

Annual Report 2011



Annual Report covering the period of NMHPV operations 1 July 2010 – 30 June 2011

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Vision

- Healthy and safe nursing and midwifery professions.

NMHP is a confidential and independent service for nurses, midwives and students of nursing and midwifery experiencing health issues related to substance use or mental health problems.

Directors of the Board:

Ms Belinda Morieson (Chair)
Ms Elizabeth Corbett
Prof. Judy Parker AM
Mr Peter Randell
Dr Olga Kanitsaki AM (Retired Sept. 2010)
Prof. Wendy Cross (Appointed Apr. 2011)

NMHP team:

Mr Glenn Taylor (CEO)
Ms Amanda Williams (Case Manager)
Ms Natalie Spencer (Rural Case Manager)
Ms Julie Ferrier (Office Manager)
Ms Carolyn McDonald (Case Manager – currently on parental leave)

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Mission

- Provide an initial point of contact, referral and case management support for nurses, midwives and students of nursing and midwifery with alcohol and other drug problems and/or mental health concerns in order to promote individual health and well being.
- Reduce risks to those who use nursing and midwifery services by assisting nurses and midwives to maintain their health.
- Provide advice and a pathway of support for employers managing nurses and midwives with health issues relating to drug and alcohol and/or mental health.

The following statements underpin NMHP policy, procedures and practice:

- The organisation's Strategic Plan incorporates a focus which delivers services, which are client-focused, evidence-based, outcome oriented, well planned, responsive, interactive and safe.
- Provision of an opportunity for the client to choose and shape their service options. This includes their service interventions and treatment modalities.
- Acknowledgement of the rights of the broader community to receive safe and high quality nursing care.
- Treating all people with whom NMHP have contact in the course of its work fairly and courteously.
- Fostering an environment where staff are valued, their skills and talents developed and their ideas encouraged.
- Ethical management and practice.
- Accountability in the use of all resources, including research and evaluation.
- Fostering collaborative partnerships which will achieve the best outcomes for NMHP clients.

Chairperson's Report Belinda Morieson

Before the National Scheme for nurses and midwives was implemented, the Nurses Board of Victoria (NBV) suggested to the Victorian Nurses Health Program that we should consider changing our name to include midwives. We thought this was a good idea as our organisation wanted to be seen as an inclusive Program to all in the professions. Our other member, ANF (Vic Branch) also thought this a good idea so the legal process was commenced to become the Nursing and Midwifery Health Program, Victoria (NMHPV). This culminated in July 2011 with the launch of our new name.

We are fortunate in that the two members of NMHPV, that is ANF (Vic Branch) and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, are highly committed to the Program. I would like to thank those nurses who indicated their support by attending the launch of the new name, in particular one of our past participants who told us all how she had been helped by NMHPV.

The ongoing support of our state health ministers has been particularly important; firstly Minister Andrews who ensured that we had funding for three years post implementation of the national scheme and now Minister Davis who launched our name and the next chapter of our organisation. The Minister is giving us great support at a national as well as state level.

Funding for NMHPV has come from nurse and midwife registration fees via the former NBV. We would like to see all states having the opportunity to have a similar Program, through a similar funding model so that nurses and midwives across Australia who have mental health or addiction problems can receive support and in most cases continue practicing. Recent yet to be published research we've undertaken shows that our Program is cost-effective in that the money saved by retaining the nurses and midwives was significantly more than the cost of our Program.

Obtaining secure funding for the future has been a major focus for the board in the past year. With the National Scheme we recognise that other states would need to join us in seeking funding for similar programs to be established in their state. We have therefore visited other states, seeking and securing support from ANF state branches, Chief Nursing & Midwifery Officers and through them state and territory Health Ministers.

We have also received support from the following:

- Rosemary Bryant, Chief Commonwealth Nursing Officer
- Royal College of Nursing Australia
- Coalition of National Nursing Organisations
- Australian College of Mental Health Nurses
- Council of Deans Nursing & Midwifery
- Council Remote Area Nurses Australia
- VHA and SIAG

At the time of writing, no decision regarding future funding has been made, but given the degree of support from nurses, midwives and their organisations throughout Australia, we are hopeful of a funding outcome that will benefit our colleagues and the health industry.

I would like to thank the following for their commitment and hard work, Glenn Taylor and his staff, Julie Ferrier for her administrative support to the Board and the Board Directors.



Launch of New Name with Health Minister

L-R: Yvonne Chaperon (ANF Federal Assistant Secretary), Lisa Fitzpatrick (ANF Vic Branch Secretary), Glenn Taylor (NMHPV CEO), The Hon. David Davis MP (Minister for Health), Meredith Bickley (AHPRA), Belinda Morieson (NMHPV Board Chair), Jane Fitzgibbon (Director of Nursing). Photo is courtesy of ANF (Vic Branch).

Chief Executive Officer's Report Glenn Taylor

The past year has been one of steady growth and continued momentum. In September, we hosted our inaugural 'Nurses & Midwives Wellness Conference', where over 800 colleagues gathered in Melbourne from around Victoria and across Australia to acknowledge, support and nurture our industry's most valuable resource – us! I would like to thank the ANF (Vic Branch) and the former NBV for the support they gave us in the planning, development and delivery of this wonderful event.

Notable by-products of the conference include: our enhanced profile within the industry; the increase in referrals to the service; requests for information and knowledge about the NMHP and the opportunity to promote the importance of good nurse and midwife health.

In the past year, we have opened 159 episodes of care. Demand for our mental health expertise has increased. Colleagues presenting in distress is common, mostly with workplace stressors. However, demand for support with personal or non-professional issues is ever-present.

Demand for help with substance use remains constant. The challenges our colleagues face mirror that of the broader society. We know alcohol continues to be identified as a significant risk factor in our society and our participants are part of that society. Hence, it's our role to remind our industry that a qualification in nursing or midwifery doesn't protect us from addiction or succumbing to problems with alcohol or other substances and to seek help if required.

Our relationships with those within the industry have continued to grow and develop. We view the role of the employer as a critical one in the promotion of nurse and midwife health. A supportive DON or NUM is often the key to an experienced professional fulfilling their potential and positively contributing to the

industry. The by-products of this support are immeasurable in terms of the benefits to the individual, their department, employer, family, community and, of course, the people for whom they are providing the care. The NMHP has been identified as playing a key role in the retention of our colleagues in the workplace.

Our two research projects commenced in this past year with the University of Melbourne and Monash University. The preliminary findings are very encouraging. It is clear that our participants respect, value and demand a support service led by nursing colleagues. They identify real benefit in seeking assistance from someone who is intimately connected to the profession and who understands the culture attached. In addition, there is clear evidence that the work of the NMHP is providing a direct cost saving for the health sector. I look forward to releasing these published reports in early 2012.

I would like to thank the Directors and staff of the NMHP for their dedication and hard work. Each of them displays a clear passion for the service we provide and the professionals we support, making it a far richer place. On behalf of the staff, I acknowledge and thank the ANF (Vic Branch) for their strong and sustained support as our member and I'd like to acknowledge and thank the Victorian Board of the Nursing & Midwifery Board of Australia for their continued support. We have enjoyed our first year together with our new member, AHPRA and have appreciated the guidance and support it has afforded us.

We continue to promote and deliver 'nurse sensitive practice'. Most of our participants understand their presenting health issues on arrival and most have an idea of what they need to do to address these. Often access to a willing listener and some practical guidance is all they require. At times a more sophisticated plan is needed.

We feel privileged to be in a position to continue to provide this unique, industry-specific service to our colleagues and look forward to doing so, well into the future.

NMHP Strategic Directions

Table 1: Strategic Directions 2010 – 2011		
Strategic Directions		Objectives
Development and Delivery of a Quality Program	1.1	To provide a support service which is evidence-based, professional, accessible and sensitive to the health needs of the nursing/midwifery community.
	1.2	To continually review and update program policies, procedures and practices in line with evidence-based best practice professional standards.
	1.3	To identify and implement a suitable accreditation program which will ensure the organisation is operating at industry standards.
Promoting the Program	2.1	To increase the number of nurses/midwives who are aware of the program.
	2.2	To raise awareness of the program locally, nationally and internationally across the nursing/midwifery industry including employers.
Establishing the Evidence Base	3.1	To maintain a data collection system that demonstrates NMHP achievements.
	3.2	To utilise and disseminate the data in the best interests of the NMHP and the nursing/midwifery community.
Strengthening Strategic Partnerships	4.1	To identify all relevant key stakeholders.
	4.2	To build and maintain stakeholder engagement.
Ensuring Financial Sustainability	5.1	To secure ongoing funds to meet future requirements.
	5.2	To maintain a financially sound organisation.
Ensuring Good Governance	6.1	To maintain and improve monitoring and compliance systems.
	6.2	To ensure Directors and staff maintain relevant knowledge that assists good governance of the NMHP.
Ensuring Accountability through Research and Evaluation of the Program	7.1	To monitor and evaluate the Program to ensure accountability and guide decisions for future planning.
	7.2	To undertake primary research to systematically investigate issues of concern.
	7.3	To disseminate results through presentations and publications.
Ensuring Future Sustainability within a National Context	8.1	To ensure the organisation continues to be a viable state wide service and is recognised as the National benchmark.
	8.2	To showcase evidence through research that the service delivers on its vision and mission.
	8.3	To garner the support and commitment of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia for a nurse and midwife health service on a National scale.

How Far Do The Frontiers Stretch?

Natalie Spencer
Rural Case Manager

The NMHP Rural Program is proving to be an effective and easily accessible health service for our nursing and midwifery colleagues. Currently 27% of the total numbers of nurses accessing the service are from rural locations. Access is a priority for the NMHP which is why earlier this year we introduced Skype. We appreciate that not all of our colleagues are able to physically access our Metropolitan and regional locations, therefore Skype is a convenient alternative and one recommended by our stakeholders.

What we know from our earlier focus groups is that nurses and midwives are reluctant to access services due to fear, shame, isolation and stigma in regards to mental health and substance use issues. The NMHP acknowledges and understands that choosing a career in nursing comes with many rewards, pressures, demands and expectations. Empathy, compassion, generosity and good time management are some of the many valued qualities that a nurse/midwife requires for this career.

The challenge for the nursing fraternity is to be mindful in maintaining a healthy balance between our emotional, physical and spiritual selves while still fulfilling the important role as a nurse. What we know is that being socially connected is one of the staple ingredients in the recipe for wellness, along with good nutrition and regular movement – energy creates energy.

There can be a cost to caring for nurses and midwives. Operating from a reactive stress-based platform for too long can contribute to symptoms of burnout and compassion fatigue amongst other health implications – this is the reality. We are a precious resource, particularly in the rural regions where it is even more important for nurses and midwives to nurture one another. The NMHP offers this

confidential space specifically for nurses and midwives to speak openly to other nurses. What can be shared in one, six or even twenty sessions can mean the difference between health and sickness.

The NMHP believes that investing in our nurses' and midwives' health will contribute to a happier and healthier nursing workforce. Our colleagues can continue to benefit from our rural services in Bendigo, Ballarat and Traralgon.

We acknowledge and value the strong and trusted relationships we have developed with industry colleagues around Victoria and look forward to strengthening these and creating new partnerships in the future. To our valued members AHPRA and the Australian Nursing Federation (Victorian Branch) we appreciate your ongoing commitment and support. We acknowledge the work, commitment and leadership of the former Nurses Board of Victoria in our history.

We look forward to planning some exciting new rural initiatives in the New Year with our valued stakeholders, such as developing rural specific seminars on nurse's health and wellbeing, to create further opportunity for regional nurses to access information, education and preventative measures on life balance.

**Table 2: Promotional Presentations Summary
July 2010 – June 2011**

To Hospitals	39
To Universities	10
To Other Health Care Providers & Unions	13
Conferences	23
Total Promotions	85

**'Wellness Conference 2010'
Summary
Amanda Williams
Case Manager**

September 10th 2010 was an historic day in our nursing landscape. Over 800 nurses and midwives attended the inaugural 'Nurses and Midwives Wellness Conference 2010' presented by the Victorian Nurses Health Program (now the Nursing and Midwifery Health Program, Victoria) at the Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centre.

This unique Conference, two years in the planning, was designed to provide our colleagues with a full day experience specifically focussed on 'nurse and midwife health and wellbeing'. Keynote speakers provided practical strategies to assist and promote health and wellness, and there was an opportunity to acknowledge and reflect on the extraordinary work that our profession provides within our communities and society.

The feedback from those individuals who attended the Conference was overwhelmingly positive. Delegates have requested future conferences be provided, which offer insights and knowledge about issues specifically relating to their health.

The day began with an early morning Yoga session before the Minister for Health, at that time, the Honourable Daniel Andrews, opened the event and acknowledged how important we are in our community and discussed his Government's ongoing support for the service in Victoria. Professor Judith Parker highlighted the importance of acknowledging the extraordinary profession nursing is and the need to ensure we promote an awareness of our own health and wellbeing needs along the journey. The keynote speakers included Ms Toni Hoffman, a Queensland-based nurse, who provided insight into her real life journey as a whistle blower and patient advocate in the Dr Patel case.

Amanda Gore provided us with an understanding of how to take a positive view

of life and the practical use of humour and self-care strategies to stay well.

Phillipa Challis promoted the therapeutic use of laughter therapy, which the audience embraced. Timothy Sharp (AKA Dr Happy) presented on the importance of happiness and showcased ways to reach this goal. Mark Bunn presented fundamental strategies to healthy living involving diet, exercise and balance.

Free massages were provided to Conference participants during the breaks and the atmosphere during these periods was wonderful. Delegates participated openly, engaged each other in conversation and embraced the opportunity to take care of themselves for the day.

This Conference was a great example of partnership in cooperation. The Nursing and Midwifery Health Program would like to take this opportunity again to thank all of those who assisted in the planning, preparation and delivery of this event. This includes the Australian Nursing Federation (Victorian Branch), who dedicated staff to planning the Conference for months and co-opted many of their staff into action on the day. Thanks also to the dedicated team from the former Nurses Board of Victoria, who committed their time in the planning and delivery of this event.

The Conference would not have been possible without the dedicated partnership of the three organisations. Discussions are underway for a second conference, which we hope to deliver in the second half of 2012.



Mark Bunn – Speaker at Nurses and Midwives Wellness Conference 2010. Photo is courtesy of ANF Vic Branch.