

Communiqué

Meeting of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia 26 November in the AHPRA National Office, Melbourne.

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

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

Update on national health support service for nurses and midwives

The national health support service (the Service) for nurses and midwives is designed to ensure that nurses and midwives can access support if they are impaired, or at risk of impairment, and will aim to improve education and awareness among nurses and midwives about impairment.

The NMBA has published tender documents for the Service. These documents are available on the NMBA website under *News* and *Requests for Tender*. As a part of this process the Board has released the *National health impairment report* by Acil Allen consulting. Read the [news item](#) on the NMBA website to access this report.

Update review of codes of conduct and professional boundaries

The NMBA is reviewing the current *Code of professional conduct for nurses in Australia* (2008), the *Code of professional conduct for midwives in Australia* (2008), the *Nurse's guide to professional boundaries* and the *Midwife's guide to professional boundaries* (2010).

The first phase of the review was a national and international literature review, analysis of notification data and workshops to inform a first draft of the revised codes. The final report from the literature review has now been reviewed and approved by the NMBA members.

The reviews will be informed by wide-ranging stakeholder engagement and input. Starting in the New Year, there will be a series of focus groups in each state and territory for nurses and midwives in urban and rural settings.

Registration standards and registered nurse standards for practice receive approval

The NMBA has approved revised registration standards, which will come into effect in 2016 and replace the existing standards. Registration standards define the requirements that applicants and registrants need to meet to be registered.

Three registration standards for registered nurses, midwives and enrolled nurses were revised by the NMBA and approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council (AHWMC) on 27 August 2015. The registration standards for nurse practitioners and the endorsement for scheduled medicines for midwives were approved by the AHWMC on 22 October 2015.

The revised registration standards are for:

- professional indemnity insurance (PII) arrangements

- recency of practice
- continuing professional development (CPD)
- nurse practitioner, and
- endorsement for scheduled medicines for midwives.

Starting dates for all of the standards will be **1 June 2016**, except the *Endorsement for scheduled medicines for midwives*, to align with the registration renewal period for nurses and midwives and replace the existing standards. The NMBA will share information on the effective date for the *Endorsement for scheduled medicines for midwives* in early 2016. This will allow for a greater transition period from the current two registration standards to the revised standard.

The standards will be published in early **February 2016** and further information will be available on the NMBA website, or to find out more on the revised registration standards go to the [NMBA Registration standards page](#).

To coincide with the release of the *Endorsement for scheduled medicines for midwives* registration standard the NMBA will also publish the revised *Safety and quality guideline for privately practising midwives (SQG)*. The NMBA undertook a comprehensive review of its current *Safety and quality framework (SQF) for privately practising midwives providing homebirth*, and the revised SQG sets out a robust regulatory framework to ensure that PPMs have clarity and support to practise in their roles with safety and quality.

National drug screening protocol

From November 2015, all nurses and midwives who have restrictions placed on their registration by the Board as a result of past substance misuse will have routine quarterly hair testing, in addition to random urine testing.

The introduction of routine hair testing is based on expert advice about modern screening methods. Routine hair testing helps provide comprehensive information about the use – over time – of a wide range of drugs (not just based on the practitioner's drug taking history).

The drug screening protocol is part of a wider, national strategy to effectively manage compliance and monitoring across the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. More information is in the statement published on the [Board's website](#).

Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia profession profile

The Board will also publish a report in the new year of its work in regulating nurses and midwives in the National Scheme during 2014/15.

The report provides a profession-specific view of the Board's work to manage risk to the public. It is a profile of regulation at work for nurses and midwives in Australia for the 12 months ending 30 June 2015.

The data in this report are drawn from data published in the [2014/15 annual report](#) of AHPRA and the National Boards, reporting on the National Scheme and will be available soon on the [AHPRA website](#).

NMBA national conference 2015

The second annual NMBA national conference took place at The Langham in Melbourne on 16 and 17 November 2015, building on the success of the inaugural event held last year.

This year's conference included attendees from national, state and territory boards and AHPRA staff across all jurisdictions. Delegates also attended from the NSW Nursing and Midwifery Council and representatives from the New Zealand Nursing Council and the New Zealand Midwifery Council.

Dr Marie Bismark, a public health physician and health lawyer, who leads the Law and Public Health Group at the University of Melbourne, presented her research into the role of clinical governance, regulation and patient complaints in improving the quality and safety of healthcare.

Key note speaker Ms Kathy Apple MS RN FAAN, former CEO Of the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN), the USA's overarching nursing regulator, addressed the future challenges of nursing and midwifery regulation and contributed her insights during a discussion on future workforce challenges.

Statutory Appointments – New South Wales

Applications are sought from interested persons in New South Wales to fill a community member vacancy on the **New South Wales Board of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia**.

Applications close on **Monday 1 February 2016**. More information can be found on the [board recruitment page](#) or email statutoryappointments@ahpra.gov.au.

Dr Lynette Cusack, Registered Nurse
Chair, Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia

26 November 2015

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 9275 9009 (overseas callers)
- For media enquiries: (03) 8708 9200