



# Appointment of South Australia's Chief Nurse

Welcome to this first edition of the Communiqué.

I have now been in the role for approximately 2 months and am gradually meeting nurses and midwives across a range of settings. I have been to a number of the metropolitan hospitals and services. Shortly I will be making visits to some of the rural areas and plan to make

such visits a regular part of my annual schedule.

I have been impressed by the level of energy and enthusiasm that I have seen in many of the nurses and midwives that I have met. In this brief newsletter we have tried to provide an idea of the activities of the Nursing Office and also an update on some of the key activities that have been occurring.

We plan to make the newsletter available on the [nursing website](#) and produce an edition every 3-4 months.

I look forward to meeting more of you over the coming months.

Debra Thoms

## Nursing Excellence Awards Dinner

The South Australian Nursing Excellence Awards provide the opportunity to recognise nurses and midwives for their professional commitment and encourage excellence.

The winners of the 2004 Awards will be announced

Friday 7 May 2004 at the Adelaide Entertainment Centre.

Tickets are now available at \$70.00 per person (which includes dinner, drinks and dancing).

Bookings close on Friday 16 April 2004.

Tickets can be ordered from Ms Dayna Vernon by E-mail at [dayna.vernon@dhs.sa.gov.au](mailto:dayna.vernon@dhs.sa.gov.au) Phone (08) 8226 6334 or Facsimile (08) 8226 6235

We look forward to seeing you at this exciting event.

## DHS Nursing/Midwifery Agency Tender

The Department of Human Services has advertised the tender for members to the Nursing & Midwifery Agency Panel from which the State's Health Units will procure services.

The objectives of the Agency Nursing/Midwifery

panel is to ensure standard procurement and contract management practices; value for money solution; provide Health Units with flexibility, ease of access and choice in the provision of Agency Nursing services.

The contract will be for a period of two (2) years, with the DHS having the option to extend for an additional 1 year.

The tender closes on Tuesday 13 April 2004.

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### Special points of interest:

- Chief Nursing Officer Appointed
- Nursing Excellence Awards
- DHS Agency Nursing/Midwifery Panel Tender

## South Australian Nurse Practitioners

The South Australian Nurse Practitioner Project was established in 1996 with the *SA Nurse Practitioner (NUPRAC) Report* being published in 1999. Phase 2 Implementation commenced in July 2000 and the Nurses Board finalised its authorisation process in April 2002 with the first Nurse Practitioner being authorised in December 2002.

The Nurse Practitioner classification has been built into the *Nurses' (South Australian Public Sector) Enterprise Agreement 2001* at Registered Nurse, Level 3, Band B or C. Processes for Nurse Practitioner's ordering of radiology, pathology and referrals has also been established.

To support the Nurse Practitioner role the South Australian Nursing and Midwifery Clinical & Admitting Privileges Committee has been established to grant privileges for the purpose of recommending of granting admitting privileges for Nurses and Midwives. Two Nurse Practitioners having been granted privileges in 2003.

The Department along with key stake-

holders has developed a framework to support Nurse Practitioner Prescribing.

The Nurse Practitioner Prescribing & Supply Framework describes the process by which Nurse Practitioners/Applicants can seek to gain an approved 'Formulary' for prescribing and/or to be licensed to supply medications that are consistent with their scope of practice.

The Nurses Board has endorsed the Nurse Practitioner Prescribing and/or Supply of Medication Authorisation Framework at their Board meeting in September 2003. After detailed consideration of the Framework for Nurse Practitioner prescribing, the Controlled Substances Advisory Council agreed at their March 2004 meeting, to amend the Controlled Substances (Poisons) Regulations to allow pharmacists to dispense prescriptions written by Nurse Practitioners.

In support of the Nurse Practitioner role the Department has provided \$208,033 to a joint Neonatal Nurse Practitioner project between Flinders Medical Centre and the

Women's and Children's Hospital. The program will provide high quality clinical care to neonates utilising a blend of nursing and medical skills consistent with that of a skilled neonatal nurse and an advanced paediatric neonatal trainee. The role will provide consistent continuity of care for neonates and their family. The 5 students undertaking their Masters of Nursing (Neonatal Nurse Practitioner) as part of this project are due to graduate this year and proceed to apply for Nurse Practitioner authorisation with the Nurses Board.

Funding by the Department through the Casemix Nurse Teaching Grant also assists with the educational preparation of nurses undertaking postgraduate studies who wish to prepare for the Nurse Practitioner role. In 2003, 18 students were enrolled in the Masters of Clinical Nursing (Nurse Practitioner) at Flinders University, with 25 students enrolled in the Masters of Nursing Science (Nurse Practitioner) at University of South Australia.

For more information please contact Naomi Heinrich on telephone (08) 8226 6370.

## Midwifery Skills Enhancement Program for Rural & Remote Midwives

The Midwifery Skills Enhancement Project (MSEP) is a national initiative by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care and was funded to establish a rural and remote midwifery workforce skills enhancement program for practising Midwives in country South Australia.

The project outcomes are to ensure a higher standard of midwifery practice in identified rural and remote health settings based on Australian College of Midwives Inc (ACMI) Competency Standards for Midwives (1998), improve maternity service provision for rural women, maintain rural and remote maternity services in the medium and long term and to meet the program participation target.

Currently, 165 (33%) of all rural and remote midwives have participated in either

some or all of the elements of the programs. The development of a skills enhancement program incorporated a flexible learning approach to meet the needs of both the midwives and health providers has been a vital retention strategy, ensuring the ongoing delivery of quality maternity services in rural and remote South Australia.

As the Midwifery Skills Enhancement Project evolved it became apparent there were four (4) distinct phases within the project.

**Phase 1** - 132 Midwives undertook Clinical Placements of up to 10 days;

**Phase 2** - 41 Midwives completed a 6-month Australasian Lactation Course and 6 Midwives undertook the Lactation Consultant exam;

**Phase 3** - 31 Midwives undertook 2-day

Peer Shadowing Best Practice Health Units visits; and

**Phase 4** - 21 Midwives undertook Advanced Life Support in Obstetrics Regional workshops are currently being conducted.

A number of issues and/or barriers have been highlighted during the course of the program. Within the time frame of the project there has been a large amount of activity taking place, leading to the development of personal linkages, professional networks and new models of maternity care. As a direct outcome, there has been renewed enthusiasm, confidence and competency reported by midwives.

For more information please contact Marcia Hakendorf on telephone (08) 8226 6167.

## Enrolled Nurse Diploma

The EN pre-registration training has moved to a Diploma qualification. The Queensland Diploma of Nursing (Pre-enrolment) has been customised for use in SA.

The course was approved by the Nurses Board of South Australia (NBSA) in Sep-

tember 2003.

The Certificate IV in Health (Nursing) was approved for continuing students until December 2004 by the Accreditation and Registration Council and NBSA.

All students should either complete their course in 2004 or be transitioned into the Diploma. Re-entry and post enrolment transition to the Diploma is currently under review.

## Committee Update

**Clinical Placements Advisory Committee** was established in July 2003 to address the recommendations of *The South Australian Nursing and Midwifery Recruitment and Retention Strategic Directions Plan 2002-2005* relating to undergraduate clinical placements. The Advisory Committee established two subcommittees to address the recommendations and provide outcomes. Key stakeholder representation was sought on each of the committees.

**Placement Coordination Subcommittee** was established in August 2003 to review the process of clinical placement bookings in South Australia, including the mapping of clinical placements across the calendar year. Recommendations have been made to develop an annual Placement Review Committee and an annual Educator Booking Committee. Each of the committees is aimed to enhance communication and provide an ongoing forum for discussion between the education and health care sectors. The Placement Coordination Subcommittee will disband in April 2004 following endorsement of their recommendations by the Advisory Committee.

**Clinical Placements Standards Subcommittee** was established in August 2003 to review the definition and implementation of a quality clinical placement through discussion, literature review and focus groups. The outcome of the review has led to the development of principles aimed to extend partnerships between the health industry and the education sector. The DHS Nursing Office will develop a policy document using the principles outlined by the subcommittee. The subcommittee was disbanded in February 2004, however members will continue to pro-

vide feedback on draft policy documents developed by the Nursing Office.

**The Continuing Education Advisory Committee** was established in July 2003 to address the recommendations of *The South Australian Nursing and Midwifery Recruitment and Retention Strategic Directions Plan 2002-2005* relating to continuing education. The Advisory Committee established three subcommittees to address the recommendations and provide outcomes. Key stakeholder representation was sought on each of the committees.

**Funding Model Subcommittee** was established in September 2003 to review the current Casemix – Nurse Teaching Grant and is in the process of drafting principles to guide funding for continuing education for the future.

**Transition to Professional Practice Subcommittee** was established to develop a framework for transition to professional practice and is currently reviewing principles for the implementation of the framework. The subcommittee is aiming to finalise recommendations by April 2004.

**Continuing Education Standards Subcommittee** was established in September 2003 to develop principles for the delivery and modes of delivery of continuing education. Recommendations are currently being prepared for presentation to the Advisory Committee. The subcommittee is aiming to finalise recommendations by April 2004.

**Nursing Information Systems Advisory Committee (NISAC)** was established to provide a corporate and strategic direction and support in the use, maintenance and evaluation of the nursing clinical information system and its databases as applied to nursing practice. The Committee has

agreed on a consistent methodology and reporting process for nursing indicators. The Committee is a reference group for the trialing of e-Care (Clinical Nursing Information System).

**Clinical Standards Subcommittee** was established in May 2002 by NISAC. The Subcommittee has developed an agreed definition of a Corporate Unit Of Care (UOC), a framework for the development of UOC's and endorsed three Corporate UOC's. The Subcommittee is in the process of expanding the set of Corporate UOC's and has commenced review of Corporate UOC Categories. A Corporate ExcelCare Training Package and User Manual have been developed and finalized by the Subcommittee.

**Midwifery Advisory Committee** is a Department of Human Services led initiative. The Advisory Committee has recently been established to address recommendations from the *SA Nursing and Midwifery Recruitment and Retention Plan 2002-2005* relating to midwifery professional issues.

The Advisory Committee will review agreed relevant 'Reports' including the Strategic Plan related to the role of the midwife, prioritise strategies and recommend an implementation plan for consideration based on best practice which supports and enhances midwifery practice and care of women.

*Our sincere thanks to all those who have been involved with the various committee's. With out your input we could not achieve the outcomes.*

## SA Nursing & Midwifery Recruitment & Retention

The supply and retention of nurses and midwives depends on many factors, including educational opportunity, clinical training, support for new graduates, improved workplace practices, meaningful careers and continuing education.

The *SA Nursing & Midwifery Recruitment and Retention Strategic Directions Plan 2002–2005* provides a blueprint for decision making about recruiting and retaining

future nurses and midwives. \$2.7 million was allocated in 2002–03 to support a range of strategies in the plan. This includes refresher and re-entry programs for nurses; funding for postgraduate nursing scholarships for rural and remote, metropolitan and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses; recruitment of overseas nurses; the continuation of the enrolled nursing cadetship and Vocational Education Training

(VET) in Schools Programs in regional areas; the Nursing and Midwifery Schools Speaking and Job Shadowing Programs; the establishment of a program for Aboriginal students to become enrolled nurses; and a clinical leadership program for nurses.

Funding support was also provided for additional undergraduate places at Flinders University and the University of South Australia.

## NURSING OFFICE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Adj Professor Debra Thoms, Chief Nursing Officer  
Erminia Morizzi, Administrative Assistant

The following portfolios within the Nursing Office have been allocated as listed:

<b>Deb Pratt</b> Principal Nursing Adviser	Workforce Budget Recruitment and Retention
<b>Naomi Heinrich</b> Principal Project Nurse	Education Nurse Practitioner
<b>Heather Osborne</b> Principal Project Nurse	Information Systems Communications/Marketing Midwifery

### Nursing Services

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[www.dhs.sa.gov.au/nurselabour](http://www.dhs.sa.gov.au/nurselabour)

The Nursing Office works closely with a number of DHS Divisions which include:

<b>Marcia Hakendorf</b> Senior Planning Officer, Nursing Workforce	Country Division
<b>Marg Mibus</b> Careers Advisor, Workforce Support & Development	Aboriginal Services Division
<b>Des Graham</b> Principal Nurse Advisor — Mental Health	Mental Health Services
<b>Christy Pirone</b> A/Principal Consultant	Safety & Quality

## Mental Health Nurses Advisory Group

The Mental Health Nurses Advisory Group (MHNAG) provides professional leadership to mental health nurses within South Australia and brings together key stakeholders. The MHNAG supports the Department of Human Services' Mental Health reform agenda and key strategic directions for Mental Health Services in South Australia by providing a forum for discussion, planning and formulating recommendations informed by practice, education, research and other factors that improve the mental health of the South Australian community.

The MHNAG, by the end of 2003, had formulated a productive workplan with critical priorities, actions and outcomes for 2004 and beyond. This workplan is an important step in working collaboratively to

ensure South Australia has a contemporarily educated mental health nursing workforce in adequate supply to meet the needs of health services in line with the reform agenda. In addition to the issue of inadequate supply are the significant complexities around the process for registration as a mental health nurse.

Concurrent activities relating to education and training and supply, recruitment and retention of mental health nurses are the National Report into Mental Health Nursing supply, recruitment and retention, prepared for the National Mental Health Working Group & Australian Health Workforce Officials Committee. This report aims to provide an evidence base for the development of strategies to im-

prove the supply, recruitment and retention of mental health nurses nationally.

Two subcommittees of the MHNAG, the Education and Training Working Group and the Supply, Recruitment and Retention Working Group, were established in response to *The South Australian Nursing and Midwifery Recruitment and Retention Strategic Directions Plan 2002-2005*. The subcommittees have presented their recommendations on mental health strategies and outcomes. The work of these two subcommittees is now complete so the subcommittees have been disbanded. It is anticipated that the collaborative work of the MHNAG will contribute positively in ensuring this goal is achieved.

## Indigenous Nursing Programs

An Indigenous Enrolled Nurse Program has been established to ensure Aboriginal Nursing Students receive culturally appropriate training in Enrolled Nursing.

The Indigenous Enrolled Nurse Program, which is conducted by Spencer TAFE at Pika Wiya Learning Centre, Port Augusta, ensures Aboriginal health professionals provide nursing care to their own local communities in the Northern and Far Western

region of South Australia. Following completion of the program, the students will be able to enroll with the Nurses Board of South Australia as Enrolled Nurses. There are 15 Indigenous Nursing Students enrolled in this course for 2004.

An Indigenous Certificate 111 in Aged Care has also been established at Pika Wiya Learning Centre by the Bungala Community Development Education Program (CDEP).

In 2003, 13 Indigenous Students graduated from this course.

The Department of Human Services in conjunction with Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST) is conducting a small pilot Nursing Cadetship program specifically for Indigenous Students in the South East of South Australia.