



N³ET E-Update (No. 04/2004)

SEPTEMBER 2004 TASKFORCE MEETING

The National Nursing and Nursing Education Taskforce (N³ET) was announced in 2003. Following each meeting an electronic update (E-Update) will be prepared and circulated to interested stakeholders. E-Updates are brief summaries of the key issues from each Taskforce meeting or other recent news/matters.

Work underway

In June 2004, work began on developing detailed project plans outlining the implementation of the recommendations assigned to the Taskforce. A high-level Workplan was submitted for endorsement to the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council (AHMAC) in July 2004. It is with great pleasure that the Taskforce can advise that the N³ET Workplan was approved in late August 2004.

Accordingly, we are now into the next stage of work, which involves progressing the work by consulting with the various stakeholders, professional groups, and those who have registered their interest, as we progress the work. The Taskforce is committed to meeting the timeframes and outcomes identified in the Workplan. Please refer to the N³ET web site for further information on individual project outlines and timeframes.

Workforce Forums (Rec 3)

Jurisdictions have now advised the Taskforce that they have allocated responsibility for this important recommendation to the State/Territory Chief Nursing Officers (CNOs). N³ET has been working with the CNOs and have developed a consistent framework for the forums. Forums will be operating in all states and territories by November and work is well underway on this. Contact details for forums are available on the N³ET web site.

Scope of Practice (Rec 4)

There is significant reform occurring nationally and internationally with respect to health workforce planning. This has highlighted a strong need to consider nursing in this broader context.

National consistency is central to the work of the Taskforce (Recommendations 4, 5, 6, 7). A foundation piece of work will be developing consistent scopes of practice for nurses. This work will underpin other aspects of the Taskforce's work like National Standards for Nurse Practitioners and Enrolled Nurse Competencies. To achieve this, the Taskforce will be working with key stakeholders to develop a harmonised understanding of scopes of practice, to identify the challenges and map the way forward.

National Standards for Nurse Practitioners (Rec 5)

The Taskforce has responded to the Australian Nursing & Midwifery Council (ANMC) recently distributed Nurse Practitioner Standards Project (2004). The Taskforce sees the report as a first step and as an opportunity for wider collaboration, however, is concerned that some may see the report as definitive work.

The project is good formative work but, due to the newness of the Nurse Practitioner role and the limited population the report is based on, work to underpin and support the N³ET National Standards for Nurse Practitioner project will require a broad approach. Central to this is locating the Nurse Practitioner role within the workforce-planning context to ensure consistency of the role and a sustainable approach..

Enrolled Nurse (EN) Competencies (Rec 21)

Work to incorporate EN Competencies into the Health Industry Training Package is being carried out by the Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council (CS&HISC) and the Australian Nursing & Midwifery Council (ANMC).



While the Taskforce has a monitoring role on this recommendation, we will also be participating closely in the development of the project through our membership of the Industry Reference Group. The outcome of this project will inform the Taskforce's work on Recommendation 4 (Scope of Practice) and Recommendation 12 (Maximising Education Pathways).

Commonwealth Assistance for Speciality & Re-entry Courses (Rec 25).

The first part of this project involves developing a detailed understanding of the current provision of scholarships for postgraduate specialty and re-entry courses. Known or potential providers will be surveyed during September/October 2004 and this information will be analysed and compared to known information about nursing workforce shortages/vacancies. The Taskforce will report the findings and recommendations regarding scholarship funding to Ministers by the end of November 2004.

For more information (including previous E-Updates) on N³ET, go to www.nnnet.gov.au