

OF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY

FOR THE FUTURE

RMIT University Nursing and Midwifery

Introduction

Tertiary education and research in Australia is a competitive enterprise and the professions of nursing and midwifery continue to be subject to dynamic and health care environments that challenge established practice. This 2008-2010 strategic plan positions RMIT University at the forefront of a visionary and planned response to tertiary nursing and midwifery education, research and healthcare service provision nationally and in the Asia-Pacific Rim.

The major goal is to promote robust programs of nursing education and research that inform and address critical health issues and problems in the region now and in the future. To achieve this we have positioned ourselves as responsive to societal needs, with a firm foundation of industry partnership and alliance with RMIT's corporate and the School of Health Sciences' strategic plans. Implicit in our approach is the creation of a vibrant and diverse working and learning environment.

Socio-political context

According to the Australian Federal Government's Second Intergenerational Report (IGR2) 2007, Australia faces a number of substantial challenges over the next 40 years. Of particular relevance to this plan are the projections in IGR2, which show that:

- > The population will continue to increase in size but with a higher proportion of older people.
- > Economic growth per person will slow as the proportion of the population of traditional working age falls.
- > Substantial fiscal pressures will emerge due to projected increases in spending in the areas of health, age pensions and aged care.

In the last few years in the State of Victoria there has been a dramatic change in the age of first-time mothers. The median age of all women in Australia who gave birth in 1995 was 29.1 years; by 2005 this had increased to 30.7 years (ABS, 2007). In addition there has been an increase in the birth rate (ABS, 2007) putting pressure on midwifery, maternal and child health services and school nursing programs. RMIT's Division of Nursing and Midwifery has a long history of working closely with these State-wide Programs in Victoria and nationally.

In line with these projections, health expenditure is predicted to rise significantly over the next 40 years, with hospitals and health services, and pharmaceutical products likely to experience the greatest increases in expenditure relative to other health areas. These projections have significant and far reaching implications for future health and social care policies, and for nursing education. There is a need to both anticipate and inform future policy and program initiatives for ensuring the provision, relevance, accessibility, affordability, and sustainability of future public health and health service programs.

The disparity in access to, affordability of, and acceptability of, health care will continue. In tandem there will continue to be a chronic nursing and midwifery shortage in rural and metropolitan Victoria, as well as Australia wide.

RMIT Nursing and Midwifery is committed to be at the forefront of these changes as we position ourselves for consolidation and realisation of our strategic plan. RMIT Nursing and Midwifery will meet these challenges within an environment that respects the individual, fosters diversity, promotes community, cultivates life-long learning, and makes excellence an imperative. This strategic action encompasses undergraduate

and postgraduate education, research and development, clinical practice and international liaisons organised around a principle of inclusiveness.

We further aim to maximize teaching effectiveness at individual and program levels while offering innovative academic programs that address unmet needs and emerging trends in nursing and midwifery care as outlined in this document. Importantly, we plan to engage with the wider community through leadership in nursing practice. A focus will be on professional and public service initiatives consistent with our research, academic, and practice directions.

The realisation of our plan should be seen in the quality of the work and learning environment for all. This plan outlines justification, actions, outcomes and priorities, as a means to implement targeted strategies to increase organizational effectiveness and to maintain academic quality. Ultimately, it is predicted that we will stimulate a climate of discovery, educational soundness and diverse perspectives on issues in nursing and midwifery in order to improve clinical practise and patient outcomes in Australia.

I am pleased to endorse this plan and am committed to regularly reviewing our progress toward our vision and strategic objectives. I encourage all staff of the Division to be actively involved in the process of monitoring our progress toward the achievement of this plan and broad direction.

Professor Eleanor Holroyd
Head, Division of Nursing and Midwifery

Mission

Mission:

RMIT Nursing and Midwifery is responsive, highly motivated, socially engaged and at the leading edge of innovative technology.

We create, contribute to, disseminate and apply knowledge that is relevant and responsive to the health and social care needs of the culturally diverse individuals, groups and communities which nurses and midwives serve.

Vision to 2010

In 2010 RMIT Nursing and Midwifery will be:

- > Urban, regional and global in outlook
- > Shaping nursing and midwifery in the 21st century
- > The pre-eminent provider of professionally relevant learning
- > Recognised for excellence in research, scholarship and consultancy

Values:

Passionate . Caring . Wise . Integrity Equitable . Resourceful . Diverse . Creative . Critical . Knowledgeable . Open . Respectful

RMIT Nursing and Midwifery value the following attributes, in our staff, students and graduates:

Passionate: a keen enthusiasm and intense desire for life long learning.

Caring: an empathic commitment to looking after people's health and well being.

Wise: the ability to make sound decisions and judgments drawing upon professional knowledge and relevant clinical experience.

Integrity: possession of firm principles that steadfastly adhere to the professional and ethical standards of the disciplines of nursing and midwifery in all situations encountered.

Equitable: a deep sense of justice, fairness and impartiality.

Resourceful: enterprising, full of initiative, with sound problem-solving skills to apply to complex situations.

Diverse: encompassing a range of social, cultural, ethnic, vulnerable, socioeconomic and gender groupings.

Creative: originality in approaches to problem-solving in order to create new ways of knowing.

Critical: informed judgments based on analytical opinions in a thoughtful, detailed and progressive manner

Knowledgeable: a high level of awareness and intelligence gleaned from the systematic and scholarly study of the disciplines of nursing and midwifery

Open: receptive, ready and willing to accept and listen to new ideas and suggestions.

Respectful: appropriate deference and dignity towards the individual, groups, and communities.

To achieve our vision

We will pursue the following priorities:

Priority 1

Create and maintain a positive educational environment and learning experience in the undergraduate nursing program.

Priority 2

Create and maintain flexible and sustainable clinical learning opportunities underpinned by theoretical knowledge.

Priority 3

Provide leading speciality nursing and midwifery postgraduate programs in key areas of contemporary health issues.

Priority 4

Target strategic international markets for studentship and scholarship.

Priority 5

Known globally for an applied focus and excellence in public health and health services research and scholarship, specifically addressing:

- > Public health and health services
- > Acute Care management
- > Mental Health



Priority 1

Create and maintain a positive educational environment and learning experience in the undergraduate nursing program.

In a rapidly evolving local and global professional milieu, the Bachelor of Nursing situates its graduates at the forefront of clinical and professional practice. The educational environment is characterised by collaborative knowledge generation that fosters critically reflective and self-directed learners who value nursing as a profession. The curriculum is enhanced by a variety of clinical and theoretical learning technologies. Knowledge acquisition is a collaborative process undertaken in a shared teaching and learning environment where teachers and learners have specific roles and responsibilities.

Action 1

Provide a curriculum that is informed by Evidence-Based Practice.

Action 2

Promote shared responsibilities and respect within the learning environment.

Action 3

Maintain a learning environment that is strongly committed to respectful oral and written communication.

Action 4

Provide feedback in the form of written and verbal communication to inform the learning process.

Action 5

Value diversity.

Action 6

Identify the mutual responsibilities of the university and industry to inform the curriculum.

Action 7

Facilitate a dynamic learning environment.

Action 8

Market and promote the excellence of nursing at RMIT.

Priority 2

Create and maintain flexible and sustainable clinical learning opportunities underpinned by theoretical knowledge.

Clinical placements within the Bachelor of Nursing are designed to support the theoretical learning experience in an integrated program to develop critically reflective and self directed learners who value nursing as a profession. Students are empowered to engage in their clinical experience in an enquiring and supported environment.

Action 1

Provide a variety of clinical experiences that contextualises theoretical learning and reflect the diversity of the health care experience.

Action 2

Introduce a cultural and organisational awareness of the health care setting

Action 3

Promote personal and professional growth in the clinical setting.

Action 4

Market and promote the excellence of nursing and midwifery at RMIT.

Priority 3

Provide leading speciality nursing and midwifery postgraduate programs in key areas of contemporary health issues.

The postgraduate Nursing and Midwifery programs are responsive to health care and industry needs in diverse population settings. Nursing and Midwifery postgraduate programs are delivered using discipline specific knowledge and technological expertise based on evidence and research. The programs are offered in collaboration with health care and industry partners to prepare advanced clinicians, future leaders and researchers in nursing and midwifery.

Action 1

Provide a dynamic curriculum that is informed by evidence based nursing practice and research.

Action 2

Provide postgraduate programs utilising expert theoretical and technological knowledge in a flexible learning environment that promotes self direction and reflection

Action 3

Position RMIT Nursing and Midwifery as the first choice provider of work and industry relevant postgraduate learning.

Action 4

Offer postgraduate programs in a practice based framework supported by a collaborative specialty based learning environment

Action 5

Offer programs that reflect current national and global health priorities, to meet the needs of diverse populations.

Action 6

Educate postgraduate students in specialty courses to the level that enables a national and global passport

Priority 4

Target strategic international markets for studentship and scholarship.

The cultural and social diversity of our students is celebrated. Our students are supported by international teaching and learning partnerships and access to study-abroad opportunities across the globe.

Action 1

In an environment of growing globalization, define our international partnerships based on our strategic partnership and actively engage with the relevant international nursing bodies, and educational institutions of the countries concerned.

Action 2

Build upon the education abroad and student exchange programs to provide opportunities for RMIT students to benefit from an international experience during their course of study.

Action 3

Improve opportunities for staff engagement in international networks, and enhance cross-cultural skills and understanding.

Action 4

Establish strong links for our International Alumni so they can continue to build networks with RMIT and their employers and professional bodies.

Priority 5

Known globally for an applied focus and excellence in public health and health services research and scholarship, specifically addressing the key areas of:

- > Public health and health services
- > Acute Care management
- > Mental Health

Action 1

Promote a strong and productive research culture that reflects our strategic directions and the needs of our industry, community and professional partners.

Action 2

Ensure our research and scholarship activities contribute effectively to the improvement of health care practices and patient/client outcomes.

Action 3

Build and maintain productive national and international research collaborations in our strategic areas of focus, and benchmark our performance.

Action 4

Support and mentor novice researchers, postgraduate students, and emerging groups by fostering research networks and assisting in the preparation and submission of successful competitive research grant applications.

Action 5

Engage emerging and experienced researchers in producing high impact scholarly works and making a significant contribution of knowledge to the field.



Appendix 1

RMIT UNIVERSITY PRIORITIES

Priority 1

Build a global university grounded in Melbourne and connected to communities, enterprises and industry across the world, providing our students with a global passport to learning and work.

Priority 2

Position RMIT as the first choice provider of work- and industry-relevant learning.

Priority 3

Develop focused areas of excellence in research and scholarship that reflect our global engagement with industries and communities. We will assure RMIT's inclusion in the top 15 research performers among Australian universities.

Priority 4

Ensure flexible, useful pathways and learning opportunities for students.

Priority 5

Create an experience for students which is stimulating and satisfying and which celebrates diversity.

Priority 6

Attract, develop, reward and retain staff who will embrace the future with energy and creativity and who are focused on the needs of our students and our partners.

Priority 7

Develop facilities and systems to support and sustain excellence in education and research.

Priority 8

Develop a sustainable platform for achieving our goals.



