

17 June 2015

Kia ora koutou,

Thank you so much for having me here at your conference. Congratulations to the Wellington organising committee, your planning has ensured the conference has run smoothly and particularly thank you for making me so welcome. It has been a fabulous two days for me and has helped make me feel as if progress is underway with more just around the corner to build on the work we have been doing for the last three years to improve the visibility and recognition of the EN role.

This is the third year I have attended your conference and it feels to me as if this year there is more assurance, more confidence and a feeling of momentum I haven't noticed before.

We have heard support and commitment to a sustainable workforce, an appropriate skill mix and the best use of the workforce skills from the Minister of Health, your professional body, a Director of Nursing and the education sector. In reality those messages are not new, they have been articulated since at least 2010 when minister Ryall agreed to reinstitute the scope of practice for ENs. However since that time there has been a variable response to employing your workforce. What has struck me at this conference is that there have been many references to the Ministry needing to do more about employing enrolled nurses. I acknowledge it seems that things have moved slowly, and it is true there has been a new scope of practice for 5 years now, and still uptake of new graduate ENs is not as high as we expect. The Office of the Chief Nurse has for the last three years been working with Directors of Nursing and others in the sector to improve employment rates of new graduate registered and enrolled nurses.

Our priority is to ensure we have a sustainable workforce, flexible and responsive to the health needs of the population. As I said at the conference last year – our work is focused on spreading the message that a differentiated nursing response is needed to the different levels of health need in the population. Everyone needs health protection and prevention interventions and universal services. Many people need more from a more specialised workforce, some people need specialist care from a workforce with specialty

skills and more advance knowledge and a few people need expert, highly specialised technical care from a small highly trained workforce.

We met in April with the Nurse Educators in the Tertiary Sector where we spent our whole agenda slot discussing the barriers and enablers to improving employment and retention rates for ENs. We are meeting with the Directors of Nursing at their national meeting and aim to have a similar session with them. As you heard from Andrea yesterday Directors of Nursing are giving a lot of thought to skill mix, and models of care and looking for opportunities to bring ENs into teams. Southern DHB and Canterbury are two areas where successful initiatives through team work and collaboration have produced great results. We need to do more to share those success stories. I believe one of the key factors to have made it work in the South has been the work between the DHB and the education providers. This is story we need to tell.

We have heard from enrolled nurses presenting at the conference just how flexible and responsive the enrolled nurse scope of practice enables you to be. You are perfectly positioned to work in teams to provide health care in a range of settings to all NZers, and also many of you have more specialised knowledge and skills and provide care to many people who require more from the health care system. Sue and Maree's presentations demonstrated the abilities of ENs so clearly, and Tina's description of her passion and engagement with smoking cessation as a student reveals the potential in the new cohorts of ENs coming through.

Alongside the feeling of momentum I have noticed in the last two days. My thinking has also crystalised about the need for us all to work together to make sure we are planning for the future, to making sure we are employing our EN graduates. The Ministry has a role for sure, but we cannot do it alone, we can only influence, not control, DHB and sector provider employment decisions. Our work can be mutually supportive of the work of others. My strong feeling is that we need to be making the EN role and potential more visible. I would love to see either very full coverage of the conference or ideally a whole issue of Kai Tiaki dedicated to telling stories like Sue's and Maree's. To sharing the success of Southern and Canterbury DHBs leadership and certainly the OCN would be keen to contribute too.

There is work to do and I look forward to the next year of shared effort, making the most of the resources we have available and improving employment rates for ENs.

Thank you again for having me here with you, I am only sorry I can't make it tomorrow, I will be with the GPNZ nurse leaders at their meeting, where I assure you, roles for ENs in PHC will be in the discussion.

Ngā mihi ki a koutou, ngā mihi mai o hā.