

**Australian College of Nurse Practitioners response to:**

Department of Health

Educating the Nurse of the Future  
Independent Review of Nursing Education

Friday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2019

Department of Health  
nursingreview@health.gov.au

SUBJECT: Educating the Nurse of the Future - Independent Review of Nursing Education

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Educating the Nurse of the Future - Terms of Reference.

The Australian College of Nurse Practitioners has made comment on the items that the Terms of Reference for the review are to examine

- **The effectiveness of current educational preparation of and articulation between enrolled and registered nurses and nurse practitioners in meeting the needs of health service delivery**

Educational preparation for all types of nursing roles must incorporate more emphasis on critical thinking, evidence-based practice, and a full understanding of what being a nurse is. While anatomy, physiology and scientific knowledge is crucial, this should not be the sole focus.

Entry level nurses, both EN and RNs, must be more practice ready and less task focused, with more support and mentorship throughout training, as well as after graduation. RNs working towards an advanced practice qualification also need specific mentoring and support to assist them to achieve their goals and existing barriers must be addressed.

Currently, students and graduates at both the EN and RN level have very little to no understanding of educational pathways and career options available to them. Additionally, these pathways can be quite challenging to navigate, with inconsistency between entry criteria and curriculum.

All nursing education must promote the future of nursing, including roles and opportunities for all nurses to develop and advance their careers. Achieving national consistency on admission criteria at each level of study would assist in both the understanding of career options as well as career planning for nurses. Progression from EN through to RN and then nurse practitioner should be more clearly articulated and consistent, with acknowledgement of multiple pathways including non-clinical and educational roles. PhD and Doctorate pathways also need to be articulated and consistent.

- **Factors that affect the choice of nursing as an occupation, including for men**

The Tertiary Entrance Rank needs to be in line with the educational and critical thinking intelligence that is expected of nurses. Undergraduates must not only meet the criteria for entry to the course, but must demonstrate suitability for the role. Nursing is much more than a qualification.

While nursing is still a predominantly female profession, there is a disproportionate percentage of men within senior management and advanced clinical roles.

Promotion of Nursing as a career to people of all genders will require government, education and industry to work in partnership, and should include details on opportunities and career pathways available.

- **The role and appropriateness of transition to practice programs however named**

A successful transition to practice program (TPP) only occurs if the employer has a supportive program in place. There is wide variation in approaches and standards. The health Industry needs to be more involved and work in partnership with the Universities to ensure that RNs and ENs can practice effectively and safely as novice nurses. It is important that RNs transitioning to nurse practitioner roles are not overlooked in this area. They too need a TPP model to optimise their transition to advanced practice.

Consideration of fundamental changes to the structure and duration of current curricula must occur. One approach may be to consider a four-year curriculum with emphasis on clinical internship in the last 12 months, with industry and education providers working in partnership.

Every newly graduated nurse should have a well-supported TPP available to them.

- **The competitiveness and attractiveness of Australian nursing qualifications across international contexts**

Australian nursing qualifications should be of the standard that can be transferrable to any country, dependent on language and regional nuances.

- **The Review will also have regard to regional needs and circumstances and national and international trends, research, policies, inquiries and previous reviews related to nursing education.**

Regional, rural and remote-based students, and students wishing to proceed with regional, rural and remote clinical placements should not be financially disadvantaged. Additionally, educational preparation must allow for, and prepare nurses to care for people from all cultural and social backgrounds in all communities. Government, education and industry need to collaborate to develop specific policies that provide for the health needs of regional, rural and remote and underserved populations. Education and Industry policy that is driven by Government policy, as was seen in 2000's by the introduction of Nurse Practitioner roles in areas of significant need such as Palliative Care, Emergency and Heart Failure, can have greater impact.

Thank you again for the opportunity to participate in this important review. The ACNP is very keen to participate further, and would be pleased to discuss our response, as well as any aspect of the review further.

Yours sincerely



Leanne Boase  
President  
Australian College of Nurse Practitioners  
25/204-218 Dryburgh St, North Melbourne 3051  
president@acnp.org.au  
1300 433 660