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Australian College of Nursing applauds Federal Government’s support for rural nurses

Australian College of Nursing welcomes the Federal Government’s commitment to supporting the rural nurse workforce. In Tuesday’s 2014-15 Budget, the Government committed an additional $13.4 million, over three years, for up to 500 rural nursing and allied health scholarships.

Kathleen McLaughlin, ACN Executive Manager, said rural health services often have greater difficulty recruiting nurses than those in metropolitan areas. Nationally, we have an ageing nurse workforce and it is recognised that we are facing a nation-wide nurse shortage into the near future. It is imperative that strategies are put in place to ensure that we have a rural nurse workforce with the range of skills and of the size to meet the health needs of rural populations.

“The scholarships announced by the government will have a positive impact in attracting nurses to work in rural health services, and will support the professional development of those nurses already practicing in rural settings.

“Nurses distributed across Australia’s rural regions make a significant contribution to improving rural health outcomes. The innovative models of practice developed and driven by rural nurses rely on nurses continually updating and enhancing their skills and knowledge,” said Ms McLaughlin.

Rural populations’ health outcomes do not compare well to that of urban populations in Australia. These scholarships, through assisting both nursing students and nurses to undertake professional development, will support the significant contribution nurses make to the health outcomes of individuals.

Continuing professional development and postgraduate studies are costly and the financial support the scholarships will provide will enable nurses to undertake study that they otherwise would not have been able to undertake.

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