



# australian nursing federation

national news - december 2011

## > National Prescribing Service (NPS) Prescribing Competencies Framework consultation forum

The ANF Federal Office participated in a workshop on 6 December 2011 to provide input into the development of a prescribing competencies framework by the National Prescribing Service. The session was attended by representatives from a range of health professional groups whose members either currently are prescribers of medicines or who have a keen interest in promoting safe prescribing practices. The ANF suggested that the term 'Professional Practice Standards' be used, as this move within nursing and midwifery away from 'competencies' - which tends to describe 'tasks' - reflects an encompassing of broader concepts such as knowledge, skills, and attitudes. It was of interest to learn that the disciplines represented at the forum come from varying starting points in approaching these proposed standards. For example, nurses and midwives using these standards will be Nurse Practitioners and Eligible Midwives who have many years of clinical experience, whereas medicine will use the same document for beginning medical practitioners as prescribers. Written submissions are invited with close of feedback by 17 February 2011. The ANF Federal Office will be consulting with the Branches on our feedback.

## > NEHTA - PCEHR Nursing and Midwifery Engagement Consultation

The National E-Health Transition Authority (NEHTA) held a nursing and midwifery consultation forum on Tuesday 6 December 2011 in Melbourne to engage with the professions on important issues for nurses and midwives in relation to the Personally Controlled Electronic Health Record (PCEHR) and e-Health. Discussion included: the components and operation (current look and feel) of the PCEHR; proposed roll out; safety and security issues; encouraging uptake and use - barriers and enablers; practical requirements to enable involvement in the PCEHR system; and opportunities to engage and communicate. Nursing and midwifery professional groups will continue to work with NEHTA in relation to education, support and implementation in the lead up to the introduction of the PCEHR in July 2012.

## > Working Safe in Rural and Remote Australia Project

As outlined in previous National News reports, the ANF is a partner in the Working Safe in Rural and Remote Australia Project. In addition to the work of Federal Office on the Advisory Committee for this Project, we are also contributing through the stakeholder, and broader interested parties, interview process being conducted by the consultant firm, *Urbis*. The ANF is keen to see this Project progress on its aim of developing community wide strategies for managing workplace violence experienced by health professionals, teachers and police. This is in line with the ANFs policy on zero tolerance of violence and aggression in the workplace which states: *nurses and midwives have the right to work in a safe and healthy workplace free from violence and aggression*. The work is scheduled for completion in 2012.

## > National Prescribing Service

As a member organisation of the National Prescribing Service (NPS), the ANF participates in activities to support and promote the work of the NPS. During December the ANF Federal Office contributed to strengthening the services of the NPS through an interview process with the social



research company Auspoll. The aim was to seek information for the NPS on their stakeholder engagement in their quest for promoting better health through better use of medicines. Members are encouraged to visit the NPS website: <http://www.nps.org.au> to check out information on the upcoming National Medicines Symposium to be held in 2012.

#### > Health Workforce Australia National Training Plan Governance Committee

The development of the National Training Plan (NTP) is being undertaken to assist in achieving the goal of self-sufficiency for Australia in the supply of nurses, midwives and doctors by 2025. The third and final meeting of the Governance Committee for this project was held in Melbourne on 7 December 2011 to consider the draft of the Final Report. The ANF represents nurses and midwives on this committee. The two phases of the NTP involve the development of projections of the nursing, midwifery and doctor workforces based on existing data and recent trends; and, a 'training pipeline' analysis to determine the number of students, graduates and trainees required to achieve the goal of self-sufficiency. The final NTP report will be submitted to the Federal Health Minister in December 2011 and the Australian Health Ministers' Conference in March 2012.

#### > Health Workforce Australia Expert Reference Group for the National Rural and Remote Health Workforce Strategy

Health Workforce Australia (HWA) is currently developing a National Rural and Remote Health Workforce (NRRRH) Strategy. The Strategy is intended to establish the direction for future rural and remote health workforce development, aimed at improving health care services for those communities. This will be a complementary document to the Commonwealth National Strategic Framework for Rural and Remote Health, which is currently under review. An Expert Reference Group (ERG) was established in August 2011 to provide guidance and input into the development of NRRRH Strategy. The ANF is represented on this group. The initial phase of the NRRRH Strategy development was informed by half day consultation workshops held throughout September and October 2011 in 19 metropolitan, regional, rural and remote locations. Interviews and meetings were held with key stakeholders and opportunity for written submission. In total 634 participants attended the workshops and 88 written submissions were received. The second meeting of the ERG was held on Friday 9 December 2011 in Adelaide to consider the feedback received from the consultation workshops, stakeholder meetings and written submissions. Key issues were identified for each of the domains to be incorporated into the draft NRRRH Strategy. The ERG is scheduled to meet again in March 2012.

#### > Australian Government funded scholarships for nurses

The ANF Federal Office represents our members on the Aged Care Nursing Scholarships Policy Advisory Group and the Nursing and Allied Health Scholarship and Support Scheme Selection and Advisory Group. Meetings of both committees were recently convened by Royal College of Nursing, Australia who administer these scholarships. The application forms and processes were reviewed as well as policies relating to advertising and communication about the scholarships, to the nursing and midwifery communities, especially in relation to reaching into rural and remote locations. Of concern also is communicating with nurses or midwives who are eligible for re-entry to practice scholarships.

Separate to the Committee process the ANF has written to the Department of Health and Ageing requesting a meeting in early 2012 to discuss the reduced numbers of Australian Government funded scholarships now available for nurses and midwives.

#### > Guiding principles for medication management in residential aged care: second stage consultation

Medication management guidelines for aged care, published by the former Australian Pharmaceutical Advisory Council, in 2002 (3rd edition), are currently being reviewed and



revised by a consultancy firm on behalf of the Department of Health and Ageing. The ANF Federal Office made a substantial submission to the first round of consultancy for this project (see [www.anf.org.au](http://www.anf.org.au) 'Submission' section, July 2011). Further work has been undertaken through meetings with the consultants and a written submission to the second round of consultation. The ANF has commented on a range of issues but specifically has sought to strengthen the role of the registered and enrolled nurse in medicines management portrayed in the document. The new draft guidelines document contains 17 'Guiding Principles', which replace the previous 'recommendations'.

The full submission can be found on the ANF Federal Office website under 'Submissions' at: [www.anf.org.au](http://www.anf.org.au)



The ANF Federal Office would like to wish you all a safe and happy festive season and best wishes for 2012.



**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).