



Australian
Nursing & Midwifery
Accreditation Council

Australia – India
Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
RG Casey Building
John McEwen Crescent
BARTON ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam,

FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (FTA) SUBMISSION

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC) is pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the potential impact of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Australia and India.

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council (ANMC), ANMAC was established in 1992 as the peak body to develop a national approach to regulation of nurses and midwives. In July 2010 ANMC was restructured to become the independent national accreditation body for nursing and midwifery courses in Australia, and in November 2010 ANMC officially changed name to ANMAC to reflect this new business. ANMAC continues to be gazetted by the Minister of Immigration and Citizenship as the relevant assessing authority for nurses and midwives who wish to migrate to Australia using the skilled migration program.

Nurses and midwives are assessed using the ANMAC Standards and Criteria consistent with the registration requirements of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA). ANMAC assesses internationally trained nurses and midwives, as well as international students, against these Standards ensuring that each applicant can demonstrate competency for migration purposes.

ANMAC supports the proposal of an FTA with India. However ANMAC is opposed to any Government action as part of an FTA which may impact negatively on the integrity of the regulatory process. The regulation of health professionals is about the protection of the public and ANMAC will continue to assess the competencies of nurses and midwives who have not been educated in Australia, against the same standards expected of Australian nurses and midwives. All nurses and midwives wanting to practice in Australia are required to meet the Australian nursing and midwifery Competency Standards. When internationally educated nurses and midwives do not meet these standards they must complete an approved competency program. Such programs ensure the continued provision of standards of nursing and midwifery care which protect the public.

In previous meetings of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and ASEAN – Australia – New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (AANZFTA) and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)

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negotiators have met with the ANMAC to discuss the issue of market access for nurses and midwives. Countries such as the Philippines, China and Indonesia have requested Australia allow the entry of their nurses and midwives. However ANMAC and the NMBA do not recognise these qualifications as being comparable to our own. In previous discussions, ANMAC required that schedules of FTAs include a reference that will satisfy the Australian need for domestic regulation and provision of recognition of specified qualifications. Currently Indian nursing and midwifery qualifications are not recognised as being comparable to Australian qualifications. Nurses and midwives from India would have to complete a competency based assessment or bridging program and provide evidence of English proficiency to be found suitable for migration and/or registration.

Staff from ANMAC would be pleased to meet with you for a more detailed discussion on the status of Indian registered nurses and midwives, should you wish to do so.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amanda Adrian". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Amanda Adrian
Chief Executive Officer

30 June 2011