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MO: H/05/00980

Mr Neil Laurie  
The Clerk of the Parliament  
Parliament House  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your petition No. 515-05 received 25 August 2005, tabled on behalf of Ms L Wilson, regarding training nurses in hospitals.

As you would be aware, the nature of nursing has undergone dramatic changes over the last few years. Factors such as increasingly complex clinical health care, reduced length of stay in hospital, technological advancements in health procedures, and growth and expansion of the nursing role, require nurses to be prepared at a higher level, across a broad range of topics.

There has been a National Review of Nursing Education conducted by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs in 2002. This Review was established to examine the future nursing educational needs of the health, community and aged care systems and to advise on appropriate education models and policy. The Review involved extensive consultation across nursing, education and healthcare groups, and reviewed both Australian and international models.

It is of note that the report from this Review recommended that the educational preparation for registered nurses should remain in the tertiary sector. However the report also noted that nursing is a 'practice' discipline and that the education of nurses must be closely linked to practice. The report also recommends investigation of the benefits that may accrue to students from their employment in the health workforce. While this employment would not be part of the requirements of their educational program, potential benefits include a source of income and additional clinical experience. A national taskforce (the National Nursing and Nursing Education Taskforce) has been established to progress recommendations from this review and Queensland representatives are participating in taskforce initiatives.

Queensland Health acknowledges that there have been issues related to the clinical experience acquired during the current nursing programs. These include achieving a balance between theoretical education and clinical experience, and the scheduling of courses which has resulted in the majority of students graduating and entering the workforce at one time of the year. As a result, a role of the Education Standing Committee, which has been established by Queensland Health, is to monitor issues relating to the clinical placement of students in Queensland Health facilities. This is to ensure that clinical placements are meeting student learning needs as well as providing appropriate clinical exposure prior to graduation as registered nurses.

A new nursing program involving a partnership between Queensland Health and the University of Queensland commenced in 2004. This program is trialling an innovative model of integrated clinical placements and classroom learning. This course will address some of the current issues regarding clinical training and will assist in meeting nursing workforce needs and the preparation of 'work ready' graduates.

Should you have any queries regarding my advice to you, please contact Ms Cynthia Kennedy, Policy Advisor on telephone (07) 3234 1191.

Yours sincerely

**STEPHEN ROBERTSON MP**