

Results from the NTV survey on pay and conditions

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In the late winter and early spring of this year, NTV conducted an anonymous, electronic survey of male family violence workers on issues related to pay and conditions for this work. The survey was open to men's behaviour change program co-ordinators and managers, group facilitators, and workers engaged in partner contact, intake and assessment or case management. We are delighted to have received 57 completed or mostly completed responses to the survey.

(A note on terminology: in this article "the proportion of respondents who ..." means "the proportion of those respondents who answered that particular question who ..." - not the proportion of the total number of respondents to the survey. Questions were generally answered by most respondents for whom the question was relevant, but not by all.)

The results that stood out the most concerned access to supervision. Almost half of respondents engaging in male family violence work during standard business hours (averaging two days per week across these respondents) reported receiving supervision specifically related to their work less frequently than once every four weeks.

Approximately one-quarter reported receiving supervision related to their work either rarely or never.

Access to supervision in relation to male family violence work conducted after-hours (e.g. group facilitation) was even poorer. Sixty percent of respondents reported receiving supervision less frequently than every four weeks in relation to work conducted after-hours. Twenty-nine percent reported receiving supervision in this context rarely or never.

Taken as a whole, it appears that the sector is not meeting the NTV minimum standard concerning supervision (MS 46 – see [/www.ntv.org.au/pages/men-s-behaviour-change/summary-of-minimum-standards.php](http://www.ntv.org.au/pages/men-s-behaviour-change/summary-of-minimum-standards.php)) for a significant proportion of its workers. Insufficient frequency of supervision can potentially compromise the quality of practice and result in workers feeling unsupported. It is therefore an issue that NTV would like to explore in more detail with the sector as a whole in 2011.

A second key focus of the survey was levels of remuneration for male family violence work. Approximately one-quarter of respondents reported that they did not have access to salary packaging for their male family violence work conducted during standard business hours. Given the relatively poor remuneration levels associated with the SACS award, lack of access to salary packaging is a significant financial impediment towards earning a right livelihood through this work. The percentage of those without access to salary packaging for after-hours work was significantly higher (44%), though this is probably related in part to some of these respondents being on their organisation's payroll (either as a casual or part-time employee) for only a handful of hours per week.

Apart from salary packaging, a key remuneration issue is of course the hourly rate that a worker is paid. In order to report data that's relevant to the vast majority of workers, the

following results for remuneration excludes those respondents who reported being co-ordinators or managers of a program. (This is not to assume that co-ordinators and managers are highly paid, but their rates of pay were as a whole moderately higher than average.)

The average hourly rate, before tax, of male family violence work conducted during standard business hours was \$28.35. (A small proportion of these respondents reported performing this work on a casual basis, and hence this figure is marginally inflated through the inclusion of the 25% casual loading in these cases.) There was a significant amount of variation between hourly rates, with approximately 30% reporting rates of \$24 to \$25 per hour, and 25% reporting rates of \$30 per hour or above (mostly in the low thirties, with the highest being \$38).

For after-hours work, again excluding those who are managers or co-ordinators, and excluding after-hours telephone-based intake workers, the average hourly rate (including after-hours penalty rates) for those not doing this work on a casual basis was \$31.28. For those doing this work as casual employees (only 8 of the respondents), the average hourly rate was \$33.12 (including the 25% casual loading).

While based on a low sample size, the results for casual after-hours work is concerning. It appears that some casual employees are being remunerated at below the SACS award for casual after-hours work. According to the SACS award, work conducted after-hours on Monday to Thursday nights (when most after-hours male family violence work occurs) should be eligible for penalty rates to reflect the night-time nature of this work, in addition to the casual loading applied to the relevant hourly rate. Given the difficult, complex and highly specialised nature of male family violence work, employment conditions beneath the SACS award is doubly concerning.

For those respondents employed part-time or full-time, the average hourly rate of \$31.28 for after-hours work appears more on par with the SACS award. If these employees were paid at the casual rate, the casual loading would lift their hourly rate to an average of \$39.10. However, it is important to note that this figure is an average rate, and that some respondents reported being paid below this. A casual rate equivalent of approximately \$39 - \$40 per hour should be the minimum that all program facilitators are paid for night-time work, including preparation and debriefing time.

Almost half of the respondents who do after-hours male family violence work described the remuneration associated with this work as “not OK” but that they continue doing the work because they feel it is so important, is something they love doing, and/or because they feel they have no choice. In particular, the importance of the work stood out as the reason why these respondents are prepared to do it despite the perceived unacceptability of the remuneration.

Overall, the results on remuneration indicate that many male family violence workers, particularly but not exclusively those who work on a casual basis, are being paid below SACS award rates for evening work. **NTV is using the results of this survey in our advocacy efforts with government to provide further evidence that programs are cutting corners to meet service demand beyond the targets through which they are funded.**