

Graduate nurses boost workforce

Latrobe Regional Hospital (LRH) has welcomed 32 new graduate nurses to its ranks.

The first group of 20 graduate nurses are already working with patients on the wards, with another 12 to begin their new careers in April.

Director Nursing, Midwifery and Clinical Services Amanda Cameron said that the graduate nurses are a welcome addition to the workforce.

"LRH, along with other rural hospitals, is faced with the challenge of recruiting nurses to sustain an ageing workforce. The graduates play an important role in delivering quality nursing care to our community," Ms Cameron said.

"Fortunately the demand for graduate places is increasing and we are planning that by 2016 we will have 43 graduate nurses at LRH."

Graduate nurses have completed their University training and work in four different areas of the hospital in a supported role.

"They are registered nurses and participate in a formal education and clinical support program called the Graduate Nurse and Midwifery Program," Ms Cameron said.

"The support includes a tailored education program, working alongside clinical nurse educators and gaining assistance from nursing staff.

"The graduate nurses will work with preceptors who are experienced nurses specifically trained to boost the clinical skills of graduates."

A majority of graduates are from Monash University Gippsland Campus, with the remaining five graduating from other universities.

"The Bachelor of Nursing Practice is a three year degree which provides a foundation to be a registered nurse," Ms Cameron said.

"The course enables nurses to develop their communication and interpersonal skills, prioritising and critical thinking.

"Graduates may go on to work in various fields including medical and surgical, mental health, palliative care, paediatrics, critical care, midwifery and emergency."

Of the year's graduate nurses 30 are women and two are men. There are eight mature aged nurses who have come from various career backgrounds.



Photo: New nurses: Kathleen Fornaro and Helen Cook begin their careers at Latrobe Regional Hospital.