

I am a former Victorian emergency Ambulance Paramedic (AP) who no longer works within the industry - an industry that has a significant shortage of qualified and experienced staff.

Currently, within the industry there is one employer of emergency paramedics in each state (ACT, NSW, NT, QLD, SA, TAS, & VIC, WA). A change in employer requires an interstate move. There can be many reasons why an AP no longer wishes, or is unable to work with the local state employer however a change in employer requires moving to an interstate employer, only feasible by an uprooting of the individual APs family.

The alternative is to obtain work as a non-emergency worker, which in itself is fraught with difficulties. For example, in Victoria, working in any capacity within the non-emergency sector requires the state based ambulance service to approve and endorse both an APs qualifications, and the individual. There have been many cases of APs who have had a disagreement with Ambulance Victoria who have been declined non-emergency registration, for no other reason than the nature of the first disagreement.

I know of no other industry where dissociation with a former employer results in removal of industry accreditation.

What should be the priorities for a competition policy reform agenda to ensure that efficient businesses, large or small, can compete effectively and drive growth in productivity and living standards?

That government, whether it is local council, state or federal, should not be involved in provision, but oversight and regulation of goods and services.

Are there unwarranted regulatory impediments to competition in any sector in Australia that should be removed or altered?

Yes, provided appropriate regulatory checks are made, any organisation should be able to set up a business. For example, private ambulance companies should be able to meet regulatory requirements and log-in to the computer aided dispatch system for triple-zero emergency phone calls and respond to emergency work.

Are government-provided goods and services delivered in a manner conducive to competition, while meeting other policy objectives?

No, nationwide, each state government provided emergency ambulance service (and in some cases, non-emergency also) with a government protected monopoly. This leads to organisations that have no drive to manage costs, staff or resources appropriately. Further, it is not unheard of for a government ambulance service to be bailed out when the respective service is unable to operate within its budget.

Is there a need for further competition-related reform in infrastructure sectors with a history of heavy government involvement (such as the water, energy and transport sectors)?

Yes, it is possible to appropriately run a private hospital, a private non-emergency ambulance service and a private nursing home, but it is not possible to provide private emergency ambulance based

services. Given the lack of oversight, the accountability as to costs within the ambulance services is limited.

Would there be a public benefit in encouraging greater competition and choice in sectors with substantial government participation (including education, health and disability care and support)?

Absolutely. First there is a pool of qualified staff in Victoria who cannot or will not work for Ambulance Victoria that would be able to provide competent and appropriate emergency ambulance response. Second, there is a level of excess in regard to supplies, equipment and uniform that is not subject to stringent checks and balances.