

NZNO Professional Nursing Advisor Report

College of Gerontology Nursing (COGN)

BGM, May 2025

Tēnā koutou katoa.

Thank you to the College Committee members who have shown strong leadership, dedication and professional engagement in another challenging year. NZNO acknowledges the huge commitment made by the Committee over and above the personal and professional commitments each one of these members hold.

Your committee has worked to advocate for you, college members across the health sector, always aiming to promote excellence of nursing practice within older adults/kaumātua health, with recognition given to gerontology nurses working at the top of their scopes.

Following the College's successful Wellington conference in 2023 your committee has worked to achieve their planned activities in 2024 and 2025.

A summary of broader NZNO activities during the 2024/2025 period includes the following:

- Development on the review of the NZNO Constitution has continued and NZNO members will shortly have the opportunity to vote on what this will look like for NZNO staff, members and most particularly College and Section members. As you are NZNO members, college members are strongly encouraged to take part in some way with determining the Constitution of NZNO. Opportunities to engage in the kaupapa will be highlighted in the CE newsletters to members.
- Over the last 12 months NZNO has worked alongside all Colleges and Sections (C&S) to determine how these clinical specialty groups can be better supported and how NZNO could assist them better raise their influence as experts in their fields. The COGN Committee responded with their views. Since then, two committee representatives attended the College and Section Days in March this year and two committee members also had the opportunity to attend a new two-day induction program designed to support new committee members, also held in March. Feedback from these days will help determine what programs of support are progressed for 25/26 year. The Board have updated the Strategic Plan, and this has been signed off by the Board and Te Poari and now guides our mahi through the year.
- NZNO's Age Safe Campaign seeks provision of quality patient care and safe staffing for residents in aged residential care facilities. <https://maranga-mai.nzno.org.nz/age-safe> Here's some detail about the campaign, since, whilst residents in ARC facilities might seem like a small proportion of the overall population, that proportion is growing. The campaign aims to mirror collection of data that informed the outcome of the Australian Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. <https://www.royalcommission.gov.au/aged-care> This means that NZNO is creating a research report for presentation to relevant government ministers that includes: in-person interviews with 75 members who provide care to residents, including 15 interviews with Māori health team members conducted by a Māori researcher; survey responses from NZNO members working in ARC; and collated reports of workplace incidents where members have held concerns about the quality of care of residents, and staffing levels. The online form can be found here: <https://www.jotform.com/242737043711856/> The report is expected to be concluded in October 2025 and will be shared widely. *NZNO intends to make Aged Care Quality and Safety a campaign issue in the 2026 government elections and the Age Safe campaign report will be a key part of achieving that.*
- Pay equity – The Pay Equity evidence thresholds and processes have been abruptly changed by the government as announced on 6 May. This is especially disappointing for members working in aged care

as well as in other settings, due to the significant amount work that has been done that will now not be able to be used.

- Staffing Ratios - Nursing unions have won enforceable staffing ratios as a result of campaigning in the US, Australia, Canada and elsewhere. Nurse-to-patient ratio legislation has markedly improved recruitment and retention in these countries. NZNOs goal is to win culturally safe nurse to patient ratios across the health system in Aotearoa. It is important to note that the Ratios process is not intended to replace CCDM where this is in place but rather to ensure a legally enforceable safe minimum staffing requirement. Aged residential care staff ratios implemented internationally (in Australia, USA) have determined the staff mix based on 'care minutes' per resident, according to the category of care that residents are assessed as needing.

NZNO's ratios campaign goal is to see ratios applied wherever there is a nurse working... this will be far reaching and will take time. Your support is pivotal for the success of this work progressing. See website for more details https://marangamai.nzno.org.nz/ratio_justice

- Health care assistants (HCA) national oversight committee – NZNO continues to work with HCAs regarding their concerns about inconsistent training and career pathway options. Their aim is to have consistent training for all HCAs wherever they work and national stepping stones for HCAs who may want to become enrolled nurses or registered nurses and where all HCAs are remunerated appropriately for the work they do.
- Professional Nursing Advisors have participated in the Nursing Council's review of the now finalised EN & RN scopes of practice and Standards of competence. We encourage all members to educate themselves about the changes and implications for their practice, including what this might mean for you as you update your PDRP. See <https://www.nursingcouncil.org.nz/NCNZ/nursing-section/Guidance-to-EN-and-RN-new-scopes-and-standards-of-competence.aspx> DO check the Nursing Council website for more information about renewing your APC under the new Standards of Competence framework.
- NZNO PNAs and the Research and Policy Team recently encouraged members to make submissions on the Government's proposal to "modernise health workforce regulation". This is the latest in a number of consultations that the government has sought comment on, that has the potential to disrupt how the health workforce is educated and how health care services are provided. It is vitally important that nurses voices are heard when politically driven changes to legislation and systems are proposed.
- NZNO PNA and lawyers will begin the planning for our annual Professional Forum. This will be held towards the end of 2025 and have a medico-legal focus. Watch out for more detail on this in the coming months. Please check out the NZNO for more information.
- Professional Supervision – there is now a list of professional supervisors from across the motu, available on the NZNO website. https://www.nzno.org.nz/support/nursing_supervision

As members you will all be receiving the CEO Updates fortnightly which provide current information about all NZNOs activities. Please do read them. It is a vital tool for you to stay up to date and enable you to participate in your profession's largest union.

My thanks again to the current College of Gerontology Nursing's committee for their effort and mahi on behalf of College members. It has been a pleasure to continue to work with such a passionate and dedicated group of nursing leaders. No matter what challenges arise, they find solutions and work together constructively. I also gratefully acknowledge the committee members whose terms have concluded, and encourage any of you to consider nomination for one of the vacancies that their departures have created.

The Committee represents you as members and ultimately aims to promote excellence of nursing practice within older adults/kaumātua health, with recognition given to gerontology nurses working at the top of their scopes.

"Kāhore taku toa I te toa takitahi, he toa takitini" - We cannot succeed without the support around us

Marg Bigsby
Professional Nurse Advisor
May 2025