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## N<sup>3</sup>ET NEWSLETTER



Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council

*The N<sup>3</sup>ET Taskforce is committed to building an enhanced and sustainable healthcare system through the promotion of professional visibility and pride, quality education and regulation to nationally consistent standards and capacity in practice, education and research for all nurses and midwives across Australia.*

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### Update from the Chair

Nursing and midwifery in Australia is the subject of ongoing review and reform. The beginning of a new year is, of course, a time to look back and consider the year we are wrapping up - and to prepare for the one ahead.

Upon reflection, 2004 saw the Taskforce explore and develop partnerships with many key stakeholders, address significant issues facing the nursing and midwifery professions, and identify the challenges that lie ahead during the next 12 months and beyond.

As work begins on all the recommendations the Taskforce has responsibility for, Project Outlines will be available on the N<sup>3</sup>ET web site, as well as updates on key milestones/deliverables for the recommendations for which work is already underway. The Taskforce's Quarterly Progress Report and access to copies of the full nursing and midwifery reports are also available via the N<sup>3</sup>ET web site.

We look forward to ongoing collaboration with our key stakeholders in working towards an exciting future for nursing and midwifery in Australia.

*Adjunct Professor Belinda Moyes*

### *Did you know?*

Enrolled nurses in Victoria (Division 2) are now able to administer medications (on successful completion of an approved course and endorsement by the Nurses Board of Victoria). This is considered an "extended scope of practice".

Yet, in Western Australia and Tasmania enrolled nurses have practiced medication administration for many years - it is considered part of their normal scope of practice.

Differences like this are explored in the N<sup>3</sup>ET Scope of Practice Commentary Paper. Please see page 3 of the newsletter to find out where to get your copy of the paper.

### *Scholarships in postgraduate specialty studies – Are they where we need them?*

Opportunities for postgraduate scholarship in specialty nursing areas has been the focus of a newly completed report undertaken by the Taskforce as part of its work on Recommendation 25. Scholarships are often part of a broader nursing workforce strategy and are seen as one way of retaining skilled staff. A survey of scholarships has been undertaken, including where the recipients of scholarships were located in Australia, the AQF level of the course they were studying and the specialty area involved. This data was compared to known nursing shortages in specialty areas and predicted areas of health demand. Health Ministers are currently considering the N<sup>3</sup>ET report and the recommendations.

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# PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

## Recommendation 3 - Nursing Education & Workforce Forums *A Word from the Chair*

Nursing Education and Workforce Forums have now been established in all States and Territories across Australia. The Forums are being coordinated by the Chief Nursing Officers/Principal Nurse Advisors, who have been nominated as the jurisdictional contact for the implementation of all the recommendations assigned to the States/Territories for action.

The aim of the Forums is to facilitate and strengthen collaboration and communication between the many stakeholders to address local and regional nursing education and workforce issues. Forums provide a venue for all sectors to come together and consider the local/regional implications or issues associated with the recommendations from National Review of Nursing Education 2002: Our Duty of Care report.

As Chair of the Taskforce, I have had the opportunity to attend (or link in with) Forums in seven jurisdictions and am excited by the interest, energy and cooperation I see. Each forum had slightly different members reflecting the local stakeholders but importantly each had a broad range of members from public, private, education/training sectors, professional groups and the like. There is such a lot of work to do and Forums provide a unique opportunity to hear others point of view and to find ways to work together on critical issues facing nursing and midwifery that are sensitive to the local circumstances.

Over the coming weeks we will be developing the ways in which all the forums can learn from each other, as well as how they can feed issues or progress onto the Taskforce. So, I encourage all nurses and midwives to stay in touch with what issues their local forums are considering.

*Adjunct Professor Belinda Moyes*

### STATE/TERRITORY FORUM CONTACT DETAILS

#### Australian Capital Territory

**Council for Nurses & Midwives, ACT** (A Work Plan is being finalized following the recent Strategic Planning Workshop)

**Contact:** Adjunct Prof Jenny Beutel - ACT Chief Nurse  
Phone: (02) 6205 5128 / Email: jennifer.beutel@act.gov.au

*Website URL: Under development*

*Next Forum event: Forum#3 "What's in a name?" Debate on advanced practice, practice nurses, nurse practitioner will be held on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2005, 1:30 - 4:00 pm at the Canberra Hospital.*

#### New South Wales

**NSW Nursing Education and Workforce Forum**  
(Steering Committee is Joint Strategic Nursing & Midwifery Reference Group)

**Contact:** Ms Susan Lang - Project Manager - Special Projects Nursing & Midwifery Office, NSW Health  
Phone: (02) 9391 9376 / Email: slang@doh.health.nsw.gov.au

*More information at:*

*<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/nursing/n3et.html>*

#### Northern Territory

##### **N<sup>3</sup>ET Forum**

**Contact:** Mr Greg Rickard - Principal Nurse Advisor  
Phone: (08) 8999 2583 / Email: Greg.Rickard@nt.gov.au

#### Queensland

##### **N<sup>3</sup>ET Forum**

*(Steering Group is N<sup>3</sup>ET Queensland Steering Committee)*

**Contact:** Ms Margaret Smith - Principal Project Officer Health Advisory Unit (Nursing)  
Phone (07) 3234 1446 / Email: Marg\_Smith@health.qld.gov.au

*Next Forum event: A forum to discuss issues associated with Student Nurse Employment will be held on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2005, 1-4:00 pm in the Princess Alexandra Auditorium.*

#### South Australia

##### **Nursing Education & Workforce Forum**

*(N<sup>3</sup>ET Nursing Education & Workforce Forum Steering Committee began meeting December 2004 and are currently developing work plan and priorities).*

**Contact:** Ms Deb Pratt - Principal Nurse Advisor  
Phone: (08) 8226 6409 / Email: Deb.Pratt@health.sa.gov.au

*More information: Watch out for "Nursing Communiqué" appearing on Nursing website in near future.*

#### Tasmania

##### **Tasmanian N<sup>3</sup>ET State Forum**

*(Steering Group is Tasmanian N<sup>3</sup>ET Jurisdictional Steering Group)*

**Contact:** Ms Linda Proietti - Professional Development Nurse  
Phone: (03) 63 36 5506 / Email: linda.proietti@dhhs.tas.gov.au

#### Victoria

**Nursing Issues Forums: \* Clinical Placement Forum; \* Nurse Director Forum; \* Nursing Education & Workforce Advisory Group; \* Rural/Regional Forum; \* Metropolitan Forum; \* Mental Health Forum; \* Subacute/Aged Forum**

*(Steering Group is the Nurse Policy Branch, DHS)*

**Contacts:** Ms Kim Sykes - Principal Nurse Advisor  
Phone: (03) 9616 6929 / Email: kim.sykes@dhs.vic.gov.au  
**OR** Ms Deborah Sykes - Project Officer  
Phone: (03) 9616 8398 / Email: deborah.sykes@dhs.vic.gov.au

*More information at: [www.nursing.vic.gov.au](http://www.nursing.vic.gov.au) and look for February 05 Newsletter*

#### Western Australia

##### **Nursing & Nursing Education Forum**

*(Steered by National Review of Nursing and Nursing Education Reference Group)*

**Contact:** Ms Carol Pinch - Senior Nursing Officer  
Phone: (08) 9222 4075 / Email: Carol.Pinch@health.wa.gov.au

*Next Forum events: Nurse Practitioner Standards 10/05/05; Scope of Nursing Practice 11/04/05; Critical Care Nurses 27/04/05*

*More information at:*

*<http://www.nursing.health.wa.gov.au/professional/n3ewa.cfm> or email to: N<sup>3</sup>EWA@health.wa.gov.au*

### Research & Research Training for Nurses (Recommendation 8)

As part of Recommendation 8, an audit of research scholarships and RTS places in universities for nurses is about to be done Australia wide. RTS stands for Research Training Scheme and is one component of funding provided by the Australian Government to universities for research. Under the RTS, a performance-based formula is used to distribute places across universities based on successful research completions.

"The Review recommended that the number of nursing places under RTS should double by 2008 and so we are about to start looking at how that is tracking as well as where the barriers are and the places in the system that have the most impact on whether this will happen or not", said Project Manager, Eithne Irving.

There are a number of important changes to the funding arrangement currently under consideration that may impact on nursing schools, but the ability of the nursing to develop its capacity to undertake research is a priority for the Taskforce, Deans of Nursing and Midwifery and the profession.



## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT - Continued

### Recommendation 4 - A Nationally Consistent Scope of Practice

**Recommendation 4: A Nationally Consistent Scope of Practice** of the National Review of Nursing Education 2002: *Our Duty of Care* report focuses on bringing a national perspective, and national consistency to dimensions of nurses' and midwives' practice, education and professional regulation through the development of a national framework for scopes of practice for nurses and midwives.

This is an important piece of work because at the moment in Australia, we do not have agreement or consistency in the way we construct scopes of practice for nurses and midwives, the way we describe or express them, or the way we regulate professional practice. For example, we have eight (8) sets of legislation (one in each State/Territory) that govern the registration and practice of nurses and midwives, and while there are points of similarity, there are also significant differences that impact on the boundaries that are placed around practice.

New roles and responsibilities for nurses and midwives and new knowledge and skills sets are evolving for nurses all the time. However, we do not have a strategic or nationally coordinated approach, to developing scopes of practice for nurses and midwives, or for identifying where new practice is risky or intrusive and requires regulation to protect the public's interest and safety.

*Our Duty of Care* identifies the broad direction and principles that should underpin a nationally consistent approach to scopes of practice for nurses and midwives. It is our task to identify the steps to achieve this goal.

To advance the work there will need to be agreement by stakeholders on the purpose and nature of the framework before it can be put "into practice". In particular, this will require the key stakeholders to work together to overcome the barriers to national consistency.

N<sup>3</sup>ET is conducting a staged program of work planned to progress *A Nationally Consistent Scope of Practice* including:

- [A Scope of Practice Commentary Paper](#)
- [A Scopes of Practice Symposium](#)
- [A platform for working together on national work](#)
- [A map of the work to be undertaken](#)
- [Working Groups for identified arms of work.](#)

The **Scopes of Practice Commentary Paper** introduces some of the complexities and barriers to implementing a national framework. Anyone with an interest in nurses' and midwives' practice will find this paper interesting, and it is recommended reading for those attending the Scope of Practice Symposium.

Not all readers will agree with views presented in the Commentary Paper. This would be difficult given that so many different people and groups have an interest.

The Taskforce hopes that in engaging with this type of

inquiry, readers will be open to contemplating new possibilities for nurses and midwives to contribute to health care in the future. This is an opportunity to explore how we can do things differently so that this contribution is strengthened and enhanced in the future.

An electronic copy of the Scopes of Practice Commentary Paper is available from the N<sup>3</sup>ET website at [www.nnnet.gov.au](http://www.nnnet.gov.au)

The Taskforce encourages you to read this paper and to discuss it with your colleagues, co-workers and with other health professionals. We suggest that you print a copy and leave it in the tearoom or on a notice board. Canvas the views of others by discussing important issues with the interdisciplinary team during regular meetings. Reflect on issues with patients and carers. Provide opportunities for others to contribute to the broader debate by advertising the Commentary Paper or providing a link to the paper on your organisation's website or through other electronic media. Perhaps create an electronic notice board so that others can also have a say.

If you think that your views, or the views of your members should be considered in forming the way forward, then the Taskforce encourages you to communicate these views to the stakeholder representative at the Scope of Practice Symposium who best represents your interests. A list of invitees to the Symposium is available from the N<sup>3</sup>ET website.

#### Scope of Practice Symposium

The follow up to the paper will be a Scope of Practice Symposium on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2005 in Melbourne.

The Scope of Practice Symposium will bring together invited representatives and key stakeholder groups from across Australia to engage in dialogue about the complexities and challenges involved in implementing a national framework for scopes of practice for nurses and midwives.

A wide range of stakeholders with an interest in Scopes of Practice for nurses and midwives have been invited to participate in the Scopes of Practice Symposium.

We are looking forward to an exciting day. This will be a chance for participants to share their views, to develop an appreciation of other perspectives and to contribute to forming the way forward on this important piece of work. In doing so, it is anticipated that the Symposium will identify areas of work that need to be progressed.

Details of the Scope of Practice Symposium activities can be found on the N<sup>3</sup>ET web site, including a list of invited stakeholders. Following the Symposium, outcomes from the day will also be available on the N<sup>3</sup>ET web site and will be featured in our next newsletter, which is due out in June 2005.



# PROJECT SPOTLIGHT - Continued

## Recommendation 5 - National Standard for Nurse Practitioners

### An overview of N3ET NP Project

There is considerable interest in Nurse Practitioners (NP), but also a lot of confusion about their role and potential. In Australia, the NP role has developed more slowly than elsewhere and there are currently only small numbers of NPs authorised to practise.

This creates a window of opportunity for us to ensure that the NP role is progressed in a strategic way and to avoid fragmentation and confusion around the role that has occurred in other countries. Already across the States and Territories we have differences in how the NP role is regulated, how NPs practice - even the minimum educational preparation required differs across Australia.

The need for national standards for NP was recognised by the *National Review of Nursing Education* and Ministers subsequently referred Recommendation 5 to the Taskforce for implementation. Numerous key stakeholders such as nurse/midwifery regulatory authorities, government and professional groups have already undertaken considerable work on several important aspects of NP practice, employment and regulation. However, there has not been a coordinated and strategic national approach to the developing a sustainable model for nurse practitioners in Australia.

The Taskforce has developed a workplan for a comprehensive piece of work on NPs that recognises the inter-relatedness of NPs with other key pieces of

work such as scope of practice and specialisation. The work needs to progress in a coordinated way and across several areas in parallel. Central to this project is an understanding that achieving national consistency needs a broad focus and the engagement of many stakeholders.

### How is the N<sup>3</sup>ET NP project structured?

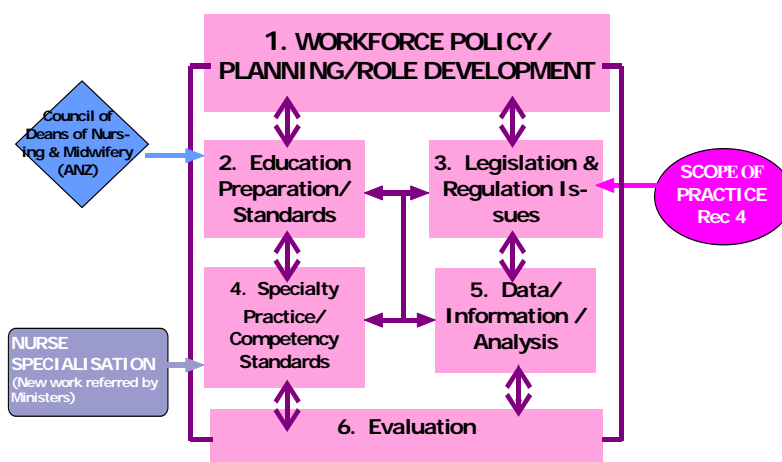
There are six arms to this project that will run in parallel. The multi-dimensional approach to this work reflects the cross sectoral context in which NPs will function. In this way the Taskforce will bring together sectors and various stakeholders to ensure a sustainable, national model for consistent NP development, grounded in the principles of health workforce policy, is achieved.

The six streams (shown below with the related projects being undertaken by N<sup>3</sup>ET) are:

1. Workforce Policy, planning and NP role development
2. Legislation & Regulatory Issues related to NPs
3. Educational Preparation/Standards for NPs
4. Clinical specialty/competencies related to NPs
5. Data/Information/Analysis about NPs
6. Evaluation of NPs role and impact.

Details of the activities that will be undertaken in each arm, the coordination and stakeholder engagement will be on the N<sup>3</sup>ET website over the next couple of weeks.

### N<sup>3</sup>ET NP PROJECT OUTLINE



Kindly distribute the N<sup>3</sup>ET Newsletter to any interested colleagues. If possible, we would appreciate your posting a copy of the N<sup>3</sup>ET Newsletter on your staff bulletin board. Upcoming Issues: Issue 2 (June 2005) / Issue 3 (October 2005)



For more information on N<sup>3</sup>ET, the Secretariat may be contacted at (03) 9616-6995 or [n3et@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:n3et@dhs.vic.gov.au)  
To register as a stakeholder, please register on-line at: <http://www.nnet.gov.au/>