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Private sector steps up to train Australia's health workforce

The Australian private hospital sector makes a substantial contribution to training Australia's health workforce and with further investment from governments could do much more, a new report shows.

The 'Education and training in the private hospital sector' report, produced by the Australian Private Hospitals Association (APHA) and Catholic Health Australia (CHA) shows the private sector's investment in training doctors, nurses and allied health workers has increased to \$167 million from \$30 million a decade ago.

Australian Private Hospitals Association CEO Mr Michael Roff said the contribution of private hospitals to training should not be underestimated.

"Private hospitals are committed to training and developing the professionals who work for them and with them to provide the highest quality health care to Australians.

"Private hospitals perform 60 percent of all surgeries in this country and in many specialties the proportion is higher. Therefore, it makes sense to expose doctors and nurses to the training opportunities private hospitals provide, particularly in relation to advanced surgical training.

"This report also shows there is opportunity and capacity for private hospitals to offer more training and with a predicted nursing workforce shortage on the way we will continue to talk to government about how we can do that," he said.

The report recommends more and longer funding agreements between governments and the private sector to enable more training and develop strong partnerships among stakeholders. It also calls for collaboration between public and private hospital sectors as the key to increasing training opportunities.

Catholic Health Australia CEO Mrs Suzanne Greenwood said the report makes a strong case for further investment from government in private hospital training.

"Private hospitals are making a contribution to training out of their own pockets and they don't shy away from their responsibility to help develop Australian health care workers – we want the best people working in private hospitals.

"But there's more that we can contribute if there are additional funds and we are supported to do so. We all benefit from a well-trained and highly skilled hospital workforce," she said.

The education and training report is based on hospital workforce and training surveys and supported by data from national data sets.

To read the report:

http://www.apha.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/APHA_WorkforceReport_FINAL_May17.pdf

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