

Dear Productivity Commission,

I am a retired Civil Engineer with a grown-up family who are also both professionals. My wife and I own our home and depend upon a part-pension complementing our Super to live on. We are always concerned about how the future generations are going to have a reasonable lifestyle. Currently, we see the future as bleak as permanent employment worsens, working hours are increasing as is unpaid working hours.

Where in heaven's name has family time gone ?

And we bought Volvos since 1972 because of the unacceptable quality , safety features and sub-standard features of Australian made cars made to US orders. I currently own a 12 year old Volvo bought at 4 years old and I still can get parts for it. See my comments in para 3 below.

The loss in the sector to a close-down would be devastating to employees, their families and the relatives and friends who would need to support them until new work is found.

I know no-one in the business but the anguish already showing on peoples faces on TV who have been retrenched or are likely to face sacking is all too apparent.

Men and women with generations in the industry and decades themselves are going to be dumped into a pool of un-employed and their sole skill is making cars and components requiring special skills only for that line of business.

The closure would be a vote of no-confidence in all politicians that they could not sit down and come up with either a revamped car industry producing cars that Australia should (not must) have or a lateral arabesque for the sector into specialised manufacture in keeping with the obvious skill sets of the workforce.

I find it unbelievable that Ford had an electric car 25 years ago and we are still producing, and racing V8 supercars, in an age where many cannot afford rudimentary transport and waste of finite resources of energy is a no brainer. I won't mention ute racing or prime mover truck racing !!

Had this situation arisen under controlled situations where re-training and deployment to other jobs and locations were planned over several years, then the impact may have been mitigated.

The failure of bipartisan politics to agree on the future of the total car industry over 5 or 10 years has been unacceptable.

The car industry or a high quality specialised version of it must continue to ensure Australia's security in engineering manufacturing. History has shown that in World War 2, Ford and GM car factories switched to producing heavy armoured vehicles and weapons in 2 months making over 130000 units a month. While the situation has changed since then, it is only the engineering manufacturing sector which would have the capacity in a future crisis to make equipment - we cannot rely on China!

Kind Regards,
Kevin Richardt