

22 AUG 2011

To The Productivity Commissioner.

My name is Judi Walmsley and I have practiced as a Maternal and Child Health Nurse in the rural Shire of Moira for over sixteen years, working with families within my role as a Maternal and Child Health Nurse, Lactation Consultant, and more recently as Team Leader for Maternal and Child Health and Immunisation, intricately involved in service provision in our multi cultural service starved community.

I am registered as a midwife and nurse with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Authority. I completed my Post Graduate Diploma in Family and Child Health through Deakin University in 1995, and I was fortunate to be accepted to study at tertiary level via a series of preliminary units. The exorbitant cost of Maternal and Child Health post graduate studies would at this point be a prohibitive factor if myself and my family were considering this field of tertiary study presently. Fortunately I have been able to complete the program of study necessary for me to practice competently in this role.

It is the recommendations 12.3 and 12.2 of the Early Childhood Development Draft Report that concerns me, in particular the removal of the midwifery prerequisite for Maternal and Child Health Nurses. The service, which I am proud to deliver is dependant in the thorough study criteria and educational preparation so far required of clinicians in this field. Midwifery has enhanced my clinical skills and I have recently drawn on midwifery knowledge dealing with women both in the early mothering period with birth related issues such as a woman who developed psychosis at home, and another woman who was repeatedly turned away from her Local Medical Officer despite the development of an ectopic pregnancy. Counselling women post traumatic delivery and health promotion during pregnancy are constantly addressed as a result of midwifery training. Thus I also believe it crucial that all Maternal and Child Health Nurses are nurses, providing strong foundations for evidenced based clinical judgement. Holistic and family centred care has evolved from my tertiary studies. Possession of these qualifications is not a barrier to Maternal and Child Health Nursing, rather the basis of quality care.

I also strongly support the value of expanding the scholarship programs and have experienced the enormous amount of work and high standard of clinical expertise exhibited by our recent graduates. I have been personally involved with mentoring students and can testify that the cost of study regardless of scholarship provision cost is certainly a barrier to attracting suitable nurses to undertake study at this level. Given the shortage of services in our rural environment the current study schedule offers our families high quality care through the multi tasking capabilities of our current work force.

I am very concerned about the limited consultation undertaken by the Productivity Commission with Victorian Nurses, our service is widely respected and I would be grateful if the Commission would meet with myself and my colleagues to expand knowledge of the depth of service provided by current nurses.

Yours Sincerely,

Judi Walmsley
Team Leader
Maternal and Child Health Nurse
Moira Shire Council.