

Submission No., 31
Date Received

RECEIVED
06 FEB 2007

BY: mig



6 February 2007

The Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Migration
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Dr Sullivan

Inquiry into eligibility requirements and monitoring, enforcement and reporting arrangements for temporary business visas

Thank you for your letter dated 14 December 2006. The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council (ANMC) is pleased to have the opportunity to make a submission to the inquiry.

The ANMC is a peak body established in 1992 to facilitate a national approach to nursing and midwifery regulation. The ANMC works with state and territory Nursing and Midwifery Regulatory Authorities (NMRA) in evolving standards for statutory nursing and midwifery regulation. These standards are flexible, effective and responsive to the health care requirements of the Australian population.

The Australian Nursing & Midwifery Council is an assessing authority for the Australian Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA). The ANMC conducts an assessment of Registered Nurses and Midwives who intend to migrate to Australia under the *General Skilled Migration* category. Through this process the ANMC determines whether nurses and midwives are suitable for migration or whether they may need to undertake further education in order to be eligible for migration in the stated skill category.

All nurses and midwives (including direct entry midwives) working in Australia must demonstrate the ANMC's national competency standards to be eligible for registration with a state or territory NMRA. Therefore, overseas nurses and midwives must also be able to demonstrate these competency standards in order to be eligible for migration to Australia. The ANMC and NMRAs are committed to protection of the public through ensuring overseas nurses/midwives are competent and safe to practice.

In applying for either registration / migration, nurses / midwives must include transcripts of nursing / midwifery education, professional reference from a current employer, verification from their current registering authority that the person has no negative actions or conditions placed upon their registration and finally, evidence of English language proficiency. The main English tests used are IELTS (academic level) and the OET. The minimum scores required for registration are: IELTS 6.5 in reading and listening and 7 in writing and speaking with a B level in each score of

the OET, this is consistent for all NMRAs. This has proven to be the minimum accepted level to ensure adequate communication for the safe practice of nursing and midwifery.

Nurses and midwives from overseas, who complete their nursing degree in Australia with a minimum of 2 years at university, are obliged to have their skills assessed by the ANMC to be eligible for permanent residency. However they are not required to provide evidence of English proficiency, or complete a specified time of experience prior to applying for residency.

The ANMC agrees with the Committee's concerns (p115 "*Negotiating the Maze*" 4.38) that in considering changes to Australia's overseas skills recognition arrangements the quality and safety of health services provision in Australia must not be compromised.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judith Conroy".

Judith Conroy
Manager
International Section
Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council
Email: jconroy@anmc.org.au