

Hello,

I'll frame this submission as a set of responses to the key questions of your issues paper which I would like to address.

INFORMATION REQUEST 1

The Commission welcomes views on our proposed approach to this study, and on any other reviews that are of relevance to this study.

(pg. 4)

I have severe concerns that this inquiry seems to be overly pro-education in its intentions and preconceptions.

I fear that, behind this inquiry, there is an intention to not only increase the amount of education that Australian workers have, but also to increase the already stifling amount of pressure placed upon Australians, by the law; by our workforce culture; and by society in general, to undergo extensive education.

Conversely, I see very little indication that this inquiry might be prepared to take action to reduce the amount of educational discrimination in our nation's workforce, or to otherwise take any action to help Australians achieve their career and personal ambitions, without being handicapped by unwanted education, or the extensive costs that come with it.

I suggest that this inquiry's focus should be reoriented to include thorough examinations of:

- How education can be problematic and/or a burden on peoples' lives, and on our society in general.
- Whether people who have been coerced into undergoing extensive education/training are being fairly compensated for the sacrifices their education entails. This question **must** be considered broader terms than money alone. Do people receive adequate personal fulfilment and life satisfaction from submitting to education/training?
- The considerations and concerns of citizens & workers who find education unattractive; not only as an aspect of their own lives, but also within their coworkers and community members.
- What steps can be taken to reduce the educational requirements imposed upon Australians - especially by the law, so that they can more freely and fulfillingly live their lives and pursue their career ambitions, with whatever level of education/training they personally prefer.

INFORMATION REQUEST 3

The Commission seeks views on:

- whether the objectives and policy directions for the VET sector set out in the NASWD are suitable for the future and why.

(pg. 8)

The objectives and policy directions seen in the Australian government's current approach towards education/training are grossly inappropriate for the future.

Current policy severely neglects the quality-of-life issues that arise from having a strong educational discrimination crisis, such as the one Australia is currently suffering through. We need the government to change its education/training and workforce policies, so that they are agreeable and beneficial for ALL Australians; not just those who consider education & training to be beneficial to our workforce, society and their own lives.

Such a policy shift must be founded on an acknowledgement that, for many Australians, education/training is ultimately undesirable.

Continuing to support the ambitions and needs of all Australians who want to be educated, and/or to live and work amongst an educated/trained culture will, of course be essential. But it is equally important that the new policy creates smooth pathways, throughout our laws and employment culture, that allow all Australians to achieve their career ambitions without undergoing education that they do not want.

I also have concerns about the emergence of deliberate sexism within the objectives and policies of Australia's education/training system.

It's been well publicized in recent months that some Australian colleges are reducing the HSC mark requirements to enter their STEM courses - but only for women. This is being done for the sake of creating gender balance in the attendance of these courses.

While any step that reduces the discrimination a person faces based upon their school marks is a step in the right direction; it is unfair and inappropriate that this discrimination be reduced only for women. Men who get low marks in their HSC have just as much right to do STEM courses as women who get low marks in their HSC. This holds true not just for STEM, but for all manner of college subjects.

The government needs to insure that all new doors that are opened in our education/training system, and indeed in our overall workforce, are not opened on a gender-discriminatory basis. Educational discrimination needs to be eliminated for all Australians, not just women.

INFORMATION REQUEST 9

- How effective are skills needs assessments as a basis for estimating demand for VET services?
 - Are priority skills lists the best way of signalling skills shortages?

(pg. 20)

Despite the buzz phrase "skills shortage" being thrown around quite frequently these days, Australia does not have a "skills shortage" of any significant scale. If there are indeed any actual skills shortages in Australia, they are extremely rare and extremely confined occurrences.

I challenge anyone who would claim that there is a significant skills shortage in Australia (or any company/facility/industry therein) to demonstrate the truth of this claim, before calling for any government action to counteract this supposed shortage.

Where is the hospital where the majority of the doctors never went to med school? Which is the airline that employs less pilots who did go to flight school than pilots who didn't? Where is the courthouse where, on a typical day, most of the lawyers pleading their case within never went to law school? Which police precinct is the one where the cops who went to the police academy are outnumbered by the ones who didn't? Where is the factory where the majority of the workers have received no training? Which of our big-city corporate high-rises is the one where most of the workers within never went to college? Where is the boardroom where the majority of the executives have no college education? Which of our industries is the one where the majority of the workforce has no college education or other training?

Where can you find the family where the majority of the working-age members are full-time employed in jobs they aren't educated/qualified/trained to do? Where is the street or neighbourhood where most of the working-age residents have full-time jobs that they aren't skilled in? Where's the pub or club where you'll discover that most of the regular customers tend to be unskilled at their jobs? Where's the pub or club where you can pop in on almost any evening, and be regaled with numerous hilarious stories about the unskilled workplace antics that the pub's unskilled customers got up to on that particular day? Where's the popular singles' hangout where a lonely single person who isn't attracted to educated/trained people, can find a plentiful, fun collection of other uneducated/untrained people to connect with, and hopefully find love amongst?

Where are the workplaces, the neighborhoods, the community fixtures where a person with no post-highschool education, degrees, or training is likely to say: "I don't feel like a minority, or 2nd-class citizen here. I feel like an actual, respected member of this community!" ?

Personally, I can't answer any of those questions. And by all accounts I've ever heard, from various sources across various states, various towns and various industries, the most likely answer to most of them is: "No such place exists in Australia."

While there may be a few communities that can answer some of those questions, the cost of being a member of such a community is obscenely high! Specifically, the government and Australia's general workforce culture seems intent on persecuting the members of these communities, by condemning them to a lifetime of unemployment, in response to their preference for an uneducated lifestyle! They are deliberately denied the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to their society and to flourish.

Australia does not have a "skills shortage"! The disturbing truth is very much the opposite! Australia is in the grip of a severe skills overload! The vast majority of Australians will look around their towns, their workplaces, their neighborhoods and their families, and find that almost everybody they see is trained/qualified/skilled at whatever job they have. Unqualified workers are not merely in the minority; they are a downright rarity!

The supposed "skills shortage" we hear about so often in media and politics is a lie. It is not merely an exaggeration, it is a lie.

The government must understand that people like myself, who are attracted to the uneducated lifestyle, are in the fight of our lives right now, trying to protect and nurture the way of life we hold dear! Our lives have become the most daunting of uphill battles: not only to personally succeed and flourish, but also to build and contribute to a community that we can genuinely be proud of and cherish.

Too many of us have lost all hope that we will ever be free to be ourselves; that we have no choice but to waste our entire lives pretending that education is somehow desirable, in order to avoid a lifetime of persecution and condemnation. Too many of us have lost all hope that there will ever be a community, or section of the workforce that creates a happy, desirable environment for people to live within and engage with. Too many of us have lost all hope that Australia will ever be a place where the workforce is free to turn it's back on what is "smart", in order to pursue what is good.

Every time somebody utters the phrase "skills shortage", it makes our struggle that much more insurmountable. Government, the education system and workforce leaders blindly react to those statements, by throwing ever more resources into flooding the country with skilled/trained/educated workers, and crushing unskilled workers (and uneducated unemployed Australians) with ever more oppressive tactics designed to cut down their presence in the workforce!

But Australia is already flooded with educated/skilled workers, and practically devoid of incompetant ones! The last thing we need is to keep perpetuating the myth of the "skills shortage", and responding by vamping up the already overblown presence of skilled workers in the workforce, and undermining the already limited presence of unskilled ones!

I respectfully request that the people presiding over this inquiry avoid using the term "skills shortage" for the remainder of this inquiry - at least in any manner that implies they actually believe such a shortage to be a real occurrence within present-day Australia.

INFORMATION REQUEST 9

- How effective are skills needs assessments as a basis for estimating demand for VET services?
 - How do governments' skills needs matching efforts alter student demand for VET?

(pg. 20)

The educational descrimination that the government maintains - and all too often bolsters - in it's workplace laws is almost certainly the primary driver behind demand for education and training. I would estimate that somewhere around 90% of the students in college, or involved in some other form of education/training, are only wiling away their lives in those classrooms, ect. because the government dictates that: "You need this degree before you are aloud to do this job!"

Reducing the amount of educational discrimination in our workplace laws and the government's employment policies will massively reduce the demand for education/training. Needless to say, this will make it much easier for the government and education system to provide education and training to the students who genuinely want it. It will reduce class sizes; improve students' access to limited-place courses; and notably, significantly reduce the overall cost that the education system imposes upon the government, as it would now only need to cater to a much smaller student base.

The massive benefits of reducing/eliminating educational discrimination are reaped by everyone; not only uneducated Australians and the broader Australian population, but also the overstressed education system, and the government that has to pay for it.

INFORMATION REQUEST 11

- How are users' preferences influenced by government incentives and programs (including information programs)?

(pg. 22)

Answering this question all depends on how you interpret the word "preference".

As noted in my response to the previous question, users' education/training choices are almost entirely dictated by government policy, most notably it's educationally discriminatory workplace laws. This can create the illusion that many Australians may have "preferences" for certain education courses, when in reality, they are reluctantly submitting to unwanted education/training, in order to accomplish career goals that the government has imposed harsh restrictions upon.

If you have someone who's dream is to be an architect, and then decree that they are forbidden to be an architect until they pass a college course in architecture, then you immediately create a "preference" in this person to reluctantly study architecture, as a means to a greater end. The government has 'influenced' - and indeed created - this "preference" in the student with it's coercive educationally discriminatory workplace laws. If the government abandoned these oppressive laws, the "preference" to study architecture in this student would likely vanish.

In terms of the big picture, the government's educationally discriminatory workplace laws mightn't be entirely responsible for the demand for education/training; but it does effect the scale of that demand immensely. A small portion of the student base for any given course will indeed be people who genuinely desire education/training. But by inflicting educationally discriminatory laws upon the national workforce, the government heavily inflates the amount of people seeking education, by placing a great many people in a position where they are required to undergo education in order to achieve their career ambitions. It creates a grossly exaggerated illusion of a widespread "preference" for education/training courses.

Similarly, areas of the workforce where the government has applied educational discrimination, but to a weaker degree, can raise peoples' preference for going down this career path.

Say you have someone who has a dream job that - due to educational discrimination laws - requires them to undergo a 4 year college course. But they don't really want to be contaminated with such a high amount of education; or they don't want to waste 4 years of their life sitting around in college.

Now say that there is another job that is significantly similar to the first one, but that the government only demands a 2 year college course in order to get into. Choosing this road may have only a minor impact upon the person's career ambitions, but would significantly reduce the education/training burden that they will need to carry. Thus, the uneven way in which the government has inflicted educational discrimination upon this industry will create a preference for the shorter college course, over the longer one.

When government policy creates an avenue that requires less education, but more or less leads to the same career outcome, it will invariably create a preference amongst the student base for the courses associated with that avenue.

INFORMATION REQUEST 11

- How can governments best ensure the market develops to support policy goals?
(pg. 22)

I would like to remind the government that Australia is, supposedly, a democracy. Therefore it's conduct should not be governed by it's own private policy goals, but rather the desires and aspirations of the Australian people.

Government should not be inflicting oppressive workplace laws upon the Australian public that coerces them into submitting to education that they do not want and, under normal circumstances, would never seek out!

It should respect and protect the individual educational preferences of each and every Australian, and allow the market to develop naturally, in response to the public's uncoerced attraction to education and training.

INFORMATION REQUEST 12

The Commission seeks the following information for each jurisdiction:

- the methodologies for assessing the cost of providing qualifications and the rationale for the methodologies
(pg. 27)

I am aware that, at the moment, this inquiry is considering the 'cost' of providing/receiving qualifications solely in financial terms.

But I would strongly urge you to recognize that there are other, highly significant, forms of cost that are incurred when a person undergoes education, such as the impacts this education will have on the student's long-term quality-of-life. Things like the opportunities that will be robbed from the student; the sacrifice in self-identity from having their own ideas and techniques overwritten by someone else's; the denial of countless fond memories of hilarious incompetent mishaps; the greatly reduced potential to have a positive impact upon the lives of their workmates and community; and the overall impact that all these sacrifices will have upon the person's perception of their own character, and the role they play in their society, workplace, local community and family.

Likewise, it must be acknowledged that the cost of that person's education will not be borne by them alone. It will be borne by everybody who knows them, or who will **ever** know them; as reducing that person's capacity and tendency to make enjoyable contributions to their community lowers the quality of life of everyone connected to that person. For every person in our workplace, neighbourhood, or family who is too smart/skilled to ever be fun or interesting, we all pay a heavy price.

Not all costs can be measured in dollars and cents. And while the financial cost of education can be notoriously high, I would urge the people presiding over this inquiry to remember that the non-financial costs are typically far more outrageous. Once a person has been educated, the impacts of that education will likely haunt them until the day they die.

Please take that into serious consideration.

INFORMATION REQUEST 16

- Are the contributions by government (on behalf of the public), industry and individuals towards VET proportionate to the benefits that each of these groups receive?
- Is direct estimation of public and private benefits as a means to direct government funding feasible and desirable? What would be the implications for other sectors (e.g. Higher Education) if such an approach was taken in VET?

(pg. 32)

I believe I've addressed these questions in my response to the previous question, immediately above.

The "benefits" (if any) that the public receives from the education/training systems are most certainly **NOT** proportionate to the government's financial contributions. The excessive amount of education and training in this country does us all an immense disservice; it does not benefit us, all things considered.

If "direct estimation of public and private benefits" means considering things solely in financial terms, then no, this is not a desirable framework for guiding policy on this issue. Policy and government conduct needs to be guided by a thorough consideration of the countless ways that education affects individuals, and their communities, that cannot be measured in terms of money.

INFORMATION REQUEST 16

- What approaches are most useful to assess the effectiveness of government investment in VET?

(pg. 32)

Go out and ask the people what they think of the government's fixation upon education/training, and the educational discrimination that goes along with it.

Ask the long-term unemployed whether they approve of the government's rampant use of educational discrimination, which drastically reduces their employment opportunities.

Ask Yr.11 & 12 highschool students whether they approve of having to face another 4 years being stuck in a classroom, listening to teachers yammer on (and being expected to pay for that ordeal!), instead of simply being able to walk into the job they want and getting to work right away.

Ask people who are actually in college, or a similar brand of education/training, if they would still be subjecting themselves to that education/training tomorrow if the government outlawed all the educational discrimination that is keeping them from their desired career. Ask them whether they are submitting to education/training because they want to, or because they've been told they need to.

Ask the general public whether they approve of the rampant educational discrimination that the government and economic leaders inflicts upon the Australian workforce, and the grossly expensive education/training system that the government has built as a workaround to this self-created problem. Ask them whether they appreciate this culture of limited and difficult-to-access opportunities. Ask them whether they appreciate frequently hearing about how terrified their friends/relatives are that their lives might be ruined if they don't do well on their next exam; especially knowing that there are plenty more traumatic rounds of exams still awaiting them further down the track. Ask them whether being in an educationally-overloaded society makes them feel more connected to, and appreciative of the community around them. Ask them how often the education imbedded in their society provides them with a broad smile or hearty laugh.

If you want to assess the effectiveness of the government's fixation on education, including the money it pours into it, then talk to the everyday citizens who's lives are most effected by this pro-education policy.

I'm sure you will discover that, all things considered, education/training is a massive drain on our society, and the government's "investment" in it is woefully misspent.

INFORMATION REQUEST 16

- Should government investment in the VET system seek increased participation in training by all Australians? How should this goal be achieved?

(pg. 32)

Absolutely not! It's horrifying that this question is even being asked!

As I have explained in previous responses: Australians **must** be free to choose for themselves whether or not they will be educated/trained in how to do their jobs. The government and our general workforce culture already inflict a horrendous amount of educational discrimination upon the Australian public. The absolute last thing we need is for the government to start cooking up new tactics to bully uneducated/untrained Australians into education/training that they neither want, nor need!

Education is not for everyone. Many people consider it to be highly undesirable, and have no interest in enduring a life that is handicapped by it. They should not be bullied or coerced into suffering this fate, nor persecuted or discriminated against for choosing to pursue an uneducated/untrained lifestyle and career.

A society and workforce that is overloaded with educated members, and virtually devoid of uneducated ones, is ultimately an unworkable state of affairs for a nation. We all need a healthy supply of uneducated/untrained/unqualified workers and community members to elevate our quality of life with their antics and character, and to counterbalance the presence of the educated/qualified workforce.

We need them to be able to enjoy, connect with, appreciate, respect, and wholeheartedly engage with and support our community, and the workforce it is built upon.

The government **must not** take any steps to increase the amount of education/training that Australians undergo.

In fact, it must do the exact opposite. It must remove as many educationally discriminatory workplace laws as possible, and institute policies that make it much easier for unskilled/untrained Australians to achieve their career ambitions as quickly and smoothly as possible. Ultimately, the government should aim for a massive increase in the amount of uneducated/unqualified workers in the national workforce, across all industries, and all levels of professional rank.

INFORMATION REQUEST 19

- If governments agree to extend programs to improve language, literacy, numeracy and digital (LLND) skills, who should these programs be targeted to?
(pg. 36)

Such services should be targeted at anybody and everybody who genuinely wants them.

Any illiterate or innumerate person who wants to be able to read or do math should, of course be given all the help they need to accomplish this goal and the government should wholeheartedly support them in this pursuit.

But as I note in my previous response, immediately above, the government's policy **must not** be to bully or coerce illiterate/innumerate people who have no desire to learn to read or do math into undergoing this unwanted education.

Not only does each and every person have the moral right to retain their own level of literacy/numeracy as they please, but it must also be acknowledged that illiterate and innumerate people make a unique and precious contribution to our society and, when given the opportunity, can make unique and valuable contributions to our national workforce.

As with all manners of being uneducated/untrained, the government should seek to help illiterate/innumerate people to find employment where their unique traits and approaches will be welcomed and appreciated, not to try to pressure them into education they don't want.

I would like to conclude this submission by thanking the government for the opportunity to comment on these important issues, and for reading this submission.

I hope that you will take the matters I've raised here into serious consideration as you proceed with this inquiry.

My Thanks again and Kind Regards,

Chris Hamill
Australian Citizen & Voter

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