



## Casual employment in nursing and midwifery

Casual employment is defined as employment which is on a casual basis for a short and indefinite period and may be terminated by either party without the requirement of prior notice. Casual employees who have consistent and ongoing regular hours of work shall be classified as permanent full time or permanent part time.

Casual employment has financial, social and industrial implications, such as:

- a) casual loadings not fully compensating for loss of conditions such as paid annual leave and sick leave;
- b) loss of career opportunities;
- c) lack of job security;
- d) reduced access to continuing education provided in the workplace;
- e) limited ability to secure finance due to uncertain earnings;
- f) inability to properly plan individual caring , family and community activities; and
- g) a negative effect on retirement benefits for example, superannuation.

### **It is the position of the Australian Nursing & Midwifery Federation that:**

1. Casual employment of nurses and midwives must only be used for genuinely temporary, or to meet unforeseen emergency, situations.
2. The use of casual nursing or midwifery employees must not undermine:
  - a) the continuity of quality nursing or midwifery care;
  - b) the knowledge and skill base of nurses and midwives providing nursing and midwifery care to patients/clients/residents;
  - c) the time available for patient/client/resident care by permanent staff orientating or assisting casual employees;
  - d) the employer's duty to provide an environment in which nurses and midwives can deliver safe nursing and midwifery care; or
  - e) permanent employment opportunities.
3. The number of nurses and midwives employed on a casual basis must be limited to the level required to meet unexpected circumstances which cannot be met by the level of permanent nursing or midwifery staff for example, sick leave or 'specialling' a patient/client/resident.



4. Working conditions should provide career advancement for nurses and midwives and incentives to assist them to remain in permanent employment, supported by human resource management policies regarding flexibility of rosters and leave, job-sharing and permanent part-time employment.
5. The cost of casual labour should properly compensate a casual employee for the loss of employment security and paid annual, personal and compassionate leave entitlements. Casual nurses, midwives and carers should have access to all other entitlements and professional development opportunities provided to permanent employees. The cost of casual labour should be set sufficiently high in all enterprise agreements to properly remunerate genuine casual workers (but without encouraging permanent staff to become casual) and to discourage employers from using casual labour.
6. 'Banks' or 'pools' of nurses and midwives whose qualifications and competence are known, and who are familiar with the policies and environment of the health service should be developed and used as the initial response to unexpected shortages. Experienced nurses/midwives on these 'banks' or 'pools' should be employed in a permanent capacity.
7. Casual employees must receive an orientation to the workplace prior to the commencement of clinical responsibilities.

*Endorsed September 1994*

*Reviewed and re-endorsed December 2000*

*Reviewed and re-endorsed December 2004*

*Reviewed and re-endorsed May 2007*

*Reviewed and re-endorsed May 2010*

*Reviewed and re-endorsed November 2013*

*Reviewed and re-endorsed August 2016*