

Possibly the world's most important occupation

I read yesterday where a new study will look at the changing role of Australian nurses in general practice and offer suggestions on how to improve the delivery of healthcare.

The three-year study, funded by the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute at the Australian National University, will examine international experiences to develop a best practice model for Australia.

Doctor Christine Phillips, senior lecturer at the ANU medical school, will lead a team that includes researchers from the UK.

Dr Phillips said there was a need for more research on the role of nurses, with past studies focusing on the role of doctors in primary health-care.

She said the three-year study will be carried out in

two phases.

The first phase will attempt to understand the role of nursing in general practice, while the next phase will develop practical tools for doctors and nurses to use.

Nurses - and doctors - are leaving the public hospital system quicker than replacements can be found.

This leads to staff shortages and results in reduced services in public hospitals - not just in the bigger cities, either.

Bowral has certainly suffered from the trend.

In my opinion, along with doctors, nursing is probably the world's most important occupation.

People will always require hospitalisation, that fact will never change.

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EDITORIAL