

## COMMUNIQUE

CoNNMO Member Meeting – Friday 3 May 2024

### **Office of the Commonwealth Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer**

Alison McMillan, Commonwealth Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer gave an update on the removal of collaborative arrangements which was announced by the Honorable Ged Kearney MP, Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care at last year's Budget. This Bill will be finalised 9 May and introduced by 1 November 2024. There was also a commitment of 50 million dollars for scholarships for nurses and midwives in primary care, with the announcement to follow on the successful applicant selected to deliver these scholarships. The Australian Digital Health Agency has recently appointed a Chief Clinical Adviser (Medicine) and has announced the creation of a new role of Chief Clinical Adviser (Nursing). CoNNMO members were encouraged to promote the opportunity and consider applying. The National Nursing Workforce Strategy first stage of consultation is complete which included engagement with 6,000 stakeholders across the country. The team are now developing the draft strategy. The CCNMO is working with the NMBA on implementation of the Designated RN prescriber. Supporting Transition to practice programs in Aged Care. One of the requirements from the Royal Commission into Aged Care resulted in 24/7 RNs in residential aged care and the introduction of care minutes. The CCNMO is working to supplement 24/7 RNs with a virtual nursing in aged care program to support nurses working in aged care. The Nurse Practitioner Workforce Plan is to include what nurse practitioners should be able to prescribe on the PBS. The CCNMO provides regular newsletters which you can subscribe to. Please visit <https://www.health.gov.au/contacts/chief-nursing-and-midwifery-officer> for more information.

### **Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care, Health Workforce Division**

Natalie Bekis, Assistant Secretary, Health Workforce Division, Department of Health and Aged Care, gave an update on the Working Better for Medicare Review, the General Practice Incentives Review, the Kruk Review Implementation, the Scope of Practice Review, and First Nations Workforce Programs and Initiatives. The Working Better for Medicare Review is currently underway led by independent leads Professor Sabina Knight and Professor Mick Reid. The review is examining the effectiveness of current distribution levers. These are laws and policies that are used to encourage or require health practitioners to work in areas of workforce shortage. The consultation has received 300 submissions, with 50 key stakeholders approached. The Interim report has been submitted to the Government. The General Practice Incentives Review is considering the effectiveness of the Practice Incentives Program (PIP) and the Workforce Incentive Program (WIP). This work is part of a broader effort to reform primary care funding arrangements to achieve the best multidisciplinary care. The expert advisory panel will provide a report later this year. The Kruk Review led by independent reviewer Robyn Kruk, is looking at our regulatory system and reforms. In December 2023 National Cabinet endorsed the final report and 28 recommendations were made, to make Australia more competitive and comparative in terms of the international workforce. Eight recommendations will support internationally qualified nurses and midwives migrating to Australia to support and grow our health workforce. Professor Mark Cormack is leading the Unleashing the potential of our health workforce - Scope of Practice Review. In October 2023, the first phase received over 700 submissions. In January 2024, there were over 300 submissions to Issues Paper One followed by a national roadshow visiting various cities with over 400 participants in the sessions providing feedback. Issues Paper Two is out now for consultation, outlining the recommendations that will be in the final report. Please visit <https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/scope-of-practice-review> for more information. First Nations Workforce Programs and Initiatives, include a scholarship program with the Lowitja O'Donoghue Foundation. The Northern Territory Primary Health Care Expert Advisory Group developed an action plan to include recruitment and retention, housing and infrastructure, training and education. The Department is working with National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) on 500 places for the First Nations Health Worker Traineeship Program. The Department of Health and Aged Care presentation is available on the CoNNMO website.

### **National Rural and Remote Nursing Generalist Framework**

Shelley Nowlan, Deputy National Rural Health Commissioner – Nursing and Midwifery, gave an update on the National Rural and Remote Nursing Generalist Framework, which was released 27 March 2023. The Framework includes four domains – culturally safe practice, critical analysis, relationships, partnerships and collaboration, and capability for practice and outlines the unique demands and challenges faced by RNs working in rural and remote areas. The Office of the National Rural Health Commissioner is currently undertaking a review of the uptake and utilisation of the National Rural and Remote Nursing Generalist Framework to understand the level of exposure and awareness of the Framework in the nursing sector and to identify how it has been implemented, used and by whom. They have developed a short stakeholder survey that is for both individuals and organisations and takes approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. The survey is open until 31 May, and they are

seeking CoNNMO's support to help disseminate it if members haven't already to our networks, members and colleagues. The National Rural Maternity Consensus Statement is being reviewed by like organisations and then will be progressed to publication. This document will be strengthened regarding continuity of care models, expanding and advancing midwifery roles, the voice of the woman and, most of all, understanding cultural safety and diversity of community.

### **Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia**

Sarah Fagan, NMBA Senior Policy and Project Officer, gave an update on NMBA activities. There is a growing body of anecdotal, industry and regulatory data reporting growing deficits in the supply and increasing challenges recruiting and retaining midwives in Australia. With no growth in registration of midwives overall and numbers of midwifery graduates plateauing in the last ten years, the NMBA commissioned a comprehensive exploration of the Australian midwifery workforce for solutions to existing midwifery workforce challenges. This work, the Midwifery Futures Project, was awarded to the Burnet Institute in 2023 led by Professor Caroline Homer. The project has involved literature/scoping reviews, stakeholder engagement/consultation, a midwifery workforce national survey, discussion paper and a national midwifery workforce symposium. The Final Report is being drafted and due in August. Key preliminary findings include: 300,000 births per year with midwives critical to every one of these; greater challenges in rural and remote settings as services reduce; challenges remain with Closing the Gap; insufficient numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander midwifery students and midwives; endorsed midwife workforce increasing slowly but barriers to working to full scope of practice; and workforce challenges (37% thinking of leaving, 73% working part time an average of 20 hours per week and only 18% of services fully staffed). To ensure a secure workforce we need to lower attrition rates, increase the number of hours worked each week, increase graduate numbers and increase immigration. The Registration standard for endorsed midwives is currently under review. NMBA key projects in nursing and midwifery include: improving understanding of health and cultural needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; review into the approach of re-entry to practice; enhancing the services of Nurse and Midwife Support; stakeholder engagement with employers of nurses and midwives; and reviews of registration standards (multi-profession). Consultation on the Guidelines for privately practicing nurses and the change of the Cosmetic position statement to *Guidelines for nurses who perform non-surgical cosmetic procedures* have closed. The NMBA has also reviewed the Registration standard and guidelines for nurse practitioner endorsement in collaboration with ANMAC and is finalising the internationally qualified RN registration standard. The largest piece of work has been the Designated RN prescribing standard which has been submitted to the Office of Impact Analysis for assessment. Other key projects are the reviews of the Registered Nurse and Enrolled Nurse Standards for Practice. Preliminary and public consultations for these reviews are coming up. The NMBA presentation is available on the CoNNMO website.

### **Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council**

Tanya Vogt, CEO ANMAC and Alan Merritt, Director of Accreditation, gave an update on ANMAC accreditation and standards work. Over 100 education providers deliver 172 programs for registered nurses, enrolled nurses, nurse practitioners, midwives and eligible midwives. The accreditation process centres on the standards and the criteria within the standards. ANMAC intends to evolve its risk-based approach to accreditation to embed quality, make accreditation business as usual, increase contact and incentivise low risk status. Health Education Services of Australia (HESA) was established to advance professional health education and training in Australia and overseas. HESA provides a range of consulting services in Health Education management and the provision of independent accreditation services in Australia and Internationally. Key focus areas include accreditation of Immunisation education programs and the National Placement Evaluation Centre (NPEC). A large part of the work that ANMAC does is Skilled Migration Services. ANMAC has been the assessing authority for overseas qualified nurses and midwives for almost 30 years, delivering skills assessment outcomes to guide visa decision making, assess qualifications, professional registration, fitness to practice, work experience claims and English language. The ANMAC presentation is available on the CoNNMO website.

### **Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation**

Annie Butler, Federal Secretary of the ANMF, provided an update on current work:

- Political lobbying activity for the Scope of practice review.
- Industrial reform includes amendments to the Fair Work Act.
- Appointment to the Ministerial Advisory Board for Jobs and Skills Australia.
- A significant amount of aged care reform, including the Aged Care Act being rewritten.
- Aged Care Taskforce recommendations.
- Work Value Cases include the Aged Care Work Value Case and the Nurse and Midwife Work Value Case.
- Launch of the Nurses and Midwives Health Program Australia.

### **National Nursing Supply and Demand Model**

Presenter - Frances Rice, Senior Nursing Adviser for the Commonwealth Chief Nursing and Midwifery Office. The Nursing Supply and Demand results are an essential component of the development of the National Nursing Workforce Strategy. The Australia's Future Health Workforce Report was published in 2014 by Health Workforce Australia. It was the last published supply and demand model of the nursing workforce. It showed a demand for nurses in 2025 and increase by 2030. Jobs and Skills Australia published data in 2023, predicting a shortage of 26,000 nurses by 2026. The modelling looks at registered nurses, enrolled nurses and nurse practitioners, by sector – aged care, acute care, primary health care, mental health and other sectors. The new model will predict results to 2035 and include a scenario planner. The data sources for the current study are more robust than previous studies. The nursing modules will look at demand and supply. Currently waiting on review by all Health Ministers and will publish soon. The plan is to update annually. The Nursing Supply and Demand Model presentation is available on the CoNNMO website.

### **Australian Cancer Nursing and Navigation Program**

Presenters - Anna Dawes, Acting Director Cancer Policy Section and James Townsend, McGrath Foundation. The Australian Cancer Nursing and Navigation Program aims to ensure all people with cancer have access to high quality and culturally safe care and is part of broader reforms in cancer services. The Australian Cancer Plan was launched in November 2023 and provides an opportunity to reform how cancer care is delivered across the country. It focuses on equity and access. The Commonwealth will set the direction of strategic reform. The Program is broken up into three delivery streams – the navigation service, the cancer nursing service and specialist telehealth service. The Department has engaged Cancer Council Australia to deliver the navigation service. The cancer nursing service will be managed by the McGrath Foundation. The model of support focuses on a person-centred approach once a person receives a cancer diagnosis and is connected with the program. The operating principles will provide a guiding document on how everyone works together to achieve the outcomes of the program. The key theme considerations include: the model of care, workforce planning, professional development, service delivery mode, accessibility and communication strategy. The Department is pleased with the implementation and process to date, but it is still early days. The McGrath Foundation will be delivering the All-Cancer Nurse Service. As part of the service, there is a nurse portal, cancer nurse self-assessment tool, onboarding pathway, needs assessment and McGrath model of care. In establishing the program there was engagement with stakeholders. The Foundation commenced the project in February which is to be up and running by the end of the year.

### **CoNNMO Chair and Secretariat Update**

Julianne Bryce gave the CoNNMO Chair & Secretariat Report. The CoNNMO Secretariat received a new member application from the Nurses Collective on 9 October 2023. CoNNMO Council considered this application at their meetings on 20 December 2023 and 4 March 2024. Following the December meeting, the Secretariat was asked to clarify the Nurses Collective's governance and membership structure. As the Nurses Collective is a free online hub/platform rather than a national nursing or midwifery organisation, the Council recommended that the Nurses Collective's application for CoNNMO membership not be accepted. CoNNMO members voted not to accept the membership application by the Nurses Collective, in accordance with the recommendation of CoNNMO Council. The CoNNMO Chair & Secretariat Report is available on the CoNNMO website.

### **CoNNMO Member Presentations**

To gain a better understanding of CoNNMO member organisations structure and function to network and collaborate, the Council determined that the Secretariat would invite three to four organisations to provide a brief presentation at each member meeting. Spotlight organisations for this meeting included:

- Australia and New Zealand Urological Nurses Society - Sally Sara
- Cancer Nurses Society of Australia - Jemma Still
- Climate Action Nurses - Catelyn Richards
- Otorhinolaryngology Head and Neck Nurses Group - Tracey Nicholls

**Member reports and speaker presentations** are available on the CoNNMO website [www.connmo.org.au](http://www.connmo.org.au).

**Next CoNNMO member meeting** Friday 4 October 2024 by zoom (details to follow).