15 March 2018

MEDIA STATEMENT

ACMHN welcomes government funding announcement to develop mental health content in undergraduate nursing programs

The Australian College of Mental Health Nurses (ACMHN) welcomes the announcement by Senator Bridget McKenzie to provide funding to develop a National Framework for mental health content in undergraduate and pre-registration nursing courses.

The ACMHN’s Chief Executive, Adjunct Associate Professor Kim Ryan said that projections are indicating that the mental health needs of the community is continuing to grow.

There are many complex issues affecting access to mental health care across Australia, particularly in regional and rural Australia.

Ms Ryan said that the review and strengthening of mental health in pre-registration nursing courses will enhance the nursing workforce.

“It gives an opportunity for the workforce to respond to the needs of people experiencing mental illness, and to support the mental health of every Australian who presents to a health care service.”

“The review will also provide nurses with the confidence to provide mental health support as part of their day-to-day practice regardless of where they work,” she said.

As nursing and midwifery workforce represents the largest and most geographically dispersed health workforce in Australia, the ACMHN advocates for a system which promotes every nurse and midwife to have a clear understanding of their roles in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of the community.

ACMHN President, Professor Eimear Muir-Cochrane highlighted that the ACMHN is undertaking research to establish future steps to ensure that newly registered nurses have a foundation in mental health and an approach to reduce the stigma and to be able to care for common mental health presentations.

Ms Ryan also stated that consideration must be given to how the mental health nursing workforce can work more effectively in collaboration with the broader nursing and midwifery workforce to support the community.

The ACMHN welcomes this initiative which demonstrates the government’s commitment to improving mental health outcomes for all Australians and their acknowledgement of the important role that nurses have and will continue to have into the future, around mental health.

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Available for interview or comment ACMHN CEO Adjunct Professor Kim Ryan

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