

Communiqué

Meeting of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia
30 August 2013 in Melbourne, Victoria

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (the National Board or NMBA) is the national regulator for the nursing and midwifery professions in Australia. It is established under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory ([the National Law](#)).

The National Board meets monthly and considers a range of matters, the most important of which are published in this Communiqué.

In order to facilitate engagement with local stakeholders across states and territories, the National Board now holds its monthly meeting in a different state and territory every two to three months.

This helps the National Board to gain a better understanding of the jurisdictional matters relating to the regulation of nurses, midwives and students.

It also supports information sharing on the National Board's strategic priorities, projects and regulatory functions with local representatives from the professional and industrial organisations, education providers and employers, health department and members of the local state or territory board of the NMBA.

Thank you and farewell to National Board Chair

Ms Anne Copeland completed her term of office as the inaugural Chair of the National Board on 31 August 2013.

During Ms Copeland's last meeting as National Board Chair, she offered her sincere thanks to the National Board members for a memorable journey. She also thanked internal and external stakeholders for their support towards meeting the National Scheme's objectives and guiding principles, including protecting the public, through several years of substantial change.

The National Board acknowledged and thanked Ms Copeland for her contribution.

Appointment of Presiding Member, National Board

In the absence of an appointed Chair by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council, the National Board may elect a Presiding Member to chair the National Board meetings.

While awaiting the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council decision on the appointment of the Health Practitioner member for Queensland and the new National Board Chair, the National Board elected Dr Lynette Cusack to be the Presiding Member.

The National Board welcomes Dr Cusack who has served in the role of Deputy Chair of the National Board since the introduction of this position by the National Board in August 2009. She was re-appointed to the Deputy Chair position by the National Board in September 2012 for a further one year term of office.

Dr Cusack has an extensive history of working in regulation, including the role of the Chair of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of South Australia prior to the introduction of the National Scheme.

Details of National Board members are available on the [National Board website](#).

Midwifery

Safety and quality framework for midwives for preliminary consultation

The National Board is going to preliminary consultation on a revised *Safety and quality framework (SQF) for midwives*.

The revised SQF aims to support regulatory accountability for safe and professional midwifery practice. It covers the legislative and policy requirements for midwifery practice and extends to all midwives regardless of place of practice. Through a comprehensive approach, the SQF is designed to help midwives shape their professional practice so they can provide safe, accountable, woman-centred care.

Core elements of the SQF include, among others, national competency standards, scope of practice, codes of professional conduct and ethics, guide to professional boundaries, registration standards requirements, decision making framework and guidelines for advertising regulated health services.

Preliminary consultation gives the opportunity to road-test the proposed content to help identify any operational impacts, issues or concerns before release for an extended public consultation to inform the review.

Once feedback from the preliminary consultation is analysed, a public consultation paper will be available under [Current consultations](#) on the National Board website so you can give your feedback.

Midwifery Council of New Zealand signs MoU with National Board

On 30 August 2013, the National Board signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Midwifery Council of New Zealand, recognising there are potential benefits in close collaboration.

This MoU is in the spirit of the [Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement](#), a non-treaty arrangement between the Commonwealth, state and territory governments of Australia and the Government of New Zealand under the [Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1997](#).

The MoU formalises a close relationship between the entities in the following areas of collaboration:

- developing standards for regulating midwives
- exchanging professional knowledge to develop these standards
- better facilitating mutual recognition of midwives
- enabling flexible movement of midwives between Australia and New Zealand, and
- facilitating the exchange of registrants' information within the scope of the respective entities' legislative powers.

The National Board looks forward to future opportunities to engage in collaborative initiatives and projects with the Midwifery Council of New Zealand.

Project on supervision models for privately practising midwives

The National Board approved a project to go out for tender to explore models of supervision for privately practising midwives. The intention of the project is to make recommendations to the National Board about a possible model in Australia.

Different models of supervision are globally practised and the project is to determine the best evidence-based regulatory model of supervision.

Nursing and Midwifery

National Board participation in WHO South Pacific Taskforce

The National Board will participate as a member in a new regional regulatory taskforce established in August 2013 for the South Pacific Chief Nurse and Midwifery Officers Alliance (SPCNMOA).

SPCNMOA's mission is to strengthen nursing and midwifery capacity as a key priority for developing Pacific health systems through country ownership and leadership. It takes into account matters including sustainable workforce issues, regional quality improvement frameworks and accreditation of nursing and midwifery programs of study.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) Collaborating Centre for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Development is the body that provides the secretariat for SPCNMOA and operates out of the University of Sydney.

In an effort to strengthen the regulatory focus of the alliance, the National Board - along with the Nursing Council of New Zealand - attended a meeting in Melbourne in November 2012, where SPCNMOA encouraged both regulators to become regulatory representatives of the taskforce.

The aim of the taskforce includes:

- exploring possible work relating to regional regulatory frameworks
- looking at own country legislations and regulations and understanding gaps or barriers in regulation that affect nursing and midwifery services
- exploring safety, economic and regulatory issues of unregulated health workers, and
- working to define quality of care in the context of South Pacific in order to promote the improved health of Pacific nations.

By participating in the regulatory taskforce, the National Board will engage in development opportunities in nursing and midwifery regulation in the South Pacific regions.

The Nursing Council of New Zealand and the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC) are also participating members of the regulatory taskforce.

[International criminal history checks for further public consultation](#)

The National Board is going into further public consultation on international criminal history checks as part of an all National Boards' consultation.

A consultation for international criminal history checks ran in June – August 2012 and is published under [past consultations](#) on the National Board website, where [submissions received](#) are also available.

Section 79 of the [National Law](#) requires that the National Boards consider criminal history from jurisdictions outside Australia before registering a health practitioner.

The current approach to checking criminal histories involves seeking an Australian criminal history through *CrimTrac*, the national information-sharing service for Australia's police, law enforcement and national security agencies. An applicant for registration must also sign a declaration on the registration application form disclosing their criminal history in all countries, including Australia.

To balance the requirements for public protection with the need for responsive and timely application and assessment processes, the National Boards and AHPRA have been considering possible options to refine the mechanisms for international criminal history checks.

The new consultation has been refined to address various issues raised in the prior consultation, and takes into account the range of responses that encouraged a reasonable balance between risk and comprehensive checks without holding up the registration process.

The new public consultation is set to run for four weeks and will be published under [Current consultations](#) on the National Board website.

[Re-entry to practice requirements for public consultation](#)

The National Board will soon consult publicly on re-entry to practice requirements for individuals who previously held registration as a nurse and/or a midwife in Australia, including those who:

- are seeking general registration following a lapse in practice of five or more years
- have held non-practising registration for five or more years, and are seeking general registration, or
- have a sole qualification in mental health nursing or paediatric nursing or disability nursing and no longer hold registration or have held non practising registration for five or more years.

The current Board-approved *Recency of practice registration standard* applies to all nurses and midwives when they apply to renew registration annually. Previously enrolled nurses, registered nurses and/or midwives in Australia who have not practised in the respective profession for a period of five or more years are required to undergo an individual assessment of their application.

This assessment is based upon the previously enrolled nurse's, registered nurse's and/or midwife's:

- qualifications (includes both undergraduate and postgraduate nursing and/or midwifery studies)
- professional practice history, and
- length of time away from practising in the profession/s.

The outcome of this assessment determines the re-entry pathway that the nurse and/or the midwife is required to complete.

The National Board consultation will include a proposed revised *Re-entry to practice policy*, principles for assessing applicants for re-entry to practice and guidelines for supervised practice.

The public consultation will be published under [Current consultations](#) on the National Board website.

[Approved programs of study leading to registration and endorsement](#)

Nursing

The National Board approved for five years the following nursing programs of study as providing a qualification for the purposes of registration:

- RMIT University, Bachelor of Nursing (Bundoora)
- University of Wollongong, Bachelor of Nursing (Wollongong, Bega, Shoalhaven, Southern Sydney & Wollongong)
- University of Wollongong, Bachelor of Nursing Advanced (Wollongong, Bega, Shoalhaven, Southern Sydney & Wollongong)
- University of Wollongong, Bachelor of Nursing Overseas Qualified Nurses (Wollongong, Bega, Shoalhaven, Southern Sydney & Wollongong)

The National Board approved for two years the following nursing programs of study as providing a qualification for the purposes of registration:

- Sunraysia College of Health and Nursing, Entry Program for Internationally Qualified Nurses – Registered Nurses (Mildura)

The National Board approved with major modification the following program of study:

- Your life Health and Learning, Diploma of Nursing
- University of Sunshine Coast, Bachelor of Nursing Science
- Partners in Training, Diploma of Nursing
- University of Ballarat, Diploma of Nursing
- James Cook University, Bachelor of Nursing Science
- Charles Darwin University, Bachelor of Nursing

The National Board approved the following to be moved into 'inactive' in the list of approved programs of study. These are old programs that may have students finishing but are not approved for new enrolments:

- RMIT, Bachelor of Nursing
- University of Wollongong, Bachelor of Nursing
- University of Wollongong, Bachelor of Nursing Advanced
- University of Wollongong, Bachelor of Nursing Overseas Qualified Nurses

The National Board approved the following program prolongations:

- University of Southern Queensland, Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Practice (rural and remote) until 31 December 2013

The National Board approved the following amendments to the approved program of study list:

- Wodonga Institute of TAFE (ADF), Diploma of Nursing
- Edith Cowan University, Bachelor of Science (Nursing)/Bachelor of Science(Midwifery)

The National Board approved the following change in education provider name:

- Australian Nursing Federation to Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation
- Tasmanian Polytechnic to TasTAFE

The National Board approved a change in unit code from the National Training package HLT51607 to National Training package HLT51612 for the following education providers:

- Sunraysia Institute of Technical and Further Education
- Kyabram Community Learning Centre

Midwifery

The National Board approved for five years the following nursing programs of study as providing a qualification for the purposes of registration:

- Charles Sturt University, Graduate Diploma of Midwifery (Wagga Wagga)
- University of Queensland, Education Program Leading to Endorsement of Scheduled Medications (Eligible Midwife) (Ipswich)

The National Board approved with major modification the following program of study:

- The University of Newcastle, Bachelor of Midwifery

The National Board approved the following program prolongations:

- Griffith University, Master of Midwifery with Honours until 9 January 2015

The National Board approved removal of conditions for the following program of study:

- Southern Cross University, Bachelor of Midwifery (Gold Coast & Coffs Harbour)

The National Board approved the following to be moved into 'inactive' in the list of approved programs of study. This is an old program that may have students finishing but is not approved for new enrolments:

- Charles Stuart University, Graduate Diploma of Midwifery (Wagga Wagga),

Nursing and Midwifery

The National Board approved the following amendments to the approved program of study list:

- Edith Cowan University, Bachelor of Science (Nursing)/Bachelor of Science (Midwifery)

For more detailed information please go to the [approved program of study lists](#) on the National Board website.

Dr Lynette Cusack, Registered Nurse

Presiding Member, Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia

18 September 2013

For more information

- Keep up to date with regular news and updates on the National Board website www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au
- Visit www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au under *Contact Us* to lodge an online enquiry form
- For registration enquiries: 1300 419 495 (within Australia) +61 3 8708 9001 (overseas callers)
- For media enquiries: (03) 8708 9200