



# Nursing and midwifery in Victoria – a new approach to your career

Since 1999, more than 8060 nurses have chosen Victoria's public health system for a rewarding career pathway. If you want a job that offers more opportunities, support and accommodates your lifestyle, consider nursing in Victoria.

There are a wide range of opportunities available for overseas nurses and midwives to register and work in a variety of health care settings, while experiencing all that Victoria has to offer.

## The nursing workforce in Victoria

There are two levels of nurses in Australia. In Victoria, the levels are:

- Division 1 – prepared at Bachelor degree level through the tertiary education sector and;
- Division 2 – also known as an Enrolled Nurse in other states and territories.

Division 2 roles, responsibilities and clinical capability are similar to those of a second level nurse defined by the UK Standards of Proficiency for Pre-Registration Nursing Education.

In Australia, Division 2 registered nurses work with Division 1 nurses, and increasingly there are opportunities for Division 2 nurses to work in acute care areas and specialised areas of practice.

All nurses in Australia must be registered with the relevant state or territory nursing and midwifery regulatory authority. To work in Victoria as a nurse you must be registered under the *Health Professionals Registration Act 2005* with the Nurses Board of Victoria (NBV)

There are over 83,200 registered nurses in Victoria and about one quarter hold Division 2 qualifications. Nurses in Victoria are able to work in the public and/or private health system across a variety of service settings and clinical environments. Currently 64 per cent of registered nurses are employed in public health services and 36 per cent are employed in private health services.

Undergraduate nursing preparation in Australia at the bachelor degree level is a comprehensive program that provides students with the skills and knowledge to competently practise in a wide variety of health settings. This comprehensive education model means that registration as a nurse in Victoria enables nurses to work across a variety of clinical areas, within their competence, unless a specific condition is placed on their registration by the Nurses Board of Victoria.

To practise as a midwife in Australia, individuals must be authorised by the relevant nursing and midwifery regulatory authority as a midwife. In Victoria, graduates of approved Bachelor of Midwifery programs have specific registration with the Nurses Board of Victoria to practice midwifery. Nurses who have completed postgraduate midwifery qualifications after their nursing education have their nursing registration endorsed to practise midwifery.

Overseas nurses who have not undertaken general preparation may be eligible for registration but may have a restriction on their registration (or specific registration) that defines their area of practice such as paediatrics, psychiatric or midwifery.

Since 2004, nurses in Victoria have been able to be recognised as Nurse Practitioners (NP) however, the title Nurse Practitioner is protected by legislation in Victoria and other states and territories so only nurses assessed, and specifically authorised by the relevant nursing and midwifery regulatory authority (such as Nurses Board of Victoria) can call themselves an NP or be employed as an NP.

For information about visas and registration please see our fact sheet 'Visa and registration requirements for nurses and midwives'.

## Nursing practice in Victoria

Nurses are very highly respected in Australia. Indeed the nursing profession is seen by the Australian public as the most ethical and honest profession in Australia, as it has been every year since being included on a national public survey in 1994.

Nursing practice in Victoria is supported by a regulatory framework that ensures safe, effective and competent care is provided by nurses and midwives.

The core professional competency standards to both obtain and retain registration as a nurse, midwife, enrolled nurse and nurse practitioner are detailed by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council

(the peak body for all nursing and midwifery regulatory authorities). For copies of these standards, go to <[www.anmc.org.au/professional\\_standards/index.php](http://www.anmc.org.au/professional_standards/index.php)>.

The Nurses Board of Victoria has a decision making framework that provides guidance to nurses in making decisions about everyday practice and changes to their practice over time (scope of practice). Using a principle-based approach, a series of threshold questions is posed to assist nurses and employers to decide if a practice is appropriate and how to support safe practice in a dynamic environment. <[www.nbv.org.au/media/43986/guidelines%20for%20scope%20of%20practice.pdf](http://www.nbv.org.au/media/43986/guidelines%20for%20scope%20of%20practice.pdf)>.

With the exception of midwifery and maternal and child health, nurses are able to be employed in a range of areas from acute to community roles, in metropolitan, regional or provincial and rural or remote settings. In some areas such as critical care, postgraduate qualifications are highly valued however, there is no mandatory requirement for postgraduate qualifications to work in specialty areas.

## Supporting nursing in Victoria

The Victorian Government values nurses and ongoing investment in recruitment and education means nurses enjoy some of the best working conditions in Australia.

Nurses in Victoria benefit from government supported programs such as:

- transition programs for early nursing graduates
- scholarships to undertake postgraduate studies in specialty areas
- ongoing educational support for Division 2 nurses
- funding and assistance for return to practice
- funding and policy initiatives to make the workplace safer including supporting back injury and occupational violence prevention and management programs.

## Arranging employment as a nurse or midwife in Victoria

Victoria's public health system includes both large and small metropolitan and regional or provincial health services. In rural and remote areas, smaller health services and bush nursing services provide services to their communities.

In Victoria, health services and hospitals independently employ staff to provide the clinical services they operate. The Department of Human Services employs some clinical and disability staff, however, nurses are usually employed by one of many public health services or hospitals. This means that staff apply to, and negotiate employment directly with the individual health service or hospital.

Many health services have their own websites that provide information about the health service, range of clinical services, and some information about the local community, and in some cases listings of employment vacancies. Details of Victorian public health services and their websites are listed on the Victorian Government website <[www.health.vic.gov.au/publichospitals/pubwebs.htm](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/publichospitals/pubwebs.htm)>.

Many employment opportunities in Victoria's public health system are advertised by employers through the Victorian Government Health Jobs website <[www.health.vic.gov.au/jobs](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/jobs)>. This site is updated daily.

Employers are generally keen to explore ways to provide flexible employment opportunities for permanent staff offering full and part-time positions. Opportunities also exist for casual work through Nurse Banks (casual pools of nurses employed by the health service or hospital).

Employment conditions and salaries for Victorian nurses are established through formal enterprise agreements. For general information about nursing employment grades and pay rates in Victoria visit WageNet – a government site that includes a database of all employment awards <[www.wagenet.gov.au/WageNet/Search/search.asp](http://www.wagenet.gov.au/WageNet/Search/search.asp)>.