

Senate Hearing for the Inquiry into universal access to reproductive healthcare

Opening Statement

My name is Julianne Bryce. I am a registered nurse and lead the national professional team for the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation. I am joined today by my colleague, Jasmine Kirk, midwife and ANMF Federal Professional Officer.

Thank you for the invitation to provide evidence at this Senate Hearing today.

The ANMF is Australia's largest national union and professional nursing and midwifery organisation. In collaboration with the ANMF's eight state and territory branches, we represent the professional, industrial and political interests of more than 322,000 nurses, midwives and carers across the country.

Nurses and midwives are the largest health workforce, with the greatest reach, enabling care to be delivered across all areas of health, education and the workplace, in all geographic locations throughout Australia.

They are a highly educated, capable and regulated workforce that has long been at the forefront of health care delivery and advancing solutions by implementing practice changes across a range of health services. Nurses and midwives have the expertise to provide holistic, person-centred care that addresses the person's physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs in the context of their lived experience.

It is imperative the contribution of nurses and midwives to sexual and reproductive health is recognised and their full scope of practice realised to improve the health of women living in Australia.

Building on the existing nursing and midwifery workforce, nurse and midwife-led models of care offer a viable solution, to the largely medical model, to increase access to reproductive health care services for women living in metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas.

To promote equitable access to reproductive healthcare the ANMF recommend greater utilisation of the skills and expertise of nurses and midwives.