

The Hon. Dan Tehan
Minister for Education
Department of Education, Skills and Employment

Dear Minister Tehan

The Australian Private Hospitals Association (APHA) is writing to you in response to the Job-ready Graduates Package draft legislation consultation. The APHA is largely supportive of the Job-ready Graduates Package.

Whilst the proposed legislation covers all graduates, the APHA wishes to take this opportunity to raise issues seen around nursing and midwifery in the private sector.

The private hospitals sector already works closely and in collaboration with the tertiary education sector. Many private hospital providers currently take students on placement, and work with education providers to ensure course requirements are met. Universities also have industry advisory committees as required to meet the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditations Council (ANMAC) accreditation standards for nursing programs.

However, when talking about job-ready graduates in nursing and midwifery, university or vocational training provided in a class room will never fully be able to make graduates 'job ready'. Even availability of sophisticated simulation learning environments has not replaced the necessity of quality clinical placements for both VET and university students. It is essential that governments ensure that there is adequate resourcing to support the provision of work placements to match student enrolment numbers.

Experience across the sector has also shown that new graduates require extensive induction and support through structured graduate programs before they are truly job ready. Such programs are also crucial in addressing attrition from the profession in the early years. Competition for admission to graduate programs in nursing is fierce and not all nursing graduates are able to obtain places in such programs. Without further government investment into graduate programs or internships for nurses and midwives, 'job-readiness' will continue to be a problem, and new graduates will be lost to the sector.

The discussion paper also has placed emphasis on engaging regional and rural people in tertiary study, and this might be very useful for nursing and other health programs, as long as the quality of the offering meets acceptable standards. If the quality of programs is not ensured, graduates will face challenges in competing with other from more programs that

have a stronger reputation with employers.

The APHA looks forward to the further development and implementation of this Job-ready Graduate Package.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Lucy Cheetham'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Lucy Cheetham
DIRECTOR POLICY AND RESEARCH
18 August 2020

