



Submission to the Australian Government Productivity Commission – Reform Priorities: Health Pillar

Submitted by: Community Flower Studio (CFS)

Investing in Preventative Health through Community-led Services and Activity Vouchers

Introduction

Community Flower Studio (CFS) welcomes the Productivity Commission's focus on health reform and strongly supports the call to invest more in **preventative health**, especially through **community-led primary healthcare services** and **vouchers to fund activities that benefit health**.

Founded in August 2019, CFS is a community-based social enterprise dedicated to improving mental well-being through **creative workshops**, **intergenerational programs**, and **grassroots engagement**. We advocate for accessible, non-clinical, and culturally safe approaches to mental health, with a particular focus on young people.

The Case for Community-Led Preventative Health

Preventative health is not only cost-effective—it saves lives and strengthens communities. Community-led initiatives like CFS are uniquely positioned to identify and respond to local mental health needs in a timely and culturally relevant manner.

At CFS, we **bridge the gap** between clinical services and community needs by offering **creative, peer-led mental health support**, especially for young people, migrants, and individuals with lived experience. Our work aligns closely with the Commission's call to **invest in community-led primary healthcare and health-benefiting activities**.

What We've Been Doing: August 2019 – Present

1. Creative Workshops by Young People for Young People

Since our inception, CFS has delivered over 150 workshops in Greater Sydney and online. Our signature **Creative Workshops** are:

- **Facilitated by young people**, for young people (15–25), fostering leadership and peer mentoring.



- Designed around **applied mindfulness**, using creative arts (e.g., watercolor, floral design, origami) as tools for reflection and emotional regulation.
- Grounded in the principle that “**there is no right or wrong in art,**” offering a judgment-free, inclusive space.
- Proven to help participants build **social connection**, reduce anxiety, and strengthen resilience.

2. Petal-it-Forward Campaigns and Pop-Up Stalls

We organize regular **pop-up stalls** linked to mental health awareness events—e.g., RUOK? Day, Mental Health Week, PTSD Awareness Month—offering:

- **Free flower bouquets** with hand-written messages of hope.
- Mini “Wellbeing Kits” (e.g., origami stars, smiley stress balls, mindfulness instructions).
- Peer conversations that **encourage help-seeking behavior** and reduce stigma.

3. Youth Mentoring and Leadership Training

We developed a **Youth Mentoring Program** that trains young facilitators in workshop design, public speaking, and mental health literacy. Participants are mentored by adults with lived experience and supported to co-lead events, building confidence, purpose, and community involvement.

4. Culturally Inclusive and Intergenerational Well-being Programs

CFS collaborates with migrant communities and seniors’ groups (e.g., Eastwood Chinese Senior Citizens Club) to co-host intergenerational events. These have included:

- Bilingual Laughter Yoga sessions.
- Nature-based walks exploring **Indigenous cultural education**.
- Harmony Day and Lunar New Year community festivals with creative workshops.

Our Recommendation: Funding Preventative, Community-based Programs

To genuinely strengthen preventative health, we recommend the Commission consider:

1. Activity Vouchers for Mental Well-being



Introduce targeted **vouchers** for individuals (especially youth and vulnerable groups) to attend **community-led, non-clinical wellbeing activities**—including CFS workshops.

2. Ongoing Support for Peer-led Community Initiatives

Invest in **community-driven programs** that:

- Offer early intervention through **creative and social engagement**.
- Empower people with lived experience to be part of the solution.
- Are **culturally tailored** and reflect local diversity.

3. Integrating Community Services into Primary Health Networks

Encourage PHNs to partner with community groups like CFS as **referral and preventative pathways**, recognizing the value of social prescriptions alongside clinical care.

Conclusion

CFS's work since August 2019 demonstrates the **transformative power of community-based, creative approaches** to mental health. By investing in preventative health through vouchers and sustained support for grassroots initiatives, the Government can **reduce downstream healthcare costs, empower communities, and improve lives**.

We urge the Commission to recognize and expand the role of youth-led and arts-based programs in Australia's preventative health ecosystem.

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