

DFAT Partnerships for a Healthy Region (PHR) Strengthening Health Workforce in the Pacific (Nursing and Midwifery)

Brief: Regulation Webinars November 2024 – February 2025

Background

The Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), through the Partnerships for a Healthy Region (PHR) initiative, is supporting the Strengthening Health Workforce in the Pacific (Nursing and Midwifery) (SHWP) program. This program is delivered by the WHO Collaborating Centre for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Development at the University of Technology Sydney (WHO CCNM UTS) in collaboration with the South Pacific Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officers Alliance (SPCNMOA).

SHWP aims to build a sustainable and resilient health workforce in Pacific Island Countries (PICs) by enhancing nursing and midwifery leadership, governance, regulation, and consistent competencies for standards for practice across the region.

Following stakeholder consultations, WHO CCNM UTS launched a series of webinars to lay the groundwork for strengthening nursing and midwifery regulation in the region. The webinars explored regulatory frameworks and what regulation means in the context of the nursing and midwifery professions.

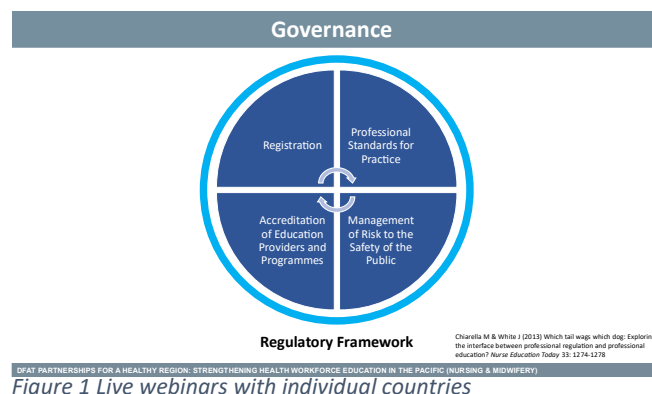
Professors Jill White and Mary Chiarella were engaged to develop and present the webinars. Mr Michael Larui, WHO CCNM UTS Regional Coordinator and former Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer of the Solomon Islands, chaired the live sessions. Associate Professor Marg Gatling and Ms Kerri Gianesi (WHO CCNM UTS) provided additional support.

Regulation webinars

Preparation

Professors White and Chiarella developed four pre-recorded presentations with voiceovers, covering key elements of a regulatory framework

Registration, Professional Standards for Practice, Accreditation, and Management of Risk to the Safety of the Public.



DFAT PARTNERSHIPS FOR A HEALTHY REGION: STRENGTHENING HEALTH WORKFORCE EDUCATION IN THE PACIFIC (NURSING & MIDWIFERY)
Figure 1 Live webinars with individual countries

The presentations were sent to each of the participating countries along with the relevant country's 'traffic lights'. The traffic lights represent the country's regulatory status as described in the [2020 WHO State of Worlds Nursing Report](#) and expanded in the recent WHO CCNM UTS [Regional Quality Improvement Program report](#).

Participating countries were encouraged to watch the pre-recorded webinar prior to attending the live webinars and discuss a set of guiding questions.

Senior nursing and midwifery leaders and regulators from participating countries attended live, country-specific webinars held between November 2024 and February 2025.

A total of ten webinars were held. The countries who attended were Samoa, Solomon Islands, Marshall Islands, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Fiji, Vanuatu, and Tonga. Papua New Guinea postponed their webinar until more participants could attend. 51 participants (9 males and 42 females) attended, with some limited by internet issues and competing priorities.

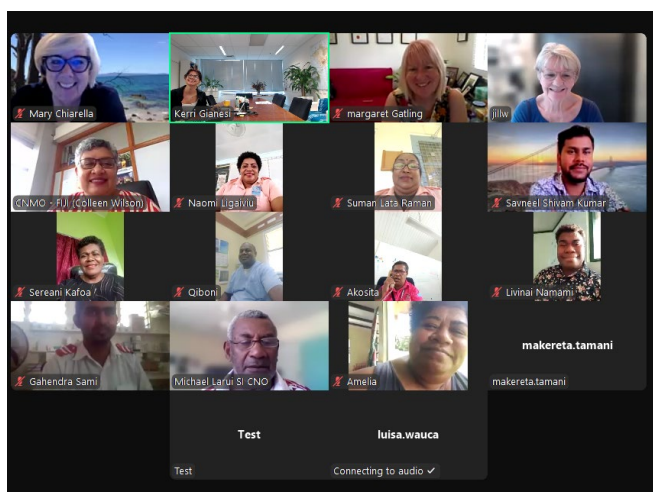


Figure 2 Fiji regulation webinar

Topics covered

The webinars introduced the four core components of professional regulation; Registration, Professional Standards for Practice, Accreditation, and Management of Risk to the Safety of the Public and explored their relevance to Pacific health systems. Professors White and Chiarella provided in-depth explanations and responded to questions raised by participants. Each session also provided a space for country representatives to describe their own regulatory systems, reflect on challenges, and identify priority areas for improvement.

A strong theme that emerged across the sessions was the importance of public protection through effective regulatory practices, particularly in the area of notifications and complaints. Participants expressed interest in approaches that support remediation and retention of nurses, rather than punitive measures, and were keen to learn more about how this could be achieved within their contexts.

Feedback

Informal feedback from webinar participants was highly positive. Many found the sessions informative, relevant, and timely, and expressed interest in further regional collaboration on regulatory issues. There was strong enthusiasm for the development of a model legislative framework to guide country-level reforms. Participants noted that such a model would help ensure consistency across jurisdictions and reduce duplication of regulatory efforts.

Additional areas of interest included:

- Development of a model legislative framework to guide country-level reforms.
- Strengthening national registration systems to improve data accuracy, track workforce participation, and monitor professional conduct.
- Sharing registration information across countries to enhance transparency and support workforce mobility.
- Developing a common set of Standards for Practice with the potential for 90% regional consistency and 10% local adaptation.
- Gaining a better understanding of accreditation processes and exploring opportunities for shared accreditation responsibilities across the region.
- Receiving broader notifications of professional behaviour, not limited to only the most serious infractions, to support professional development and uphold public trust.
- Exploring notification and complaints processes that focus on retaining and supporting nurses in the profession, rather than punitive outcomes.



Figure 3 Regional registration webinar

Follow Up

In response to participant interest, four follow-up regional webinars are scheduled to provide a more in-depth focus on each of the core regulatory elements. These sessions are open to all participating countries and have been very successful with over 39 participants attending. The schedule for the in-depth webinars is:

- **6 February 2025:** Registration (completed)
- **11 February 2025:** Standards for Practice, including Codes of Ethics and Conduct
- **21 March 2025:** Accreditation
- **24 March 2025:** Management of Risk to the Safety of the Public