



Registration of assistants in nursing

Assistants in nursing are supervised and delegated aspects of nursing care by registered nurses. Registered nurses assess the competence of, supervise and delegate aspects of nursing care to assistants in nursing. This position statement should be read in conjunction with the ANMF position statement on *Assistants in nursing providing aspects of nursing care* and the ANMF guideline on *Delegation by registered nurses and midwives*.

Titles include assistants in nursing, health assistants in nursing, personal care assistants and personal carers. These employees provide direct care and aspects of nursing care to people who are aged, frail, have disabilities or illnesses. Assistants in nursing generally work in community and residential settings but some are employed in acute, sub-acute and primary health care settings.

It is the position of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation that:

1. Regulation by licensing / registration of assistants in nursing should be introduced under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009. ¹
2. It is the responsibility of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia to protect the public in relation to the practice of nurses and midwives and this protection should be extended to include the work of assistants in nursing. The public should be able to rely on rigorous and transparent standards and codes of ethics and practice established by the NMBA in relation to the work of assistants in nursing and not individual contracts of employment between employers and assistants in nursing for protection.

As these workers provide aspects of nursing care and work with, report to and are supervised and directed by registered nurses and midwives, the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) should be the body responsible for licensing / registration.

3. Regulation of assistants in nursing by licensing / registration will ensure:
 - A standard minimum level of knowledge, education and competence;
 - A standard minimum standard of nursing care and the establishment of a mechanism for accountability;
 - The protection of the public;
 - The removal of the current inconsistency whereby two different worker groups in the same facility and doing aspects of the same job but are not held to the same standards or level of accountability – thus leading to increased confusion within the community;
 - That legal action can be taken with regard to those whose conduct and/or competence is less than the required standard (such as: conditions applied to registration; suspension or cancellation of registration; or removal from the register to practice);
 - The establishment of nationally consistent professional practice competency standards;
 - The application of fair and transparent assessment for those applying for registration as assistants in nursing;



- The identification of a scope of practice for assistants in nursing;
 - The provision of a process to inform individuals receiving nursing care from assistants in nursing that the worker is competent to provide the care; and
 - Support for registered nurses who are working with assistants in nursing to delegate particular aspects of nursing care appropriately.
4. Representation on the Board of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) should occur as part of the legislative changes, so that assistants in nursing are appropriately represented and their specific needs are addressed by the national body.

endorsed May 2005

reviewed and re-endorsed November 2008

reviewed and re-endorsed November 2011

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Reference

1. Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 which was enacted on 1 July 2010. Available at: <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/H/HealthPracRNatLaw.pdf>