

Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation submission to the

NURSING AND MIDWIFERY BOARD OF AUSTRALIA PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED REVISED NURSE PRACTITIONER STANDARDS FOR PRACTICE

31 AUGUST 2020



Australian
Nursing &
Midwifery
Federation



INTRODUCTION

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) is Australia's largest national union and professional nursing and midwifery organisation. In collaboration with the ANMF's eight state and territory branches, we represent the professional, industrial and political interests of more than 295,000 nurses, midwives and carers across the country.

Our members work in the public and private health, aged care and disability sectors across a wide variety of urban, rural and remote locations. We work with them to improve their ability to deliver safe and best practice care in each and every one of these settings, fulfil their professional goals and achieve a healthy work/life balance.

Our strong and growing membership and integrated role as both a professional and industrial organisation provide us with a complete understanding of all aspects of the nursing and midwifery professions and see us uniquely placed to defend and advance our professions.

Through our work with members we aim to strengthen the contribution of nursing and midwifery to improving Australia's health and aged care systems, and the health of our national and global communities.

The ANMF welcomes the opportunity to provide a response to the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) public consultation on the proposed revised *Nurse practitioner standards for practice*. The objective of this review of these standards to ensure they are up to date, based on current evidence, and continue to reflect nurse practitioner practice, is supported.

The ANMF has been a lead organisation in the conception and development of the nurse practitioner role in Australia. Most of the 2,017¹ nurse practitioners in this country are ANMF members. We are a staunch advocate for this peak clinical role for registered nurses; the role is integral to improving access for people to evidence-based, safe and effective health and aged care. There remains much to be done to ensure there is a substantial increase in the numbers of registered nurses electing to undertake the pathway to nurse practitioner endorsement. Ensuring the NMBA *Nurse practitioner standards for practice* are clear, comprehensive and remain relevant to contemporary nursing practice is essential to both effective regulation of the role and growth of the nurse practitioner workforce.

1. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia. (2020). Registrant Data - Reporting period: 1 January 2020 – 31 March 2020. Available at: <https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/About/Statistics.aspx>



Questions for consideration

Has the content and structure of the proposed revised standards improved from the previous iteration?

- 1. The presentation of the proposed revised standards has been aligned to the presentation of the *Registered nurse standards for practice* and the *Midwife standards for practice*.**

Do you agree that the content and structure of the proposed revised standards improved from the previous iteration?

Although largely unchanged, the content and structure of the proposed revised standards has improved in some areas from the previous iteration. Please see specific suggestions for amendments in response to the questions below.

- 2. ‘Support of systems’ is a key component of advanced practice. Support of systems is embedded in the NP orientating statements and is more evident with the renaming of Standard 4 to ‘Supporting health systems’.**

Do you agree with the way that ‘Support of systems’ has been included in the document? If not, how could it be improved?

The proposal to include the language of ‘support of systems’ is reasonable. Additional clarity regarding this new term has now been provided, following the preliminary consultation, with the inclusion of a definition in the glossary. This definition now clearly outlines what ‘support of systems’ means in the Australian context of practice.

In order to be consistent with the titles of the other three standards, the title of Standard 4 should state ‘Supports health systems’ rather than ‘Supporting health systems’. This aligns both the active language and the tense of the four standards. Inclusion of evaluation and advocacy in the title of the fourth clinically focussed standard completes the nursing process of assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation across the standards.

The four standards would then read as follows:

Standard 1: Assesses using diagnostic capability

Standard 2: Plans care and engages others

Standard 3: Prescribes and implements therapeutic interventions

Standard 4: Supports health systems through evaluation and advocacy

- 3. The Nurse practitioner standards framework has been amended to denote the clinical independence of nurse practitioners.**

Do you agree with the changes made to the Nurse practitioners standard framework (Figure 1, on page 2 of the Standards for practice document)? If not, how could it be improved?



The amendment to Figure 1: Nurse practitioner standards framework, to represent and reinforce the nurse practitioner's ability to practice independently, is strongly supported. The addition of explanations of the education, research and leadership domains to the visual representation of the standards in Figure 1 adds clarity.

- 4. The glossary has now been revised to include updates to the key definitions of 'advanced practice' and 'nurse practitioner'. New definitions of 'autonomous' and 'independence' have been added as well as current NMBA definitions for 'cultural safety' and 'standards for practice'.**

Are there any other terms that are used in the document that you feel should be included in the glossary to provide greater clarity?

Amending the glossary to include updates to the definitions of 'advanced practice' and 'nurse practitioner', new definitions of 'autonomous practice' and 'independence', and the current definitions of 'cultural safety' and 'standards for practice', is supported. However, the feedback ANMF provided in April 2019 concerning the proposed change to definitions relating to advanced practice has still not been addressed and subsequently our concerns remain.

The ANMF supported most of the definition of 'advanced practice' that the NMBA is proposing would be included in this revised standard but maintain our opposition to the inclusion within the definition of the sentence that states: *Advanced practice in nursing is demonstrated by a level of practice and is not by a job title or level of remuneration.* Ideally, registered nurses' job titles and remuneration should always reflect their experience and expertise. The ANMF request that this sentence be amended to state: *Advanced practice in nursing is demonstrated by a level of practice and is commonly, but not necessarily, related to a job title or remuneration.*

- 5. Do you have any other comments on the proposed revised standards?**

For consistency across all standards, the term 'Statement' should be added in front of 1.1 and 1.2 on page 3 of the standards.

In Standard 3, criteria 3.1.1, the word 'an' should be added after 'achieve' so the criteria reads:

3.1.1 contributes to health literacy by sharing knowledge with the person receiving care to achieve **an** evidence-informed management plan

In Standard 3, Statement 3.3, the term 'territorial' should be amended to 'territory'.

In Standard 4, Statement 4.2, the 's' should be removed from the words 'participates' and 'leads' so the statement reads:

Statement 4.2: NPs advocate for, participate in, or lead systems that support safe care, partnership and professional growth



CONCLUSION

The ANMF appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback through this submission to the public consultation on the proposed revised NMBA *Nurse practitioner standards for practice*. It is essential that these standards remain clear, current and reflect contemporary nurse practitioner practice in Australia. Once finalised, the ANMF will be keen to assist the NMBA to communicate the changes to the Standards to our nurse practitioner and registered nurse members.