Strengthening Health Worker Education (SHWE) Program in Papua New Guinea (PNG) – Stage 2
Development of a Graduate Certificate/Graduate Diploma in Health Professional Education

Brief 1 2025: Strategic Partnership Planning & Development of Curriculum Framework
University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG), School of Medicine and Health Science (SMHS)
Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, February 20 & 21, 2025

Background: During the Strengthening Health Workforce Education (SHWE-2) Program which resulted in the revised Nursing and Community Health Worker (CHW) curricula (implemented in 2024), it became clear that there was a crucial need to continue building capacity in health educators across PNG to enable them to effectively plan and deliver the revised education programs. The University of PNG (UPNG) was identified as the local institution best able to provide this education and sustainably build and improve capacity in educators of health professionals in PNG across the long term.

During Stage 1 of the SHWE it also became apparent that staff from the UPNG School of Medicine and Health Science (SMHS) and in particular the Nursing Division, had limited capacity to design and deliver the programs that were needed. While Bachelor of Nursing awards are offered, there are currently no postgraduate programs delivered by the SMHS and a critical need for mentoring and support of staff was identified. Stage 2 of the SHWE was therefore designed to build and strengthen postgraduate programs, research and teaching capacity in the SMHS Nursing Division to improve educational standards for health education across PNG.

The purpose of Stage 2 of the SHWE Program is to assist and support the strengthening of teaching, learning and educational standards in the SMHS Nursing Division through an international partnership (Sister School model) between the UPNG SMHS and the WHO Collaborating Centre for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Development (WHO CCNM UTS) in the Faculty of Health (FoH) at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), to improve the quality of education for nurses and CHWs across PNG.

The SHWE Program is implemented by WHO CCNM UTS, in partnership with UPNG, the PNG National Department of Health (NDoH) and the PNG Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (DHERST) with funding provided by the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

The first workshop for the second stage of the SHWE was delivered over two days in February 2025 at UPNG and focused on discussion and planning of the partnership and framework for the proposed new postgraduate programs.

Workshop: The goal of the workshop was to ratify the strategic partnership plan and proposed curriculum framework for postgraduate programs.

Workshop objectives were to:

1. Review and finalise draft Strategic Partnership Plan.
2. Review educational needs analysis and analysis of continuing professional development (CPD) needs.
3. Finalise the framework and subject topics for new program for health professional educators.
4. Develop a plan for course approval.
5. Provide CPD in relation to contemporary ideas about teaching, learning and course development.

The 18 participants (16F 2M) in attendance included representatives from the NDoH (Mary Kililo, Thelma Ali Dr Julie Kep, Julie Dopsie, Mary Roroi) and the UPNG SMHS (Dr Nancy Buasi, Marian Minnala, Wambri K. Poita, Tendini Ambuari, Varina Lobuna, Sharon H, Paula Z Aines, Gracelyn Potjepat, Elizabeth P, Thompson Telepo, Nikki Joseph, Lillian Temo, Helen Terea).

Day 1: The workshop was opened by Dr Nancy Buasi, who outlined its purpose and scope. Following an opening prayer, a review of the Nov 2024 preliminary workshop was presented by SHMS Nursing Division staff.

In a session facilitated by Prof Di Brown, participants worked in small groups to review and discuss the Strategic Partnership Plan and generally agreed on the overall goals, objectives and strategies after considerable debate.

Group activities on day one of the workshop

Groups reviewed and discussed the Educational Needs Analysis. Four working groups were established to ensure that the curriculum was developed in a timely manner and to institutional and national standards as follows:

1. A governance working group to coordinate and oversee the activities described below and report to the Steering Committee for the whole SHWE program.
2. A scoping group to assess the context and provide clear guidance, justification and socialisation for the programs.
3. A curriculum development group to develop the required documentation, and to ensure that institutional and national (DHERST) standards and timelines are met.
4. A continuing professional education group responsible for operationalising the educational program that will support SMHS Nursing Division staff as they develop the new graduate programs. They will plan and coordinate a structure CPD program that will strengthen the capacity of staff, enabling them to design and implement the proposed postgraduate programs.

The afternoon of Day 1 was spent discussing the purpose and membership of each working group.

Prior to this, Prof Di Brown presented a consolidated version of the *Politics, Policy and Health Care Leadership* subject that was designed during the November 2024 workshop. This subject provides the capstone to the Graduate Diploma of Health Professional Education (GDHPE). After general discussion, participants felt it could assist nurse educators and the nursing profession more broadly in developing confidence and competence in leadership and policy development.

Discussions between Prof Di Brown and one of the working groups

Day 2: The workshop was again opened by Dr Nancy Buasi, followed by a morning prayer and a reflection on the previous day's activities. The first session, facilitated by Prof Di Brown, was set aside for review and discussion of the suggested GDHPE curriculum framework and program outline and its implications for the structure of future postgraduate programs in the SMHS. Agreement from all participants was essential, particularly in relation to the impacts for the Curriculum Working Group.

The four working groups reconvened and discussed their respective Terms of Reference (TOR), overall structures, process and initial action plans. Each group presented this information to the larger group for discussion and endorsement.

Next Steps:

1. Dr Buasi requested that all working group TOR be sent to her and the Governance Working Group by Friday 28th February 2025.
2. It was agreed that each working group would provide the Governance Group with an activity

summary at the end of each month.

3. Each working group created a WhatsApp group and agreed on their next meeting date.
4. Prof Di Brown agreed to amend the Strategic Partnership Plan and the Educational Needs Analysis in line with changes as agreed by the workshop participants.
5. Dates of future meetings for the SMHS Nursing Division in relation to this work will be determined at a later date. A Steering Committee Meeting is planned to coincide with the next in-country visit by the WHO CCNM UTS team in April – May 2025.

Following the workshop, Prof Di Brown met with Ms Mary Kililo, Ms Julie Dopsie (NDOH), Ms Mary Roroi (WHO CCNM UTS) about the next Fast Track Workshop for the CHWs and Nursing Educators planned for April – May 2025. It was agreed that this week-long event will be held for the participants from Stage 1 of the SHWE Program to focus on development of the final semesters' subjects in the DGN and Cert IV for CHWs. A second 5-day workshop will follow for a new group of educators representing each CHW institute and Nursing school to restart the Fast Track Program. Participants will undertake the *Improving Teaching & Learning* subject as CPD and will review the implementation of the revised nursing and CHW curriculums and use this knowledge to improve the quality of their teaching.

Workshop participants from the NDoH and UPNG SMHS with Prof Di Brown