International recruitment of nurses and midwives

Preamble

The movement of nurses and midwives between countries is an international phenomenon contributing to the personal and professional development of individual nurses and midwives and to the provision of nursing and midwifery care.

While international mobility of nurses and midwives is nothing new, there now exists large scale, targeted, international recruitment by developed countries to address domestic shortages.

In Australia, international recruitment is a strategy that is regularly utilised to resolve workforce shortages.

The global shortage of nurses and midwives can only be adequately addressed by Governments acknowledging the issue and at a local level by implementing strategies that properly plan and manage the domestic nursing and midwifery workforce.

A primary strategy must include inter-government agreements which protect the interests of host and source countries, with particular acknowledgment of the need to minimise the negative impacts on the provision of health services in developing countries.

It is the policy of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation that:

1. The implication of global competition for nurses and midwives necessitates ethical consideration, as aggressive recruitment from developing countries may have potentially unwanted consequences for the health systems of the source country(ies).

2. Overseas recruitment programs must not be used as a primary strategy to overcome nursing and midwifery shortages in Australia and internationally, or as an alternative to educational opportunities for the existing nursing/midwifery workforce.

3. Overseas working visa programs should not be utilised by Australian Governments of any level as a solution to the underemployment or unemployment of Australian graduate nurses and midwives.

4. Governments must commit more resources for workforce planning, education and improving pay and conditions in order to attract and keep nurses.

5. Employers wishing to recruit nurses and midwives internationally must demonstrate:
   - They have introduced a range of strategies aimed at attracting, recruiting and retaining nurses and midwives residing in Australia;
   - They will provide internationally recruited nurses and midwives with employment conditions the same as those offered to nurses and midwives in Australia.
   - They will provide internationally recruited nurses and midwives with employment conditions the same as those offered to nurses and midwives in Australia.
   - They meet the Australian Department of Immigration requirements.

6. Prior to the recruitment of international nurses and midwives, employers must exhaust all avenues to employ nurses and midwives domestically.

7. Employers seeking to recruit and employ nurses and midwives from other countries must provide the following:
• Transparency and fairness in recruitment practice;
• Effective human resource planning and development including mentoring and orientation;
• Full access to employment opportunities and flexible environments;
• Standards, Terms & Conditions consistent with the domestic workforce;
• Freedom from discrimination; and
• The right to be informed regarding freedom of association;
• Assistance to meet the necessary Registration Standards including the English Language Skills Standard as well as the requirements for recognition of the nurses/midwives overseas qualifications as determined by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia.

8. Employers of nurses and midwives in Australia must be required to recognise experience gained overseas which is assessed at a comparable standard for the purpose of experience and incremental payments.

9. Procedures for the assessment of nursing and midwifery applications from other countries must be equitable and fair, be based on nationally agreed proficiency in the English language, determine clinical competence, and recognise previous experience and prior formal educational qualifications.

10. Nurses/midwives who choose to move overseas must have their overseas work of a comparable standard recognised in Australia for the purpose of retention of their registration with the NMBA.

11. The ANMF Federal Office is the central point for all enquiries from international recruitment companies or any other source seeking information regarding the recruitment of nurses and midwives from overseas.

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Reference