

Community Mental Health Australia submission to the Productivity Commission inquiry into Introducing Competition and Informed User Choice into Human Services: Identifying Sectors for Reform – Study Report

Addendum to Submission made 2 February 2017

The following is an addendum to the CMHA submission made on 2 February 2017 to the Study Report. The information included in this addendum relates specifically to remote Indigenous services and highlights an example of a best practice community-led mental health program model. CMHA would urge the Productivity Commission to examine such models in informing their work on remote Indigenous communities.

CMHA noted in the full submission to the Study Report that the Productivity Commission should be looking at how to build the capacity of existing local services in remote Indigenous communities, and developing an understanding of current services to then identify the gaps and improve quality, equity, efficiency, accountability and responsiveness via this pathway. In remote Indigenous communities adding, building and investing in local people to develop and deliver programs and services needs to be highlighted by the Commission, such as the example provided in this addendum.

The example is of a community-developed and community-led mental health program in a community in East Arnhem called Galiwin'ku. Galiwin'ku is a Yolngu community of approximately 2500 people, situated on Elcho Island. The health service – Ngalkanbuy – was managed by the local council until 2008 when Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation took over management. Ngalkanbuy provides a 24/7 service and is characterized by the prominent role of local Yolngu in its staffing profile.¹

The Healthy Minds team runs the mental health program. This team undertakes activities such as monthly and fortnightly injections and supervised daily administration of oral medication. The team works collaboratively with families, with much of their work undertaken in the community (rather than in the clinic). They respond to acute situations and people with chronic mental health conditions, this includes responding to overnight emergencies.²

This is a link to an audio file on the model for more information -

<http://caama.com.au/news/2015/galiwinku-community-led-mental-health-program-models-best-practice>

¹ Ngalkanbuy health service at Galiwin'ku, Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation, <http://miwatj.com.au/what-we-do/clinical-services/at-galiwinku/>, Accessed 8 February 2017

² Ibid