



# australian nursing federation

national news - april 2011

## > ACTU Industrial Officers Workshop

The ACTU have issued a general invitation to Industrial Officers to attend a workshop to be held in Melbourne on 23 May 2011. These workshops are in response to requests by affiliates to run regular meetings of Industrial Officers to discuss issues of mutual interest. This workshop will be held from 3pm-5pm and will hear a presentation from the AEU on delegate rights. Should you wish to attend or require further information please contact Nick Blake at [industrial@anf.org.au](mailto:industrial@anf.org.au) by 18 May 2011.

## > United Voice demarcation proposal

In February 2011 the United Voice (previously known as LHMU) proposed a demarcation agreement with the Australian Nursing Federation across health, community and aged care services. The draft proposal sought ANF agreement to recognise United Voice coverage for most health workers other than registered and enrolled nurses in some states. At a Federal Executive teleconference on 2 May 2011 the proposal was rejected and the Federal Secretary directed to write to United Voice advising the ANF's position. The letter has now been sent.

## > Meeting with the Trade Minister

On 12 April 2011, ANF Federal Office met with the Trade Minister, Craig Emmerson to discuss trade related matters including mutual recognition of nursing qualifications, protection of public health services, the PBS and ethical nursing migration. In response to these and other issues the Minister indicated that the government has reviewed its stance on trade and would now have as a priority federal and state government rights to protect public services, including the PBS, the maintenance of labour standards and a sympathetic approach to the needs of developing countries. A copy of the government's most recent statement on trade is available at [www.dfat.gov.au](http://www.dfat.gov.au)

## > Model Occupational Health and Safety laws

The ANF made a submission to Safe Work Australia (SWA) on draft model Workplace Health and Safety Regulations and Codes of Practice. We are concerned that the drafting of the laws is such that the highest OHS standards and rights for Australian workers will not be implemented and existing provisions will be watered down. Extensive comment was provided on numerous concerns with the content of the Code of Practice and Regulations dealing with Hazardous Manual Tasks. The ANF also provided comment on various issues including concerns about the process for electing Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs), and the lack of a process for risk management in the Regulations. The harmonised occupational health and safety (OHS) laws will be legislated by each jurisdiction during 2011 and are due to take effect from 1 January 2012. These laws will replace the separate schemes currently operating in each State and Territory and the Commonwealth scheme Comcare. The ANF's submission can be found on the SWA website: <http://safeworkaustralia.gov.au/Legislation/PublicComment/Pages/PublicSubmissionsA.aspx>

#### > Department of Health and Ageing enterprise agreement

Negotiations are soon to commence on a replacement for the federal Department of Health and Ageing Collective Agreement 2007-2011. The existing agreement expires on 8 August 2011. The agreement covers all non-SES employees of the Department, including nurses engaged as Commonwealth Nursing Officers. If you are a nurse or midwife employed by the Department and wish to make comment, please contact Andrew McCarthy ([andrew@anf.org.au](mailto:andrew@anf.org.au)) or ANF delegate Julie Venamore ([Julie.Venamore@health.gov.au](mailto:Julie.Venamore@health.gov.au)).

#### > Coalition of National Nursing Organisations

The first meeting of CoNNO for the year was held in Melbourne on Friday 1 April. Once again, this meeting was very well attended with 47 of the 50 member organisations represented. Much of the meeting was dedicated to a workshop for the CoNNO National Nurse Credentialing Framework Project. The Commonwealth Chief Nurse and Midwifery Officer, Ms Rosemary Bryant and the Department of Health and Ageing representative, Ms Ros Bauer were in attendance and participated in the workshop. It is planned that the next meeting of CoNNO will be held in Sydney in August.

#### > Nursing and Allied Health Scholarship and Support Scheme

Last year the Australian Government reconstituted the suite of scholarships on offer to provide financial assistance to nurses and midwives undertaking studies across undergraduate, postgraduate, continuing professional development and re-entry courses. The ANF has had a strong commitment to the scholarship program since its inception in 1997. Accordingly a Federal Office representative participated in the first meeting of the newly constituted Scholarship Advisory Group convened by Royal College of Nursing, Australia (the fund administrator), on 12 April 2011. The committee discussed various aspects of the scholarship program including the marketing strategy, application forms, and timing of application periods. Information on the suite of scholarships of offer can be found at: [http://www.rcna.org.au/scholarships/government\\_scholarships](http://www.rcna.org.au/scholarships/government_scholarships). All ANF nurse and midwife members are encouraged to seek funding support for professional education activities, through the Australian Government scholarship programs. Selection for the first round of scholarships for 2011 will take place during May.

#### > Aged Care Nursing Scholarships

Similarly, the ANF Federal Office has participated in the first meeting of the Aged Care Nursing Scholarships Policy Advisory Group under the newly constituted Australian Government funded scholarships. The meeting on 21 April 2011, included representatives from professional and industry employer groups in the aged care sector. The suite of scholarships under this program includes:

- Undergraduate
- Postgraduate, including Honours studies
- Continuing Professional Development and Re-entry
- Nurse Practitioner in Aged care

The first round of continuing professional development scholarships has just closed; and a second round, which will include the full suite of scholarships, will take place from July to September 2011.

#### > National Rural Health Alliance Council Meeting

The NRHA Council met on Monday 18 April 2011 via teleconference. The 31 national organisations in the Alliance work collaboratively to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Australia's rural and remote areas. Issues for discussion at the April meeting of Council included: report on the 11th National Rural Health Conference held in Perth in March 2011; overview of the face to face meetings with Minister Roxon and the Independents; the NRHA submission to the Productivity Commission Interim Report on Caring for Older Australians; update on work undertaken with Health Workforce Australia; latest developments with Medicare Locals; report on the National Rural Health Plan; and rural/remote representation on the advisory group to the new preventive health agency. The next meeting of Council will be held on Thursday 16 June 2011.

#### > National Roundtable on Lifetime Care and Support

The ANF Federal Office was invited to participate in a national roundtable on lifetime care and support convened by the Young People In Nursing Homes Alliance in Melbourne on 7 April 2011. ANF members are involved in the care of young people with disabilities (from the initial catastrophic injury through to longer term rehabilitation and on-going care) and are especially concerned with the issue of young people in residential aged care facilities.

The Roundtable brought together key individuals and organisations to explore major themes for the development and implementation of a lifetime care approach in Australia. Participants were from the compensation, disability and health sectors, as well as State and Commonwealth Government representatives and those working with children and veterans.

The Productivity Commission's (the Commission) recently released Draft Report on Disability Care and Support has recommended a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and a National Injury Insurance Scheme (NIIS). With the draft report's overarching concentration on the funding component required to support these schemes, participants welcomed the opportunity to discuss and debate a range of other matters to be highlighted with the Commission, such as: the issues around methodologies for case management and care co-ordination, future planning and consumer/family involvement in decisions, as well as the roles of specialist organisations in the new schemes and partnerships between health, disability and aged care. The draft report can be obtained from the Commission's website at: <http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/inquiry/disability-support/draft> (warning - there is a volume 1 and 2).

The outcomes from this event will form the basis of the response from the Young People In Nursing Homes Alliance to the Commission's interim report due at the end of April; and will also inform forthcoming state and federal discussions around continuing and expanding the Young People In Residential Aged Care initiative nationally.

#### > Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement Programs Reference Group

The Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement (the Fifth Agreement) between the Australian Government and the Pharmacy Guild of Australia commenced on 1 July 2010. The ANF was invited to contribute to the development of three new initiatives being funded as part of the Fifth Agreement. The three initiatives are:

- Continued Dispensing of PBS Medicines in Defined Circumstances which will allow pharmacists to provide an urgent supply of a limited number of medicines for long term therapy where despite the best efforts of both the patient and the pharmacists, a valid prescription is unavailable.
- Supply and PBS Claiming from a Medication Chart in Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACFs) which will introduce supply and claiming of PBS medicines from a medication chart in RACFs.
- Electronic Recording and Reporting of Controlled Drugs which will implement an electronic system to collect and report data relating to controlled drugs.

The ANF elected to provide overall support for the three initiatives with a general comment on each, rather than respond to specific questions posed in the consultation documents. In the submission the ANF noted that the numbers of members across all areas of the health and aged care sectors meant that our organisation has an intense interest in the quality use of medicines, including the role of community pharmacies in the supply of therapeutic goods prescribed within treatment regimes. The ANF submission is available from the Federal Office website under 'Submissions' at: [www.anf.org.au](http://www.anf.org.au)

#### > Senate Inquiry into Australian Health Practitioner Regulatory Agency

The ANF has been a strong supporter of the move to national registration and accreditation for health professions in Australia, demonstrating this through participation throughout the development of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS). Given our commitment to the success of this important scheme, the ANF welcomed the Senate Inquiry into the Administration of Health Practitioner Registration by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). In its submission to the Senate Standing Committees on Finance and Public Administration the ANF declared its on-going support

for the NRAS. The Inquiry has, however, provided the ANF with an opportunity to present a range of significant issues experienced by ANF members regarding assessment of qualifications, initial and renewal of registration and the online register since the introduction of the AHPRA on 1 July 2010. Although the ANF has voiced concerns in relation to these issues on a regular basis with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) and AHPRA, reaction has at times been slow and inconsistent. In addressing the Terms of Reference of the Inquiry, the ANF has sought to highlight the limited capacity of AHPRA and the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia to implement and administer the national registration scheme.

Given a stance of support for national regulation the ANF will continue to collaborate with AHPRA and the NMBA to provide professional opinion on nursing and midwifery matters, to ensure nurses and midwives are dealt with fairly and equitably in the regulatory process. The ANF submission is available from the Federal Office website under 'Submissions' at: [www.anf.org.au](http://www.anf.org.au)

#### > Options for regulation of unregistered health practitioners

The ANF Federal Office has made a submission, in conjunction with the State and Territory Branches, in response to the consultation paper Options for regulation of unregistered health practitioners issued in February 2011, by the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council. In this submission the ANF has pointed out that assistants in nursing are a group of health and aged care workers who engage in direct care activities and as such their work carries potential for harm. The ANF firmly believes that, just as registered nurse and midwives and enrolled nurses are regulated so too should assistants in nursing. Accordingly the ANF is making application to the Health Ministers Advisory Council for this category of health and aged care worker to be included within the regulatory and professional practice framework of nurses and midwives.

The discussion paper presents a model used in NSW to "better regulate unregistered health practitioners". The ANF considers that the NSW scheme is a retrospective mechanism as it comes into effect once a complaint has been made against an unregulated health worker – that is, 'damage' has already been done to a patient/client/resident. This is in stark contrast to the positive approach to protection of the public, taken by the National Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia for the nursing and midwifery professions. The full submission can be found on the Federal Office website under 'Submissions' at: [www.anf.org.au](http://www.anf.org.au)

#### > Australian Council on Social Services

As a member organisation of the Australian Council on Social Services (ACOSS) the ANF was represented at their annual conference held in Melbourne on 29 and 30 March 2011. A plethora of thought provoking issues relating to the impact of inequalities in health and social determinants of health in the Australian community were discussed. Conference papers are available on the ACOSS website at: [http://www.acoss.org.au/nationalconference/conference\\_program/](http://www.acoss.org.au/nationalconference/conference_program/)

#### > Australian Practice Nurses Association

The Australian Practice Nurses Association held its third conference in Sydney from April 7-10. The conference offered nurses working in general practice and primary health care extensive opportunities to learn, share and network with their colleagues from around Australia. The ANF Senior Federal Professional Officer attended the conference and assisted with running a nursing leadership workshop, delivered a paper and participated in a panel discussion.



LEE THOMAS  
Federal Secretary



YVONNE CHAPERON  
Assistant Federal Secretary



For more information about any of the above items contact your ANF state or territory Branch, the NSW Nurses Association (ANF NSW Branch) or the Queensland Nurses Union (ANF QLD Branch).

