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of Social Service

# Future Social Service Institute

## Visualising the Victorian Care Sector

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## **Executive Summary**

This paper examines the effectiveness of interactive data visualisation techniques for exploring charity and not-for-profit data collected by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC) across two years, as well as reporting key findings of the sector. This project was conducted in partnership with FSSI and VCOSS, and the series of data visualisation analyses were compiled into a web report. The intended audience of this web report is industry stakeholders, and was submitted as supporting documentation.

As a method of exploratory analysis, interactive visualisations were found to be a concise and effective tool for handling the summation of data of a complex nature. Visualisation techniques allowed for an improved understanding of the Victorian social service sector, primarily that the sector is reliant on government funding, the reliance of volunteers, and that a large proportion of charities operate in a budget deficit each year.

This study could have been improved by using a greater variety of data visualisation techniques. This limitation was in part due to the single data source used, which could also be expanded upon for future updates.

## **Acknowledgement**

Xuejiao and Ben would like to extend our gratitude to Paul Ramcharan, Jessica Lee-Ack, and Brooke McKail; our partners in FSSI and VCOSS for their invaluable mentorship and comprehensive industry knowledge that provided insight throughout this project. We would also like to thank RMIT for making this project possible as not only organisers of the project itself but also industry partners for FSSI.

## **Declaration of Originality**

Xuejiao and Ben declare that, to the best of our knowledge, all work contained within this report and any supporting documentation is original, unless otherwise stated. Sources are referenced in RMIT-Harvard style, and some documents in the appendices have been created and shared by either FSSI or VCOSS.

## **Glossary**

- FSSI - Future Social Service Institute
- VCOSS - Victorian Council of Social Service
- RMIT - Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
- *Main activity* - variable name derived from ACNC data, loosely interchangeable with “sector”. Charities report the main activity they perform to the ACNC, but also report secondary activities as well. Main activity only pertains to this main activity as reported by charities to the ACNC

## Student Contributions

Both student members of the project development team have contributed to the project equally. Most of the work throughout this project has been shared, and contributions overlapped regularly. The table below lists the main contributors to each section in order, where a comma ( , ) is used. If “and” is used, contributions are equal.

Sections of the project proposal were reused in this final report. As such, student contributions for this final report have only been listed for new sections or sections substantially changed.

File	Section	Contributing Students
Project Proposal	1 Introduction, 1.1 Background, 1.2 Significance	Ben Cole
	2 Brief Literature Review, 2.1 Transformation of the Social Service Sector	Ben Cole
	2.2 Data Visualisations in the Social Service Sector	Xuejiao Zhou
	3 Objectives	Xuejiao Zhou
	4 Proposed Methodology, 4.1 Digital Report, 4.2 Visualisation Platform, 4.3 Stakeholder Engagement Workshops	Ben Cole
	5 Project Design, 5.1 Timeline	Xuejiao Zhou
	5.2 Collaboration Plan	Ben Cole
	6 References	Xuejiao Zhou and Ben Cole
Final assessment (this report)	7 Appendices	Xuejiao Zhou and Ben Cole
	4 Methodology	Ben Cole
	5 Results	Xuejiao Zhou, Ben Cole
Web Report	6 Discussion	Ben Cole
	Foreword	Ben Cole, Xuejiao Zhou
	Sector Size and Composition - text	Xuejiao Zhou, Ben Cole
	Sector Funding Sources - text	Xuejiao Zhou, Ben Cole
	Financial Health of Sector - text	Xuejiao Zhou, Ben Cole
Presentation slides	Code for all visualisations	Ben Cole, Xuejiao Zhou
	Introduction, objectives	Xuejiao Zhou
	Methodology	Ben Cole
	Results	Ben Cole
	Limitations & Recommendations	Xuejiao Zhou
	Insights	Ben Cole

# 1 Introduction

The Future Social Service Institute (hereon FSSI) has been established cooperatively between the Victorian state government, the Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS), and the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT). The objectives of FSSI are wide-reaching, including (but not limited to) designing educational programs, assisting in workplace training, researching reforms for the social service sector, and supporting transformation in not-for-profit organisations. (Glanz, 2016)

There are numerous industries involved in social services, and these industries can differ between countries and cultures. As this project focuses on the social services in Victoria - and more broadly Australia - the Australian federal government website for the Department of Social Services includes the following sectors:

- Communities and Vulnerable People
- Disability and Carers
- Families and Children
- Housing Support
- Mental Health
- Seniors
- Women's Safety
- Working Age
- Welfare Reform

(Department of Social Services, 2019)

In the Victorian government specifically, social services are bundled together with health, but include services operating in areas such as:

- Ageing
- Alcohol and drugs
- Children and families
- Disability
- Housing and homelessness
- Mental health

(Department of Health and Social Services, 2019)

More broadly, the Australian Association of Social Workers supports the definition of social work as laid out by the International Federation of Social Workers that:

*Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing.*

- International Federation of Social Workers,  
July 2014

Whilst definitions for which industries comprise social services can vary, the reasons for establishing FSSI and their data needs are much clearer.

## 1.1 Background

### 1.1.1 An Ageing Population

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the number of Australians aged 65 and over has been increasing steadily since 1927. In 2017, the total number of Australians over the age of 65 made up 15% of Australia's total population, with this proportion only projected to grow over the coming years. (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018)

Considering Australia's aged population is predicted to increase, it's reasonable to assume that the number of persons in aged care will increase as well. This isn't solely limited to those in aged care facilities, but also aged persons accessing social services from personal residences.

### **1.1.2 Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety**

Numerous scandals were reported in Australian news services regarding the care of residents in aged care facilities between 2015 and 2018, particularly in South Australia. In response to an ABC News Four Corners investigation in 2018, Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced a Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (Hutchens, 2018).

The terms of reference can be viewed on the Royal Commission's government website, and cover 6 main objectives for investigation:

- whether aged care is being provided adequately
- specifically, how to provide the best care to younger persons with disability in aged care and persons with dementia
- what challenges the aged care sector will face with changing demographics and in rural & regional areas
- what can be done to improve aged care provision
- how to improve the autonomy and independence for patients in care
- sustainability and modernisation of aged care provision
- as well as any other matters related to the above terms

(Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, 2018)

Considering the wide scope of investigation and the many recommendations that will be made, it is likely that the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety will be a catalyst for change, reform, and restructuring of the social service sector.

### **1.1.3 NDIS**

First legislated in 2013, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (hereon NDIS) was established to achieve several objectives, but primarily to support independence in seeking supports and services as well as supplying funding given to the provision of disability care (*National Disability Insurance Scheme Act*, 2013). Furthermore, the NDIS also encompasses regulation and reformation of disability care services in Australia. This funding amounts to AU\$22 billion per year, which covers half a million Australians with a permanent and significant disability who are younger than 65 years old. This care isn't solely of a medical nature, and can also include services that address emotional health, fitness, education, opportunities to socialise, and more. (National Disability Insurance Scheme, 2020)

### **1.1.4 Disability Royal Commission**

Similar to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, a separate Royal Commission was established in 2019 to investigate Violence, Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation of People with Disability (Prime Minister of Australia, 2019). One of the leading causes for this Royal Commission was a report that detailed allegations of abuse and corruption at a Victorian non-profit provider of care for persons with disability (McKenzie & Baker, 2014). However, this was just one example of such allegations, with the Royal Commission hearing that persons with disability in the care of hospitals were vulnerable to misdiagnoses, medication errors, and generally poor understanding of intellectual disability (Brown, 2020).

### **1.1.5 Charitable Organisations**

The Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission (ACNC) (2019) reported over 57,500 total charities operating or registered within Australia in the year 2017. Australian charities included in the ACNC report recorded 1.26 million employees in paid positions, and 3.3 million volunteer roles. Of those more than 57,500 charities, 10.9% were found to be operating within the social service sector. Furthermore, the ACNC reported that 20.5% of these charities were based in Victoria. Charities make a sizeable contribution to Australia's workforce and an equally important contribution to the delivery of social services.

### **1.2 Significance**

The social service sector is clearly going to change considerably in the next few years, which FSSI cite as one of the primary reasons for their being established. The FSSI is choosing to focus on 3 pillars of support to the social service sector; growth, quality, and adaption. Data collected by the ACNC will assist FSSI in assessing how the Victorian social service sector will grow over time, how the quality of its services can be maintained and improved, and how best to both adapt to and inspire the changes that will occur in the future.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Transformation in the Social Service Sector**

Kyle et al (2018) identified a number of indicators and predictors for the transformation occurring in the social service sector, as well as the challenges facing the industry. Chiefly among these were that there are many women currently working in care roles that are unpaid and unemployed (United Nations, 2015). Kyle et al (2018) also found that young and less educated persons faced greater difficulties in finding employment in paid roles. Further to this, wage growth has not kept up with rising productivity in social services or salary increases in other sectors, effectively resulting in pay decreases for the social service sector (Dew et al, 2016). This is coupled with an ageing workforce that is exiting the industry, showing real strain on staffing expected for the social service sector both presently and in the coming years (McKinsey Global Institute, 2017).

Combined with the expected ageing population stated above, the social service sector needs to embark on rapid change in order to minimise the strain it will endure in the coming years.

### **2.2 Data Visualisations in the social service sector**

In an age of “*big data*”, it is essential that digital transformation be undertaken across social service sectors. Karannasios (2018) demonstrates that data and analytics can be considered as important as labour and capital for modern organisations. Community services sectors should value big data and analytics as currently maintained by many commercial organisations. Young and Wessnitzer (2016) state that a good exploratory data analysis begins with the ability to describe and plot a data set. Thus, visualisations are an effective method for reviewing the data and can provide valuable insights into large data sources.

Visualisation techniques can be used to summarise com-

plex, large, or multivariable datasets through graphical means, such as plots and charts. It is believed by experts that representing data visually makes it possible to communicate data effectively and gives people the opportunity to analyse and examine various datasets which would otherwise be difficult to understand (Kennedy & Allen 2017). However, not all visualisation tools are useful in analysing large datasets or databases. For example, Tableau is a powerful popularly used visualisation tool but often struggles with complex and large datasets.

A good visualisation tool is able to explore data interactively and also assure the interaction quality of users with data visualisation (Berinato 2016). Tool designers should consider whether the user is able to adjust properties with the tool's interface, explore relationships between attributes of their choice and look for links between different data (Polack 2019).

### 3 Objectives

The objective for this project as defined by primary stakeholder FSSI is to develop an interactive data visualisation tool that explores trends and changes between ACNC datasets for two consecutive years. Stakeholder engagement with FSSI and VCOSS determined the data visualisation tool would be used to answer several guiding questions as laid out in Appendix 1. Consultation sessions with FSSI and VCOSS further defined this objective to be explored using a web-based document that allows for interactive visualisations.

## 4 Methodology

### 4.1 Data Source

The 2016 ACNC data set had already been accessed by VCOSS and cleaned to their standards, and was supplied. The 2017 ACNC data was then cleaned for this project to VCOSS standards to ensure consistency between years. There is scope for this project to be updated with datasets from more recent years once they have been released.

#### 4.1.1 Data Cleaning

As the 2016 data was pre-prepared by VCOSS, no cleaning was performed on it prior to use in the project besides identifying and removing invalid ABNs (see below). The 2017 ACNC dataset was sourced directly from the ***data.gov.au website*** and was cleaned to VCOSS standards. Please see Appendix 2 for further details on how the 2017 dataset was cleaned.

Hereon the ACNC datasets cleaned to VCOSS standards will be denoted as VCOSS ACNC {year} Data, or words to that effect.

**4.1.1.1 Removing Invalid ABNs** Exploration of the data by the development team revealed there to be invalid ABNs in the 2016 VCOSS ACNC dataset. Referring to the ***Australian Business Register website***, the development team wrote a short block of code to run through all ABNs in the VCOSS ACNC datasets and identify valid or invalid ABN codes. It was found that most of the entries in the data with invalid ABNs were tied to ACNC reporting groups, which is explained on the ***ACNC website***.

Any ABN found to be invalid resulted in the removal of the entire entry from the datasets before further use in visualisations and analysis. Please see Appendix 3 for a code snippet on how these ABNs were identified.

## 4.2 Variables in the Datasets

The variables in the datasets were consistent in both 2016 and 2017. These variables were:

Variable	Brief Description
ABN	
Charity Name	
State	
Charity Size	Small charity < \$250,000 - Medium charity >= \$250,000 & < \$1,000,000 - Large charity >= \$1,000,000
Conducted Activities	Whether the charity conducted activities
Main Activities	Main activity performed - loosely interchangeable with 'sector'
Operates in Vic	
Staff Full Time	
Staff Part Time	Staff count
Staff Casual	
Staff Volunteers	Volunteer count
Government Grants	
Donations and Bequests	Funding received
All Other Revenue	
Total Revenue	
Other Income	Income not captured in other variables
Total Gross Income	
Employee Expenses	
Interest Expenses	Interest payments made on loans taken by charity
Grants and Donations Made for use in Australia	Total dollar value of grants and donations with the intended use in Australia
Grants and Donations Made for use Outside Australia	Total dollar value of grants and donations with the intended use outside of Australia
All Other Expenses	Expenses not captured in other variables
Total Expenses	
Net Surplus Deficit	Budget status

## 4.3 Digital Report

This project is centred on data that has already been collected by the ACNC and cleaned to standards established by VCOSS. Once the appropriate data was defined via discussion with stakeholders, a digital report summarising key findings from the VCOSS ACNC 2016 and 2017 datasets was compiled. The report combined interactive data visualisations with industry insights, and was prepared as a .html file with R packages ggplot2 and plotly used for visualisations as required. Please see figure 1 for an example of an interactive plotly chart built with the VCOSS ACNC 2016 and 2017 datasets.



Figure 1: A Plotly interactive plot using the ACNC dataset to visualise funding sources for each main activity

#### 4.3.1 Visualisation Types

The primary goal for stakeholders FSSI and VCOSS was to examine any change in key metrics between 2016 and 2017, in addition to an improved understanding of the impact of charities and not-for-profit organisations in the social service sector. In order to visualise change over years, two main graphical techniques were used; angle and facet grouping. Angle was used with dot-and-line plots as seen in figures 2 and 3 below, while faceting was combined with bar charts as seen in figure 1 above.

Changes across years was also expressed using frames in animation, which cannot be shown in this paper but can be seen in the supporting web report file under sections *Volunteer Percentage of Workforce and Funding by Charity*, among others.

#### 4.4 Stakeholder Engagement

During project planning meetings, FSSI stakeholders suggested following a co-design process to engage key contributors from both FSSI and VCOSS throughout all stages of development to ensure the project was fit for purpose. Meetings with stakeholders in FSSI and VCOSS were held weekly during the development of the project, which addressed both design considerations as well as extra insight into the data offered from an industry perspective.

## 5 Results

### 5.1 Social Service Sector Size

More than one out of every five charities in Victoria listed social services as their main activity in 2016 and 2017. In 2016 this was 1,062 charities, which decreased slightly in 2017 to 1,022 (22.8% and 22.0% of total charities, respectively). The number of charities in other sectors increased from 3,606 in 2016 to 3,629 in 2017.

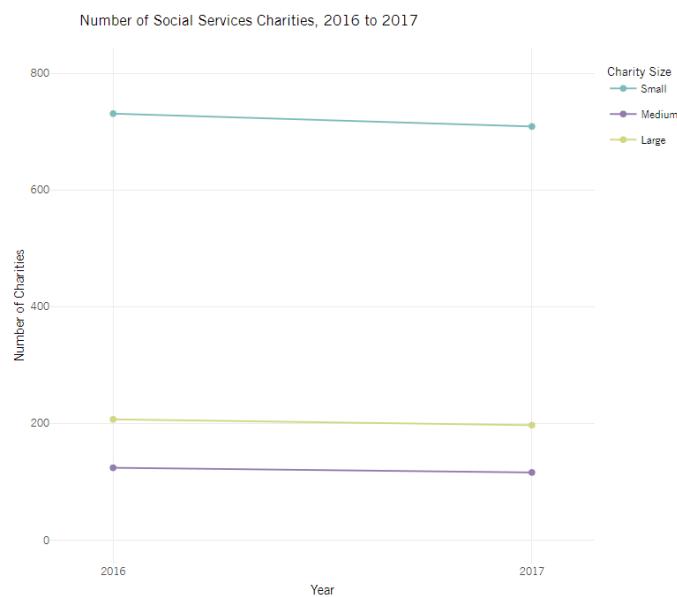


Figure 2: Count of Social Services Charities by Charity Size

The majority of Victoria's social service charities were small charities (731 charities in 2016, 709 in 2017), followed by large charities (207 in 2016, 197 in 2017) and medium-size charities (124 in 2016 and 116 in 2017).

Figure 3 shows that most community service organisations (including social service charities) had no change or slight decrease in numbers. Only *other education* organisations and *economic, social and community development* organisations increased in number from 2016 to 2017.

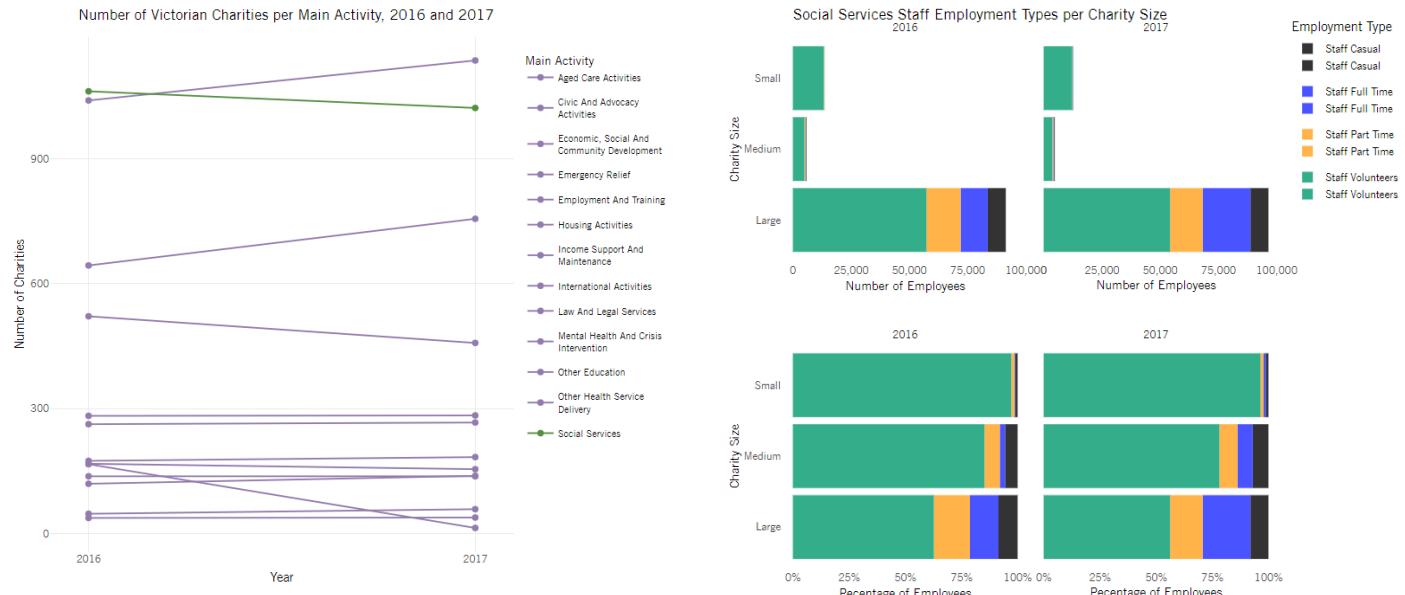


Figure 3: Count of Victorian Charities per Main Activity

## 5.2 Workforce Composition

The charitable services sector is a large and growing employer. Analysis of the ACNC 2016-2017 data show that Victorian social service industry employed 35,296 people in 2016 and this figure was increased to 43,697 in 2017. In 2016, the social service industry employed 23.45% of the total 150,515 paid staff working for charities, and in 2017 social service charities employed 23.53% of the total 185,714 paid staff.

From 2016 to 2017, the dominant staff type in social service sector was changed from part-time to full-time. The number of casual staff was the smallest in 2016 and 2017 compared with other staff types. A slight decrease in number of casual employees was seen in the period of 2016 to 2017; from 8,258 to 8,222 respectively. There were changes in the number of part-time employees and the number of full-time employees as well. The number of part-time employees decreased from 15,220 to 14,570 and the number of full-time employees was increased from 11,818 to 20,905.

Figure 4: Number of Workers in the Social Services Industry by Organisation Size and Employment Status

Large charities employed around 96% of social services industry workers in Victoria in 2016 and 2017. This comprised:

- 11,635 and 20,456 full-time workers (34.2% and 48.5%)
- 14,644 and 14,014 part-time workers (43% and 33.2%)
- 7,773 and 7,734 casual workers (22.8% and 18.3%)

Medium-size charities employed around 2.4% of the total social service industry workforce in 2016 and 2017. The medium-size charity workforce comprised:

- 139 and 325 full-time workers (16.1% and 31.1%)
- 398 and 387 part-time workers (45.1% and 37%)
- 326 and 334 casual workers (37.8% and 31.9%)

Small charities employed around 1% of the total social service industry workforce in 2016 and 2017. The small charity workforce comprised:

- 44 and 124 full-time workers (11.5% and 27.7%)
- 178 and 169 part-time workers (46.7% and 37.8%)

- 326 and 334 casual workers (41.7% and 34.4%)

The vast majority of Victorian social services industry charities are supported by unpaid volunteer workers. Volunteer workers accounts for 68.2% of the total social service industry workforce in 2016 and was decreased slightly to 61.7%.

Small charities of social service sectors rely the most on volunteers (97.2% in 2016, 96.5% in 2017) followed by medium (85.3% and 78.2%) and large charities (62.7% and 56.3%).

In other community service sectors, Civic and advocacy activities had the most volunteers in 2016 but had a huge drop from 77403 to 620 in 2017. In 2017, other education sectors got the highest numbers of volunteers. Social services were in the second place in both years and had a slightly decreasing from 75,605 to 70,289 people.

### 5.3 Sector Funding

The Victorian social services charities and not-for-profit organisations collectively received an income of around \$3 billion in 2016 and \$2.3 billion in 2017 with around 60% these generated from government grants.

The social service industry received the most in government grants (\$2.1bn and \$1.97bn) in 2016 and 2017, with other health service delivery second (\$1.6bn) in 2016 and aged care service delivery second (\$1.5bn) in 2017. International activities raised the most from donations and bequests (\$513m and \$438m).

Figure 5 shows government grants are the single biggest source of income for Victorian social service charities. All other income and revenue combined raised nearly \$650m for social service charities but the amount was decreased substantially to \$180m by 2017, while donations and bequests raised over \$200m in each year.

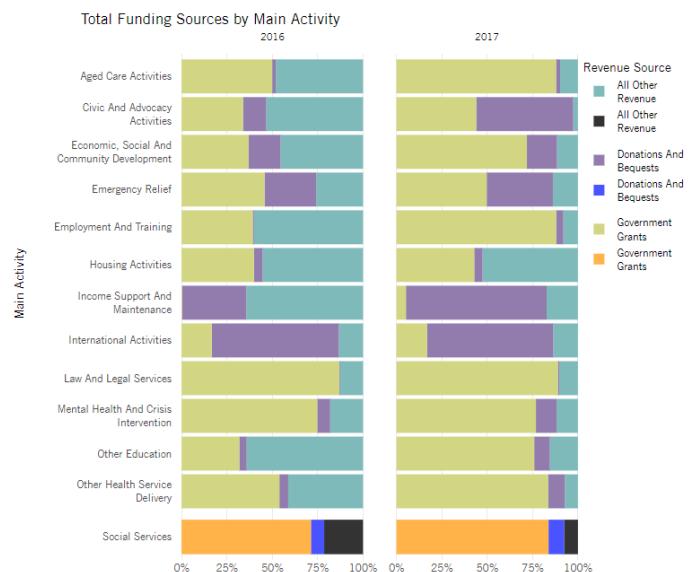


Figure 5: Proportion of Funding Sources per Main Activity

Large social service charities received most money from government grants, which was around \$2 billion. Income from donations and bequests decreased from \$200m to \$184m while other income and revenue received decreased from \$600m to \$158m in 2016-2017.

Medium-sized social service charities raised \$14m in other income and revenue in 2017, a decrease from the previous year. They also raised around \$10m in donations and bequests, a slight decrease from the previous year. Reported income from government grants was \$17m, which was a slight decrease from 2016.

Small social service charities received just around \$5m in other income and revenue, little change from 2016. They also raised \$7.3m from donations and bequests, a slight increase from \$7.1m in the previous year. Small social service charities also received around \$3.9m from government grants, almost the same as the previous year.

## 5.4 Financial Health of Sector

The financial health of social service charities affects their ability to deliver vital services to people facing disadvantage. Figure 6 shows the majority of Victorian social service charities (539 in 2016 and 537 in 2017) were in budget surplus. Eighty-two (82) social service charities operated a balanced budget in 2017 and this is a decrease on the number of charities from the previous year. Four hundred and three (403) charities were in deficit in 2017 and it was changed little from the previous year.

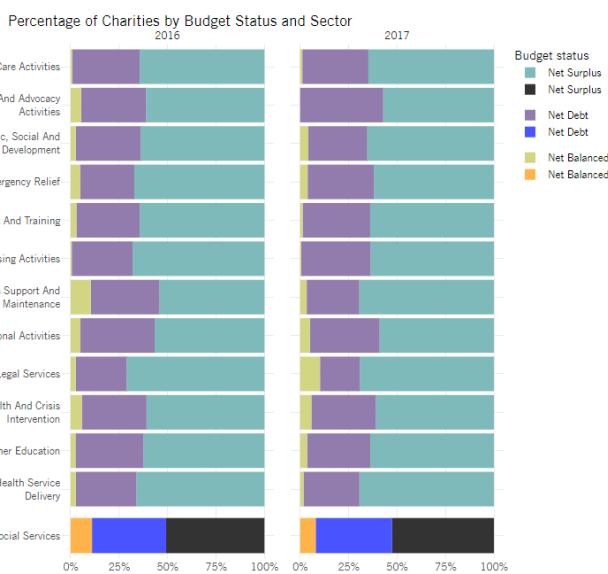


Figure 6: Budget status per Main Activity

Small social service charities were more likely to operate budget deficits and a balanced budget than medium-sized and large charities. Around 43.6% of small charities operated budget deficits, compared to 21.7% of large organisations and 33.9% of medium-sized organisations in 2016. Figures changed to 44%, 24.9% and 31.9% respectively in 2017.

Around 40.9% of small charities in 2016 and 44% in 2017 operated budget surplus compared to 77.8% and 75.1% of large charities and 63.7% and 66.4% of medium-sized charities. Conversely, 15.5%/11.3% of small charities operated in a balanced budget, compared to 2.4%/2.7%

of medium-sized organisations and 0.5%/0% of large charities.

Charities whose main activity was law and legal services were more likely to operate budget surpluses in 2016 while charities whose main activity was income support and maintenance were more likely to have a budget surplus in 2017. Charities whose main activity was international activities were most likely to operate budget deficits in 2016 but in 2017 civic and advocacy activities charities got the highest chance of budget deficits. Charities whose main activity was social service were most likely to have balanced budgets in 2016 but law and legal service charities became more likely in 2017.

## 6 Discussion

This report visualised the 2016 and 2017 ACNC datasets for Victoria charities and not-for-profit organisations in the social service sector, which is a strong and fast growing industry, particularly the social services industry. Social services industry is a key component of Victorian economy and also a key employer. It consists of thousands of charities, employing tens of thousands of staff and having thousands of volunteers. It is a billion dollar sector receiving a large amount of income from governments, donations and other revenue (eg. Service fees). The financial support from government contributes to the growth of the sector.

As the charitable and not-for-profit social service sector is so large and the nature of the data is a summary of surveyed reportings, it was necessary that analysis of the data began with exploratory techniques in the form of visualisations.

## **6.1 Interpretation of Results**

### **6.1.1 Social Service Sector Size**

Considering the large contribution to essential services provided by the charities in the social service sector such as aged care, disability care, etc, it was expected that social services charities would make up a large proportion of all charities operating in Victoria. However, the finding that social services charities comprised more than 1 out of 5 Victorian charities in 2016 and 2017 highlighted the important contribution that charities make to social services.

Considering the large quantity of charities performing social services, it was expected that a similarly large proportion of social services charities were small or medium in size. The number of large social services charities was greater than medium-sized charities for both 2016 and 2017, which could be due to the nature of the social services provided. This could be in the form that larger charities tend to provide social services such as aged care and disability care, while smaller charities provide more specialised social services like Returned Soldiers Leagues for individual communities/suburbs and individual childcare facilities. Considering the social service sector is shifting to providing services on the terms set out by the individual receiving the service, it is of concern that the number of charities and not-for-profit organisations performing essential care services such as disability care and aged care may be coalescing and merging.

### **6.1.2 Workforce Composition**

It was unsurprising that charities in the social service sector employed a very large number of paid staff and volunteers throughout the years, and the visualisations revealed the largest proportion of the total workforce are employed by large charities. The visualisations also revealed that the number of volunteers working in social services charities outweighed the total number of paid staff across both

years, underlining the sector's reliance on unpaid staff. When focusing on medium and smaller charities, not only do volunteers comprise the majority of staff, but they are often more than 90% of the total staff count in social services charities of these sizes.

### **6.1.3 Sector Funding**

Government grants are the majority of funding sources for charities and not-for-profits across all but one sector (international activities), and charities in the social service sector are no exception. Charities operating in social services collected the greatest amount of government grants in both 2016 and 2017, which shows how much the sector is reliant on government funding to perform their services. Furthermore, large social services charities received approximately three quarters (75%) of their total funding from government grants in each year, which was in contrast to small and medium social charities that received smaller proportions of their funding from government grants. Large social services charities also received a much greater proportion of their funding from government grants than large charities in other sectors, which only further emphasises the importance of government funding in maintaining social services.

### **6.1.4 Financial Health of Sector**

The visualisations exploring the financial health of the sector uncovered some concerning information. Considering the large contribution made to the social service sector by charities and not-for-profits, it is alarming that such a high percentage of charities are running a budget deficit each year. Any budget deficit places a given charity at risk of collapsing, but this risk is far greater to small charities that don't have the same cultural/marketing capital as larger charities. Therefore the fact that a greater percentage of smaller charities run a budget deficit compared to their medium- and large-sized contemporaries indicates instability in the sector. Whilst ACNC data for 2018, 2019, and 2020 is not available at the time of writing this report,

it would be remiss to predict that these small charities running a budget deficit would be able to endure the economic effects of the COVID-19 crisis without experiencing instability.

## 6.2 Method of Analysis

Data visualisation techniques often out-perform other methods of exploratory data analysis such as descriptive statistics, especially when using complex data with many variables or data that isn't normally distributed. As the ACNC data from 2016 and 2017 displayed all these properties, data visualisations allowed for concise summaries to be generated that offer insights into the nature of the data.

As the majority of the variables were continuous or integer numeric variables, there were restrictions surrounding how data could be categorised during analysis. Main activity and charity size were frequently used, along with the created variable for Year, when visualising numeric variables.

## 6.3 Limitations and Recommendations

Data visualisations served well to explore the Victorian ACNC data considering its complex nature. However, the visualisations made use of categorical variables too frequently when exploring continuous variables, and further visualisations could have been produced exploring bivariate continuous data visualisations, such as scatter plots.

The dot-and-line visualisations used to observe changes in continuous variables between the two years comprised considerable white/blank space when only examining a small number of categories, or when examining variables with a wide dispersion of data points between categories. For data summaries of a small nature, other visualisations could be explored, particularly using frames of a plotly animation to see changes over time.

The project also only considered one data source; ACNC

data in 2016 and 2017. There is scope for further data to be sourced or collected to gain further understanding of the contribution that charities make to the social service sector. Furthermore, as the data only pertained to charities and not-for-profits, it was not possible to quantify the impact of charities on the entire sector. Data from other sources would facilitate this comparison, for example allowing comparisons to be drawn to for-profit businesses also offering social services.

## 6.4 Summary

The visualisations effectively explored the ACNC data in 2016 and 2017 to facilitate industry-relevant analysis. Amongst the findings were that a large proportion of charities perform social services, that the number of volunteers in social services is greater than all paid staff, that budget deficits are common throughout charities of all sizes, and that the sector is reliant on government grants.

The study is limited in its scope to ACNC data, as well as the variety of ways in which visualisations were produced using the data. Future improvements can be made to this report by expanding the years captured by ACNC data as well as sourcing other datasets.

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## **8 Appendices**

### **8.1 Appendix 1: Guiding Questions**

- Are some types of organisations categorised as community services growing more quickly than others?
- Has there been a change in the size of organisations over time? Has the proportion of small to large sized organisations changed or remained constant? Is the change more apparent among some types of organisations?
- How many workers are employed in the community services industry? What is the breakdown of part-time/full-time/casual? Can we get this data by type of organisation? Are the proportions of casual and part-time employees growing faster in some types or sizes of organisations than others?
- Has the number of volunteers or - who they are employed by - changed over time?
- What proportion of services are providing NDIS services? Has this changed since 2017? Are large or small organisations more likely to provide NDIS services?
- Has there been a change in the source of income for community service organisations? Is this change more apparent by organisation size or type?
- Is the proportion of income being spent on employee expenses changing or remaining constant?
- What size or type of organisations are most likely to have a deficit budget?

## 8.2 Appendix 2: ACNC Datasets

The 2017 ACNC data set was sourced from the following data.gov.au website:

<https://data.gov.au/dataset/ds-dga-a1f8626c-fefb-4c4d-86ea-deaa04fb1f6e/details?q=>.

This data was cleaned and filtered to VCOSS standards to ensure consistency with the 2016 dataset that was supplied by VCOSS. The below details are the requirements set out by VCOSS for cleaning.

### Appendix 1 – ACNC Data Cleaning Rules

VCOSS adopted the data cleaning rules that were developed by the Centre for Social Impact and the Social Policy Research Centre in their report [Australian Charities 2014..](#)

#### Syntax for data cleaning and data analysis

SPSS was used to clean and analyse the data. Syntax for the data cleaning and analysis is available . Much of the cleaning is to turn string (text) variables into numeric variables, which is easier for analysis. We also apply rules as outlined in the following table.

The analysis is easy to follow/recreate using the tables and charts we have publically reported as long as we use the valid data filters as created through the cleaning process.

Year on year we have needed to update the syntax because the ACNC will often change variable names which means we need to update the syntax.

Data rules:

Item/variable	Rule
Creation of Victorian Community Services Industry Dataset	<p>We usually keep all the data from across Australia in the data set and use filters in SPSS to use the data we want for Victoria.</p> <p><b>If Main Activity</b> is one of: Aged Care Activities Civic and Advocacy Activities Economic, social and community development Emergency Relief Employment and Training Housing Activities Income support and maintenance International activities Law and Legal Services Mental health and crisis intervention Other Education Other health service delivery Social Services</p> <p><b>If Other Activity</b> offered by the charity is from one of the above list.</p> <p>We create Community Sector Charity variable.</p> <p>Then to create the Victorian Community Services Charity variable it is if orgs operate activities as above and it is they are based in Victoria (State=Victoria) and operating in Victoria (Operates in VIC). This means that this dataset will pick up organisations based in Victoria, operating in Victoria, but also operating in other states.</p>

<b>Item/variable</b>	<b>Rule</b>
Size of organisation	<p>Organisations self-select their organisational size            Small = Revenue Less than \$250,000            Medium= Revenue of \$250,000 to \$999,999            Large = Revenue of \$1 million or more</p> <p>This is checked against Total Gross Income of the organisation</p> <p>We have also added an additional size category for organisations into the following:            Extra Small= &lt;\$50,000            Small = \$50,000-&lt;\$250,000            Medium = \$250,000 to &lt;\$1m            Large-\$1m to &lt; \$10m            Extra Large \$10m to &lt; \$100m            Extra-extra- large &gt;\$100m</p> <p>This will be useful to track over time in terms of whether the number of large to extra/extra-large organisations has grown</p>
Income	Data is checked, if there is no income for the organisation then these are excluded from the analysis
Inaccurate Income Data	<p>The sum of individual income fields and total income differ by more than \$25,000 for small charities</p> <p>The sum of individual income fields and total income differ by more than \$100,000 for medium charities</p> <p>The sum of individual income fields and total income differ by more than \$1,000,000 for large charities</p>
Inaccurate expenditure data	<p>The sum of individual expense fields and total expenses differ by more than \$25,000 for small charities</p> <p>The sum of individual expense fields and total expenses differ by more than \$100,000 for medium charities</p> <p>The sum of individual expense fields and total expenses differ by more than \$1,000,000 for large charities</p> <p>Employee expenses per reported employee exceeds \$300,000.</p>
Ratios	<p>Ratios (e.g. Government grant per total gross income) exceed 100%</p> <p>Negative values (e.g. negative employee expenses or liability).</p>
Valid Financial data	Variable created to ensure that after all checks data is valid

### 8.3 Appendix 3: Identifying Invalid ABNs

```
# Removing Invalid ABNs

## Reference Keybreaker file

ABN_Keybreaker <- read_excel("VCOSS Data/ABN Keybreaker.xlsx")

datatable(ABN_Keybreaker,
         class = "compact",
         options = list(pageLength = 11,
                        searching = FALSE,
                        lengthChange = FALSE))

## Function for checking ABNs

ABN_Checker <- function(ABN_No) {

  sumproduct <- c()

  for(position in 1:nchar(ABN_No)) {

    number <- as.numeric(substr(ABN_No, position, position))

    if(position == 1) {

      number <- as.numeric(number - 1)

    }

    product <- (number * ABN_Keybreaker$Weighting[position])

    sumproduct <- sum(sumproduct, product)

  }

  if(sumproduct %% 89 == 0) {

    Check <- "Valid ABN"

  } else {

    Check <- "Invalid ABN"

  }

}
```

```

  return(Check)

}

ABN_Validator <- function(ABN_vector) {

  sapply(ABN_vector, ABN_Checker)

}

VCOSS_ACNC_16 <- mutate(VCOSS_ACNC_16,
                        ABN_Validation = ABN_Validator(abn))

Invalid_ABNs_16 <- filter(VCOSS_ACNC_16,
                           ABN_Validation == "Invalid ABN")

VCOSS_ACNC_17 <- mutate(VCOSS_ACNC_17,
                        ABN_Validation = ABN_Validator(abn))

Invalid_ABNs_17 <- filter(VCOSS_ACNC_17,
                           ABN_Validation == "Invalid ABN")

## Filter out invalid ABNs from VCOSS dataframes

VCOSS_ACNC_16 <- VCOSS_ACNC_16[which(! (VCOSS_ACNC_16$abn %in% Invalid_ABNs_16$abn)), ]

VCOSS_ACNC_17 <- VCOSS_ACNC_17[which(! (VCOSS_ACNC_17$abn %in% Invalid_ABNs_17$abn)), ]

```