

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

Brief 9: In-country visit – Workshop for Development of Postgraduate Diploma Programs at University of Medicine and Health Sciences, PNG

Port Moresby Holiday Inn – 16th to 20th March 2026

Purpose

This brief provides an update on in-country activities for the March 2026 meeting under the Strengthening Health Workforce Education (SHWE) Program in Papua New Guinea (PNG). The 6-person team from the WHO Collaborating Centre for Nursing, Midwifery, and Health Development at the University of Technology Sydney (WHO CCNMH UTS) facilitated and participated in four concurrent activities on 16th-20th March 2026 in Port Moresby, PNG:

- Delivery of a new round of the Fast Track program workshops for PNG educators;
- Development of Postgraduate Diploma programs with educators from the School of Medicine and Health Sciences (SMHS) at the University of PNG (UPNG);
- Exploration and development of a revised preceptorship program with partners from the PNG National Department of Health (NDoH);
- Networking with PNG partners.

Background

Stage 1 of SHWE, implemented between 2021 and 2024, resulted in the revised national Nursing and Community Health Worker (CHW) curriculums for PNG.

Building from this, Stage 2 of the Program supports the strengthening of teaching, learning and educational standards in the Division of Nursing and Midwifery (DoNM) through an international partnership between the School of Medicine and Health Science (SMHS) at the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG), and WHO CCNMH UTS to overall improve the quality of PNG health professional education.

In the second stage of the SHWE program the aim is to develop postgraduate programs, alongside developing research and teaching capacity in the DoNM at UPNG, to improve educational standards across PNG. This March 16-20th workshop focused on the design and development post-graduate educational programs to address the current lack of postgraduate offerings.

The program is implemented by WHO CCNMH UTS, in partnership with UPNG, PNG NDoH and 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).



Participants during SHWE Workshop – March 2026

Overview

During this visit, Professor Di Brown and Dr Jan Forber, focused on facilitating the continued development of a new postgraduate program with a suite of offerings at Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma levels. Collaborative engagement with six members of education staff from the Division of Nursing and Midwifery at SHMS, UPNG reflected the strong commitment, enthusiasm, and vision for the development of this Postgraduate Program. With the support of WHO CCNMH UTS, there was collective engagement and application of expertise to guide the design and development of a forward-looking curriculum, responsive to contemporary healthcare needs.

Key Objectives

- To enable staff to further develop accreditation documents for postgraduate programs and gain deeper insights into postgraduate-level program delivery;
- To collaborate in designing and refining subjects for the proposed Postgraduate Diploma Program;
- To further strengthen collaboration between the UPNG team and the Schools of Nursing and Midwifery in the Faculty of Health, UTS, and WHO CCNMH UTS.



Workshop participants group work activities

Days 1-2

The visit commenced with agreement on the aims for the week and a plan for the week's activities and outputs. The following day centred on developing the purpose and rationales for the program(s) overall, along with drafting program-level learning outcomes. The Postgraduate Diploma program aims to strengthen healthcare provision across clinical specialties in PNG and the wider Western Pacific. With the region facing challenges such as climate change, access to services, and evolving disease patterns, the need for a highly



Workshop participants group work activities

skilled health workforce is evident. Postgraduate nursing education was considered essential to enhancing the quality, responsiveness, and resilience of PNG's healthcare systems. These programs aim to build specialist nursing capacity by developing advanced clinical knowledge, critical thinking, decision-making skills, leadership and management capacity.

Days 3-4

In subsequent days, the focus shifted to developing specific content with Professor Di Brown and Dr Jan Forber leading groups developing the Graduate Diploma in Leadership and Management and the Graduate Diploma In Clinical Specialisation, respectively. Three specialities were discussed at this stage: Child Health, Emergency Nursing and Mental Health. Other specialities may subsequently be developed, such as Intensive Care and Advanced Medical Surgical Nursing.



Prof. Di Brown working with UPNG staff/workshop participants

The Course Structure for the Postgraduate diploma will be a total of 12 Credit Points (cps) with consideration of a potential Postgraduate certificate of 60 cps. The Postgraduate Diploma comprises 4 subjects, each 30 cps, with the subject Using Health Data to Improve Health Care Practices core to all programs. The proposed structure is as follows:

Semester 1	Semester 2
Leadership and Management 1 30cps	Leadership and Management 2 30cps
Using Health Data to Improve Health Care Practices 30cps	Politics, Policy and Healthcare Leadership 30cps

Course Structure

Semester 1	Semester 2
Speciality Subject 1 30cps	Speciality Subject 2 30cps
Using Health Data to Improve Health Care Practices 30cps	Applied pathophysiology and pharmacology 30cps

Workshop & Visit Outcomes

Considerable advancement was achieved over the course of the visit. Learning outcomes, indicative topics/content and possible assessment tasks were discussed and drafted both for the overall program and for each proposed subject. At the conclusion of the week, arrangements were agreed upon for continued development of the program at the local UPNG level, with further liaison with WHO CCNMH UTS staff via email and/or Zoom to advance the subjects and course accreditation materials. It was proposed that the UPNG staff visit WHO CCNMH UTS in May with the aim to have proposal documents for approval/accreditation prepared by mid-year.



Workshop participants group work activities



Workshop participants group work activities



Prof. Michele Rumsey and Prof. Di Brown working with UPNG staff