

NATIONAL SUMMIT ON NURSING WORKFORCE

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) hosted a virtual National Summit on the Nursing Workforce, addressing current issues facing the nursing profession on Thursday 14 October 2021. Over 200 organisations were represented, with interaction encouraged via the hashtag #nursingsummit

Priorities for Government

1. Support retention of nurses through education and training to develop leadership and build scope of practice.
2. Develop pathways to utilise nurses in other areas such as universities, non-acute services, virtual delivery, cosmetic nursing, GP practice, etc.
3. Nurses work to full scope of practice, including option for nurse practitioners to reduce load in EDs, undertake vaccinations, advanced practice roles in rural and remote, and in primary care.
4. Support transition to practice for graduates; funded programs developed to support areas of need including rural and remote and or aged care. Further transition to practice strategies includes preceptor training and consideration to an additional undergraduate 4th year of study as an intern, or similar.
5. National dataset required to underpin workforce planning.
6. Articulation pathways for enrolled nurses to become registered nurses.
7. Accredited clinical placements to ensure focus on quality - rather than quantity.
8. To reduce anxiety and incidents of occupational violence, vaccinated patients to be allowed to visit family members in hospitals and all settings.
9. National legislation and campaign to protect nurses and all health care staff in relation to occupational violence, including policies which incorporate standardised incident reporting.
10. Flexibility across jurisdictions to support nurse mobility and maintenance of entitlements.
11. Fund a national campaign to promote the diversity and breadth of nursing roles. "You can't be what you can't see".

Government response

1. ACN to collaborate with Chief Nurse & Midwifery Officer and Australian Government Department of Health for development and delivery of "Respect Our Nurses" campaign.

2. Australian Government will support a joint statement with ACN on a ‘zero tolerance’ approach to occupational violence and nursing.
3. ACN to consider an idea from the AMA Queensland on a “medical reserves” option which recognises significant professional experience, education and training (RPL) that would support a future surge workforce requirement.
4. ACN to continue to promote gender and age diversity in nursing.
5. Australian Government to deliver National Nursing Strategy in March 2022.

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