

## Productivity Commission Draft Report on Mental Health

### Submission regarding Early Intervention

The report quotes the following:

*[T]here remains considerable disquiet in the community about programs designed to detect emerging mental health issues at an early age.*

I submit that the reason for this disquiet is because unlike physical examinations which rely on facts and science, and can be measured, mental health diagnosis relies 100% on opinion, as there is no scientifically proved way to detect mental illness.

We therefore have a situation where we are reliant on someone's opinion as to whether our two-year-old has a "mental health issue". How do we know that this opinion is not flawed and has mistakenly labelled a talented or creative child as having a mental health issue?

The disquiet is increased by our knowledge that an increasing number of children are being put on medication of various types to address their actual or supposed mental health issue. So, a non-scientific diagnosis is followed up (possibly) with a "let's see how this works" medication. That would be ok if it was not for the long list of (horrific) side-effects most of these meds have and their unknown long-term effects, especially when started on an infant.

The Commission does not, it appears, question the effectiveness of medicating children. Nor does it explore the dangers. Does it seriously think medication will not increase with this screening? I believe prescribing medication can be quite a profitable exercise. What safeguards does the commission propose to prevent this happening?

What are the proven, successful methods of helping young children and their families? Success would be, I submit, happy, healthy children within happy, healthy families. Does the Commission know what works and what doesn't work? Are there actual statistics to back this up? A focus on what works, and strengthening and supporting that, rather than supposing the experts know what they are doing and just need more funding, would be a welcome outcome of the Commission's work.