



## College News

### Progress report on the registered nurse anaesthetic assistant (RNAA) role

**Background:** In New Zealand anaesthetists are assisted by anaesthetic technicians and nurses.

There is a shortage of anaesthetic technicians and a large number of surgical cases requiring general anaesthetics are being cancelled due to lack of anaesthetic technicians. There is growing need for competent nurses to meet the workforce shortages in anaesthetic assistance.

Currently in New Zealand there is no specific anaesthetic assistant nursing course which builds upon holistic comprehensive nursing knowledge in the field of anaesthetic assistant. To address this gap, the Perioperative Nurses College is keen to endorse a specialty-based graduate level nursing course in anaesthetic assistance. The specialty based nursing criteria will be aligned to the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (2012) PS8 document 'Recommendations on the Assistant to the Anaesthetist'.

#### KEY MILESTONES

##### 2012: Phase 1 – Inception

- Joint Communication Statement from Medical Sciences Council and the Nursing Council of New Zealand

Under the direction of this Joint Communication statement "the Perioperative Nurses College of the New Zealand Nurses Organisation has agreed to develop a definition and competencies/skills/standards for anaesthetic nurses."

##### 2013: Phase 2 – Planning

- Skills and knowledge framework for the competent registered nurse functioning as an anaesthetic assistant

There were 2 rounds of consultation on the Skills & Knowledge Framework for RNAA, via Survey Monkey. There was a total of 115 groups or individuals who offered feedback across both consultations.

- Advisory group established to make recommendations to PNC on the education and assessment pathway of a RNAA course. Membership included:
  - 1 PNC convener + 3 PNC members;
  - 1 representative from Auckland University of Technology: Clinical & training development co-ordinator of anaesthetic assistants
  - 1 NZ representative from the Australian & New Zealand College of Anaesthetists;
  - 1 representative from the New Zealand Society of Anaesthetists
  - 1 representative from NZ Private Surgical Hospital Directors of Nursing Group;
  - 1 representative from the Directors of Nursing DHB (invited)
  - NZNO, professional nursing advisor. Ex-officio during teleconferences

To assist the advisory group's work a Survey Monkey questionnaire was distributed to theatre nurse managers of public and private hospitals. There were 30 responses. The questionnaire enquired about types of anaesthesia; specialty services, staff mix, and level of interest in an RNAA 1 year course.

- Introductory discussion with Health Workforce New Zealand

PNC leadership has commenced initial discussions with Health Workforce New Zealand. This will be progressed during 2014 when PNC national committee has ratified the education and assessment pathway of the RNAA role.

##### 2014: Phase 3 – Implementation

PNC National Committee meeting February 15, 2014 to consider the advisory group recommendations and develop an action plan for phase 3.

This will include approaching the Auckland University of Technology to investigate the feasibility of delivering a course through the School of Nursing. PNC welcomes a collaborative approach, we are seeking a DHB nursing director champion to work with PNC leadership, Health Workforce New Zealand and the Tertiary Provider in implementing this course.

First RNAA course intake is aiming to begin 2014/2015.

– Fiona Unac, PNC Chair & Berice Beach, PNC Secretary/  
Treasure On behalf of the National Committee of the Perioperative Nurses College<sup>NZNO</sup> 14<sup>th</sup> February 2014



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