



1 April 2010

Text for Board Newsletters – March 2010

New Era In Regulation from 1 July 2010

Australia's new national registration and accreditation scheme begins on 1 July 2010. From this date, a new National Law (the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009*) will come into effect and 10 health professions will be regulated by the same piece of legislation.

For the first time, there will be one National Board setting standards and policies for the regulation of all nurses and midwives registered in Australia. The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) will be supported in this task by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), which will be providing services to each of the National Boards. The NMBA will also be supported by State and Territory Boards, which will continue to make decisions about individual notifications and registration issues, guided by national policy and delegations.

In effect, Australia is simplifying its professional regulatory system. We are moving from more than 85 health profession boards, in eight States and Territories, governed by 66 Acts of Parliament, to one national scheme with 10 National Boards, all governed by a single Act of Parliament.

This is an exciting and important time for nursing and midwifery regulation in Australia. For the first time, there will be one national fee, one set of registration and professional standards and one registration process for all nurses and midwives across Australia.

Behind the scenes, substantial work, detailed planning and intense collaboration is supporting the transition to the new national scheme. The existing State and Territory Registration Boards are working with AHPRA and the National Boards to support the safe introduction of the new scheme.

The new national scheme was agreed in principle by all governments in 2008 and the detailed legislation has been adopted in NSW, Victoria, Queensland, ACT and Northern Territory. It will shortly be considered by parliaments in the remaining States.

The new scheme will bring:

- Mobility: 300,000+ nurses and midwives will be able to register once and practise across Australia
- Consistency: there will be consistent national standards for registration and professional conduct
- Improved public protection with national online registers for each of the 10 professions in the national scheme. These registers will be accessible to the public. A range of registration obligations on nurses and midwives (described below) will support this
- Collaboration: greater opportunities for more sharing, learning and understanding between professions through collaboration between the national boards and their chairs
- Efficiency: a streamlined and effective administrative system will support the 10 National Boards

What about me?

The process of moving to the national system should be straightforward for most nurses and midwives. All nurses and midwives who are registered on 30 June 2010 will automatically transition to the national scheme until the end date of their registration.

Every registrant will receive a letter from the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia towards the end of April, detailing the transition process, advising them of details of the type of registration they will transition to and outlining what is required of them to ensure a safe transition to the National Scheme. In general, more than 300,000 nurses and midwives will transition to the type of registration that matches their current registration. While the name of some registration categories will change, the Board has no intention to change any practitioner's scope of practice. Please check the registration type allocated to you in the April letter and provide feedback to AHPRA if there are any errors.

Please read this letter carefully, as it will include important information about you and your transition to the new scheme.

Update your contact details now

The information about you held by your current registration Board will transfer to the national scheme. Please make sure you have updated your contact details with your current registration board, so up to date contact information is passed onto the National Board.

Registration fees

The National Board will be communicating the new national registration fee to the profession in April. These fees will apply to registrants whose registration renewal is due after 1 July 2010 and to new applicants for registration after 1 July 2010. There will be no cross-profession subsidisation in the national scheme.

National registration: key features

Some things will be different in the new scheme when the National Law comes into effect. Key features of the National Law are:

- Mandatory reporting obligations
- Uniform national approaches to handling of notifications and complaints:
 - Health, performance and conduct matters
- National registration fee for each profession
- Student registration
- Independent accreditation functions.

Registration requirements: What's new?

Under the National Law, all nurses and midwives will need to comply with a range of registration standards. The details will be available on the NMBA website after they are approved by the Ministerial Council. Obligations will include requirements:

- for professional indemnity insurance
- for continuing professional development
- in relation to the nature, extent, period and recency of previous practice
- for English language skills by applicants for registration
- for criminal history checks.

NMBA will publish a registration standard that applies to the criminal history of applicants for registration and nurses and midwives registered by the Board. The standard will include matters to be considered in deciding whether an individual's criminal history is relevant to the practice of nurses and midwives.

National register

There will be a National Register of nurses and midwives published online. The Register will show details of any current conditions on practice. In the case of nurses and midwives who have conditions related to their health, the register will show that health conditions apply but will not routinely list the details of the conditions. The National Law details what information must be published and what information must be held by the National Board but not published.

Where can I get more information?

Go to the websites for the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia at www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au or AHPRA at www.ahpra.gov.au.