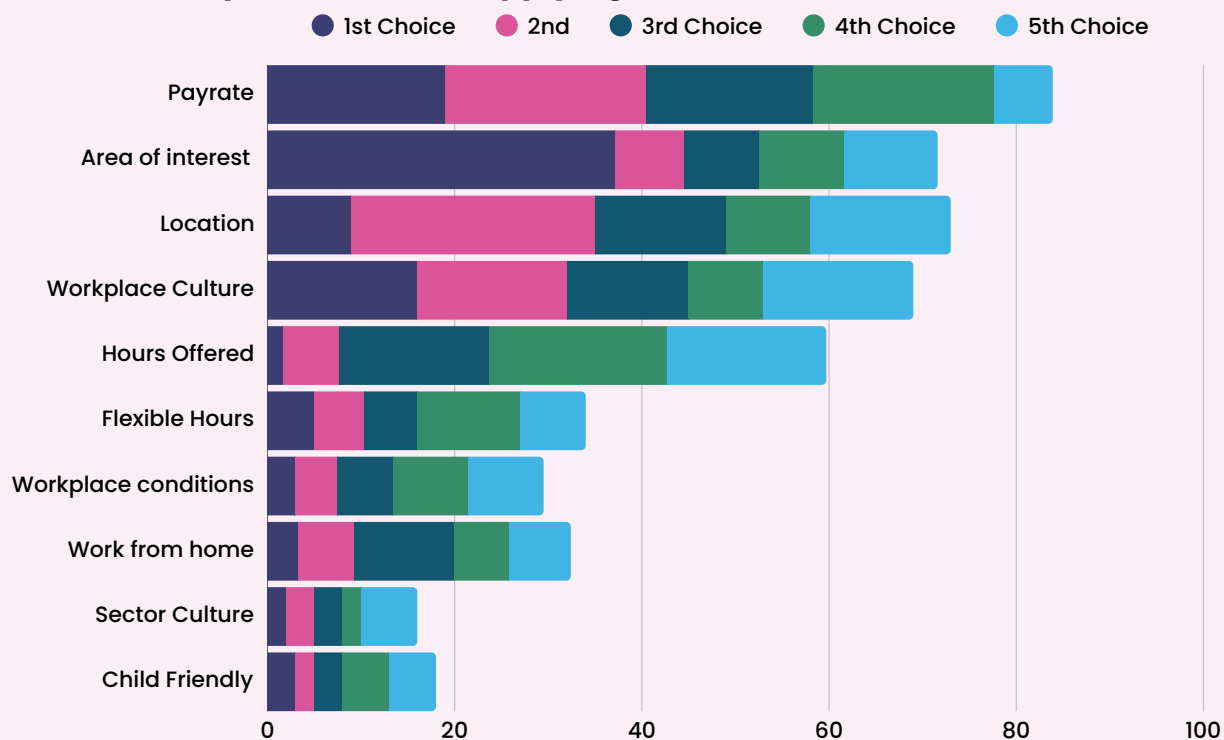
*I enjoy the team of my current role but may need new challenges in the future.*

*Need more flexible hours and role and work arrangements.*

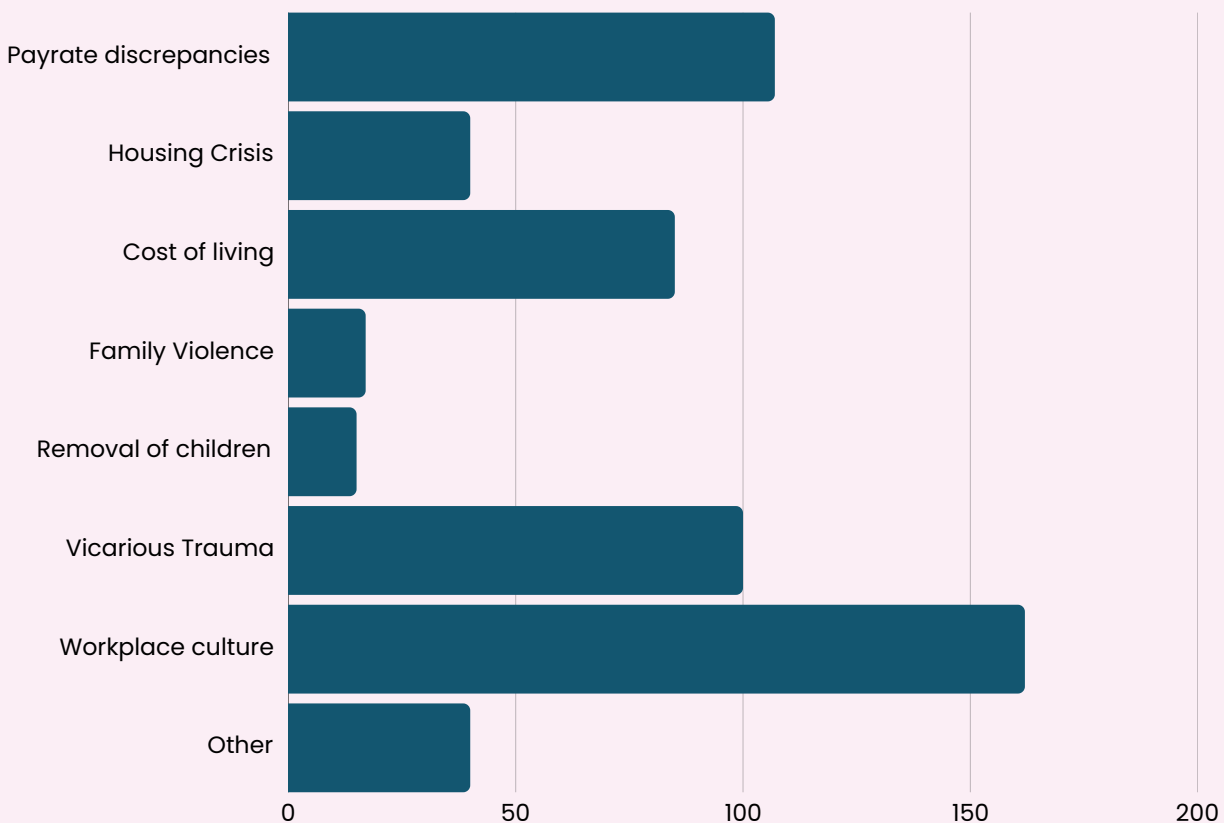


# Practitioner Survey | Job Values

## Factors of importance when applying for work:



## Factors that influence decisions to leave the work:



# Practitioner Survey | Leadership Opportunities

**There were a few organisations where practitioners were able to consistently and clearly outline the career progression opportunities within the organisation, which typically were:**

- Internal leadership training
- Back filling
- Taking up time-limited leadership positions
- Taking up an on-going position.

However, what came through in the majority of comments, was that practitioners were unclear if any leadership opportunities were available to them, or they felt that there wasn't a formal identification and upskilling of potential leaders and instead positions often went to the person who had been on the team the longest or who was friends with a group of people internally to the organisation.

Many practitioners voiced that they didn't believe that their hard work was recognised and therefore overlooked by the organisation. Where it did seem to work, a clear and transparent merit pool had been established.

## **Reflections on leadership opportunities:**

*We are offered opportunities to upskill regularly, there are a lot of PD days offered, online training and webinars and we are welcome to suggest our own ideas of what we would like to do based on our job roles and interests.*

*The organisation identifies potential leaders through the level of experience and skill observed in a practitioner and leadership qualities such as the ability to work autonomously and tap into resources effectively.*

*Our managers and leadership team identify 'key talent' within the organisation and offer training and education opportunities in leadership to those they have identified. They also allow secondments into leadership and provide ongoing support from the top down to those who are wanting to progress within the leadership space.*

*Employees are offered the opportunity to "act up" when their supervisors go on leave. I think this is an effective way to see how people handle extra responsibility and gain extra skills.*

*I recently voiced my interest to my team leader about upskilling / taking on new responsibilities. Within the next week or two I was enrolled into leadership training*

*This is done poorly, minimal to no support provided to upskill and often person who has most years experience is offered opportunities when their experience may be extremely limited (4years) and they lack leadership skills altogether.*

*Do not know... it is a complete mystery to me. I think you have to be in the "in-group"*

# Practitioner Survey | Fixed-Term Funding

**Practitioners were asked: Does your organisation have any innovative methods which it uses to maintain staff between financial periods? Do you find these effective as a practitioner?**

We had numerous comments on the impact of fixed term contracts on either the practitioner themselves or on their colleagues, however very few comments were made on any strategies used by agencies. This demonstrates that communication methods to practitioners are not effective, or not occurring during periods where fixed term contracts are coming to an end.

## Reflections fixed term funding:

*I find it stressful being on a fixed term contract as I do not have job stability. Not knowing if I will have a job or not in a years time has deterred me from taking contracted positions.*

*I would say that you do see a lot of valuable colleagues having to leave and take on roles elsewhere due to not having job security when their roles are coming to an end and the uncertainty around whether funding will be extended.*

*My leadership calculated the funding they receive and work that out to cover for such time of overlapping period between the old funding and the new funding time so no redundancy is necessary to me made.*

*The organisation has tried a number of cost cutting initiatives to try to counter balance this and shift roles around but this has not always worked.*

*We have implemented a revenue diversification committee to attempt to explore additional revenue streams to ensure staff can remain employed and the community supported.*

*This has impacted me in the past when working for previous employers and there was no assistance or support when the contract ran out and was quite devastating. I think this is perhaps the worst thing about working in the sector.*

*Our organisation acknowledges the challenges posed by fixed-term funding in the sector and has implemented several innovative strategies to maintain staff continuity between financial periods. These strategies include:*

- *Diversified Funding Sources*
- *Internal Secondments and Cross-Training*
- *Flexible Employment Arrangements*
- *Strong Advocacy and Communication.*

# Practitioner Survey | Retention

The comments practitioners provided to this question all focused on:

- **Workplace conditions**
- **Practitioner wellbeing**
- **Client outcomes**

The concerns about high demand and waiting lists and their impact on practitioners were really captured in this part of the survey.

Workplace conditions and the need for a focus on pay rates, workload, supervision and positive work environments came through very strongly through the survey.

## Reflections on retention:

*Understanding managers. Having a great team behind you that value what you do in your role. Knowing that debriefing in our role is important.*

*Paid student placement. Higher pay rates, lower admin tasks, lower case loads.*

*Continued support from Team Leaders, and not overwhelming them with high numbers.*

*Flexibility on working from home, hours and looking after practitioners' wellbeing.*

*Peer support along with management support. Its difficult in outer gippsland due to distance, ability to recruit skilled people. Kindness is helpful. Understanding all the warm and fuzzy emotions. Being validated, and being treated as valuable. Clinical Supervision availability essential. Access to professional development.*

*Ability for staff to feel safe and supported in role.*

*The removal of being solely focused on 'targets' rather than the individual person we are supporting. As we have to meet targets to secure on-going funding, we often feel that it is not person centered as much as we try for it to be.*

*Additional, effective and preventative initiatives such as greater understanding of and support for self-care (including individualised Vicarious Trauma Prevention Plans for all staff working in this sector), quality and regular clinical and other supervision, communities of practice, reduction of focus on KPIs and a focus on quality outcomes for clients/participants (from funders).*

*Acknowledgement of a practitioners strengths and skills. Embrace all types of personality and respect lived experience rather than the focus being on who has the highest university degree.*



# Practitioner Survey | Retention Continued

## Reflections on retention:

*In discussions I've had with others in the sector there is an overwhelming sense of personal responsibility- staff feeling like they need to hold 100% of a client's needs or a programs delivery and that if they are unavailable this will have large negative impacts- this isn't sustainable, particularly in understaffed/under-resourced sectors, or where a practitioner holds multiple cases and the burnout and staff turn-over as a result is far too normalised to the point that it's almost expected*

*Upon reflection the client based work is deeply satisfying but comes at the financial cost of HECS debt, appallingly low rate of pay particularly in comparison to industry, the toll of vicarious trauma and the weight of client risk management including family violence, risk of overdose, self harm and suicide. This is noble work but comes at a high personal cost that can be addressed with meaningful commitment to funding, recognition and reward for those who aspire or want to stay in the sector.*

*These roles are specialised and important - the sector/funders/community need to respect and reflect that in terms of the rates of pay, opportunities for career development and progression, and continuity of work roles (funding) as well as ensuring that there is an appropriate balance between funded KPIs and ability to have time for supervision, reflective practice, skill/practice/professional development and self care.*

*Wages are much improved in recent years. I would like to know/have some transparency about indicative typical salaries my colleagues earn .We all work hard, but someone on \$90K+ should be working harder and at more responsibility than someone earning \$60K, I have no real sense of what people earn and whether their output is commensurate with their income.*

*Don't overlook our clients needs and how this impacts retention. If we truly feel like we are making a difference (our clients get the right support, when they need it) we will be happy in our roles and stay*

*Company should always acknowledge staff's efforts and encourage them to share their thoughts, top down management usually do not last long.*

*The work is becoming more complex and challenging and we are seeing higher rates of burnout, however staff cannot afford to lose income and move to another sector/role that pays less, so they stay in the role and their heart is not in it.*



Gippsland  
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Alliance

# Leadership & Human Resources Survey



# Leadership Survey

62

Participants

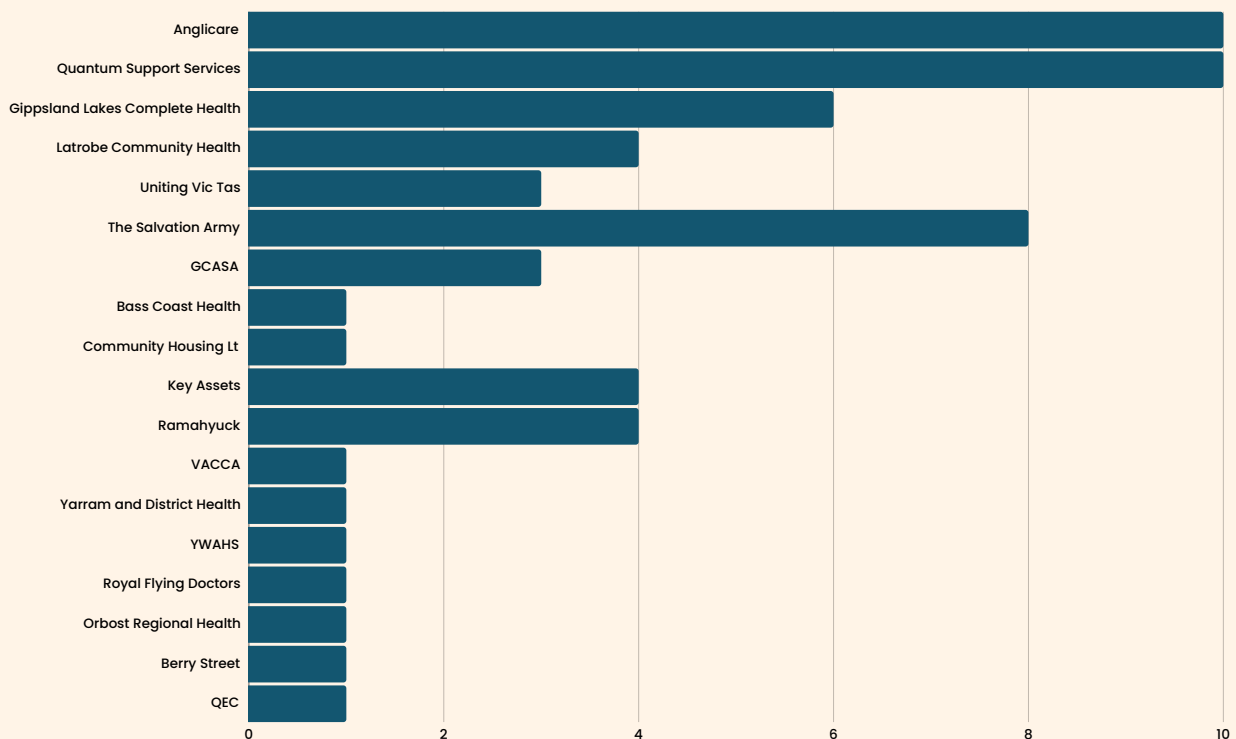
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Agencies

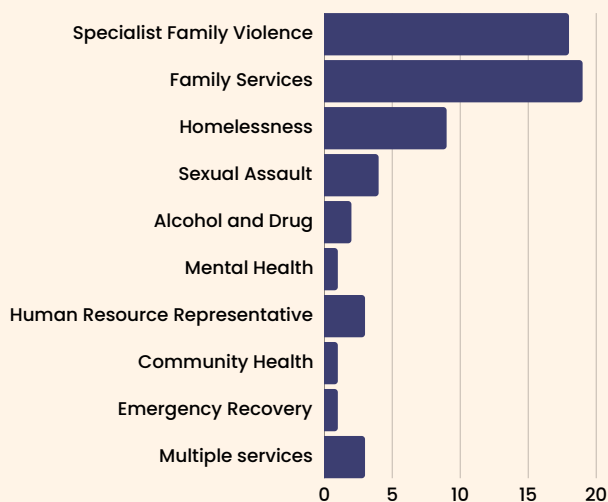
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Sectors

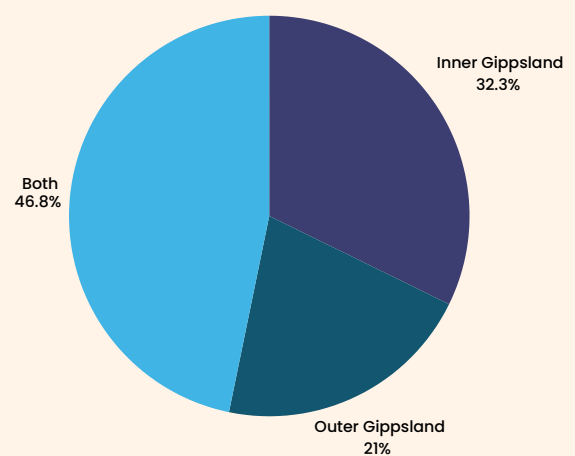
## Agencies



## Sector:



## Location:



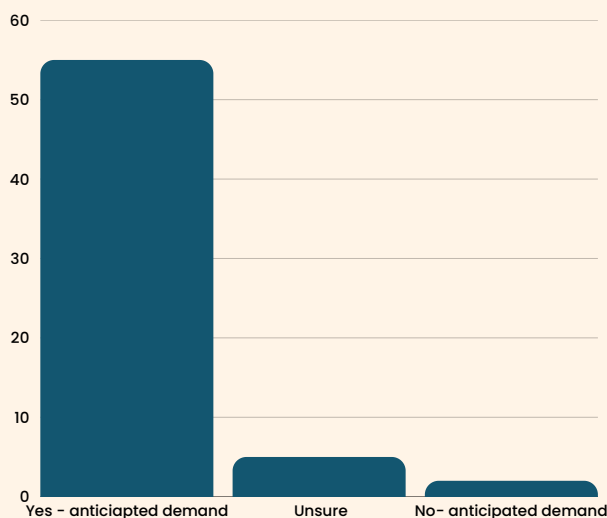
# Leadership Survey | Demand for Practitioners

**The majority of leaders who responded to the survey expected a demand for practitioners in the next 5 years. This aligns with the work of Victorian Skills Authority who found that Victoria will need 83,324 health and community workers by 2026.**

The only sector who didn't feel they would experience demand in the next 5 years were two leaders in the Family Services space. Most of the comments focused on increasing client complexity, and the high pressure/vicarious trauma experienced by the workforce which leads to burnout, as a reason for increased staffing demands.

There were fewer comments related to increased funding or program innovation.

## Anticipated demand for practitioners in the next 5 years:



## Reflections on anticipation on demand:

*With the increasing number of clients with complex issues, we will need to expand our workforce to meet demand.*

*I hope we receive more programs! However, I believe it will be more so because IAP workers generally move on from working in the entry point after 3 years on average. In addition to this, we are seeing more staff burnout due to the high pressures and challenges of working in the homelessness sector and are leaving for other sectors.*

*Our funding is decreasing so I don't feel that our programs will expand, and we are currently getting a good group of suitable applicants for the roles we advertise.*

*With the social climate as it is with homelessness, cost of living, various drugs coming into local areas, mental health concerns increasing due to the previous areas mentioned, I expect that relationships will suffer and instances of FV will increase or at least remain the same*

*Increasing funding in the area will require more staff, as will retirement of some experienced staff and the high turn over of this industry.*

*Growth in funding requires strategic 3-5 workforce development plan to ensure predictable, highly qualified workforce to meet minimum qualifications - Bachelor level.*

*Currently we see a lot of internal movement that is great for staff opportunities, but it is extremely challenging to bring in new quality people within Gippsland, especially for fixed term contracts.*

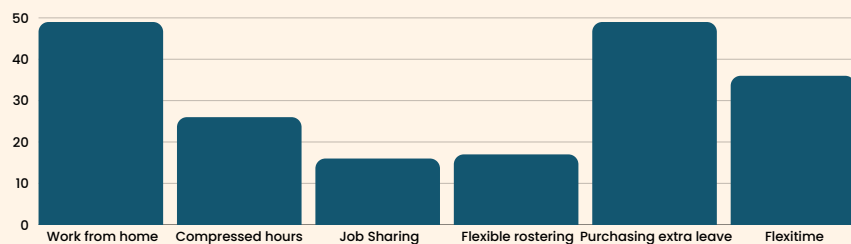
*The Family Violence sector sees a lot of turn around given the nature of the work and the expectation for qualifications and experience being highly desirable.*

# Leadership Survey | Flexible Work Arrangements

The comments on Flexible Work Arrangements by leaders were mixed. It does appear those in more senior positions did speak positively on the impact of flexible work arrangements on retention, while sometimes mentioning the complexities of putting flexible work into practice. Those in more middle management positions had less positive comments about work from home.

It is worth noting that not all the comments were backed up by evidence of practitioner wrong doing. Comments such as 'I feel' should be deconstructed. The comments do reflect what has come through on the practitioner survey, that while policies are in place, the flexibility seems inconsistent and dependent on managers.

## Flexible work arrangements:



## Reflections on flexible work arrangements:

*Though our agency offers all of the above, it is not something that is generally approved for our homelessness staff because we are a drop in face to face service, we have had staff leave our agency because they wanted better flexible working arrangements.*

*Decreased team morale and connection as well as broader disconnect between staff and leadership. Concerns on not being able to accurately gauge a person's mental health and well-being due to remote working.*

*Flexible working arrangements are a must and are prevalent in all our staff feedback, it can be difficult to manage the staff want for flexibility and the clinical need of having clinicians on site.*

*I feel staff are not as productive wfh in our area as we are outreach in the community. I also feel staff can burn out with limited resources, funding, and options for our particular cohort of clients.*

*I feel some staff would take advantage of our flexible working from home arrangements and will complete personal errands during work hours instead of working.*

*If the organisation is inflexible or unwilling to move with modern society for flexible working arrangements / agreements the recruitment and retention of staff is diminished, and potential applicants look to other organisations for employment.*

*Flexible working has many positive impacts on staff and leaders alike being able to attend to family commitments and responsibilities while working from different sites and home as required.*

*Flexible work arrangements appear to be instrumental in retaining staff, but they also need to be managed strategically*



# Leadership Survey | Evidence – Flexible Work

**There were many differing views within this survey about flexible work, so we felt it was necessary to provide a short evidence review around flexible work.**

It should first be noted, that flexible work is not limited to work from home. It includes:

- working compressed hours
- job sharing
- flexible rostering
- purchase leave
- flexitime

These provisions can assist with direct service delivery, particularly for clients who cannot access services in 9-5 windows.

The research shows, that there is theory behind why flexible work is successful as a concept. Sajjad et al. note that the Social Exchange Theory explains the link between work-life balance and commitment. Social Exchange theory studies social behaviour between two parties where economic benefits are involved.

When Sajjad et al. applied the concept to workplaces which had flexible workplaces they found that flexible work can lead to increased employee participation as individuals may feel obligated to contribute extra effort in exchange for the additional benefits offered. This commitment is evident in employees' voluntarily engaging in extra role activities that benefit the organisation, demonstrating their strong organisational commitment (Sajjad et al 2024).

**Two reasons were found to explain the disconnect between the experiences of flexible work between practitioners and some leaders.**

The first is outlined in an Australian article by Xiang et al. Xiang notes that in Australia flexible work, particularly for mothers is often applied both formally through policy, and informally, through arrangements with line management. They outline positive and negative consequences of both arrangements, however they ultimately found the *transparency of formal arrangements may offer a more secure way to ensure genuine working-time flexibility, it may simultaneously produce a level of visibility that risks exacerbating flexibility stigma, potentially leading to reduced pay or lost opportunities for training, and/or taking on an increased workload to compensate for reduced workplace presence.*

It's clear from the survey that both informal and formal arrangements were being used, which could explain the inequity between not only teams within an agency, but when from when a new team leader is recruited. The use of the informal arrangements is likely to be part of the reason there is a perception of inequity.

**The second reason behind the disconnect, could be put down to the differing capability of managers.**

It should be highlighted that when the leadership survey was examined, senior leaders, such as deputy CEO's and General Managers were more likely to speak positively of flexible work, compared to middle managers.

This can be explained by a study undertaken by Buick et al. This study outlines that there are often four typical management styles used by managers. They found that the capacity to support flexible work practices is shaped by a *managers knowledge, self-efficacy, and experience with flexible working and their willingness to support this practice may be motivated by perceptions of resource loss or gain.* It highlights that the presence of these different approaches to managerial support creates the potential for employee well-being to vary considerably within the same organisation.

Buick et al, suggests, managerial toolkits, addressing managerial knowledge gaps and consistent managing of manager performance to develop self efficacy around flexible work.

## References:

Sajjad, M, Ahmad, N & Sherwani, NUK 2024, 'Impact of Flexible Working Hours on Organizational Commitment and the Mediating Role of Work-Life Balance', IUP Journal of Organizational Behavior, vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 5-25, viewed 9 October 2024, <<https://research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=f0152b41-f8ec-3aca-be8d-5c21f392aad7>>.

Xiang, N, Whitehouse, G, Tomaszewski, W & Martin, B 2022, 'The benefits and penalties of formal and informal flexible working-time arrangements: evidence from a cohort study of Australian mothers', International Journal of Human Resource Management, vol. 33, no. 14, pp. 2939-2960, viewed 9 October 2024, <<https://research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=645b6b5b-864d-3763-a9e3-49318117c106>>

Buick, F, Blackman, DA, Glennie, M, Weeratunga, V & O'Donnell, ME 2024, 'Different Approaches to Managerial Support for Flexible Working: Implications for Public Sector Employee Well-Being', Public Personnel Management, vol. 53, no. 3, pp. 377-405, viewed 9 October 2024, <<https://research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=226fa8fb-5135-3139-8722-150d68a360a2>>.

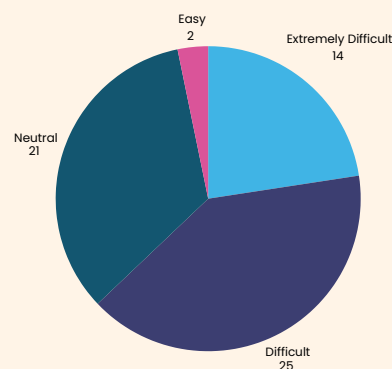
# Leadership Survey | Recruitment

**Leaders seemed to be in agreement that recruiting appropriately trained and skilled practitioners has been difficult. A common theme in the comments was the choice between under-qualified practitioners but who have experience, and those who have the qualifications but not the experience.**

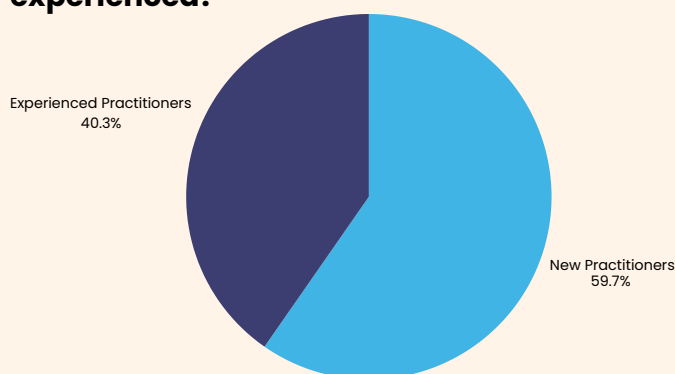
It should be pointed out that if practitioners with qualifications, but no experience are never provided with employment- they will never have an entry into the sector. It should also be highlighted that practitioners who were in the sector prior to July 2021, do not need to meet Rec 209.

Greater support for new workers entering the sector, along with agencies could support the growth of the sector.

**In the past 12 months, how difficult was it to recruit?**



**In the past 12 were practitioners new or experienced?**



## **Reflections on recruitment:**

*To undertake the work with clients with complex mental health and experience assault is challenging and requires high levels of support to workforce to reduce vicarious trauma.*

*Success have been looking at the applicant's potential to develop in the role. This has sometimes meant contacts are offered in the first instance. Sometimes at a lower SCHADS rate depending on quals). It may also be discussed with applicant a about their willingness to undertake further education in the future.*

*We are of the view to re-advertise and wait for the right candidate rather than employing anyone where there are concerns. We have had a number of new graduates apply; however, our preference is an applicant with experience in the sector.*

*We haven't needed to do alot of recruitment however, what we have found when we do, is we either have the choice between new grads with little experience or diploma qualified staff with a lot of experience.*

*Senior roles require experience and applicants with bachelor or masters level with no experience are still not appropriate for the role. Most experienced applicants come internally or from DFFH.*

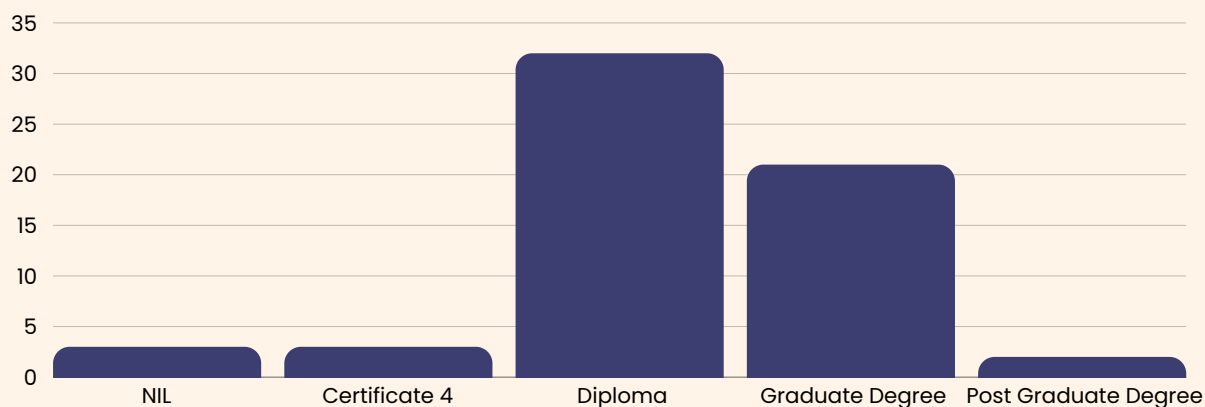
*Staff are just not qualified. It's a high investment to support a new staff member in the sector and then there is low tolerance from partner agencies to support or create safe spaces for these workers. They just get walked over and bullied. We are more successful to keep staff in home agencies and support their alignment rather than out working in the Orange door or alongside partners.*

# Leadership Survey | Qualifications

Preferred qualifications by leaders varied by sector, and there was often little consensus even within a sector. The one exception was Homelessness, which unanimously agreed that diploma was the preferred qualification.

Overwhelmingly the sector preferred a minimum of a diploma, with 51% stating it's their preferred qualification and 31% stating graduate degree. Family violence was more likely to ask for a graduate degree.

## Preferred Qualification:

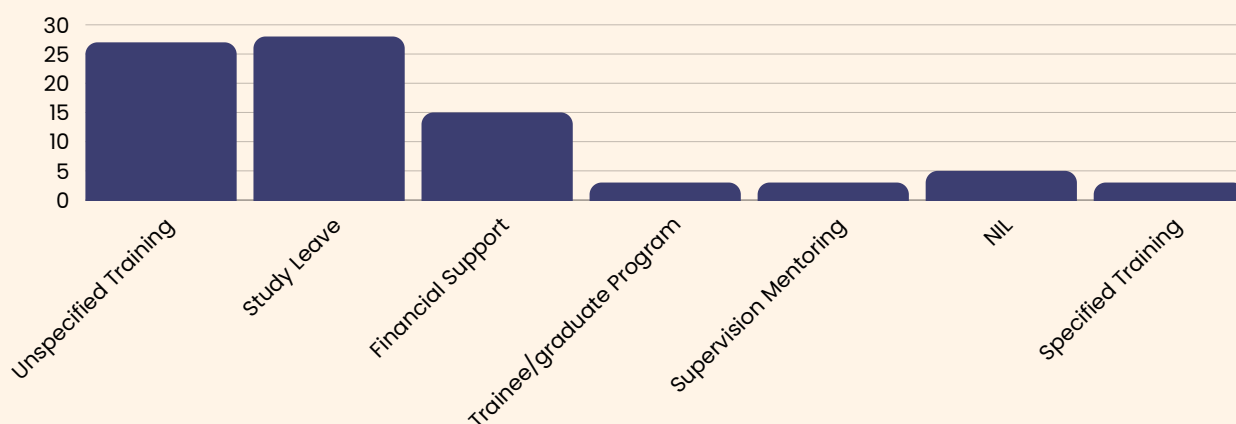


The supports agencies offered to practitioners to upskill varied considerable. Even when study leave was offered, some organisations noted providing the minimum required in the SCHAD's Award, which is 5 days, while some offered 7.6 hours a week, those differences are not shown clearly in the graph below.

Many organisations offered unspecified 'training' but it was unclear whether that was in-house communities of practice or short courses that are often offered within the sector that come at a cost. Some of these will be recognised by other employers, some will not, so practitioners will place varying levels of importance on them.

There was significant differences in the financial support which is offered by organisations, with some requiring practitioners to nominate for a scholarship, others it seems to be a set amount built in for an employee.

## Support to Upskill:



# Leadership Survey | Leadership Identification

**One organisation, which was a large, state based organisation, with a learning and development team seemed to have a defined pathway to leadership, which was mirrored in the practitioner survey.**

Others mentioned identifying the skills of a potential leader, through their actions and supervision. It's unclear whether it's communicated to practitioners what attributes are being looked for in this process, which is perhaps what is leading to the 'preferential treatment' comments by the practitioners.

Opportunities varied between agencies with some offering university degrees and other formal training, while others offered development plans, supervision, internal training etc. Backfill and offering to 'act up' mentioned a lot. However, it was mentioned that backfill positions were often limited and it was sometimes found that the person was not a good fit for the position.

## **Reflections on how your organisation identifies potential leaders:**

*Passion for the program and what it offers, reliability, teachable, flexible, non judgemental, supportive of others, able to complete administrative requirements, follow direction, work autonomously and within a team, Team spirit, professional behaviours and boundaries.*

*Our leaders/supervisors identify future or emerging leaders through supervision, performance reviews, and succession planning. In succession planning, a development plan is developed for the individual.*

*Identified through supervision, performance appraisals, observation by Manager etc, then offered internal project opportunities to test if interested.*

*Potential leaders are identified through their approach to their work, their interaction within the team, their willingness to take on extra duties and through supervision are given the opportunity to act in more senior or leadership roles for short periods of holiday leave. Further training is offered depending on what training and education has already been undertaken*

*We ensure staff have opportunities to contribute to the overall team and demonstrate their leadership skills in way that are meaningful to them.*

*Supervision with workers is an opportunity to discuss leadership aspirations. There is also the possibility of doing higher duties when leaders are on leave. Workers are encouraged to upskill and there is access to online module training via the online portal.*

*We offer extensive online trainings, leadership training options as well as providing support for senior workers to move into leadership to cover backfill.*

*Through fortnightly goal focused supervision, PD opportunities, encouragement for study leave, and promotion of the use of internal only advertisements; including higher duties when leaders are away.*

*Offer opportunities to staff who show potential in growth and leadership. We are trialing 360 feedback to support skill development. We also fund a grad cert in management through Deakin uni to some staff- currently in second round since commencing this opportunity. Succession planning.*

# Leadership Survey | Fixed-Term Funding

**Fixed term funding has long been identified as an issue for the community sector. Recent changes to the legislation has impacted the use of fixed term contracts, with most practitioners now on ongoing contracts.** This, however, has not provided job security for practitioners who are working on programs which have funding which isn't ongoing, as they are aware they can still experience a redundancy at the end of the funding period.

**Leaders indicated that they were largely working with their finance and Agency Performance and Systems Support advisors to maintain some funding certainty for their practitioners, but it's also identified that this is an ongoing worry and a time consuming activity.** It was identified that some agencies worked to maintain practitioners for a period of three months after fixed term funding ceases, to prevent the need to recruit, if/when additional funding comes through. But as one comment mentions, it's increasingly becoming unsustainable to wait 3 months of the year without funding certainty.

## Reflections on how organisations address fixed-term funding:

*We keep staff on as long as possible. this year was particularly challenging due to funding decreases and late notification of funding allocations. We take our APSS word for some of the funding that is coming but have not had formal confirmation yet. Certainly no ideal!*

*In recent years we have taken more risk and given ongoing contracts for security for staff even in the face of fixed term funding. This has helped morale and retention bit at times has cost us financially.*

*We typically use understand to support these gaps, however due to the recent comms from DFFH advising that understand will be recouped and org will be held to account for target aligned achievement, we may not be able to use underspend in the future, or mission funding. This is a concern for us.*

*Leadership work closely with finance on balancing FTE and multiple staff hours and days to offer security where possible to staff. Budgeting is monitored closely to allow for this.*

*This is a HUGE problem re staff retention! I am exploring corporate funding, but actually we lose staff all the time due to the instability of the funding.*

*My organisation guarantees 3 months post the funding ending, which is a fantastic idea, because often funding is extended but we're not told until the last minute, by which time people have moved on. This approach allows time for funding announcements while giving employees peace of mind.*

*If we know the funds will flow we use spillage to extend contracts but managing workforce isn't easy and ultimately the pressure of the work load on all staff (where people opt out), mortgages and or cost of living prevails. Bank in the financial year where recruitment hadn't occurred.*

*It helps having a large organisation otherwise I don't know how we'd manage. We are still waiting for payments on half our programs and it's likely not to come until September or October 24. That's over 3 months into the new financial year. Last year I saved some additional funds received in December just to keep one staff member employed this financial year. But as a result it looked like we were under performing despite achieving well over our original target. It helps to be transparent with Agency Performance and Systems Support (APSS) and keep to conversations going. They have been our greatest advocates.*

# Leadership Survey | Diversity Initiatives

**This question and the corresponding question in the Practitioner Survey were added at the request of the Centre for Workforce Excellence, who are beginning to examine how to support inclusive and diverse workplaces across the state.**

The majority of comments focused on:

- Training
- Reconciliation Action Plans
- Employee Assistance Programs
- Celebration of significant days

Overall, diverse workplaces have a positive impact on both employees and clients who seek a service from us.

## Reflections on how organisations support inclusive and diverse workplaces:

*Value based organisation, recruitment of candidates with diverse identities, sharing of culture in organisation, welcome to country.*

*Not to my knowledge besides all staff completing training (aboriginal cultural awareness).*

*Our organisation has a focus on diversity inclusion and have groups set up to support inclusive workplace. We also have an advisory panel designed to support those with lived experience working within the organisation*

*We do have policy, procedure and a diversity and inclusion committee but I think my organisation lacks significantly in this spaces and needs improvement.*

*We do but they are Richmond initiatives so don't include the Gippsland staff as easily.*

*We are lucky in that we are an Aboriginal Organisation. Culture is important and held as a priority. Staff are encouraged to attend cultural activities and events. Sorry Business is significant and staff are given space and time to heal.*

*Providing training in working with diversity, equity, and inclusion. Training, which is specific to assist First Nations people, being inventive/creative/supportive with workforce who bring lived experience and mental ill health.*

*Our organisation has a number of supports for diverse communities and have demonstrated their commitment to these groups through a RAP, Pride Group and lived Experience group. Staff also undertake training to ensure all staff are culturally aware and inclusive of all identities.*

*Comprehensive EAP program offers many pathways for support flexible work arrangements paid cultural leave paid gender affirming leave paid FV leave.*

*We have internal working groups that workers can engage in and recognise and celebrate significant days to promote inclusion.*

*We have many employees from all backgrounds. Our organisation also has the rainbow tick accreditation.*



# Leadership Survey | Sector Partnerships

**This question received one of the fewest responses from leaders, with almost all responses being represented below. Comments largely focused on having a centralised pool of applicants or traineeships/secondments across multiple agencies.**

These ideas have been explored in the past, however we have run into the following barriers:

- Job application requirements by agencies and whether a central pool will meet those requirements.
- Concerns the partnerships do not have the structures to support the confidentiality and privacy requirements a central application portal would require.
- Concerns about how to manage a central trainee program, when agencies would need to formally hire the practitioner on each placement, for them to have their entitlements as an employee.
- This isn't to say there isn't a path around some of these obstacles. It will however, require agencies to really look at their recruitment processes and examine what they're willing to commit to, for these to work.

Other comments mentioned induction forums, information sessions and resources, all of which can be explored by the partnerships.

## **Reflections on how sector partnerships can support recruitment and retention:**

*Consideration for supporting secondments across agencies to assist practitioners developing their skills and also maintaining their employment long-term.*

*Pool practitioners and agency/role match. I.e. people apply to a central pool that has reps from a few agencies who look over CV's and review experience and match to roles within organisations. Share job vacancies across a number of agencies.*

*Facilitate induction forums throughout the year- maybe 3 pa. Bring new staff together and provide sector induction.*

*It would be great to share and forward on any unsuccessful applicants when agencies are recruiting (with their consent). This occasionally happens but not regularly. would be great to have a central pool of applicants that applicants could register themselves as well.*

*We need more funding and stability.*

*Working together on resource development has already been exceptional.*

*Yes adequate training and mentoring plus pay scale to match skill and experience and responsibility if role. Have a basis of remuneration based on performance.*

*Representing all member organisations via outreach to universities? perhaps supporting a new grad network (would be helpful for us given we have such small EFTs in community services).*

*Offering "Alliance Traineeships", where the trainee is able to work across the alliance organisations; a shared trainee as such. This could give a trainee a broad experience and assist with their chosen pathway and in turn support retention.*

*Would be great to have info session nights to invite locals/students/grads to raise awareness of the industry, sector, roles available and agencies offering those roles.*

# Leadership Survey | Other Comments

**Additional comments were provided by leaders relating to demand and funding, mirror what we're seeing in the practitioner survey. Demand and increased client complexity, along with funding limitations is placing pressure on the workforce.**

Other comments were either general in nature, or looked at recommendation 209, and gave further recommendations as to what can be done in that space.

## Reflections on anything else related to recruitment and retention:

*Long waitlists and lack of support services e.g. case management, lack of housing, poor police involvement wear people down. Further, no increase to DFFH budgets has an impact on sole practitioners working alone.*

*The challenge we currently face is insufficient funding to meet current demand in the community which impacts on our ability to extend contracts. Other factors that we have faced is having applicants that are qualified however do not pass the recruitment phase due to inability to answer interview questions*

*The REC 209 requirement was not well executed. There was not thought for the cost either financially or commitment if time to those that it was directly impacting. The cost of education and completing placement is big.*

*More education sessions on qualifications, training, rec 209, etc for leaders. I know very little about what staff need to complete in order to meet all the equivalencies under rec. 209 when on a pathway. I know very little about what is taught or learnt in different courses. I know little about professional registration*

*Just FYI – Gippsland Allied Health Network has also formed a recruitment and retention working group – would make sense to share resources especially in context of recruiting from metro universities, practical support for new grads (housing, orientation to rural context etc.).*

*We work in a building or have partnerships to respond as first responders together with Victoria Police, forensic nurses and health professionals. It is not an environment where our team are in high level of hyper vigilance. It is why we place such focus on support and care but we look forward to additional therapeutic managers to share this challenging but very rewarding work.*

*We need to stop promoting WFH. These sectors of client-facing practitioners are not suitable for WFH. Flexible arrangements yes, WFH NO!*

*Recruiting to the Mens Programs is difficult in regional areas, there is a lack of housing for practitioners, often the pool of candidates is limited due to inexperience and/or people don't want to travel.*

*It is difficult in remote regions and organisational culture is an ongoing challenge. Some practitioners do not get the respect or professional recognition that they deserve*

# Family Violence Survey



# Family Violence Survey | Practitioners

**The family violence section included practitioners from intake, case management, men's services and therapeutic/counselling services.**

When asked about the what was needed to support practitioners to remain in the current sector the family violence responses placed a strong emphasis on clinical supervision, manageable workloads and increased access to time off/workplace conditions.

When asked about general thoughts about recruitment and retention, family violence practitioner spoke either highly about their experience or mentioned disillusionment with pay/ progression opportunities.

The family violence workforce has undergone tremendous changes within the last 5 years. The survey demonstrated the ongoing need for support for the workforce.

## Reflections from family violence practitioners:

*It can be really deflating that at Inner Gippsland the dialog around recruitment that we are basically desperate to recruit. It undermines the hard work I and many of my colleagues have put into obtaining our roles and our ongoing commitment to learning. I have hit a glass ceiling in my pay in which many people with little industry experience are paid at the same pay level as me with unmatched expectations. It can be exhausting to be working at a senior level with no perception of financial reimbursement of the hard work and experience I bring.*

*We need more MBCP facilitators!! Upskilling people who currently work within the space to attend observations and learn about facilitation is crucial. There are many people who i have worked with particularly from the orange door (hub pracs) who have a burning desire to progress into mens work in the MBCP space but are extremely restricted in their capacity to undertake further training/obs because of the significant workload within TOD.*

*Ability for staff to feel safe and supported in role. Many staff members currently not feeling so due to team leaders managerial styles; staff seeking appropriate EPA/counselling/support.*

*Allowing for growth and trust in staff members. Workplace culture is so important, given the challenges faced in the actual role.*

*Good and effective support from the sector, better work arrangements, more flexibility in working arrangements, better pay and healthy work culture. Plus provide more opportunities for professional growth.*

*More meaningful work and allowing staff to engage with a client where they are comfortable.*

*Working for an ACCO means we are paid significantly less than mainstream organisations. I have so much passion for the work I do but worry with the cost of living rising that i'll be forced to leave due to financial stability.*

# Family Violence Survey

**73**

**People**

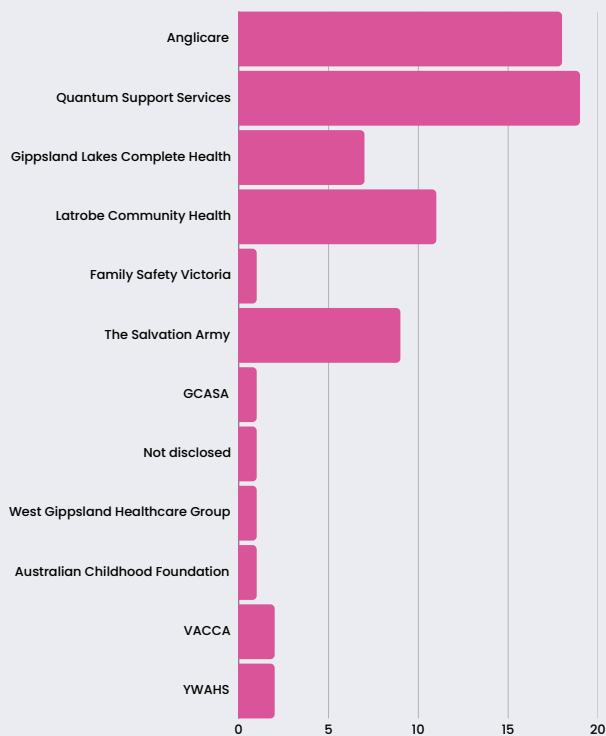
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**Agencies**

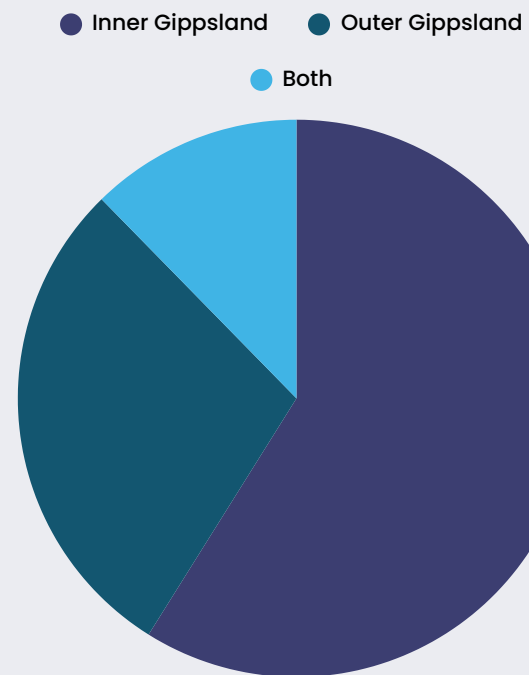
**90%**

**Women**

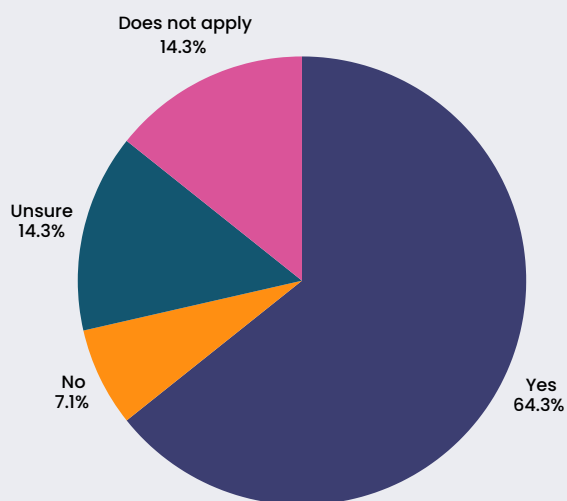
## Agencies



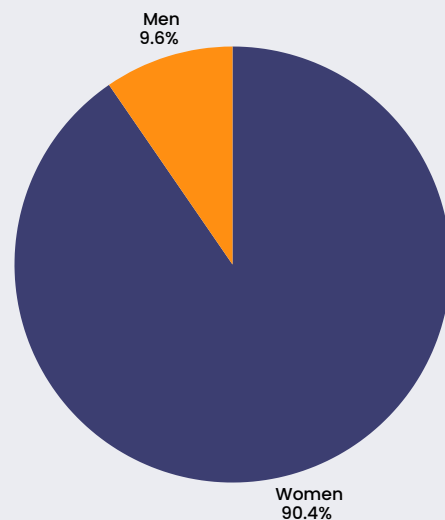
## Location:



## Felt safe at work to disclose identities:



## Gender::



# Family Violence | Statewide Comparison

We compared the results from the 73 respondents to the survey who noted they were from the family violence sector, with the results from the 2023 Family Violence Workforce Pulse Survey. The Workforce Pulse Survey was completed by 1044 practitioner across the state, including 95 from Gippsland.

In comparison, Gippsland had a much higher number of practitioners with a graduate degree. We attribute this to many practitioners with experience, getting grad certificate in the wake of Recommendation 209, which is less accessible to Gippslanders, who may want to study face to face.

Gippsland practitioners have a much lower study rate of social work than the statewide average, probably indicating the inaccessibility of the degree, but a much higher rate of study in the Community/Welfare area. We also have a much lower rate of the study of psychology. Gippsland practitioners are hired at full-time at the same rate as other practitioners across the state, and have relatively similar rates of gender within the workforce.

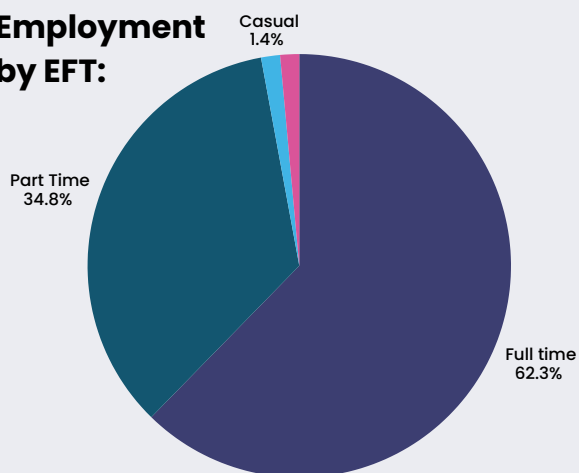
	Gippsland	Statewide
Identified as Female	90%	87%
Graduate Degree	42%	26%
Post-Graduate Degree	30%	52%
Employed Full-Time	58%	58%

Primary Area of Study			
Gippsland		Statewide	
10%	Social Work	38%	Social Work
3%	Psychology	12%	Psychology
20%	Community Services	14%	Community Services
8%	Counselling	8%	Counselling



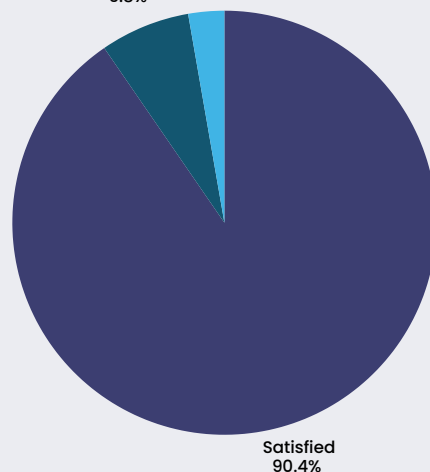
# Family Violence

## Employment by EFT:

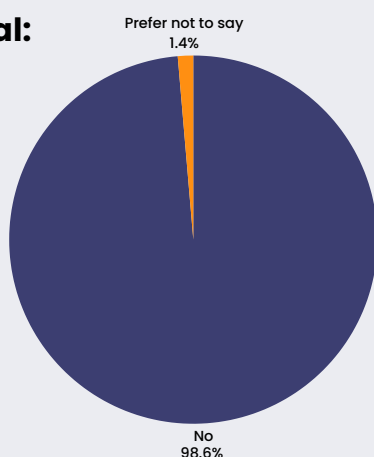


## Satisfaction with hours offered:

Unsatisfied - Less hours wanted  
6.8%

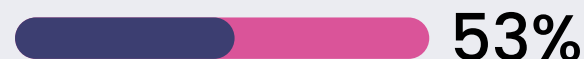


## Aboriginal:

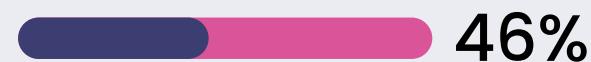


## Intention to move between workforces:

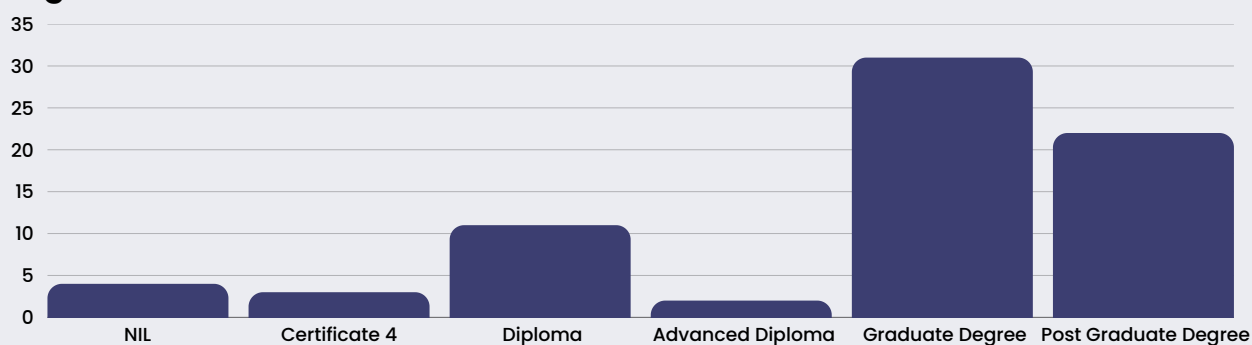
Work in one sector:



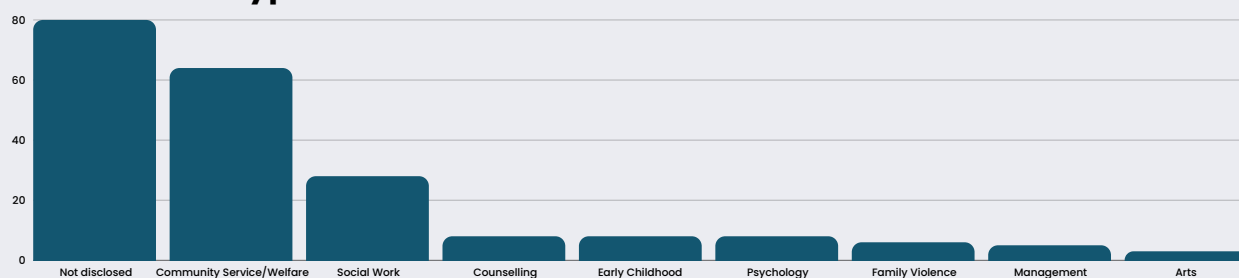
Work in multiple sectors:



## Highest level of education obtained:



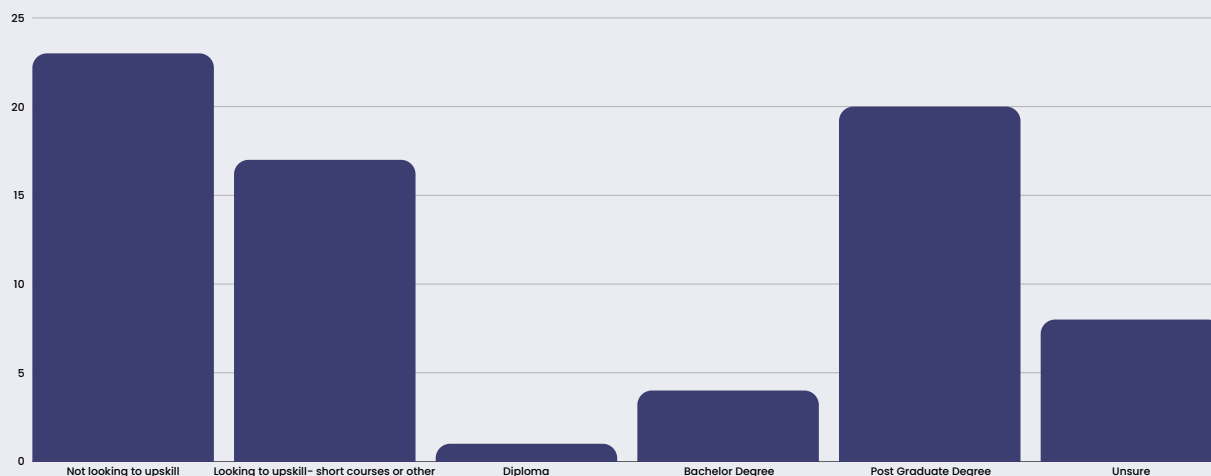
## Qualification type:



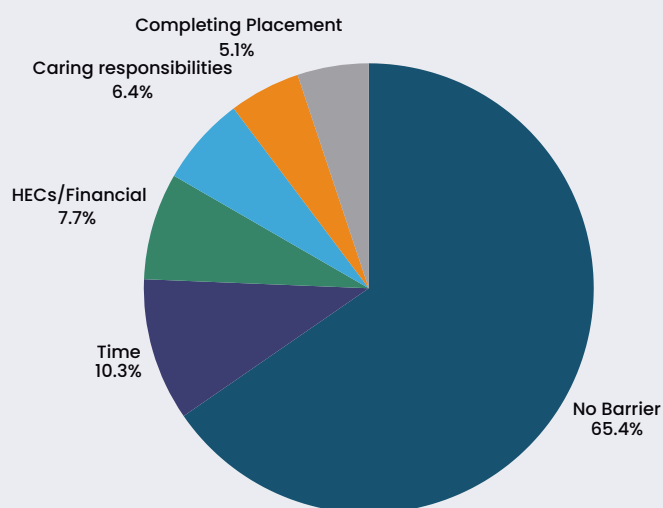
More listed in the appendix

# Family Violence | Upskilling

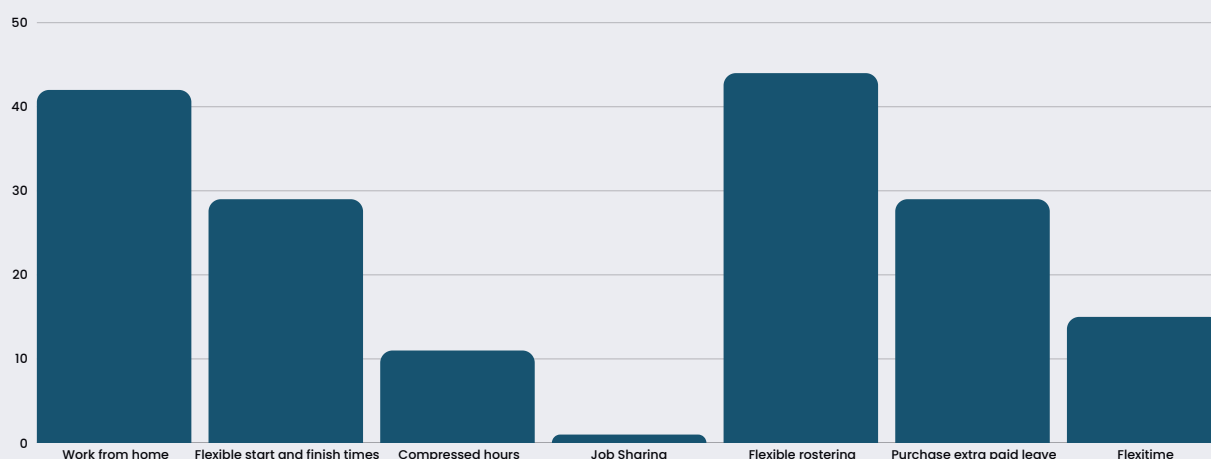
## Intentions to upskill:



## Barriers to upskilling:

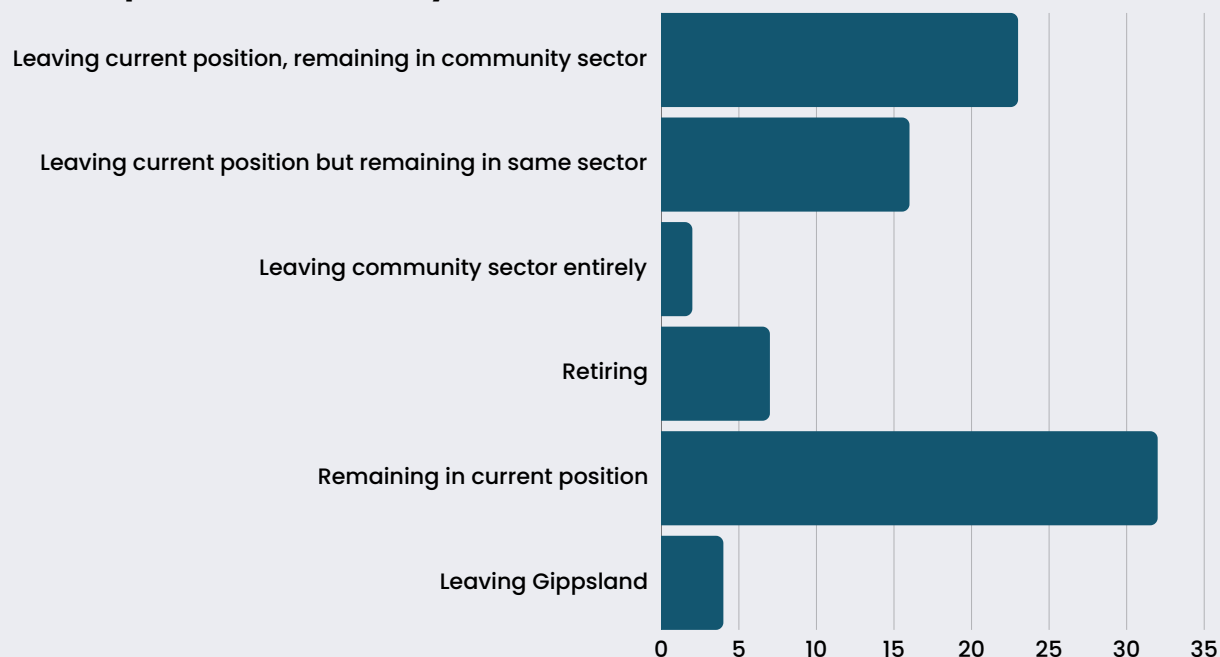


## Flexible Work:

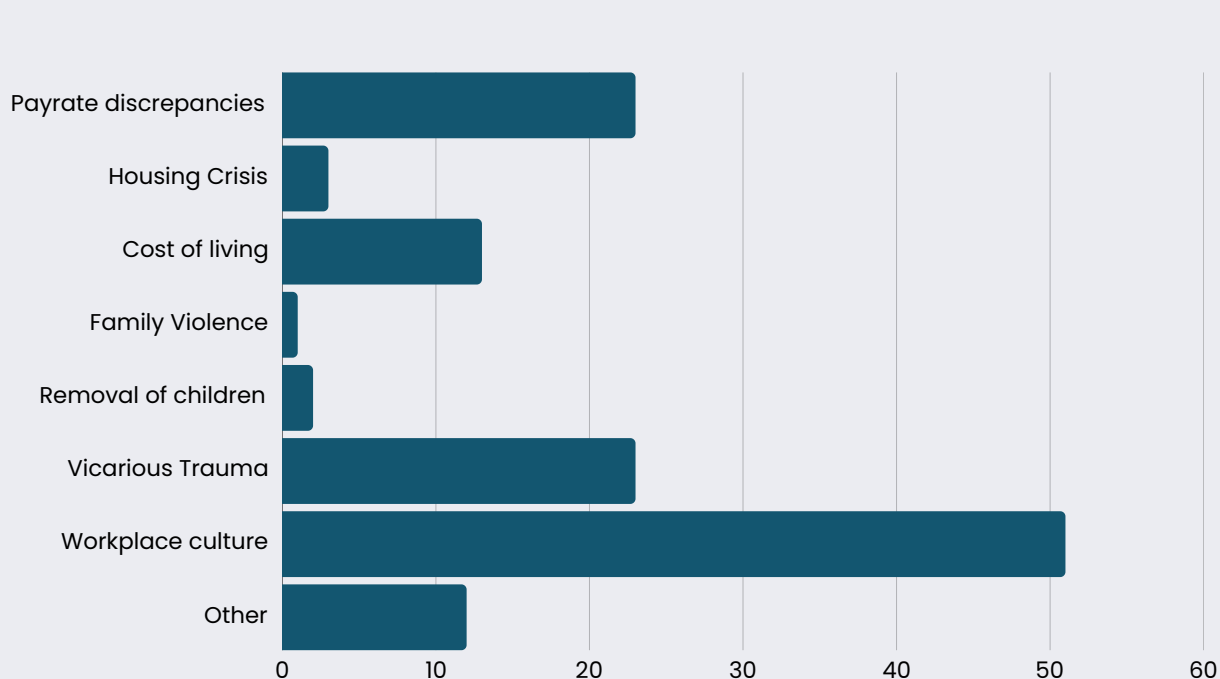


# Family Violence | Future Plans

## Future plans in the next 5 years:



## Factors that influence the decision to leave work:



# Family Violence Survey | Leadership

**The family violence leadership survey included 18 leaders from across the sector, ranging from managers, team leaders, practice leads and advisors.**

Leaders mentioned not understanding the complexities of Recommendation 209, and this was confirmed by comments in the Practitioner survey with practitioners with criminology being asked to complete further study (criminology is 209 compliant).

They also spoke of the difficulties of recruiting and how housing is impacting the recruitment process.

Constant mentions of actions for the GFVA were support around the Supervision and wellbeing guides, induction, promotion of the sector as a career pathway and pooling candidates.

## Reflections from family violence leaders:

*Housing is still our main issue – getting potential staff from other areas.*

*Facilitate induction forums throughout the year– maybe 3 pa. Bring new staff together and provide sector induction.*

*Training – around the implementation of FV supervision and Wellbeing guides – put it in to practice.*

*Sharing and promoting roles in the community across all sectors would be beneficial. There are often transferable skills.*

*It would be great to share and forward on any unsuccessful applicants when agencies are recruiting (with their consent). This occasionally happens but not regularly. would be great to have a central pool of applicants that applicants could register themselves as well.*

*Consideration for supporting secondments across agencies to assist practitioners developing their skills and also maintaining their employment long term*

*Recruiting to the Men's Programs is difficult in regional areas, there is a lack of housing for practitioners, often the pool of candidates is limited due to inexperience and or people don't want to travel.*

*The challenge we currently face is insufficient funding to meet current demand in the community which impacts on our ability to extend contracts. Other factors that we have faced is having applicants that are qualified however do not pass the recruitment phase due to inability to answer interview questions.*

*More education sessions on qualifications, training, rec 209, etc for leaders. I know very little about what staff need to complete in order to meet all the equivalencies under rec 209 when on a pathway. I know very little about what is taught or learnt in different courses. I know little about professional registration and cpd. I rely on our recruitment staff to help but they don't know this stuff either. I try to suggest what people need but I'm not confident that it's always well informed. I'm not the expert of training and education. I am just skilled in family violence.*

# Family Violence Survey | Leadership

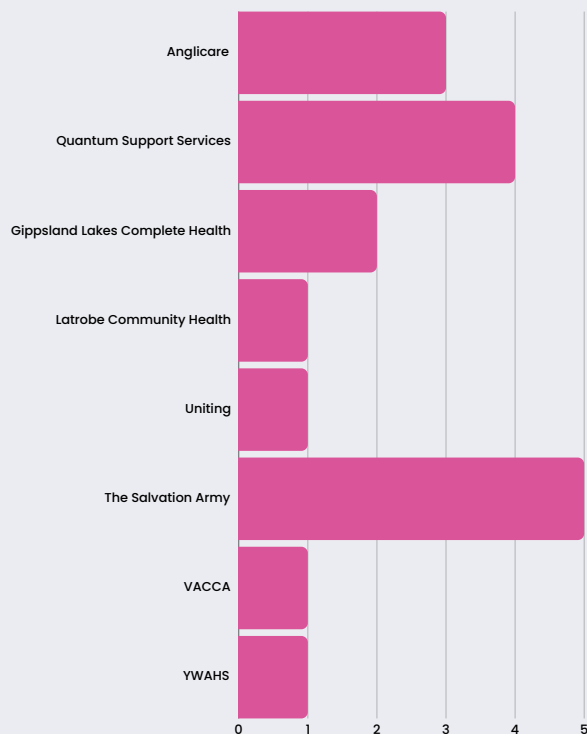
18

People

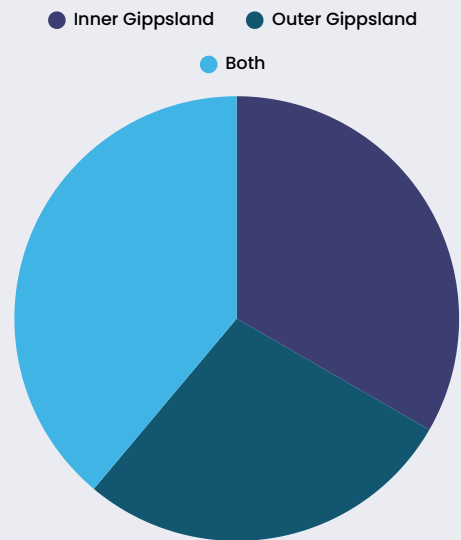
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Agencies

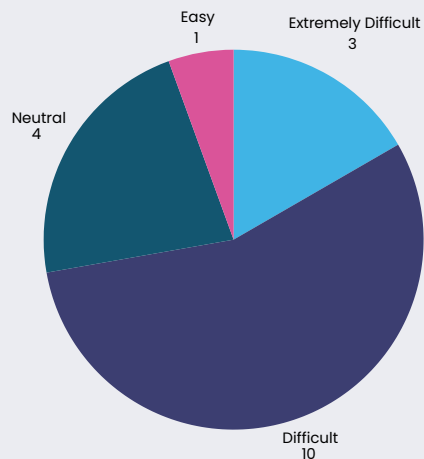
## Agencies:



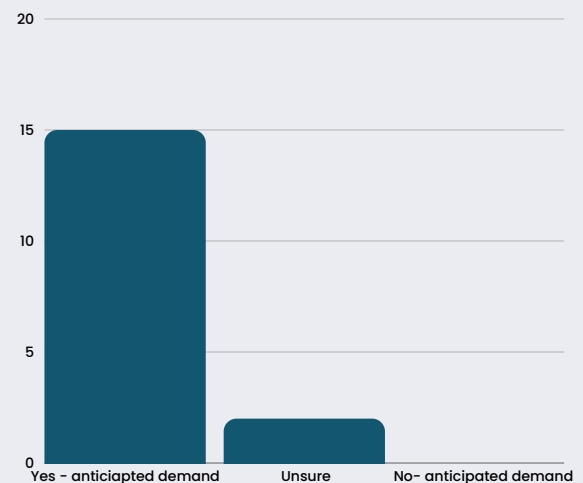
## Location:



## In the past 12 months, how difficult was it to recruit?

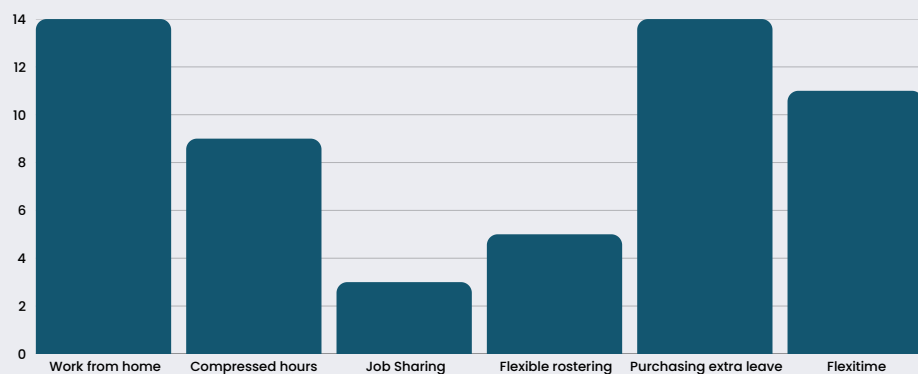


## Anticipated demand for practitioners in the next 5 years:

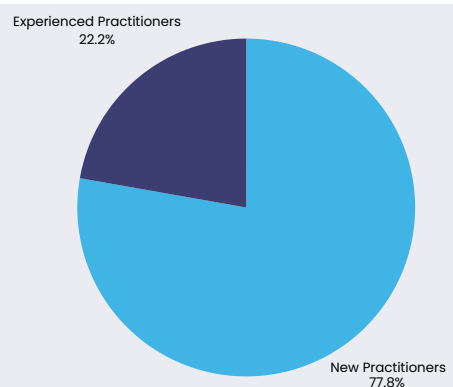


# Family Violence Survey | Leadership

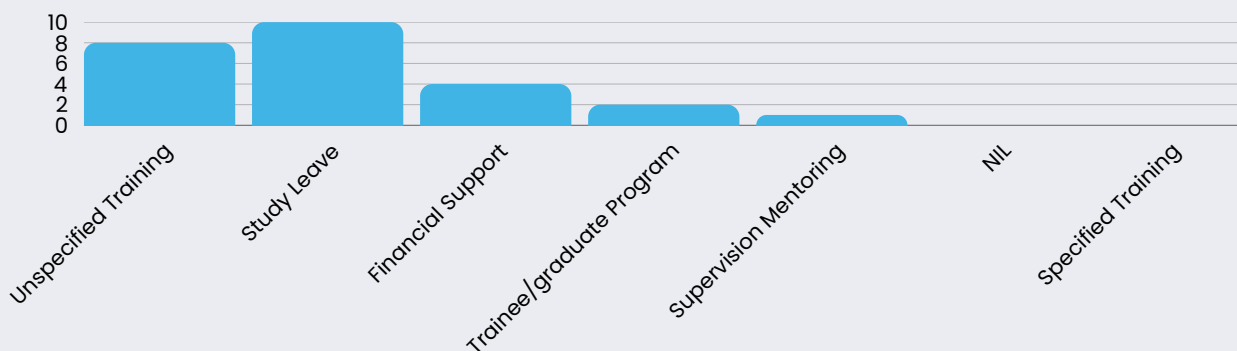
## Flexible work arrangements:



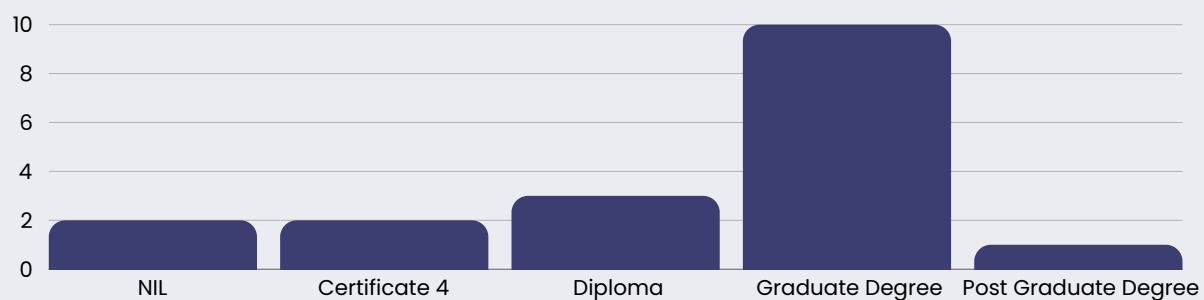
## In the past 12 were practitioners new or experienced?



## Support to upskill:



## Preferred Qualification:





# Homelessness Survey



# Homelessness Survey | Practitioners

**The Homelessness Survey included practitioners from intake, private rental assistance program and housing support.**

When asked about the what was needed to support practitioners to remain in the current sector the homelessness responses place a strong emphasis on job security and also flexible work arrangements.

When asked about general thoughts about recruitment and retention, family violence practitioner spoke about the impact of the housing crisis, the impact of fixed term funding on the sector, the impact of the focus on targets over outcomes and also feeling under appreciated by their agency.

Homelessness workers are one of our smallest workforces working with complex clients, with limited options of outcomes and the survey showed the need to support them through all aspects of their career.

## Reflections from Homelessness practitioners:

*Strong identification of vicarious trauma and any training or support opportunity to upskill in that area. Other than my Director who provides excellent support, a wider understanding and appreciation by my agency of the impact of my role and the supportive part me and my team play.*

*The removal of being solely focused on 'targets' rather than the individual person we are supporting. As we have to meet targets to secure on-going funding, we often feel that it is not person centered as much as we try for it to be. As such, this has a negative impact on the Practitioners who are doing them best to achieve positive outcomes in a significantly changed housing market.*

*Stability and security with fixed term positions ending. Eg- stay employed by organisation but knowing your role could change so you don't end up jobless with funding changes.*

*I believe all practioners benefit from network meetings and forums. Since Covid, I have noticed a reduction in opportunities to attend network meetings.*

*For me, the ability to retain great staff comes down to having strong leadership.*

*Unfortunately, I feel there are some leaders in roles that don't belong there and leaders in roles who don't come from the community service sector - I understand this is important for business and the bottom line, but I feel sometimes it can miss the mark for practitioners.*

*Most jobs are advertised as having the opportunity for promotion however this is not the case in Homelessness*

*I think if you're going to advertise a role as a hybrid role, you need to actually accommodate that - our sector doesn't, and this is misleading to new applicants and results in high turn over.*

*Flexible working arrangements. Having the option to work from home if a child is sick for example. It used to be an option but was stopped.*

*Position security and internal hiring opportunities to keep skilled staff.*

# Homelessness Survey

**28**

**People**

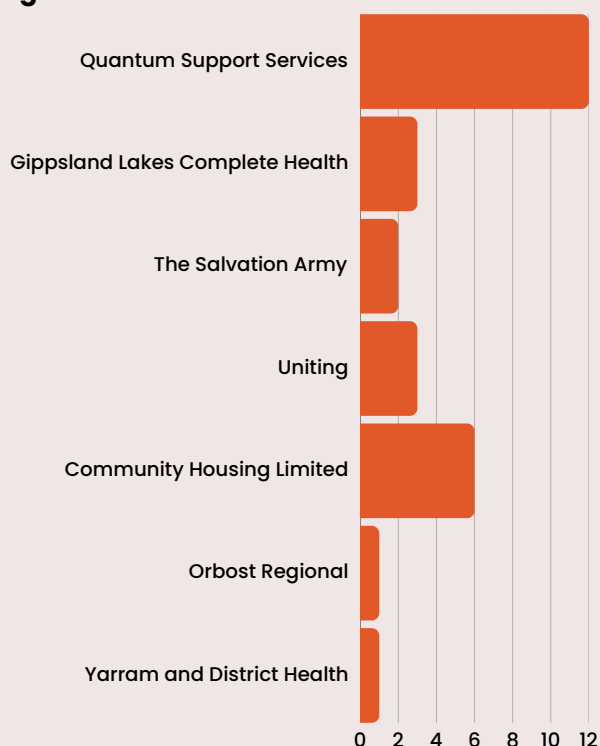
**7**

**Agencies**

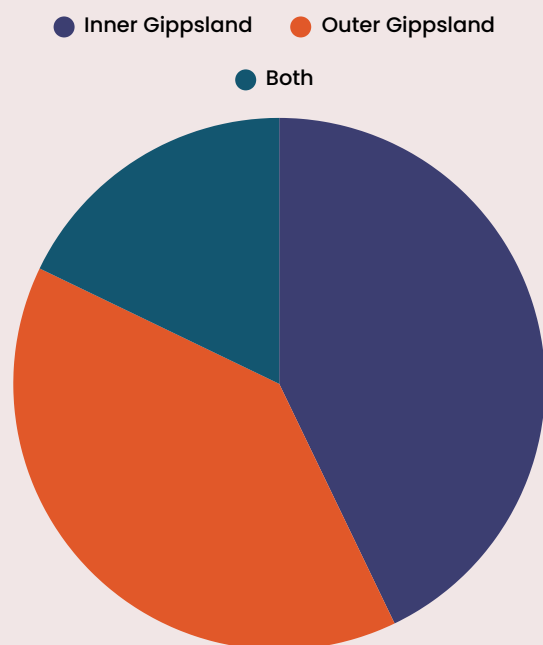
**85%**

**Women**

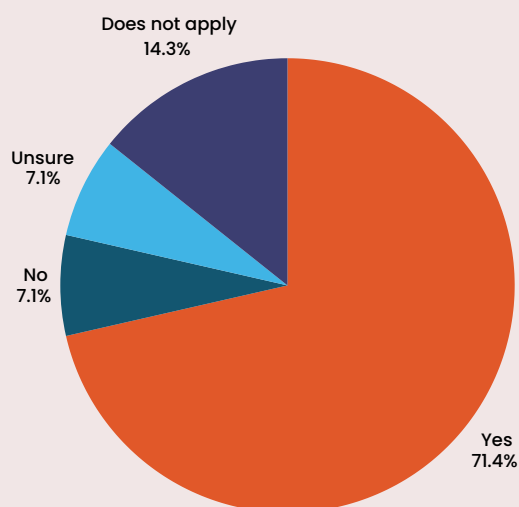
## Agencies



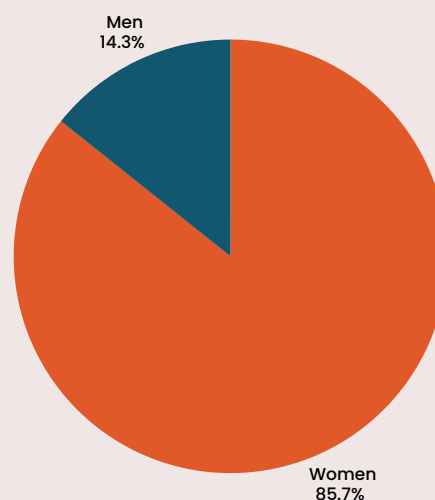
## Location:



## Felt safe at work to disclose identities:



## Gender::



# Homelessness | Statewide Comparison

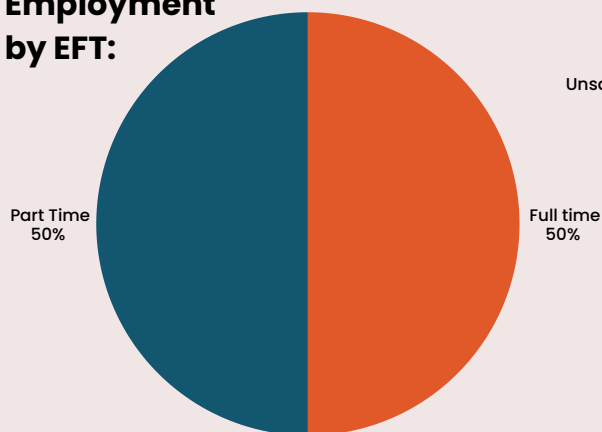
**We compared the results from the 28 survey respondents who selected that they worked in the Homelessness Sector, with the Council to Homeless Persons: A new workforce planning platform to support Specialist Homelessness Services and the community and social services sector report. This survey was compiled differently, in that it used data from SHIP, funding data and agency data to compile the report, instead of self reported data by practitioners themselves. However, we were able to get some comparable data sources.**

Gippsland practitioners are significantly less likely to hold a graduate degree, than those across the state. However, it should be noted that CHP report would have included anyone employed under the funding stream, including managers and senior leaders. Our survey examined practitioners only. Gippsland practitioners were also slightly less likely to hold a diploma, however there were several homelessness workers who declined to answer this question, who may be skewing the data. Gippsland practitioner had a slightly higher intention to leave the workforce, than what was actually leaving the workforce. This may be due to increased violence towards workers, fewer housing options and general workplace stress.

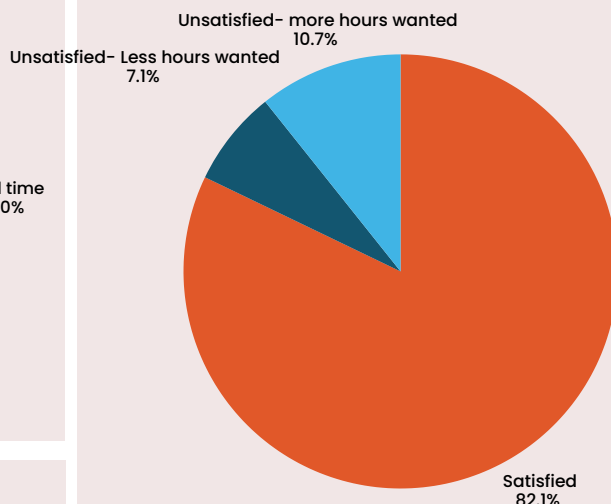
	Gippsland	Statewide
Identified as Female	85%	80%
Diploma or Higher	6 in 10 people	9 in 10 people
Graduate or Higher Degree	1.4 in 10 people	7 in 10 people
Retention	1.25 in 5 workers surveyed intend to leave their role in the next 5 years	1 in 5 workers surveyed left their role in the past year

# Homelessness

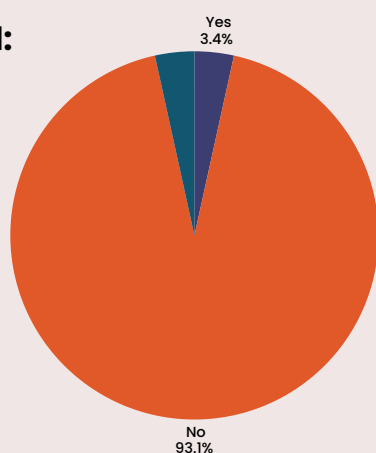
## Employment by EFT:



## Satisfaction with hours offered:



## Aboriginal:



## Intention to move between workforces:

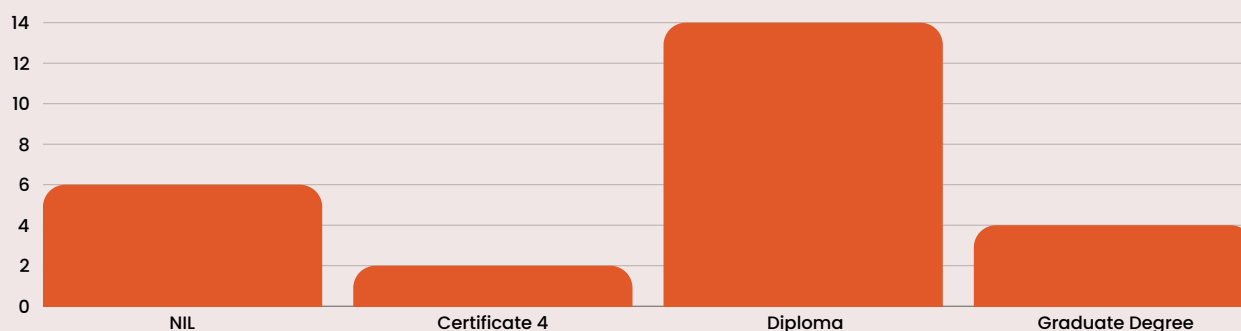
Work in one sector:



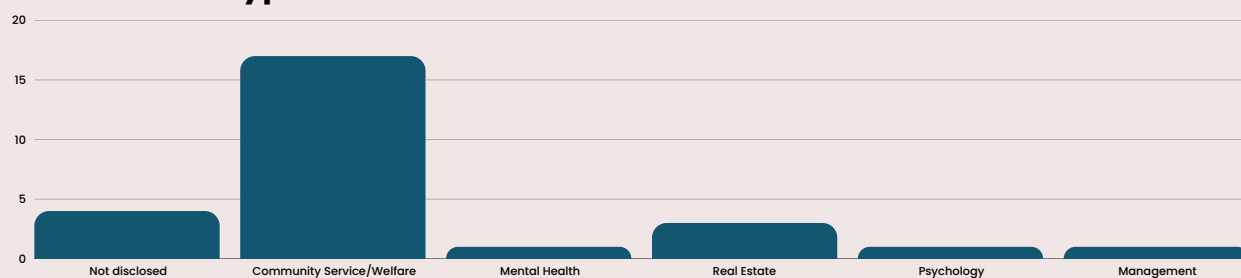
Work in multiple sectors:



## Highest level of education obtained:



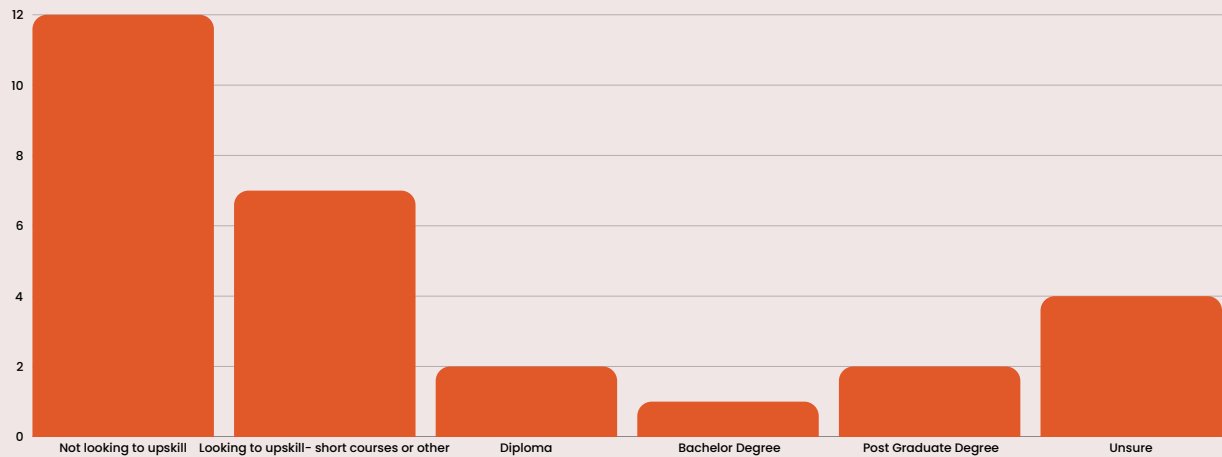
## Qualification type:



More listed in the appendix

# Homelessness | Upskilling & Future Plans

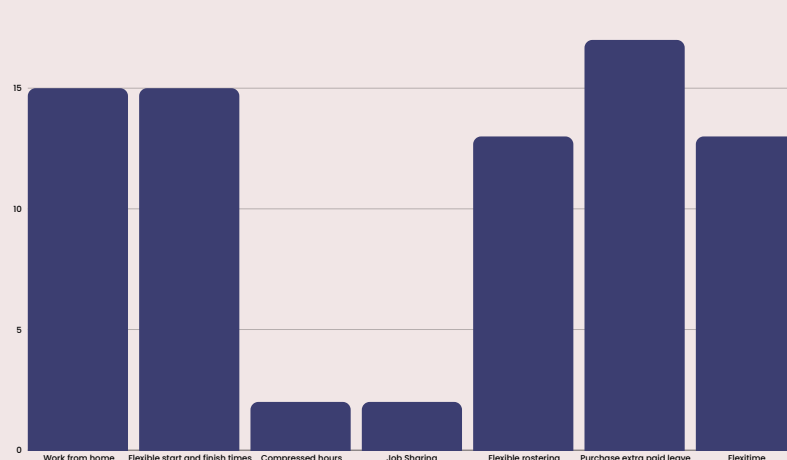
## Intentions to upskill:



## Future plans in the next 5 years:

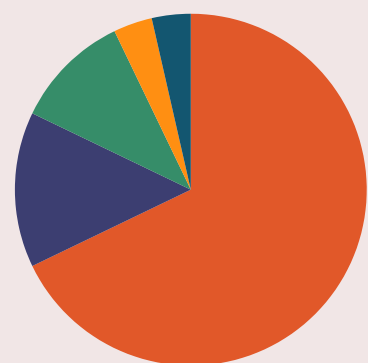


## Flexible Work:



## Barriers to upskilling:

- No Barrier
- Time
- HECs/Financial
- Lack of org support
- Increased quals not increasing compensat...





# Homelessness| Leadership

**The homelessness leadership survey included 9 leaders from across the sector, ranging from General Managers, managers and team leaders.**

Homelessness leaders did not provide any suggestions on things the Homelessness Network could work on to support recruitment or retention. They also didn't provide any general thoughts on recruitment or retention.

They did provide some information on barriers they have experienced in recruitment, including the lack of new applicants for positions and that location proves and issue for recruitment, particularly for outer Gippsland.

Comments also indicate that applicants don't always have the required qualifications or the transferrable skills and that the organisation occasionally needs to take a risk on the applicant to hope they can acquire the necessary skills.

## **Reflections from homelessness leaders:**

*We have recently advertised for a couple of new roles, internal applications have been the majority, some external applications have been received, however most seem to not have the relevant entry level qualification or experience.*

*We have employed new staff to this sector. We have found trying to employee experienced or qualified staff very difficult. We have even employed unqualified and will put staff through the minimum qualification.*

*Sometimes there is mainly inexperienced staff apply and so your having to take risk which may or may not pay off.*

*Inner Gippsland is generally pretty good at recruiting, however outer Gippsland we always struggle.*

*Location always proves a barrier to recruitment.*

# Homelessness| Leadership

9

People

4

Agencies

## Agencies:

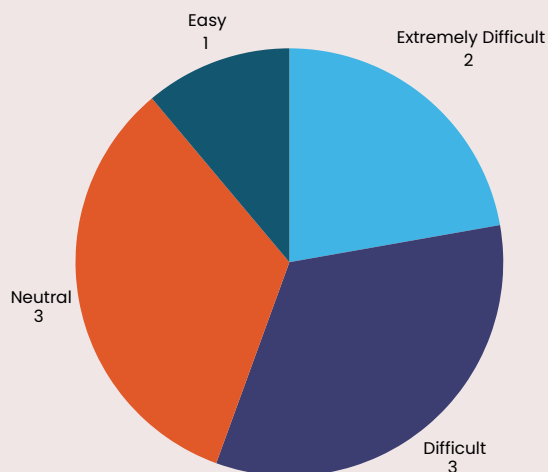


## Location:

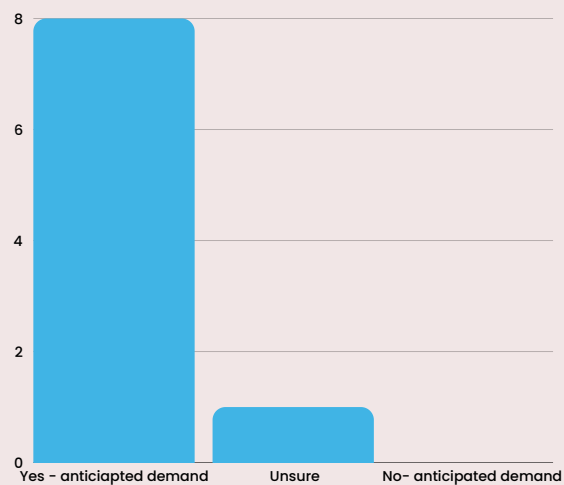
● Inner Gippsland ● Outer Gippsland  
● Both



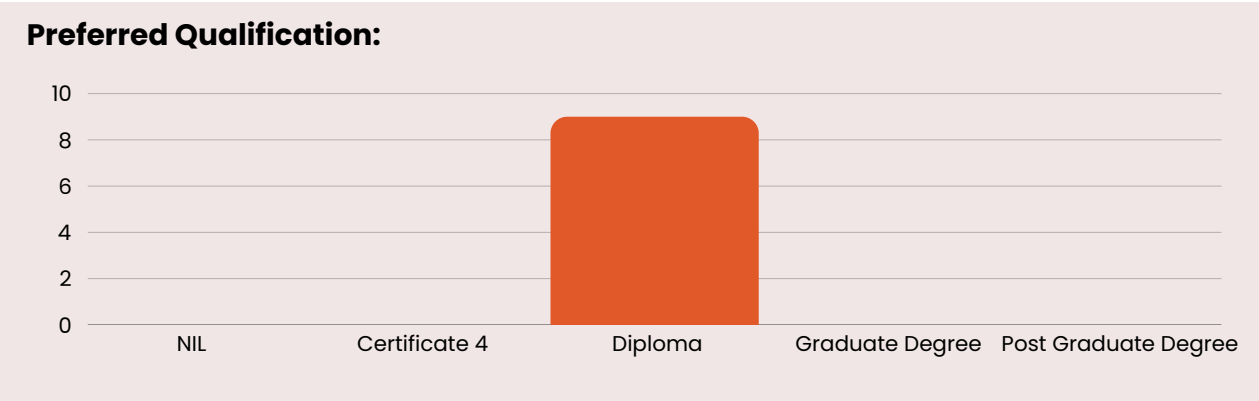
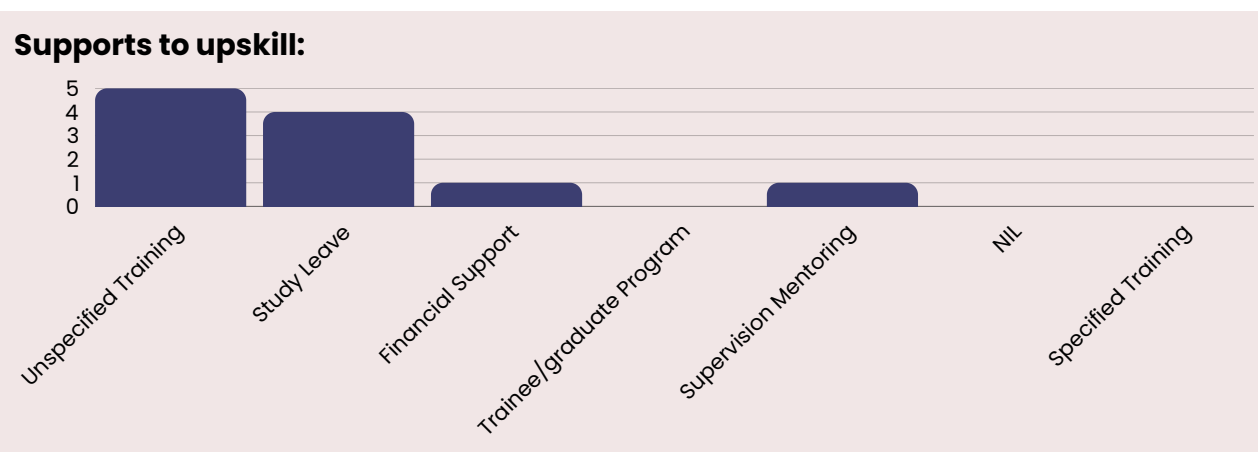
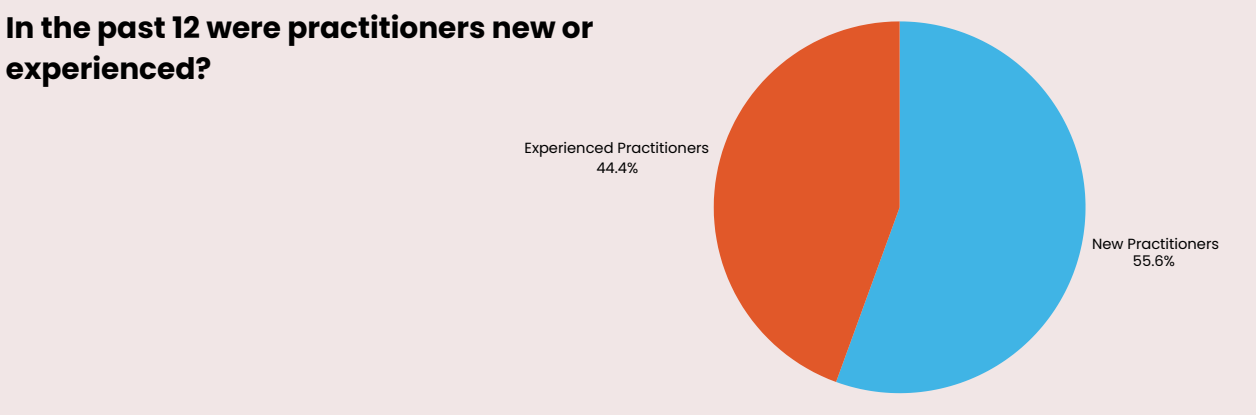
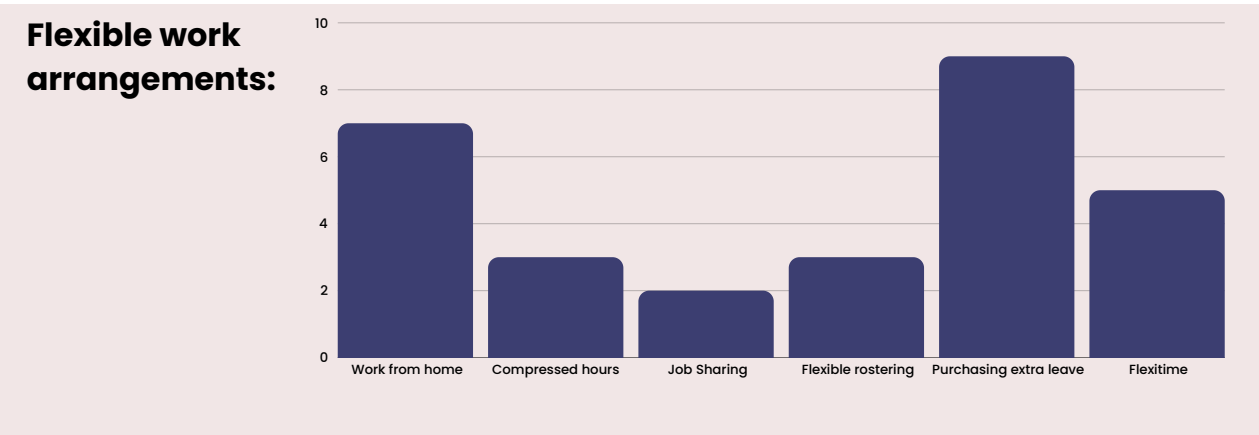
## In the past 12 months, how difficult was it to recruit?



## Anticipated demand for practitioners in the next 5 years:



# Homelessness Leadership



# Family Services



# Family Services| Practitioners

**The family services data includes those from youth work, group work programs and one to one programs for parents.**

When asked about the what was needed to support family services practitioners to remain in the current sector, and for general comments about recruitment and retention responses were similar to both questions, with a strong emphasis on the complexity of the work and the case loads. The concerns around being able to meet client outcomes and work with the complexity and also feel recognised for the work were also present.

The family services workforce is one of the largest workforce, but by working in the home, with all parties is required to undertake some of the most complex work. The survey indicated that workforce is feeling under an increased strain to support families.

## **Reflections from family services practitioners:**

*More opportunities to advance, case loads that are not all complex and really heavy, something else that would balance that, e.g. running groups.*

*Pay, flexible work conditions, continuous funding of our roles, funding for our clients (currently we have no funding for our clients in certain programs and it makes our job so much harder) and access to services for our clients. You feel helpless (and wonder why you even bother with your job) when your clients can't access the services they need, such as housing, FV, any mental health support, specialist for diagnosis or medication.*

*-Recognition- The work we do is hard, and we are faced with new challenges daily. Recognition and/or rewards for appreciation of hard work I believe is a good incentive. - Increase mental health and wellbeing support. -Continue flexibility arrangements.*

*Don't overlook our clients needs and how this impacts retention. If we truly feel like we are making a difference (our clients get the right support, when they need it) we will be happy in our roles and stay*

*I am very concerned at the overall very low skill level in our sector and think there needs to be more support for lower qualified staff to unskilled.*

*The work is becoming more complex and challenging and we are seeing higher rates of burnout, however staff cannot afford to lose income and move to another sector/role that pays less, so they stay in the role and their heart is not in it.*

*In discussions I've had with others in the sector there is an overwhelming sense of personal responsibility- staff feeling like they need to hold 100% of a client's needs or a programs delivery and that if they are unavailable this will have large negative impacts- this isn't sustainable, particularly in understaffed/under-resourced sectors, or where a practitioner holds multiple cases and the burnout and staff turn-over as a result is far too normalised to the point that it's almost expected*

# Family Services

**78**

**People**

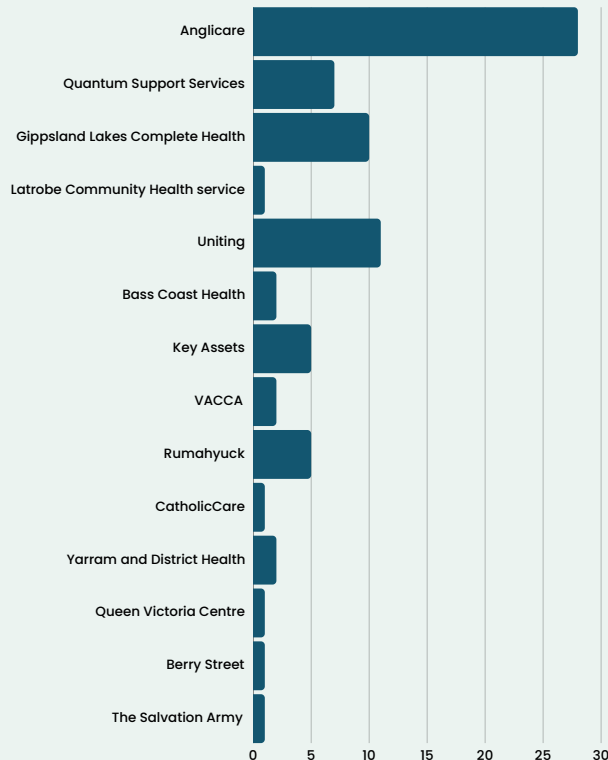
**14**

**Agencies**

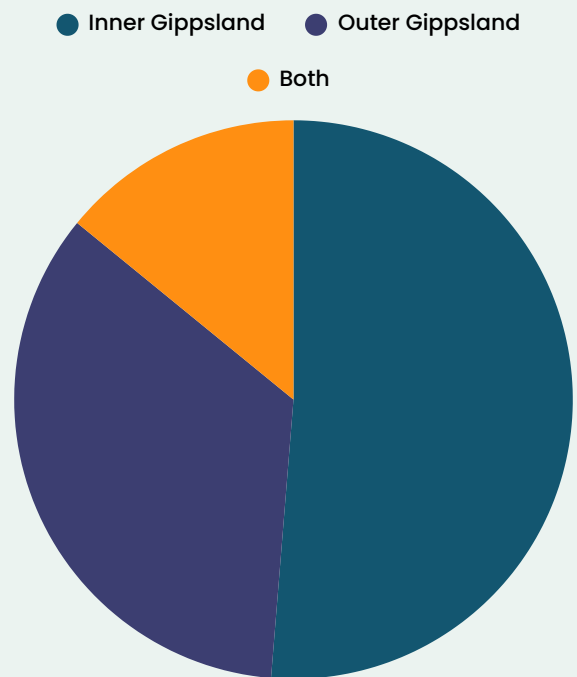
**87%**

**Women**

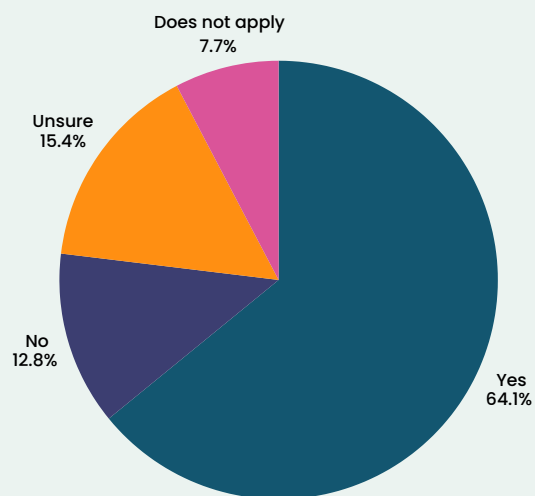
## Agencies



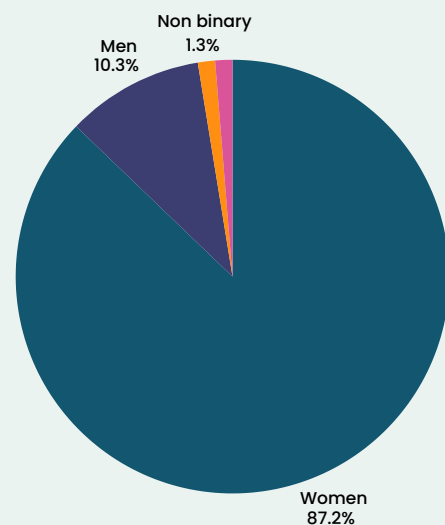
## Location:



## Felt safe at work to disclose identities:

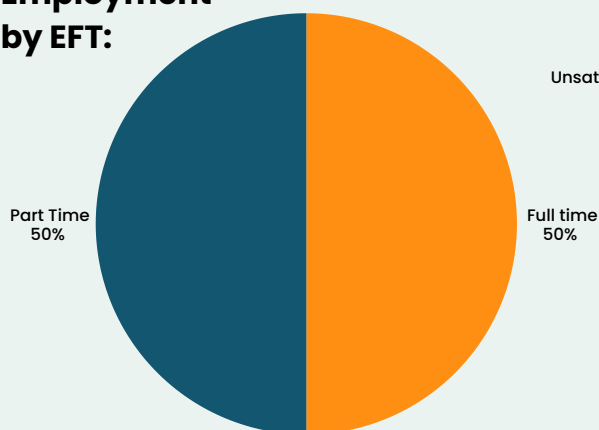


## Gender::

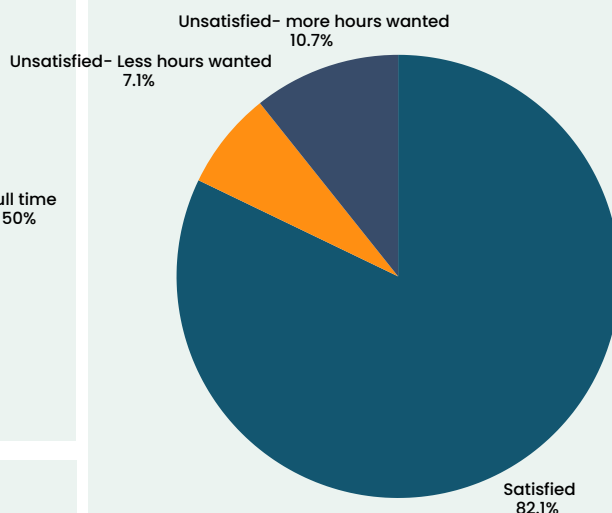


# Family Services

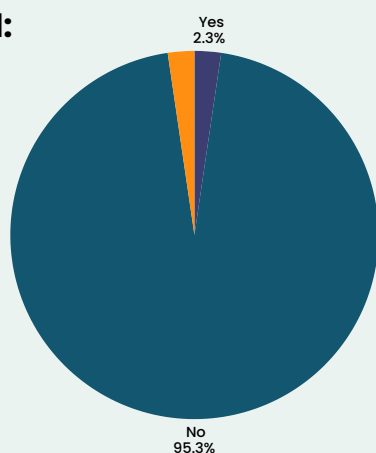
## Employment by EFT:



## Satisfaction with hours offered:



## Aboriginal:



## Intention to move between workforces:

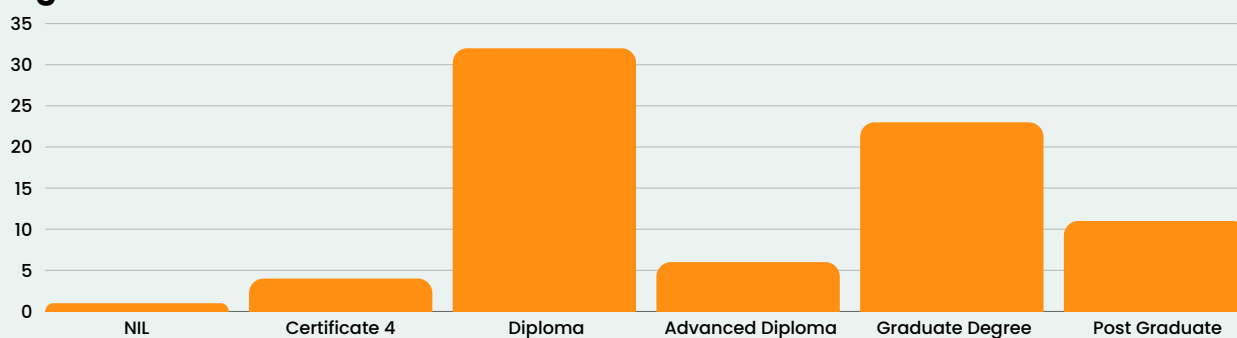
Work in one sector:



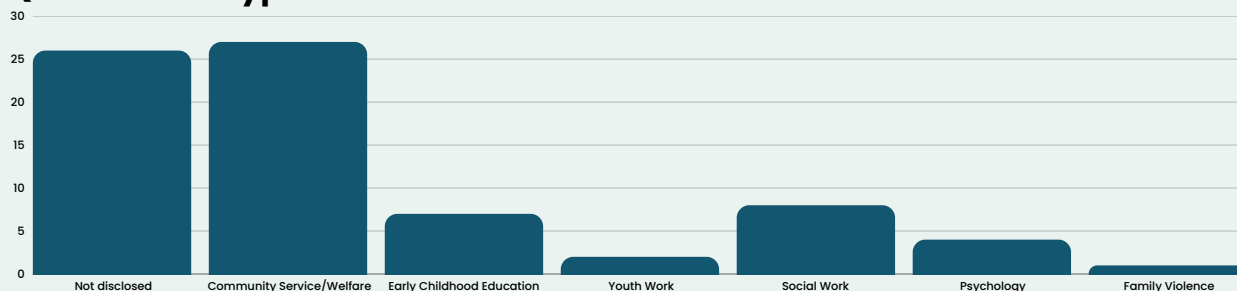
Work in multiple sectors:



## Highest level of education obtained:



## Qualification type:

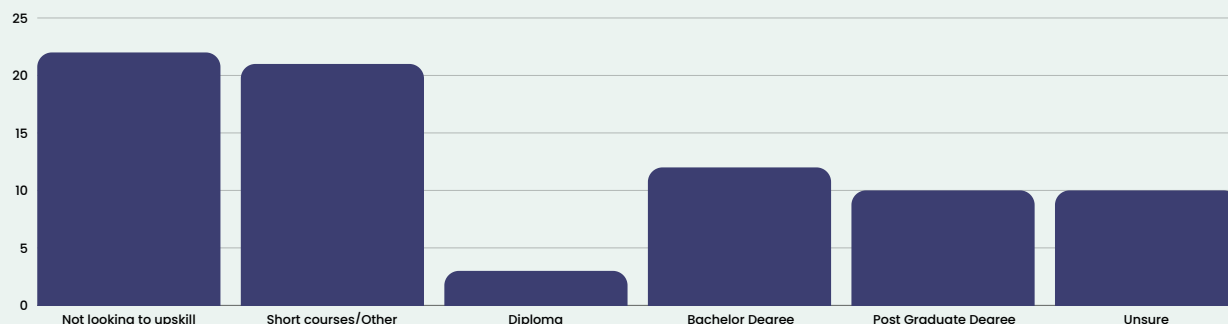


More listed in the appendix

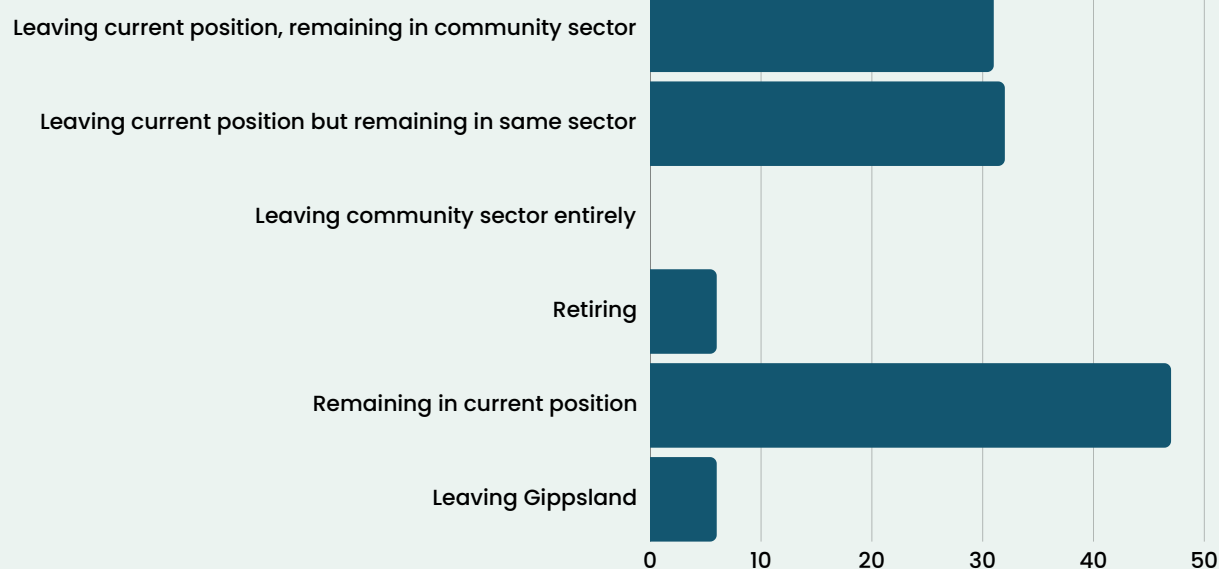


# Family Services | Upskilling & Future Plans

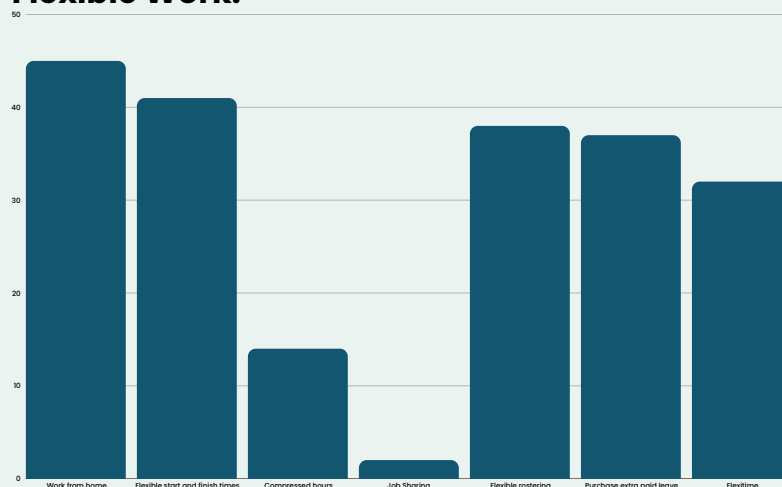
## Intentions to upskill:



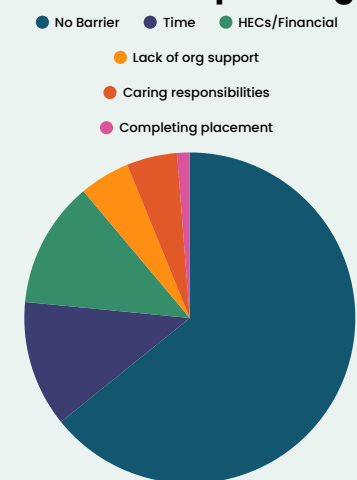
## Future plans in the next 5 years:



## Flexible Work:



## Barriers to upskilling:



# Family Services| Leadership

**The family services leadership survey included 19 leaders from across the sector, ranging from managers, team leaders and advisors.**

Family Services leaders were across both Inner and Outer Gippsland, but only provided limited comments on suggestions for the Family Services Alliances, mostly focusing on induction/training for perspective practitioners and traineeships.

They did provide some information on barriers they have experienced in recruitment, with a lot of comments focusing on the award levels which are offered to practitioners, the ability/inability to support new practitioners to enter the sector while meeting target/funding requirements and the lack of pay progression for experience. Other comments mentioned needing to readvertise multiple times, and rarely receiving applications with experience.

## Reflections from family services leaders:

*I would like to see Traineeships on offer for those taking further study.*

*Offer induction/introduction training/development day for perspective practitioners looking to join sector. Coordinate rolling get to know the sector type inductions for new recruits?*

*Offering "Alliance Traineeships", where the trainee is able to work across the alliance organisations; a shared trainee as such. This could give a trainee a broad experience and assist with their chosen pathway and in turn support retention.*

*representing all member organisations via outreach to universities? perhaps supporting a new grad network (would be helpful for us given we have such small EFTs in community services)*

*We need more funding and stability.*

*A lot of applications from international students – a lot of work to screen for suitability, visas etc. Those employees tend to need a long period of orientation and don't always stay long.*

*Yes adequate training and mentoring plus pay scale to match skill and experience and responsibility if role. Have a basis of remuneration based on performance.*

*A barrier to our program is the entry level is a SCHADS 5 when a majority of the agency are on SCHADS6*

*Barriers exist for those changing careers as they are sometimes lacking the required knowledge to work with the complexities of some of our families.*

*Success where we offered above award payments, flexible work arrangements which at times challenges the service delivery. But, trying to strike balance of being able to deliver some service rather than none and continue to work at recruitment. Require to recognise newly qualified practitioners are at start of journey and usually require good foundations to build as practitioner and not treated as if they can hit the ground running. Again impacts on ability to deliver service which often conflicts with funding obligations.*

# Family Services| Leadership

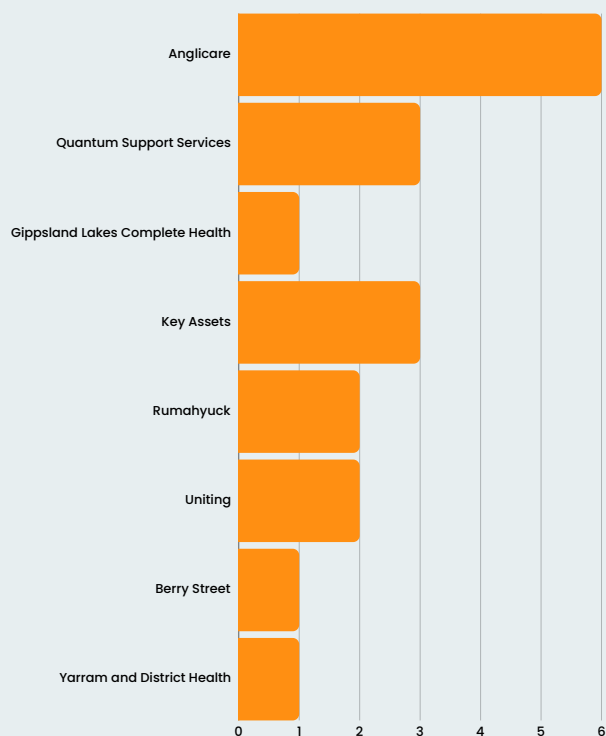
19

People

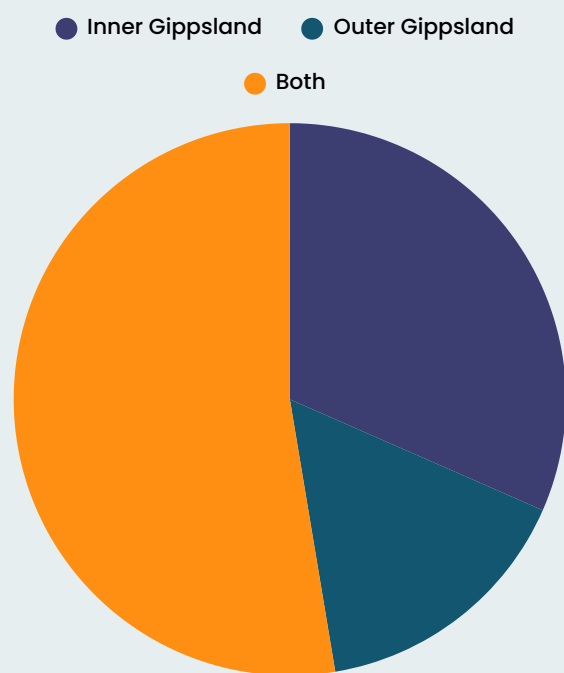
4

Agencies

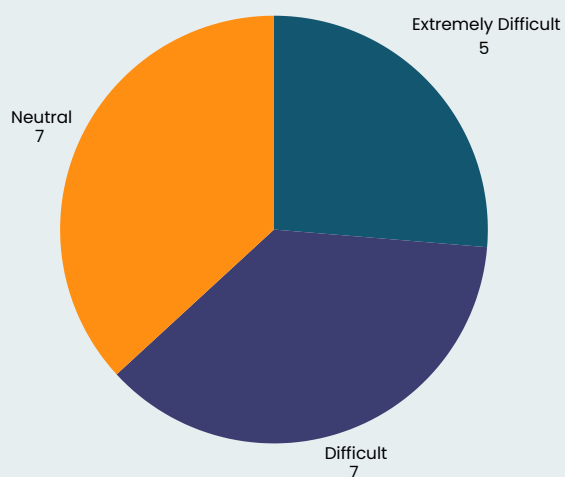
## Agencies:



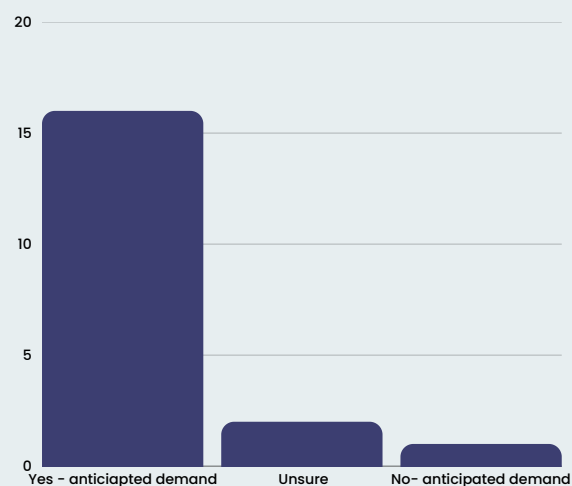
## Location:



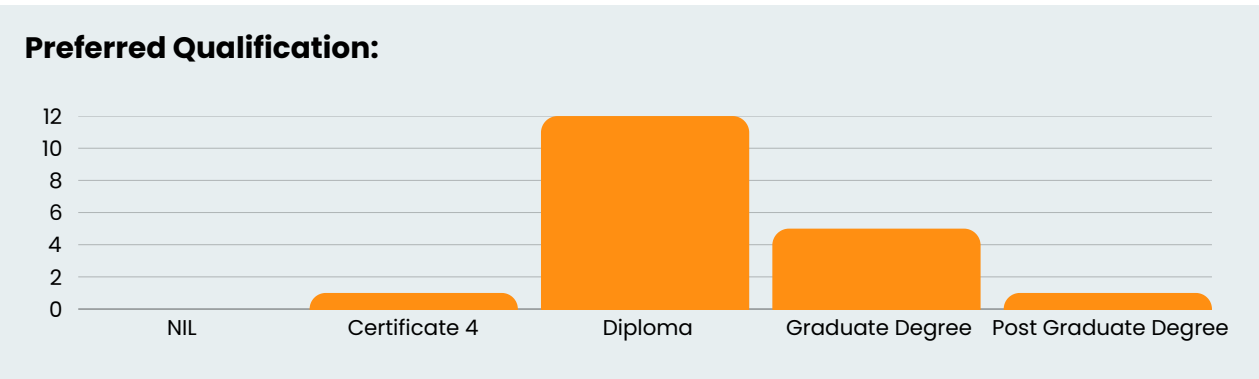
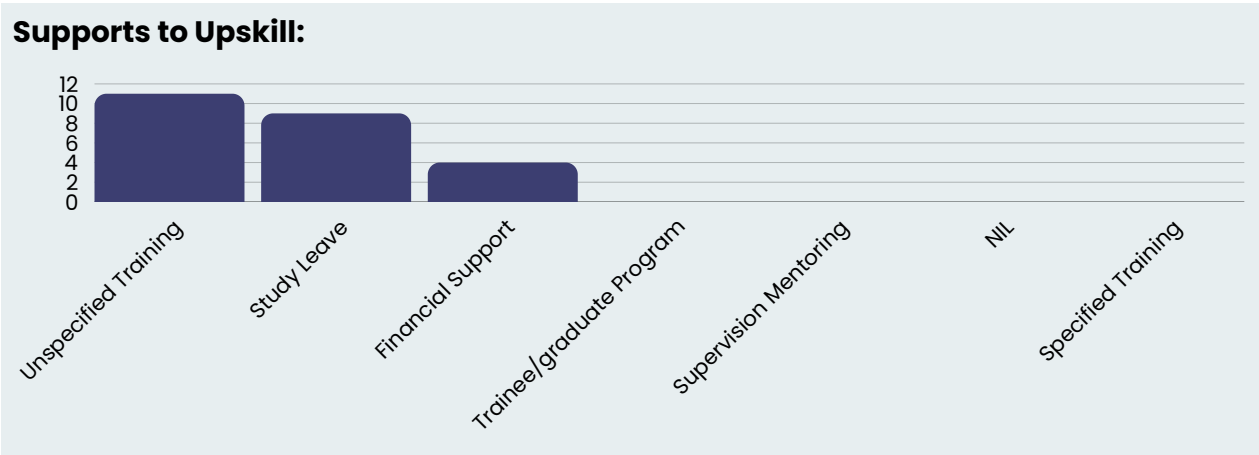
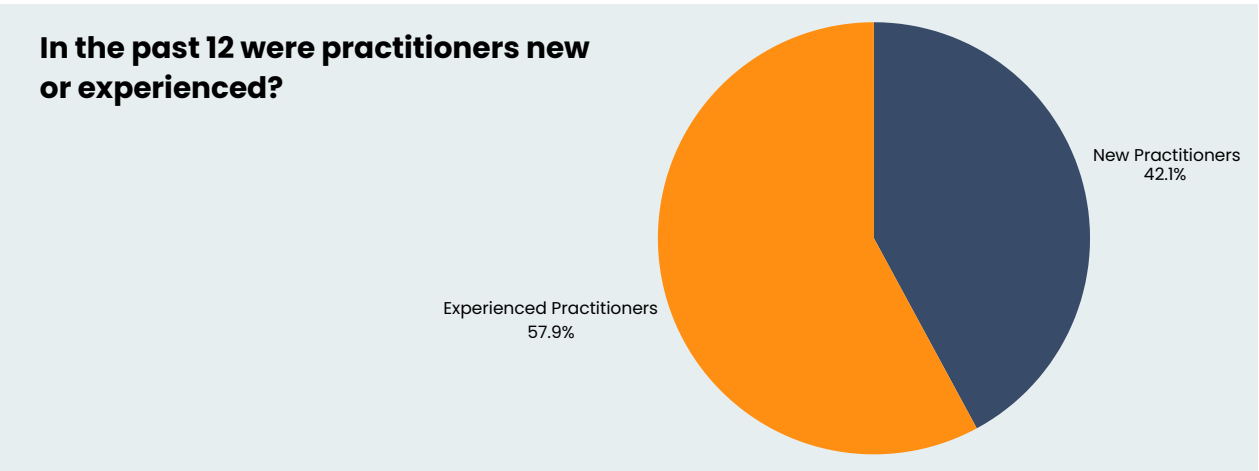
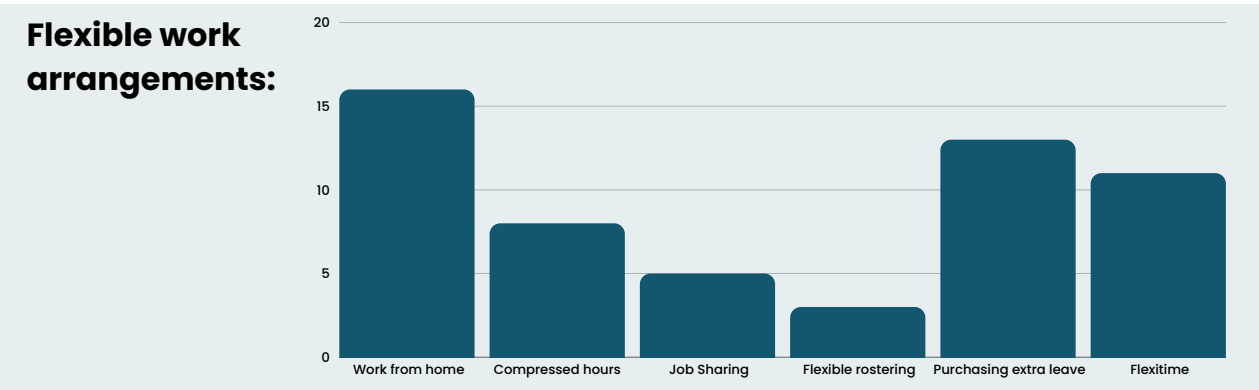
## In the past 12 months, how difficult was it to recruit?



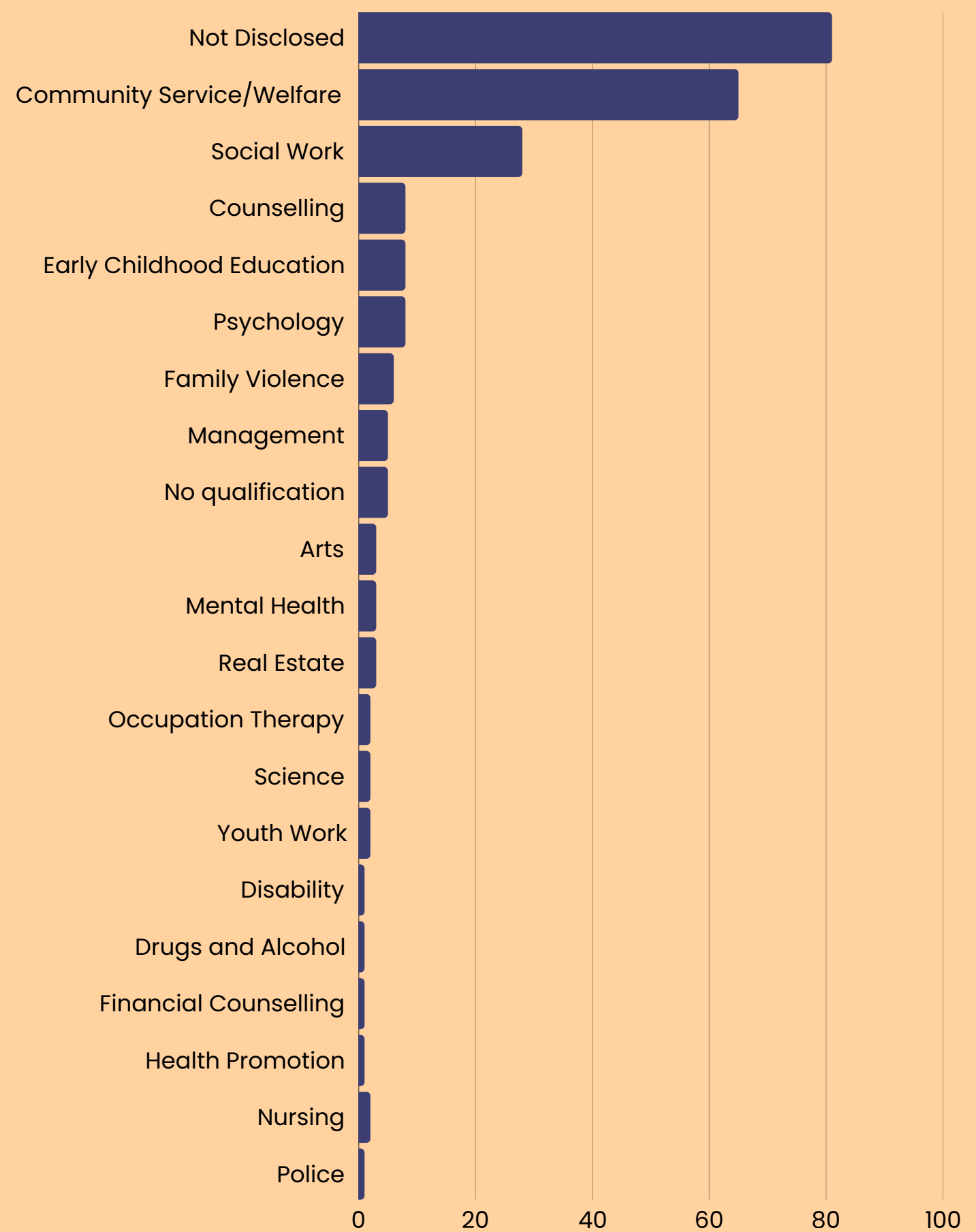
## Anticipated demand for practitioners in the next 5 years:



# Family Services Leadership



# Appendix A | Full list of Qualifications





Gippsland  
Family Violence  
Alliance



Promoting inclusive  
practices and affirming  
safe environments.

# Thank you to all survey participants.

For any queries or to provide feedback, please  
contact us via email: [fvsupport@gfva.com.au](mailto:fvsupport@gfva.com.au)

[www.gippslandfamilyviolencealliance.com.au](http://www.gippslandfamilyviolencealliance.com.au)

