

Early Childhood Development Workforce Study Productivity Commission
Locked Bag 2
Collins Street East
Melbourne Vic 8003

29 AUG 2011

24 August 2011

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am a Maternal & Child Health Nurse in Wodonga. I have been working here for over ten years. I manage a clinic in a neighbourhood house in Wodonga and I also work casual shifts as a Midwife at the local Maternity Hospital. I completed my General training in Adelaide in 1972, completed my Midwifery training in Perth in 1973 and have worked as a registered nurse / midwife since this time. I completed a Graduate Diploma in Advanced Nursing at La Trobe University in 1997 and a Graduate Certificate in Maternal, Child & Adolescent Health in 1999. Since this time I have also gained qualifications as an Immunisation Nurse & as a Lactation Consultant. I utilise these qualifications in my every day work.

I am particularly concerned with the recommendations 12.3 & 12.2 of the Early Childhood Development Draft Report regarding removal of midwifery as a qualification prerequisite for MCH nurses. I feel this is a vital part of my work and lacking in the knowledge of this area would be a great disadvantage for my clients.

How can a Maternal & Child Health Nurse advise or help a mother breast feed if she has no experience in this area? This is a vital requirement to help new mothers. Without this support, many of the mothers I see would give up feeding their babies and the health of their children would suffer.

Being a Registered Nurse is also a vital requirement to help new mothers. How can a Maternal & Child Health Nurse assess or recognise illness in a mother if she has no experience in this area? Without this support the health of mothers and their children would suffer. There is a shortage of Medical Practitioners in the country. Many families rely on us to advise them if they or their children are ill. Early discharge from hospital of mothers into a rural environment also means these mothers are often without family support and with very little other support, their emotional and physical health is at great risk.

I am very concerned with the hasty decision being taken regarding National standards of MCH nurses – I feel that the lowest denominator will win and the very high standards set by Victorian Nurses will be degraded. Please ensure that the Productivity Commission is aware of the great harm they will be doing if they do not consider these facts and act in families' best interests. Increasing the standards of Australia has to be the aim, not decreasing them.

Thank you for considering this letter.

Yours Sincerely,

Jillian Crouch-Hall.
AHPRA NMW0001055564/5