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## Message from the Chair

As was last year, 2015 is a very busy year for the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA). Our work plan stays tuned with the [National Scheme's](#)<sup>1</sup> objectives and guiding principles. These are to protect the public, facilitate workforce flexibility and mobility and provide high quality and innovative education and training.

The health and safety of the public is at the core of our role. Our aim is to make sure that the Australian community has access to competent and qualified nurses and midwives for safe, high quality care.

In May, we united with the rest of the world in commemorating the [International Day of the Midwife](#) (5 May 2015) and [International Nurses Day](#) (12 May 2015). On behalf of the NMBA, I commended nurses and midwives for their invaluable contribution to the Australian community.

An important piece of work the NMBA is undertaking this year is the review of the *Registered nurse standards for practice* (previously known as competency standards). This builds on the work we have done on the nurse practitioner and enrolled nurse standards for practice. I encourage you to participate in our [public consultation on review of the Registered nurse standards for practice](#). See more information further down in the newsletter.

I'm also excited to announce that the NMBA members and representatives will be attending and participating in two international conferences this year. This month, the [International Council of Nurses \(ICN\) international conference](#) being held

in Seoul, South Korea will explore the importance of cross-cultural understanding and global cooperation in nursing. The NMBA will participate in a number of presentations and also host a small exhibition booth at the ICN conference.

In July, we look forward to attending the [International Confederation of Midwives \(ICM\) Asia Pacific Regional Conference 2015](#), in Yokohama, Japan. The theme of the ICM conference is 'midwifery care for every mother and their newborn'.

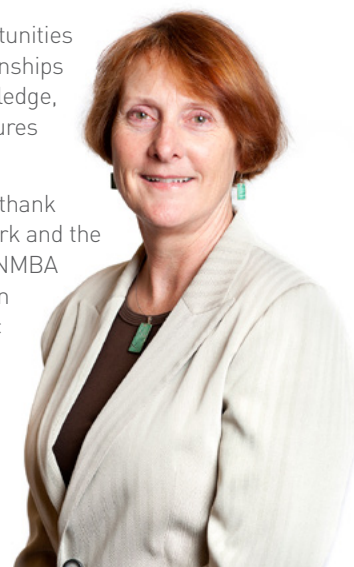
Attending these conferences is part of NMBA's commitment to learning from our international nursing and midwifery counterparts and strengthening our engagement with nurses and midwives.

The conferences will also provide opportunities for nurses and midwives to build relationships and share nursing and midwifery knowledge, leadership and experiences across cultures and countries.

The work of the NMBA is ongoing and I thank everyone who has contributed to the work and the achievements to date. On behalf of the NMBA I am grateful for the commitment shown and the willingness to protect the public by ensuring appropriate regulation is in place.

### Dr Lynette Cusack RN

Chair, Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia



<sup>1</sup> The National Registration and Accreditation Scheme

## Registration

### Thank you for renewing your registration

Another successful renewal campaign saw 97.5 per cent of nurses and midwives renew online and on time this year. This is a one per cent increase on the online renewal numbers for last year.

Renewal of registration is an annual requirement and the number of nurses and midwives renewing online continues to grow every year.

Thank you to all registered and enrolled nurses, midwives and nurse practitioners and non-practising registrants who renewed on time by 31 May.

### Missed the renewal deadline?

Nurses and midwives who did not renew by 31 May and who wish to keep practising must submit their application by 30 June or risk their registration lapsing.

Renewal applications received during June will incur a late payment fee in addition to the annual renewal fee, as outlined in the National Law<sup>2</sup>.

Anyone who does not renew their registration by 30 June will have lapsed registration and their name will be removed from the national register. Your listing on the national register is evidence to current and prospective employers that you are registered to practise as a nurse and/or midwife.

Nurses and midwives yet to renew should read quick tips for easy online renewal, if experiencing difficulty accessing online renewal.

### New English language skills registration standard comes into effect on 1 July 2015

The NMBA has released a new version of its English language skills (ELS) registration standard.

Section 38 of the National Law requires the NMBA to develop and recommend to the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council (the Ministerial Council or health ministers), registration standards about the English language skills necessary for an applicant for registration in the nursing and midwifery profession to be suitable for registration in the profession.

The ELS registration standard states that all applicants, including internationally qualified applicants, who seek initial registration in Australia must demonstrate that they have the necessary English language skills.

The new version has been approved by the Ministerial Council and will be effective from 1 July 2015.

More information and supporting documents including FAQs are available on the NMBA website.

### Revised criminal history registration standard will take effect from 1 July 2015

The revised criminal history registration standard, common to all health professions' National Boards and approved by the Ministerial Council, takes effect from 1 July 2015.

The NMBA published the revised criminal history registration standard early in May, to allow nurses and midwives to become familiar with the new requirements.

Whenever possible, the NMBA seeks to work together with 13 other health professions' National Boards to develop common or similar standards across professions.

The revised shared criminal history registration standard makes very minor amendments to the old standard and is expected to have minimal impact on nurses and midwives. No changes have been made to the factors NMBA will take into account when considering an applicant's or registrant's criminal history.

When a nurse or midwife first applies for registration, the NMBA requires the applicant to declare their criminal history in all countries, including Australia.

#### All registered nurses and midwives must inform the NMBA if they are:

- **charged with an offence punishable by 12 months imprisonment or more, or**
- **convicted or found guilty of an offence punishable by imprisonment in Australia and/or overseas.**

When nurses and midwives renew their registration they must disclose any changes to their criminal history.

More information on registration standards including the ministerial letter of approval is available on the NMBA website.

### Five other registration standards ready for ministerial approval

As well as the two standards above the NMBA has also completed its review of five additional standards and presented them to the Ministerial Council for consideration. These are the:

- *Registration standard: Recency of practice*
- *Registration standard: Continuing professional development*
- *Registration standard: Professional indemnity insurance arrangements*
- *Registration standard: Endorsement as a nurse practitioner, and*
- *Registration standard: Endorsement for scheduled medicines for eligible midwives.*

The final standards will be published on the NMBA website approximately six weeks before they come in effect, to allow nurses and midwives to become familiar with the new requirements.

More information on registration standards is available on the NMBA website.

<sup>2</sup> Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (the National Law), as in force in each state and territory.

## Changes to what appears on the national register for some nurses

The NMBA continues its work in promoting a consistent approach to the way conditions and notations on registration are described and shown on the national register.

A recent comprehensive review of the national register has resulted in changes that will benefit nurses with conditions on practice relating to sole qualifications in mental health nursing, paediatric nursing or disability nursing and other general scope of practice conditions.

For the majority of this group, the conditions on their registration will be removed or the condition will be changed to a notation on the register, in line with the NMBA policy position.

More information including the NMBA's policy position is available on the [NMBA website](#).

## Re-entry to practice policy revised

The NMBA has approved a revised version of the policy for re-entry to practice. This policy provides information for nurses and midwives who do not meet the [Recency of practice registration standard](#) and wish to re-enter practice.

Under the National Law, there is a mandatory requirement for applicants for registration and renewal of registration to meet the NMBA's requirements in relation to the nature, extent, period and recency of any previous practice.

The NMBA has also approved provisional registration for nurses and midwives who are no longer registered and are applying to re-enter practice as a nurse or midwife. Provisional registration will be available from 1 September 2015.

More information and the revised policy will be available available on the [NMBA website](#), earlier than the effective date to allow nurses and midwives to become familiar with the new requirements.

## Nursing and midwifery codes of ethics, conduct and professional boundaries to be reviewed

Starting in July this year, the NMBA will undertake a phased review of the codes of professional conduct and codes of ethics for nurses and midwives. The following documents will be reviewed:

- [A nurse's guide to professional boundaries](#)
- [A midwife's guide to professional boundaries](#)
- [Code of professional conduct for nurses in Australia](#)
- [Code of professional conduct for midwives in Australia](#)
- [Code of ethics for nurses, and](#)
- [Code of ethics for midwives.](#)

The NMBA will keep you up to date about the progress of this project and invite your feedback during the public consultation phase.

You can view NMBA codes and guidelines on the [NMBA website](#).

## Changes to professional indemnity insurance for private practice midwives

Insurance provider VERO has withdrawn its professional indemnity insurance (PII) cover for private practice midwives (PPMs). VERO has stopped insuring new customers immediately and renewals for current customers will end after 1 July 2015.

Section 129 (1) of the National Law requires midwives to have appropriate professional indemnity insurance (PII) arrangements for midwifery practice. This section states:

*A registered health practitioner must not practise the health profession in which the practitioner is registered unless appropriate professional indemnity insurance arrangements are in force in relation to the practitioner's practice of the profession.*

The NMBA advises all PPMs to check with your insurance provider and make sure you are covered by appropriate PII arrangements.

The following documents are available on the NMBA website:

- [PII arrangements registration standard](#)
- [Guidelines for professional indemnity insurance arrangements for midwives.](#)

## Consultations update

### Public consultation on review of the Registered nurse standards for practice

The NMBA has funded a review of the *Registered nurse standards for practice* (formerly called competency standards). As a part of this review we are releasing consultation papers on the draft revised standards.

Please complete this [structured response consultation\\*](#) to provide feedback on the [draft revised Registered nurse standards for practice](#).

We encourage all our stakeholders – nurses, midwives and any other interested parties – to review and respond to this consultation, which closes on 3 July 2015.

More information including a background paper is available on our [current consultations](#) page.

\*When you click on this link, you will be taken to the structured response consultation on a third party website, hosted by Southern Cross University (SCU). SCU, with a team led by Professor Andrew Cashin, has been commissioned by the NMBA to review and revise the current *National competency standards for the registered nurse* and produce *Registered nurse standards for practice*. This work commenced in March 2014 and is on schedule to conclude at the end of October 2015. The information will be handled in accordance with the privacy policies of SCU [here](#) and Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) on behalf of the NMBA [here](#).



## New board member appointments



### Melodie Heland

The NMBA has recently welcomed a new board member, Melodie Heland, RN, MN.

Ms Heland began a three-year appointment on 1 June 2015 as the Victorian practitioner member and comes with extensive tertiary clinical and management experience. Ms Heland also has a nursing and midwifery regulatory background, being a member of the Nurses Board of Victoria from 2000-2010 and holding the office of President from 2007-2010.

In accepting this role Ms Heland said, 'I take the role of NMBA board member seriously. It is a role which can influence the reputation and professional standards of nursing and midwifery in Australia. I hope to look nationally and internationally to both guide and drive the NMBA's vision and direction in the future'.

Ms Heland commended the NMBA for all its work so far in protecting the public and providing leadership to nurses, midwives and students.

In the coming months we will be announcing more board member appointments.

More information on NMBA's current board members and new announcements is available on the [NMBA website](#).

## Other NMBA news

### Calling all enrolled nurses!

Do you want to provide leadership, be more engaged with, and strengthen the nursing profession? The NMBA invites you to become a board, committee or panel member.

The NMBA is looking for enrolled nurses to sit on boards and committees. You can influence how the nursing profession is regulated.

Contact [boardappoint@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:boardappoint@ahpra.gov.au) to register your interest today!

## ANZAC Day wreath-laying ceremonies



ACT wreath-laying ceremony

This ANZAC Day various members of the NMBA took the opportunity to commemorate those who fought and died for Australia and the nurses who tended the sick and wounded.

The Darwin ANZAC Day Dawn Service was attended by Northern Territory Board Chair Angela Bull and Deputy Chair Brian Philips. A wreath was laid at the cenotaph as part of the service.

In the early afternoon a wreath-laying ceremony was held at the National Nurses Memorial on ANZAC Parade in Canberra. This has taken place each year since the inception of the National Scheme.

An honour guard was formed by service nurses and medics, including Alison Reardon, member of the ACT Board. Mary Kirk, ACT National Board Member, paid tribute to past and present nurses who served.

Wreaths were also laid for the NMBA by Emma Baldock (Chair ACT NMBA) and for the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council by Fiona Stoker (CEO).



Northern Territory Board wreath

### Updated section for internationally qualified nurses and midwives on the NMBA website

In April this year the NMBA launched new pages with updated content on the internationally qualified nurses and midwives sections on its website.

The [new section for internationally qualified nurses and midwives](#) makes it easier for users to access the commonly sought after information and services. Information relating specifically to internationally qualified nurses and midwives will be updated with the most current and relevant content.

The NMBA hopes to improve customer experience for all our users including overseas applicants for registration, current practitioners, students, employers, government ministers and health departments, and the general public.

## National Scheme news

### Improving monitoring of conditions on practitioner registration

AHPRA has welcomed calls for stringent monitoring and swift detection of breaches in compliance by registered health practitioners with restrictions on their registration.

On 24 March 2015, the Queensland Office of the Health Ombudsman (OHO) published a report recommending a range of initiatives to strengthen monitoring and compliance in Queensland and the National Scheme.

'Regulation is all about managing risk to patients and we welcome all suggestions to help improve our work in public safety,' AHPRA CEO Martin Fletcher said.

For more information, please read the [media release](#) on AHPRA's website.

### AHPRA actions to improve consumer and practitioner experience

Improving the experience of people who have made a notification has been a focus for AHPRA since early last year, when the Health Issues Centre of Victoria (HIC) was commissioned to conduct targeted research into the consumer experience when making a notification.

Since then a raft of changes have been made to address the issues this research raised, in particular to make written communication clearer and easier to understand.

AHPRA will continue working on addressing the HIC's recommendations, and improving the overall experience of both consumers and practitioners who are the subject of a notification.

### Health ministers to consider National Scheme review report in August

Federal and state and territory health ministers will respond to the report of the review of the National Scheme in August this year.

Ministers met in mid-April at the COAG Health Council to discuss a range of national health issues, including the final report of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme Review. The independent review was conducted by Kim Snowball, the former Director General of Health in WA. It involved an extensive consultation process that included more than 230 written submissions and more than 1,000 individuals participating in consultation forums in each capital city.

More information including the *COAG Health Council communiqué* is available on the [COAG Health Council website](#).

## Keep in touch with the NMBA

- Visit the [NMBA website](#)\* for registration standards, codes, guidelines and FAQ.  
\* Please make sure you are using the most up-to-date browser version when viewing the NMBA website.
- Lodge an [online enquiry form](#).
- For registration enquiries, call 1300 419 495 (from within Australia) or +61 3 8708 9001 (for overseas callers).
- Address mail correspondence to: Dr Lynette Cusack RN, Chair, Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia, GPO Box 9958, Melbourne, VIC 3001.



Nursing and Midwifery  
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