



## **Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee**

*the council of Australia's university presidents*

(ACN 008 502 930 - ABN 53 008 502 930)

**Our Ref: G-02-001**

24 November 2005

Mr Robert Fitzgerald and Mr Mike Woods  
Commissioners  
Productivity Commission  
Level 3 Nature Conservation House  
Corner Emu Bank and Benjamin Way  
Belconnen ACT 2617

Dear Commissioners

I am writing to you regarding the Productivity Commission's recent draft report into *Australia's Health Workforce*. The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) recently formed a Working Group on the Health Workforce. This group has been tasked with investigating a range of issues regarding the education of health workers.

The Productivity Commission report *Australia's Health Workforce* has featured prominently in the early discussions of the Working Group. Draft proposal 5.1 of *Australia's Health Workforce* has been of particular interest to the Working Group. This proposal states that:

*The Australian Government should consider transferring primary responsibility for allocating the quantum of funding available for university-based education and training of health workers from the Department of Education, Science and Training to the Department of Health and Ageing.*

The AVCC does not support this proposal. Australia's universities consider that the proposed change would not improve upon current funding arrangements, wherein the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) has primary responsibility for the allocation of funds across the spectrum of university courses. The AVCC sees no efficiency gain to be made in splitting funding responsibilities across a number of bodies.

The funding allocated by the Commonwealth for each area of teaching remains insufficient for ensuring the highest quality education, an issue the AVCC continues to raise with the Government.

It is not realistic to consider that moving responsibility for one set of courses will lead to additional funding for those courses. However, the AVCC encourages close cooperation between DEST and the Department of Health and Ageing in regards to the identification of health workforce shortages and the distribution of places in health courses.

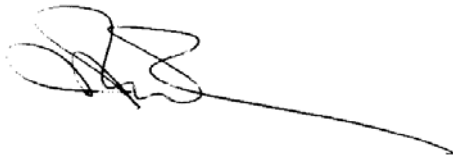
One Geils Court  
Deakin ACT 2600  
  
GPO Box 1142  
Canberra ACT 2601  
AUSTRALIA

Ph: +61 (0)2 6285 8200  
Fax: +61 (0)2 6285 8211

avcc@avcc.edu.au  
www.avcc.edu.au

Please do not hesitate to contact me on 02 6285 8208 if you wish to discuss this issue further.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

John Mullarvey  
Chief Executive Officer