

Submission of Merinda Strahan, VIC

## **Productivity Commission Inquiry into the increased application of competition, contestability and informed user choice to human services**

I have worked for Partners In Recovery in the South East for the past 3 years and we were relieved and grateful that the Commonwealth funding was extended to us for another 3 years. Unfortunately, due to changes with Primary Health Network taking over the Medicare Locals which managed our program, our contracts were only going to be extended another year. For my team of 4, our organisation decided not to continue with the program, primarily as an economic decision due to the focus on NDIS and instability in the sector, so we are all out of work. Our caseload will need to be picked up by the existing workers, placing further strain on an overworked market. I'm reassessing whether to continue in the mental health sector rather than face constantly seeking new employment with limited contracts on offer. Many skilled workers I know have had to change jobs every few years and are leaving the sector, leaving the field bereft of their knowledge and experience.