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Message from the Chair

I am delighted to write to you as the newly appointed Chair of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (National Board or NMBA).

It is an honour to have this responsibility. I would like to reinforce my commitment to strengthening the relationships between the National Board and our stakeholders. I look forward to working with you on nursing and midwifery regulation, education and workforce matters.

I am pleased to confirm that we have a number of improvement initiatives for 2014/15 that focus on fostering stakeholder relationships, improving and strengthening the National Scheme and driving operational excellence.

Welcome to our new member from Queensland



Adjunct A/Prof Veronica Casey

Let me take this opportunity to congratulate Adjunct A/ Prof Veronica Casey on her appointment to the National Board as the new health practitioner member for Queensland from 6 May 2014, for a period of three years to 1 May 2017.

Adjunct A/Prof Casey is a registered nurse and midwife, and a fellow of the Australian College of Nursing. She is also one of the practitioner members of the Queensland Board

of the NMBA. She brings invaluable experience, including regulatory experience gained as a state board member, to her role with the National Board. Please join us in welcoming Adjunct A/Prof Casey.

Visit the [Board member page](#) on our website to see the profiles of our National Board members.

Welcome to our new Executive Officer

I am pleased to announce the appointment of a new Executive Officer for the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia. Ms Tanya Vogt took up her position as Executive Officer in June 2014.

In this role, Ms Vogt will support and guide the National Board in matters of policy, governance, regulation, standards development and accreditation. She will also facilitate cross-professional collaboration, maintain National Board stakeholder relationships and contribute to our work in the National Scheme. Ms Vogt brings to her role a strong background in health and regulation.

We also take this chance to farewell Ms Alyson Smith, former Executive Officer, and thank her for her guidance and support over the past three years. We especially acknowledge her contribution to developing the work of the National Board during that time and wish her all the best in her new role as Program Coordinator within AHPRA.

Congratulations to Dr Rosemary Bryant

On behalf of the National Board, I would like to congratulate Dr Rosemary Bryant, Commonwealth Chief Nurse and Midwifery Officer, for recognition of her work in the Queen's Birthday honours list this year.

Dr Bryant was honoured as an Officer of the Order of Australia for distinguished service to the profession of nursing through national and international leadership, and as a supporter of access and equity in healthcare.

In her nursing and midwifery position within the Commonwealth government, Dr Bryant represents an important stakeholder in the work of the National Board.

Registration renewal

Annual registration for nurses and midwives took off to a strong start this year and reached an important milestone at the end of May when registration renewal was due.

By the close of the late payment period for renewals on 30 June, about 346,400 nurses and midwives had renewed registration. Of those who applied to renew registration, 97 per cent did so online. This is remarkable progress over the four years since we started the renewal process at the start of the National Scheme in 2010.

We are now in the fast track period that only runs in July. [Find out more...](#)

Internationally qualified nurses and midwives

A number of you may already be aware that we introduced in February 2014 a different model for assessing applications for registration from internationally qualified nurses and midwives. This change is to make sure that overseas-trained nurses and midwives are qualified to provide safe care to patients in Australia. [Find out more](#)

Review of the National Scheme

The three-year review of the National Scheme is well underway following the public release of the terms of reference on 28 April 2014. [Find out more](#)

Stakeholder forums

This year, the National Board held stakeholder forums in Sydney (February) and Darwin (May). Participants included nursing and midwifery professional associations, education providers, employers, and nurses and midwives. The forums provide a networking opportunity, bringing us closer to our stakeholders. [Find out more](#)

On behalf of the National Board, I encourage all nurses, midwives and students to stay abreast of the changes that are happening and to engage in our public consultations on new and revised registration standards, codes or guidelines by regularly visiting [our website](#).



Dr Lynette Cusack RN
Chair, Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia

Registration

Registration renewal: update

In order to practice in Australia, nurses and midwives must first register with the National Board. Annual registration is due by 31 May.

Registration renewal reached an important milestone at the end of May with close to 340,000 nurses and midwives renewing their registration at an online renewal rate of 97 per cent.

By 30 June, the end of the late payment period and when renewals for nursing and midwifery came to an end, registration numbers had jumped to 346,400. A further one per cent of eligible registrants were being assessed, another one per cent advised they were not renewing and the remaining two per cent had lapsed registration.

Each annual renewal is a process we seek to learn from. Our work continues in finding opportunities for refinement. We are pleased to see the uptake of online renewal. Renewing online is quick, easy and convenient. If you meet registration criteria and have made correct declarations, it can take as little as six minutes from when you click *submit* to get renewal confirmation.

Remember, if you:

- have forgotten your password, you can update it using the [password reset function](#) (you need to have previously registered your correct email address with AHPRA for this function to work)
- are experiencing difficulties using the online service, please phone our Customer Service Team on 1300 419 495 and a member of the team will talk you through the process, and/or
- have submitted your application, you can find out if we have received it; use our online service at [AHPRA - Renewal received confirmation](#).

Fast track applications

If your registration lapsed on 1 July 2014, this means you are now removed from the [national register](#). If you wish to keep practising, you have a chance to submit a fast track application. This offer is only available for the month of July.

Visit [Renewal of registration](#) on our website for a fast track application form.

A fast track application [fee](#) is payable in addition to a registration fee.

If submitting a fast track application, you cannot practise until your application is processed and your registration details are updated on the national register.

To update your contact details

Use AHPRA's secure online services for health practitioners at www.ahpra.gov.au:

- go to the bottom of the home page
- click on *Update contact details* under *Services for Practitioners*
- use your user ID and secure password, and
- follow the prompts.

Audit report

We shared with you in our [newsletter](#) last year that the National Board and AHPRA were developing a nationally consistent approach to auditing.

Annual audits check compliance with registration standards and help us protect the public.

Below are results of an initial random sample of nurses and midwives audited to check their compliance against the recency of practice and continuing professional development registration standards. The audit ran from May to November 2013, and revealed the following outcomes:

Audit outcome	Nurses and midwives who...	% of nurses and midwives
Completed the audit	met registration standard requirements	84.5
Changed to non-practising	changed to a non-practising registration	1.4
Failed to renew	did not renew registration	7.7
Board submission	were referred to the National Board to determine registration or restrictions on registration	4.4
Withdrew application	withdrew their application for registration at the time of the audit	1.6
Other	were ineligible for audit due to unforeseen circumstances	0.4

This is a positive result with a good majority of the random sample showing compliance with registration standards.

The National Board is exploring opportunities and strategies to improve the compliance of nurses and midwives with registration standards.

More information about the audit is available under [Audit](#) on our website.

A public audit report is now available on the [AHPRA website](#) – see *Audit > Practitioner audit - phase 3*.

Internationally qualified nurses and midwives

The National Board has introduced a different model for assessing the qualifications of international nurses and midwives. The aim of this model is to make sure that overseas-trained nurses and midwives seeking registration in Australia hold qualifications that meet Australian standards.

The new model is consistent with the requirements of the National Law and applies a set of clear educational standards all international applicants for registration need to meet, regardless of where they undertook study.

This model comes after:

- three years' experience with the National Scheme and applying the National Law
- continuing evidence-based research on international best practice in assessing the qualifications of internationally qualified nurses and midwives, and
- reviewing decisions from Australian tribunals. The model includes eight criteria against which the National Board assesses qualifications. The criteria establish whether an international qualification is substantially equivalent to a Board-approved Australian nursing or midwifery qualification for registration.

Where a qualification leading to registration is not assessed as equivalent to an Australian qualification, the National Board may take into account relevant subsequent nursing and midwifery qualifications that may allow the applicant to meet all requirements.

Find out more about the [assessment model](#) on our website.

We recognise that assessment and comparison of international qualifications are constantly evolving, and we continue to benchmark this assessment model against international trends.

See also the following useful information:

- [IQNM: Assessing your application under the new model](#)

Registered workforce at a glance

The June 2014 report of the registered workforce will shortly be available on our website.

According to the March 2014 National Board statistics, there are 1,058 nurse practitioners registered to practice in Australia. In total, there are 360,505 enrolled nurses, registered nurses and midwives registered with the National Board.

Table – Snapshot of registered workforce: March 2014

The following table shows totals for practising registration:

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	No PPP	Total
Enrolled nurse (EN)	692	13,199	418	11,286	7,804	1,374	19,817	5,154	53	59,797
Registered nurse (RN)	4,298	73,654	3,114	49,241	21,455	6,346	64,487	27,771	6,870	257,236
EN & RN	53	1,053	39	1,024	538	46	1,793	410	6	4,962
Midwife	91	687	54	528	455	13	940	318	72	3,158
Nurse (EN & RN) & midwife	583	8,846	534	6,222	2,240	644	7,976	3,024	209	30,278
Total Practising										355, 431

The following table shows total for non-practising registration:

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	No PPP	Total
Enrolled nurse (EN)	12	294	4	106	57	16	164	50	4	707
Registered nurse (RN)	52	1,286	19	351	184	69	491	226	115	2,793
EN & RN	1	1	-	3	-	-	2	-	-	7
Midwife	-	15	-	3	5	-	17	5	2	47
Nurse (EN & RN) & midwife	25	947	8	155	50	24	208	82	21	1,520
Total Practising										5,074

The National Board currently recognises four registration types:

- general registration
- limited registration
- non-practising registration, and
- student registration.

Of these registered health professionals, 5,074 hold non-practising registration. Registrants with this type of registration can continue to retain their nursing or midwifery title without practising their profession during the registration period.

The statistical breakdown within the quarterly registration data shows registrants by state and territory, their age and gender by registration type, and endorsement and notations by state and territory.

The nursing and midwifery registrants comprise:

- 257,236 registered nurses
- 59,797 enrolled nurses
- 4,962 registered as both a registered nurse and enrolled nurse
- 3,158 midwives, and
- 30,278 people registered as both a midwife and either a registered nurse and/or an enrolled nurse.

Providing data that accurately reflects the number of registered nurses and midwives is one of the important benefits of the National Scheme. These statistics bring enormous value to nursing and midwifery workforce planning and help improve access to health services.

Before the advent of the National Scheme, this data could not easily be collated and reported.

Find more on registration data for nurses and midwives in the [About](#) section of the National Board's website.

Supplementary news

Three-year review of the National Scheme

We believe it is essential to continue protecting the public and keeping our patients safe. These are objectives of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme ([National](#)

[Scheme](#)). In addition, the National Scheme aims to enable a flexible Australian health workforce and facilitate:

- workforce mobility for health professionals
- high quality education and training for practitioners
- the assessment of overseas-qualified practitioners, and
- access to services provided by health practitioners.

In March 2008, when Commonwealth and state and territory governments signed the agreement that underpins the National Scheme, they also agreed to a review after three years of operation.

The review of the National Scheme will look at whether the scheme is meeting the objectives set out in the National Law; it will also consider benefits and costs. The Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council (Ministerial Council) has now published the [terms of reference](#) for the review.

Former director of WA Health, Kim Snowball, is the person appointed to independently lead the review. Kim has held a variety of senior leadership roles in both the public and private health sectors, and was previously director general of WA Health. Kim has also served as chair of the Ministerial Council.

The independent review offers us an opportunity to see what is working well, and find ways to strengthen our work in keeping the public safe.

Stakeholder forums

This year the National Board held a stakeholder forum in Sydney (February) and in Darwin (May). Participants included nursing and midwifery professional associations, education providers, employers, and nurses and midwives.

The purpose of the forums is to enable:

- the National Board to outline its strategic directions and the work of national committees for policy, accreditation, finance and governance, and
- local stakeholders to ask questions and discuss the National Board's role and work in regulating nurses, midwives and students.

The forums provide networking opportunities, allowing members of the National Board and AHPRA to engage with stakeholders.

In addition to a question and answer session, topics covered include:

- the National Scheme
- functions of the National Board
- functions of AHPRA
- NMBA strategic plan 2013-2015
- state and territory boards of the NMBA, and
- national committees of the National Board, such as the Finance and Governance Committee, Policy Committee and Accreditation Committee.

National Board presence at Australian College of Nursing expos

The National Board participated this year in the Australian College of Nursing (ACN) Nursing and Health Expos 2013 (ACN expos) held in Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and New South Wales.

Established in 1999, the ACN expos are the only event in Australia specifically dedicated to enhancing the profile of nursing as a profession.

By showcasing a wide range of health service providers, education providers, recruitment agencies, specialty nursing groups, health products and services, ACN expos help promote recruitment and retention within the nursing workforce.

The National Board hosted exhibitions at each event, in order to:

- promote the role and functions of the National Board
- engage with nurses and students of nursing on topical issues surrounding the profession, and to inform policy development, and
- reinforce Board-approved standards and guidelines.

Clearer Advertising guidelines

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia, together with the other National Boards, has acted on the feedback received in relation to the Guidelines for advertising regulated health services (*Advertising guidelines*) released in March 2014.

An [updated version](#) effective from 20 May is now available on our website.

Anyone who advertises a regulated health service must meet the requirements of the National Law. This includes registered nurses, midwives, other health professionals, individuals who are not health professionals, and businesses.

The updated *Advertising guidelines* clarify that:

- under the National Law, testimonials are not allowed when advertising a regulated health service
- the obligations of the National Law about advertising only apply when a regulated health service is being advertised, and
- the National Law is not intended to stop members of the community and patients from discussing their experiences online or in person.

Thank you to everyone who provided feedback on the guidelines.

For more information

- Read [frequently asked questions \(FAQ\) on the revised advertising guidelines](#).
- See the [fact sheet on advertising](#) on the AHPRA website.

Queensland – new arrangements for notifications (complaints) from 1 July 2014

On 1 July 2014 a new law came into effect in Queensland: the *Health Ombudsman Act 2013*.

If you now wish to make a complaint about a registered nurse, a midwife, an enrolled nurse or a student of nursing or midwifery, then you should make it directly to the Office of the Health Ombudsman (OHO).

The OHO will either:

- manage the matter, or
- refer it to the relevant National Board to manage.

If you raised a complaint with AHPRA or the National Boards before 1 July 2014, AHPRA will generally continue to manage the complaint on behalf of the respective National Board.

However, under the new law the OHO may request that the matter be referred to them to be managed. If this were to happen, AHPRA will inform both the notifier and the health professional who is the subject of the notification.

For information about the Office of the Health Ombudsman, please go to www.oho.qld.gov.au or call 133 646 (133 OHO).

To find out more about how notifications/complaints are managed nationally, please go to the [What is a notification?](#) page on the AHPRA website.

Data access and research

From time to time the National Board and AHPRA receive requests for access to the data we hold on registered health practitioners, or access to send them communications through our database.

While you may need to target a sample of nurses or midwives for research purposes, AHPRA holds registrant details for the primary purpose of administering the National Scheme. The *Privacy Act 1988* (Cwlth) strictly limits the use of this information for secondary purposes. How we collect, use, disclose and protect personal information is important. See the [Privacy](#) page on the AHPRA website.

This means that we are likely to refuse your request to contact practitioners.

To find out what kind of requests you can make, timelines and who to contact, visit [Data access and research](#) on the AHPRA website.



Nursing and Midwifery
Board of
Australia