Strengthening Health Workforce Education (SHWE) Program in Papua New Guinea (PNG) – Stage 2

Brief 3: Fast Track Program 2 Workshop - Health Professional Education

Hideaway Hotel, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, May 4th – 9th, 2025

The WHO Collaborating Centre for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Development at the University of Technology Sydney (WHO CCNM UTS) commenced delivery of the second series of Fast Track continuing professional development (CPD) workshops for health professional educators from Schools of Nursing (SoN) and Community Health Worker (CHW) institutes across Papua New Guinea (PNG) in May 2025.

This important national CPD event is part of the second stage of the Strengthening Health Workforce Education (SHWE) Program designed to improve the teaching and learning skills, and practices of health educators across PNG. This will ensure the quality of new health graduates and the professional health workforce as a critical component of quality healthcare provision. This program has been funded since 2021 by the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), managed and implemented by program education specialists from the WHO CCNM UTS in partnership with the PNG National Department of Health (NDoH). The program aims to support PNG's health workforce to meet current and future health needs. Stage One of SHWE included the review, development and implementation of revised National Curriculum for the Diploma of General Nursing (DGN) and the Certificate for the Community Health Worker (CHW) Program across PNG.

Stage Two of the SHWE Program builds on achievements from Stage One and continues to sustainably support the strengthening of teaching, learning and educational standards for nurses and CHWs in PNG through the delivery of Health Professional Education workshops in 2025.

This stage also incorporates collaborative work with staff from the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) School of Medicine and Health Science (SMHS) as the identified local institution in PNG, to support them to continue to build capacity in health educators sustainably in the future.

Fast Track Program 2 Workshop

This workshop was held at the Hideaway Hotel in Port Moresby between May 4th and 9th, 2025 and aimed to assist participants to critically review and improve their teaching and learning practices and provide guidance about the implementation of the revised new nursing and CHW curriculums.

Educators from all 13 SONs (7 females, 6 males), 17 CHW Institutes (15 females, 2 males) were represented at the workshop, along with 15 staff (13 females, 2 males) from UPNG SMHS.

Figure 1 Fast Track Program 2 Workshop Participants and WHO CCNM UTS staff

Presenters and guests during the workshop included Ms Mary Kililo (Technical Adviser, HRH Division) Ms Julie Dopsie (A/Technical Officer) from Pre-Service and In-Service Training, NDoH; and educational specialists from the WHO CCNM UTS: Prof. Di Brown, Ms Ali Moloney, Ms Lisa Townsend, Dr Caroline Havery; and Monitoring and Evaluation adviser Ms Amanda Neill. Administrative coordination and support was provided by the WHO CCNM UTS in-country team that included Mrs Mary Roroi, Ms Marie Kavu, and Ms Shirlyn Belden based at NDoH, and Ms Norah Hau'ofa working closely with UPNG.

The workshop objectives for participants included:

- Critically evaluating current teaching processes and practices to work towards improving the quality of student learning in their own settings;
- Applying evidenced-based learning to students to improve student outcomes;
- Evaluating different forms of assessment;
- Reflecting on personal assumptions about teaching and learning and how these might influence students' approaches to learning;
- Development of a learning contract for professional improvement.

Figure 3 Ms Mary Kililo, Ms Julie Dopsie, Dr Caroline Havery and Mrs Mary Roroi.

Each day of the workshop commenced with an opening prayer, followed by introductory discussion, and reflection on the previous day's activities and learning.

The WHO CCNM UTS specialists began with outlining the Fast Track Program workshop sessions and requirements, and discussed course expectations, expected learning and time commitments.

Figure 2 Workshop Participants undertaking Teaching and Learning activity

The topics and content of workshop sessions included the following:

- How adults learn, theories of teaching and learning, and discussion of which is the best fit for the participant's local context.
- Philosophies of teaching, with a focus on student-centred learning.
- Academic writing, reflective practice and critical thinking, techniques to assist with improving writing.
- Analysing literature and sourcing appropriate resources, including open access databases to support teaching practices.
- How to undertake an annotated bibliography, including referencing and writing an annotation.
- Review of journal articles and critical evaluation of the text, with strategies for understanding the different parts of a journal article.
- Understanding data and using data to support teaching and learning in PNG.
- Professional development through undertaking a learning contract.
- Developing clear expectations and marking criteria.
- Evaluation of current assessment practices.
- Improving student's assessments.
- Structured reflection and feedback to conclude each day.

Workshop activities involved participants utilising a range of practical teaching and learning strategies:

- Group discussions, small group work, role plays, reflection and feedback sessions, presentations, writing tasks summarising their understanding of student-centred learning, critical analysis in small groups, group discussion of current teaching practices, characteristics of good learning, and critical review of teaching practices.

Participants were given overnight tasks, including reviewing subject or course expectations based on the textbook, reflecting on potential change projects relevant to their teaching settings, and considering the level of commitment required to succeed in the Fast Track Program.

Figure 4 Workshop Participants undertaking Teaching and Learning activity

Workshop Outcomes:

Preliminary feedback from the participants and presenters indicated that all objectives of the workshop were achieved. Participants actively participated in all aspects of the program and their reviews, reflections and final evaluations indicated that their learning was beneficial, interesting and relevant to their work. Monitoring and evaluation activities included a workshop evaluation questionnaire and interviews with key informants. Findings will be disseminated in future meetings and reporting.

Meeting with UPNG SHMS staff:

Towards the end of the workshop, Prof. Di Brown met with the UPNG School of Nursing and Midwifery (SONM) staff to discuss and coordinate submission of course application documents for the proposed Graduate Certificate/Diploma in Health Professional Education through UPNG. The curriculum needs to be submitted by the end of May to enable it to be approved by the Senate in June for introduction in Semester 1 2026. Plans for holding two further workshops this year were discussed with this group and dates in June and November confirmed.

Next Steps

Following on from this workshop, a further two Fast Track Program 2 workshops will be held for this new cohort of nursing and CHW educators in August and November 2025. It is hoped that the UPNG SMHS educators will join this larger group for the November workshop.

Collaborative work will continue with WHO CCNM UTS and UPNG SMHS, through an international partnership to further improve the quality of education for nurses and CHWs across PNG. Prof. Di Brown will facilitate the workshop planned for June 2025 to progress the design and development of the post graduate curriculum for health professional educators, whilst also building teaching capacity in participants.

Through joint development of the Graduate Certificate/Diploma of Health Professional Education, with UPNG, proposed course entry points, and credit for completion of the Fast Track Program will be determined.

Figure 5 Participants undertaking workshop activities