

## Media release

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4 May 2012

### Nursing and Midwifery Board recognises special day for midwives

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (the National Board) recognises the important role of midwives in communities across the nation.

May is an important month for the midwifery profession with the International Day of the Midwife being commemorated worldwide tomorrow – 5 May 2012.

More than 39,000 midwives are currently registered with the National Board.

The International Day of the Midwife has been celebrated since 1991 and in 2012 the commemorative day's theme is 'Midwives Save Lives'.

National Board Chair Anne Copeland said the day was a perfect opportunity to reflect on the invaluable contribution of midwives not only in Australia but globally in tackling maternal, newborn and infant mortality.

"Midwives working in Australia take pride in their work of caring for women and their babies. Midwives also contribute to the midwifery profession by providing important feedback to the National Board on registration standards, professional codes, standards and guidelines, and consultations relating to midwifery practice", Ms Copeland said.

"Their willingness to engage with the National Board is vital when determining evidence-based standards to guide the profession".

The National Board plays a key role in keeping the public safe by ensuring that women have access to qualified and competent midwives to provide quality care.

"The fact that midwives can now prescribe scheduled medicines as an eligible midwife is an example of progress within the midwifery profession in Australia and is a further service to the community in expanding the right to choose a specific health care provider", Ms Copeland said.

The National Board welcomed the opportunity to approve the inaugural program of study from the Flinders University, a Graduate Certificate Midwifery (Leading to Endorsement for Scheduled Medicines for Eligible Midwives) on Monday 30 April 2012.

The implementation of this approved program of study will enable the existing 114 eligible midwives, once their study is completed, to obtain an endorsement to prescribe scheduled medicines and practice to their full scope of midwifery practice.

More than 340,000 midwives and nurses are due to renew their registration with the National Board by 31 May 2012.

*For more information*

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