

Brief submission

BACKGROUND TO SUBMISSION. I have a BSc (Psychology with Biology), B Social Admin (social work) & have worked professionally in community services since 1977 (40 years). I've also volunteered for community & sports organisations 1971-2016. Professionally I have worked for (a) non government organisations (NGOs) from 1977-79 (Manager of Youthline), & 2010-16 as a tender writer (b) the S Aust Government from 1979-2009: 1979-90 managed youth programs; 1990-2009 managed funding programs. So I have experienced the funding, tendering, monitoring & evaluation of community services from both Government & NGO perspectives. MY DEFINITIVE CONCLUSIONS Over the last 40 years I've seen Governments regularly tender & re-tender for services which has inevitably resulted in a total disruption to existing services, the defunding of some excellent services because they were unable to write a paper tender which met criteria, and a lowering of the quality of services because the service coordination & referral systems that were in place have been terminated. It is extremely frustrating for service providers (& Govt Departments) to spend enormous amounts of time every few years on tendering instead of investing time & energy into monitoring, evaluating & improving existing services. By maintaining a long term funding commitment to existing services (i.e. 5+5+5 years), service systems will develop & the quality & coordination of services will continuously improve. Any services which do not meet required standards can be easily de-funded & replaced through a specific tendering process or offered to a proven effective service provider. I make an impassioned plea to follow a process of developing bipartisan long term strategic plans for the various sectors (e.g. like the 2020 plans for homelessness & Domestic Violence), & commit long term funding of services and stop regular tendering when good services already exist. CONTESTABILITY THEORY DOES NOT WORK - IT MAKES SERVICE QUALITY WORSE.

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