

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

I work in a MHCSS outreach service which means I support people with a mental illness on their journey to recovery. I have been in the sector in Victoria for a total of 3 years. Over these years I have been impacted by temporary contracts causing job and financial instability, changes in the MHCSS sector due to the recommissioning which has caused a lot of workers to change jobs and work in different services or different organisations within the sector. The instability in our employment hinders service delivery, which inevitably transfers over to the clients that we support, in which clients are also exposed to a great deal of uncertainty. Changes in PARC services for example, which I previously worked in has led to significant staff shortages and changes in the way these services are managed has led to an alarming decrease in the quality of the service as well as a noticeable increase in staff burnout and staff turnover. This is not acceptable. If the government continues to carry on with their initiative of marketisation and privatisation of the community sector, the services provided will inevitably drop in quality to such a degree that I believe duty of care and ethics will be compromised. Community services should not be given added and unnecessary pressure to compete with other service providers, especially private providers. This would remove the focus from service delivery to a focus on cost cutting and profitability which means that quality of care is no longer a priority. This will lead to chaos in service delivery which workers and services users should not be subjected to. Marketisation, competition, profit driven motives are NOT compatible with the community support sector. What the Turnbull government is doing is wrong and unethical.