

Preface

This book is the result of the first study of the origins, development, and future of continuing professional education (CPE) in Australia. The research is currently relevant because of the role of CPE (now continuing professional development CPD) in the national registration scheme for select health professions established in 2010 and the potential for a similar process for all professions.

The book's title reveals how CPE has missed in its development many opportunities to enhance its profile or link with other educational sectors. It is proposed that the new national registration scheme is a significant event that offers new opportunities for CPE that must on this occasion be acknowledged and exploited.

The book is designed for a broad audience. As it is an initial study of the Australian situation, it is of particular value to those associated with this form of professional education worldwide. Attention has been given to providing details of the changing Australian context in which CPE has been offered.

For the domestic market, those linked with the professional associations are a primary target, for CPE in Australia has been developed and owned by the professional associations. Senior staff and practitioners holding important positions, plus those practitioners with an interest in their profession's history are potential readers. There are also the academics involved in providing entry-level degrees, research, and possibly CPE. Then there are those in organisations providing CPE or who are involved in vocational education for other types of workers. Finally, there are the practitioners for whom CPE is designed.

The nature of the research process adopted and the structure of the book have been determined by circumstance. The term 'tale' is used as the story is not a typical history: there was no foundation day when CPE began and no government policy to guide its operation. Data are provided from the writer's own research, including national surveys, interviews of practitioners, national reports and research papers, and professional association policy documents.

As far as the goals of the book are concerned, in addition to increasing knowledge of, and further research in, Australian CPE, a further objective is to promote research by individual professions on their own CPE and its origins and development.

Four perspectives have been selected to tell the tale – CPE’s relationships with other educational sectors, mandatory CPE, competencies, and professional regulation. However, in spite of many missed opportunities, CPE has progressed. Further, the 2010 national regulation regime offers many areas and activities that those associated with CPD cannot afford to disregard or overlook, as has been the customary response in past years.

Though the writer is finally responsible for the work submitted, there are many who have shared and contributed. Two very supportive colleagues over many years have been Dr. Darryl Dymock and Dorothy Lucardie. To that duo must be added all those practitioners who came to conferences or participated in surveys or other research or made suggestions or proposed complaints and the professional associations’ staff from CEOs to those who posted out the brochure advertising the CPE programme. Recent support has come from my PhD supervisors, Associate Professor Bob Boughton and Dr. Paul Reader. But the strongest personal link is that which goes back many years to my late father. For he who was denied the advantages that education can provide would be so pleased to see that his son has taken the opportunities that have been provided to him.

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Continuing Professional Education in Australia
A Tale of Missed Opportunities

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