Established in 1924, the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) is the largest professional and industrial organisation for nurses and midwives in Australia, with Branches in each State and Territory. The core business of the ANMF is the professional and industrial representation of our members and the professions of nursing and midwifery.

With a membership of over 244,000 nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing, our members are employed across all geographical and health and aged care settings, both private and public. As the peak professional and industrial body for the nursing and midwifery professions, the ANMF participates in the development of policy relating to: nursing and midwifery practice, professionalism, regulation, education, training, workforce, and socio-economic welfare; health and aged care, community services, veterans’ affairs, occupational health and safety, industrial relations, social justice, human rights, immigration, foreign affairs and law reform.

The ANF, now the ANMF, is one of the seven founding members of the National Rural Health Alliance. More than 80,000 of ANMF’s members reside and practice in rural and remote areas. Our communication network is far reaching in terms of accessing nurses and midwives in widely dispersed country areas and therefore impacting their practice and, in turn, the health outcomes of rural and remote communities. Nurses and midwives are the most widely geographically distributed members of the health workforce.

On 25 July 2013, the Fair Work Commission endorsed our new name – the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation. This historic amendment reflects our membership of more than 20,000 midwives.

Nursing and Midwifery Leadership
Annie Butler commenced as Assistant Federal Secretary of the ANMF in March this year. Annie took over from Yvonne Chaperon, who moved back to her home town of Hobart to take up the role of President of the Mental Health Council of Tasmania. Annie is a registered nurse with a strong background of professional, political and industrial advocacy working for the ANMF NSW Branch (NSW Nurses and Midwives Association). Both Lee Thomas, Federal Secretary and Annie Butler will seek re-election for a four year term in November this year.

Review of the National Competency Standards for nurses in general practice Project
The ANMF is conducting a review of the National Competency Standards for nurses in general practice, which we first published in 2005. This 18 month project is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health (DoH). Our research partner is the University of Wollongong. From March to September 2014, the Project Team has conducted a series of focus groups across the country. To date focus groups have been held in Sydney, Wollongong, Canberra, Hobart, Ulverstone, Melbourne, Perth, Albany (including Busselton and the Wheatbelt), Cairns, Mackay and Brisbane (including videoconferencing with Townsville and Far North Queensland). Further focus groups will be held in Adelaide and Clare at the end of September. Interviews are also being conducted with General Practitioners and Practice Managers around their awareness, use and application of the current Standards and the associated resource toolkit. The Project is due to be completed in December 2014.

Advanced Practice Nursing and Midwifery Study
In 2013 the ANMF commissioned Professor Glenn Gardner, Queensland University of Technology (QUT) and Professor Christine Duffield, University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) to undertake a national scoping study into the activities and level of nursing and midwifery practice in different positions, titles, grades and advanced practice. The study (the ANSWER 4 Nursing and Midwifery)
included a national online survey open to all currently employed Australian registered nurses and midwives. There were 7,000 responses to this national survey conducted between February and April this year. The ANMF, the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC), QUT and UTS have received Australian Research Council (ARC) funding as partner investigators for research and development of a national framework for advanced practice in nursing and midwifery over the next 18 months.

**Review of the National Competency Standards for Registered Nurses**

The ANMF is participating on the Project Research Team led by Southern Cross University and the University of Sydney undertaking the project to review the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia's *National Competency Standards for the registered nurse* in May 2014. The first stage of the project involves registered nurse observations to be undertaken across the States and Territories in a variety of clinical contexts of practice. This work will seek to determine the areas of clinical practice not captured in the current Standards. Observations will commence in September 2014. This 18 month project is scheduled to be completed in November 2015.

**Telehealth**

In 2012/13 ANMF partnered in a Nursing and Midwifery Telehealth Consortia funded by the Australian Government DoH with the aim to provide more equitable access to specialist services for patients in regional, rural, remote and outer metropolitan areas. The ANMF was responsible for managing the development and distribution of nationally agreed Telehealth professional practice standards and guidelines for nurses and midwives which were completed in June 2013. The project also included development of Telehealth on-line learning modules, now available on the ANMF website. In 2014, the ANMF has developed the Telehealth guidelines into eBook format which will be available to download for free through the Apple iBook app later this year.

ANMF is represented on the National Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) Telehealth Advisory Committee (ATHAC).

**Australian Government funded scholarships for nurses and midwives**

The ANMF represents the interests of our nursing and midwifery members on the Australian Government Nursing and Allied Health Scholarship Selection and Support Advisory Group and participates in scholarship selection as reviewers. The NAHSSS is administered by the Australian College of Nursing.

**Professional Indemnity Insurance for Homebirth Midwives**

In June 2015 the insurance exemption allowing private practice midwives (PPMs) to provide homebirth is due to expire. Unless the federal and state governments reach an agreement to allow these midwives to continue to offer homebirths, the option will be illegal in Australia. ANMF Federal Office has written to the Federal Health Minister, Peter Dutton in August 2014 about this issue. We have requested, until such time as sufficient evidence is available about the risk profile and an appropriate indemnity insurance product for PPMs providing intrapartum services for planned home births, that the Australian Government place a hold on the cessation of the current PII exemption.

**Relevant Conferences**

ANMF Federal Professional Officers presented papers at the International Council of Nurses Congress in May 2013 and the Australian College of Nursing National Forum, October 2013 on the Working Safe in Rural and Remote Australia Project – a partnership of health professionals, teachers and police led by the Rural Doctors Association of Australia, combining forces to develop a national framework for action for a whole-of-community response to working safely in rural and remote.
Cultural Safety and Respect Training
Senior ANMF leaders attended a cultural safety and respect workshop in Canberra in July 2014 hosted by the Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives (CATSINaM). The facilitators led participants through an extremely thought provoking, and at times confronting, excellent two day workshop. CATSINaM will be offering this workshop twice a year to nursing and midwifery leaders.

Current ANMF National Campaigns
- **Grad Nurses and Midwives Need Jobs Campaign**: this campaign raises awareness of the appallingly high numbers of newly graduating nurses and midwives not able to secure jobs. ([www.anmf.org.au](http://www.anmf.org.au)).
- **Lies, Cuts and Broken Promises Campaign**: this is a campaign opposing the many cuts announced in the 2014/15 Federal Budget to health, pensions, family tax benefits, university deregulation and the GP co-payment. The ANMF has recently made submission to the Senate Inquiries into the Abbott Budget Cuts and the Higher Education Reforms.

Rural and Remote Member Communication
Communication with the wider ANMF membership on rural and remote issues and with our members residing and working in rural and remote locations occurs in a variety of ways. These include: National and State/Territory based meetings; National and State/Territory journal publications; State and Territory delegates conferences; State and Territory professional days; and the National and State/Territory websites. The ANMF National Representative on the NRHA Council, chairs the ANMF National Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) which has twenty two registered nurse/midwife members consisting of ANMF Branch Secretaries and Branch Professional Officers representing all of the States and Territories. PAC members are also responsible for rural and remote portfolios at a jurisdictional level. This committee meets quarterly, two full day face to face meetings and holds a minimum of two teleconference meetings each year. Additional ad hoc teleconferences are held on a needs basis (usually at least two per year). These meetings have a standing agenda item on specific rural and remote issues. ANMF State and Territory branches also have Special Interest Groups for Rural and Remote members.

Shared priorities with NRHA:
- Promoting the essential role of the nursing and midwifery workforce in the provision of safe, competent health care to people in rural and remote areas
- Recruitment and retention of nurses and midwives to rural and remote areas
- Allowing nurses and midwives to work to their full scope of practice in rural and remote areas
- Advocating for jobs for endorsed Nurse Practitioner’s in rural and remote areas
- Promoting the role of the rural generalist nurse/ midwife
- Building the dual registered workforce in rural and remote areas
- Lobbying for increased Medicare Benefit Schedule Item funding for endorsed Nurse Practitioners (NPs) working in private practice
- Extending MBS and PBS rights to NPs working in the public sector to improve timely access to health services for the community

**Julianne Bryce**
**Senior Federal Professional Officer**
**Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation**