

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

Brief : Tuvalu Nursing Regulation Workshop – 12 and 13 August 2025

Background

The Strengthening Health Workforce in the Pacific (Nursing and Midwifery) (SHWP) Program is funded under the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (DFAT) five-year Partnerships for a Healthy Region (PHR) initiative (2024-2029). The SHWP program aims to strengthen Pacific health systems to improve the quality of and access to health care and population health across the Pacific. The WHO Collaborating Centre for Nursing, Midwifery & Health Development at University of Technology Sydney (WHO CCNM UTS) is managing and implementing the program, in partnership with South Pacific Chief Nursing & Midwifery Officers Alliance (SPCNMOA) across 13 Pacific Island countries (PICs).

The Tuvalu Country Workshop for the PHR SHWP Program took place between 12 and 13 August 2025. Fourteen (14) hospital managers and senior staff (13 female, 1 male) participated from the Ministry of Health's (MoH's) Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH).

Purpose and Approach

In 2025, WHO CCNM UTS and Fellows from the Pacific Leadership Program (PLP) (2025) are facilitating workshops in all 13 PICs involved in SHWP. Following their April Study Block, these workshops are led by the PLP Fellows, with support from the senior leader(s) for nursing and midwifery in each country and the WHO CCNM UTS team. They aim to engage national key stakeholders to identify system-level strengths and challenges across education, regulation, service delivery, governance, to establish a common understanding and co-develop and prioritise actions for strengthening nursing and midwifery registration, regulation, and workforce planning through multi-stakeholder collaboration and regional alignment.

Workshop Objectives

1. To explore and understand the framework for professional regulation.
2. To examine and discuss country traffic lights action plan and strategy (SOWN 2020 & 2025).
3. To assess regulatory status against the regulatory framework in order to determine the work priorities.



SHWP workshop participants from the Tuvalu Ministry of Health with DFAT representatives and the WHO CCNM UTS team

4. To agree on priorities and a plan of action.
5. Collect baseline data for GEDSI and raising awareness of GEDSI principles.



Deputy Health Secretary Mr Pelesala with senior nursing staff at Princess Margaret Hospital including A/Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer Sr Felolini Anitelea, and A/Medical Superintendent Dr Sine Apineh.

Activity 1: Strategic Orientation and Leadership Engagement

The WHO CCNM UTS Team (senior nursing regulation and education advisers Prof. Di Brown and Associate Prof. Margaret Gatling, with monitoring, evaluation, research and learning (MERL) specialist Ms Amanda Neill) arrived on 11 August and met initially with the Acting Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer (CNMO) Sr Felolini Anitelea Lifuka with the two PLP Fellows – Sr Sulia Teaukai and Sr Arient Safenga at the PMH MoH Offices to discuss the meeting objectives and plan workshop activities. Meetings were also held by the WHO CCNM UTS team, and key stakeholders including the Deputy Secretary of Health and Acting Health Minister Mr Pelesala Kaleia. These two PLP 2025 Fellows and the Acting CNMO revised the proposed workshop structure and planned respective sessions and presentations for the workshop with support from the WHO CCNM UTS Team.

Sr Sulia Teaukai facilitated the workshop with Mr Pelesala opening the event after prayer. Representatives from the DFAT Post in Tuvalu – Mr Henry Adamson, Ms Paulini Naimina and Ms Lilia Taomia - welcomed workshop participants and gave an overview of DFAT's involvement with Tuvalu and the SHWP Program. Sr Felolini Lifuka, CNMO introduced the SHWP Program and the involvement of Tuvalu as one of the 13 PICs, and gave a presentation on the SHWP's background

and context, National Nursing Strategy and Traffic Light Action Plan. The Traffic Lights were reviewed and amended to reflect current position and priority actions.

Activity 2: System Review and Regulation

Issues associated with health / nursing and midwifery system reviews and regulation were introduced by A/Prof. Marg, who presented the framework for Health Professional Regulation - the five areas of regulation (registration, professional standards and codes, accreditation, complaints, and governance) with the need for common language. This provided structure for the remainder of the workshop.



Participants involved in group work during the workshop

A session on Understanding Your Legislation also facilitated by A/Prof. Marg focused on review of the contents of the Tuvalu Health Practitioner Act (2016) that included detailed discussed by section. Gaps or points of contention were identified for further review and debate.

The World Café session continued the critical review of the Act (2016) as participants analysed sections in four separate groups, focusing on Education - Accreditation, Nursing Council, Registration and Discipline - Public Safety. Each group ran through gaps, challenges and recommendations for action, and recorded this information. Groups were able to have in depth conversations about elements of the regulation and the Health Practitioner Act introduced earlier in the day. They explored all areas of the legislation and it was generally agreed that four Committees should be established that specifically addressed

issues for respective health practitioner cadres including nurses and midwives.

Activity 3: Continuing Professional Development and Group Discussion on National Priorities

A range of topics were presented by the WHO CCNM UTS Team as part of continuing professional development (CPD) for the nursing participants. These were requested by the PLP Fellows and the CNMO as there are a few concerns locally about managing performance and developing evidence-based and locally accepted explicit professional nursing standards.

The first presentation focused on having challenging conversations with staff. How to hold staff to account and how to ensure that conversations can have positive outcomes for all involved. Participants were able to role play the steps and practice challenging staff behaviour using real, local examples. They found the experience helpful and potentially useful for the future. It is always difficult in an environment when everyone knows each other, so techniques that can assist to manage performance without causing breakdown in personal relationships are highly valued.

The second presentation focused on the role and responsibilities of nursing leaders in patient safety and protecting the public. The discussion was very fruitful and enabled us to review a number of processes in the hospital such as medication safety.

The CNMO and senior nurses reinforced the need for explicit nursing standards for Tuvalu as none currently exist. The group then reviewed the WPSEAR standards and agreed we would have a follow-up meeting to ensure that this important aspect of professionalism can be implemented as soon as is practicable.

A/Prof. Marg presented on a proposed structure for the Nursing Registration Committee. She covered the draft terms of reference for a range of possible committees all in line with the Tuvalu

Health Professional Act (2016), including committee function, membership, and number of meetings required.

As Mr Pelesala Kalerie (Acting Director of Health) and four other senior representatives from the various health professions were present, the first meeting of the Tuvalu Health Professionals Board was held at the end of the workshop. At this meeting it was agreed that a number of professional sub-committees would be set up to oversee registration and the development of professional standards for each professional group. These will report to the Health Professionals Board. WHO CCNM undertook to support the Board functions until other resources can be made available. Next Board meeting was agreed for 4th Nov 2025, by which time all health professionals in Tuvalu will be registered.

Activity 4: Review and Key Outcomes

Key points and recommendations from each group were fed back by the facilitators for open comments. Participants had fruitful debates about the priority areas for each section, which fed into the workshop recommendations.

Issues were reviewed by the five regulation framework areas and following consultation and review of the workshop recommendations with the CNMO and all workshop participants, the following gaps and recommendations for action were agreed upon:

Registration

Gaps

- Currently registration processes not implemented.
- No health practitioners are currently registered.
- No easy process for ensuring registration.
- No Council or equivalent has been established.

Recommendations / Action

- Implement Nursing & other health professionals Committees under the auspices of the Health Professionals Board.

- Develop Terms of Reference for the Committee.
- Request that the registration information be piggy-backed onto the new digital health system.
- Enquire about further training to assist the development and implementation of the Nursing Committee.

Standards

Gaps

- No standards for practice available.

Recommendations

- Review the WPSEAR competency standards and consider their usefulness for adaptation and adoption in Tuvalu.
- Follow-up meeting with WHO CCNM to assist in further reviewing and developing the competency standard.
- Develop the competency standards in plain English and include a realistic performance appraisal tool that can be used to assess nurses across Tuvalu, including those coming from other countries.

Accreditation

Gaps

- No education institute, so Tuvalu relies on nurses and midwives being educated elsewhere.
- There is no process in-country to assess returning nurses and midwives to ensure they are educated to the level and scope needed in Tuvalu.

Recommendations

- Once the Nursing Committee is established, they develop a set of standards/criteria for nurses' registration.
- Once agreed scopes of practice are developed for each level of nurse and midwife, a process will be agreed to assess in-coming nurses and midwives to ensure training programs meet the needs of Tuvalu.



PLP Fellows in discussion with workshop participants

Complaints

Gaps

- A complaints process exists in the Health Practitioner Act, but currently there is no formal process for lower-level, less serious complaints.

Recommendations

- Establish a complaints process that enables appropriate management of minor complaints at the lowest possible level.
- Develop a policy and process for managing the complaints.
- Training on complaints process for public, nurses, midwives, Health Practitioners Board and other committees as needed.

Governance

Gaps

- Health Practitioners Act passed in 2017, but no meetings occurred until August 2025.
- No Nursing and Midwifery Registration Council.
- While the Act says the Board can collect fees, there doesn't appear to be a way of ensuring that fees collected can be used by the Board for its services.

Recommendations

- Consider funding request to establish the Board and provide Secretarial support until it is fully functioning.
- Board Chair to approach relevant personnel to review how registration fees are managed with a view to being able to use the fees to ensure smooth Board functioning, capacity to offer

CPD and to maintain the register and properly protect the public.

Continuing Professional Education (CPD)

Gaps

- CPD is currently ad hoc and unstructured.
- There is a need for the Health Professionals Board to set CPD expectations and implement processes to manage this.

Recommendations

- Once the Nursing Committee is set up and all practising nurses and midwives are registered, then the Committee can review registration standards and expectations, including CPD requirements.

Chief Nursing & Midwifery Officer (CNMO)

Gaps

- Lack of a staffing formula and strategy.
- Lack of permanent positions available and career pathway for staff.
- Needs training and support for managing the budget.

Regional Standards, Guides, Policies

Recommendations to:

- Enable reciprocity move across region and work across region.
- Standardized practice – regional curriculum framework. To enable qualifications to be recognized education link with other regional courses (CPD).
- Explain role of registration – protection of public.
- Guide to explain role of regulation, PSC, MOH, Association, CNO/PNO, education.

- Guidelines for registration of new graduates (local and external) and overseas nurses required.

Concerns

- Need to understand health systems and legislation of each country.

MERL feedback on the workshop

Workshop outcomes were successfully met through workshop activities. Workshop evaluations were completed by participants and semi-structured interviews were conducted with senior health staff by Amanda Neill for SHWP data collection, and initial feedback from participants evaluating the workshop was very positive.

Special thanks

To DFAT for funding the meeting through the PHR and support of the SHWP, and to the Tuvalu Deputy Secretary for Health for his time to meet with the WHO CCNM UTS team with the A/ CNMO, and support granted to the CNMO's Office.

Next steps

- Provide a meeting Brief.
- Continue support for next four years under PHR.
- Work across region to assist countries and help develop / revise regulatory guides and standards as required.
- Continue the Pacific Leadership Program (PLP).
- Continue support for ongoing country work.
- Return to Tuvalu for a follow up national meeting.

Final dinner celebrations following workshop completion



