

Nursing Workstream

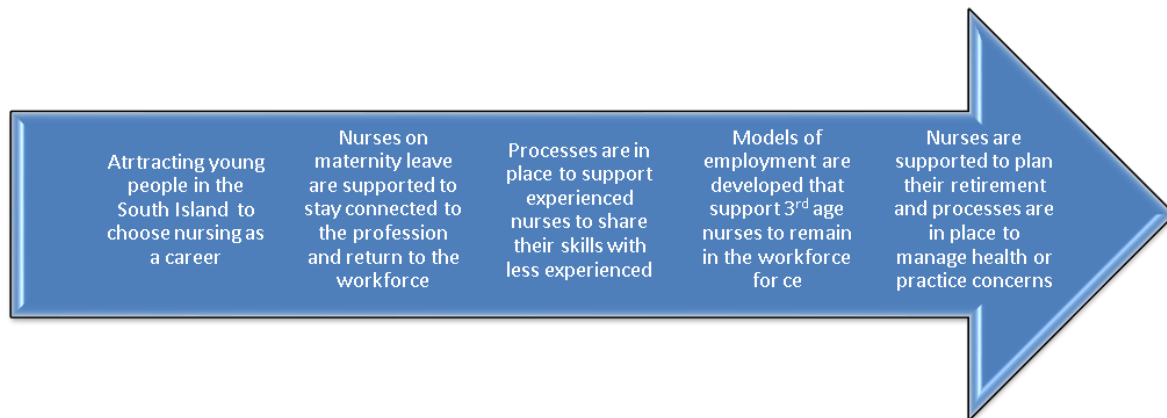
South Island Executive Directors of Nursing Position Statement on Sustaining the South Island Nursing Workforce

Background

New Zealand has an aging nursing workforce but of particular concern for the South Island is that our population of nurses is even older than nationally. In 2010 64% of the South Island Nursing workforce is aged 45 or above – this equates to 7893 nurses and only 24% of the nursing workforce is under 40. The median age of nurses in 2010 was 46.7 years; this is up from 42.6 years in 1998. In the South Island in 2010, 47.2% of nurses were over 50 years compared with 40.9% for New Zealand (Nursing Council of New Zealand 2010). A significant number of nurses are expected to retire in the next 10-15 years (nationally Nursing Council expect half of the current nursing workforce to retire within the next twenty five years). The retirement of such a large number of nurses has the potential to have a very detrimental effect on the delivery of nursing services in the South Island. In addition population factors such as the aging of the general population and their increased life expectancy is expected to result in an increased demand for nursing care. Analysis and modelling completed for the Nursing Council predicts that in order to continue to have the same number of nurses proportional to the population we nationally require 107 more graduates per annum between 2010 and 2035.

Sustaining the Nursing Workforce

The South Island Executive Directors of Nursing are committed to on-going long-term workforce planning. A long-term approach is essential and should not be influenced by immediate or short-term issues that impact on the demand for nursing services. The aim is to develop strategies that both grow and retain our current nursing workforce that result in ensuring ongoing commitment by nurses in nursing. Sustaining of the South Island nursing workforce will require multiple strategies and initiatives that work across the continuum from attracting new nurses to the profession to retaining our 3rd age nurses (see the diagram below).



The future state will require both radical redesign of some processes and subtle changes to others including:

- Development of a career progression processes that supports retention of nurses within the profession
- Greater flexibility of work schedules and environments to meet the needs of nurses across the continuum
- Redesign work to enable experienced nurses who are entering 3rd age to remain active in direct nursing care roles
- Investment in education and training that is designed to support nurses to stay current with technological advances including information technology that enhances the capacity of a potentially reduced nursing workforce.

References

Nursing Council of New Zealand, 2010

Late Career nurses in New Zealand, Research Advisory Paper, Dr Jill Clendon and Dr Leonie Walker, New Zealand Nurses Association, 2012 Pages 1-6

The Future Nursing Workforce, Nursing Council of New Zealand 2013
