

## Submission to Review of Nursing Education (Educating the Nurse of the Future)

### The effectiveness of current educational preparation of and articulation between enrolled and registered nurses and nurse practitioners in meeting the needs of health service delivery

#### My comment

My recommendations for the above, including educational, including clinical, preparation to meet future health, aged care and disability needs of Australians include:

1. **An interview / testing to determine suitability** of applicant for a career in nursing (similar to those wanting to enter medicine). Look for those who can **demonstrate empathy** and an actual **interest in people, health and the career** in general. Design the interview to also test the **applicant's understanding of English** at the same time. **Safety is paramount** in healthcare – will they understand the request to “bring the emergency trolley now!!” ?
2. The current Royal Commission into **Aged Care** is highlighting the fact that many of the staff have **very little training**, cannot communicate well enough with their residents, leading to the **shocking situations** we have all heard about through the submissions to the Commissioner. A better and more comprehensive system of training is needed for these staff.
3. Anecdotally, you will hear that **university graduates need more clinical practice time**. They are **graduating with very little (compared to previous training systems)** experience. This doesn't help them when they come onto the wards and are expected to take a full patient load and the responsibilities of an RN. I would suggest they spend half of their degree time on the wards in placements **learning and becoming competent in all the clinical skills they will need so they can hit the ground running with confidence** when they graduate. This will also help them to know how to relate to and communicate with elderly people (many hospitals patients are older), and will help if they go on to work in aged care. Some of the **learning at the hospital could be done onsite in a block of study** (whether **face to face on wards with tutors** and/or **assignments online from uni**).
4. **Some cultures are disapproving of nursing as an occupation**, so this is a challenge. A lot of international students will want to study business, law and medicine (as encouraged by their parents), not nursing. Many of these students will make good nurses, providing they are suited empathetically, can converse - understand and be understood, and it is of interest to them.
5. Career pathways should be highlighted to make it a viable choice in terms of a long term career.
6. Transition to practice programs. These seem like a good idea. Not sure how they work in practice and what the **feedback from those who have done these programs?**  
There is the perception that nurses will not get a job in the future in a public hospital if they haven't done a Transition to Practice program.

**Primary health is an area not particularly focussed on well** in undergraduate programs. More **emphasis on practice nursing** could be good. Practice nursing is a rewarding career and many nurses working in general practice enjoy it very much. A good practice nurse can help look after patients in the community and through good chronic disease management **can prevent unnecessary admission to hospital, saving money** for the government. However, there are challenges in attracting new graduates to primary care, as they think they have to do a year of graduate program first.

**Which nursing qualification?** I like the model where students study enrolled nursing first, with 400 clinical placement hours for a 12-18 month diploma of nursing, e.g. TAFE (compared to 800-840 hours over 3 years for the undergraduate degree). Here they learn the basics of patient care, relate to patients, learn meds and then get an EEN qualification. Once they have this they can then go on to the Bachelor degree in Nursing and learn more in depth. Being an EN will allow them to earn a salary and support themselves while they study their Bachelor degree.