

Communiqué

Meeting of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia

23 February 2012 in the AHPRA office Adelaide, South Australia

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

The Board has had a very busy start to the new year, meeting twice via teleconference in January 2012 followed by the regular monthly meeting on 23 February 2012 in the South Australian AHPRA office. Board meetings are being held in each state and territory and provide the opportunity for the National Board members to meet with members of State and Territory Boards of the NMBA as well as the senior AHPRA state and territory staff.

Ms Gillie Anderson formally resigned her position as a community member of the National Board and Tasmanian Board of NMBA. Gillie was acknowledged by the National Board for her invaluable contribution to the Boards and the NMBA Finance and Governance Committee. The Board expressed their appreciation to Gillie and wished her well in the future.

The Board member vacancy created by Gillie Anderson's resignation will be replaced as part of the recruitment and selection process currently being undertaken by AHPRA for the appointment of a new twelve member Board from September 2012. The membership will comprise eight health practitioners, one from each state and territory, and four community members. Nominations and expressions of interest for future board members of the National Board closed on Friday 2 March 2012.

Nominations for the appointment of Board members for Victorian and South Australian Boards of NMBA

Nominations and expressions of interest for the Victorian and South Australian Boards of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia are currently being advertised.

[Victorian Board of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia](#)

Vacancies for two health practitioner Board members - applications open until close of business on Monday 19 March 2012.

[South Australian Board of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia](#)

Vacancies for two health practitioner and three community Board members - applications open until close of business on Monday 2 April 2012.

The State and Territory Boards of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia are each comprised of nine members (six health practitioners and three community members). They are committees of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia. The National Board delegates in accordance with the National Law to these committees who make decisions in relation to the registration of an individual applicant or a notification in

relation to an individual nurse's or midwife's health, performance and/or conduct and an individual student's health.

Further information and a candidate application pack can be obtained from the [AHPRA website](#).

NMBA Project - *The Comparative study on services available to support impaired nurses and midwives in Australia*

At a meeting on 15 December 2011, the National Board discussed a request received from the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council (AHWMC) to consider the continuation of board-funded health programs such as the Nurses and Midwives Health Program Victoria (NMHPV) (formerly the Victorian Nurses Health Program), and its expansion nationally for the nursing and midwifery professions. AHWMC also requested that the National Board consult with relevant professional bodies on this matter as part of this process and provide a response to AHWMC.

To develop an informed response to this request by April 2012, the Board approved funding for a study titled *The comparative study on services available to support impaired nurses and midwives in Australia*. The Board undertook a request for tender process and appointed Siggins Miller on 13 February 2012 to undertake a comparative study of the services provided to support impaired nurses and midwives across Australia and to consult with relevant professional stakeholders. The outcome of the report will assist the Board in fully considering the viability of health programs including the Nurses and Midwives Health Program, Victoria (NMHPV) and determining whether a national health program is appropriate from a regulatory perspective.

Funding for such a program would need to be carefully considered as the National Board is entirely funded through the registration fees received from nurses and midwives. The resources required and potential costs to the registrant will be part of the National Board's deliberations.

The study will be conducted in February/March 2012 with a final report to be presented to the Board for consideration by April 2012. The Board will subsequently provide recommendations to the AHWMC.

Professional codes, guidelines and position statements

Developed and approved by the Board following wide-ranging stakeholder consultation, professional codes, standards, guidelines and position statements are published on the Board's website under the [Codes, Guidelines and Statements](#) tab. These documents, in conjunction with the National Board's *Competency Standards*, comprise the National Board's *Professional Practice Framework* which outlines the National Board's expectations of safe, quality care by nurses and midwives and the standard of professional care they provide.

Re-entry to practice policy

Work is in progress to finalise the *Re-entry to practice policy*, which will soon be published on the Board's website and distributed to stakeholders. This policy sets out the National Board's requirements for persons who have previously held registration as a nurse and/or a midwife in Australia who are returning to work after a break. The policy will include the requirements for persons who previously held registration as a nurse in Australia with the sole qualification in mental health, paediatric or disability nursing.

Under the National Law, the National Board's [registration standards](#) must be met by those applying for initial registration, nurses and midwives renewing their registration and those seeking registration who previously held general registration or non-practising registration as a nurse and/or a midwife in Australia and are applying for registration in order to return to practice in Australia.

The *Recency of practice registration standard* requires nurses and midwives to demonstrate that they have undertaken sufficient practice to maintain competence in their profession/s within the past five years, for a period equivalent to a minimum of three months full time.

Previously registered nurses and midwives in Australia who have not practised for a period of five years or more, will be required to undergo an individual assessment of their application by the Board to determine

whether they need to satisfactorily complete a program of study, an assessment or a period of supervised practice experience approved by the Board prior to being able to gain registration and practise.

The policy outlines the pathways available to those returning to work which is dependent on the outcome of the assessment of the individual's qualifications (both undergraduate and postgraduate nursing and/or midwifery studies), professional practice history, and length of time away from practising in the profession/s.

This policy will enable the Board to protect the public while facilitating previously registered nurses and midwives to re-enter the profession/s and ensuring that each person who is registered is safe and competent to practise.

Eligible midwives

At an out of session meeting on 25 January 2012, the National Board approved an extension to the time period for eligible midwives to successfully complete a Board-approved program of study to prescribe scheduled medicines in midwifery practice (in accordance with Requirement (f) of the [Registration Standard for Eligible Midwives](#)).

This extension was made in recognition that there is no National Board approved program of study currently available, meaning that eligible midwives cannot enrol and complete a course in the time identified in their formal undertaking.

Eligible midwives with a notation effective from 1 November 2010 to 30 December 2011, will soon receive a letter from the National Board with a new formal undertaking that provides an extension of a further 12 months to complete a Board-approved course.

The National Board is currently awaiting the outcome of an assessment by ANMAC of a new national on-line program of study for prescribing scheduled medicines in midwifery practice. Further information will be given to eligible midwives once this has occurred.

Upon successful completion of a Board-approved program of study, the eligible midwife will be endorsed by the Board as *qualified to prescribe schedule 2, 3, 4 and 8 medicines required for midwifery practice across pregnancy, labour, birth and post natal care, in accordance with relevant State and Territory legislation*. The first statement of the eligible midwife notation will remain unchanged to articulate the scope of practice for an eligible midwife, that is, *that the practitioner is an eligible midwife competent to provide pregnancy, labour, birth and postnatal care and qualified to provide the associated services and order diagnostic investigations required for midwifery practice, in accordance with relevant State and Territory legislation*.

The Board has approved the reformatting of the *Registration standard for eligible midwives* to align this standard with all the other NMBA registration standards. This will not alter the existing content of the registration standard as approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council. An explanatory note will be included when the National Board publishes the reformatted standard on its website. This registration standard has an expiry date of 30 June 2013 and the Board will undertake a review of this standard in due course in accordance with the AHPRA consultation guidelines.

Accreditation - Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council

The Board approved the following programs for five years:

- Australian Catholic University (ACUcom) Diploma of Nursing (Melbourne) and
- University of Southern Queensland, Bachelor of Nursing (Toowoomba and Hervey Bay).

The Board approved following additional campuses to be included in the existing Approved Programs of Study list – Major Changes:

- Goulburn Ovens TAFE (GOTAFE), Diploma of Nursing (Echuca)
- Navitas Health Skills Australia (HSA), Diploma of Nursing (Brisbane) and
- University of Ballarat, Diploma of Nursing (Ararat).

The Board noted that in accordance with the transitional provisions under s283 Programs of Study in the *National Law*, that the Wimmera Health Care Group – Return to Practice course for Registered Nurses in Division 1 and 2/ Initial Registration of Overseas Nurses (IRON) in Division 1 and 2 (Horsham and Dimboola) will be included in the NMBA Approved Program of Study list effective from 1 July 2010.

Website and receiving important information by email

Further information about the National 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 relating to their professions.

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