

Our Duty of Care – Recommendation 4

NATIONALLY CONSISTENT SCOPE OF PRACTICE FOR ALL NURSES

Progress Update 2006

The Atlas of legislation and Professional Regulation of Nursing and Midwifery in Australia has been developed to support the work of the Taskforce and Alliance partners on Priority Action Areas identified in the Blueprint for National Action.

The Maps focus on the areas of regulation that are pivotal to influencing the practice of nurses and midwives and highlight the inconsistencies that exist within the current regulatory frameworks in the States and Territories for nurses and midwives wishing to practise in Australia.

The Atlas contains eight 'maps':

Map 1 – The legislation, the regulatory authority and professional standards

Map 2 - The registers and or rolls of nurses and midwives

Map 3 – Original or initial entry to practice requirements as a registered nurse, registered midwife or enrolled nurse

Map 5 – Application for restoration to register or roll – not currently registered or enrolled in any other jurisdiction

Map 6 - Application for registration or enrolment under mutual recognition either under the *Mutual Recognition Act 1992* (Cwth) or the *Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1997* (Cwth).

Map 7 – Renewal of registration or enrolment

Map 8 – Safe practice in specialised & specific practice areas

Map 9 - Setting & reviewing educational standards

(Note: Map 4 is not available at this point)

What is this project about?

The National Review of Nursing Education Australia (2002) *Our Duty of Care* underpinned Recommendation 4 with a strong argument that consistency in scopes of practice for nurses and midwives would contribute to achieving consistent standards of care and quality health outcomes for the Australian public. Furthermore, consistency would facilitate mutual recognition of nurses' and midwives' qualifications, and would contribute to a more mobile and responsive nursing workforce.

These goals are consistent with the vision and goals outlined in the National Health Workforce Strategic Framework (Australian Health Ministers' Conference, 2004), which has highlighted a strong need to consider nursing and nurses' scopes of practice in the context of the national health workforce.

National consistency is central to the work of the Taskforce as it intersects with and underpins a number of other pieces of work, including [Recommendations 5](#) and [Recommendation 12](#). In addition, considerable work in related areas is also being undertaken by the jurisdictions, and other stakeholders. Therefore, strong partnerships and coordination are fundamental to ensure that the work progresses in structured and coordinated way.

The objective of this project is to promote nationally consistent scopes of practice for registered nurses, enrolled nurses, nurse practitioners (and other categories of nurse with protected title) and midwives by formulating a framework for:

- Advancing national consistency through non-legislative means, and
- Reform and development of Commonwealth, State and Territory legislation and regulations that impact on scope of practice of nurses and midwives.

To achieve this, the Taskforce is working with key stakeholders to develop a harmonised understanding of scopes of practice, to identify the challenges and map the way forward.

This is a challenging and complex piece of work for the Taskforce as each of the States and Territories has its own legislation and regulatory framework. While there are many consistencies in the way nurses and midwives are regulated, there are also many differences that impact on the mobility and flexibility of the nursing/midwifery workforce.

The overall objective of our work is to bring greater national consistency to elements of nursing and midwifery regulation, education and practice, thereby promoting a flexible, diverse and responsive nursing and midwifery workforce, which is adequately prepared and enabled to meet the challenges of providing health services to the Australian public now and as we move into the future. Our aim is to position nurses and midwives to make a valuable contribution to health service and the health of Australians as we move into the future.

- In February 2005, the Taskforce produced the [National Scope of Practice Commentary Paper \(2005\)](#), highlighting the complex framework enabling and sustaining nursing and midwifery practice in Australia and highlighting the issues and implications of regulatory inconsistencies for nurses, employers, health consumers and others.
- The N³ET Scope of Practice Symposium 2005 ([see report](#)) was held in March 2005. The N³ET Symposium brought together a broad range of stakeholder representatives from across Australia to discuss the issues and to agree on a way forward to achieve greater national consistency.
- The stakeholders at the Symposium agreed on a set of [Principles of Working Together to Achieve National Outcomes](#), to guide stakeholder groups and organisations in how the work should be conducted. The principles of Transparency, Integrity, Accountability, Stewardship and Leadership propose a way of working together that accounts for the interests of diverse stakeholders including nurses and midwives, while making central the interests of Australian health consumers.
- There was broad agreement by the participants at the Symposium that 5 elements are required to achieve national consistency in nursing and midwifery practice:
 1. **Consistent terminology and language**
 2. **Consistent legislation and statutory regulation**
 3. **Consistent professional regulation by NMRAs (policies, standards and guidelines)**
 4. **Consistent approaches to decision making**
 5. **Nationally consistent education (including education pathways for enrolled nurses and nurse practitioners).**
- The [Blueprint for National Action](#) has been developed to guide collaborative action on priority action areas.
- An [Alliance](#) between key stakeholders - N³ET, the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council (ANMC), the Australian and New Zealand Council of Chief Nurses (ANZ-CCN) and the Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery – Australian and New Zealand (CDNM-ANZ) - has progressing and sponsoring action on the Blueprint

The Alliance has a vital role in providing direction for the work, and for providing a mechanism for coordinating at a high level, complex activities involving a range of stakeholders, and with major implications for the provision of nursing and midwifery services.

- The language of specialisation and advanced practice paper has been completed and is available on the Specialisation page.
- **The ANMC is leading a pivotal piece of work to develop a Professional Scope of Practice National Decision Making Framework for Nurses and Midwives in Australia.** More information on this project is available from the ANMC at <http://www.anmc.org.au/>
- The CDNM-ANZ worked with N³ET to **map the education pathways for nurse practitioners** (see also [Recommendation 5](#) and [Recommendation 12](#)). The report on this work is pending.
- The ANZ-CCN is leading work **on ongoing competence for the renewal of registration** (see also [Recommendation 6](#)) and **re-entry to practice** (see also [Recommendation 25](#)). The work has been undertaken by the Tasmanian Principal Nurse Advisor with the Department of Health and Human Services.
- N³ET has completed the Atlas **of legislation and regulation of nursing and midwifery practice**. The Atlas underpins the activities of the other Alliance partners and other dimensions of the Taskforce's work program ([Recommendations 5](#) and 6).

The Blueprint for National Action contains more details.

Taskforce Role	Taskforce to implement	Commencement of Work	AUGUST 2004
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