Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council

NATIONAL NURSING & NURSING EDUCATION TASKFORCE (N³ET)

N³ET E-Update (No. 08/2005)

The National Nursing and Nursing Education Taskforce (N³ET) was announced in 2003. Following each meeting an 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.

Mapping of Nursing and Midwifery Legislation across Australia starts:

The National Review of Nursing Education (2002) *Our Duty of Care* report highlighted that there are differences in the legislation and regulation of nursing and midwifery practice across Australia. This has implications for the flexibility and responsiveness of the national nursing and midwifery workforce and is a source of confusion for employers and the professions. Since the Review, the legislation in a number of states and territories has changed, and in some states the legislative reforms are substantial.

To assist us to have an up-to-date understanding of the current regulatory context, N³ET is conducting a mapping exercise which will focus on aspects of the legislation and regulation of nursing and midwifery practice and other key areas to support the work of the Alliance (N³ET; ANMC; ANZ-CCN; CDNM-ANZ) on the priority action areas identified on the Blueprint for National Action. Unlike other mapping exercises, our intention is to develop an understanding of how regulation works on the ground. So we will be asking questions about such things as how legislation is interpreted and put into practice, how policy is developed and the evidence that supports criteria used by NMRA in making determinations.

A consultant is undertaking the mapping exercise for the Taskforce and is planning to meet with key contacts from the nursing and midwifery regulatory authorities, the ANMC and government departments early in 2006 to progress the work. We appreciate the assistance of these groups in providing access to key policy documents and key people.

Once validated, the mapping information will be available for use by interested stakeholders. N³ET will also be using this data to inform a report to Ministers.

Specialisation In Nursing and Midwifery:

In Australia currently there is no nationally agreed framework for what is a specialty and what is not. As a result different classifications and specialty groupings are used that makes planning and comparisons difficult As a result, work on Specialisation within nursing and midwifery was referred to the Taskforce by Ministers.

As part of that project, a team at Deakin University has started work on reviewing the previous specialization frameworks that have been developed. This builds on work previously undertaken by Deakin for the National Review of Nursing Education. From there the team will propose a contemporary specialisation framework and the criteria that apply for a specialty to be included in the framework.

A final part of the project will be to map the specialization framework against current data systems that collect data about nursing and midwifery specialty workforce. In this way the Taskforce will be able to provide advice to Ministers about what changes need to occur to existing data systems to be able to have consistent, comparable data across Australia about the specialty nursing and midwifery workforce.

The Taskforce is also planning work on the Governance standards that should apply to nursing and midwifery groups that develop standards that relate to specialty practice. Discussion are underway on how that work may be undertaken with the participation of, and input from, groups such as those that are part of the National Nursing Organisations.

Nurse Practitioner (N) Workforce Planning Data Set:

As part of its work on Recommendation 5 - National Standards for Nurse Practitioners (NP), the Taskforce has commenced work with Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) and DHS Victoria to develop an agreed data set to be used to inform workforce policy and planning decisions about the role NP play in the workforce. Given the relative newness of the NP role and the small numbers of NP at present, it is critical to capture this moment and to begin developing consistent data about this important role.

Getting agreement on the types of data needed to make informed decisions about the NP workforce will require the primary users of such data to collaborate — government, policy, researchers and workforce planners as well as those who work in data standards and nurse practitioners themselves have been bought together to identify what needs to collected. The NP Workforce Planning Data Set - Development Team is currently working with AIHW on developing a draft of the data they require. There will then be an opportunity for interested parties to comment on the draft that is developed in early 2006 via the Taskforce Website.

The focus will be on data that describes the NP role for government, health service planners and researchers and informs future policy development and service planning. The data will also provide a basis for the future development of research and evaluation methodologies related to NP practice by providing structure and consistency in the way high level data on NP is collected (data standards).

N³ET Solution Seekers and models of education:

The **N³ET Solution Seekers** website was launched in September 2005 to assist in disseminating information about best practice and innovation in relation to aspects of nursing and midwifery education to inform and promotes national dialogue on key issues. **N³ET Solution Seekers** is an electronic clearinghouse that showcases projects related to the work of the Taskforce, and issues identified by the Ministers to be of national importance. **N³ET Solution Seekers** enables anyone to search for projects of interest without leaving the N³ET website, and in this way provides further opportunities to collaborate, connect and discuss different initiatives across Australia.

If you visit the **N³ET Solution Seekers** site, you will note there are already more than 25 entries highlighting projects and innovative approaches to various issues arising from our program of work. Each month, a new Highlight of the Month is selected and showcased. We are receiving positive feedback from stakeholders about the information on Solution Seekers and we are monitoring increasing numbers of visits to the site. All stakeholders are invited to submit innovative projects related to these areas of national importance.

Currently, **N³ET Solution Seekers** is targeting innovative approaches to nursing and midwifery education, in relation to:
- Models of clinical practice in preparatory programs (Recommendation 24)
- Models of interdisciplinary or integrated education (Recommendation 27)
- Models and partnerships that enable and enhance cross sector articulation and pathways to a nursing and midwifery career (Recommendation 12)

As a stakeholder, the Taskforce invites you and your partners to share information about initiatives in the three areas of nursing and midwifery education mentioned above through the **N³ET Solution Seekers** site. Disseminating information about successful innovations in education is important and instructive; not only to justify the benefits of doing things differently, but also to ensure we have sustainable models of education as we move into the future.

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

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