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| Nursing and Midwifery Workforce Development Fund |
| Frequently asked questions |

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to creating more opportunities to retain, recruit and train more nurses and midwives in Victoria. The $50 million Nursing and Midwifery Workforce Development Fund (the Fund) will be distributed over four years (from 2019-20) to address current and future workforce challenges including staffing requirements associated with implementation of amendments to the *Safe Patient Care (Nurse to Patient and Midwife to Patient Ratios) Act 2015* (the Act). This will be achieved through expanding current programs coordinated by the Department of Health and Human Services (the department) and establishing new workforce development initiatives.

# What programs will be supported through the Nursing and Midwifery Workforce Development Fund?

The Fund will support a range of nursing and midwifery workforce development programs. This includes:

* Expanding existing departmental programs including support for additional:
  + - registered nurse and registered midwife transition to practice (graduate) places
    - nursing and midwifery postgraduate places, including in the postgraduate midwifery employment program
    - postgraduate scholarships for currently employed nurses and midwives to upgrade their clinical specialist skills.
* Establishing new programs that support health services to locally coordinate and manage:
  + - an enrolled nurse graduate program to increase employment opportunities in public health services
    - refresher programs to enable currently employed nurses and midwives to re-skill in priority clinical specialty areas and encourage nurses and midwives that are currently registered but not practising back into the workforce
    - registered nurses to undertake studies in midwifery through a postgraduate midwifery employment model.

# How will the funding be allocated?

The funding allocation methodology will be tailored to each program within the Fund. For example, where existing programs are being expanded, the usual method of funding allocation will likely continue. New programs may require an Expression of Interest process where health services submit an application for funding to conduct and coordinate the new program to meet local needs. Further information will be distributed once available.

To meet the objectives of the Fund, funding will be prioritised to target health services and regions where there are existing workforce challenges or where there are additional workforce requirements associated with implementation of the Act.

# What support is available for rural and regional health services?

$10 million of the Fund will be prioritised to support the rural and regional nursing and midwifery workforce. The department will work closely with regional stakeholders to ensure a strategic and targeted implementation of programs.

# What are the details for each program?

## Refresher Programs

Refresher programs provide structured education and clinical exposure to update knowledge and skills, and re-establish and enhance confidence to practice. Refresher programs enable participants to either re-enter the workforce after a period not practicing or to change the area of nursing and midwifery in which they practice.

Up to 800 Refresher Program places will be supported through the Fund.

## Enrolled Nursing Transition to Practice Program

The Enrolled Nursing Transition to Practice Program will provide employment pathways for enrolled nurses completing a Diploma of Nursing as part of the Free TAFE initiative.

Funding will support public health services to coordinate and manage enrolled nurse graduate places and contribute to the cost of supporting newly registered enrolled nurses in their first year of practice. Health services will be expected to adhere to the Nursing and Midwifery Transition to Practice Programs Guidelines 2018.

400 Enrolled Nurses will be employed in Transition to Practice Program places through the Fund.

## Postgraduate Midwifery Incentive Program

The Postgraduate Midwifery Incentive Program aims to encourage the growth of the Victorian midwifery workforce. The program provides registered nurses with an opportunity to undertake postgraduate studies in midwifery and meet clinical experience/supervision requirements while being employed by a health service.

Up to 150 registered nurses will be supported to undertake postgraduate studies in midwifery through the Fund.

## Graduate Transition to Practice Program

Graduate Transition to Practice Programs are formalised education/support programs offered by employers for registered Nurses/Midwives in their first year of practice. They are workplace-based programs designed to consolidate knowledge, skills and competence, and to help graduates make the transition from student to practitioner as competent, confident and accountable professionals.

The Fund will increase the current funding pool resulting in the ongoing maintenance and growth of quality programs.

## Postgraduate Programs

Postgraduate Programs are formalised education offered by employers in collaboration with higher education providers for Registered Nurses/Midwives and deliver a mix of theoretical and practical education in clinical specialities. The Fund will invest in developing, supporting and utilising a postgraduate trained workforce. This will create highly skilled and specialised clinical nurses and midwives to lead expert teams and deliver evolving models of care for the improvement of patient outcomes.

The Fund will increase the current postgraduate nursing and midwifery training opportunities by more than 400 additional places.

## Nursing and Midwifery Postgraduate Scholarship Program

To align with the expanded postgraduate program, the postgraduate scholarship program will target identified health services and specialty areas impacted by potential improvements to ratios and areas where current workforce challenges exist.

The Fund will increase the Postgraduate Nursing and Midwifery Scholarship Program by up to an additional 400 scholarships.

# Where can I find updates?

Updates, as available, will be published on the Nursing and Midwifery Workforce webpage.

Questions can be directed to: [nmw@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:nmw@dhhs.vic.gov.au)

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