



# SPECIALTY NURSING IN THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT: BALANCING REGULATORY AND PROFESSIONAL ISSUES

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# INTRODUCTION

Director of Nursing in Queensland  
Australia and registered nurse for 25  
years

Lawyer of the Queensland Supreme  
Court

Currently undertaking doctoral  
research into clinical decision making  
and perceptions of legal and ethical  
obligations to the individual and  
broader community

World Health Assembly delegate for  
the International Council of Nurses for  
the past 5 years

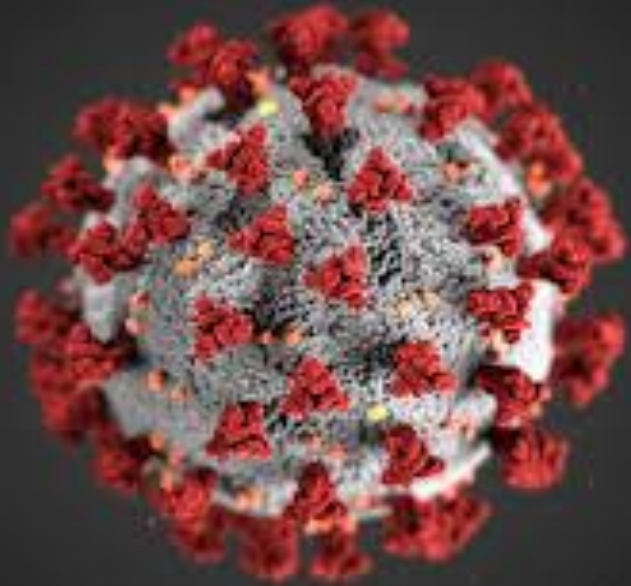
Global Nursing Policy Leadership  
Institute Scholar 2017







# COVID-19 QUEENSLAND



## Cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in Queensland

21/02/2021

0

CASES TODAY

5

TOTAL ACTIVE CASES

1,321

TOTAL CASES TO DATE

5,085

TESTS IN THE PAST  
24 HOURS

1,908,537

TOTAL TESTS

1,309

PATIENTS RECOVERED

5

HOSPITAL INPATIENTS

0

ICU PATIENTS

6

TOTAL DEATHS



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P03725.008

# BACKGROUND

Historically all nurses were hospital trained in the Nightingale tradition

- Medical Dominated
- State regulation
- Limited scope of practice

All programs moved to Tertiary Sector by 1993

University entry score of higher than engineering

400,000 Nurses and Midwives (Approx. 1 200 per 100,000 pop)

Beginner RN      US\$60K

Executive DON    US\$170K



# THE NATIONAL LAW

## Uniform National Law

- Health Practitioner Regulation National Law 2010

To establish a national registration and accreditation scheme

- The regulation of health practitioners
- The registration of students

Establishes the National Boards

## Protected titles

- nurse, registered nurse, nurse practitioner, enrolled nurse, midwife, midwife practitioner





## LEGISLATIVE OBJECTIVES

To provide for the protection of the public by ensuring that only health practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified to practise in a competent and ethical manner are registered

To facilitate workforce mobility across Australia by reducing the administrative burden for health practitioners who wish to move or work across Australia

To facilitate the provision of high quality education and training

To facilitate the rigorous and responsive assessment of overseas-trained

To facilitate access to services provided by health practitioners in accordance with the public interest

To enable the continuous development of a flexible, responsive and sustainable Australian health workforce



# REGISTRATION LEVELS

Enrolled Nurse

Registered Nurse

- Endorsement as a Nurse Practitioner
- Endorsement for Rural and Isolated Practice





## ADVANCED PRACTICE — A LEVEL OF PRACTICE

Nurses practising at an advanced practice level incorporate professional leadership, education, research and support of systems into their practice.

Their practice includes relevant expertise, critical thinking, complex decision-making, autonomous practice and is effective and safe.

They work within a generalist or specialist context and they are responsible and accountable in managing people who have complex healthcare requirements.



## SPECIALIST NURSING- A CONTEXT OF PRACTICE

No legal recognition of nursing specialisation in Australia

Findings from the 'Specialist registration for the nursing profession project 2014' identified that:

- a variety of mechanisms are employed internationally to recognise and regulate speciality practice, including licensure, endorsement, credentialing, validation and certification
- formally regulating speciality groups for purposes of registration did not reduce risk to the public
- there was a lack of significant evidence that regulation of speciality practice improves patient/client outcomes.





## THE RURAL GENERALIST

A rural and remote nurse is an experienced, resourceful generalised nurse with specialised skills and knowledge in remote area nursing, primary health care settings and emergency care, who can work autonomously and as a team member.

The rural and remote nurse must demonstrate advanced nursing practice and possess a high level of skills, as a result of higher education and job experience.

They would also possess a high level of insight, sound clinical decision making, clinical judgement and can demonstrate cultural sensitivity and diversity.



# PROFESSIONAL ISSUES

The growing need for new models of care

Defining nursing specialties

The specialist / generalist

The importance of specialty recognition

- Sustainable education and recognition of the need to invest in post graduate education
- Authorities
  - Prescribing, diagnostics and admitting rights
- Sustainable funding and appropriate remuneration
- Protected titles
- Recognition





## TAKE HOME MESSAGES

Nursing is evolving very quickly and challenging historical limitations

There is increased demand for nurses to have advanced skill sets, but a reluctance to recognise or pay for it

Specialty skills require investment in education and training

Funding and remuneration must recognise nursing specialties

Unless recognised specialty career pathways at risk due to lack of investment

Nursing needs to reconcile the concepts of Advanced Practice and Specialty Nursing

Nursing needs to articulate what its specialties are

Professional recognition is not the same as being legally recognised