

12<sup>th</sup> February 2019

**ACMHN Additional Response to Consultation  
Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards Framework.**

In reference to the recommendation 3.9 the program includes:

- a) *A discrete unit addressing mental health taught by a registered nurse with a formal qualification in mental health*

The ACMHN requests this be reworded as:

- a) *A discrete unit addressing mental health nursing taught by a registered nurse with a formal qualification and expertise in mental health nursing.*

As the largest clinical health workforce in Australia, it is imperative that the Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards clearly and deliberately communicate requirements relating to the coverage of mental health nursing to ensure nurses are equipped with the appropriate knowledge, skills and clinical experience to respond to what will soon represent the largest burden of disease in Australia. Specifically, this should include incorporating mental health nursing into the Accreditation Standards as a required disciplinary learning outcome; specifying that registered nurses with specialist qualifications and experience in mental health nursing are delivering theoretical content and supervising students on mental health placements and requiring that clinical placements are directly relevant to the learning outcomes the placement aims to achieve.


As currently written the recommendation would provide scope for:

- Units of study which include broad mental health content (e.g. psychology, well-being) without any dedicated mental health nursing content.
- Units of study in mental health and mental health nursing being taught by Registered nurses with qualifications with mental health content (e.g. psychology, welfare work) and potentially no qualifications specific to the discipline of nursing, and no required experience of working within mental health services.

Bachelor of Nursing programs emphasise the important role of nurses in contributing to positive health outcomes in all components of the health care sector. Therefore, it is necessary that nursing expertise is fundamental to knowledge and skill development in all areas including mental health. Without the changes we have suggested, mental health nursing skills may become secondary to generic knowledge taught by people without an experientially based understanding of mental health nursing. To support this would jeopardize the standards for care and treatment for consumers.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide feedback. We are happy to be contacted to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely



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