



## SEEING DOUBLE

Until now, students completing a double degree in nursing and paramedicine at Australian Catholic University have been forced to choose which job they will pursue after graduating. Despite qualifying as both nurses and paramedics, graduates have only been able to complete their transition in to one industry.

A new Inter-Professional Graduate Program for Nurse Paramedics launched recently in Ballarat will now allow graduates to work across two workplaces – as a nurse at Ballarat Health Services and as a paramedic with Ambulance Victoria. The program was trialled last year with two graduates and recently expanded to include six new graduates as part of the pilot.

For nurse-paramedic graduates, it opens doors to their chosen career pathway and greater job opportunities across rural and regional Victoria and means they no longer must choose one profession over the other. The project has been a collaboration between Ballarat Health Services, Ambulance Victoria, the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation, Ambulance Employees Association and the Department of Health and Human Services.

“We have worked for the past 12 months on this project to bring together these two professions and create a 72 week early transition program where graduates are employed in both organisations and rotate through both,” said BHS Director of Nursing, Education and Practice Development and Nursing Administration, Denielle Beardmore.

If successful, the trial will be widened across the Grampians region. “It allows graduates to care for patients both out of hospital and in hospital, giving them a greater understanding of the health system working together,” said Ambulance Victoria Grampians Region Clinical Manager Grant Hocking. “The program will be evaluated over the next 12 to 18 months with the capacity to offer the program more broadly across Victoria for interested health services.”

Wendouree MP Sharon Knight said the program would help build a higher-skilled workforce that could meet the growing demands of regional communities. “It will help boost the expertise, professionalism and hard work of our health workers ensuring all Victorians can receive high-quality care, when and where they need it,” Ms Knight said.

Ms Beardmore said the new program had benefits for the graduates, both organisations and the community. “It enables us to have a nurse who is very active out there in the community as a paramedic, who has an understanding when they arrive at the emergency department door of being inside as a nurse,” she said.

*Article courtesy of the Ballarat Courier, text by Michelle Smith*

