



30 April 2012

TRAINING MORE NURSES AND MIDWIVES IS NOT THE PANACEA TO WORKFORCE SHORTAGES

The findings of the Health Workforce Australia Report *Health Workforce 2025* released by Health Ministers last week reinforces the views of the Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery that increasing supply alone will not address the projected shortfall of nurses and midwives in the future.

Health Workforce 2025 projects a potential shortfall of almost 110,000 nurses in 2025.

“The Council has repeatedly indicated to Government that unless more is done to stem the haemorrhaging of registered nurses and midwives from the workforce, increasing training numbers will have only limited impact”, stated Council Chair, Professor Patrick Crookes.

“Australian universities have increased their student intakes substantially over the last 10 years but access to clinical training opportunities and the increasing cost of providing clinical training, which is an essential component of nursing and midwifery education, is hindering any further increase.

Effort must now be made to support health services to keep nurses and midwives in the system. Too many are leaving because of a lack of adequate support post-graduation”, Professor Crookes added.

“There is extensive evidence that shows that nurse retention is high where nurses feel supported in the clinical environment by a nurse educator and when there is good nursing leadership at the clinical level. It’s time that governments listened to the evidence and increase support to health services so that they can accommodate greater numbers of less experienced nurses and midwives .”

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The Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery (ANZ) is the peak organisation that represents the Deans and Heads of the Schools of Nursing in universities that offer undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in nursing and midwifery throughout Australia and New Zealand.

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