



anf policy

# australian nursing federation

## nursing and midwifery within organisational structures<sup>1</sup>

It is the policy of the Australian Nursing Federation that:

1. The primary function of hospitals, aged care services, community health services and ambulatory care services is the provision of health care across the continuum of health promotion, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of injury and illness. Organisational structure, policies and processes should clearly reflect this.
2. The structure and function of health service organisations should provide career pathways for all employees. Career pathways are best provided by the implementation of structures which encourage and reward increased responsibility, depth and breadth of knowledge and skills, and demonstrated expertise, all of which contribute to increased job satisfaction and improved service outcomes.
3. Any process of organisational restructuring that affects nursing and midwifery positions must involve genuine consultation and negotiation including, but not limited to:
  - involvement of the relevant ANF Branch;
  - ANF representation on committees established to review, propose or trial structural changes;
  - ANF access to the recommendations and rationale of any reports relating to nursing and midwifery positions; and
  - mechanisms which ensure open discussion with all ANF members in the facilities affected by management proposals for structural change.
4. Any proposals for changes to nursing and midwifery roles, job descriptions, titles, lines of accountability, reporting relationships, responsibilities, clinical governance, position numbers, and any related matters must be negotiated with ANF Branch representatives and the nursing or midwifery staff likely to be affected. All proposals should include risk assessments to determine the impact on patient safety and quality of care.
5. If organisational structures are decentralised to a regional level, positions providing for regional nursing or midwifery leadership and practice coordination must form part of the regional executive structure (for example. regional or area director of nursing and midwifery positions). Where appropriate in terms of size and the nature of the health service, combined director of nursing/chief executive officer roles are supported, provided that incumbents are licensed to practise as a registered nurse and/or midwife.

6. If organisational structures are decentralised to a health service organisation level (eg. hospital or community health centre), the director of nursing role must maintain organisation wide responsibility for nursing and midwifery administration, nursing and midwifery standards of practice, nursing and midwifery finances (including budgets), professional activities for nurses and midwives and assistants in nursing, and representation of nursing and midwifery at the executive level. Additionally, the corporate nursing and midwifery structure should include nursing and midwifery roles with responsibility for staffing, personnel, finance, research, quality assurance, education, and information technology functions.
7. If organisational structures are decentralised to a unit level (eg. clinical directorates or clinical units), unit level management must reflect equal and complementary relationships among registered nurses and midwives and medical practitioners. Infrastructure support of unit level management should include appropriate information technology systems, administrative support, the necessary delegated authorities, and financial advice and support. Additionally, nursing and midwifery practice must be managed by appropriately skilled and experienced nurses or midwives. The management process may vary according to the size of the unit, patient service needs, patient demographics, patient acuity levels, models of nursing and midwifery practice and relevant current evidence based practice.
8. Irrespective of the operational level of the organisational structure, nursing and midwifery practice and all components of the nursing or midwifery role, as outlined below, as well as organisational elements which impact on nursing and midwifery practice must be managed by appropriately skilled and experienced nurses or midwives.
9. Components of the nursing or midwifery role include: clinical care; management; education; health promotion; research; and education, advice and counselling for individuals and groups requiring care. The organisation of the delivery of services should give effect to these components.
10. The structure and number of nursing and midwifery positions within organisational structures must be arranged so that reasonable workloads for all nurses and midwives in all positions are assured. The resources required to perform all nursing or midwifery roles must be available.
11. Wage differentials between levels of nurse, midwife or assistants in nursing and career structure salary levels should reflect the difference in work and role responsibility at each level. Each career structure level should have a clear and distinct delineation of role and responsibilities, accountability, autonomy and delegated authority. Nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing remuneration should reflect the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.
12. Incremental salary progression within career structure levels should recognise the further development of knowledge and skills as a specific outcome of experience, within each level of responsibility.

13. Flexible employment patterns (for example. part time employment) should be recognised in all roles at all levels.
14. Professional practice principles, including ongoing education and professional development, formalised performance review or peer review and the promotion of research based practice must be supported at all career structure levels.

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#### references

- 1 The organisational structure refers to the management and employment arrangements in acute care, aged care, community health and ambulatory care services. It is generally depicted in an organisational chart and should be supported by policies that outline the roles and responsibilities for each manager in the organisation.