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MEDIA RELEASE

Nurses and midwives welcome the deferral of the proposed cap on education deductions

Key national professional nursing and midwifery organisations have been encouraged by the Rudd Government’s recent deferral of the proposed $2,000 cap on tax deductible self-education expenses.

The Australian College of Midwives, Australian College of Mental Health Nurses, Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association and the Australian College of Nursing oppose the cap, as it will have adverse effects in sustaining a healthy nursing and midwifery workforce in Australia.

Last month, the respective CEOs warned the Australian Government that the proposal to introduce a $2,000 cap on deductions for education expenses would impose major barriers to continuing professional education for nurses and midwives. The deferral comes as a welcome relief for those looking toward obligatory professional development.

While we are not out of the woods, this deferral is a positive step toward more appropriate reform. We will continue to oppose the cap, as it is detrimental to the productivity of nurses and the welfare of the health care system.

Now is the time to be encouraging the nursing and midwifery workforces toward further education, allowing for greater workforce retention, patient care and job satisfaction. The expected workforce shortfall of nurses and midwives must be a major national health policy priority.

Prerequisites in continuing professional development for nurses and midwives to maintain registration to practise, mean their expertise, knowledge and skills need to be continually updated. Further consultation is required to avoid backward reform; this deferral allows time for further consideration of the needs of the health workforce.

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