

28th August 2011

Early Childhood Development Workforce Study

Productivity Commission

To Whom It May Concern,

RE: Productivity Commission Draft Report Recommendations

My Name is Leanne Geddes. I have been practising as a Maternal & Child Health Nurse for Frankston City Council for the past 6 years. I am also a Registered General Nurse and Registered Midwife through AHPRA. I completed my original nursing qualification through the Alfred Hospital (hospital based training program) in 1990 and worked in various acute medical surgical areas before undertaking a Postgraduate Diploma in Midwifery (Monash University). After working in Midwifery (extensively in Special Care Nursery), I undertook a Postgraduate Diploma in Maternal & Child Health (Deakin University).

I am making this submission in response to the Draft recommendations for the Child Health Workforce, specifically, Draft Recommendation 12.3 which reads as follows: ***In order to reduce unnecessary obstacles to attracting new child health nurses, state and territory governments should not require child health nurses to have qualifications in midwifery in addition to their qualification in nursing and in child health.*** In response to this recommendation, I am **strongly** opposed to the Midwifery qualification being removed as a prerequisite to obtaining a Maternal & Child Health Qualification. My practice as a Maternal & Child health Nurse is enhanced and in many instances dependant on my extensive education & training in both general nursing & Midwifery as well as Maternal & Child Health. As a MCHN, I provide health surveillance & preventative health care to families throughout the extremely important early years of their children's lives. Extensive medical, pharmacological & midwifery knowledge is often required as many families have complex medical & surgical histories which impact on the care & advice that I provide.

A thorough understanding of foetal development, the birth process & lactation are essential in providing a high standard of care to families that can help to reduce mortality & morbidity & enhance outcomes. A large majority of mothers that use the Maternal & Child Health Service deliver their babies through the public health system which often means they are discharged

within 24hrs of delivery. It is imperative in these instances, that the Maternal & Child Health Nurse has a thorough understanding of the birth process and common postnatal complications as well as extensive knowledge on lactation and establishment of breastfeeding. I believe that without Midwifery qualifications the quality of care that families receive would be significantly undermined with a likely result of poorer breastfeeding outcomes as well as the possibility of increased morbidity due to failure to detect complications in both mothers and babies.

I strongly believe that my qualifications and experience in general nursing, midwifery & maternal & child health nursing enhances my ability to practice as a competent professional with the aim improving outcomes for families and children as well as a providing a holistic approach to care of the family. I **do not** see the Midwifery Qualification as an “unnecessary obstacle” but rather see it as a **necessity** to providing a competent professional Maternal & Child Health service.

Yours Sincerely,

Leanne Geddes

Maternal & Child Health Nurse