

Dear Productivity Commission,

I am 91, kept my family and house on my own since 1966, great-grandmother, taught mathematics Years 7-12 for 30 years. For the first 12 years of my working life, I was a secretary in the CPS working with senior staff of Dept. of Munitions. For the last 6 years I was Personal typist to the Chairman of the Secondary Industries Commission, and very much in contact with all the Commission members, as well as the most senior staff of the Dept. of Munitions/Supply and Development. I have a singularly good memory.

We are scientists, musicians, teachers, good gardeners, cooks, handymen and women - all skilled. But - we depend on our community for the means to do these things. If car manufacture goes, so do the component parts makers. It is the smaller places who depend very much on skilled metal, etc., workers, rather than the process workers of the assembly plants. If skill is not respected, the inference is that the person is likewise unworthy of respect. What skilled industry is proposed to replace the car industry? Should we see some form of industry protection as a temporary palliative while we replace one skilled industry with another? Who is talking about that? Until that happens, leave the car industry, but ensure that it is a truly efficient industry.

If the car industry goes, so, for a start, do all the component parts manufacturing enterprises. There is less chance of adding on value to the extraction of metals and coal - no or fewer refineries, foundries have gone already, as well as any chance of specialised steel, etc., production. There is less need to bother educating for skill, or giving manual skill its rightful respect. Reducing industries which make things for our own use or for export is not clever policy. We become a society dependent on our more enterprising neighbours. I have not even mentioned self-sufficient defence - which was an important point in those Sec.Ind.Com. discussions during the 1940's - many of which I read, typed and heard discussed by Australia's leading Public Service and business administrators, economists, senior Armed Service folk, and engineers..

All my forebears came to Australia to use their talents and skill, and to ensure their children had an opportunity to do the same. I am sadly watching my grand-children's generation unable to build the life of satisfying work which came to five generations of migrants to this country. They were skilled and willing to work and acquire more skill. Why are we denying the same opportunities to the next generations of such people and the many others coming here for a good life? "Service industry" is a euphemism for sub-servient work denying self-determination let alone the self-satisfaction of using carefully acquired skill.

Kind Regards,
Shirley Pitcher