



MEDIA RELEASE

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'Don't lose our local graduates' say nurses

The Australian Nursing & Midwifery Federation (SA Branch) is calling for urgent government action to address the underemployment level amongst nursing graduates.

Adj Assoc Professor Elizabeth Dabars, CEO/Secretary, ANMF (SA Branch) said:

"We seem to be trapped in a never ending cycle of either shortages or oversupply of nurses.

At the moment we are in a position where there is a small oversupply of nursing graduates in SA and around the country.

That means that many talented graduates have missed out on securing a place in graduate programs in our public health services or in the private system.

In addition many of the nurses that completed their graduate programs at the end of last year have lost their jobs and are now reliant on casual or agency work.

The State Government is taking a really short term approach to this issue by refusing to employ the additional graduates.

The Federal Government is also adding to the problem by failing to secure employment for graduates of nursing programs that they fund and, at the same time, continuing to allow immigration levels to continue for overseas recruits.

Whilst we need a mix of skilled, experienced overseas recruits to meet the short term gaps in our skills, this should not be at the expense of providing opportunities to local graduates to enter the workforce.

By 2015 (and then getting progressively worse) Health Workforce Australia research demonstrates that we face a nursing shortage for a decade or more. This shortage has serious implications for provision of health services in to the future.

The ANMF is calling on the state and federal governments to collaborate in order to find solutions to the current crisis.

We need graduates to be in work, developing clinical skills and gaining specialist knowledge to replace the nurses that we will lose in the coming years.

If we wait for experienced clinicians and nursing leaders to retire before we act, the workforce will simply be unable to meet the needs of patients into the future.

Governments need to plan for the future rather than operate within budget years if the community is to be assured of the best nursing care in the longer term.

That is why we are calling on the new Minister of Health to cast a fresh set of eyes on this problem."

Media Comment: Adj Assoc Professor Elizabeth Dabars – CEO/Secretary