

14th April, 2011

I am currently employed as a Transitional Nurse Practitioner in rural NSW. I would like to provide evidence of the challenges that Transitional Nurse Practitioners have faced under AHPRA.

From the time that AHPRA commenced until recent weeks no Nurse Practitioner Endorsement applications were processed at the Sydney AHPRA office, this is despite Nurse Practitioners from other states and territories including Tasmania, Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory indicating that they had been authorised under AHPRA.

From the 1st of July 2010, an application form and Registration Standards for Nurse Practitioner Endorsement was found on the AHPRA website, however there was no indication on the website that Nurse Practitioner Endorsement applications were not being accepted.

In August 2010 an email only was received from a member of the Sydney AHPRA office advising that at that time applications were not being processed, however this email did indicate that this would be addressed in the short term. Instead some eight months went past before the Guidelines for Endorsement were developed.

Shortly after these interim guidelines were posted on the website, new guidelines were posted, this was despite no one being authorised under the old guidelines. This has caused confusion for many Transitional Nurse Practitioners who were preparing documentation for Endorsement.

I am aware that Transitional Nurse Practitioners that have phone the Sydney office of AHPRA over the last 8 months have been advised that developing the Nurse Practitioner Guidelines was not a priority matter for AHPRA.

Not being able to become Endorsed has significant impacts on health consumers, as Transitional Nurse Practitioners are unable to carry out the full role of Nurse Practitioners eg. Prescribing medications and ordering diagnostics.

A delay in the Endorsement process has also financially disadvantaged Transitional Nurse Practitioners as they are only paid as Clinical Nurse Consultant and not as Nurse Practitioners.

After 8 months my application has now been forwarded from the Sydney Office to the Perth Office of AHPRA, which means if I have any concerns I must make an STD call to the Perth Office as no free call number is provided.

I am aware through my personal networks of 6 other Transitional Nurse Practitioners who have experienced the same issues and have had their Endorsement unnecessarily delayed.

Christine Symington

Transitional Nurse Practitioner