

Public Consultation Survey for the Draft National Nursing Workforce Strategy

Overview:

The Department of Health and Aged Care, Victorian Department of Health and Safer Care Victoria, in collaboration with all jurisdictions, are developing Australia's first National Nursing Workforce Strategy (the strategy).

The strategy will establish priorities for enhancing the nursing workforce, aiming to bolster the delivery of health and aged care to all Australian communities. It offers a comprehensive framework to foster collaboration and drive action among stakeholders in shaping the future of workforce planning, investment and reform.

Context:

The draft strategy has been released for the purpose of seeking feedback from people and organisations with an interest in the nursing workforce. The prospective priorities and actions presented reflect issues, ideas and feedback raised during the initial consultation process.

The evidence base collected in this process was analysed and summarised into a **Consultation and Research Summary Report** <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-nursing-workforce-strategy-stage-1-consultation-summary-report?language=en>

For more information on strategy development visit www.health.gov.au/nnws

Why your views matter:

Open consultation is an opportunity to have your say to help shape the strategy. The strategy is written for the whole nursing profession, to apply to all specialties and practice settings. Nurses working in specialty areas are encouraged to read the strategy through this lens to understand and apply it to their context.

The diverse perspectives, experiences and knowledge of all stakeholders and interested members of the community are valued, respected and will contribute to the final strategy.

Complete the survey or upload a written submission:

Before providing your feedback, you are encouraged to read *Draft National Nursing Workforce Strategy*.

The consultations close at 11.59pm AEDT on 20 October 2024.

The survey will take approximately **15 minutes** to complete.

If you have any questions about how to complete the survey, please email nnws@health.gov.au.

You may provide your feedback on the strategy by responding to specific survey questions or by uploading a written response.

You will have the opportunity to go back and review your responses at the end of the survey before submitting.

If uploading a written submission, please ensure the file does not exceed 25MB. If you have any issues uploading your document, please email to nnws@health.gov.au by 23:59 AEDST 20 October 2024.

Alternatively, you can send to:

Department of Health and Aged Care
Attention: Director, Nursing Taskforce
MDP 55, Level 9 South
GPO Box 9848
Canberra ACT 2601
Australia

Thank you for your interest. We look forward to hearing your views.

PRIVACY NOTICE

Your personal information is protected by law, including the [Privacy Act 1988 \(Privacy Act\)](#) and the [Australian Privacy Principles](#), and is being collected by the Department for the purposes of conducting the Consultation on the Draft [National Nursing Workforce Strategy](#). The Department will collect your personal information at the time that you provide a submission, unless you choose to make a submission anonymously, and you are not reasonably identifiable from the information provided in your submission.

If you consent, the Department may, at its discretion, publish part or all of your submission on the Department's website. If your submission is published, the Department may identify you and/or your organisation as the author of the submission, if you consent to being identified. Please note that your email address will not be published and responses may be moderated to remove content that is inappropriate/offensive or contains sensitive information.

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CONSENT TO PUBLISH

Your feedback is being used to refine the draft strategy and ensure the actions address key nursing workforce challenges. Suggestions proposed during this round of consultation will be considered as work continues to refine the final version of the strategy for approval by all Health Ministers.

Do you consent to your submission being published? [MANDATORY]

- ☒ Yes
☐ No

[If selected Yes to consent] Would you like your name or your organisation's name to be published alongside your submission on the consultation hub? [MANDATORY]

- ☒ Yes
☐ No

[If selected Yes to name being published] Please provide your name or your organisation's name as it will appear alongside your response:

Name: HumanAbility Ltd

RESPONDENT INFORMATION

It is important for diverse perspectives, experiences and knowledge of all stakeholders and interested members of the community to be heard. This is valued, respected and will contribute to the final refinement of the strategy.

Please answer a few short questions about yourself:

Are you answering these questions on behalf of an organisation? [MANDATORY]

- ☒ Yes, I am answering on behalf of an organisation/institution.
☐ No, I am answering as an individual.

IF ORGANISATION: Name of your organisation: [optional]

Name of your organisation:

HumanAbility

IF ORGANISATION: In which State(s) and/or Territory(ies) do you mainly operate: [MANDATORY]

- ☐ New South Wales
☐ Australian Capital Territory
☐ Victoria
☐ Queensland
☐ Tasmania
☐ Western Australia
☐ Northern Territory
☐ South Australia
☒ National

IF ORGANISATION: Please select the category that best describes your organisation: [MANDATORY]

- ☐ Peak/professional body – nursing
- ☐ Peak/professional body - other
- ☐ Regulatory body
- ☐ Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander organisation
- ☐ State/Territory Government department/agency
- ☐ Health service delivery organisation
- ☐ Local council
- ☐ Primary Health Network
- ☐ University/education/research institute
- ☒ Other

IF OTHER: How would you describe your organisation? [MANDATORY if ticked 'other']

How would you describe your organisation?

Jobs and Skills Council

Our overarching feedback (question nine: Please provide any further feedback you may have in the text box below).

HumanAbility is pleased to have the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft National Nursing Workforce Strategy. The consultations, analysis, and data presented in the supporting reports offer a commendable depth and breadth, with practical examples that effectively highlight key issues, challenges, and potential solutions. These reports provide a strong evidence base that lays the groundwork for a robust strategy. However, the strategy itself does not fully capitalise on this foundation. While we recognise it is not intended to be an implementation plan, the strategy would benefit from being more concrete and explicitly aligned to the insights and recommendations outlined in the evidence-based reports.

The strategy sets out important goals, but many actions are too broad or vague to be actionable or measurable. The language lacks specificity, making it difficult to develop a meaningful implementation plan, ensure accountability, allocate funding, or evaluate success. To be effective, the actions need to be clearer, expressed more precisely.

For instance, terms like "invest," "grow," "adopt," or "develop" are used frequently without sufficient detail to guide implementation. Similarly, references to developing frameworks do not specify who will be responsible, what they will cover, the time frame, or how they will be carried out.

Actions such as "adopting anti-racism initiatives" or "promoting positive practice environments" also lack measurable criteria. There needs to be a clearer definition of these terms, along with specifics on how they will be implemented and measured.

While the strategy is not an implementation plan, it still needs to be clear enough to guide policy, investment, and actions that can be implemented and make a meaningful difference on the issues raised during consultations. To improve accountability and ensure successful outcomes, the actions should be rephrased to provide clear direction, facilitate resource allocation, and enable effective monitoring and evaluation. This approach will help ensure the strategy translates into practical steps that address the identified challenges.

We recognise this is a strategy, not an implementation plan. However, it would benefit from including, up front, clear direction on how it will be used and implemented. Providing guidance on the process for translating the strategy into concrete actions will help ensure that it serves as an effective roadmap for addressing the issues identified and demonstrating meaningful action to people who have given their time and expertise to the earlier consultation phase. In addition, there are key connections that haven't been drawn into the strategy.

A nursing strategy should address several critical areas to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive approach. The Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) sector is significantly underfunded, and because nurses in this field often operate outside hospital settings, it struggles to attract and retain staff. This underfunding creates a cycle where the lack of resources leads to staffing shortages, which then further limits the sector's ability to provide adequate care.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) nursing care models should also be a priority, focusing on preventative health and holistic approaches that encourage ongoing wellness rather than just emergency response. The strategy should reflect a community-level approach, emphasising continuous support and wellbeing, rather than solely acute care interventions.

The strategy should also include specific funding commitments and be aligned with the National Health Reform Agreement, ensuring workforce strategies are interconnected and cross-referenced. Additionally, the relationship with the Allied Health Workforce Strategy should be explicitly recognised to create a more integrated and sustainable approach across the healthcare system.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

Vision:

The nursing workforce is valued for its vital contribution to the health and wellbeing of all Australians and is empowered to innovate and excel in dynamic and diverse environments.

Do you have any suggested changes to the *Vision* of this strategy?

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

If respondent selects **Yes**:

What changes to the *Vision* would you suggest?

We think the vision statement could be less abstract and more concrete. We would also like to see nurses at the centre of the statement and recognising their contribution and skill. A suggested version that brings some of these elements together is:

The nursing workforce is respected as knowledgeable, empowered, and dedicated to enhancing the health and well-being of all Australians. We are committed to providing the support, systems and training nurses need to innovate, excel, feel valued and to deliver exceptional care in a wide variety of settings.

QUESTION TWO:

Outcomes

In meeting the vision, the following outcomes will be achieved:

- *Sufficient supply and distribution of nurses to meet the diverse health needs of the Australian community.*
- *Nursing roles enable the workforce to work to optimum scope of practice and improve access to and experience of person-centred care.*
- *Improved retention of the nursing workforce.*
- *Positive practice environments which foster diversity, cultural safety and wellbeing.*
- *Nursing management and leadership engaged in effective decision-making and policy at all levels, in all contexts and valued for its contribution.*
- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population parity achieved within the nursing workforce.*
- *Career and education infrastructure enable nurses to progress their careers and lead and participate in research and innovation in the way they choose.*

Do these Outcomes support the Vision?

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No
- ☐ Unsure

If respondent selects **No**:

Which Outcomes would you change?

Sufficient supply and distribution of nurses to meet the diverse health needs of the Australian community.
Nursing roles enable the workforce to work to optimum scope of practice and improve access to and experience of person-centred care.
Improved retention of the nursing workforce.
Positive practice environments which foster diversity, cultural safety and wellbeing.
Nursing management and leadership engaged in effective decision-making and policy at all levels, in all contexts and valued for its contribution.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population parity achieved within the nursing workforce.
Career and education infrastructure enable nurses to progress their careers and lead and participate in research and innovation in the way they choose.

What changes would you suggest for each of these Outcomes?

Sufficient supply and distribution of nurses to meet the diverse health needs of the Australian community.	Sufficient supply and distribution of nurses to meet the diverse health needs of the Australian community and contribute to easing workload pressures.
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Nursing roles enable the workforce to work to optimum scope of practice and improve access to and experience of person-centred care.	Nursing roles <i>are enabled (through scope-of-practice initiatives for other roles) and</i> enable the workforce to work to optimum scope of practice and improve access to and experience of person-centred care.
Improved retention of the nursing workforce.	<i>Identify factors that contribute to nurses exiting the system to enable targeted retention strategies to be identified, developed and implemented.</i>
Positive practice environments which foster diversity, cultural safety and wellbeing.	Implement positive practice environments which foster diversity, cultural safety and wellbeing <i>that recognise and remunerate the expertise of bilingual and bicultural nursing staff.</i>
Nursing management and leadership engaged in effective decision-making and policy at all levels, in all contexts and valued for its contribution.	<i>A sustainable pipeline for training and skill development that ensures enough skilled leaders who can work to their full scope of practice.</i>
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population parity achieved within the nursing workforce.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population parity achieved within the broader nursing workforce, <i>and, more First Nations, ACCO nursing care models.</i>
Career and education infrastructure enable nurses to progress their careers and lead and participate in research and innovation in the way they choose.	

Are there any additional Outcomes that you would suggest?

QUESTION THREE:**Priority 1: Value**

Priority 1 focuses on the need to uplift the value and perception of nurses and nursing from within the profession and from a public perspective.

Action

1.1	Invest in nurse leadership.
1.2	Grow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurse leadership.
1.3	Adopt anti- racism initiatives in nursing.
1.4	Support internationally qualified nurses to transition into Australia's health and aged care system.
1.5	Modernise the identity of nursing.

Do you have any suggested changes to the actions in *Priority 1*?

- ☒ Yes
☐ No
☐ Unsure

If respondent selects **Yes**:

Which actions in *Priority 1* would you change?

1.1	Invest in nurse leadership.
1.2	Grow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurse leadership.
1.3	Adopt anti- racism initiatives in nursing.
1.4	Support internationally qualified nurses to transition into Australia's health and aged care system.
1.5	Modernise the identity of nursing.

What changes would you suggest for each of these actions?

1.1	Invest in nurse leadership.	<i>Continue to invest in current leaders and development of a sustainable leadership pipeline, while also strengthening frontline supervisory and team management capabilities to help ease workload pressures.</i>
1.2	Grow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurse leadership.	<i>Strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurse leadership by implementing supportive policies, providing funding to support skills development, and promoting self-determination and collaboration.</i>
1.3	Adopt anti- racism initiatives in nursing.	<i>This action should be split into several actions under a commitment to improve respect for and experience of culturally and linguistically diverse nursing staff and those receiving care by:</i> <i>- Taking steps to strengthen the bilingual and bicultural workforce.</i>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Ensure that nurses who are called upon to provide bicultural or bilingual supports to patients are not penalised.</i> - <i>Implement nationwide programs, adapted to local community specific needs, to address and dismantle systemic racism.</i> <p><i>We also note that more detailed actions here should be informed first by organisations representing the culturally and linguistically diverse workforce.</i></p>
1.4	Support internationally qualified nurses to transition into Australia's health and aged care system.	<i>Facilitate the transition of internationally qualified nurses into Australia's health and aged care system, ensuring bilingual and bicultural workers are acknowledged, and their specialist skills fully integrated and recognised as a core part of their work.</i>
1.5	Modernise the identity of nursing.	<i>Modernise the identity of the nursing profession by fostering strong partnerships with employers, educators, regulators and governments.</i>

Are there any additional actions for *Priority 1* that you would suggest?

To ensure the actions are achievable and measurable, our strong overarching suggestion for all actions throughout the strategy is that they are more specific, the responsible stakeholder/s is named, there is a timeframe for action and any linkages between state and territory strategies are highlighted within these actions.

QUESTION FOUR:**Priority 2: Plan**

Priority 2 focuses on workforce planning, education and regulation as pivotal to meeting the health and aged care needs of the Australian community and drive change.

Action	
2.1	Implement nationally coordinated nursing workforce data, modelling and planning.
2.2	Implement strategies that enhance workforce mobility and flexibility.
2.3	Grow the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nursing workforce.
2.4	Investigate and implement the most contemporary structure of pre-registration courses.
2.5	Facilitate students to access and complete nursing education.
2.6	Adapt student employment models for all health and aged care settings.
2.7	Increase transparency and timeliness of regulatory processes and outcomes.
2.8	Develop and implement a nationally consistent accreditation process for post graduate nursing education.

Do you have any suggested changes to the actions in *Priority 2*?

- ☒ Yes
☐ No
☐ Unsure

If respondent selects **Yes**:

Which actions in *Priority 2* would you change?

2.1	Implement nationally coordinated nursing workforce data, modelling and planning.
2.2	Implement strategies that enhance workforce mobility and flexibility.
2.3	Grow the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nursing workforce.
2.4	Investigate and implement the most contemporary structure of pre-registration courses.
2.5	Facilitate students to access and complete nursing education.
2.6	Adapt student employment models for all health and aged care settings.
2.7	Increase transparency and timeliness of regulatory processes and outcomes.
2.8	Develop and implement a nationally consistent accreditation process for post graduate nursing education.

What changes would you suggest for each of these actions?

2.1	Implement nationally coordinated nursing workforce data, modelling and planning.	
2.2	Implement strategies that enhance workforce mobility and flexibility.	
2.3	Grow the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nursing workforce.	
2.4	Investigate and implement the most contemporary structure of pre-registration courses.	

2.5	Facilitate students to access and complete nursing education.	
2.6	Adapt student employment models for all health and aged care settings.	<i>Facilitate the adaptation and implementation of student employment models in all health and aged care settings, including pathways for Enrolled Nurses (EN) to Registered Nurses (RN), and shaping policy, that promotes recognition of prior learning (RPL), and access to sustainable funding.</i>
2.7	Increase transparency and timeliness of regulatory processes and outcomes.	<i>Ensure transparency and timeliness in regulatory processes and outcomes</i>
2.8	Develop and implement a nationally consistent accreditation process for post graduate nursing education.	

Are there any additional actions for *Priority 2* that you would suggest?

Refer to our general response for the framing of all priorities under Priority 1.

QUESTION FIVE:**Priority 3: Design**

Priority 3 focuses on designing the nursing profession to ensure it meets the needs of the community.

Action	
3.1	Prepare and engage the nursing workforce in the innovation and use of emerging technologies.
3.2	Grow nurse leadership and involvement in the design and delivery of innovative models of care.
3.3	Empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nursing communities to design workforce initiatives that suit local conditions and community situations.
3.4	Create and embed funding models that drive evolution and enhancement of nursing practice.
3.5	Enable nurses to work to their optimum scope of practice in all settings.
3.6	Mobilise the nursing workforce to lead and contribute to a sustainable and climate-resilient health and aged care system.

Do you have any suggested changes to the actions in *Priority 3*?

- ☒ Yes
☐ No
☐ Unsure

If respondent selects **Yes**:

Which actions in *Priority 3* would you change?

3.1	Prepare and engage the nursing workforce in the innovation and use of emerging technologies.
3.2	Grow nurse leadership and involvement in the design and delivery of innovative models of care.
3.3	Empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nursing communities to design workforce initiatives that suit local conditions and community situations.
3.4	Create and embed funding models that drive evolution and enhancement of nursing practice.
3.5	Enable nurses to work to their optimum scope of practice in all settings.
3.6	Mobilise the nursing workforce to lead and contribute to a sustainable and climate-resilient health and aged care system.

What changes would you suggest for each of these actions?

3.1	Prepare and engage the nursing workforce in the innovation and use of emerging technologies.	<i>Prepare and engage the nursing workforce in the innovation and use of emerging technologies, including providing education and training to ensure they are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to confidently use and take advantage of these technologies.</i>
3.2	Grow nurse leadership and involvement in the design and delivery of innovative models of care.	

3.3	Empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nursing communities to design workforce initiatives that suit local conditions and community situations.	<i>This action should provide more clarity on how this will be done.</i>
3.4	Create and embed funding models that drive evolution and enhancement of nursing practice.	
3.5	Enable nurses to work to their optimum scope of practice in all settings.	<p>Either adapt this by adding to it, or in the descriptor above the action call out the need for complementary roles also needing to work to full scope of practice, and the need for legislation, and harmonisation of jurisdictions requirements.</p> <p><i>Enable nurses to work to their full scope of practice in all settings, supported by workforce strategies that ensure complementary roles, such as those in allied health and Aboriginal Health Workers and Practitioners, are also trained and empowered to operate at their full scope of practice.</i></p>
3.6	Mobilise the nursing workforce to lead and contribute to a sustainable and climate-resilient health and aged care system.	<i>This action should provide more clarity on the nurses' role and how this will be done? I.e. is the intent that nurses have an educative role?.</i>

Are there any additional actions for *Priority 3* that you would suggest?

Refer to general comment under Priority 1.

QUESTION SIX:**Priority 4: Deliver**

Priority 4 focuses on what is required to enable Australia to grow, attract, recruit, and retain the best possible people to the nursing profession.

Action	
4.1	Develop a nationally consistent framework for transition to practice.
4.2	Develop a national professional development framework.
4.3	Adopt positive practice environment standards in all settings.
4.4	Develop a national career framework.
4.5	Build and grow nurse clinical-academic/research career pathways.
4.6	Develop a dedicated rural and remote recruitment and retention strategy (inclusive of students).

Do you have any suggested changes to the actions in *Priority 4*?

- ☒ Yes
☐ No
☐ Unsure

If respondent selects **Yes**:

Which actions in *Priority 4* would you change?

4.1	Develop a nationally consistent framework for transition to practice.
4.2	Develop a national professional development framework.
4.3	Adopt positive practice environment standards in all settings.
4.4	Develop a national career framework.
4.5	Build and grow nurse clinical-academic/research career pathways.
4.6	Develop a dedicated rural and remote recruitment and retention strategy (inclusive of students).

What changes would you suggest for each of these actions?

4.1	Develop a nationally consistent framework for transition to practice.	<i>Develop a nationally consistent framework for transition to practice, incorporating clear pathways into nursing and recognition of prior learning (RPL) to support a diverse and skilled workforce.</i>
4.2	Develop a national professional development framework.	<i>Develop a national professional development framework with clear, accessible, and articulated career pathways.</i>
4.3	Adopt positive practice environment standards in all settings.	<i>Adopt positive practice environment standards in all settings, including clear guidelines on staffing ratios, workload management, and support systems that will achieve better workload balance, reduce burnout, and enhance job satisfaction.</i>
4.4	Develop a national career framework.	<i>Can 4.2, 4.4 and 4.5 be combined? Or expanded to differentiate further?</i>

4.5	Build and grow nurse clinical-academic/research career pathways.	
4.6	Develop a dedicated rural and remote recruitment and retention strategy (inclusive of students).	<p>Either incorporate additional information as suggested below into the action, or incorporate it into the pre-ambles to these actions, or create an additional action.</p> <p><i>Develop a dedicated rural and remote recruitment and retention strategy, inclusive of students, addressing jurisdictional salary disparities for rural and remote nurses and ensuring pay parity in border towns where differing state rates negatively impact workforce stability.</i></p>

Are there any additional actions for *Priority 4* that you would suggest?

Refer to general comment under Priority 1.

QUESTION SEVEN:

The strategy is written for the whole nursing profession, to apply to all specialties, practice settings and contexts of care and service delivery. Nurses working in specialty areas are encouraged to read the strategy through this lens, to understand and apply it to their context.

Are you able to see how the strategy's actions can be applied/implemented to your sector or area of work?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☒ Unsure

If respondent selects **No**:

What could be changed to ensure the actions can be applied/implemented to your sector or area of work?

We would strongly encourage more specificity and timelines to actions. Many of the existing actions are very broad and will require multiple sub-actions to be achieved. Understanding what the priorities are to move toward achieving the outcomes most effectively, and the anticipated timelines for doing this, would be helpful.

QUESTION EIGHT:

Can you see the link between the actions and the strategy's vision to improve the health and wellbeing of all Australians?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Unsure

If respondent selects **No**:

What could be changed to ensure the link between the actions and the strategy's vision is clear?

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What happens next?

Thank you for your participation. Your input to the development of the strategy is greatly appreciated.

If you'd like to receive updates on the progress of the strategy, please visit our website <http://www.health.gov.au/nnws> or subscribe to our newsletter <https://www.health.gov.au/using-our-websites/subscriptions/subscribe-to-our-nursing-and-midwifery-newsletter>.