

## Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2023

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Australian College of Nurse Practitioners response to:

Queensland Parliamentary Service

- Inquiry into the Health and Other Legislation  
Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2023

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Health and Environment Committee  
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*By online submission of pdf document via:*

*<https://qldparlcomm.snapforms.com.au/form/hec---health-and-other-legislation-amendment-bill-no-2-2023>*

Dear Committee Secretariat

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a response to the Inquiry into the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2023.

The Australian College of Nurse Practitioners (ACNP) is the national peak organisation for Nurse Practitioners, advancing nursing practice and consumer access to health care. A key focus for the role and scope of practice development for Nurse Practitioners is on unmet needs within the community and increasing access to health care.

The Bill amends:

- the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 to –
  - clarify that, for the purposes of nurse and midwife-to-patient ratios, a newborn baby should be counted as a patient when they are staying in a room on a maternity ward with their birthing parent

ACNP response - Supported.

The presence of a newborn baby in the maternity ward impacts the workload and care requirements, thus necessitating the inclusion of the newborn in patient counts. Studies have shown that nurse-to-patient ratios significantly affect neonatal outcomes.<sup>1</sup> Recognising

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newborns as patients in maternity wards is essential for improving nurse and midwife-to-patient ratios and ensuring comprehensive care for both birthing parents and newborns.<sup>2</sup>

- require a Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) to disclose information about a health professional to their chief executive where the QAC reasonably believes the health professional's health, conduct or performance poses a serious risk of harm to a person

ACNP response - Supported.

- clarify that the chief executive of Queensland Health may, after considering a report from a clinical review or health service investigation conducted in a Hospital and Health Service, take the action the chief executive considers appropriate in relation to the matters identified in the report

ACNP response - Supported.

- ensure key findings, recommendations and lessons learnt from root cause analyses of serious clinical incidents can be shared with relevant staff across Queensland Health

ACNP response - Supported.

- the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 and Criminal Code to -
  - allow additional health practitioners to perform early medical terminations of pregnancy through the use of termination drugs

ACNP response - Supported.

The ACNP supports registered health practitioners, including nurse practitioners, to perform early medical terminations of pregnancy. This approach is particularly valuable in rural settings, where individuals often face challenges accessing medical care.

The Nurse Practitioner Workforce Plan<sup>3</sup> released by the Department of Health in May 2023, describes ways to remove barriers around the

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Nurse Practitioner Scope of Practice. Removing state legislative barriers that do not have a clinical basis and do not align with federal and other states legislation is paramount for consistency across states and territories. It is in the interest of national uniformity that nurse practitioners are enabled through legislation which is constant across state and commonwealth instruments.

Nurse practitioners, as highly skilled and qualified healthcare providers, are well-positioned to address the healthcare needs of individuals in remote and underserved areas. Expanding the authorisation of nurse practitioners to include early medical terminations aligns with the principles of equitable healthcare access and patient-centered care.

The ACNP firmly holds the view that registered health practitioners, including nurse practitioners, prescribing registered medicines for early medical termination of pregnancy is a pivotal measure to improve healthcare accessibility and promote the well-being of Queensland residents.

- make consequential amendments to the offence provision set out in the Criminal Code to align with the above change

ACNP response - Supported.

- provide for more inclusive language by replacing references to 'woman' with 'person' in termination of pregnancy provisions

ACNP response - Supported. Adopting inclusive language across all legislative tools is supported.

- the Public Health Act 2005 to exempt medical practitioners from duplicate reporting of dust lung diseases to the Queensland Notifiable Dust Lung Disease Register where there has been notification to the National Occupational Respiratory Disease Registry

ACNP response - Supported.

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- the Mental Health Act 2016 to clarify how Mental Health Court expert reports and transcripts may be released and used.

ACNP response - Supported.

Thank you again for the opportunity to participate in this important review. We are happy to be contacted to participate further or provide clarification.

Yours sincerely



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