

## COMMUNIQUE

CoNNMO Member Meeting – Friday 4 October 2024

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

Alison McMillan, Commonwealth Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer, Department of Health and Aged Care gave an update on the following:

- Budget 2024/25 update
- National Nursing Workforce Strategy
- Nurse Practitioner Workforce Plan
- Midwifery Update – Midwife Professional Indemnity Insurance
- Aged Care Update – Care Minutes and 24/7 RN
- New Aged Care Act and Aged Care Nursing Workforce Programs
- Mental Health Update

The CoNNMO 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 following:

- Strengthening Medicare Reforms
- Working Better for Medicare Review
- Review of General Practice Incentive Programs
- Scope of Practice Review
- National Registration and Accreditation Scheme Complexity Review
- Kruk Review Implementation
- Expert Think Tank
- Nurse Midwife Health Program Australia
- First Nations Workforce Programs & Initiatives

### Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia

Alley Peck, CEO Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia gave an update on the following:

- Implementation of Kruk review recommendations
- Midwifery Futures Project
- Designated registered nurse (RN) prescribing standard
- Concurrent review of Standards for Practice – EN and RN
- Employer engagement – strategy and resources
- Registration standard: Endorsement for scheduled medicines for midwives – literature review completed and consultation in late 2024 and early 2025.
- Improving understanding of health and cultural needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – in partnership with CATSINaM.
- Review of regulatory documents – guidelines for privately practicing nurses, Cosmetic position statement. Nurse practitioner endorsement registration standard and guidelines. Maternal child and family health fact sheet. Recency of practice registration standard review. English language skills registration standard. Criminal history registration standard.

### Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council

Tanya Vogt, CEO, Alan Merritt, Director of Accreditation and Kath Baird, Director of Skilled Migration Services at the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council gave an update on the following:

- Accreditation – risk-based approach to accreditation
- Development of a Risk Assessment Tool – final stages of development
- Risk Indicators
- Future planned work
  - Review of ANMAC Accreditation Framework
  - (Getting' Em and Keepin' Em) GENKE II recommendations
  - Quality Clinical Placement Standards
- Skilled Migration – over 15,000 applications for a migration skills assessment

- Health Education Services Australia (HESA) – to advance health education and training in Australia and overseas and provide independent accreditation services in Australia and internationally.

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

Julie Reeves, Strategic Lead – Aged Care Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation gave an update on the following:

- **Work Value Case**  
ANMF has been running the case for nurses and care workers since May 2021. Presented extensive evidence. Interim decision up to 15 %, second decision up to 23% on the award for aged care workers – half of that will be implemented in October and the other half in January 2025. Still waiting on final decision for aged care nurses.
- **Nurse and Midwife Health Program Australia**  
The Program has been implemented across the country. Members were asked to promote it across their networks.
- **Aged Care Act**  
The Act was finally tabled in Parliament (last Act was in 1997). There will be an Inquiry into the Act and then the Bill will be progressed. The previous Act was focused on providers and this one will focus on the rights of older people. The ANMF have a number of concerns with the Act – particularly the importance of workers being valued in the Act. Care minutes have increased, and many providers are not meeting their care minutes. The Minister has sent a letter to all providers about the care minutes requirements.

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

Frances Rice, Senior Nursing Adviser, Commonwealth Chief Nursing and Midwifery Office presented on behalf of the Health Workforce Data Intelligence Unit.

The National Health Workforce Data Set includes how people participate in the workforce survey – how they are employed, where they are employed, breakdowns of professions by gender, age groups and jurisdictions. Includes midwives, nurse practitioners, enrolled nurses, registered nurses and Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives. Details include the principal area of work, principal settings, average hours people are working per week, gender breakdowns per age group. You can also compare a year period, or from year to year, all the way back to 2017.

Demand for Nurses – population projections, service volume projections, nursing FTE to services ratio and demand FTE projections. Supply for Nurses – historical statistical distributions, supply microsimulation engine. Then we compare the supply and demand results.

The 2023 data updates include:

- 365,188 employed nurses in Australia, which represents a 5% increase from the 2022 figure of 347,196.
- 26,303 new nurses who registered in 2023, an increase of 6,053 since 2022.
- 12,035 exits of nurses in 2023, compared to 12,721 in 2022.
- In 2023 most nurses were primarily engaged in clinical work.
- The full-time equivalent (FTE) of nurses increased over the past 5 years in all states and territories.
- 745 nurse practitioners not employed/working as a nurse practitioner.

Preliminary baseline model shows a shortage of 70,000 FTE nurses by 2035. The headcount of nurses that we need in 2035 is 79,000. In each of the sectors there is an undersupply. Different settings in the profession may influence the nursing supply. The plan is to update the outputs from the model bi-annually.

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

Kristopher Garred, Cancer Policy, Department of Health and Aged Care, Danielle Spence, Cancer Council Victoria and Jane Mahoney, McGrath Foundation presented on the ACNNP. The program aims to ensure people affected by cancer have access to high quality, equitable and culturally safe care, irrespective of their cancer type, cultural background or location. It will include a Navigation Service, All Cancer Nurse Service and Specialist Support Services. Key program activities and implementation include:

- Program governance established and underway
- Foundational work progressing to design and establish key services under the program
- Program evaluation commencing
- Engagement with priority population groups
- Broader stakeholder engagement activities

Navigation Service will be supported by the Cancer Council by offering a national multimodal information and support solution, amplify the communication of the service, work in partnership with the NGO sector and build strength of the existing telephone service. People are guided through the navigation service by health practitioners that identify their needs and understand how they can assist in addressing them.

ACNNP All Cancer Nurse Service will include 100 FTE New All Cancer Nurses, transition 30 FTE Melanoma Nurses, transition 4 FTE Lung Nurses and existing 114 McGrath Breast Care Nurses. There will be 100 FTE to June 2027, with positions to be rolled out over 3 phases. All positions in place by 2026.

All Cancer Nurse Projects will include McGrath Model of Care, Needs Assessment, Nurse Portal, Cancer Nurse Self-Assessment Tool, Onboarding pathway, Association pathway, Professional development and education and Evaluation.

## **Unleashing the Potential of our Health Workforce - Scope of Practice Review**

Professor Mark Cormack, Independent Reviewer for the Unleashing the Potential of our Health Workforce: Scope of Practice Review gave an update on the review.

The Taskforce was announced in July 2022 with the report released in December 2022. In May 2023 the Scope of Practice Review was announced and commenced in August 2023. The aims of the review are to identify priority recommendations for systemic reform and implementation by governments, regulators, health sector employers, professional bodies, educators and professionals that will enable health practitioners, working in primary care, to deliver better health outcomes by working to their full scope of practice. The review concludes in October 2024 with the final report and implementation plan. The journey to date has included stakeholder consultation and stakeholder forums, Issues Paper 1 and Issues Paper 2, and the draft final report and implementation plan with targeted consultation. Sector engagement included receiving 1,180 submissions, consultations attended by over 700 people, over 100 targeted consultation sessions conducted with over 200 organisations/individuals and stakeholder groups and a literature review and evidence review being undertaken. Overall - virtually all health professions working in the primary health care sector, including GPs, have some restrictions or barriers to working to their full scope of practice that are unrelated to their skills, qualifications, competence and acceptance of professional accountability for their practice.

Consequences:

- Restricted consumer access to optimal care.
- Reduced opportunity for multidisciplinary care.
- Reduced workforce mobility and skills portability.
- Poor workforce retention.
- Inadequate preparation for practise in primary care.
- Exclusion from NRAS for self-regulated health professions.

What we need to do:

- Aim for best practice retention
- Workforce design, development, education and planning
- Legislation and regulation reform
- Funding and payment policy support
- Enablers

## **Midwifery Futures Project update**

Professor Kathleen Baird is part of the Midwifery Futures Team. Kathleen presented the project on behalf of the team. The Project commenced in October 2023. The team established advisory groups and undertook scoping reviews. Primary data collection included surveys, interviews and focus groups. A National Symposium was held in March 2024. The Draft report was submitted to the NMBA in July 2024 and the Final Report in August 2024 with the public launch scheduled for 23 October 2024 in Canberra. Key issues include:

- The midwifery workforce in Australia is in crisis and change is needed. Doing the same and expecting different results is no longer possible.
- Not enough midwives or current midwifery students are in the pipeline to meet the future needs, especially if midwives are not supported to stay in the profession.
- Urgent action is required to increase the number of midwifery students by at least 20%.
- High rates of possible attrition - action needs to support the retention of all midwives.
- Not enough Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander midwives.
- Significant numbers of midwives work in shift-based models, mostly on a roster system.
- Women want continuity of midwifery care, especially in primary maternity care settings. Continuity of carer models can be beneficial for midwives.
- Birthing on Country models of care can play a significant role in Closing the Gap.

There were 32 Recommendations made in the report. There is a need to increase visibility, governance and leadership, scaling-up midwifery models of care, growing the midwifery workforce, supporting the midwifery workforce, and improving data to support workforce planning.

## **An Introduction to Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

Jen Bichel-Findlay is on CoNNMO Council and represents Nursing and Midwifery in Digital Health on CoNNMO. First identified in 1956. Familiar with AI in daily lives. AI is augmented or assistive intelligence. AI loves mundane, routine, repetitive tasks. Artificial intelligence is when computers are performing tasks that are usually assumed to require human intelligence. AI uses algorithms or rules to function independently. It can classify, categorize and make predictions. AI in health examples such as robots are becoming popular. Hospital departments are using AI to predict sepsis. AI is also used in detection and diagnosis. A more extensive presentation on this topic will be provided at the May 2025 CoNNMO member meeting.

## **CoNNMO Chair and Secretariat Update**

Julianne Bryce, CoNNMO Council and Secretariat gave the CoNNMO Chair & Secretariat Report.

- New member application - In August 2024, the Secretariat received an application for membership from the Australasian Nursing and Midwifery Clinical Trials Network. CoNNMO Council reviewed the application, and a recommendation was made at the CoNNMO Member Meeting in October 2024 to accept the application. The Australasian Nursing and Midwifery Clinical Trials Network's application for membership was supported

unanimously by CoNNMO member organisation representatives and their representative was informed of their successful application.

- Membership withdrawal - In September 2024, the Secretariat received notification from the Australian Association of Forensic Nurses, that they are no longer functioning and have withdrawn their membership.
- Council positions - Nominations for two Council positions will be sought by the Secretariat in December 2024. The Council members currently holding these positions will both be eligible to re-nominate.
- CoNNMO consultation forums – The CoNNMO Secretariat will be holding two National Nursing Workforce Strategy webinar consultations on 14 and 16 October 2024, the first hosted by Karen Cook from the Department of Health and Aged Care and the second by Karrie Long from SaferCare Victoria.

The CoNNMO Chair and Secretariat Report is available on the CoNNMO website.

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

**Next CoNNMO member meetings** Friday 2 May 2025 and Friday 3 October 2025 (details to follow).