

SUBMISSION TO THE PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION RE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT
WORKFORCE STUDY.

My name is Carol Scott and I have practiced as a Maternal and Child Health Nurse for the past 22 years. I have worked in 5 different metropolitan municipalities over these years both as a relieving nurse and as a permanent employee. I am currently working as a relieving Maternal and Child Health nurse.

I have completed my General Nursing at St Vincents Hospital in Melbourne; my Midwifery at St John of God Hospital in Perth; a Bachelor of Applied Science (Advanced Nursing) at Lincoln School of Health Sciences, Latrobe University; and a Graduate Diploma in Women's Health at Melbourne University. I did not receive any scholarships to complete these studies.

My response to the workforce study is in relation to Draft recommendation 12.3. I **do not** support the removal of midwifery as a prerequisite qualification for Maternal and Child Health Nurses (MCHNs) for the following reasons:-

- In my practice I have found this knowledge incredibly useful in assessing the health of the mother in her role as primary carer for her child. With mothers being discharged within 48hrs of giving birth and hospitals only visiting these women mostly once post delivery, the knowledge gained during my course has enabled me to adequately assess the mother's health and refer to the hospital or GP if things are not going well.
- Part of the 4 week visit in Victoria is to assess the health of the mother and to administer the Edinburgh Post natal Depression Scale (EPDS). Without my experience in midwifery dealing with mothers suffering from puerperal psychosis and depression it would make it difficult to assess whether the mother had answered the EPDS truthfully and if she was displaying subtle symptoms of depression, which if dealt with early enough would have little impact on the infant.
- During my general nursing training we did a component of infant and children's health which focused on illness and disease in children. I also did a component on mental health. These areas of study coupled with time spent working in these areas has given me a deeper understanding and broader knowledge of child health and mental health. The Maternal and Child health course mainly focuses on the well child and mother so the knowledge gained in my previous qualifications has allowed me to be able to assess the progress and health of both the mother and child in a more effective and thorough manner.
- As for the assertion that there is no evidence that more qualifications deliver better outcomes for the child, this is difficult to assess when there has not been a study to measure this. It maybe that parents in other states have more paediatrician and GP visits than those in Victoria for well child checks (at a greater cost to the individual and community) thus ensuring equal outcomes for the child.
- The notion that more qualifications cost more is not a conclusive one as Table 12.2 cites that there are 3 states other than Victoria where nurses earn over \$70,000 per year, with the Northern Territory and the ACT earning more than Victorian nurses.