Productivity Commission
Graduate Recruitment

Paul Davidson
My university experience

• Started at UNE in 2004 studying BEc, LLB
• Finished BEc in 2006
• Started BEc(HONS) in 2007, finished 2008
• Finished LLB in 2010
University cont’d

- Started tutoring ECON101, ECON102 in 2007
- Started tutoring/lecturing LS251 in 2010
- President of UES 2010
What is the Productivity Commission?

- The Productivity Commission is the Australian Government’s independent research and advisory body on a range of issues affecting the welfare of Australians.
What do graduates do at the PC?

• From day one you would be contributing to:
  – Undertake applied economic and policy research
  – Research and draft reports and papers
  – Debate views with your team and Commissioners
  – Liaise with other agencies, organisations and groups (inc. excursions!)
  – Providing support within your team
What does the Commission do?

- The RBA is the central authority on macroeconomic issues
- The Productivity Commission is the ‘mythbusters’ of microeconomic issues
What has the Commission done?

- The commission looks at three major areas of microeconomic policy:
  - Economic (derr!)
  - Social
  - Environmental
Economic projects

- Bilateral and regional trade agreements
- Economic impacts of migration and population growth
- Economic structure and performance of the retail sector (current inquiry – finalised in November)
- Economic regulation of airport services (current inquiry – finalised in December)
Social policy projects

- Consumer product safety
- Executive remuneration
- Indigenous disadvantage
- Gambling
- Disability (current inquiry – finalised mid-year)
- Aged care (current inquiry – finalised mid-year)
Environmental projects

- Urban water
- Drought assistance
- Energy efficiency
- Impacts of foot and mouth disease in Australia
- Biodiversity
- Citrus growing and processing
- Carbon pricing (current inquiry – finalised in May)
2011 Graduates

• Lucy Bechtel
  – BEc(HONS) at UQ
  – Working on COAG reforms
    … Regulatory environment
    … Education
  – Received welcomed feedback on work
  – Enjoys the laissez faire work environment
  – Likes the opportunity of meeting new graduates in Canberra
2011 Graduates cont’d

• Cindy Li
  – Studied BA/Ed and did MEc at Sydney Uni
  – Working on retail inquiry
    … Collecting data sources
    … Liaising with stakeholders
  – Enjoys working as part of the team
  – Has the opportunity to learn from highly trained economists
2011 Graduates cont’d

- Paul Davidson
  - *Regulation of airport services inquiry*
- Potential issues
  - *What is an airport?*
  - *Market structure*
  - *Market power*
  - *Airport efficiency*
  - *Accessing airports*
What is an airport?

- *Facilitates passenger and freight movement*

- *Anything more than that?*
  ... Ownership structure
  ... What else occurs at airports?
Economic Regulation of Airport Services

• Market structure
  – Natural monopolies?
  – Monopolies?

• Further problems:
  – Definition of ‘market’
    ... Why might this be a problem?
• Market power
  – *What is market power?*
  – *Do airports have “it”?*
  – *Is market power good/bad?*
  – *ACCC intervention*
Airport efficiency

- Are airports “efficient”?
- Is market power a problem in terms of efficiency?
• Accessing airports
  – *PC have been asked to look at planning/access issues wrt airports*

  ... What are the planning issues?
  > *Who owns airports?*
  > *Who governs airports?*
  > *What compliance measures are in place?*

  ... What are the access issues?
  > *Downstream users*
Phew!

- That is why we get 12 months to answer these questions, not 12 minutes like you have just had!
Afterthoughts

• Hopefully this gives you an idea of both the breadth and depth of issues that the Productivity Commission looks at.
A career at the Commission

- Interesting work and practical application of microeconomics
- Diversified career paths and promotion opportunities
- Work with highly motivated colleagues
- Potential for further training and private study
- Based in Canberra or Melbourne
- Salary $58,000 plus superannuation
  - Total package just over $66,900
Who does the Commission want?

- Graduates with a strong background in economics or a related discipline (preferably at Honours level or higher)
- Good analytical, research and investigative skills
- Self-motivated graduates and high achievers
- Good communicators
How do I apply?

• Closing date: usually April each year
  – Interviews: May
  – Offers: May/June

• See information packs or visit the website: http://www.pc.gov.au/employment/graduate

• Starting dates are flexible but likely to be January of the following year
Further information

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