

Media Release Media Release



The College of Nursing
incorporating The NSW College of Nursing



COUNCIL OF DEANS OF NURSING & MIDWIFERY
AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

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Federal Government Restricts Nursing Numbers

Access to quality nursing care in this country is being increasingly compromised by the lack of Federal funding, according to the Executive Director of The College of Nursing, Professor Judy Lumby and Associate Professor Kim Usher, Chair of the Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery.

This year thousands of potential registered nurses are being turned away from the undergraduate programs due to lack of Commonwealth funded places.

Said Professor Usher: "Without an immediate and adequate injection of funds into our Faculties of Nursing our nursing shortage will escalate, throwing our healthcare system into further chaos. Lack of funds for University infrastructure, staff and facilities for quality clinical education are all contributing to an inability to take in more students".

Professor Lumby noted that while Dr Brendan Nelson claims to have injected additional places into the system, it is now clear that they are too few and too late. The majority of new places allocated in NSW and the ACT will not come online until 2008, she said, and, as a result, the system will continue to struggle for another eight years as an ageing workforce retires with few graduates to replace them.

The rapid increase of students seeking university nursing places in 2005 is a global phenomena, Professor Lumby said, with Registered Nursing being named by the US Dept of Labor as the top occupation in terms of job growth.

Professor Lumby said it was astounding that after years of increased funding being poured into marketing nursing as a career, the profession was being forced to turn away those answering the call. "Without nursing graduates," she said, "the Australian healthcare system will spiral into deeper crisis. New beds cannot be opened, surgery cannot be done and clinics will remain unstaffed. This is nothing short of a national disgrace after years of severe nursing shortages which are predicted to increase to 40,000 by 2010."

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