



MEDIA RELEASE

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PEOPLE'S INQUIRY INTO PRIVATISATION LAUNCHES

The impact on ordinary Australians of privatising essential public assets and services will be examined in a People's Inquiry launched today by Public Services International (PSI).

The *People's Inquiry into Privatisation* will examine in detail community concerns, including those recently raised by Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) chairman Rod Sims, that selling off assets and services to bolster state and federal budgets leads to higher prices for consumers.

PSI has united with community organisations and public sector unions representing workers from health, social and community services, energy and power, as well as federal, state and local government workers. Written submissions are open to organisations and individuals via the website: peoplesinquiry.org.au.

PSI spokesperson, Michael Whaites said while questions around value for money, efficiency and out-of-pocket costs would be obvious things to look at, more important issues around equity of access and delivering social good also need to be addressed.

"It's becoming increasingly obvious that successive government agendas, at both the state and federal levels, to privatise public services are not in the best interests of the community or our economy," Mr Whaites said.

Per Capita's Executive Director, David Hetherington will chair the panel that will hear from metro and regional communities in all states and territories as public hearings make their way across the country during September and October.

Hetherington said the inquiry will focus on the human impact of privatisation and help explore what kind of a society Australians want and what the future role for government is in providing the services we need.

"The People's Inquiry will take submissions from communities nationwide to get a better understanding of how taking services out of public hands affects the quality of services as well as things like accountability and transparency. The panel will consult and report on issues relating to the sale of public assets, outsourcing of service delivery, user choice, voucher systems, public-private partnerships, commissioning, social impact investment and mutualisation," Mr Hetherington said.

"Governments exist to serve the community and the people should have a say in how our services are delivered."

The People's Inquiry aims to start a national conversation around privatisation and develop an alternate vision for Australia's public services: one that serves the needs

of the community and makes them accessible to everyone who needs them, not just those who can afford them.

The final report will look at the impact of privatisation on the quality and efficacy of public service delivery; service delivery by for-profit businesses to vulnerable populations in the community; public service capacity and capability; ministerial accountability; transparency in the provisions of contracts, supply chain details, company ownership, employment and tax practices; wages and conditions of 'privatised' workers; costs to government, compared with publicly-owned services; regional communities; not-for-profit organisations; and relevant international human rights and labour standards.

Alternatives to the privatisation models of service delivery and the role of government in service delivery will be key considerations.

The *People's Inquiry into Privatisation* will commence hearings in Newcastle on 5 September and conclude in Canberra on 27 October.

See the [website](#) for more details and submissions.

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