

**ANNIVERSARY DINNER HELD TO HONOUR THOSE WHO CONTRIBUTED
TO THE TRANSFER OF NURSING EDUCATION TO THE TERTIARY
SECTOR 20 YEARS AGO**

**By Associate Professor Kim Usher, Chair of the Council of Deans of Nursing and
Midwifery (Australia and New Zealand)**

A gala dinner at Parliament House was recently hosted by the Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery to celebrate 20 years since the announcement by the government of the transfer of nursing education to the tertiary sector. The evening brought together many who had been significant in the lobbying and demonstrations that helped to ensure the transfer went ahead with the current leaders in academia, the clinical arena and professional groups. The program for the evening was exciting and included an address by Maria Fernandez, representing the Minister for Science, Education and Training, Dr Brendan Nelson; a debate by Associate Professor Sally Borbasi, Flinders University, and Associate Professor Kate Caelli, University of Alberta, on the nurse research agenda; as well as an interesting address by well known ABC presenter Geraldine Doogue. A particular highlight of the evening was the presentation of certificates of appreciation to many of the people who were instrumental in bringing about the change some 20 years ago and to the leaders who helped to establish nursing in the higher education sector.

In her welcome address, the Chair, Associate Professor Usher, reminded the group that hospital-based nurse training was already inappropriate in the 70s and 80s, and that nurse leaders, as well as enlightened Ministers and administrators, had realised that a university education was required for nurses to face the challenges of the health care system of the future. She also said that “since establishing our ‘toe hold’ in the higher education sector 20 years ago, Deans of Nursing and Midwifery have worked assiduously and concertedly with colleagues in practice, to develop undergraduate and postgraduate nursing curricula which are responsive to both changing health care and education environments, to develop PhD programs with a strong practice focus and even to develop some post-doctoral nursing research programs. And as the numbers of graduate nurses, doctorally prepared nurses and major nursing research programs attest, we have been quite extraordinarily successful”. As Dr Neal Blewett, one of the invited guests who had been instrumental in the transfer some 20 years ago, predicted, the transfer has helped “to underwrite the status of nursing as a major profession in the health care field” to the benefit of health care in Australia.

For further details contact:

Associate Professor Kim Usher
Chair, Council of Deans of Nursing & Midwifery (Aust & NZ)
C/- School of Nursing Sciences
James Cook University
Townsville Qld 4811
Tel. (07) 4781 4261
Email: Kim.Usher@jcu.edu.au