

**Implementation of National Curriculum for the Diploma of General Nursing (DGN) and
Certificate for Community Health Worker (CHW) Program**

Brief 17: In-country visit - PNG Health Professional Education -

Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, 4th to 7th December 2023

The WHO Collaborating Centre for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Development at the University of Technology Sydney (WHO CC UTS), in partnership with the Papua New Guinea (PNG) National Department of Health (NDoH) is implementing a program to strengthen health workforce education in Papua New Guinea (PNG) funded by the NDoH, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Australian Government, through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). The overall program aims to support PNG's health workforce to meet current and future health needs through the review, development and implementation of revised National Curriculum for the Diploma of General Nursing (DGN) and the Certificate for Community Health Worker (CHW) Program.

Three members of the WHO CC UTS team – Dr Michele Rumsey (Program Lead), Professor Di Brown (Education Adviser) and Ms Amanda Neill (Program Manager and Monitoring and Evaluation Adviser) travelled to Port Moresby in early December 2023 for final program activities for the year, and to wrap up Stage One of the program.

Meeting with University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) School of Medicine and Health Sciences (SMHS) and Open College

This meeting was held with senior health educators and staff from UPNG and Open College, representatives from NDoH and the WHO CC UTS team, at the UPNG campus in Port Moresby to progress initial discussions regarding further developing the Fast Track Program into a tertiary level program to be conducted at UPNG, and / or through their Open College.

Dr Nancy Buasi (UPNG) chaired the meeting. Ms Mary Kililo (Technical Adviser – Health Training, NDoH), Dr Michele Rumsey and Prof. Di Brown provided some background on the National Curriculum Review Program and its Fast Track Program, before turning the discussion to looking at future alternatives for recognition and delivery.

Dr Buasi and Mr Nore Kewa (Associate Director, Open College) outlined processes and requirements for accrediting university programs, and the processes for



Representatives from UPNG, Open College, NDoH and WHO CC UTS meeting at the UPNG campus, 5 December 2023

partnerships with external organisations and institutions. Further input may be required at a later date from the Director, UPNG Open College.

The meeting concluded with agreement that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) be drafted between UTS and UPNG, and a working group be established to focus on progressing the issues raised. Membership of the working group may include UPNG coordinators of nursing and other interested parties, with representation from WHO CC UTS and NDoH. The date of the first meeting and workshop of the Working Group was set from 30 January to 1 February 2023.

Workshop and Activities with NDoH staff

On 6 December, Prof. Di Brown worked with senior NDoH staff at the Lamana Hotel to finalise the National HRH Staff Development Plan and Staff Development Policy documents. A pre-Christmas lunch hosted by WHO CC UTS was held for NDoH staff to thank them for their involvement with the Program, and for their hard work throughout the year.

Approval of Curricula

Certificate IV for Community Health Workers (CHW) curriculum received formal approval from the Papua New Guinea Medical Board, and the revised Diploma of General Nursing (DGN) was endorsed by the PNG Nursing Council in August 2023. The DGN curriculum has been sent to DHERST for their approval and accreditation.

Copies of the approved CHW curriculum and associated resources for Semester One 2024 have been shared with members of all CHW institutions. Following the completion of the accreditation processes, the accredited DGN program will be disseminated to Nursing Schools and relevant stakeholders.

WHO CC UTS held meetings on 11 and 12 December with the principals from CHW institutions and Schools of Nursing to discuss curriculum implementation and accompanying resources. Participants reflected on the program's commitment to healthcare education and improving the quality of healthcare services and advancing the standards of health workers education in PNG.



NDoH and WHO CC UTS staff celebrating program achievements during 2023.