

COURTESY DEAKIN-SOUTHERN HEALTH



Bev O'Connell

VIC

Nation's first teaching nursing home

Australia's first teaching nursing home will be established in Melbourne this year. Teaching nursing homes developed internationally, largely in the USA from 1985, to improve the experience of student nurses on clinical placements in aged care; and to encourage graduates into the sector by close affiliations between universities and aged care facilities.

The two year project, supported by a \$307,000 ANZ trustees grant, is a partnership between Deakin University and Southern Health Nursing Research Centre in Australia. The project is broader and expands on the teaching nursing home concept, Deakin University professor and project lead professor Bev O'Connell said.

While the teaching nursing home concept is

largely based on improving nursing students' experiences in aged care, the Australian project will also focus on the development and support of existing staff in aged care facilities and develop materials on best standards of practice.

Professor O'Connell said the project aims to raise the profile of aged care and provide professional development for staff in the sector who have been neglected. "Adequate education and training of staff has not been occurring in aged care and it is becoming an isolated sector. It is an important and complex area that requires development.

"Not only do some students have a poor experience on clinical placement in residential aged

care, but often we cannot send them to some facilities as we know they will not have a positive learning experience. The staff themselves are not supported or developed. We cannot just blame the aged care sector we have to invest long term in its development."

The teaching nursing home will be based at a new 100-bed high and low residential aged care facility in Doveton, Melbourne. In the first eight months materials such as workshop manuals, best practice guides, clinical leadership models and change champions will be developed, followed by teaching of staff at other aged care facilities and evaluation of resident outcomes. "We will deliver standards of care, exemplars of practice, an easy to use best practice guide resource and develop leaders," professor O'Connell said.

Aged care staff will be consulted as to areas of weakness in their facilities and for exemplar models of care.

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