Bringing Nurses Back into the Workforce program
FACT SHEET FOR NURSES AND MIDWIVES

Background
If you are a registered nurse/midwife (Division 1 in Victoria) or enrolled nurse (Division 2 in Victoria) who has been employed previously in the Australian nursing workforce, but you have not worked as a nurse/midwife in Australia for 12 months, you may be eligible for cash bonuses to encourage you to come back to work in a public or private hospital, or residential aged care home.

This program was announced on 15 January 2008 by the Prime Minister, the Hon Kevin Rudd MP and the Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon Nicola Roxon MP. The program commits $39.4 million over 5 years to provide places for 7,750 extra nurses and midwives in public and private hospitals and 1,000 nurses in residential aged care homes. This program is part of a larger measure through which the Government will provide $138.9 million over five years across the Health and Ageing and Education portfolios in support of the recruitment and training of up to a total of 8,750 nurses across public and private hospitals and aged care as well as funding up to an additional 1,170 ongoing university nursing places per year.

Aims and Approach
The aims of the Bringing Nurses Back into the Workforce program are to:
• reduce the nursing shortages in many parts of the hospital system, both in the public and private sectors and in residential aged care homes; and
• attract 8,750 of the estimated 30,000 qualified nurses who are outside the Australian nursing workforce back into nursing.

The program will provide cash bonuses of up to $6,000 to eligible nurses and midwives who return to work in either a public or private hospital or aged care home that is participating in the program.

Nurse/midwife eligibility
You are eligible for the Bringing Nurses Back into the Workforce program if you:
• have previously been employed as a registered nurse/midwife (Division 1 in Victoria) or enrolled nurse (Division 2 in Victoria) in the Australian nursing workforce;
• have not been employed as a registered nurse/midwife (Division 1 in Victoria) or enrolled nurse (Division 2 in Victoria) in Australia within the past 12 months;
• are registered or enrolled with the relevant state or territory regulatory authority or have qualifications that make you eligible for such registration or enrolment;
• return to work as a registered nurse/midwife (Division 1 in Victoria) or enrolled nurse (Division 2 in Victoria) as an employee of a public or private hospital or residential aged care home that has allocated places under this program;
• returned to work on or after the 15 January 2008;
• confirm that the hospital or residential aged care home that is employing you has an allocated place available under this program; and
• meet any additional requirements of the relevant state or territory.

You are not eligible for this program if any of these apply to you:
• you returned to work as a registered nurse/midwife or enrolled nurse in Australia before 15 January 2008;
• you are unable to gain registration or enrolment with the relevant state or territory regulatory authority;
- you have been employed as a registered nurse/midwife or enrolled nurse in Australia within the past 12 months at the time you intend to return to work;
- you are a registered nurse/midwife or enrolled nurse, or have qualifications that make you eligible for registration or enrolment, but have never been employed as a registered nurse/midwife or enrolled nurse in Australia;
- you are under investigation or sanctioned under the relevant state or territory regulatory body;
- you are employed as a registered nurse/midwife or enrolled nurse to provide services to a hospital or residential aged care home by an external body, e.g. nursing agency; and/or
- you are or have been in receipt of a Bringing Nurses Back into the Workforce bonus payments through previous employment. This applies for the duration of the funding.

**How will the program work for nurses/midwives in hospitals?**

- To ensure eligibility for the bonus payment, you should check that the hospital where you are returning to work is participating in the program and has an allocated place available under this program.
- You will need to fill in an application form, including a statutory declaration, to apply for a place at the hospital where you intend to work.
- You will need to submit this form to your employer for consideration for a place under the program. Failure to submit this completed form and signed statutory declaration to your employer will make you ineligible for the program.
- You can only apply to return to work in one hospital under this program, and the hours worked in this place of employment are the only hours that will be attributed to the bonus payments.
- If you choose to change sectors before receiving the bonus payments, you will forego all entitlements under the Bringing Nurses Back into the Workforce program.
- The first bonus payment of $3,000 (or pro rata equivalent) will be due for payment by the funding body six months after you commence employment and can only be paid if employment is continuous during this period and
- After 18 months continuous employment you will be entitled to a final bonus payment of $3,000 (or pro rata equivalent).
- There are a limited number of places available under this program, so if you believe you are eligible you should check now with your employer.

**How will the program work for nurses in a residential aged care home?**

- To ensure eligibility for the bonus payment, a nurse should check that the residential aged care home where he or she is returning to work is an Australian Government funded service and is eligible under this program.
- A nurse will need to submit an application through his or her employing organisation.
- A nurse can only apply to return to work in one facility under this program.
- If a nurse chooses to change employers before receiving the bonus payments but remains in an eligible residential aged care home, he or she will retain the entitlements under the Bringing Nurses Back into the Workforce program.
- The first bonus payment of $3,000 (or pro rata equivalent) will be due six months after a nurse commences employment and can only be paid if employment is continuous during this period.
- After 18 months continuous employment in residential aged care a nurse will be entitled to a final bonus payment of $3,000 (or pro rata equivalent).
- There are a limited number of places available under this program, so if you believe you are eligible you should check now with your employer.

**How will bonus payments be treated for taxation and income purposes?**

The $6,000 (or pro rata equivalent) is considered assessable income for personal taxation purposes under the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*, and will be taxed accordingly.

**Further information**