

# Communiqué

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## Meeting of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia

### 24 November 2011 in the AHPRA office Sydney NSW

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (the Board or NMBA) is the national nursing and midwifery regulator in Australia. It is established under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act* (the National Law) as in force in each state and territory. The Board meets monthly and discusses a range of issues, the most important of which are published in this Communiqué.

### International Council of Nurses - Credentialing and Regulators' Forum

Representatives from the Board, the Royal College of Nursing and the Australian Nursing Federation attended the International Council of Nurses (ICN) *Credentialing and Regulators Forum* held in Taipei, Taiwan from 31 October to the 2 November 2011.

The International Council of Nurses (ICN) is a federation of more than 130 national nurses' associations representing millions of nurses worldwide. Operated by nurses and leading nursing internationally, ICN works to ensure quality care for all and sound health policies globally.

This annual forum provides participants with an opportunity to share information and discuss international nursing credentialing and regulation issues. Representatives from Australia, Bahamas, Canada, Ghana, Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, New Zealand, Singapore, Taiwan, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America attended the forum. An overview of the four topics discussed and analysed at the forum is outlined below.

#### How is the economic crisis impacting quality of care?

Leading Taiwan economist and academic, Dr Sheng-Cheng Hu, gave insights into the economic crisis and its trajectory over the short term indicating that the volatility will likely continue for at least the next three to five years though not to the scale of 2008. Dr. Hu pointed out that the impact of the crisis will continue to vary from country to country and will require public sector reforms including lengthening of retirement age and health sector reform in many parts of the world. He stressed that commitment to education must be maintained and supported, particularly during times of high youth unemployment. Forum participants shared country-specific impacts of the crisis including hiring freezes and non-replacement of workers and the related negative impact on the delivery of safe, quality nursing care. Long term implications foreseen include lack of employment opportunities for new graduates in some countries and threats to the future supply of nurses.

#### What are the emerging issues around scope of practice?

The on-going economic crisis, human resource challenges and changing demographics and disease patterns mean that scopes of practice for all health professions are evolving. Participants identified particular challenges and opportunities around determining the appropriate care provider. They highlighted how registered nurses and nurse practitioners, if supported and authorised to practice to their full scope, can enable increased equity and access to cost-effective health care.

### Are there winning strategies for ensuring nursing continuing competence?

Participants recognised that the search for the most efficient and effective model for establishing continuing competence for nurses and for all health professionals is on-going, but of vital importance to ensuring patient safety and quality care. A nurse researcher currently carrying out multi-country research on continuing competence provided information on the early results of her research. Participants noted that there were some very promising models emerging, particularly those that go beyond just requiring a certain number of continuing education credits and extend to multi-source feedback.

### Is there a reason for concern by regulators and credentialing agencies about the impact of social media?

The explosion in the use of social media has witnessed the rise of such issues as breach of patient confidentiality on Facebook, blogs etc. On the other hand, social media offers the opportunity for those involved in regulation and credentialing to reach individuals, such as nursing students and recent graduates that may not have engaged with regulatory and credentialing bodies.

The Board is reviewing these issues as they relate to nursing and midwifery regulation in Australia.

## NMBA Social Media Information Sheet for Nurses and Midwives

The Board has an approved information sheet relating to social media for nurses and midwives, [Social Media Information Sheet for Nurses and Midwives](#), which can be accessed from the website. The information sheet was developed to provide a framework for accountable and responsible practice for the online activities of nurses and midwives.

The Board encourages nurses and midwives to be aware of the potential implications of their online behaviour, and how it can affect their professional life and registration.

The Board understands that when posting information on a social networking site, nurses and midwives need to consider that the comments made are in the public domain and will remain there for an extended period of time.

## International Nurse Regulator Collaborative

The Board has entered into a two year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Cooperation with international nursing and midwifery regulatory organisations to develop standards for the regulation of nurses and midwives, and to facilitate the free exchange of professional knowledge that contributes to the development of these standards.

Regulatory organisations from Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, Singapore, United Kingdom and the United States are signatories.

The MoU was formally signed in May 2011 by all parties of the at the ICN Conference *Nurses driving access, quality and health* in Malta.

The inaugural meeting of the International Nurse Regulator Collaborative was held on 3 November 2011 in Taipei, Taiwan during which collaborative projects were identified and explored. Agreement was reached that each participating organisation would compile de-identified data in relation to decisions made about registered nurses' health, performance and/or professional conduct matters for 12 months from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011. Analysis of the cases will help to identify possible trends and issues as well as potential strategies to address them. The project will also help develop a disciplinary lexicon and explore opportunities for future cross-country research.

This is a unique opportunity that the Board is keen to engage in, aimed at improving international relationships and nursing regulation.

The collaborative partners continue to progress the work agreed at the meeting and will meet again face to face at the ICN Triad meeting in Geneva in May 2012.

## WA nurses and midwives urged to renew registration on time, online

To date, only 44% of the 6000 nurses and midwives in Western Australia (WA) have renewed their registration which is due to expire on 31 December 2011.

The easiest and fastest way to renew is online by following the '[Renew your registration](#)' button on the Board's or AHPRA's homepage. Nurses and midwives who have yet to renew their registration are urged to renew on time and online. This group of practitioners will be registered until 31 May 2012, and will then be in line with the ongoing nursing and midwifery renewal date. They will need to apply to renew their registration in May 2012.

## Enrolled nurses who qualify for registration as a registered nurse can now apply online

If you are an enrolled nurse who is due to complete an [approved program of study](#) that will qualify you for registration as a registered nurse, you have two options:

1. **Apply online** for registration as a registered nurse. You must be **currently registered** as an enrolled nurse with AHPRA. You will still need to provide the required [supporting documentation](#). You need a Visa or MasterCard credit or debit card and an email address to apply online.



2. Complete the paper form and send it into AHPRA along with the [supporting documentation](#), as instructed on the form. Please check the [forms page](#) for available forms.

### Important note:

If you want to give up (cease) your registration as an enrolled nurse, midwife or registered nurse, complete this form (NSUR-40). **Please note:** Your registration will cease when the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia receives your request, unless you specify in the form the date from which you want your registration to end. **No refunds apply.**

## Registration Standards

[Registration Standards](#) developed by the Board and approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council (AHWMC) are published on the Board's website under the 'Registration Standards' tab. The registration standards outline the Board's expectations of practitioners, and must be met.

### English language skills registration standard

An updated [Fact Sheet and FAQ for English Language Skills](#) on the English language skills registration standard that has been in place from 19 September 2011 has been disseminated widely to stakeholders and published on the [website](#) on 29 November 2011.

### Professional Indemnity Insurance arrangements registration standard

The Board has presented the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council (AHWMC) with a revised *Professional indemnity insurance arrangements registration standard for nurses and midwives*. Under the National Law, a registration standard must be approved by AHWMC before it can take effect.

The Board will then publish supporting *Guidelines: Professional indemnity insurance arrangements for midwives* to help guide practitioners on the new standard and how it applies, if the proposed standard is approved.

The revised standard and new guidelines will also be distributed widely to stakeholders and published on the NMBA [website](#).

## Position Statements

[Position Statements](#) issued by the Board to help guide nurses and midwives are published on the Board's website under the 'Codes, Guidelines and Statements' tab.

### Nurse Practitioner Scope of Practice

The *Position Statement on Nurse Practitioner Scope of Practice* was distributed to stakeholders for information and uploaded onto the Board's [website](#) with a notice and link under the *Latest News* section of the Board's home page on 29 November 2011.

### Re-entry to Practice Policy

The Board has analysed the feedback received from the stakeholder consultation and noted there was in principle support for the policy. Stakeholders acknowledged that it is vital that previously registered nurses and/or midwives returning to practice are competent and safe to provide nursing and/or midwifery care.

The Board has carefully considered the themes identified from the public consultation and endeavoured to address the issues raised. In finalising the policy, the Board must balance the need to maintain public safety while ensuring workforce flexibility, enabling access to a range of appropriate pathways for re-entry to practice and ensuring educationally sound pathways are available.

The Board recognises the importance of a re-entry to practice policy and is undergoing a further targeted consultation to ensure the draft policy is robust, effective and that there are no unintended consequences when it is implemented.

Upon completion of this targeted consultation, the Board will consider the policy and if approved, disseminate widely to all stakeholders.

## Accreditation - Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council

Anne Copeland, Chair and Louise Horgan, Board member and Chair of the Board's Accreditation Committee attended the official launch of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC) on Monday 7 November 2011 in Canberra. This provided an opportunity to acknowledge the outstanding work of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council (ANMC) to facilitate the re-structure and establishment of the ANMAC Board and the organisation as the independent accrediting authority for nursing and midwifery under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. Members of the Board's Accreditation Committee met with AHPRA, and ANMAC Board members and staff on Friday 28 October 2011 to discuss a range of matters relating to accreditation. The meeting was held to clarify the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of the Board and ANMAC, and ensure a timely and responsive approach to the myriad issues that arise when bringing together the accreditation approaches from the eight states and territories and determining a nationally consistent and quality accreditation approach for nursing and midwifery in the future.

Both NMBA and ANMAC have recognised the value of this forum and have agreed to meet twice in 2012, in March and October.

## Website and receiving important information by email

Further information about the Board can be found at: [www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au](http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au). Nurses and midwives are encouraged to refer to the site for news and updates on Standards, Codes and Guidelines affecting their professions.

Practitioners are also encouraged to provide their email address to AHPRA (by updating their contact details online). This will enable the Board to send e-newsletters and other important information for the profession, and AHPRA to contact practitioners about important registration or renewal information.

## For more information

- Follow the Board on Twitter! Join us via [www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au](http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au) and keep up to date with regular Board news and updates.
- Visit [www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au](http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au) under *Contact Us* to lodge an online enquiry form
- For registration enquiries: 1300 419 495 (within Australia) +61 7 3666 4911 (overseas callers)