



**Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee**  
*the council of Australia's university presidents*

## Media Release

10/06

Monday 10 April 2006

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### **More university places for the health workforce – just what the doctor ordered!**

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The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) welcomes the announcement by Prime Minister John Howard on the weekend to increase university funding by \$250 million to help address Australia's health workforce shortages.

AVCC President Professor Gerard Sutton said that the funding, which largely translates into additional university places in medicine and nursing, is a positive step in responding to community need.

"The additional 400 places for medicine and 1000 places for nursing starting from 2007 are a real commitment by the Government to investing in the ongoing sustainability of Australia's health workforce," Professor Sutton said.

"The university sector welcomes any additional support for places associated with Australia's health workforce shortages – particularly areas of known shortage such as nursing, a national priority area, and medicine.

"It is also pleasing to note that the Government has substantially increased funding (from \$690 to \$1000) a year for each nursing student's clinical training," Professor Sutton said.

"The AVCC will work with both the Federal and the State Governments to ensure that the medical student loading, similar to that for nursing, is also addressed. Medical students also need to have properly funded, high quality clinical placements to prepare them for the workforce.

"Further the issue of clinical placements for the intern year, and subsequent postgraduate training of doctors needs to be addressed by all levels of Government in cooperation with the health and education sectors: there will be a large influx of medical graduates from 2009 for a number of years, taking into account the Government's previous commitments, and all will require high quality placements.

"Universities look forward to working with the Minister for Education, Science and Training Julie Bishop in setting priorities for the allocation of the additional places starting from 2007," Professor Sutton said.

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