



24 April 2025

Ms Annie Butler
Federal Secretary
Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation

Via email: anmffederal@anmf.org.au

Dear Ms Butler

Thank you for your correspondence to the Prime Minister of 10 April 2025.

Nurses are a critical part of the health and aged care workforce. They make up more than 40 per cent of the health workforce and are the largest health profession in Australia.

The Albanese Labor Government has invested in nurses and midwives through supporting wage increases for aged care nurses, funding scholarships for nurses and midwives to do postgraduate study to extend their skills and experience, supporting nursing and other students with Fee-Free TAFE and the upcoming Commonwealth Prac Payment.

In the 2025-26 Budget, the Albanese Labor Government announced it will provide \$10.5 million for 400 more postgraduate scholarships to support nurses and midwives to extend their skills and become a highly trained nurse practitioner or endorsed midwife. This builds on the \$50.2 million the Government provided for 1,850 scholarships for nurses and midwives.

We have also delivered on our 2022 election commitment to establish a new program to help Australian nurses and midwives deal with stress and burnout. The Albanese Labor Government has providing \$25.2 million for the groundbreaking Nurse and Midwife Health Program Australia (NMHPA). The free and confidential service for nurses, midwives and students helps them better manage and reduce escalating rates of fatigue, stress and burnout. The Albanese Labor Government provided national funding for the NMHPA. We remain committed to the program and transitioning it to sustainable, ongoing funding.

The Government is in the final stages of developing the *National Nursing Workforce Strategy*, which will guide the nursing workforce now and into the future. The strategy will help address workforce challenges, foster collaboration and drive action among stakeholders in shaping the future of workforce planning, investment and reform. The Government has consulted widely with nurses and midwives on the strategy, and the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) has played a vital role as a member of the advisory group that is providing advice on the development of the strategy.

We believe there is more to do and will work with the ANMF and other nursing and midwifery organisations to ensure nurses and midwives can work to their full scope of practice and have rewarding careers.

A re-elected Albanese Labor Government will prioritise scope of practice reforms, including those identified through the *Unleashing the Potential of our Health Workforce (Scope of Practice) Review*. This will strengthen our primary health care sector, support multidisciplinary care teams, and remove barriers to enable nurses, midwives and other health professionals to work to their full scope of practice. The Government will continue to consult with the health sector as it considers the recommendations and findings of this review, alongside other related reviews. A taskforce has been established in the Department of Health and Aged Care to work with the health sector to design and coordinate options in response to the reviews. The taskforce is being supported by an Expert Panel, of which the ANMF is a member.

A re-elected Labor government will prioritise the development of a National Midwifery Strategy and appoint a Commonwealth Chief Midwife, within the Department of Health and Aged Care. In addition, a Labor Government is committed to working with state and territory jurisdictions on a single, national employment check for nurses and midwives, noting that this will require collaboration across all jurisdictions.

The Labor Government will progress scoping work on a range of other initiatives to support and make the most of Australia's nursing and midwifery workforce. That includes, for example, greater access to and consistency in RUSON and RUSOM programs, and implementation of recommendations of the yet to be finalised *Independent review of complexity in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme*.

We also remain committed to the public hospital funding deal agreed between the all jurisdictions at the December 2023 National Cabinet meeting whereby the Commonwealth will increase its contributions to 45 per cent over a 10-year glide path. The Commonwealth has put \$17.8 billion of additional funding on the table for states and territories as part of negotiations for the next 5-year National Health Reform Agreement (NHRA). This deal means more money for beds, more money to ease ramping, and more money to clear surgery waiting lists. We will re-commence negotiations with the state and territories immediately following the election.

At the Commonwealth level, we will continue to deliver ongoing improvements for nurse practitioner access to Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) and Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) items. This will build on the Government's historic change in 2024, which removed the requirement for medical practitioners to sign off on nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives accessing the MBS and prescribing drugs on the PBS.

Yours sincerely

ALP Campaign 2025