

Brief submission

Very disappointed - the report persists with false notions of competition, contestability and choice as the means to improve quality and availability of services, client participation and healthy community. Non govt provision in all sectors listed have deteriorated in quality of care & accessibility - generally failed. Introducing contestability WILL mean providers focus more on tender application & contracts to the detriment of clients & service outcomes. Govts need to take responsibility for a full continuum of services, facilitation of community engagement but get out of the way of local relationship between client & service & enable freedom to create strong results for clients; services need access to data, innovations, successful project models but be free, through reflective practice, supervision and support to cooperate with other services, respond flexibly to clients' needs in relationship, over the long term. Complex systems DO NOT work through central control, prescriptive policies & punishing, distant, critical "accountability" processes. These approaches have broken human service systems over 30 years. The basic values of this report are wrong, will not address the very real problems in human services nor enable those on the ground who know how to fix things to show the way. Social health & cohesion are the product of relationship, personal engagement, local cooperation & flexibility NOT competitive business models which disempower caring, committed workers & the clients they serve. If this is implemented I fear greatly for the future of Australian society as human services are privatised & the privileged can buy services & disadvantaged are left behind. Many good services are anorexic or defunded; people abandoned. I see no evidence in report or practice that competition, centralisation & contestability improves human services - on the contrary. Clients lack choice due to broken systems & poor policy. Feel pointless giving you detailed response.

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