

WEDNESDAY 5 AUGUST 2009

## HEALTH TEAMS MUST WORK TOGETHER: EXPERT

Future success of Australian health reforms will depend on primary care teams working together, says a UK inter-professional learning expert who is visiting the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute based at The Australian National University.

Professor Debra Humphris, Pro Vice-Chancellor Education at the University of Southampton, said Australian universities could play a key role in transforming the education of future health care workers.

"Universities could provide opportunities for inter-professional team working as a core element of courses," Professor Humphris said. "In England, as part of the National Health Service (NHS) Plan in 2001, the Government encouraged universities to address inter-professional team working as part of how we prepare the future workforce."

The National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission (NHHRC) report identifies that the current education of the health workforce '*tends to reinforce professional boundaries and does not adequately foster team-based collaborative models of care*'.

"For individuals using health care services, I'm sure they are often unclear about how all the various health care workers are coordinating their efforts," Professor Humphris said.

"The irony is that many of those staff train in the same University, but they don't have any opportunity to learn with, from or about each other and their roles."

Professor Humphris supported the NHHRC report's recommendation that a new framework for the education and training of health professionals should be developed that moves towards '*a flexible, multi-disciplinary approach to how we educate and train health professionals*'.

She also welcomed the report's emphasis on team working and inter-professional learning as a means to support wider changes to the health and social care workforce in Australia.

Professor Humphris will give a public lecture titled, "Working together for a better primary health care system," at the Finkel Lecture Theatre in the John Curtin School of Medical Research at ANU today at 4pm.

Professor Humphris' visit to Australia was sponsored by the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute (APHCRI).

Professor Humphris will be available for interviews:

**For media assistance: Will Wright, APHCRI – 02 6125 2026 / 0432 130 469**

---

**ANU MEDIA:** Simon Couper  
(02) 6125 4171  
0416 249 241

Martyn Pearce  
(02) 6125 5575  
0416 249 245

Penny Cox  
(02) 6125 3549  
0424 016 978

Christina Apps  
(02) 6125 6125