



## Credentiailling for nurses and midwives position statement

### 1. Purpose

This position statement sets out the rationale for the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) opposition to credentiailling for nurses and midwives. It should be read with the ANMF position statements: *Professional practice framework and standards for nurses and midwives* and *Speciality nursing practice*.

### 2. Definitions

In Australia, **credentiailling** is a private process used to signify that a clinician has attained a particular qualification. Some professional organisations promote this private process to their members as a way of recognising that a member has, at a point in time, met the organisation's self-imposed requirements.

### 3. Context

Australia has an effective statutory regulatory regime to endorse and recognise the qualifications of nurses and midwives and their preparedness to practice. This regime gives the public an accessible and transparent mechanism by which to assure themselves of the registration status and right of an individual health practitioner to practice.

The strength of this regime makes redundant other private accreditation, certification or authentication processes, often described as credentiailling. Such private credentiailling is not required for a nurse or midwife to maintain their registration. As such, it offers the public no assurance of safety and quality.

### 4. Position

It is the position of the ANMF that:

1. Australia's statutory regulation regime for nurses and midwives protects the public and assures quality nursing and midwifery practice by ensuring individuals, programs of study, and education providers meet agreed standards.
2. The National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009* (National Law), provides for regulation through the *Professional practice framework* and the protection of registered titles.<sup>1,2</sup>
3. The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) established under section 23(1) of the National Law, are responsible for regulating nurses and midwives to ensure they meet the mandatory standards for practice.
4. Nursing and midwifery programs of study leading to initial registration, notations and endorsement are validated through the national accreditation standards of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC).

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<sup>1</sup> *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009*. Available at <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2009-045>.

<sup>2</sup> Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia. 2020. *Registration standards and professional codes and guidelines*. Available at <https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/>.



5. Entry to practice for nurse practitioners; midwives with scheduled medicines endorsement; registered nurses; midwives; and enrolled nurses is validated through national minimum standards of education set down by the NMBA.
6. The NMBA's continuing professional development requirements for nurse practitioners; midwives with scheduled medicines endorsement; registered nurses; midwives; and enrolled nurses assures the public of their commitment to ongoing learning to maintain their competence to practice.
7. Endorsement of a nurse or midwife having achieved a postgraduate qualification on the National Register held by the NMBA and AHPRA provides a fair and transparent validation mechanism for the professions, the public, other health professionals and employers.
8. The safeguards provided through 1-7 make redundant other forms of private accreditation, certification, and authentication – often referred to as credentialling. These other forms must not be used as a validation mechanism for advanced practice or postgraduate qualifications.

### **Private credentialling**

9. Private credentialling is unwarranted and open to misuse, with some professional organisations using it to generate income and some employers using it as an additional hurdle or requirement for career promotion.
10. The community is deprived of nursing and midwifery services when organisations or jurisdictions other than the NMBA propose employment arrangements which are open only to nurses or midwives who are privately credentialled by professional organisations.
11. Professional organisations offering credentialling services to members for an additional fee, and employers who link promotional positions to the private credentialling process, should carefully consider:
  - their ability to protect the public within a private credentialling program
  - their role in undermining the national registration and accreditation scheme and associated validation mechanisms in place for public protection
  - ethical organisational conduct including:
    - the ethics of potentially holding out to the public that a nurse or midwife has specialist knowledge and skills when specialist registration in nursing and midwifery is not used by the NMBA
    - the apparent conflict of interest between an organisation generating income through credentialling and the ability to provide independent advocacy for the professions
  - organisational reputation
  - whether they are engaging in anti-competitive behaviour
  - their legal and financial liability.

### **5. Position statement management**

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