



NURSING AND MIDWIFERY BOARD OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2009

MEET THE BOARD

Ms Angela Brannelly	Chair
Mr Steven Cooper	Practitioner Member
Ms Cecilia Farley	Practitioner Member (Midwife)
Vacant	Practitioner Member
Ms Frances Pagdin	Practitioner Member
Ms Heather Sjoberg	Public Member
Ms Kim Ball	Public Member

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

This has been another exciting year so far with many changes and challenges on the horizon, which I look forward to.

The Board has continued to work towards providing guidance to Nurses and Midwives in the interests of ensuring maintenance of quality health care in the Northern Territory.

I strongly encourage all Nurses and Midwives to develop an understanding of the *Health Practitioners Act* and familiarise themselves with the Board's policies and guidelines.

I hope this Newsletter provides assistance and guidance in your day-to-day practice as well as an understanding of the current and potential changes in regulation of Nurses in Australia. Please contact the Board if you have items of interest you would like the Board to address in Newsletters.

Best Wishes
Angela Brannelly (Chair)

POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

The following policies have been changed or developed in the 2007/2008 financial year:

- English Language Competence Policy;
- Enrolled Nurses and Medication Administration;
- Entitlement to Registration/Enrolment Authorisation Policy;
- Standards for the Accreditation of Education Providers Delivering Nursing and Midwifery Courses; and
- Nurse Practitioner Authorisation Process and Information Guide.

Should you wish to learn more about our policies and guidelines, visit our website at www.nt.gov.au/health/registrationboards.

SCHEDULED BOARD MEETING DATES

Please note that applications for registration and other information that is to be considered at a Board meeting must be received no less than two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting date.

The Board cannot guarantee that documents received after this date will be addressed at the next scheduled meeting. Late documents will be assessed for the level of urgency. Should your matter be urgent please contact the Board as soon as possible. The next meeting date for is scheduled on 2 February 2009.

MEETING DATES FOR 2009

Proposed meeting dates for 2009 and for your diary are as follows:

- 02 February 2009
- 06 April 2009
- 01 June 2009
- 10 August 2009
- 05 October 2009
- 07 December 2009

COAG - NATIONAL REGISTRATION & ACCREDITATION

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has agreed on a National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for the following nine health professional groups:

Nurses and Midwives; Optometrist; Chiropractors; Dental (Dentists, Dental Specialists, Dental Hygienists, Dental Therapists, Prosthetists); Medical Practitioners; Osteopaths; Pharmacists; Physiotherapists, and Psychologists.

At this point in time it is projected that Occupational Therapists, Aboriginal Health Workers and Radiographers will continue to be regulated under current Northern Territory legislation.

Dr Louise Morauta has been appointed to oversee the introduction of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme with an implementation date of 1 July 2010. From that date everyone will have national registration.

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It is planned that the new scheme will have one registration fee to work anywhere in Australia. This means that there will be a consistency of standards and registration throughout the country, thereby removing some of the current policy and legislative differences between States and Territories. Under the agreement each of the health professions will have their own national board with each board being responsible for deciding on their specific operating structure and necessary local representation.

The next few months will be a time of consultation to finalise how the new scheme will look. The consultation is critical on how the new scheme will operate and how it will reflect the aims of the current Northern Territory Nursing and Midwifery Board. So far the Board has provided input to the scheme via submissions provided by the ANMC. The ANMC submission can be viewed via the ANMC website at www.anmc.org.au.

The Board supports the introduction of a National Registration and Accreditation Scheme as it will confirm the present Board role of regulating the profession, setting professional standards and protecting the public.

The latest information regarding the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme can be found on the Health Workforce Australia website at <http://www.nhwt.gov.au/natreg.asp> Information on the Intergovernmental Agreement, ministerial statement, applicable legislation and submission papers can all be accessed on this site.

WEBSITE UPDATE

The Nursing and Midwifery Board website at www.nt.gov.au/health/registrationboards has undergone a recent facelift. The code (policies), register and application forms can be accessed on this site.

NURSE PRACTITIONER

The Nursing and Midwifery Board approved the Nurse Practitioner Authorisation Policy in 2008. The policy provides for three pathways for registered nurses who seek to be authorised to practice as a Nurse Practitioner in the Northern Territory.

Pathway 1 is for registered nurses who are authorised, registered or endorsed to practice as Nurse Practitioners by another Australian or New Zealand Nursing and Midwifery Board.

Pathway 2 is for registered nurses who have completed a masters program accredited by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of the Northern Territory as leading to authorisation as a Nurse Practitioner.

Pathway 3 is for registered nurses who are working at an advanced practice level and who wish to become authorised as a Nurse Practitioner but have not completed a clinically focused masters program, which has been accredited by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of the Northern Territory. Applications for this pathway close on 31 March 2009.

The Nurse Practitioner Authorisation Policy can be found on the Nursing and Midwifery Board's website. For more detailed information, please contact the Board.

ACCREDITATION

The Board has been very busy accrediting or providing provisional accreditation for a broad range of courses including:

- Enrolled Nursing Course;
- Bachelor of Nursing;
- Graduate Diploma of Midwifery
- Re-Entry Program for Registered Nurses;
- Overseas Qualified Nurses Program;
- Overseas Qualified Midwives Program;
- Master of Nursing (Nurse Practitioner)
- Master of Health Practice (Nurse Practitioner)
- Bridging Program for Internationally Qualified Nurses
- Overseas Nurse Competency Assessment Program

ENROLLED NURSE MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION POLICY

The Department of Health and Families have developed an Enrolled Nurse Medication Administration Policy. The Board supports the policy and has provided formal recognition of the Policy in the Board's 'Position Statement on Enrolled Nurses and Medication Administration.'

KNOW YOUR ACT

Nurses and Midwives and 9 other health profession groups are regulated under the *Health Practitioners Act* in the Northern Territory. The purpose of the Act is to ensure public protection.

Annual Practising Certificates (APC) Section 40(2)

A practising certificate is evidence that until the due date, or the date determined by the Board (a) the health practitioner is authorised to practice in the Territory. **Most APC's expire 30 September each year.**

Always keep your APC in a secure place and check it for the following:

- date on which your APC expires;
- accuracy of information on your APC; and
- conditions (if applicable) listed on the APC.

Please contact the Board immediately if the details on your APC are incorrect.

Those practitioners with conditional registration must ensure they are compliant with the conditions, to do otherwise is a breach of the legislation and may lead to a review of registration pursuant to s30 of the *Health Practitioners Act*.

Practising Unlicensed Section 101(1)(b)

Practising unlicensed is a breach of section 101 (1)(b) of the *Health Practitioners Act* and is: a risk to patients and practitioners; may impact on entitlement to Medicare rebates; and may alter indemnification arrangements.

Should you find yourself in this situation, it is in the best interest of your patients, yourself and your employer to rectify the situation immediately. Please note it is the practitioner's responsibility to ensure that they hold current registration and that there is no provision under the *Health Practitioners Act* to provide registration retrospectively.

Notice of change of name or address Section 46

A health practitioner must, within 30 days of changing his or her name, personal address or business address, give the relevant Board notice in writing of the change and the new name or address, as the case may be.

Failing to update the Board with changes of name / address details means that you will not receive any correspondence from the Board. In effect, this may mean that you will miss out on the opportunity to:

- keep up with changes to policy;
- receive newsletters; and
- receive the application to renew your registration.

The Board seeks your assistance in ensuring that the name and contact details maintained on the database are current.

Unconscionable conduct Section 111

A person must not, either directly or indirectly, attempt to influence, coerce or otherwise cause a health practitioner to conduct or provide a health service that does not comply with the standards contained in the code applying to Nursing.

Employer Notice of Misconduct or Incompetence - Section 117

If a person who employs a health practitioner terminates or suspends the practitioner's employment because of alleged or actual misconduct or incompetence to practise, the person must provide a written report of the circumstances of the termination or suspension to the Board and to the practitioner.

Protection from Liability Section 118

This section applies to a person who; makes a complaint; provides the Board with information; assists the Board with a preliminary investigation (including an assessment report or opinion); assists or provides information under Part 6; or assists or provides information to the Tribunal. This person is not civilly or criminally liable for an act done by the person in good faith in taking an action referred to above.

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CONDUCT

Conduct Statistics

1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008

Total conduct matters considered or otherwise dealt with by the Board 46

(Please note that this figure included all matters that were referred to or considered by the Board regardless of whether or not further action was taken with respect to the notification of the complaint).

New matters notified in this period	17
Conduct Complaints (Part 4 Investigations)	12
Tribunal	1
Number of complaints finalised	26
Notifications of possible impairment	18
Monitored impaired practitioners	7

REGISTRATIONS

Registration Statistics

As at 30 June 2008

The total number of registrants included:

Registered Nurse	3977
Enrolled Nurse	589
RPA*	1035
Midwife	15

*RPA – Registered Nurse with restricted practice area - Midwifery

CONTACT US

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