

# **NURSE PRACTITIONERS CAREER GUIDE**

## **FOR ASPIRING NURSE PRACTITIONERS**



Tash Jennings, NP

# BECOMING A NURSE PRACTITIONER



Stuart Mobsby, NP

This career guide has been created by the Australian College of Nurse Practitioners (ACNP) to provide nursing students and registered nurses with information regarding the Nurse Practitioner (NP) role, career path and opportunities. The decision to become a NP involves long-term goals and it is important to the ACNP that you have access to accurate information to advance your career.

Since the year 2000, the role of Nurse Practitioner has steadily grown within the Australian health care system. Becoming a Nurse Practitioner will enable you to practice independently and autonomously, allowing you to fulfil your full potential as a nurse and giving you the opportunity to address Australia's increasing demand for health services where they are most needed.



Shiree Walker, NP

## NURSE PRACTITIONERS

Nurse Practitioners can provide:

- Advanced health and physical assessment
- Diagnosis and treatment of health conditions
- Designing and implementing therapeutic regimens for patients and carers
- Initiating and receiving appropriate referrals from health professionals
- Ordering and interpreting pathology and radiology tests
- Prescribing medications
- Health education relevant to each condition
- Health promotion advice
- Holistic health care support

## WHY BECOME A NURSE PRACTITIONER?

Nurse Practitioners play an important role in complementing existing health care services, and assist in the delivery of an enhanced health care system to all Australians.

An increase in the number of NPs will consequently improve the accessibility and efficiency of health care services to patients across variety of geographic areas.

The decision to become an NP is a career choice made by nurses for a wide range of reasons:

- Improving health outcomes for patients and the community
- Making a positive impact to Australian health care services
- Ensuring evidence-based practice is maintained and promoted
- Delivery of patient focused, holistic practice
- Becoming a specialist in your scope of practice
- Providing much-needed health care services in areas/populations deemed vulnerable
- Advancing your nursing career

The role of the NP builds upon the registered nurse scope of practice, enabling autonomous patient care. This practice includes wellness-focused care and health promotion within collaborative teams.



# HOW TO BECOME A NURSE PRACTITIONER?

In Australia, Nurse Practitioners are authorised to assess, diagnose and formulate a management plan for people of all ages with a variety of acute and chronic health conditions, within their scope of practice.

If you are a registered nurse with:

- Experience in a specialty area of practice
- Experience at an advanced nursing level of practice
- Enthusiasm to be a leader in nursing care
- Commitment to improve health services to Australian consumers
- Determination to take the next step of your nursing career

There are many exciting opportunities for career advancement, personal growth and development in the NP career path.

If you are considering transitioning to become a Nurse Practitioner, a number of minimum requirements are necessary:

- Two years of advanced practice nursing before seeking application for a Nurse Practitioner course of study
- A post graduate qualification in an area of clinical specialty

For a full overview, please check the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) website for approved (Pathway 1) courses, and enquire directly with the Universities.

# NURSE PRACTITIONERS

## FACT SHEET

**NURSE PRACTITIONERS**  
TRANSFORMING HEALTH CARE



**1960**

NPs are well established in the UK, Canada and USA



**2000**

First NP was endorsed in Australia



**2018**

Over 1,700 NPs are endorsed in Australia



NPs can **Prescribe** PBS-listed Medications and **Refer** Patients



NPs Work in Many Clinical Settings, such as Emergency, Aged Care, Mental Health Paediatric, Private Practice, Rural and Remote



NPs are Educated at **Masters Level** and Work at an **Advanced Clinical Level**

**26%** of NPs are in **QUEENSLAND**



# WHAT IS INVOLVED IN BECOMING A NURSE PRACTITIONER?

In Australia, the five core prerequisites that need to be covered before applying for endorsement as a nurse practitioner include:



## Registered Nurse

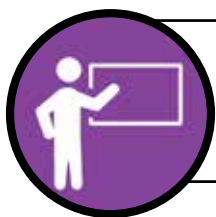
Current registration with no restrictions or conditions relating to unsatisfactory performance or conduct.



## 5,000 hours of Advanced Clinical Nursing

Completion of a graduate certificate in Nursing.

Two years advanced experience within the past 6 years



## Master's Degree

Successful completion of a NMBA-approved NP qualification at a master's level.

As well as:

- Compliance with National Competency Standards for the Nurse Practitioner
- Continuing professional development – as required in the standards



Tracey Mackle, NP

# CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Continuing professional development and a declaration of currency of practice are requirements for ongoing endorsement as a Nurse Practitioner. Signing off the annual statutory declaration, detailing that the Nurse Practitioner has completed all of the requirements of ongoing endorsement, is also required (as per the NMBA CPD requirements).



# WHERE DO NURSE PRACTITIONERS WORK?

Nurse practitioners (NPs) have varied clinical backgrounds and areas of specialty practice. Their scope of practice extends beyond that of the traditional registered nurse, and includes the authority to diagnose, prescribe medication, prescribe treatment, refer to other professionals, and admit patients to hospital, where appropriate.

NPs in Australia work in a variety of settings including Public, Private, Community and Primary Care; in Rural, Remote and Metropolitan locations. NP specialties include emergency and critical care, aged care, chronic and complex disease, alcohol and other drugs, medical, surgical, private practice, women's health, mental health and paediatrics, and many others, with some taking on generalist, or highly specialised roles, and anything in between.



## HELPFUL RESOURCES

Australian College of Nurse Practitioners

<https://www.acnp.org.au/>

Approved programs of study

<https://www.acnp.org.au/universities>

Nurse Practitioner Accreditation Standards 2015

[https://www.anmac.org.au/sites/default/files/documents/Nurse\\_Practitioner\\_Accreditation\\_Standard\\_2015.pdf](https://www.anmac.org.au/sites/default/files/documents/Nurse_Practitioner_Accreditation_Standard_2015.pdf)

Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia

For NP registration standards, prerequisites, endorsement process and ongoing endorsement please [visit www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au](http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au)

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

<https://www.ahpra.gov.au/>





“Nursing is an incredible profession. It has opened doors and provided me with experiences that no other career would have. I believe that nurses who have the drive to want to do more for their patients and their communities, should explore becoming a NP”

**Kate Reed, NP**

“I get to use my skill set to it’s full potential and I love the diversity of this role, and it is very rewarding me”

**Michelle Blackwell, NP**



# CONTACT DETAILS

Australian College of Nurse Practitioners  
Level 2 204-218 Dryburgh Street,  
North Melbourne VIC 3051

**Phone:** 1300 433 660

**Fax:** (03) 8677 1126

**Email:** [info@transforminghealthcare.org.au](mailto:info@transforminghealthcare.org.au)

**Website:** [www.transforminghealthcare.org.au](http://www.transforminghealthcare.org.au)



## ABOUT TRANSFORMING HEALTH CARE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN

The Australian College of Nurse Practitioners (ACNP) is the national peak body for Nurse Practitioners and advanced practice nurses in Australia. The ACNP has developed the Transforming Health Care initiative to provide valuable information to the public about the benefits of having Nurse Practitioners as part of your usual health care team; and to advise the healthcare sector about the advantages of increasing access to Nurse Practitioners across inpatient, outpatient and community settings.

Supported by the Commonwealth Department of Health, the Transforming Health Care campaign highlights the vital role that Nurse Practitioners have in the healthcare and community environments. Our aim is to connect directly with Australian communities and promote the value of Nurse Practitioners in addressing service shortfalls thereby improving the health care outcomes of Australians.

*The Raising the Awareness of the Role of the Nurse Practitioner project has been funded by the Australian Government Department of Health*