

## Public consultation paper

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April 2014

### Draft revised *Safety and quality framework for midwives*

The proposed *Safety and quality framework for midwives* (Attachment A) applies to all midwives, regardless of place of practice. It replaces the existing *Safety and quality framework for privately practising midwives attending homebirths* and combines into one document, the registration standards, professional codes and guidelines to incorporate all the legislative and regulatory requirements for safe and professional midwifery practice. The requirements and guidelines of relevant state and territory legislation and employers also guide midwifery practice. Midwives in paid employment must also work within the parameters of clinical governance of their employing organisation.

**Please provide feedback, marked ‘Safety and quality framework for midwives consultation’, in Word (or equivalent) and PDF format by email to [mbafeedback@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:mbafeedback@ahpra.gov.au) by 4pm on Monday 23 June 2014.**<sup>1</sup>

#### About this consultation

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (National Board) is releasing the draft revised *Safety and quality framework for midwives* for public consultation. We invite you to provide your comments on the consultation paper, including answers to the questions posed, by 23 June 2014.

Some feedback received during preliminary consultation to target stakeholders has been incorporated into this version of the SQF for midwives. The National Board is also testing some proposals more widely and will integrate feedback into finalised documents when the public consultation closes.

#### How your submission will be treated

Submissions will generally be published unless you request otherwise. The National Board publishes submissions on its website to encourage discussion and inform the community and stakeholders.

However, the National Board will not publish on its website, or make available to the public, submissions that contain offensive or defamatory comments or which are outside the scope of reference.

Before publication, the National Board may remove personally-identifying information from submissions, including contact details. The views expressed in the submissions are those of the individuals or organisations who submit them and their publication does not imply any acceptance of, or agreement with, these views by the National Board.

The National Board also accepts submissions made in confidence. These submissions will not be published on the website or elsewhere. Submissions may be confidential because they include

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<sup>1</sup> You are welcome to supply a PDF file of your feedback in addition to the Word (or equivalent) file; however we request that you do supply a word file. As part of an effort to meet international website accessibility guidelines, AHPRA and the National Boards are striving to publish documents in accessible formats (such as Word), in addition to PDFs. More information about this is available at [www.ahpra.gov.au/About-AHPRA/Accessibility.aspx](http://www.ahpra.gov.au/About-AHPRA/Accessibility.aspx)

personal experiences or other sensitive information. Any request for access to a confidential submission will be determined in accordance with the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth), which has provisions designed to protect personal information and information given in confidence.

Please let the NMBA know if you do not want your submission published, or want all or part of it treated as confidential.

## Contents of this consultation paper

- Overview of consultation
- Estimated impact of revised documents
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## Overview

### About the draft revised *Safety and quality framework for midwives*

This consultation paper outlines the aim, objectives and context of the draft revised Safety and quality framework (SQF) for midwives.

The proposed SQF has been developed following a review of the existing Board-approved *Safety and quality framework for privately practising midwives attending homebirths* available under [Codes and guidelines](#) on the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (National Board) website.

This paper describes the process of consultation and proposes a number of key areas for you to consider in your response.

The National Law requires the National Board to ensure there is wide-ranging consultation on the content of any proposed code or guideline. The National Board will consider your feedback on the proposed *Safety and quality framework for midwives* before finalising the document.

### Why we are revising the SQF

At the request of the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council in October 2010, the National Board adopted the *Safety and quality framework for privately practising midwives attending homebirths* developed by the Victorian Department of Health. The principles underpinning that framework have been incorporated into the draft revised SQF and encompass the regulatory and legislative requirements of midwifery practice.

The draft revised SQF extends to all midwives regardless of place of practice and is a comprehensive approach designed to help midwives shape their professional practice so they can provide safe, quality woman-centred care.

The revised SQF supports regulatory accountability for safe and professional midwifery practice. Through its governance approach of providing evidence based structures, systems and process reviews, the National Board continues its quality improvement work to ensure its accountability.

All midwifery related documents published on the National Board website have been identified and integrated into this SQF and will be used in all future policy documents relating to midwifery.

### Estimated impact of the revised documents

The impacts on midwives and other stakeholders arising from the changes proposed in the revised SQF are minimal. Significant changes may, however, be identified as a result of consultation.

The draft revised SQF provides an explanation of the provisions of the National Law and outlines the standards, codes and legislative requirements within which midwives must practise, ensuring ongoing competence and safe practice.

The proposed changes improve the clarity and usefulness of the explanatory information and incorporate proposals in order to provide guidelines and some certainty to midwives, relevant stakeholders and regulatory authorities.

These proposed changes demonstrate that the midwife's practice is evidence-based and of a higher standard as confirmed by the requirements for notation and endorsement for scheduled medicines.

Any midwife who elects not be recognised at a higher level with a notation or endorsement for scheduled medicines, and is seeking an exemption from PII under section 284 of the National Law, must meet *all alternative requirements* described in the SQF and support those requirements with evidence.

Shaded boxes throughout the document highlight statements surrounding the proposed changes and are designed to promote discussion and feedback during the consultation process.

**1. The proposed *Safety and quality framework for midwives* replaces the existing document *Safety and quality framework for privately practising midwives attending homebirths* to include all midwives regardless of place of practice.**

Points to consider:

- a. Is it appropriate that the revised SQF incorporates all midwives rather than focus on privately practising midwives attending homebirths?
- b. Is the content of the revised SQF helpful, clear and relevant?
- c. Does any content need to be changed, deleted or added in the revised SQF?
- d. Is there missing information that should be added to the revised SQF?
- e. Do you have any other comments on the revised SQF?

**2. Revised requirements for professional indemnity insurance (PII) exemption.**

Points to consider:

- a. How are the existing guidelines for PII working?
- b. Is Table 1. outlining the legislative and policy requirements for PII exemption helpful, clear and relevant?
- c. Does any content need to be changed, deleted or added to the table?
- d. Do you have any other comments on the revised table outlining the requirements for PII exemption?

**3. Evidentiary requirements of midwives claiming Section 284 of the National Law**

Points to consider:

- a. Is Table 2. outlining the evidentiary requirements for privately practicing midwives (PPM) helpful, clear and relevant?
- b. Does any content need to be changed, deleted or added to the table?
- c. Are the evidentiary requirements for annual audit clear and easy to understand?
- d. Do you have any other comments on the revised table outlining the requirements of PPM's?

**4. Policy and legislative requirements of the SQF**

Points to consider:

- a. Is Table 3. outlining the policy and legislative requirements of the SQF helpful, clear and relevant?
- b. Does any content need to be changed, deleted or added to the table?
- c. Does Table 3. add any value to the SQF?
- d. Do you have any other comments on the revised table outlining the requirements of PPM's?

**Relevant sections of the National Law**

Section 35 of the National Law allows a National Board to develop or approve standards, codes and guidelines for the health profession, including the development and approval of codes and guidelines that provide guidance to health practitioners registered in the profession.

Section 39 states that a National Board may develop and approve codes and guideline to provide guidance to the health practitioners it registers; and about other matters relevant to the exercise of its functions.

Section 113 states restrictions on the use of protected titles. For midwifery, the protected title is 'midwife'. You must only use the protected title 'midwife' if you are registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia as a midwife. Upon registration your name is included in the [Register of midwives](#) kept by the National Board.

The title 'registered midwife' is not a protected title.

### Associated documents

Read the *Safety and quality framework for midwives* in conjunction with [codes and guidelines](#) published on the National Board website. These Board-approved documents set the expected standards of professional practice for midwives.

### Review

This guideline will be reviewed at least every three years. This guideline replaces any previously published National Board safety and quality framework for midwives.

<b>Date of issue:</b>
<b>Date of review:</b>