

Dear Mr Jones and others,

This submission asks the following question and suggests the answer below and attached:

Q. WHAT IS TO BE DONE WHEN THE US TAXPAYER OWNS 70% OF GENERAL MOTORS?

A. EMBARK UPON AN AUSTRALIAN AUTO, MANUFACTURING AND RELATED INDUSTRY BARGAINING DIRECTION TO GET AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY DEBT UNDER CONTROL

According to the article 'Bondholders pull the plug on GM', in the Australian Financial Review (Bensinger, AFR 20.5.09, p. 16), the General Motors bondholders have rejected a deal to swap their debt for equity in the company and GM will follow Chrysler into bankruptcy in the US. However, a new contract has been developed which will allow the US government to take a 70% stake in GM. In return the US government will provide the company with finance in addition to the \$US19.4 billion it has already lent GM. The United Auto Workers (UAW) would get a 17.5% share in the company plus warrants for an additional 2.5% in exchange for forgiving more than half of GM's \$20 billion obligation to a retiree health care trust fund run by the union. Bondholders will get about 10% of the company and the Canadian government also has a small stake.

On 'The News Hour' on SBS TV (29.5.09) Ron Gettelfinger of the UAW said that GM has a revenue problem. I guess a related problem is identifying where the future demand for cars will come from and where the latter and their parts are ideally produced. In developed countries, such as Australia, the demand for cars ideally depends on the nature of settlement, transport and communication planning. Hopefully, towns will be very clean and green, with settlement which is fairly densely built, as distinct from having loads of spread out dormitory suburbs where everybody in the family needs a car as early in life as possible to get a decent go at anything. The wonderful development of communications technology since the heyday of the car also means one ideally does not need to go further than the village. I am a baby boomer and seriously adore my couch, computer and TV. However, I will go to China and Russia soon by plane and train and hope to see a lot of history, animals and lovely scenery. (I bet many others are like me.)

I fear Ron Gettelfinger and GM may have missed the auto opportunity. On News Hour he said little or nothing about how US taxpayers, who will soon own 70% of GM, will have a clue about whether GM production will be travelling in the right direction, from their perspective. I assume this direction is ideally in a world which is increasingly concerned about greenhouse gas reduction, reversing deforestation, avoiding rural and urban over-population and fixing the related lack of sufficient employment, education and access to other basic services which avoid disorder. Nobody likes chaos either.

I like to assume that the above is the future world that cars will be bought into and that comparatively few urbanites will ever truly like travelling by car or parking in somewhere like Bangkok or New York. (Think what happened to Sherman McCoy.)

Personally, I hate trying to find a parking spot, especially in the dark. One cannot take a car if one is in danger of consuming more than 2 glasses of wine. The six monthly services for tiny times spent on the roads seem silly. I may be old but I bet I'm not alone.

The AFR editorial entitled 'Crunch time for Carr Plan' therefore made a lot of sense to me when it said that 'Given Australia's relatively small production volumes and domestic market, it is going to be an uphill battle to create an electric-car industry to replace our traditional sector. The risk for taxpayers is that they will be trapped into subsidising dated and perhaps doomed operations while at the same time throwing cash at what might be the mirage of local electric-vehicle production..... Tough decisions are needed in Australia as much as they are needed internationally' (AFR 29.5.09, p.58).

In times of trouble why not tell us what others in the global car industry are doing to try to maximise Australian and global development towards the cleaner greener car and other forms of transportation? A related submission to the Australian Automotive Review is attached. In the article 'Holden on a rocky road' (AFR 29.5.09, p.57) Skully quoted federal Industry Minister, Kim Carr saying he expects GM Holden in Australia will remain in 'the company fold'. He thinks Holden operations would be highly sought after, particularly by emerging car makers in China and India. However, the present indications are that GM sees Holden as being part of its Asia-Pacific operations that it wants to retain, anchored in joint ventures in China. Skully states that a record search showed that in 2007 the operating company GM Holden was owned by General Motors Australia which also had controlling stakes in GM's operations in Korea and Thailand. General Motors Australia had some of its shares held by General Motors of Canada in 2007 and GM Holden received loans from Controladora General Motors in Mexico.

What are Australians going to build that can compete effectively in this international environment and who will be the customers for GM Holden's 4 cylinder car, Toyota's new petrol-electric Camry hybrid, and for Ford product? This is not clear to me so besides the suggested research direction to the Automotive Review attached, the broader manufacturing, energy and construction bargaining strategies are offered on the assumption that auto may lead this direction in regard to the following related matters:

- Australian treatment of contract terms (profit, non-profit and unfair)
- commercial arbitration based on the United Nations Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration (UNCITRAL) and related dispute resolution procedures
- benchmarking issues in occupational health and safety (and community health)
- National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting (NGER) Act greenhouse gas audit and certification processes and related innovative development
- Management of manufacturing and other waste (What happens to old cars? Unfortunately I have no idea.)

These issues are ideally considered in the context of broader industry and community, profit and non-profit organizational and funding development, competitively coordinated with industry and community communication, education, entertainment and research. This ideally uses the Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia (IBRA) system,

the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) and related international community and industry systems for rough regional planning purposes.

WHAT CARS WILL BE BUILT WHERE AND WHO MAY BUY THEM?

The automotive industry is global and Australia and its major trading partners are ideally committed to sustainable development and to the reduction of greenhouse gases as primary development goals. How will the safer, greener, more affordable car ideally be produced to support related innovation and investment to gain safer, greener transport and production everywhere? Attainment of such common goals appears to be most easily achieved by broadly coordinated, openly planned searches for effective and innovative production to meet related triple bottom line accounting goals, which are financial, social and environmental. The attached auto industry consultation and research direction to assist future innovation is designed to assist producers and other stakeholders ascend the sustainable development value chain by first seeking to find out:

- What key auto related producers in Australia now do and see as necessary for themselves and others to assist the safer, greener, affordable car.
- What current domestic and foreign customers want from Australian auto production, in the light of national goals for greenhouse gas reduction
- What the current production processes and future intentions are of major auto related overseas producers which export cars to Australia
- What auto and other Australian education and research institutions might do to support the cleaner, greener sustainable car and its relations better in future.

The Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research issues paper on the Australian Automotive Industry produced by the Australian Automotive Review stated the sales of Australian made vehicles are largely dependant on private and government fleet purchases. This appears to represent opportunities for future growth and development in the light of mutual aims for safer, greener, more affordable auto and transport production in Australia and internationally. Further consultation with existing and potentially related producers and customers should be used to test this hypothesis.

In the last few years the Middle East has apparently emerged as Australia's main export market (p. 6). The paper states 'this dependence on the middle East market is a concern for the industry, especially with growing competition from Asian nations that enjoy scale and geographic advantages over Australia'. This seems to me to be a major opportunity rather than a major threat, especially given mutual relationships with China. Other major automotive export markets apparently include the US, New Zealand, Korea and China.

EXPLORE POTENTIAL FORMS OF PROFIT AND NON-PROFIT FINANCE

One reads a lot lately about Australian, Chinese and US trading relationships. I will not repeat any of this other than to say that the Chinese appear concerned about over-investment in US dollars in case US debt and the normal US strategies to contain it also cause US currency inflation. One assumes another big bubble and crash which usually

hurts those poorest most, is the normal alternative in the absence of more stable and competitive operational systems. In the article entitled, 'Treasury revisits fund managers' tax', Anderson reports the Treasury is looking at opportunities for Australia to become a major centre for Islamic finance which is governed by strict rules forbidding interest payments. The Hon. Chris Bowen, Minister for Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs, is reported as stating that 'Many countries around the world are taking measures aimed at facilitating Islamic finance products. The Australian government is concerned to ensure that the Australian financial sector is not being left behind' (AFR 29.5.09, p. 7). Australian profit and non-profit structures require investigation in this global context.

On 'The News Hour' (29.5.09) it was reported the key terms of future discussion between Israel and Palestinian representatives in the Middle East hinges on gaining the following:

- A 'two state solution' and a freeze on future Israeli settler development (A problem is, apparently, that it is hard to differentiate between 'new' settlement and reasonable market development of existing settlements.)
- No future violence towards Israeli settlements from Hamas and a mechanism to ratify decisions Hamas endorses. (Does this include suitable contracts?)

In the above context I refer to my third submission below to the Productivity Commission (PC) Review of the Contribution of the Not for Profit Sector and to related attachments. The PC seeks measurement and comparison of a non-profit organization's capacity to meet the PC identified goals of *service delivery, advocacy, connecting the community and enhancing the community endowment*. A learning culture is needed to support innovation. The explosion of information technology ideally makes it easier than ever before for any education and entertainment content to be disseminated through a wide variety of media and utilized quickly in related skills and industry or community development and enjoyment. There is now a greater need and potential than ever for the rational development of open education content and for effective teaching and workplace based supervision to assist in the development and assessment of competencies. Knowledge production is different to other forms because its value to the community multiplies and increases through its creation, spread and use, rather than the product being used up or the production destroying the 'global commons' for private gain, as is normally the case in agriculture, mining or manufacturing.

Industry consultation is needed on what skills must now primarily be taught to assist the competitive development of safer, cleaner, affordable cars and related industry and community production and enjoyment. The quality of education is partly in the eye of the beholders who consume it depending on their personal capacities and needs. Education openness may therefore logically be seen as a necessary but insufficient test of education quality. The more one knows about education beforehand, the more one may judge if it is worth consuming further. Certification of student competency to practice safely and effectively is a separate matter, which is ideally managed by the most relevant institutions according to specifications related to the key stakeholders (those funding and consuming education) and to broader stakeholder requirements in key industries and communities.

I hope you will consider and act upon the auto industry development and related bargaining opportunities in the direction suggested above, below and in the attached. My Weekend Sydney Morning Herald horoscope suggests that I should also give some thought to ‘what could make my life lighter more radiant and less burdensome’ so I also urge you to ask Nixon Apple to visit me to discuss these and other matters at length, preferably in June or August 09. Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

Yours truly, Carol O’Donnell, St James Court, 10/11 Rosebank St., Glebe, Sydney 2037.

CALLING UPON THE AUSTRALIAN AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY REVIEW FOR A SAFER, GREENER, PLANNED TRANSPORT INNOVATION FUND

INTRODUCTION AND KEY RECOMMENDATION

This submission to the Australian Automotive Review responds to the question on page 12 of the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research issues paper on the Australian Automotive Industry, which is:

Should automotive-specific assistance continue? The answer is NO.

Based primarily on analysis of the broader supporting discussion paper entitled ‘The Australian Automotive Industry’ the current submission argues that all existing Australian auto industry support mechanisms, such as the Automotive Competitiveness and Investment Scheme (ACIS) and other auto- related research and development incentives, should be folded into the new Green Car Innovation Fund announced by the Australian Government and this fund should be appropriately broadened and renamed:

The safer, greener, planned transport innovation fund

The proposed automotive industry innovation design which is discussed later ideally assists automotive industry goals to be planned and pursued more competitively in more broadly coordinated Australian and related regional contexts, in order to provide positive incentives for improvements across related regional industry and community boards. The alternative appears to be to perpetuate many Australian bureaucratic, academic or related silos trying to pick winners to deliver small amounts of funds to, at great expense.

The report of the Australian House of Representatives Standing Committee on Economics, Finance and Public Administration inquiry entitled ‘Australian Manufacturing: Today and Tomorrow’ (July 07), referred to the general business abhorrence of government financial strategies which attempt to ‘pick winners’, but these are often used by government. The report also discussed the Export Marketing Development Grants (EMDGs), research and development tax concessions, and the case of venture capitalists in a similar context. It appears that many of those in manufacturing, no doubt like many academics, feel that hopelessly competing for comparatively small amounts of money is a waste of

organizational and related government time and money. The Business Council of Australia wants inefficient taxes and charges on production cut. The ACTU submission stressed that Australian industry should progress 'up the value chain'. Bluescope Steel pointed out that one of its major priorities is 'ensuring greenhouse gas regulations do not make Australia's steel industry uncompetitive' and that China is the world's largest producer and consumer of steel so is naturally a major polluter. Such views are ideally also reflected in this submission. All suggest that regional opportunities now exist for the proposed design of more directly related Australian routes up the value chain towards sustainable development. Cut out all the currently dysfunctional industry assistance.

WHY THE SAFER, GREENER, PLANNED TRANSPORT INNOVATION FUND?

The automotive industry is global and Australia and its major trading partners are now committed to sustainable development and to the reduction of greenhouse gases as their primary development goals. Attainment of these common goals appears to be most easily achieved by broadly coordinated, openly planned searches for effective innovations to meet related triple bottom line accounting goals, which are financial, social and environmental. The car is vitally necessary but public transport is greener and the search for more environmentally friendly fuel relates to both. The proposed fund is designed to assist producers and other stakeholders ascend the sustainable development value chain.

Hilmer's proposed national competition policy would have led to triple bottom line accounting if it had been implemented. It was not. He defined competition as, 'striving or potential striving of two or more persons or organizations against one another for the same or related objects' (1993, p.2). His late twentieth century idea, that competition need not only be for money, was largely overlooked as a result of dysfunctional additions to older and outdated Australian legislation such as the Trade Practices Act (TPA). The latter appears to assume that market competitors ideally and normally pursue money as their only motive and that this kind of competitive pursuit is always in the public interest. The Australian evidence on health care and on workers compensation insurance provision shows this view is wrong. Government and industry ownership of funds may allow more effective identification of the outcomes of competitive contract offer and related product or service delivery. On the other hand, the ruling Australian legal monopoly operates feudally, using few of the scientific expectations and procedures which arose centuries ago and which are essential for quality management of any goods or services.

The globally recognized need for sustainable development now demonstrates that many assumptions which underpin old legislation and many current economists' activities are outdated, along with many related theories about 'the invisible hand' which supposedly moves markets benignly, in the interests of all, if left to its own devices. Enormous disparities in wealth globally and within nations, plus the continuing fact of economic booms and crashes cast extreme doubt on the idea that markets will clear as long as governments do not tamper with them other than to prevent monopolies arising. Those with financial power appear to like markets that are systematically rigged in their own interests, and may achieve this largely by denial of clear and truthful information, combined with urging less informed people into high risk behaviour. Such financial

goals are assisted by client legal privilege and many related legal concepts. Life may die out if one waits for market clearing in the long run, as Keynes presciently pointed out.

Ironically, the old fashioned economist's idea, that perfect information appears logically necessary for perfect competition, seems to have been conveniently forgotten by most contemporary economic ideologues. I assume it is no accident that such people are normally close to those with continuing interests in managing financial services. Bill Clinton famously said, 'It's the economy, Stupid'. Or is it the political environment, Stupid, created by those able to grow rich by investing others' money in opaque financial instruments and also charging fees for placing the bets that they have recommended? The idea that perfect information is necessary for perfect competition, perfect science and perfect control of risk makes perfect sense to me. I assume the Australian automotive industry must be analyzed in this global context, which is why I recommend the openly planned approach to increasing competition to achieve sustainable development outlined later. Is this conservative or radical? You be judge. (I don't give a fig for your labels.)

FIRST KEY DEVELOPMENT GOAL: PRODUCTION OF THE SAFER, GREENER, AFFORDABLE CAR IN AUSTRALIA AND INTERNATIONALLY

From reading the papers guiding the submissions to this inquiry, I assume the main goal of stakeholders in the Australian automotive industry should be to participate effectively in the global search and production of the safer, greener, affordable car.

To pursue this goal, one first needs a clearer picture of car industry production processes and relationships in Australia, and in related regional contexts. These production processes and relationships also underpin the employment and trade related numbers in the Australian automotive industry background papers. Consideration of the Australian industry and its global context is necessary in order to be able to identify those innovation strategies which seem likely to achieve all national and international goals related to the production of the safer, greener, affordable car and other safer, greener, transport later.

CLARIFY THE NATIONAL, INTERNATIONAL AND RELATED HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF AUTO PRODUCTION IN THE LIGHT OF THE ABOVE GOAL

Whilst I have a great deal of respect for the work of the Productivity Commission, I think that gaining the information discussed below is now more important than asking it 'to undertake modelling on economy-wide effects of future assistance options', as proposed by the current inquiry. In my view, such early economic modelling is merely likely to produce complex figuring based on existing industry trends and many opaque and/or highly contested assumptions. This appears likely to do little or nothing to assist the industry restructures which are necessary to meet the goals of sustainable development. Hold the early economic modelling and follow the direction suggested below instead.

I know little or nothing about how cars are produced, financed, marketed, purchased, maintained and disposed of in Australia or globally. Nearly all my knowledge has been gained by reading the discussion papers provided on the Australian automotive industry.

I get the impression from this that the parents of Australian producers have long ago seen the likelihood of rising petrol prices on one hand and lower wage labour markets on the other, and that these two trends partly explain the kind of car being produced in this country. Australian producers currently appear to manufacture the least popular type of cars – neither four wheel drive gas guzzlers for the rich, nor cheap, tiny ones which use comparatively little petrol. On present trends, Australian production appears to be the most obvious for its parent companies to phase out. How independent of its parent companies is Australian production? Where decisions are made in Australia alone?

My personal impression is that the marketing and maintenance of cars has recently become much more labour intensive and therefore expensive for consumers, in comparison with the past. I guess this is also a sign of Australian industry decline, which contributes to it, like the increasing price of petrol. On the other hand, I assume there is massive future demand for cars in developing nations. They will need to be cleaner, greener and affordable, especially where public transport is not a better planning option. If my extremely ignorant analysis is correct, Australia appears to need to develop its innovation capacities strongly rather than relying on its existing production methods. It seems wise to discuss research and patents broadly in this context, as addressed later.

LEARN FROM ALL AUSTRALIAN STAKEHOLDERS, THEIR PARENTS AND ACTUAL OR POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS TO PRODUCE A SAFER, GREENER, AFFORDABLE CAR IN AUSTRALIA AND BEYOND

The first group of key stakeholders in achieving the goal of the safer, greener, affordable car are all those who wish to live in more sustainable environments where greenhouse gases are reduced and where any new cars purchased are also safer and greener as well as affordable. In Australia, governments primarily represent all these people. Some of the latter are car owners or potential car owners and some are not.

The second group of key stakeholders in regard to the above goal are those whose primary income is from investment or employment in car production in Australia. GM Holden, Ford Motor Company of Australia and Toyota Motor Corporation of Australia are all fully owned subsidiaries of major overseas producers while Mitsubishi Motors Australia ceased its Australian production in 2008. It remains in the market as an importer of a full range of vehicles.

On page 1 of the discussion paper, one learns that there are over 30 producers of cars in Australia. However, I assume this is an error and that they are actually selling imported cars rather than producing them in Australia for sale. (They must also be consulted.)

Other Australian auto industry stakeholders are over 200 firms producing automotive components. (What exactly are these components?) In 2006 Australian motor vehicle producers apparently sourced 75% of components from Australian component producers. The Australian automotive industry also accesses specialised tooling services from around 500 firms located in this country. (What exactly are these services?)

Other stakeholders in safer, greener, affordable car production in Australia are those who provide other essential products or services to the key Australian stakeholder groups (e.g. finance, marketing, maintenance, car body disposal, research, education etc.).

These primarily Australia partnerships must also be considered in the context of related international partnerships. This is discussed later.

PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION TO DEVELOP THE ABOVE DIRECTION

A clearer view of the car production process and related industry in Australia is necessary in order to identify the key innovation strategies which seem most likely to achieve the national and international goals which I have previously identified above. One needs to:

- Find out more about what key auto producers in Australia (and their parents) do now and see as necessary for themselves and others in future to achieve the safer, greener, affordable car. (Check out car sellers as well as the producers.)
- Find out what the current domestic and foreign customers want from Australian auto production, in the light of mutual national and international goals for greenhouse gas reduction
- Learn more about the current production processes and future intentions of major auto related overseas producers which export to Australia
- Learn more from auto and related Australian education and research institutions with a view to supporting the cleaner, greener sustainable car better in future.

Consult Australian auto producers (and sellers of imported cars):

The Australian automotive industry background paper states that the Australian automotive industry includes a wide range of activities, including vehicle production, component production, tooling and design and engineering (p. 3). What major production processes actually underlie these concepts? One cannot know how cleaner, greener, affordable, car industry goals can be achieved without clearly understanding the nature of the major production processes, and related stakeholder interests and plans.

To undertake this research first contact major motor vehicle producers in Victoria and South Australia. Three motor vehicle producers also have research and development capability within Australia. In addition there are over 200 firms producing automotive components predominantly based in Melbourne and Adelaide who should be contacted. The Australian automotive industry accesses specialised tooling services from around 500 firms located in this country. There are over 30 sellers of imported cars in Australia. All or many of these organizations should be consulted. I assume such research is ideally also guided by information under ANZSIC industry classification 231: Motor vehicle and motor vehicle part manufacture and key related ANZSCO occupational classifications.

The researchers should try to understand and report on the above stakeholders' past and current production and related activities and relationships and ask them about their

personal views or ideal plans for the future - especially in the light of the sustainable development aims outlined earlier for the auto and transport industries nationally and internationally. This may be conceived as mutual education, which is discussed later.

Do not post out massive tick the box questionnaires. Such arm's length questionnaire formulation is often ignorant and its results are often meagre and therefore expensively uninformative and unreliable, in my opinion. The research computations of such work seldom point out opportunities. Instead talk to all or lots of the stakeholders face to face and report analytically on the answers quickly. Also consider focus groups or inviting written submissions. On no account transcribe the tape recorded results of talking to each individual into a computer, as if every word is priceless, in order to analyse the results of this later, using one of many forms of computer software which are now available for this. This bizarre process, which universities appear to have universally adopted in recent years, massively reduces the number of people one can talk to because it is so slow and expensive. It is also possible that one or more of the research team will develop occupational overuse syndrome or a related medical problem and will need to access workers' compensation, thereby putting the total research project in peril indefinitely and necessitating additional expenditure on researcher rehabilitation and equipment.

Instead record what as many as possible of the industry stakeholders say, while also quickly taking notes. Then think about this content intelligently and write it up fast, in the light of the research project aims and Australian Bureau of Statistics or other relevant industry research. Do not make a big song and dance about confidentiality. Encourage people to open up and share knowledge in the interests of all, as discussed again later.

Consult Australian and overseas customers for Australian produced cars:

Learn more about the major customers for auto production in Australia and in the world, to encourage broader development partnerships to achieve the goals of cleaner, greener, affordable auto and transport production, in which Australia can play an effective part.

Apparently, the sales of Australian made vehicles are largely dependant on private and government fleet purchases. This appears to represent opportunities for future growth and development in the light of mutual aims for safer, greener, more affordable auto and transport production in Australia and internationally. Further consultation with existing and potential customers should be used to test this hypothesis. (Graphs on page 3 which address this are hard to understand. Further consultation and clarification would be good)

In the last few years the Middle East has apparently emerged as Australia's main export market (p. 6). The paper states 'this dependence on the middle East market is a concern for the industry, especially with growing competition from Asian nations that enjoy scale and geographic advantages over Australia'. This seems to me to be a major opportunity rather than a major threat, especially given mutual relationships with China. Other major automotive export markets apparently include the US, New Zealand, Korea and China. Is Austrade the most appropriate body to undertake this kind of consultation?

Consult current major overseas auto related producers which export to Australia

Charts 7 and 8 (p. 8) indicate major vehicle imports to Australia (from Japan, Thailand, Korea, Germany and the US) and major component imports (from the US, Japan, Indonesia, Germany and China). Consult with all key producers with a view to achieving the global and related national aims outlined earlier.

CONSIDER FURTHER SUPPORT FOR INDUSTRY INNOVATION IN THE ABOVE CONTEXT OF STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION AND RESEARCH

The research recommended above is consistent with the development direction recommended in the report of the Review of the Skills Base in NSW and the Future Challenges for Vocational Education and Training (IPART 2006). This concluded that increased levels of vocational education and training should be a key element in a 'whole of government' strategy designed to increase the supply of skilled labour. The IPART report called for 'broader, more sophisticated responses than traditional approaches to skills creation' and wanted to ensure that skills are 'used and applied in the real world of work.' It also calls for a shift in focus from vocational education and training to the newer concept of 'workforce development' (p. iv). The report later noted that 'a collaborative approach between government, employers and training organizations is needed, to achieve viable long-term participation of individuals in the labour market and sustainable productivity and economic growth. It suggested the government will need to expand its role from being a provider of funds and training to also being an enabler whose function is to help, encourage and support its partners to play a greater role in future workforce development' (p.39). This seems equally applicable to universities. There are many ways that universities and other higher education providers may collaborate or compete with each other. This should now be discussed specifically in regard to the development of cleaner, greener, affordable car and related transport.

A learning culture is needed to support innovation. The explosion of information technology means it is now easier for education content to be disseminated through a wide variety of media and utilised quickly in related skills development. There is now a greater need and potential than ever for the rational development of open education content and for effective teaching and workplace based supervision to assist in the development and assessment of competencies. Knowledge production is different to other forms because its value to the community multiplies and increases through its creation, spread and use, rather than the product being used up or the production destroying the 'global commons' for private gain, as is normally the case in agriculture, mining or manufacturing. Florida (2003) pointed out that because a good idea produces more value for the community the more it is used and built upon it also produces increasing returns on production rather than the diminishing returns which traditional economists think is normal. He claimed that traditional societies overprotect intellectual property and reduce opportunities for creativity, which he conceptualised as the useful combination of new forms out of existing knowledge. From this perspective, which I share, the broader the education reach, the broader the dissemination of knowledge and related productive and innovative strategies.

The quality of education is partly in the eye of the beholders who consume it depending on their personal capacities and needs. Education openness may therefore logically be seen as a necessary but insufficient test of education quality. The more one knows about education beforehand, the more one may judge if it is worth consuming further. Certification of student competency to practice safely and effectively is a separate matter, which may be managed by the most relevant institutions according to various specifications related to the stakeholder and broader community requirements. Research is needed on what skills must primarily now be taught to assist the development of safer, cleaner, affordable cars and transport through the related development of the recommended safer, cleaner, affordable transport development fund.

The Chinese do not care for patents much and nor do I. As a result of attending Australia's first national biotechnology conference and many educational events organized by the Sydney University Business Liaison Office, I have gained the strong impression that patents and related secrecy add major costs and produce high risks and hindrances for all broader innovation and development. Patent development requirements call for extremely high levels of secrecy combined with opaque, specialised legal, financial and related technical language to serve a range of unknown and possibly highly divergent future expectations, which are normally driven by lawyers and short term market interests. This also creates associated higher levels of risk arising from cyclical market fluctuations and related expectations. Sydney University policy mandates secrecy for all its 'trade secrets, institutional knowhow, plans, strategies and initiatives'. This level of secrecy appears to be against the institutional, consumer and public interest. Is one expected to whisper one's plans and strategies to one's lawyer and to one's lesser intimates around the world until sustainable development is attained by all? If so it seems likely that the most vulnerable forms of Australian automotive related life will soon become extinct. Many more open and competitive approaches to innovation and development are better instead.