

COVID-19 and the Youth Sector

The COVID-19 crisis has dramatically affected the lives of young people and the vital work of the youth sector. YACVic asked youth sector organisations to tell us about the impact of the pandemic on their operations.

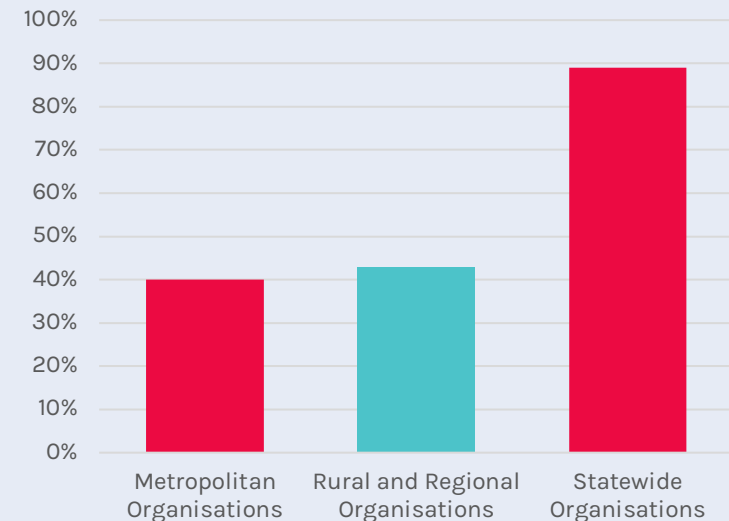
Youth Services Are Experiencing Increased Demand

COVID-19 has already increased demand for youth services across Victoria. A large number of youth services are expecting even greater demand over the next two years as the long-term effects of the pandemic result in increased youth unemployment, higher rates of mental ill-health and frequent social isolation.

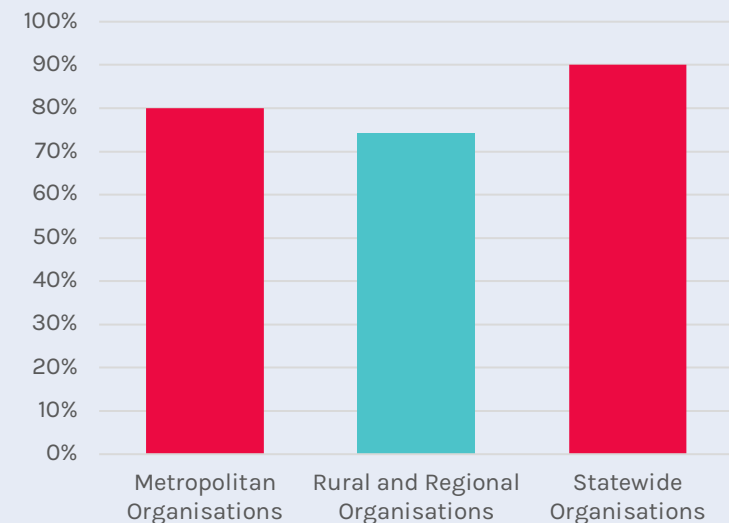
The Youth Sector is Preparing and Needs Support

The majority of youth services have rapidly prepared for the pandemic by implementing response plans. However, youth services urgently need more financial support to manage the increased demand and changed working conditions.

Proportion of Youth Services Experiencing Increased Demand



Proportion of Youth Services with COVID-19 Response Plans



Workers Are Concerned About Services and Engagement

Workers are most likely to be concerned about maintaining service quality during restrictions and the loss of engagement

with young people. Respondents cite the transition to online service delivery as a major challenge. Youth workers are also concerned about continuity of service delivery during the pandemic.

'Being unable to work face-to-face impacts our ability to respond to those in crisis. It will prevent the delivery of some aspects of our service completely.'

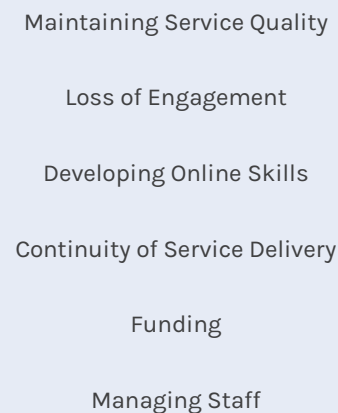
Funding and Support is Needed

Funding is a major concern among workers and organisations. Respondents noted that project-specific and expiring funding is at risk. There is significant concern that existing funding is insufficient for services to meet the expected increase in demand.

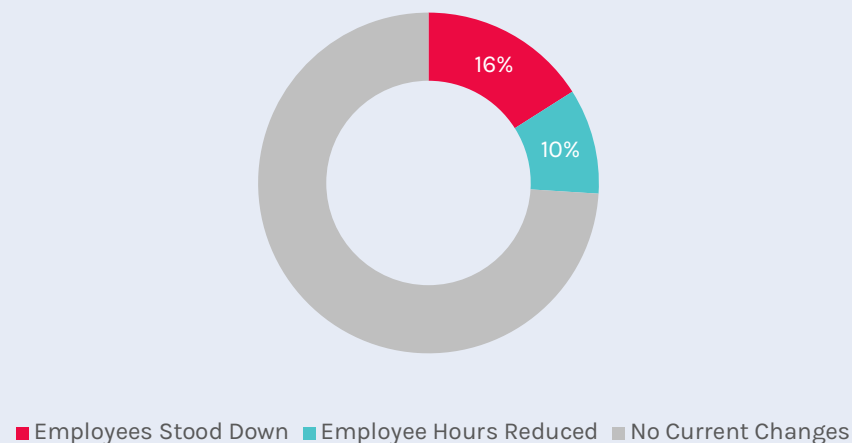
Youth Sector at Risk of Job Losses

Twenty six per cent of respondents stated that youth workers at their organisation had been stood down or that their work hours had been reduced. A significant number of respondents expect further job losses without additional funding. It is highly likely that the number of youth workers who have been stood down has increased since responses to this survey were collected.

Major Concerns for Youth Services



Proportion of Organisations Changing Employment



Worker Concerns for Young People

Workers are primarily concerned about the loss of social interaction for young people caused by the pandemic. There is also serious concern that young people will not be able to access education, resulting in significant interruption and disengagement for tens of thousands of young people.

A majority of workers based in metropolitan areas are concerned about youth unemployment and income support payments.

'Due to the unemployment rate increasing we have a significant amount of young people who have lost their jobs and with no one hiring at the moment we are unable to assist them in obtaining new employment.'

More than 40% of workers stated that COVID-19 would directly result in the young people they work with experiencing domestic violence. A similar proportion of workers are worried that young people will lose access to services and that marginalised young people will be most affected.

Further Information

Survey responses collected from 1 April 2020. Data analysis completed between 17 April and 1 May 2020.

Visit yacvic.org.au for more information

Worker Concerns for Young People

