

Policy on Nursing and Midwifery and the Environment

Endorsed by Annual Conference 2016

Note: This policy should be read in conjunction with the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association Position Statement on Climate Change.

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association recognises that:

- Effective public policy and a supportive environment underpin the promotion and maintenance of health and enable people to make informed health choices and lead healthy lives.
- Environmentally sustainable development requires a shift in emphasis towards better environmental practice:
 - supporting, promoting and protecting natural resources;
 - promoting the most fuel efficient and environmentally sustainable production methods to reduce energy costs;
 - reduction in raw material usage;
 - reduction or elimination of waste products; and
 - improvement in the working environment.
- Environmentally sustainable production techniques and work practices are central to the long term viability of Australian ecology, economy and industries.
- Human health is threatened when the health of ecosystems is disrupted, disturbed or destroyed.
- The achievement of a healthy and safe working environment should be an integral part of an environmentally sustainable development process.

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association adopts the policy that:

1. Better environmental practice should be developed by all health facilities acknowledging and accepting responsibility for the environmental impact of health care service delivery.
2. All health facilities should establish a mechanism which, in collaboration with all stakeholders and other appropriate personnel, advises on policies and protocols in relation to environmental issues; undertakes environmental impact audits; provides advice on new and existing products and buildings; and seeks to operate in the most resource efficient manner.
3. All health facilities should carry out environmental audits to assess energy, water and resource consumption; pollution of soil, air and waterways; and waste generation and disposal.
4. All health facilities should set goals and targets in relation to the reduction of general and clinical waste; lowering energy, water and resource consumption and levels of pollution generated by the facility.
5. All health facilities should develop policies and protocols to minimise the over-use of all disposable products and seek alternatives where appropriate.



6. Environmental hazards should be identified and eliminated at their source.
7. Nurses and midwives are encouraged to be socially aware and politically active in relation to environmental issues.
8. Nurses and midwives should consider the environmental impact of everyday decisions at work and make changes if appropriate.
9. Nurses and midwives have the right to participate in the formulation and implementation of action plans to establish environmentally sustainable production techniques and practices in the workplace.
10. Nurses and midwives have the right to bring to the attention of colleagues, employers and the public, the dangers of environmentally harmful processes and products without fear of victimisation.