

Transcript
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I came into nursing via a fairly roundabout way I guess. I came from a long line of nurses so my grandmother was a registered nurse, my mother was a registered nurse, my aunts were registered nurses, and I was determined not to be registered nurse. However I did a degree in health service management and health information management and I really enjoyed the health environment working in health care settings. I went travelling for a few years and when I came back I thought I would like something that was a little bit more people focussed so I decided to do a nursing degree.

Aged care really is a growing industry and a growing area of interest in the healthcare area at the moment. We have a growing ageing population and that certainly is getting increased recognition from healthcare providers, and health care policy makers as well are increasingly looking at the range of aged care services in order to maximise their efficiency and effectiveness.

I guess the other area that we are dealing with is the shortage of registered nurses which is having a major impact on aged care. While a number of areas are dealing with the shortage, because registered nurses are fairly low in number, in residential aged care in particular, that shortage is really being felt.

Here at Griffith we offer one of the only accredited Bachelor of Nursing (Aged Care) in Australia. That is a government funded program - it's part of the regular Bachelor of Nursing program and our graduates graduate with a Bachelor of Nursing that will enable them to work in any area but during the course of their degree they take four specialist aged care courses that look at things like the art and skill of dementia care and various other issues to do with ageing. That prepares our graduates for work in a variety of settings, any where that older people can be found such as acute care, emergency medicine, rehabilitation, community care or residential care.

The research that I am doing is really looking at the scope of their practice, the kind of roles, how they might work in with other healthcare providers and engage more with the multidisciplinary health care team including doctors and physiotherapists as well as with enrolled nurses and personal care workers. In particular we are looking at nurse practitioners and advanced practice registered nurses and looking at ways that we can expand their scope in a way that will be economically efficient for the limited human resources that we have but that will also maximise patient safety and quality of care.

Career pathways is one of the reasons that I chose aged care as well. It's quite a clear and fast career projectory in aged care simply because there is a growing ability to choose between a management area or a clinical area, and certainly as the advanced practice nursing roles and nurse practitioner become more developed, we will see people having a career progression along those lines as well.

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