



23 June 2015

New Zealand Productivity Commission
PO Box 8036
The Terrace
Wellington 6143

MORE EFFECTIVE SOCIAL SERVICES – DRAFT REPORT APRIL 2015

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Commission's draft report on *More Effective Social Services*.

Alzheimers New Zealand

Alzheimers New Zealand (www.alzheimers.org.nz) represents people affected by dementia at a national level by raising awareness of dementia, providing information and resources for people affected by dementia, advocating for high quality services for people affected by dementia, and promoting research about prevention, treatment, cure and care of people affected by dementia.

We also support a federation of 21 local Alzheimers NZ organisations throughout New Zealand, each of which is a member of Alzheimers NZ. Our local Alzheimers organisations provide support and personal advocacy, education, information and related services directly to members of their communities who are affected by dementia.

Our response to the Draft Report

Overall, we support the direction proposed in the Draft report. In particular we were very pleased to see the recognition given to the role of family/whānau, frontline staff, volunteers and local communities in delivering effective social services and supporting with to remain well and actively engaged with and participating in their communities. We were also pleased to see recognition that the support of family/whānau is not a free good.

We support the proposed direction of change and high level recommendations:

- *Improved system stewardship* is critical. Our concern is that much of the focus to date has been on the central government and publically delivered components of the system. In our view it is essential any system stewardship focus on the entire system including the social profit sector, and that the tasks of system stewardship also include capacity and capability building. Without this system-wide focus there is a risk that a shift to more client directed care and innovation fails through a lack of capacity and capability across the system;
- *Reshaping roles and responsibilities* will be necessary and a shift to more client directed care is important. However, the system needs to be strong throughout, including at the centre. Strengthening devolved arrangements at the expense of the centre and with the result that purchasing and delivery

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arrangements are further fragmented will not help in the long run. In our sector fragmentation, complexity and lack of consistency are frequent complaints from clients – we need to find a way to respond to the strong call for more integrated and consistent services while also offering choice;

- *Improved commission and purchasing capability* is essential and long overdue. A critical capability, in addition to those listed in the Draft Report, will be in recognising and optimising the partnership that exists with successful purchaser and provider relationships;
- *Making better use of data* is also essential. It is important not to underestimate the size of the change needed in this space - in our sector a data vacuum exists with no data currently collected or used nationally and significant effort is required to both identify the critical indicators and develop and implement the systems needed to collect and effectively utilise that information;
- *Shaping incentives* will be important, and choice and transparency are two important levers. However, in our view social service outcomes are another lever for driving innovation and embedding continuous improvement; and
- *A strong voice for the client* – including their care partners/advocate - is essential and consultation is one way that that can be achieved.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Draft Report *More Effective Social Services*. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the issues raised in this submission with you, and to remain involved in and contribute to your deliberations as you progress this work.

Kind regards

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Alzheimers NZ