

28 March 2005

Aust. Govt. /Productivity Commission
New Commissioned Research Study on the Health Workforce
Level 28
35 Collins St
Melbourne Vic. 3000

Dear Mr Henderson

I note from your website that the Treasurer has asked the Productivity Commission to conduct a study on the health workforce and that you will produce an issues paper on this by 31st May.

I hope you will consider the attached papers I have written when you prepare your own issues paper. My position is that vocational education must come into the 21st century by first being transparent. It should be made freely available on TV or through any other relevant communication format. This is a necessary demand for any group which takes skills development seriously in my view.

Finding out the content of vocational education in order to learn is currently very expensive, especially at a university. The habit of traveling thousands of miles to sit at the feet of someone and paying thousands of dollars for the privilege belongs in the 13th century. Computer based learning systems like Web-CT are only for the rich and also deliver product which is often comparatively trivial.

In my view, the carriage of vocational education on TV and other media should be the central pillar of a national communications policy approach which ideally includes a fourth TV station and a related industry and community development strategy. The standards to be attained by students are always able to be enforced by the group which undertakes accreditation of their product.

The short film that I attach and which I am making with students is an example of the kind of mental health education and therapy related product any sufferer might make with peers. Psychiatrists and psychologists may be an expensive part of the general mental health problem in my view. Let TV be the teacher?

I also provide the subject outlines which I teach at Sydney University. Books of my lectures and Powerpoint slides are also available and sponsors are currently being sought to put them on community TV. But perhaps you should start with nursing?

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide this advice. I hope that you will take it up.

Yours truly
Carol O'Donnell

Attachments are available on request.