

NURSE PRACTITIONER INFORMATION SHEET

1 What is a Nurse Practitioner?

The Nurse's Board of Victoria has established a series of information sheets to inform clinicians and consumers about the endorsement of nurse practitioners in the State of Victoria. The information is current as of September 2008. All ongoing queries can be made by emailing accreditation@nbv.org.au.

What is a nurse practitioner?

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council (ANMC) define a nurse practitioner (NP) as a registered nurse educated and authorised (endorsed) to function autonomously and collaboratively in an advanced and extended clinical role.

The nurse practitioner role includes assessment and management of clients using nursing knowledge and skills and may include but is not limited to the direct referral of patients to other health care professionals, prescribing medications and ordering diagnostic investigations.

The nurse practitioner role is grounded in the nursing profession's values, knowledge, theories and practise and provides innovative and flexible health care delivery that complements other health care providers. The scope of practice of the nurse practitioner is determined by the context in which the nurse practitioner is authorised (endorsed) to practise.¹

The Board expects NPs to practice in accordance with the ANMC's competency standards for nurse practitioners.²

What can a nurse practitioner do?

Much of the focus of NP practice has been on their ability to prescribe medications. This is only one aspect of their role. NPs are clinical and professional leaders.

They work within a model of nursing practice that meets a particular service need(s) and defines the scope of practice. The nurse practitioner's practice is supported by evidenced based policies and guidelines approved by their employer.

Can anyone call themselves a nurse practitioner?

No. The title of nurse practitioners is protected in legislation. Nurse practitioners have an endorsement on their registration. This is in accordance with section 20 of the *Health Professions Registration Act 2005*.

Any nurse who uses the title of nurse practitioner without endorsement or implies he or she is a nurse practitioner without an endorsement is committing an offence in accordance with section 97 of the *Health Professions Registration Act 2005*.

Who funds nurse practitioners?

Nurse practitioners are paid by their employer in accordance with the applicable industrial relations agreements.

The Department of Human services provides targeted funding to health services to assist in the establishment of the role.

Information about current projects can be found at the Department's nursing website – Nursing in Victoria.³

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How many nurse practitioners are there in Victoria?

The current number of nurse practitioners and the categories for endorsement are listed on the Board's website at www.nbv.org.au.

How do I get in touch with a nurse practitioner?

The best place to start is your workplace. Are there any NPs working in your organisation – even in a different specialty?

You can contact nurse practitioners throughout Australia via the Australian College of Nurse Practitioners.⁴

There is also a Victorian Emergency Nurse Practitioner Collaborative that have an online email group.⁵

Do all states and territories have nurse practitioners?

Yes. However, the role has evolved differently in all states and territories. All nurse registration authorities in Australia have adopted the ANMC definition and competency standards for nurse practitioners as the agreed level of competence.⁶

There will be national consistency for NP endorsement / authorisation when national registration of health professionals is implemented in July 2010.

How do I become a nurse practitioner?

The process to endorsement is rigorous and extensive; it is available on the Board's website.⁷

For questions around the endorsement process, please see Nurse practitioner information sheet number 2 – How do I become a nurse practitioner?

1 <http://www.anmc.org.au>

2 <http://www.anmc.org.au>

3 <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/nursing>

4 <http://www.acnp.org.au>

5 <http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/NP-ED-VIC>

6 <http://www.anmc.org.au>

7 <http://www.nbv.org.au>