

28 September 2015

Ms Jan Barham MLC  
Committee Chair  
NSW Legislative Council General Purpose Standing Committee  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

Sent via email: [gpscno3@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:gpscno3@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Ms Barham MLC

### **Inquiry into registered nurses in New South Wales nursing homes**

I am writing in response to your letter to Dr Cusack seeking information about the education and practice of registered nurses and enrolled nurses. The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) regulates the professions of nursing and midwifery. One of the functions of the NMBA is to register nurses and midwives who are safe and competent to practice. The NMBA achieves this through the establishment of the requirements for initial and ongoing registration and the publication of standards, codes and guidelines that set the expected level of practice.

Under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law as in force in each state and territory (National Law) there are two divisions of nurse; registered nurses and enrolled nurses that are regulated by the NMBA. The NMBA does not regulate Assistants in nursing or other non-regulated employees that work in Residential Aged Care Facilities and as such the response to your questions does address these employees. The responses to your specific questions are included in Attachment A. With regard to your questions about the number of registered nurses and enrolled nurses trained in each year, this is not data that the NMBA collects and I recommend that you contact education providers for this information.

Since the introduction of the National Law in 2010 there are no longer enrolled nurses with or without medication endorsement. Enrolled nurses who are not educationally prepared to administer medications have a notation on their registration that states 'Does not hold Board-approved qualification in administration of medicines'. This means that these enrolled nurses are not permitted to administer medications. Registered nurses and enrolled nurses are required to work within the relevant Drugs and Poisons legislation in the state or territory in which they are practising.

A program of study leading to registration as an enrolled nurse is separate from, and **not** part of, the program of study leading to registration as a registered nurse. The breadth and depth of the education of a registered nurse and an enrolled nurse are quite different. As a result the role expectations and scope of practice of a registered nurse and an enrolled nurse are different. The NMBA Enrolled Nurse Standards for Practice require enrolled nurses to be supervised by a registered nurse.

Each program of study for registered nurses and enrolled nurses is approved against the relevant NMBA-approved accreditation standards and designed to meet the relevant NMBA standards for practice (also known as competency standards), that is the Enrolled Nurse Standards for Practice or the Registered Nurse Standards for Practice.

Yours sincerely

**Tanya Vogt**  
Executive Officer  
Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia

*Encl. Attachment A – Response to NSW Senate inquiry into registered nurses in NSW nursing homes*

Attachment A

## Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia

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28 September 2015

Response to NSW Senate inquiry into registered nurses in NSW nursing homes

Question	Registered Nurse	Enrolled Nurse
What are the minimum education requirements for these employees to be able to practice?	Bachelor of Nursing BN	Diploma of Nursing
What sort of courses under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) are the minimum requirements for these employees?	AQF level 7	AQF level 5
What is the shortest duration of these courses?	3 years full time	18 months
What's the longest duration of these courses?	3 years full time	2 years

How many hours of study are required?	There is not a minimum number of hours, education providers are required to demonstrate that the curriculum meets the NMBA approved accreditation standards and that graduates from the BN will meet the NMBA approved RN Standards for Practice.	Approximately 1450 hours
Do these courses include clinical practicum or clinical placements? If so, what's the minimum amount of time for these?	Minimum 800 hours	Minimum 400 hours
Is a first aid qualification required? What's the minimum classification required?	No – RNs are not trained to be first aiders	Yes, this is a unit of competency in the Diploma in Nursing
Is cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) covered in this first aid qualification?	CPR is included as a part of the curriculum	Yes
Is the operation of an automatic external defibrillator (AED) covered in this first aid qualification?	AED operation is included as a part of the curriculum	AED is <b>not</b> included in the curriculum
Is the administration of oxygen and other gases covered in this first aid qualification?	This is included in the BN curriculum	The basics of oxygen administration is included in the curriculum
Is the administration of intravenous fluids covered in this first aid qualification?	This is included in the BN curriculum	This is an elective in the Diploma of Nursing

What restrictions are placed on them for medication administration?	None	Only ENs without a notation on their registration can able to administer medications.
Can they administer Schedule 2 medications?	Yes	Yes and as above
Can they administer Schedule 4 medications?	Yes	Yes and as above
Can they administer Schedule 8 medications?	Yes	Yes and as above
What forms of pain relief can these employees administer?	All forms of pain relief	Yes and as above
How many of these employees are currently employed or "registered" within New South Wales?	75,832	13,344