



Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia

10 March 2017

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Public consultation on codes of conduct

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the public consultation drafts of the revised codes of conduct for nurses and midwives. The Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives (CATSINaM) is the peak body that represents, advocates for and supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives in Australia. We believe that nurses and midwives are the backbone of the Australian health system and play a pivotal role in providing culturally safe health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

CATSINaM believes that promoting a framework of cultural safety across nursing and midwifery will improve the recruitment, retention and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, nurses and midwives and improve access and quality of care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients. Embedding cultural safety across nursing and midwifery requires a systems approach where health service standards, nursing and midwifery curricula, and health professional standards and codes all support cultural safety.

CATSINaM is committed to advocating for a consistent approach to the inclusion of cultural safety across nursing and midwifery practice standards, codes of conduct, and accreditation standards and to actively participate in the review of these standards and codes. As such, CATSINaM offers the following comments on the revised codes of conduct for nurses and midwives specifically regarding cultural safety:

- ① CATSINaM commends the clear inclusion of cultural safety into the revised Codes of Conduct for Nurses and Midwives in sections 3.1 and 3.2.
- ① Section 3.1 of the revised Codes of Conduct clearly articulates the importance of cultural safety to the conduct of nurses and midwives when caring for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and acknowledges the impact of colonisation on the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This is an extremely important inclusion into codes of conduct for nurses and midwives as a lack of cultural safety can be a barrier to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accessing health care and to

CONGRESS OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER NURSES AND MIDWIVES

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the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives.

- ④ As well as providing individual care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that is culturally safe, it is equally important for nurses and midwives to support the development of culturally safe health services. CATSINaM therefore suggests a minor amendment to section 3.1.c in the nurses' code of conduct and section 3.1.b in the midwives' code of conduct as follows (underlined and in italics):
 - 'act to facilitate access to quality and culturally safe health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people'.
- ④ CATSINaM considers that section 3.2 accurately covers the key aspects of culturally safe and respectful practice for nurses and midwives, and again, is a very important inclusion in the codes.
- ④ To ensure consistency and to acknowledge the important origins of the term 'cultural safety' CATSINaM suggests the following amendment to the definition of cultural safety in the glossary:
 - Cultural safety occurs when health care practices and policies from individual practitioners and organisational health services are free from individual and institutional racism and result in an experience of cultural safety as determined by the person. The term cultural safety originated in the nursing profession in New Zealand and is specifically focused on the health care experiences and outcomes of First Nations Peoples. It has been adapted to the Australian context for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians over the last 15 years.
- ④ The amendment to the definition of cultural safety is consistent with feedback provided by CATSINaM to the recent public consultation process on the Enrolled Nurse Accreditation Standards conducted by ANMAC.

CATSINaM has provided feedback on other aspects of the codes of conduct as sought by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia via the online survey.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the revised codes of conduct for nurses and midwives. If you have any questions about our comments please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Janine Mohamed

Chief Executive Officer