

16 March 2009

Dr Christine Bennett
Chair
National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission

Dear Dr Bennett

Response to the Interim Report of the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission ‘A Healthier Future for all Australians’

This is a response to the Interim Report of the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission from the Executive Committee of the Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery (Australia & New Zealand) (CDNM).

The CDNM compliments the review panel for producing such a thorough and progressive report. We commend much of it; we would require further information and detail on some major points before we would feel able to commit our support.

We commend in particular:

- The emphasis on equity and the measures that follow from that
- The collection and dissemination of data as recommended
- The establishment of a national health promotion and prevention agency
- The central role for the Commonwealth in the policies and funding of primary health care
- The Comprehensive Primary Health Care Centres as described
- The proposals on Aged Care and Palliative Care
- The proposals relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- The proposals relating to the professional education of people in remote and regional areas
- The range of proposals to assist people suffering from mental health disorders
- The proposals on oral health, including the establishment of a scheme similar to Medicare for dental health, and an internship year for dental professionals
- The proposed priorities for new capital investment
- The expanded roles and responsibilities recommended for nurse practitioners
- The proposals to extend research in health care
- The proposals relating to safety and quality in health care.

We would wish to see in the Final Report more detail on the proposed electronic personal health record accessible “by all health professionals and across all settings”. We would

need to be assured of complete confidentiality of these records and full control by the person they cover.

Whilst we recognise that “access to emergency departments and for planned procedures are often competing objectives for hospitals”, we would want to be assured that the solution proposed, with completely separate staff and facilities for providing each, would not in turn lead to unhelpful competition.

We would require further discussion and detail on the Report’s proposals on the education and professional preparation of nurses and midwives. At present, our programs meet the requirements of the relevant registering bodies, and we would always aim to do that. We endorse the proposal for the establishment of a National Clinical Education and Training Agency and would expect that body to sponsor discussions on the education of health professionals, involving educators, registration authorities, employers and possibly others.

We wish the Commission well in its deliberations.

Yours sincerely

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