



**Blueprint objective** 3. A health workforce that exists to serve and meet population health needs

**Case example** Nurse practitioners in Australia: An untapped resource

**What is the community need or problem being addressed?**

- Improved access to healthcare, particularly for underserved populations
- Reduction in fragmentation and duplication in the delivery of health care
- Delivery of flexible and responsive care with the implementation of nurse practitioner models that traverse healthcare from the acute to community and aged care sectors
- Delivery of accessible care closer to the patient aiming to reduce avoidable emergency department presentations and hospital admissions

**What is the approach being implemented?** The nurse practitioner role, while not a discreet program, is flexible and adaptable and able to be implemented into most multidisciplinary teams, programs or activities

**What is the context in which the activity or program is being implemented?** The role of the nurse practitioner was implemented in Australia nearly 20 years ago – however with less than 1,600 currently endorsed to practice, the potential of this health workforce role described throughout the international literature is yet to be realised in this country.

While initially implemented in the public sector, since being admitted as eligible providers and prescribers in 2010, nurse practitioners are developing an increasing presence in primary care—in general practice, private practice, Aboriginal medical services and home nursing services.

**What are the barriers or enablers impacting the activity or program?**

- Slow growth in workforce numbers and to embed across health systems
- Education and training remains specialised rather than targeted to meet current and future system needs
- Challenges in establishing successful business models

**What is needed to scale-up the successes?**

- Improve understanding of the nurse practitioner role across policy makers and health systems
- Identify service driven opportunities for nurse practitioners
- Reconsider the preparation of the nurse practitioner workforce to meet consumer and health system needs
- Broaden the focus of nurse practitioner preparation to better prepare them to deliver primary health care and to prepare them to practise in other service models outside employed models
- Address issues in establishing suitable business models

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