



## **NATIONAL NURSING & NURSING EDUCATION TASKFORCE**

### **N<sup>3</sup>ET E-Update (No. 05/2004)**

#### **OCTOBER 2004 TASKFORCE MEETING**

*The National Nursing and Nursing Education Taskforce (N<sup>3</sup>ET) was announced in 2003. Following each meeting an electronic update (E-Update) is prepared and circulated to interested stakeholders. E-Updates are brief summaries of the key issues from each Taskforce meeting or other recent news/matters.*

#### **Nationally Consistent Scope of Practice (Rec 4)**

Many things influence our scope of practice – regulations, education, the setting and people we are caring for, the culture of the organisation we work in, and even how others in the health team think we should practice. The impact of all of these factors will need to be explored to achieve a nationally consistent scope of practice for nurses and midwives. However, the first step in this journey is to come to a common understanding of what is meant by scope of practice.

To start this process, the Taskforce is writing a Commentary paper that will provide a contextual framework for thinking about scope of practice. This Commentary paper will be available in December 2004.

In February 2005, a Forum will be held where key stakeholders such as Chief Nursing Officers, Nurse Regulatory Authorities, Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery, National Nursing Organisations, Employers, Unions etc will be invited to validate our understanding of scope of practice and to agree about the work that needs to follow. We anticipate that there may need to be a number of smaller working groups that focus on how to make the changes to move towards consistency. These areas may include legislation, education, standards of practice, inter-professional relationships and workplace culture.

#### **National Standards for Nurse Practitioners (Rec 5)**

N<sup>3</sup>ET has been tasked by the Health Ministers to ensure national consistency for Nurse Practitioners (NP). Over the next 18 months the Taskforce will implement Recommendation 5 of the National Review of Nursing Education - National Standards for Nurse Practitioners. Competency standards need to be located within a broader context and the successful development and adoption of the NP role requires a comprehensive, collaborative and unified approach by government, education providers, regulators, employers and the wider nursing community.

Many of the recommendations coming from the recent ANMC Nurse Practitioner Standards Report (2004) require consideration by, and contribution from, a range of key stakeholders. Therefore, the Taskforce proposes that the body of the Nurse Practitioner Standards Report (2004) stand as an important first step that can be built upon, but that the recommendations should be initially considered by the ANMC, State and Territory Chief Nurses, State and Territory Nurse Regulatory Authorities and the Taskforce. Accordingly, the Taskforce is convening a meeting in November to achieve this.

#### **Enrolled Nurse (EN) Competencies (Rec 21)**

Many Enrolled Nurses (Div 2 in Victoria) will be aware that the Health Training package is currently being reviewed and, as part of this overall process, work has commenced on the inclusion of Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council (ANMC) Enrolled Nurse Competency Standards in the package. The Community Services and Health Industry Skill Council (CSHISC) with ANMC are jointly undertaking this important work. The Chair of N<sup>3</sup>ET has been invited to be on the Industry Reference Group for Enrolled Nursing and will be actively promoting the enhancement of EN practice and education through this process.



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The review is now underway and there are opportunities for input through discussion forums. The Taskforce encourages nurses to understand the process and contribute to the work involving EN competencies. Details of the review process and the discussion forums can be found on the CSHISC website ([www.cshisc.com.au](http://www.cshisc.com.au)). There will also be a special piece on this work in our next N<sup>3</sup>ET Newsletter.

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

A survey of providers of scholarships for postgraduate speciality and re-entry courses is nearing completion. A number of responses have been received and the time and effort taken by many organisations to complete the survey is appreciated. Scholarship data will now be compared to information about nursing workforce shortages/vacancies and the findings reported to Health, Education and Training Ministers at the end of November 2004.

A substantial amount of the work the Taskforce is undertaking will rely on information and input from many nursing organisations across Australia. In anticipation of the many times we will be asking for your assistance, advice and expertise, the Taskforce would like to thank you.

### **Nursing Specialisation**

Health Ministers have recently referred new work on issues relating to speciality nursing in Australia to the National Nursing and Nursing Education Taskforce. A summary of the [project scope](#) can be found on the N<sup>3</sup>ET website but the work will focus on developing:

- An agreed definition of specialist nursing
- An agreed framework for nursing specialisation and the development and attainment of postgraduate qualifications.

Defining nursing specialties is integral to a number of other recommendations currently being implemented by the Taskforce, including the work on scope of practice, Nurse Practitioners, Scholarships, education pathways and critical care courses (*Our Duty of Care* recommendations 4, 5, 12 and 25 and Critical Care Report recommendation 2).

**For more information (including previous E-Updates) on N<sup>3</sup>ET, go to**  
<http://www.nnet.gov.au/>

*Have you registered as a Stakeholder yet?  
If not, go to the N3ET website and follow the links to Stakeholder registration.*