

## A word from the Chair

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (the National Board or NMBA) continues its mission to work in partnership with the nursing and midwifery professions and associations, the education sector and the wider community.

Our 2012/13 strategic plan prioritises a significant work program relating to the core regulatory functions of registration, notifications, professional practice standards and accreditation. Priorities for the coming year incorporate working towards establishing and improving the requirements of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme). The [2011/12 annual report](#) provides a comprehensive summary of the National Board's achievements towards the strategic plan.

While not without its challenges, we continue to undertake major initiatives in accordance with the National Law, and will publish details of the new National Board 2013/15 strategic plan on the National Board website as soon as it is finalised and approved. This plan is in development by the newly appointed National Board (pictured below).

We have made good progress on the accreditation review currently underway, now in the public consultation phase – read more on the [accreditation review](#) in this issue of the National Board newsletter.

The National Board is participating in the International Council of Nurses 25th Quadrennial Congress that is being held in Melbourne in May 2013. More on [ICN 2013](#) is also covered in this December newsletter.

As the festive season and the New Year swiftly approach, I would like to acknowledge the Chairs and members of the state and territory boards of NMBA for their commitment and contribution to the National Board's role in determining matters relating to registration, endorsement and notifications of individual nurses, midwives and students. In addition, I would like to thank all our stakeholders, including government, professional associations, education providers, nursing and midwifery organisations, nurses and midwives for their significant contribution to our key projects, initiatives and accomplishments during the year 2012.

Best wishes to you and your families. On behalf of the National Board, I wish you all a prosperous New Year.

**Anne Copeland**

Chair, Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia

## National Boards and AHPRA publish annual report 2011/12

The 2011/12 annual report of the National Boards and AHPRA has been published and is now available on the [National Board website](#). AHPRA is the national organisation responsible for implementation of the National Scheme across Australia, in partnership with the 14 National Boards.

The report details the progress that the National Boards, in partnership with AHPRA, have made during the second year of delivering the benefits of the National Scheme to regulate the professions.



*National Board members. Back row – left to right: Mary Kirk – Health Practitioner ACT, Louise Horgan – Health Practitioner Western Australia, Angela Brannelly – Health Practitioner Northern Territory, Prof. Mary Chiarella – Health Practitioner New South Wales, Dr Lynette Cusack – Health Practitioner South Australia (Deputy Chair), Max Howard – Community Member Queensland, Allyson Warrington – Community Member Tasmania*

*Front row – left to right: Lynne Geri – Health Practitioner Victoria, Dr Christine Murphy – Community Member Victoria, Anne Copeland – Health Practitioner Queensland (Chair), Prof. Denise Fassett – Health Practitioner Tasmania, Margaret Winn – Community Member New South Wales*

The report covers in detail:

- National Boards – functions, quarterly registration data, consultations, registration standards and Board reports
- AHPRA’s delivery of the operational aspects of the National Scheme and overview of:
  - > registrations
  - > notifications
  - > accreditation function
  - > legislative reporting, and
  - > financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2012.

On behalf of the National Boards, AHPRA renewed the registration of 557,000 health practitioners during the year, including the biggest ever health practitioner renewal in Australia when more than 330,000 nurses and midwives renewed by 31 May 2012.

Of more than 68,000 criminal history checks conducted across all National Boards, 400 were assessed as having the potential to affect registration, and the registration of nine practitioners was restricted or refused as a result.

Under National Board reports, the NMBA report restated the National Board’s vision, mission and strategic themes, complementary to the National Scheme’s vision, mission and strategic directions.

Aligned with the National Scheme’s vision for a competent and flexible health workforce that meets the current and future needs of the Australian community, the National Board’s vision is to be a capable and visionary national board that regulates nurses, midwives and students with integrity in the interest of public safety.

For nursing and midwifery, the report reveals:

- there are 11,518 more registered nurses and midwives in 2012 than in the previous year, an increase of nearly 3.47%
- there are now 736 nurse practitioners registered, 224 more than last year
- there are now 121 eligible midwives with the notation that enables them to provide pregnancy, labour, birth and postnatal care to women and their infants, and one eligible midwife with the endorsement to prescribe scheduled medicines
- there are 784 nurses whose registration is endorsed to prescribe scheduled medicines, 400 more than last year
- as a result of criminal history checks, the National Board refused to register one practitioner and limited the registration of three others
- there were 51 notifications made about midwives and 1,401 about nurses; this means a notification was made about fewer than 0.0.4% of nurses and midwives.

- there were an additional 442 mandatory notifications made about nurses and midwives (including NSW data). In total, AHPRA received 775 mandatory notifications about health practitioners
- there were more than 3,700 students registered in midwifery, and nearly 63,000 students registered in nursing in accredited courses leading to registration as enrolled nurses, registered nurses and midwives at the end of June 2012, and
- one in every 39 Australians is a registered health practitioner.

Read more on the National Board’s areas of focus, key achievements, registration standards, policies, professional standards and guidelines, priorities for the coming year, and much more in the AHPRA annual report 2011/12 at the [National Board website](#). National Board Chair, Ms Anne Copeland commended the 2011/12 annual report, which outlines the scope of the National Board’s and AHPRA’s work.

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## Registration

### Reminder: Use of a nurse’s or midwife’s legal name

Nurses and midwives are required to register using their legal name, and this is the name that will appear on the [National Registers of Practitioners](#).

The registers provide up-to-date information on the registration status of nurses and midwives who are registered to practise in Australia. This will ensure that anyone, particularly the general public and employers, can search and confirm that a nurse or midwife is registered with the NMBA, and see whether the nurse or midwife has any endorsements, conditions, undertakings or notations on their registration.

The quickest and easiest way to search information on the online [National Registers](#) is by name and profession.

To ensure that the public and employers can access this vital information, and avoid any confusion about a nurse’s or midwife’s registration, the National Board reminds all nurses and midwives to make sure that the name they practise under (that is, the name that appears on their identification when practising their profession) is the same name that appears in the online National Registers.

To change a name on the National Register, go to [Practitioner Services](#) under registration on the AHPRA website.

### Employer services for checking registration

On behalf of the NMBA, AHPRA provides valuable online services for employers to check the registration details and status of nurses and midwives who are employees.

It is important in the interests of public safety that employers check the public registers to ensure nurses and midwives are registered to practise.

There are a number of ways that employers can make use of this service, as outlined below.

**Individual registration checks:** Employers can check registration details using the Registers of Practitioners. This free online service is practical for looking up individual registration details. Anyone can check a nurse's or midwife's registration in the online [National Registers of Practitioners](#). Search results are accessible by entering the nurse's or midwife's name or registration number. This search can indicate to an employer if a nurse or midwife has made an application to renew their registration, particularly during the one-month late period after the registration expiry date.

**One-month late period checks:** Employers can also find if their employee is in the 'late period', which is the one month following the expiry date for renewal of registration.

**Bulk registration checks:** An [online enquiry form](#) is available by selecting 'Multiple Registration Check Service' in a drop-down menu for 'category of enquiry'. When an employer submits a request, AHPRA directly contacts them to validate their identity and eligibility to use the service, and then provides the necessary registration details.

**Cancelled registration checks:** If a nurse's or midwife's registration has been cancelled, details are published in a searchable online National Register of [cancelled health practitioners](#).

AHPRA also provides a service for conversion of pre-National Scheme registration numbers. This service supports the replacement of any registration number issued by the previous state or territory boards of nursing and midwifery before 1 July 2010 (18 October 2010 in Western Australia) when the National Scheme came into effect. You can visit [Employer Services](#) on the AHPRA website to access this service.

### Registration standards compliance audit – pilot update

All nurses and midwives, and other health practitioners registered under the National Law, are required to comply with a range of registration standards. The National Board developed registration standards for nurses and midwives after wide-ranging consultation, and approval by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council.

Registration standards that all nurses and midwives must continue to meet in order to practise are:

- recency of practice
- continuing professional development
- professional indemnity insurance arrangements, and
- criminal history.

In partnership with all National Boards, AHPRA is currently developing an auditing framework through a health

practitioner audit project to audit compliance with these mandatory registration standards. As part of this large program of work, a pilot was conducted with the pharmacy profession earlier this year.

A second phase commenced in late September 2012, to run for about three months. This phase is targeting the pharmacy, optometry and chiropractic professions and is being conducted at renewal of registration. Registrants will be randomly selected across the three professions when they apply to renew their registration for the 2012/13 period.

Findings from both phases of the pilot will inform the next steps for developing a comprehensive audit framework and its subsequent rollout to the remaining professions, including nursing and midwifery. The National Board will advise stakeholders when the implementation of auditing of nurses and midwives against the National Board's registration standards will commence.

More information on the health practitioner audit is available under [Registration](#) on the AHPRA website [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au).

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## Consultations

### National Board consults publicly on accreditation review

In the September/October 2012 newsletter, the National Board announced that a review of accreditation arrangements for nursing and midwifery, and each of the other professions that joined the National Scheme on 1 July 2010 (18 October 2010 in Western Australia), had begun.

As part of a joint National Boards consultation, the NMBA is consulting on the review of accreditation arrangements for nursing and midwifery.

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC) is the current independent accrediting authority for nursing and midwifery under the National Scheme, and has informed the National Board of its intent to continue in this role, subject to the outcome of the accreditation review.

A consultation paper on the accreditation review went out for preliminary consultation to targeted stakeholders on 19 September 2012. The preliminary consultation was a 'road test' of the proposed content, which is a normal process to help identify any operational impacts, issues or concerns, ahead of the paper's review and release for public consultation in late October 2012.

In this public consultation phase, the National Board seeks extensive feedback and encourages wider distribution across registered nurses and midwives, other health practitioners and members of the community.

Details of the public consultation, which closes on 7 December 2012, are available on the [National Board website](#).

## Professional indemnity insurance arrangements for midwives

In January 2012, the National Board implemented a revised *Professional indemnity insurance (PII) arrangements registration standard*. This standard sets out the minimum PII requirements for nurses and midwives in Australia.

Under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law), registered health practitioners must not practise their profession unless they have appropriate PII arrangements in place.

During the revision of the *PII arrangements registration standard*, the National Board assessed the risks and benefits of stating a quantum of cover for midwives. The National Board identified the need for further research to help determine a minimum amount of insurance cover needed for midwives.

The National Board has engaged PricewaterhouseCoopers to undertake the research on professional indemnity insurance (PII) for privately practising midwives.

The research project began in September 2012, and is anticipated to finish in February 2013. The project's objective is to carry out a selective international and national review of professional indemnity insurance arrangements and claims, specifically in relation to midwifery practice and obstetric practice.

PricewaterhouseCoopers is consulting nationally and internationally with key National Board stakeholders. A literature review and data reports are also in progress.

The collation and synthesis of research findings will assist the National Board's decision-making in determining the minimum amount of insurance cover needed for midwives.

Information on this PII research project will be updated periodically on the National Board website.

## Consultation on guidelines: professional indemnity insurance arrangements for registered nurses and nurse practitioners

The National Board is publicly consulting on new guidelines: professional indemnity insurance (PII) arrangements for registered nurses and nurse practitioners. This document will provide specific guidance to the National Board's *Professional indemnity insurance (PII) arrangements registration standard* for nurses and midwives. The consultation is now open.

Feedback from members of the community and stakeholders is welcome by email to: [nmbafeedback@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:nmbafeedback@ahpra.gov.au) by close of business on **10 January 2013**.

The new guidelines on PII arrangements provide direction to registered nurses, nurse practitioners, their employers and education providers about the requirements for PII arrangements under the National Law.

You can access the [PII consultation](#) on the National Board website.

## Review of National competency standards for the Nurse Practitioner

The National Board will release its review of *National competency standards for the Nurse Practitioner (NP)* for public consultation later in December 2012 or possibly early January 2013.

Southern Cross University and the University of Sydney are the two collaborating parties funded by the NMBA for this research project to review the current competency standards. The review is taking into account relevant national and international literature, as well as the current scope of practice and role of nurse practitioners across Australia.

The review aims to ensure that the competency standards provide an accurate guide for contemporary nurse practitioner practice and the educational preparation that nurse practitioners receive.

The competency standards endeavour to:

- communicate to consumers the standards of competent practice to expect of nurse practitioners
- determine eligibility for endorsement of individuals who have undertaken approved nurse practitioner programs of study in Australia
- determine eligibility for endorsement of nurse practitioners who wish to practice in Australia but have undertaken courses elsewhere
- assess registered nurses who wish to return to work as a nurse practitioner after being out of the nurse practitioner workforce for a defined period of time, and
- assess qualified nurse practitioners who are required to show that they are fit to continue practising.

The public consultation on the review of *National competency standards for the Nurse Practitioner (NP)* will run for eight weeks from its opening date. The competency standards will be published on the National Board website once the consultation begins.

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## Supplementary news

### Mothercraft and medicines administration

The National Board has published a position statement on mothercraft nurses.

All mothercraft nurses, including Division 5 nurses in Victoria who transitioned to the National Scheme as enrolled nurses, have a condition limiting their practice to mothercraft nursing only. This group of enrolled nurses is not eligible to enrol in a Board-approved medicines administration program of study and is therefore unable to administer medicines.

Mothercraft nurses are, therefore, ineligible for enrolment into the following Board-approved medicines administration units:

- Analyse health information HLTAP501C, (previously identified as HLTAP501A or HLTAP501B), and
- Administer and monitor medications in the work environment HLTEN507C (previously identified as HLTEN507A and HLTEN507B).

Read the [position statement](#) on mothercraft nursing on the National Board website.

## International Council of Nurses 25th Quadrennial Congress 2013

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 nursing care for all and sound health policies globally.

Held every four years, the ICN congress (ICN 2013) is taking place at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre from 18–23 May 2013. The Australian College of Nursing, formerly the Royal College of Nursing Australia, is a member organisation of ICN and is assisting in hosting the congress.

Together with nearly 3,000 abstracts (summary of papers) submitted to the ICN Congress from 75 countries for consideration, National Board members submitted abstracts relating to nursing and midwifery regulation in Australia.

The abstracts gave short synopses of proposed conference presentations including:

- the origin of nursing regulation and where Australia is today
- the concept of continuing competence, and measuring it
- policy, process and national consistency
- regulating students of nursing and midwifery
- defining scope of practice for nurse practitioners in Australia, and
- nursing and midwifery and the administration of medicines.

In addition to participation at ICN 2013, the National Board will host a small exhibition booth that will run for the duration of the congress.

Registrations are now open for the Congress – visit the [ICN website](#) to learn more. You can go direct to the online [registrations page](#) to register.

Coinciding with ICN 2013 is a one-day International Nurse Regulators Collaborative Forum (INRCF) that the National Board will host in Melbourne. The group includes representatives from nursing regulators in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, Singapore, United Kingdom and United States of America.

## Focus on policy, professional practice requirements, projects and initiatives

Between July and December 2012, the National Board released the following publications on its website.

### November 2012

- [Graduate Applications FAQs – nursing and midwifery](#)
- [ANMAC Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards 2012](#), and a link to the ANMAC implementation plan
- [2011/12 National Boards and AHPRA Annual Report](#)

### October 2012

- [Quarterly registration data](#) includes information on types of registration held, principal place of practice, endorsements, registrant age and gender.
- [Continuous professional development – Exemptions: published under frequently asked questions \(FAQ\) relating to other registration standards under Codes, Guidelines and Statements.](#)
- [Position statement on mothercraft nursing](#)
- [Enrolled nurses and medicines administration fact sheet](#)

### September 2012

- [Health profession agreement](#): The National Board and AHPRA increased public access to financial information about the National Scheme by publishing the Health Profession Agreement (HPA) on the National Board's website.
- [Recency of practice FAQ](#): Updated FAQ on recency of practice, to help ensure that nursing or midwifery skills are current and up to date for nurses and midwives practising their profession.

## Advertising guidelines for nurses and midwives

The National Board reminds all nurses and midwives about their role and responsibilities in relation to the advertising of regulated health services, particularly those involved in private practice. Under the National Law, a regulated health service is a service provided by, or usually provided by, a registered health practitioner.

Advertising guidelines jointly developed by the National Boards, with the aim to provide guidance, are available on the National Board website.

While recognising the value of providing information through advertising to the public about registered nurses and midwives and the services they provide, the National Board requires that such advertisement is reliable, useful and assists the public to make informed choices about health care.

Any advertisement needs to present honest and accurate information in a readily understandable way to help consumers decide on services and procedures, and choose between providers.

False or misleading advertising can create unrealistic expectations about the benefits, likelihood of success and safety of regulated health services, with possible adverse consequences. Such advertising also potentially disadvantages consumers who likely know less about health products and services compared to health practitioners.

The National Board advertising guidelines include an explanation of possible consequences of breaching the advertising provisions of the National Law. The guidelines are admissible in proceedings against a registered nurse or midwife as evidence of what constitutes best practice and the profession specific codes of conduct for nurses and midwives.

All nurses, midwives and students of nursing and midwifery need to familiarise themselves with the *Guidelines for advertising of regulated health services for nursing and midwifery*, available under [Professional Practice Guidelines](#) on the National Board website.

### Outcomes of the comparative study on services available to support nurses and midwives with impairment

In February 2012, AHPRA, on behalf of the National Board, engaged Siggins Miller – an independent consulting group – to undertake a comparative study on services available to support nurses and midwives with impairment in Australia.

In consultation with relevant professional stakeholders as part of the process, the project aimed to provide an overview of health services supporting nurses and midwives with impairment in each jurisdiction, including the Nursing and Midwifery Health Program Victoria (NMHPV).

The resulting report found limited support for the establishment of a national program for all states and territories. Other states and territories had no similar Board-funded health program. Some survey respondents, who were primarily Victorian-based, were enthusiastic about the NMHPV, recommending that similar programs of support helped retain a safe and competent workforce.

However, other respondents raised questions about the value, need and cost of such a program, which duplicates existing services such as Employment Assistance Programs (EAPs), and other public and private health services accessible to practitioners for support and treatment of issues related to alcohol and other drugs (AOD) and mental health problems.

While the National Board is concerned about the wellbeing of all nurses and midwives, as a regulator it does not have a statutory role in primary, preventative or support health programs.

In forming a decision about future National Board funding for the NMHPV, the National Board also considered the range of existing support programs in place across jurisdictions, including EAP programs provided by large employers, and practitioners' access to health support through public and private health sector services.

More information is available in the following documents on the National Board website.

- [National Board media release NMHPV November 2012](#)
- [Nursing and Midwifery Explanatory Notes NMHPV Nov 2012](#)

### AHPRA releases service charter

AHPRA recently released a service charter that sets out the values that guide AHPRA, the standards of service you can expect from it, and the steps you can take if these standards are not met.

The charter is not about practitioners' responsibilities in relation to registration, or the decisions and actions of National Boards in relation to registered practitioners. National Board decisions are made case by case. Appeals against these decisions can be made to courts and tribunals, as set down in the National Law.

AHPRA works in partnership with the National Board, along with 13 other National Boards, to regulate the health professions.

The most important role of the National Board is to protect the public and facilitate access to health services. The National Board sets the standards and policies that all nurses and midwives must meet. AHPRA works on behalf of the National Board.

AHPRA maintains public registers for enrolled nurses, registered nurses and midwives, and manages the initial registration of nurses and midwives, and their annual renewal of registration in partnership with the state and territory boards of the NMBA.

AHPRA also manages notifications about the health, performance or conduct of nurses and midwives, in partnership with the state and territory boards of the NMBA, except in NSW where this is done jointly through the Nursing and Midwifery Council and the Health Care Complaints Commission.

Read more on the AHPRA service charter under *About* on the [AHPRA website](#).

