

I am writing in response to the Commission's draft report on Early Childhood Development and Chapter 12 (Child health workforce) in particular.

I am a fully qualified maternal and child health nurse and have been working in the local government sector in outer Eastern Melbourne for two years.

I gained the relevant nursing qualifications through the tertiary system beginning with a batchelor of nursing at Deakin University. After working to consolidate these skills I completed a further 12 months full-time study to gain a Postgraduate Diploma to qualify as a registered Midwife at La Trobe University. I worked for eight years as a Midwife and then went on to complete my current qualifications of a Post Graduate Diploma in Child, Family and Community Nursing again through La Trobe University.

I am keen to make a submission because I am deeply concerned that the report,as it is currently drafted, runs the risk of undervaluing the importance to our community of supporting happy, healthy children and their mothers and fathers with the skills to cope with the responsibilities of and adjustment to parenthood.

Midwifery qualifications are identified in the report as "unnecessary" and creating " additional hurdles." I find this observation ill-informed and not reflective of our experience with parents and children across the spectrum. Many midwives look positively at the structured career path of gaining further qualifications as maternal and child health nurses in Victoria, because they are aware they have the essential qualifications from years as midwives to work confidently and competently in this complex role.

The report, as it is currently drafted, undervalues our work and suggests standards should be dropped in the recruitment of the people who provide vital maternal and child health services in Victoria. This decision would come at significant cost to the families who access our services.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Postill

Maternal and Child Health Nurse

Victoria