



NURSING IN AUSTRALIA

SAMPLE EBOOK

Nursing in the Australian Health Service
by Emma Bates



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by Emma Bates RN BSC Hons Dip HE

Why Write an eBook Like This and Why do you Need This eBook?

Nurses are expected to find their way through a complicated health care system with nothing to really guide them. Although the health service does what it can to help via orientation programs, an eBook specifically focusing on nursing in the Australian Health Service like this would have been really helpful and eased a lot of the worry and anxiety I had when starting in the service. There were things I wished I'd known up front, like what are the nursing clinical specialities? What are the laws and acts affecting our practice? What are the nursing organisations etc? Information about administering medication in Australia would also have been useful. I realised it would have been useful to have something to read prior to starting in the health service, so that I could prepare myself with what to expect. I also wondered why there wasn't a good guide for nurses out there available on the internet, so I wrote this eBook which I hope will make it easier for you to understand Nursing in the Australian Health Service and ease your transition into your role, so that you will be able to 'hit the ground running' right from the start. Nurses are the back bone of the health service and it is imperative that they have the necessary information and resources about the industry they work in to do their job well. This eBook goes the extra mile; it's bursting at the seams with facts, innovative ideas and top tips about working as a nurse in Australia. It addresses the nursing jungle that is the complicated healthcare system, using an easy-to-read format. This eBook acts as a guide to what you need to know. It is packed full of useful advice, facts and information about nursing and midwifery in Australia, including lots of useful resources, websites and address. It is aimed at providing you with the information you will need to help you feel informed and equipped to work in the nursing profession. This eBook will be invaluable to you in many, many ways throughout your employment in the health service.

A Little Bit About the Author

Originally trained in the UK, I've held a variety of senior nursing positions both in the UK and in Australia and currently work for a premier hospital in Sydney. I have published research in the UK and in Australia and I also teach nursing students at a university in Sydney.

Having spent several years nursing in Australia, this eBook contains what I have discovered about nursing in the Australian health service.

How to Use This eBook and Who Should Read it

The eBook follows a logical sequence of topics covering areas that you need to know. You can of course just jump straight to the sections you need. Here is an overview.

Nursing in the Australian Health Service provides comprehensive information on the Australian health service containing invaluable information for newly qualified, transitional and student nurses, including Registered Nurses already in Australia looking to familiarise themselves with the Australian health system. Overseas nurses and midwives and international nursing students may also find it useful if they already in Australia (see below).

This eBook contains information on: the health system and how it is structured and funded; what to expect from your role and workplace (including clear definitions of nursing roles); what's involved in nursing orientation and mandatory skills expected of you as a nurse; Australian nursing organisations and associations; nursing systems, terminology and acronyms in use; nursing specialities; grading, salary and terms and conditions information; drug calculations (what you'll need to now and some help to practice them); basic life support (BLS) and the National Inpatient Medication Chart (NIMC); and a complete listing of all of Australia's public and private hospitals and nursing courses run by universities across the country. You name it, it's in here. This eBook section contains many useful numbers, links and contact details throughout.

Who Should Read this eBook?

This eBook has been written for newly qualified, transitional and student nurses, including Registered Nurses already in Australia. Overseas nurses and students looking to come to Australia should consider purchasing *Nursing in Australia – A guide to Working and Living as a Nurse Down Under*, please visit <http://www.nursingaustralia.info>

Important Notes for Readers

Web Addresses

Throughout this eBook useful links and web addresses have been inserted or suggested for your information and convenience as a place to go to easily find out more about a particular area or subject. However, the links provided form a list that is certainly not exhaustive and should not be a substitute for doing your own research and homework. Links and web addresses are continually being updated and may change or vary slightly. You should also conduct your own research using a 'search engine' such as Google or Yahoo, using the same key words and names listed in this eBook. Web addresses are either featured as they are mentioned in the text, or in some cases at the end of the relevant section.

This is the Legal Bit

I'm obliged to tell you this bit, so here goes. The Author (Emma Bates) does not warrant that the information contained in this eBook (Information) is free from errors and omissions. Changes in circumstances after the time of publication may impact on the accuracy of the Information. Emma Bates is not liable for the accuracy of any Information and shall have no liability to the users of the Information for any loss, damage, cost, expense incurred or arising by reason of any person using, acting on, or relying on the Information whether or not the loss, damage, cost, expense incurred was caused by reason of any error, negligent act, omission or misrepresentation in the Information.

All of the reference material provided in this eBook is in the public domain and is easily obtainable from Australian medical libraries, hospital libraries, nursing journals and the internet. Everything has been verified with senior nursing professionals. However, this material is not a substitute for independent advice. No material contained within this eBook is intended to be used as medical advice and it is not intended to be used to diagnose, treat,

cure, or prevent any disease. It should not be used for therapeutic purposes or as a substitute for your own health professional's or institution's advice.

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Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined.

Henry David Thoreau

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Introduction

In a country of over 21 million people, there are approximately over 305,000 registered nurses currently working in Australia¹ yet in every capital city and town in Australia there are public and private hospitals and facilities looking for nurses, including many different types of health care centres and aged care facilities. It doesn't all have to be about hospital-based roles either; the jobs on offer are really diverse. Imagine yourself flying out to run a clinic in a remote area to provide much needed nursing care in the outback, or becoming a clinic nurse on a remote island in the Whitsundays. You may like to try something a bit different and there are a variety of roles in community health, acute care, working with homeless teams, remote area nursing, flight nursing, outback placements, liaison services and nurse-run clinics, providing roles for everyone from Nurse Practitioners to general practice nurses.

To take full advantage of these opportunities you need to be able to navigate the health system and know where to go for support or information. Read on.

Registering as a Nurse in Australia

To practice as a Registered Nurse (or midwife) in Australia you must have a current registration with the relevant Nursing and Midwifery Board. This is in accordance with the Nurses and Midwives Act (which varies slightly in each state and territory). The Nurses and Midwives Act is the primary piece of legislation in Australia relating to nurses and midwives. Therefore you will need to register with your own state or territory Nursing and Midwifery Board (see list of Boards at the end of this section). Please note that these Boards are responsible for registering both nurses and midwives, and there are no separate governing bodies for the different professions. Enrolled Nurses need to register too.

You may be surprised to read that nursing is not 'universal' across the whole of Australia and this is the same for the registering process. Each state and territory has its own nurse regulatory authority/Nursing and Midwifery Board which maintains its own register of qualified nurses (for now, but see new single national registration and accreditation scheme, below). Each Nursing and Midwifery Board provides monitoring, advice and screening for every Registered Nurse, midwife and Enrolled Nurse working within their borders.

Nurses who have never practiced in Australia before need to register and obtain a 'certificate of registration' from their respective Nursing and Midwifery Board. This is different to your 'Authority to Practice' card, (which you will also need to be able to practice and you get at the same time as the certificate of registration). You will need to show this Authority to Practice card (or equivalent) to your employer when you start work and after every year (or thereabouts) depending on the Nursing Board's rules (as opposed to the certificate of registration which you only get once for a particular Board). Please note that it is mandatory that all nurses wishing to practice maintain their registration with their respective state or territory Nursing Board. It is usually the nurse's responsibility to renew their registration and there is not usually any reminder letter. The fee is usually between AUD\$ 70 – AUD\$ 145

depending on where you live, which is tax deductible (contact details below, check the Nursing and Midwifery Board website for current annual prices).

Changing States or Territories

If you decide to change state or territory then you will have to re-register with the state or territory you are moving to. This is until the new single national registration and accreditation scheme starts (see below). Currently there is Mutual Recognition Legislation (1992) in Australia which provides some recognition of registration in other states and territories. This means that presently nurses registered in one Australian state or territory can re-register in another using a more simplified process than their initial state/territory registration.

Australia to New Zealand and Vice Versa (except WA)

There is also an agreement between Australia and New Zealand (the Trans–Tasman Mutual Recognition (1997) Legislation) and once you have gained registration in Australia, then the process has been simplified for you to gain it in New Zealand (and New Zealand to Australia).

New Zealand

Nurses who have current authority to practise as a Registered Nurse, Enrolled Nurse or midwife in New Zealand may be able to apply for recognition with Australian Nursing and Midwives Boards under the Trans Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1997 (Commonwealth). This provides direct entry onto an Australian Nursing Board register (see above).

New Single National Registration and Accreditation Scheme

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has agreed to establish (by July 2010) a single national registration and accreditation scheme for all of the nine health professions: medical practitioners; nurses and midwives; pharmacists; physiotherapists; psychologists; osteopaths; chiropractors; optometrists and dentists (including dental hygienists, dental

prosthetists and dental therapists). This is to facilitate workforce mobility, improve safety and quality, and reduce red tape. A single national accreditation scheme for health education and training is aimed at simplifying and improving the consistency of the current arrangements. A national scheme will also permit Registered Nurses and other health professionals to practice across state and territory borders without having to re-register.

It is forecast that there will be one governing body covering the national registration and accreditation scheme for all of the nine health professions across the whole of Australia. Each health profession will then have its own national board responsible for the registration and accreditation of its own profession (for example, the one for nursing might be called the National Nurses and Midwifery Board of Australia). Each state and territory will still have their own subsidiary, based in their state or territory which will offer a service to nurses and midwives. This will then provide accreditation and registration for nurses and midwives, but to a new single national registration scheme which will then feed back to the National Nurses and Midwifery Board, which will then update a national data base.

For updates on the implementation of the scheme please refer to the websites below, including your own Nursing and Midwifery Boards' website.

<http://www.nhwt.gov.au/natreg.asp>

<http://www.coag.gov.au>

<http://www.anmc.org.au>

About Registering

Registering can take some time, so it should be something you start looking into early on. Start by checking the Nursing and Midwifery Board website of the state or territory you intend to work in, and see what is required of you to get registered or enrolled. Follow each

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Nursing and Midwifery Board's instructions carefully as they vary slightly. The whole process should take approximately eight weeks, although this can depend on the demand on the service at any given time. It is recommended that you submit applications directly yourself, to avoid communication disruptions and delays.

The Nursing and Midwifery Board has a responsibility to protect the public and ensure that professional standards are being maintained, so only nurses that meet certain specific criteria with appropriate nursing and midwifery qualifications are allowed to practice. Therefore each Nursing and Midwifery Board checks each nurse's credentials thoroughly. Although each Nursing and Midwifery Board application form to register may vary, you'll be assessed on the following.

- Proof of your identity, birth certificate or copies of passport etc.
- Evidence of your good character.
- Evidence of your registration as a nurse in the jurisdictions where you were educated and/or previously practiced.
- Evidence of your degree(s), diploma(s) certificates in nursing, midwifery and course transcripts etc.
- You may need to provide two professional references.
- Verification of registration/enrolment from other states, or certificate of good professional standing.
- Professional experience supporting evidence of competence.

Please Note that there is usually separate information on the websites detailing how to register as a Nurse Practitioner or Midwife Practitioner.

END OF FREE SAMPLE !

To continue reading and see over 180 pages of more information and invaluable links and resources you'll need to buy the eBook.