

CoNNMO Member Meeting Minutes

Friday 23 May 2025, 9am – 3pm

1. Welcome, acknowledgement of country and introductions

Members were welcomed to the meeting by Joanne Perks, the CoNNMO Chair. Jo acknowledged the traditional owners and custodians of the land she was on and where member representatives, invited guests and observers were participating in the meeting

2. Attendance

CoNNMO Members

Kirsten Biddle	Audiometry Nurses Association of Australia
Marion Eckert	Australasian Nursing & Midwifery Clinical Trials Network
Sally Sara	Australia & New Zealand Urological Nurses Society
Sandra Code	Australian & New Zealand Society of Occupational Medicine
Jacquie Burton	Australian College of Children & Young People's Nurses
Blake Mulraney	Australian College of Critical Care Nurses
Sally Havers	Australian College of Infection Prevention & Control
Rhonda Wilson	Australian College of Mental Health Nurses
Dr. Zach Byfield	Australian College of Nurses
Tracy Kerle	Australian College of Perioperative Nurses
Tarryn Armour	Australian College of Perioperative Nurses
Kristy Aguilar	Australian Dermatology Nurses Association
Prof. Deirdre Fetherstonhaugh	Australian Hartford Consortium of Gerontological Nursing Excellence
Leigh Bruce	Australasian Neuroscience Nurses' Association
Kathryn Geisler	Australian Nurse Teachers' Society
Anita Taylor	Australian New Zealand Orthopaedic Nurses Alliance
Naomi Riley	Australian Nurses Midwifery Federation Australia
Sam Moses	Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association
Alison New	Australian Rehabilitation Nurses Association
Joanne Perks	Australian Women's Health Nurse Association Inc.
Meredith Cummins	Cancer Nurses Society of Australia
Sam Keogh	Climate Action Nurse
Mary-Claire Balnaves	Congress of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Nurses & Midwives
Sue Blinman	Continence Nurses Society Australia
Rachel Yates	Council of Deans of Nursing & Midwifery
Shannan Lewis	Council of Remote Area Nurses of Australia
Dr. Antonia Van Loon	Australian Faith Community Nurses Association
Lea Wiggins	Gastroenterological Nurses College of Australia
Victoria Traynor	Gerontological Alliance of Nurses Australia
Gabrielle Koutoukidis	National Enrolled Nursing Advisory Council
Jen Bichel-Findlay	Nursing Midwifery in Digital Health
Marian Linnane	Nursing Informatics Australia
Tracey Nicholls	Otorhinolaryngology, Head & Neck Nurses Group
Kylie Draper	Palliative Care Nurses Australia
Gail Tomsic	Professional Association of Nurses in Developmental Disability Australia Inc.
Matthew Carew	Refugee Nurses Australia
Catherine Buchan	Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand
Hayley Ryan	Wound Rescue (morning session)
Meaghan Osborne	Multiple Sclerosis Nurses Australasia
Louise Wightman	Maternal Child & Family Health Nurses of Australia
Helen White	Australian College of Midwives
Lucy Lowry	Australian New Zealand Society for Vascular Nurses
Tanesha Shant	Wound Rescue (afternoon session)

Guests

Natalie Bekis	Australian Government Department of Health, Disability & Ageing
Kathleen Baird	Australian Nursing & Midwifery Accreditation Council
Tracey Thomson	Australian Government Department of Health, Disability & Ageing
Tanya Vogt	Australian Nursing & Midwifery Accreditation Council
Annie Butler	Australian Nurses Midwifery Federation Australia
Karen Booth	Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association
Mitch Wall	Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association
Prof. Alison McMillian	Commonwealth Chief Nursing & Midwifery Officer
Alley Peck	Nursing & Midwifery Board of Australia

Observers

Lindsey Bailie	Australian Government Department of Health, Disability & Ageing
Niluka De Silva	Australian Government Department of Health, Disability & Ageing
Tara Jones	Australian Government Department of Health, Disability & Ageing
Cia Kay	Australian Government Department of Health, Disability & Ageing
Alison McCluskey	Australian Government Department of Health, Disability & Ageing
Sally Nguyen	Australian Government Department of Health, Disability & Ageing
Maria Shaw	Australian Government Department of Health, Disability & Ageing
Anna Smith	Australian Government Department of Health, Disability & Ageing
Noelleen Kiprillis	Australian Nurses Midwifery Federation Australia
Kim White	Australian Women's Health Nurse Association
Jennifer Harland	Australian College of Nurses

Apologies

Kathryn Zeitz	Australian College of Nurses
Alison Weatherstone	Australian College of Midwives
Susan Slatyer	Australian Hartford Consortium of Gerontological Nursing Excellence
Roslyn Hollis	Australian Women's Health Nurse Association
Julia Morphet	College of Emergency Nursing Australia
Kate Norton	Audiometry Nurses Association of Australia
Brianna He	Australian Government Department of Health, Disability & Ageing
Nick Morgan	Australian Government Department of Health, Disability & Ageing
Eleanor Newby	Australian Government Department of Health, Disability & Ageing
Adrian Armitage	Australian College of Mental Health Nurses
Diana Harapin	Australian College of Perioperative Nurses
Sonia Jones	Australian Day Surgery Nurses Association
Sally Kane	Australian & New Zealand Society of Occupational Medicine
Vera Meeusen	Australasian College of Peri Anesthesia Nurses
Jacqlyn Tate-Baker	Australasian Hepatology Association
Dr Ali Drummond	Congress of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Nurses & Midwives
Mark Holmes	Climate Action Nurse
Amelia Druhan	Council of Remote Area Nurses of Australia
Edward Zimbudzi	Renal Society of Australasia
Sue Easton	Professional Association of nurses in Development Disability Australia Inc.
Carolyn Atkin	Australian Association of Stomal Therapy Nurses
Professor Kathleen Baird	Council of Deans Nursing and Midwifery
Sue Monaro	Australian New Zealand Society for Vascular Nurses
Leanne Boase	Australian College of Nurse Practitioners
Margaret Broom	Australian College of Neonatal Nurses
Karrie Long	Chief Nurse and Midwifery Officer - Victoria

3. CoNNMO Chair Secretarial Update

- Julianne Bryce, former CoNNMO Secretariat, has left ANMF after 18 years of service to the nursing profession in this role. Julianne was thanked for her dedication and contribution to CoNNMO. Naomi Riley, ANMF Strategic Lead – Midwifery, will act as Secretariat moving forward.
- Nominations for two Council positions will be sought by the Secretariat in June 2025. These Council positions are currently held by Joanne Perks and Samantha Moses. This is Joanne Perks' third term on Council and due to the rules under the Terms of Reference, she will be unable to re-nominate for a position. CoNNMO council would like to acknowledge and thank Jo for her contribution to CoNNMO as a Council member over the past 6 years and Council Chair since August 2023. Samantha Moses, having served two consecutive terms on Council will be eligible to re-nominate for a vacant position. CoNNMO member representatives that have attended a minimum of two member meetings, as a representative or observer will be encouraged to nominate.
- No new membership applications or withdrawals have occurred since the last meeting and currently there are 63 member organisations in CoNNMO.
- Updated Secretariat and Chair reports, along with a corrected attendance list, will be made available on the CoNNMO website, along with the meeting minutes and CoNNMO member reports

4. Commonwealth Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer update Adjunct Professor (Practice) Alison McMillan PSM CCNMO

- The department has been restructured to include Health, Disability and Ageing under one umbrella.
- Discussed departmental priorities, including a strong focus on health equity, prevention, and workforce development.
- Challenges remain in private maternity hospital viability, with nursing and midwifery organisations actively involved in addressing these issues.
- In Aged Care, improvements include mandatory 24/7 registered nurses and infection prevention control nurses. Vaccination coverage remains a concern.
- Expanded access for nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives to prescribe under PBS and access MBS
- Designated nurse prescribing is expected to commence by July 2026.
- Introduction of a professional indemnity insurance (PII) product underwritten by the Commonwealth Government for privately practising midwives to include intrapartum care and homebirth to be available from July 1, 2025. Exemption for PII for midwives providing intrapartum care and homebirths to remain until June 30, 2026.
- The National Nursing Workforce Strategy is expected to be signed off by the Prime Minister soon.
- Emphasis on community-based, proactive healthcare models to improve access, especially in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities.

5. Commonwealth Department of Health Disability and Ageing update Natalie Bekis, Assistant Secretary

- Natalie provided updates on recent reviews and the establishment of a taskforce to prioritise and coordinate over 70 recommendations evolving from these. Key elements are addressing challenges in primary health care, utilising the full scope of practitioners to deliver efficiencies in care, improved funding models, digital integration, and garnering consumer support.

- She outlined the Complexity Review of the National Scheme (NRAS), led by Sue Dawson, addressing governance, regulation across professions, and proposed changes to complaints handling, with a final report due mid-year.
- Updates on the international workforce included streamlined pathways for nurses from five countries to gain registration in Australia and faster medical practitioner registration processes, alongside efforts to balance this with strengthening the domestic workforce and addressing high nurse and midwife attrition.
- The National Maternity Workforce Strategy, led by QLD and NSW Governments, is progressing, with the first steering committee meeting, following a number of consultations/forums across Australia over the past 6-8 weeks, to be held on May 29, 2025. Discussions are ongoing around election commitments, including funding for a Chief Midwife and a national midwifery strategy.
- Mental health and disability portfolios are being integrated, with advocacy planned for stronger support for mental health and disability nursing.
- Finally, the nationwide rollout of the Nurse and Midwife Health Program was acknowledged, now offering free support through state-based hubs.

6. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia update Alessandra Peck, CEO (via teleconference)

- Alley provided an update on current regulatory priorities and highlighted the board's partnership with CATSINaM to support culturally safe care and eliminate racism in healthcare, including a joint video project to be launched in Darwin.
- Reviews of standards, codes, and guidelines are underway to reflect these priorities.
- Draft standards for RN prescribing endorsement and a new registration pathway for internationally qualified nurses are progressing.
- Objective Structure Clinical Exam (OSCE) expansion to Melbourne and Adelaide is underway, with new self-paced prep programs and a national assessment model being explored.
- Final cosmetic procedure guidelines for nurses are nearing completion.
- Updates also included: dual RN-paramedic registration, changes to recency of practice and CPD standards, and nurse practitioner endorsement consultation.
- Collaboration with Monash University is ongoing to revise RN and EN practice standards, with broader consultation planned for late 2025.
- Despite challenges with the new case management and MFA login systems, over 250,000 nurses and midwives have registered, and late fees are waived until mid-June.

7. Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council update Tanya Vogt, CEO

- Tanya provided an update on key accreditation developments and highlighted a shift to a risk-based, streamlined reaccreditation process, especially for established universities.
- Double degrees linking nursing with other fields are growing, but the focus remains on the RN qualification.
- ANMAC is reviewing RN and EN accreditation standards, especially cultural safety, clinical placement

quality, and foundational education levels.

- Designated RN prescribing is progressing, with new accreditation standards in place, but broader implementation such as PBS access requires legal changes.
- ANMAC is collaborating with the Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery (CDNM) and universities to develop standards and real-time evaluation tools to improve clinical supervision and placement experiences for students.
- ANMAC is also involved in Aboriginal-led assessor training and is working on real-time clinical placement evaluation tools.

8. Australian Nursing & Midwifery Accreditation Council update Kath Baird, Director of School Migration Services

- Kath shared an update on Health Education Services Australia's (HESA) work since its establishment in 2018.
- HESA focuses on developing and accrediting education standards for immunisation programs since 2020 and runs the National Placement Evaluation Centre acquired in 2022 to evaluate nursing and midwifery student placements.
- In 2024, they began collecting supervisor evaluation data and will soon publish a summary report.
- Recently re-established as a not-for-profit entity, HESA aims to set postgraduate education standards in nursing and midwifery, with plans to partner with industry groups and expand accreditation to other health professions.
- They also plan to introduce an online register for accredited programs and graduates to assure quality and support workforce development, particularly in areas like rural health, maternal and child health, and aged care education.

9. Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation update Annie Butler, Federal Secretary

- Annie acknowledged the impact of current NSW floods on health workers and highlighted the ANMF's new Climate Change Officer role, funded through a CANA grant, to strengthen national coordination on the health impacts of climate change.
- Acknowledged the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and ANMF's recent public statement in support of healthcare workers affected by global conflicts.
- Concerns were raised about proposed nursing apprenticeships, warning of significant professional and industrial risks, particularly to pay and conditions.
- Provided updates on aged care reforms, including the new Aged Care Act effective from 1 July, 2025, rights-based care, and ongoing work around education, training, and implementation of RN 24/7 requirements.
- Provided an update on the ANMF Work Value Case and the launch of a second case affecting nurses outside state systems, including in private hospitals and primary care. She highlighted growing employer resistance and noted the upcoming Fair Work Commission conference is scheduled for 17 June.

- Noted the importance of political engagement, celebrating wins like fee-free TAFE and support for student placements under the current federal government.

10. AI in Digital Health Jen Bichel Findlay, Nursing Midwifery in Digital Health Network representative

- Jen was invited to complete the presentation that was cut short at the October 2024 member meeting.
- Presented how AI handles repetitive tasks better than humans
- Explore the use of chatbots—AI programs that simulate conversation - and their growing role in healthcare beyond customer service. Unlike basic bots, health chatbots are backed by clinical literature and used in symptom checking, mental health, chronic pain, and aged care. Key examples include Call Me, Milo, Bungie, Wysa, Wobot Health, Dolores (used for pain and child abuse detection), Holly (tracks Parkinson's progression), Edna (genetic testing), and Quinn (smoking cessation).
- The session also introduced Generative AI, which creates personalized care plans, documents, and patient education using predictive algorithms, but requires human oversight to avoid errors or hallucinations.
- Tools like Otter.ai, Read.ai, and SmartScribe were shared as practical AI applications for real-time meeting transcription, along with emerging use in sentiment analysis.
- Noted the practical use of AI in healthcare, especially how tools like ChatGPT can efficiently extract relevant information. Key platforms mentioned include Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini, and OpenAI tools, with ongoing concerns about hallucinations, bias, and lack of regulation.
- Shortcomings of AI and ethical issues were briefly explored including the lack of content reflecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' experiences available to AI, and the need for nurse involvement in AI development.
- Predictive modeling in wound care, mental health, and community nursing was emphasised as the future, supported by examples of AI applications in diagnostics and patient triage.
- Rhonda Wilson shared updates from RMIT on mental health AI research and stressed inclusive, regulated development.

11. Member reports

Written reports are provided by the following CoNNMO member organisations and will be available to view on CoNNMO website:

Audiometry Nurses Association of Australia Inc.
 Australia & New Zealand Urological Nurses Society
 Australian & New Zealand Society of Occupational Medicine
 Australian & New Zealand Society of Vascular Nursing
 Australian College of Neonatal Nurses
 Australian College of Nurse Practitioners
 Australian College of Nursing
 Australian College of Perioperative Nurses
 Australian Faith Community Nurses Association Inc.
 Australian Hartford Consortium for Gerontological Nursing Excellence
 Australian Nurse Teachers' Society
 Australian Women's Health Nurse Association
 Australasian College for Infection Prevention and Control
 Australasian College of Peri Anesthesia Nurses
 Australasian Hepatology Association
 Australasian Neuroscience Nurses Association

Australasian Nursing and Midwifery Clinical Trials Network
Cancer Nurses Society of Australia
Climate Action Nurses
Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Nurses and Midwives
Continence Nurses Society of Australia
Council for Remote Area Nurses of Australia
Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery
Australia and New Zealand Drug and Alcohol Nurses of Australia
Gastroenterological Nurses College of Australia
Nursing Midwifery in Digital Health
Otorhinolaryngology Head and Neck Nurses Group
Professional Association of Nurses in Development Disability Australia Inc.
Refugee Nurses Australia
Renal Society of Australasia
The Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand
Wounds Australia
Australia & New Zealand Orthopaedic Nurses Alliance
CRANaplus
Australasian Sexual Health and HIV Nurses Association Inc.
Australian College of Midwives (ACM)

- The Australian College of Mental Health Nurses' representative noted their international conference is scheduled for September 2025 in Brisbane, and the global mental health nursing summit will be held in November 2025 in Barcelona.

12. Other Business

- No other business.

13. Australian Digital Health Agency Update Karen Booth, Chief Clinical Advisor (Nursing)

- Karen discussed key strategic documents including the National Digital Health Strategy, the Interoperability Plan, and the Healthcare Identifiers Roadmap.
- Efforts are underway to provide better My Health Record access to allied health professionals, who currently face limited integration.
- Key updates included the implementation of the "Share by Default" legislation to ensure health data like pathology and imaging results are uploaded to MHR, and the expansion of digital health in aged care, including improved clinical handover and access to patient data.
- Updated on the My Health App, which is positioned as the "digital front door." The app allows consumers to access scripts, results, and add personal health information. There are plans to add My Medicare registration and advance care planning support.
- 40–50% of aged care homes are now connected to MHR. Efforts continue to improve clinical handovers and digital access in aged care, including allowing ENs to contribute more effectively to records.
- Future plans involve developing a new dynamic national platform to allow real-time, interoperable communication across hospital, GP, and other health systems, plus integration of real-time prescription monitoring.

14. Florence by APNA – a new Continuing Professional Development tool Mitch Wall *Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association*,

- Mitch introduced *Florence*, a new, free professional development and career growth app designed by APNA for nurses.
- Launched 10 days ago, Florence already has several thousand users and over 11,000 CPD activities logged.
- The app aims to transform CPD from a basic compliance task into a meaningful, strategic career tool. It allows nurses to easily record CPD activities via multiple methods including QR codes, URLs, or manual entry and provides personalised CPD recommendations based on their role, setting, and goals.
- Nurses can also set SMART goals, build and share learning collections, and compare their expertise with other peers using dynamic skill graphs.
- Florence serves not only individuals but also the broader health system by generating real-time workforce insights to support planning, retention, and reform.
- It is designed to be inclusive, culturally aware, and continually evolving based on user feedback. The platform will soon support employer and research engagement by matching opportunities with relevant nurse profiles.
- It's available now for free on the App Store and Google Play. Further information at www.florence.today/

15. Next Meeting:

Hybrid meeting scheduled for Friday 3 October 2025.