

PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE

**14 September 2007**

**Public Health Concern About Government's Outdated Nursing Policy**

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) has today expressed grave concerns about the Federal Government's announcement that it will return to hospital based training for nurses.

Professor Helen Keleher, spokesperson for the PHAA said, "The announcement by the Howard Government to set up a duplicate system for training nurses in the private sector is an expensive attempt to privatise the education of nurses and to undermine the excellent systems established by the VET sector and Universities. There are picket-fence beliefs about handmaiden training of nurses that sit behind this announcement.

In the 1960s, Australia was heavily criticised by the World Health Organisation for its apprenticeship training of nurses, because these systems failed to educate nurses as 'citizens of the world'. The plans of the Howard Government are about a return to the past, not about addressing workforce needs of the future. Arbitrary superimposing of a new system onto an established system is wasteful and unnecessary, not just lacking in vision but signalling a lack of understanding of workforce planning and the needs of the education and training needs of young people wishing to work in our sophisticated health care services.

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