

# **Bringing Nurses Back into the Workforce (BNBW) Public hospitals component**

## **A Commonwealth initiative**

**Administered by  
Nurse Policy Branch  
Department of Human Services  
& Department of Health and Ageing**

### **Guidelines - July to December 2008**

#### **1 About the BNBW program**

The Bringing Nurses Back into the Workforce (BNBW) Program is funded by the Commonwealth Government Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA). BNBW aims to bring an extra 6,200 full time equivalent (FTE) nurses/midwives back into our public hospitals within five years.

The BNBW program includes a target of bringing 1,000 FTE nurses/midwives back into the hospital workforce and 400 FTE nurses back into residential aged care homes across Australia in 2008 and to continue to return nurses/midwives to the workforce up to 15 January 2012.

This is part of a broader program over 5 years to support recruitment and training of up to a total of 8,750 nurses across public and private hospitals and aged care services as well as funding up to an additional 1,170 ongoing university nursing places per year.

The aims of the BNBW Program are to:

- Reduce the nursing shortages in many parts of the hospital system, both in the public and private sectors and residential aged care homes; and
- Attract 8,750 of the estimated 30,000 qualified nurses/midwives who are currently outside the Australian nursing workforce back into public hospitals.

The program provides cash bonuses of up to \$6,000 to eligible nurses and midwives who return to work in either a public or private hospital or residential aged care home participating in the program. The program also provides cash bonuses of up to \$1,000 to each participating public hospital, private hospital and residential aged care home that employs an eligible nurse/midwife.

The public hospitals component of the BNBW program in Victoria is administered by the Department of Human Services (the department) and the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA). The policy and requirements outlined in these guidelines have been developed by DoHA in consultation with the States and Territories and approved by the Commonwealth Minister for Health and Ageing. They have been accepted by the Health Workforce Principal Committee which reports to the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Committee, and endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments.

The BNBW program will be periodically reviewed by DoHA in consultation with the States and Territories to ensure the program achieves its policy outcomes.

Further information including questions and answers and fact sheets on the Bringing Nurses Back into the Workforce program can be found on the DoHA web site at [www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/work-nurse-backnurse](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/work-nurse-backnurse) or by calling toll free on 1300 733 314.

*Please note; these guidelines have been customised to reflect the Victorian context and local arrangements for reporting and financial management.*

## 2 Eligibility

### **Nurses/midwives will be eligible for BNBW bonuses provided they**

- have previously been employed as a registered nurse/midwife ( Division 1 or 3 in Victoria) or enrolled nurse (Division 2 in Victoria) in the Australian nursing workforce;
- have not been employed as a registered nurse/midwife (Division 1 or 3 in Victoria) or enrolled nurse (Division 2 in Victoria) in Australia within the 12 months prior to the date of employment;
- are registered with the Nurses Board of Victoria (NBV) or are eligible for registration;
- return to work as a registered Division 1, 2 or 3 nurse as an employee of a public hospital in Victoria (this does not include residential aged care services) which have allocated places under the program;
- return to full time or part time work in a participating public hospital;
- returned to work on or after the 15 January 2008;
- confirm that the hospital that is employing them has an allocated place available under the program;
- are an Australian citizen or have permanent residency status; and
- meet any additional registration requirements of the NBV.

### **Nurses/midwives will not be eligible for this program if they;**

- returned to work as a registered nurse or midwife, or enrolled nurse in Australia before the 15 January 2008;
- are unable to gain registration with the NBV in Victoria;
- have been employed as a registered nurse/midwife or enrolled nurse in Australia within the past 12 months at the time they intend to return to work;
- are a registered nurse/midwife or are eligible for registration but have never been employed as a registered nurse/midwife or enrolled nurse in Australia, (i.e. are a new graduate, or a nurse/midwife entering Australia and seeking employment as a nurse/midwife for the first time);
- are under investigation or sanctioned by a State or Territory regulatory body;
- are employed as a registered nurse/midwife or enrolled nurse to provide services to a health service or residential aged care home by an external body, e.g. nursing agency; and
- have been in receipt of a BNBW bonus payment/s at previous employment.

*Please note: An information sheet for nurses is available from the DoHA website at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/work-nurse-backnurse>*

### **A public hospital will be eligible if it is a Declared Public Hospital, where it provides hospital treatment that includes part of an overnight stay.**

*The process for Declared Public Hospitals is located on the DoHA website at: [http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-phicirculars2008-12\\_08.htm](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-phicirculars2008-12_08.htm)*

### **An organisation is not an eligible public hospital if it is:**

- an agency that employs nurses/midwives to provide nursing services to a hospital or aged care home;
- a public hospital which only provides hospital treatment that does not include part of an overnight stay (ie. day hospital facilities); or
- an organisation that is not a Declared Public Hospital.

**Please note: An information sheet for public hospitals is available from the DoHA website at: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/work-nurse-backnurse>**

### 3 Allocation of BNBW places

Victoria has been allocated a quota of full time equivalent (FTE) BNBW places for public hospitals. Places will be allocated to public hospitals twice a year based on:

- submissions from hospitals
- advice from hospitals about nursing vacancies
- known workforce shortages; and
- department priorities.

The availability of allocated places is limited under the BNBW program. Hospitals will be advised of the process and criteria for applying for places in for each funding round.

Hospitals that do not receive an allocation in a funding round will be eligible to apply for BNBW places in subsequent rounds.

Places that have not been awarded to eligible nurses at the end of the reporting period must be reported to the department as part of the minimum data set. Unless otherwise notified by the department, unused places may be rolled over to the next period.

### 4 Funding and conditions

BNBW funds will be distributed through the Budget Payment System and will appear on the health service cash flow statement as **Bringing Nurses Back into the Workforce**. (Small Rural Health Services will be advised of arrangements to flow funds).

BNBW funds will be flowed at the beginning of each 6 month funding period (Jan to June; July to December) based on the BNBW allocation and the payments that are anticipated within the funding period.

Full funding for each allocated BNBW place (including hospital bonus and nurse bonus components) will be provided in the period in which a payment falls due. Residual funds from surplus places or fractional appointments must be held in reserve for BNBW purposes, reported to the department and may be recovered through a reconciliation process.

Hospitals will be advised of reconciliation and adjustments processes when instituted.

#### Bonus payments

In 2008-09

<b>Hospital</b>	\$1040 per EFT (pro-rata)	The hospital can claim a bonus payment of \$1040 per full time nurse (pro-rata) at the time an eligible nurse commences employment. The payment is calculated using the nursing EFT at commencement.
<b>Nurse</b>	\$6000 per EFT (pro-rata) in two instalments	Bonus payments of \$3000 are made to the BNBW nurse following 6 months and 18 months of continuous employment with the hospital.

*\*4% indexation is applied to the hospital bonus from 2008-09  
See funding table in Attachment A*

Bonus payments are based on a nurse/midwife returning to work full time (as per the EBA). A pro rata amount will apply to nurses/midwives and to the relevant hospital for nurses/midwives who return part time. Indicative tables of pro-rata bonus payments to hospitals and nurses are included in **Attachments A and B**.

Hospitals are required to disburse funds to eligible nurses as payments fall due.

#### Conditions for the nurse

A nurse can only receive bonus payments that are a part of this program **once** within the life of the program. This includes the 6 month and eighteen 18 month payments.

A nurse/midwife is required to work at the hospital that they have returned to for a continuous period of 18 months in order to receive the two bonus payments.

However, a nurse/midwife who changes employers is eligible for bonus payments if:

- the new employer is a public sector hospital; and
- the nurse can demonstrate continuous employment in Victoria's public hospital sector (including the average hours worked with previous employer/s).

*Continuous service refers to unbroken service and includes approved leave or allowable period of absence as defined in the current EBA.*

A nurse in the public sector will not be eligible for bonus payments if they change employment sector e.g. take up employment in the private hospital or aged care sector.

**Nurses are to be advised that the Nurse/Midwife Bonus is considered assessable income for personal taxation purposes under the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997, and will be taxed accordingly.**

## **Conditions for the hospital**

A BNBW place must not be awarded to a nurse without an allocated place and available funds.

A hospital can only claim a bonus payment for an individual employee once during the life of the program and should ensure that an individual has not previously attracted a payment under this program.

Should an eligible nurse/midwife leave prior to receiving a 6 or 18 month nurse/midwife bonus, another eligible nurse/midwife could be employed, and the eligible public hospital would be eligible for another hospital payment in proportion to the hours of the new employee. This must be **agreed with the Nurse Policy Branch** and is contingent upon funds being available.

If a nurse/midwife is offered an allocated place under the BNBW program, but is later deemed ineligible by the participating eligible public hospital, and this is confirmed by the department, any nurse/midwife bonuses paid to the nurse/midwife must be returned to the department. If the Agreement has ceased then funds must be returned to the Commonwealth.

Health services **must not deduct fees or levies** for administering BNBW funds.

The Nurse Policy Branch expects that health services will provide appropriate levels of support to nurses returning to employment under the BNBW program and facilitate professional development and learning activities.

## **5 BNBW business process**

### **DHS processes and responsibilities**

The department is not responsible for assessing nurses' eligibility under the program, or for determining local employment policies and priorities. The department will not adjudicate on matters in dispute.

### **Disbursement of funds**

DHS will forward funds to hospitals at the beginning of the funding rounds following the allocation of places.

### **Hospital processes and responsibilities**

The hospital is responsible for implementing local human resource management, payroll and business process to meet their obligations under the program including:

- informing a nurse/midwife who is eligible under the program if there are places available at the hospital and should identify its preferences for allocating places at the time;

- providing nurses with standard information about the program and explaining the nurse's obligations under the scheme;
- providing nurses with an application form and statutory declaration;
- determining if applicants are eligible;
- selecting successful candidates and allocating a BNBW number from the numbers allotted;
- collecting and reporting the minimum data set and acquitting for funds to the department as required;
- making bonus payments to nurses as they fall due based on continuous service and average hours worked;
- providing departing nurses with a record of employment including average hours worked and payments that have been made or are pending under the scheme;
- liaising with the department and other public hospitals with respect to funds held in reserve for BNBW bonus payments to a particular nurse who has transferred employment;
- records maintenance and privacy of personal information; and
- participating in evaluation activities as required by the department.

Hospitals should be guided by local priorities in awarding BNBW places. Priority may be given to full time nurses/midwives as determined by the employers. Applicants must be advised if this is the case. The availability of BNBW places may be used as a recruitment incentive, however positions do not need to be tagged as BNBW places. Recruitment and selection processes may proceed in parallel with the BNBW application process.

Hospitals utilising BNBW places for nurses participating in "refresher" programs may also be eligible for funding through the Nurse Policy Branch Return to Nursing Grant, subject to grant conditions. Information about the grant is available at:

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

Hospitals **must** provide applicants with the standard information, **Application Form and Statutory Declaration** available from the DoHA website at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/work-nurse-backnurse>

## Nurse

A nurse applying for a BNBW place **must** read the information provided and complete the application form and Statutory Declaration and submit this to the health service for consideration.

Nurses may forfeit or be required to repay funds if the information they have provided is found to be incorrect.

## 6 Reporting

Reporting of the Minimum Data Set (MDS) and financial acquittal will be via the electronic **MDS and financial reporting tools** provided to participating hospitals and will be according to the DoHA reporting schedule (**See Attachment C**). Reports are to be submitted by email.

Hospitals will be notified of the due date for data, which must include all nurses recruited to the program during the reporting interval or since last reporting and updated financial data for nurses recruited in previous reporting periods.

**\*Please do not adjust the reporting templates. Enter data in all mandatory fields.**

**\*Retain an electronic copy of the report as this will be updated in subsequent reporting periods.**

A format for contributing to scheduled progress reporting will be provided to health services when available.

## 7 Contact

Enquiries can be directed to:  
Nurse Policy Branch - 9096 7947  
Email: [nursepolicy@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:nursepolicy@dhs.vic.gov.au)

**Attachment A**

**Table 1: Nurse/midwife pro rata bonus payments**

<b>Number of hours worked per week</b>	<b>Bonus payments after 6 and 18 months service (26 and 78 weeks)</b>	<b>Total bonus payments after 18 months service</b>
4	\$ 316	\$ 632
5	\$ 395	\$ 789
6	\$ 474	\$ 947
7	\$ 553	\$ 1105
<b>8</b>	<b>\$ 632</b>	<b>\$ 1263</b>
9	\$ 711	\$ 1421
10	\$ 789	\$ 1579
11	\$ 868	\$ 1737
12	\$ 947	\$ 1895
13	\$ 1026	\$ 2053
14	\$ 1105	\$ 2211
15	\$ 1184	\$ 2368
<b>16</b>	<b>\$ 1263</b>	<b>\$ 2526</b>
17	\$ 1342	\$ 2684
18	\$ 1421	\$ 2842
19	\$ 1500	\$ 3000
20	\$ 1579	\$ 3158
21	\$ 1658	\$ 3316
22	\$ 1737	\$ 3474
23	\$ 1816	\$ 3634
<b>24</b>	<b>\$ 1895</b>	<b>\$ 3789</b>
25	\$ 1974	\$ 3947
26	\$ 2053	\$ 4105
27	\$ 2132	\$ 4263
28	\$ 2211	\$ 4421
29	\$ 2289	\$ 4579
30	\$ 2368	\$ 4737
31	\$ 2447	\$ 4895
<b>32</b>	<b>\$ 2526</b>	<b>\$ 5053</b>
33	\$ 2605	\$ 5211
34	\$ 2684	\$ 5368
35	\$ 2763	\$ 5526
36	\$ 2842	\$ 5684
37	\$ 2921	\$ 5842
<b>38</b>	<b>\$ 3000</b>	<b>\$ 6000</b>

Note: (1) Pro rata bonuses will be calculated at the end of six and eighteen months service, based on hours worked; and

- (2) The above figures are:
- based on a 38 hour full time equivalent week;
  - rounded to the nearest dollar; and
  - pre- tax amounts.

## **Attachment B**

### **Table 2: Indicative hospital pro rata bonus payments**

Intended number of hours to be worked by Nurse/Midwife per week	Hospital Bonus payment				
	(Jan to June 2008)	2008-09	2008-10	2008-11	2008-12
4	\$105	\$109.20	\$113.57	\$118.11	\$122.84
5	\$132	\$137.28	\$142.77	\$148.48	\$154.42
6	\$158	\$164.32	\$170.89	\$177.73	\$184.84
7	\$184	\$191.36	\$199.01	\$206.97	\$215.25
<b>8</b>	<b>\$211</b>	<b>\$219.44</b>	<b>\$228.22</b>	<b>\$237.35</b>	<b>\$246.84</b>
9	\$237	\$246.48	\$256.34	\$266.59	\$277.26
10	\$263	\$273.52	\$284.46	\$295.84	\$307.67
11	\$290	\$301.60	\$313.66	\$326.21	\$339.26
12	\$316	\$328.64	\$341.79	\$355.46	\$369.68
13	\$342	\$355.68	\$369.91	\$384.70	\$400.09
14	\$368	\$382.72	\$398.03	\$413.95	\$430.51
15	\$395	\$410.80	\$427.23	\$444.32	\$462.09
<b>16</b>	<b>\$421</b>	<b>\$437.84</b>	<b>\$455.35</b>	<b>\$473.57</b>	<b>\$492.51</b>
17	\$447	\$464.88	\$483.48	\$502.81	\$522.93
18	\$473	\$491.92	\$511.60	\$532.06	\$553.34
19	\$500	\$520.00	\$540.80	\$562.43	\$584.93
20	\$526	\$547.04	\$568.92	\$591.68	\$615.35
21	\$553	\$575.12	\$598.12	\$622.05	\$646.93
22	\$579	\$602.16	\$626.25	\$651.30	\$677.35
23	\$605	\$629.20	\$654.37	\$680.54	\$707.76
<b>24</b>	<b>\$632</b>	<b>\$657.28</b>	<b>\$683.57</b>	<b>\$710.91</b>	<b>\$739.35</b>
25	\$658	\$684.32	\$711.69	\$740.16	\$769.77
26	\$684	\$711.36	\$739.81	\$769.41	\$800.18
27	\$711	\$739.44	\$769.02	\$799.78	\$831.77
28	\$737	\$766.48	\$797.14	\$829.02	\$862.19
29	\$763	\$793.52	\$825.26	\$858.27	\$892.60
30	\$790	\$821.60	\$854.46	\$888.64	\$924.19
31	\$816	\$848.64	\$882.59	\$917.89	\$954.60
<b>32</b>	<b>\$842</b>	<b>\$875.68</b>	<b>\$910.71</b>	<b>\$947.14</b>	<b>\$985.02</b>
33	\$869	\$903.76	\$939.91	\$977.51	\$1,016.61
34	\$895	\$930.80	\$968.03	\$1,006.75	\$1,047.02
35	\$921	\$957.84	\$996.15	\$1,036.00	\$1,077.44
36	\$948	\$985.92	\$1,025.36	\$1,066.37	\$1,109.03
37	\$974	\$1,012.96	\$1,053.48	\$1,095.62	\$1,139.44
<b>38</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>	<b>\$1,040.00</b>	<b>\$1,081.60</b>	<b>\$1,124.86</b>	<b>\$1,169.86</b>

**Based on 4% annual indexation of the base bonus payment of \$1000 per EFT**

Note:

- 1) Pro Rata hospital bonus payments relate to the intended hours of work when a nurse/midwife commences with the employer; and
- 2) The above figures are:
  - based on a 38 hour full time equivalent week;
  - rounded to the nearest dollar; and
  - pre- tax amounts.

**Attachment C– Indicative Reporting Schedule Table**

<b>Reporting Period</b>	<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Health Service Reporting Date</b>
May-June 2008*	MDS	31 July2008	21 July 2008
July-Sep 2008	MDS + Progress Report	30 October 2008	16 October 2008
Oct 2008- Dec 2008	MDS	31 January 2009	14 January 2009
Jan - March 2009	MDS + Progress Report	30 April 2009	16 April 2009
April - June 2009	MDS	31 July 2009	17 July 2009
July 2009 - Dec 2009	MDS + Progress Report	31 January 2010	14 January 2010
Jan 2010-Jun 2010	MDS	31 July 2010	17 July 2010
July 2010-Dec 2010	MDS + Progress Report	31 January 2011	14 January 2011
Jan 2011- June 2011	MDS	31 July 2011	17 July 2011
July 2011- Dec 2011	MDS + Progress Report	31 January 2012	14 January 2012
Jan 2012- Jun2012	MDS	31 July 2012	17 July 2012
July 2012-Dec 2012	MDS + Progress Report	31 January 2013	14 January 2013
Jan 2013-June 2013	MDS	31 July 2013	17 July 2013
July 2013-Dec 2013	MDS + Progress Report	31 January 2014	14 January 2014
Jan 2014-Jun 2014	MDS	31 July 2014	17 July 2014
July 2014- Dec 2014	MDS + Progress Report – <b>Final Report</b>	31 January 2015	14 January 2015

Please note: the reporting schedule may be subject to change however the reporting periods will remain unchanged.