

Communiqué

Meeting of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia

27 October 2011 in the AHPRA office Canberra ACT

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (The Board or NMBA) meets for a full day each month to consider matters relating to the effective regulation of nurses and midwives in Australia and in accordance with the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act* as in force in each state and territory (the National Law): www.ahpra.gov.au/Legislation-and-Publications/Legislation.aspx

With a [Board membership](#) comprising eight health practitioners from each state and territory as well as four community members, the Board has been progressively meeting each month in a different state and territory AHPRA office. This provides the opportunity for the National Board members to engage with the members of the State or Territory Board of NMBA and key staff in the State or Territory office of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).

To improve the communication between the NMBA and the State and Territory Boards of NMBA, the Chair of the State or Territory Board or their delegate are able to attend as an observer when the National Board meeting is held in their state or territory. In addition, the National Board has approved the establishment of a formal monthly meeting between the Chair of the NMBA, Ms Anne Copeland and the Chairs (or their delegate) of the State and Territory Boards of NMBA. The purpose of these meetings is to share information, provide feedback and recommendations for improvement in the Board's governance arrangements including delegations, inform nursing and midwifery policy as well as enhance national consistency of decision making and Board processes. This is particularly important because the State and Territory Boards as well as the State and Territory Registration and Notifications Committees are delegated their responsibilities by NMBA and determine the registration and/or notification matters relating to an individual nurse and/or a midwife.

The Board recognises the importance of communication and is keen to re-establish the monthly Communiqués as one of a number of communication strategies to better inform nurses, midwives, students of nursing and midwifery as well as stakeholders, including the public, of the considerable work being undertaken by the Board. The Board is working hard to establish and maintain a responsive and effective regulatory framework that provides clear evidence based standards and sound guidance to nurses and midwives for the safe, quality nursing and midwifery care to the Australian community.

An important contribution to the Board's work is the input received from stakeholders during the Board's wide-ranging consultation on documents that affect the professions. The Board releases consultation papers from time to time, asking stakeholders to provide input that help shape the Board's Registration Standards, Codes and Guidelines, as well as policies. All current and past consultations, including submissions from stakeholders can be accessed from the Consultation and Submissions section on the Board's home page www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au

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

The Board is sending registration reminders to about 6000 nurses and midwives in Western Australia (WA) with registration due to expire on 31 December 2011. The easiest and fastest way to renew is to follow the [‘Renew your registration’](#) button on the Board’s or AHPRA’s homepage.

A [media statement](#) has also been distributed, which can be viewed on the website under the ‘News’ tab.

The primary message from the Chair of the Board, Ms Anne Copeland is to urge these nurses and midwives to renew on time and online. This cohort will be given valid registration until 31 May 2012 when they must renew their registration again along with all nurses and midwives in Australia.

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 in order to be registered.

English language skills registration standard

The Board implemented a [revised registration standard on English Language skills](#) for nurses and midwives effective from 19 September 2011.

Specific transition provisions for students and existing internationally qualified nurse and/or midwife applicants are outlined on pages 4 and 5 of the [Fact Sheet and FAQ for English Language Skills](#) and include the following statement:

Education providers are encouraged to contact their local State or Territory Manager at AHPRA to clarify any issues arising from the transition provisions. The State or Territory Manager will ensure all relevant issues are raised directly with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia for consideration.

At the October meeting, the Board considered submissions from three education providers regarding the impact of the existing transition provisions and subsequently approved a policy whereby any student that is identified in writing by a Board approved education provider as having completed all the approved program of study requirements by **30 March 2012** will be assessed against the registration standard on English language skills (1 July 2010 -18 September 2011) and related arrangements in place prior to 19 September 2011.

These students will have the option to choose to be assessed against the registration standard on English language skills in place from 19 September 2011. They will need to write to AHPRA specifically to request this option.

The Board also reaffirmed that all students that complete an approved program of study leading to registration as a nurse or midwife after 30 March 2012 will be required to meet the registration standard on English Language skills for nurses and midwives effective from 19 September 2011.

More information about the revised registration standard on English language skills is published on the [website](#).

Update: Professional Indemnity Insurance arrangements registration standard

The Board has analysed the feedback received from stakeholders and incorporated the changes to the:

- *Revision of professional indemnity insurance arrangements Registration Standard for nurses and midwives*
- *Draft of professional indemnity insurance for midwives guideline, and*
- *'Quantum of cover' for professional indemnity insurance for midwives guideline.*

The Board has approved both the revised *Professional indemnity insurance arrangements Registration Standard for nurses and midwives* and the revised *Guidelines: Professional indemnity insurance arrangements for midwives* and subsequently presented them to the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council (AHWMC) for consideration at the November 2011 meeting. Implementation of both documents by the Board is subject to the AHWMC's approval and the Board is awaiting the outcome of AHWMC's deliberations.

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 Board has approved a new *Position Statement on Nurse Practitioner Scope of Practice* to provide clarity with regards the Board's decision not to require scope of practice to be included on the endorsement of Nurse Practitioners and the National Register.

In addition, the Position Statement provides guidance to Nurse Practitioners who choose to expand or change their scope of practice to meet the needs of their client group.

The *Position Statement on Nurse Practitioner Scope of Practice* will be uploaded onto the Board's website shortly with a notice and link under the *Latest News* section of the Board's home page.

Audit of compliance with Board's Registration Standards

AHPRA has established the Australian Health Practitioner Audit Project which will develop an auditing framework in consultation with the 10 National Boards to ensure a nationally consistent approach to health practitioner compliance with the Board's four registration standards; Criminal History, Professional Indemnity Insurance, Continuing Professional Development and Recency of Practice.

The development of a framework for auditing compliance will consider relevant legislative requirements, frequency and size of the audits, type of audit setting and setting the scope and terms of reference for the audit, appointment of auditors, audit methodology; and the reporting of results.

A communication strategy will be a central part of the audit of compliance project to the Board's stakeholders. AHPRA expects this will be completed by mid 2012 following a trial in late 2011/2012 with the Pharmacy Board of Australia.

The Board has prioritised auditing of practitioner compliance with the Board's registration standards as an important initiative. The Board has recently completed a two month audit project into the Registration Standards on Continuing Professional Development and Recency of Practice and has approved a report

that will complement and inform the AHPRA audit project as it considers the profession specific aspects of auditing compliance of nurses and midwives.

Accreditation - Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC) is the independent accrediting authority for nursing and midwifery under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. ANMAC www.anmac.org.au is based in Canberra and sets the standards for accreditation and accredits nursing and midwifery programs of study leading to registration and endorsement as well as the education providers.

Standards for accreditation, accredited programs of study and education providers all require approval by the Board. At a meeting in May 2011, the Board approved the first two programs of study accredited by ANMAC.

Since then, the Board has approved a total of twelve programs of study including the following five in October/November 2011:

1. Wodonga Institute of TAFE – Diploma of Nursing, for five years at two campuses, Wodonga and Yarrawonga (Victoria) - *Enrolled Nurse*
2. University of South Australia, Bachelor of Nursing for five years at three campuses, City East in Adelaide, Whyalla and Mt Gambier (South Australia) - *Registered Nurse*
3. University of Sydney, Bachelor of Nursing (Advanced Studies) for five years (New South Wales) - *Registered Nurse*
4. Flinders University - Bachelor of Midwifery for five years (South Australia) – *Registered Midwife*
5. Victoria University - Bachelor of Midwifery for five years (Victoria) – *Registered Midwife*

The Board also approved the removal of Caulfield General Medical Centre’s Return to Practice program from the Board approved program of study list and approved the inclusion of the following education provider’s new name on the Board approved program of study list. The original name of the education provider will be placed in brackets stating “previously known as”. These providers are:

Original name of approved Educator provider	New name of approved Educator provider
Victorian College of Health Nursing (VCHN)	Institute of Health and Nursing Australia (IHNA)
Avondale College Ltd	Avondale College of Higher Education
Marr Mooditj Foundation Incorporated	Marr Mooditj Training Inc
Royal District Nursing Service Foundation Inc of SA	Your Life Health & Learning Inc
Mater Education Centre- Mater Misericordiae Health Services Brisbane Limited	Mater Education Limited
Nursing Industry Skills	Australian Nursing and Midwifery Education Centre (ANMEC)

These approved programs and amendments have been included in the Board's list of [approved education providers](#) and programs of study on the Board's website under the 'Accreditation' tab.

Student Registration

Since March 2011, all students enrolled in an approved nursing or midwifery program are registered as a student of nursing or midwifery with the Board. Under the National Law, the Student Register is not public.

The role of the Board in relation to students is limited to student health impairment matters or when there is a criminal conviction of a serious nature, either of which may adversely impact on public safety. The Board has no role to play in the academic progress or conduct of students, which continues to be a core responsibility of educational providers.

The definition of education providers under the National Law is broad. It includes education providers delivering Board approved programs of study leading to registration. It also includes education providers, health services and other organisations or individuals that provide clinical experience placements for persons who are not enrolled in a Board approved program of study leading to registration and do not hold registration in Australia in the profession in which they are undertaking the clinical experience placement. This includes students from overseas.

The Board registers students for the duration of study or until the student is no longer enrolled in an approved program of study. Two [fact sheets](#) have been developed to inform students, education providers, health services about student registration and their obligations under the National Law. These are available on the website under the 'Registration and Endorsement' tab.

Graduating Students

AHPRA has introduced online registration for thousands of final year students who are graduating as health practitioners at the end of 2011. This service enables students to apply for registration early, four to six weeks before they complete their course.

Most students will be able to complete their registration application online, while others will use the dedicated web-pages to be directed to the correct application form. All applications require students to return some supporting documents to AHPRA by mail.

There are five simple steps to graduate registration:

1. Students apply for registration at www.ahpra.gov.au/Registration/Graduate-Applications.aspx (This can be done 4 to 6 weeks before completing their course)
2. Applicants fill out an online application (if eligible) or download an application form. All applications require some documents to be sent to AHPRA by mail.
3. Education providers advise AHPRA when applicants are eligible to graduate
4. AHPRA finalises assessment, confirms registration, publishes new graduates' names on the Register of Practitioners and sends out registration certificates
5. New graduates are registered and eligible to start working as soon as their name is published on the Register of Practitioners

Website and receiving important information by email

Further information about the Board can be found at: 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 and keep up to date with regular Board news and updates.
- Visit 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)