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DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER**

Minister for Education; Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations;  
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**COAG to deliver up to 50,000 more frontline health workers**

The Rudd Government will invest in up to 50,000 additional health vocational training places to tackle the current health workforce crisis.

This commitment will deliver one of the single biggest injections of workers to the health system in Australian history

The training places will target areas of chronic skills shortage, such as dental health, nursing, and Indigenous health.

The Rudd Government recognises that addressing the health workforce crisis is critical to delivering better health services and to achieving long-term health reform.

Skills Australia will be asked to report to COAG in July 2008 on a method for allocating these priority places following consultation with the COAG Health and Productivity working groups and ministerial councils.

These training places will be online from 1 January 2009.

There are widespread shortages of health professionals in the health system, which are largely the result of the Howard Government's underinvestment in health education and training over the last 11 years.

By providing up to 50,000 additional training places over the next three years for professionals including enrolled nurses, dental health workers, allied health assistants, ambulance officers, and Aboriginal health workers, this commitment will provide a significant step towards addressing the current health workforce crisis.

The Rudd Labor Government will work in partnership with the States and Territories to deliver more frontline health workers into our hospitals and community over the coming years through this and other initiatives.

Along with the Australian Government's commitment to introducing a system of national registration and accreditation for health professionals, this announcement demonstrates the Government's commitment to tackling Australia's health workforce needs and to laying the foundations for delivering on our long term health reform agenda.

The Rudd Labor Government is investing in the health and education systems that are required to build a modern Australia that can meet the challenges of the future.

The vocational training places are part of the Rudd Labor Government's commitment to provide 450,000 new vocational education and training places to address skill shortages in the economy.

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