



National Nursing & Nursing Education Taskforce (N<sup>3</sup>ET)

*The N<sup>3</sup>ET 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.*

## Busy times... Our projects & timelines

As the Taskforce is concluding many pieces of work, it is worth while to think about how the work of the Taskforce is contributing to the wider changes, challenges and debates occurring in Australia regarding health workforce planning.

In December 2005, the Productivity Commission released its final report with recommendations to strengthen Australia's health workforce and strategic ways forward.

It is encouraging to all those that are progressing projects with the Taskforce that the report recommendations from the Productivity Commission are reflected in the work of the Taskforce.

This edition of the National Nursing & Nursing Education Taskforce Newsletter provides a snapshot of some of our projects, which will be finalised over the next few months.

For a more comprehensive list of projects, or more information on the Taskforce's progress, please visit our home page to follow the

### N<sup>3</sup>ET timeline.

We hope you enjoy this edition and welcome feedback on any of these and other topics covered off on our website.

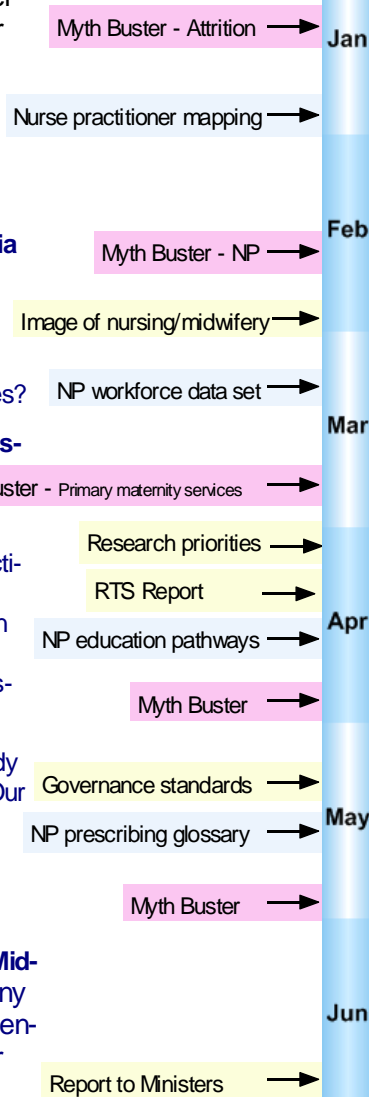
*Work highlighted in this edition of the N<sup>3</sup>ET Newsletter*

**Communication and Media Principles** for the image of nursing and midwifery. These consultations have concluded. So what happens with the data principles?


**Nurse Practitioners in Australia**, encompassing the nurse practitioner mapping project, the nurse practitioner workforce data set, nurse practitioner education pathways, and the nurse practitioner prescribing glossary.

**N<sup>3</sup>ET Myth Busters**, already two have been released. Our next myth, due out in late March, will be on *Primary Maternity Services*.

**Research and Research Training for Nurses and Midwives**, the result of the many consultation forums to identify research priorities for nurses and midwives.



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For more information about the National Nursing and Nursing Education Taskforce, contact the Secretariat on (03) 9616 6995 or to receive this newsletter electronically, register as a stakeholder at:

<http://www.nnet.gov.au/>

 Australian Health Ministers  
Advisory Council



## Communication and media principles - *The image of nursing and midwifery*

N<sup>3</sup>ET has undertaken broad consultation with nurses and midwives and other interested parties across Australia to develop and validate a set of national media and communication principles for the contemporary portrayal of nurses and midwives, which:

- Promote an intentionally positive representation of the disciplines,
- Capture the diversity of nurses/nursing and midwives/midwifery, and,
- Reflect the distinctive characteristics of the Australian community and health system .

With all the state and territory consul-

tation forums completed, the Taskforce would like to thank all those who took time out of their busy schedules to participate and to contribute their views. While at times it is clear that nurses and midwives do not agree on how best to portray professional practice, there is commitment to increase the profile of nursing and midwifery in the public domain and to demonstrate the benefits that nursing and midwifery bring to the community.

There is no doubt that communication media are powerful tools in shaping community perceptions of nursing and midwifery. The challenge is to promote positive, contemporary images that reflect the reality

of nursing and midwifery to those responsible for creating communication materials, be they within or beyond the health sector. Fortified by an agreed set of principles, nurses and midwives themselves will be equipped to develop a communications repertoire to confidently and authoritatively promote careers in nursing and midwifery, and the benefits nursing and midwifery bring to patients/clients and the community.

The report based on the information generated through the consultation process has been submitted to the Taskforce to consider the next steps.

## Governance standards for nursing and midwifery organisations

Work by the ANF and the RCNA on behalf of the National Nursing Organisations is underway to develop governance standards for nursing and midwifery organisations. The project will be seeking input from members of the National Nursing Organisations and other interested specialist nursing and midwifery organisations across

Australia that are engaged in the development of standards, competencies and/or guidelines for specialty practice, including all the domains of nursing and midwifery practice, and not restricted to clinical specialties. The work is part of the N<sup>3</sup>ET larger work on **specialisation**.

The timeframe for this exciting work is short and so interested groups should en-

sure they keep in touch with the Governance Standards Project Team by contacting Fiona Armstrong, ANF Federal Professional Officer, on: (03) 9639 5211 or [fiona@anf.org.au](mailto:fiona@anf.org.au)

For information about N<sup>3</sup>ET work on Specialisation, visit:

<http://www.nnnet.gov.au/work/recsp.htm>

## Nurse practitioners in Australia

A number of different pieces of work that relate to nurse practitioners are currently underway, including:

A Nurse Practitioner (NP) Workforce Planning Data Set - **Exposure Draft** has been developed by a team of representatives from Chief Nurses, government workforce planning/policy and data standards, NP and researchers with the guidance of Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). The draft was then available on line for a period for consultation/comments by other stakeholders and following that the data set is now being finalised.

The next phase of work will involve state and territory representatives examining how they can progress data collection and the barriers and local circumstances that need to be considered. The data set will set a standard for information to be collected (and the format in which to be collected uniformly) to facilitate workforce planning. While the primary users for this data set are those doing service/workforce planning, many of the data elements defined in this data set are equally applicable to other collections, such as the data collected by NPs for re-authorisation, and if used more uni-

versally would allow some benchmarking or analysis to occur.

The second **Myth Buster on Nurse Practitioners** was released in February and like the first, has been extremely well received. There is much confusion about the NP role, partly because it is a relatively new role in Australia, partly as a result of differing policy across Australia and also because the **myths** continue to be repeated. So for the facts on NP make sure you read (and pass around) the **N<sup>3</sup>ET Myth Buster**.

The **mapping of State/Territory Nurse Practitioner (NP) Models, Legislation and Authorisation Processes** is now available on line. This work highlights the opportunities that exist to achieve greater national consistency in this important role and current N<sup>3</sup>ET projects are focused on information that has been gained from this mapping.

One example is the group that has been working **on educational pathways for NP as part of Recommendation 12**. The work by N<sup>3</sup>ET shows the many different minimum educational levels and pathways that currently exist across Australia for NPs. The working group is now finalising a set of principles to guide jurisdictions when

they are making decisions about the minimum educational requirements for authorisation as an NP. It is anticipated that adoption of these principles will provide greater national consistency in the pathways to NP practice and increased transparency in the way in which NP applications are considered by regulatory authorities.

Over the next few months, a working group currently being convened by the N<sup>3</sup>ET is undertaking work on a **National Nurse Prescribing Glossary**. Currently, there is a range of different models that enable NPs in the different states and territories to prescribe and little consistency or common use of terminology to describe NP prescribing practice or authorisations (prescribing authority). As a result, it is difficult to compare or analyse either the prescribing practice or the outcomes. Therefore, a standard nurse-prescribing glossary will be developed and the existing models will then be mapped against these definitions to create a comprehensive picture of the different nurse prescribing models in Australia. For more information:

<http://www.nnnet.gov.au/work/rec5.htm>

## N<sup>3</sup>ET MYTH BUSTERS - Why look at nursing & midwifery myths?

Part of the role of the National Nursing and Nursing Education Taskforce is to look at best practice and disseminate information the nursing and midwifery profession in Australia.

**N<sup>3</sup>ET Myth Busters** is part of a series of work, which includes **Solution Seekers** and **Conference Watch**.

These publications:

- Examine current relevant issues to nurses/midwives,
- Provide information,
- Add to the debate and discussion on the future of nursing/midwifery in Australia, and
- Promote and disseminate examples of innovative works.

N<sup>3</sup>ET commenced Myth Busters in December 2005 with the first myth on nursing attrition, **Myth: People 'drop out' of nursing more than other careers.**

Attrition is a popular subject with certain 'facts' continually recycled until they can no longer be sourced.

The evidence demonstrates that attrition from nursing study and employment is not exceptional. Nursing, in fact, offers very good employment opportunities and experiences relatively high rates of retention in both study and employment.

The second in the series focused on the role of the nurse practitioner,

**Myth: You may not get the best care from a nurse practitioner.**

There is confusion around what a nurse practitioner is, what they do, and how they fit into the Australian health care system.

While nurse practitioners are relatively new to Australia, they have been working in other countries for over forty years. This **Myth Buster** provides information

and evidence regarding the appropriate levels of experience and education needed by nurse practitioners to be authorised to practice at an advanced level. It highlights the increasingly valuable role of the nurse practitioner in the Australian context, and which is also highlighted in the Productivity Commission report.

The third in the series, to be released later in the month, is on primary maternity services in Australia. Nurses/midwives, health care professionals and the public will be familiar with the current debate on the safety, provision of and access to maternity services in Australia.

All **Myth Busters** can be viewed online at:

<http://www.nnnet.gov.au/mythbuster.htm>

## Research and Research Training for Nurses and Midwives

How can we assure not only that evidence is found and applied for best practice, but also that nursing and midwifery make a significant research contribution to the health care system and the health of the Australian people?

The work of the Taskforce in this area focuses on the building the capacity of nursing and midwifery research in Australia. There are two aspects to this work.

Firstly, N<sup>3</sup>ET has surveyed higher education providers to see if there is growth in the numbers of nurses and midwives undertaking higher degree research training supported by the Australian Government through the Research Training Scheme (RTS) and Australian Postgraduate Awards (APA).

The data from this survey indicates that while there has been an increase in RTS and APA supported places for nurses and midwives, there are also challenges in providing the infrastructure to support research students and in recruiting suitable candidates to a career in nursing and/or midwifery research. With changes to accountability and the quality framework for publicly funded research pending, it is unlikely

in the current competitive research environment that the target of doubling RTS places by 2008 set in *Our Duty of Care* will be achievable. This means that to continue developing research capacity through research training, as a discipline group, we have to do things differently.

The second piece of work in relation to research that N<sup>3</sup>ET has been progressing is the formulation of national priorities for nursing and midwifery research in Australia. National priorities will provide direction for future investment in nursing and midwifery research and research development in a nationally competitive research environment.

In the course of this project, N<sup>3</sup>ET has consulted with nurses and midwives from practice, education and research settings, as well as governments across Australia to gain their views. An extensive review of nursing and midwifery research capability and productivity has also been undertaken.

It is evident from our investigations that there has been substantial growth in nursing and midwifery research productivity and capability over the past two decades. This is laudable given that nursing and midwifery are relatively new disciplines in the higher education sec-

tor, which has a core responsibility for generating new knowledge and for higher degree research training.

Overwhelmingly, those consulted in this process have put the view that continued growth in research capability hinges on successfully competing for public research funding. Aligning nursing and midwifery research with national health and research priorities, developing strategic partnerships and focusing on programmed research are just some of the strategies that have been identified for increasing competitiveness. A further priority is implementing measures to augment utilisation of research findings in practice.

In addition, a strong message from the consultation forums is the urgent need for a mechanism or leadership structure to effectively **co-ordinate a national approach** to nursing and midwifery research.

The report that is being prepared on this project outlines the challenges ahead and proposes priorities and a strategic approach for building the research capacity and capability of the nursing and midwifery disciplines. To find out more about this work visit the N<sup>3</sup>ET web site.

<http://www.nnnet.gov.au/work/rec8.htm>

## N<sup>3</sup>ET Solution Seekers

N<sup>3</sup>ET Solution Seekers was launched in September 2005.

Thanks to the many interested stakeholders, innovative individuals and organisations, N<sup>3</sup>ET Solution Seekers now hosts close to 40 innovative projects from across Australia.

Submitted projects provide a searchable data base for interested parties. In turn, individuals are able to learn more about innovative nursing/midwifery practices across Australia.

Thus far, N<sup>3</sup>ET Solution Seekers hosts projects submitted by the departments of health from the ACT, NSW, SA, Tas and Vic. Nursing/midwifery regulatory authorities from Qld, SA, Vic and WA and hospitals such as Epworth in Vic and Mt Barker in SA.

Many other organisations have also submitted projects ranging from independent midwifery led centres, mental health skills acquisition to inter-professional learning projects.

The Taskforce continues to invite stakeholders to submit information on innovative projects and to search the site. N<sup>3</sup>ET Solution Seekers has become an interesting and valuable resource connecting people to local solutions that have the potential to be applied to improve practice at a national level.

You can visit the N<sup>3</sup>ET Solution Seekers portal via the N<sup>3</sup>ET website at:

<http://www.nnnet.gov.au/>

- Past Solution Seeker Highlights are:**
- Establishing a clinical skills centre at Western Health (Vic)
  - NSW Aboriginal Nursing & Midwifery Strategy (NSW)
  - Rural extended practice—emergency nursing, Mt Barker Health (SA) and,
  - DEU model of clinical placement, University of Canberra (ACT)

### N<sup>3</sup>ET Solution Seekers Highlight of the Month



#### Collaborative Clinical Education Epworth Deakin (CCEED)

Preparation of nurses for practice has implications for delivery of safe, quality patient care, the development of individual professional identity and the capacity of nursing workforce generally.

In a recent Australian report on health workforce, the Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery identified a shortage of clinical placements that adequately prepare nursing students for registration (Productivity Commission, 2005). In an effort to improve the quality of new graduate transition, Epworth Hospital and Deakin University ran a collaborative project (2003) funded by the National Safety and Quality Council to improve the support base for new graduates while managing the quality of patient care delivery.

To find out more about the CCEED initiative visit N<sup>3</sup>ET Solution Seekers today!

N<sup>3</sup>ET invites you to contribute conference & event details that relate to the work of the Taskforce via email today at [n3et@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:n3et@dhs.vic.gov.au)

## N<sup>3</sup>ET Conference Watch—Upcoming events in 2006

### Indigenous Leadership - Forum 2006

April 4-5, Liquid Learning, Mercure Hotel, Brisbane Qld  
Contact: (02) 9437 1311

### Monitoring the quality of care in hospitals

NHMRC Centre for Research Excellence in Patient Safety  
April 10, AMREP Seminar Room, Alfred Hospital Melbourne, Vic  
Contact: (03) 9903 0017

### Rural health conference - going for gold

April 19-21, DHS Victoria  
Ballarat, Vic [www.health.vic.gov.au/ruralhealth/news/conf.htm](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/ruralhealth/news/conf.htm)

### Aged Care Leaders - Style and Substance

April 20-21, ACAA-NSW  
Novotel, Brighton-le-Sands  
Contact: (02) 9212 6922



To find out more about these and other event and conferences of interest, visit <http://www.nnnet.gov.au/>