

## The New Zealand Productivity Commission – More effective Social Services

<b>Q 2</b>	<p><b>How important are volunteers to the provision of social services?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide the most cost effective of all elements of social service delivery</li><li>• Build a cohesive functioning community</li><li>• More readily identify community needs and provide service essential to well-being</li><li>• Promote essential community values</li><li>• Provide a strength and resilience to society</li><li>• Are often under-valued and under-rated by government agencies</li><li>• Have a capacity for delivery of substantial outcomes</li><li>• Create well-being which, by its nature, is largely immeasurable</li></ul> <p><i>Should volunteers be under-valued and their work under-rated in the social service sector, their initiative, goodwill and input may be seriously affected.</i></p>
<b>Q 5</b>	<p><b>What are the opportunities for, or barriers to, social-services partnerships between private business, not-for-profit social service providers and government?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Each party must understand the need of the community and its extent</li><li>• Ideas to measure the effectiveness of delivery must be developed by each of the parties together</li><li>• It is a shared enterprise with no one party dictating the method or outcome</li><li>• Each member must hold a commitment to the enterprise</li></ul> <p><i>Barriers to social service partnerships are when community input is undervalued, short term rather than long term solutions are sought, the extent of the social problem is not explored, and partners cease to listen to each other.</i></p>
<b>Q 6</b>	<p><b>What scope is there for increased private investment to fund social services? What approaches would encourage more private investment?</b></p> <p>This can happen when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The cost of society of unmet human need both economically and socially is understood</li><li>• The value of a “human investment approach’ is developed</li><li>• The opportunity to build a cohesive society is committed to</li><li>• Education “away from dependency” is promoted</li><li>• A vibrant society is seen as a public good</li><li>• Reduced inequality is identified as an imperative</li></ul>
<b>Q 8</b>	<p><b>Why are private for-profit providers significantly involved in providing some types of social services and not others?</b></p> <p>Social Services improving outcomes for inter-generational deprivation can expect no short-term returns in pecuniary profits. The long-term benefits are in reduced incarceration, reduced hospitalization, increased employment opportunities. These outcomes are difficult to measure with accuracy but must be included in any analysis.</p>

How successful have recent government initiatives been in improving commissioning and purchasing of social services? What have been the drivers of success, or barriers to success, of these initiatives

Are there other innovations in commissioning and contracting in New Zealand that the Commission should explore? What lessons could the Commission draw from these innovations?

Q 9  
+  
Q10

Social Sector Trials as a recent government initiative will be successful when

- Geographical areas are selected carefully
- Research is thorough on ascertaining what social services are already in place
- The community, schools, voluntary organisations and relevant agencies are consulted
- There is investigation into the type of contracts already in existence eg an integrated contract
- Cross agency collaboration already in existence is explored
- The work of the community organisations is acknowledged
- In depth research prior to selection is undertaken
- Measurement of specified outcomes is confined to the selected area ie South Dunedin only
- Measurement of outcomes acknowledges the work of other NGO's

In Dunedin an integrated contract had been in existence since 2000 covering Health, Mental Health, Police, CYFS, and Education from the Truancy initiative. A "wraparound" delivery was developed: schools, medical practitioners, parents and the wider community referred to the service; community grants, private funding, personal contributions combined with government funding for the operation; volunteers have annually given service; an independent evaluation has been made; a research base has been developed and is ongoing; community credibility is of a high order. Each Integrated Contract report showed successful outcomes and cross-agency satisfaction. The identical outcomes of reduced truancy, reduced youth offending, reduced alcohol and drug abuse, increased participation in education, training and employment, were those also listed by the current Social Sector Trial last year. This duplicates established services, causes confusion and community distrust.

What are the barriers to learning from international experience in social services commissioning? What are the barriers and risks in applying the lessons in New Zealand?

Q 12

Barriers to learning from international experience are

- The small size of New Zealand as a country
- That regional differences in culture and socio-economic conditions are very marked
- That the gap between rich and poor is wider than in most countries
- That the statistics for vulnerable children and youth are alarming in New Zealand
- That the evaluation of New Zealand based innovations should first be made
- That the under-resourcing of regional and community organisations is evident

Where and when have attempts to integrate services been successful or unsuccessful? Why?

Q 13

Otago Youth Wellness Trust has offered an integrated wrap-around service in Dunedin for unattached and socially excluded youth since 1996, based on Multi-disciplinary Health and Development Unit research at the University of Otago and with considerable community input. It has a multi-disciplinary staff of eighteen, all highly qualified. Contract reporting includes a profile of randomly chosen clients noting their achievements of reaching specified goals within individual client plans. A HHEADSS assessment of each client determines the extent of the need and their aspirations and that of their families is always sought and included

<p><b>Q 14</b></p>	<p><b>What needs to happen for further attempts at service integration to be credible with providers?</b></p> <p>Agency collaboration will be successful when</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A “silo approach” becomes non-existent</li> <li>• Agencies focus on the needs of clients as a total entity</li> <li>• The causes of human need are investigated</li> <li>• Attitudes towards community organisation change</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q 19</b></p>	<p><b>Are there examples of service delivery decisions that are best made locally? Or centrally? What are the consequences of not making decisions at the appropriate level?</b></p> <p>Service delivery decisions are best made at a community level where the nature of the human need is best understood.</p>
<p><b>Q 22</b></p>	<p><b>What is the experience of providers and purchasing agencies with high-trust contracts? Under what circumstances are more relational contracts most likely to be successful or unsuccessful? Why?</b></p> <p>High Trust Contracts must involve funders who</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the needs of the community and their extent</li> <li>• Approach the problem from a unified standpoint</li> <li>• Forgo a silo approach</li> <li>• Respect community based personnel as equals</li> <li>• Appreciate staff skills and experience</li> <li>• Uphold a relational approach</li> <li>• Seek to understand how the entire operation works in practice</li> <li>• Thoroughly read the content of each report returned by the provider</li> <li>• Understand that the required reporting is a basis for further enlightened discussion</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q 31</b></p>	<p><b>What measures would reduce the cost to service providers of participating in contestable processes?</b></p> <p>Tenders won by large “corporate NGO’s” could be inappropriate and not as effective at successful delivery; Large corporate NGOs may not have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The flexibility to respond to changing needs at a local level</li> <li>• Sufficient community input in their decision making</li> <li>• Freedom from a bureaucratic approach</li> <li>• Integrated and focussed programmes</li> <li>• Freedom from employment issues and unsafe work places</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q 41</b></p>	<p><b>Which types of services have outcomes that are practical to observe and can be reliably attributed to the service?</b></p> <p>Services which could be observed are those whose outcome is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced recidivist offending by youth</li> <li>• Increased school engagement</li> <li>• Enhanced employment experiences for youth</li> <li>• Healthy community engagement by youth</li> <li>• Increased family well-being</li> </ul>

Are there important issues for the effective commissioning and contracting of social services that will be missed as a result of the commission's selection of case studies?

Q 55

Case studies should recognise

- The increasing complexity of need
- That the consequences of inter generational deprivation are analysed
- That emphasis on the child and young person is paramount
- That one-size does not fit all
- That a productive nation is one which reduces inequality is humane and enjoys cohesive communities

*Productivity in any domain rests on the responsiveness of communities, the well being of people, and a reduction in the gap between the rich and poor. An egalitarian society is the most productive. Therefore social services from a community-based delivery are essential to bring about a more equal society.*