



anf policy

australian nursing federation

international recruitment of nurses and midwives

Preamble

The movement of nurses and midwives between countries is an international phenomenon contributing to the personal and professional development of individual nurses and midwives and to the provision of nursing and midwifery care.

While international mobility of nurses and midwives is nothing new, there now exists large scale, targeted, international recruitment by developed countries to address domestic shortages.

In Australia, international recruitment is a permanent part of an employer's strategy to solve work force shortages.

The global shortage of nurses and midwives can only be adequately addressed by Governments acknowledging the issue and at a local level by implementing strategies that properly plan and manage the domestic nursing and midwifery workforce.¹

A primary strategy must include inter-government agreements which protect the interests of host and source countries, with particular acknowledgment of the need to minimise the negative impacts on the provision of health services in developing countries.

It is the policy of the Australian Nursing Federation that:

1. The implication of global competition for nurses and midwives necessitates ethical consideration, as aggressive recruitment from developing countries may have potentially unwanted consequences for the health systems of the source country(ies).
2. Migration programs should not be used as a primary strategy to overcome nursing and midwifery shortages in Australia.
3. Governments should commit more resources for workforce planning, education and improving pay and conditions in order to attract and keep nurses.
4. Employers wishing to recruit nurses and midwives internationally must demonstrate:
 - they have introduced a range of strategies aimed at attracting, recruiting and retaining nurses and midwives residing in Australia; and
 - they will provide internationally recruited nurses and midwives with employment conditions the same as those offered to nurses and midwives in Australia.
5. Prior to the recruitment of international nurses and midwives, employers must exhaust all avenues to employ nurses and midwives domestically.

6. Employers seeking to recruit and employ nurses and midwives from other countries must provide the following:
 - Transparency and fairness in recruitment practice;
 - Effective human resource planning and development including mentoring and orientation;
 - Full access to employment opportunities and flexible environments;
 - Equal pay for equal work;
 - Freedom from discrimination; and
 - The right to be informed regarding freedom of association;
 - Assistance to meet the necessary English Language Skills Registration Standard of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia.
7. Procedures for the assessment of nursing and midwifery applications from other countries must be equitable and fair, be based on nationally agreed proficiency in the English language, determine clinical competence, and recognise previous experience and prior formal educational qualifications.
8. Employing agencies must exhaust all avenues to employ specialist nurses and midwives residing in Australia prior to seeking specialist nurses and midwives from other countries.
9. The ANF Federal Office will become the central point for all enquiries from international recruitment companies or any other source seeking information regarding the recruitment of nurses and midwives from overseas.

endorsed June 1998

reviewed and re-endorsed November 2004

reviewed and re-endorsed December 2007

reviewed and re-endorsed August 2008

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References

- 1) World Health Organisation 2003 *International nurse mobility, trends and policy implications* Geneva p.5