



12.8.09

Productivity Commission
Performance of public and private hospital systems

Dear Commissioners,

I do apologise for the late arrival of this submission. My work pattern has been interrupted by the public release of the NHHRC Final Report, which has, in my view and of that of many of my senior medical academic colleagues, serious deficiencies in its assessment of factors likely to influence quality of performance in public hospitals.

I write to urge attention be given to noting the extent to which any private hospital or group of hospitals, has a close association with a university medical school. I believe the presence of any serious commitment to clinical research within a hospital or even of its staff having such a commitment elsewhere is likely to enhance the quality of professional service to patients, even if not necessarily to the service to the referring doctor where the private practice context is more likely to act as a strong incentive. I would also be interested to see if there is any indication of the presence of a teaching role in the institution having an influence on attitudes and performance.

I write as a former Professor of Medicine for 17 years, eight of these also as Dean of medicine at Melbourne University, and then eight years a Vice Chancellor.

Yours sincerely

Professor David Penington AC
Chairman,
Bio21 Australia Ltd