

Dear Commission,

I am writing as a parent and as an Australian citizen to express my concern over aspects of the Productivity Commission Issues Paper "The Social and Economic Benefits of Improving Mental Health" January 2019.

I am aware that mental health is a problem in today's society; but disagree strongly with some of the measures taken particularly in the area of children and babies.

I understand that this is a complex issue; however, having observed closely my own children growing up, as well as many other children; I feel strongly that the drugging of young children as emotionally destructive.

For example, one child in my son's class, of about 10 years old, when taken out of the class and given Prozac would have worse resultant behaviour (per my son). Then there are the horrific instances of childhood suicide which is related to increased suicidal thinking and behaviour associated with taking many of these antidepressant drugs. Also the associated violent impulses which can be triggered from these drugs.

From my observation, children as they grow need to experience life and have the love, support and help of a family to help them adapt to their ever-changing world. Their emotional state will move up and down (just as this occurs with adults) and they need to have friendship, love and a family with which to assist them to cope with the disappointments of life. Adding in drugs to attempt to help them work through problems, just adds to these problems.

I do agree that the treatment of physical health to assist children and adults to be of immense value. As undiscovered or untreated physical conditions can have a massive bearing on mental wellbeing.

I don't think thoughts and feelings and emotions can be controlled by a drug, like antibiotics will handle an infection. And backing this is the fact that there are no exact clinical test for the prescription of these antidepressant drugs.

Drugs to handle mental health have continued to grow to massive proportions with 2018 the PBS showing 3 million Australians including 100,000 children were using antidepressants. Yet mental health is not going away, indicating this drugging as a failing solution.

The sale of antidepressant type drugs generates huge income for those companies manufacturing these medications, and I think tax payer subsidies of these prescriptions would be better spent on physical health, nutrition, exercise, getting out into the environment, problem solving education, work skills improvement, general education etc.

Thank you.