



# Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council

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Date: 30.06.10

Ms Anne Copeland  
Chair  
Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia  
PO Box 16085  
MELBOURNE VIC 8007

Dear Ms Copeland

Thank you for letter of 25 June 2010 concerning the national accreditation standards for nursing and midwifery education.

The Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council discussed the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia's (NMBA) advice on proposed standards on Monday 28 June 2010. Ministers noted the advice you provided.

Ministers remain concerned about the Board's decision to continue to exclusively support university-based education for registered (Division 1) nurses into the future. We are pleased that the Board has supported existing currently accredited undergraduate courses (Holmesglen TAFE and Avondale College) being exempt from the proposed standard while they continue to meet benchmarking requirements. Ministers were of the view that the exemptions provided to Avondale College and Holmesglen TAFE demonstrate that the Board recognises that non-university courses, when meeting the appropriate benchmarks, do not put at risk patient safety and quality of care outcomes.

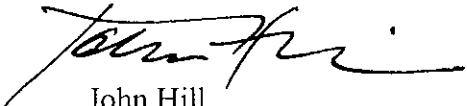
Ministers also expressed dissatisfaction that the former Deputy Prime Minister's letter, as Chair of the Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment, did not persuade the Board to adopt a standard consistent with national higher education policy. Further we are disappointed that a priority on learning outcomes and a competency-based approach appears to have been discarded for an approach which emphasises comparison with other professions.

Ministers made the decision not to issue a policy direction on this matter, however we welcome an extensive, but expeditious review and consultation on this standard. We hope this will provide an opportunity for the views of Ministers, the strong evidence of existing practice, and the incorporation of national higher education policy to be better reflected in the Board proposed standard.

Ministers welcomed the Board's agreement that the transition period to the Diploma entry requirement for enrolled nurse programs will not apply until 1 July 2014 and that this standard will only apply to new graduates applying from that date.

In relation to the accreditation standards for postgraduate midwifery courses, Ministers recognise that the Board has agreed to amend this standard to stipulate a minimum requirement of 12 months full time study or part time equivalent. Ministers would prefer a competency based approach to training, which would consequently not require a reference to course duration. However, the proposed revised standard does reflect the status quo in the majority of jurisdictions and in this context, Ministers welcomed the amendment to this standard.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Hill', written in a cursive style.

John Hill  
Chair, Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council  
Minister for Health, South Australia