

ANMF Submission to the NMBA consultation

PROPOSED CHANGE TO DEFINITIONS RELATING TO ADVANCED PRACTICE

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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 275,000 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 Federation welcomes the opportunity to provide a response to the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) public consultation on the proposed change to *definitions* relating to *advanced practice*. These definitions related to advanced practice are currently set out in the NMBA *Nurse Practitioner standards for practice* and the *Registration standard: Endorsement as a nurse practitioner*.

The ANMF has been a lead organisation in the conception and development of the nurse practitioner role in Australia. Many of the 1,784¹ 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. A clear regulatory definition of advanced practice is essential as it will assist registered nurses to demonstrate that they have met this requirement when applying for endorsement as a nurse practitioner.

1. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia. (2018). *Registrant Data Table - Reporting period: 1 October 2018 – 31 December 2018*. Available at: <https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/About/Statistics.aspx>



QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Is the proposed definition of *advanced practice* helpful, clear and more workable compared to the current definition of *advanced nursing practice*?

It is the view of the ANMF that the amendments to the *advanced practice* definition proposed for inclusion in the NMBA *Nurse Practitioner standards for practice* and the *Registration standard: Endorsement as a nurse practitioner*, is helpful, clear and more workable for the purposes of regulation than the current definition of *advanced nursing practice*. Amending and clarifying the current definition of 'advanced nursing practice' to the re-titled 'advanced practice' will reduce confusion.

The ANMF supports most of the definition proposed, however we have significant concern with the following statement within the definition: *Advanced practice in nursing is a level of practice and is not related to a job title or remuneration*. The ANMF cannot support this statement as it stands. Ideally, registered nurses' job titles and remuneration should always reflect their experience and expertise. The ANMF understands the regulatory intent of this statement, thereby allowing registered nurses to demonstrate that they meet the definition of advanced practice, when this is not reflected in their job title or remuneration. However, this statement could have an unintended consequence. The statement should be amended as follows: *Advanced practice in nursing is a level of practice, and is commonly but not necessarily related to a job title or remuneration*.

2. Does the proposed definition of *advanced practice* meet the needs of both the regulatory and the nursing profession requirements in the Australian context?

Although the proposed definition of 'advanced practice' has been developed for a regulatory purpose, it will no doubt be used by the profession and employers of nurses in a broader context. Consequently, the ANMF is concerned about the inclusion of the term 'autonomous' in the definition. This term is often poorly understood, with many people equating it with independent practice rather than its correct meaning of practicing without need for direction or direct supervision, and is accordingly often used to exclude registered nurses from certain roles, either by themselves or by the employer. Including the term in the definition may make it harder for registered nurses to demonstrate they have met the 'advanced practice' requirement, not only for the purposes of obtaining and maintaining nurse practitioner endorsement but also for a range of other 'advanced practice' roles. We request that the term 'autonomous' is removed from both standards. As discussed in our response above, the last sentence in the propose definition of advance practice should be amended to 'and is commonly but not necessarily related to a job title or remuneration.'



3. Do you have any other comments on the proposed definition of *advanced practice*?

Should this proposed change to *definitions* relating to *advanced practice* currently set out in the NMBA *Nurse Practitioner standards for practice* and the *Registration standard: Endorsement as a nurse practitioner* be ratified, it is essential that there is a comprehensive communication strategy to accompany this change. There is considerable confusion nationally around the definition of advanced practice. This definition is specifically being used for a regulatory purpose and this should be clearly communicated to the profession to ensure a shared understanding.

4. Does the proposed definition of *nurse practitioner* (replacing the current definition of *advanced practice nurse*) appropriately reflect the ongoing regulatory requirements of a nurse practitioner?

The ANMF supports the removal of the definition of advanced practice nursing/nurse in the NMBA *Nurse Practitioner standards for practice* and the *Registration standard: Endorsement as a nurse practitioner*.

The proposed amended definition of nurse practitioner is supported.

Other comments

We are aware that our Queensland branch, the Queensland Nurses and Midwives Union, have made a separate submission relating to Queensland-specific concerns in addition to their contribution to our national response.

CONCLUSION

The ANMF welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback through this submission to the public consultation on the proposed change to definitions relating to *advanced practice*. Once completed, we look forward to further assisting the NMBA to communicate these changes to our members.