



Australian Divisions of **General Practice**

General Practice Nurses

An essential part of today's general practice

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Funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing

Introduction

What factors have contributed to:

- more nurses in general practice
- expanded role for the nurse
- increased profile of general practice nursing



General practice

- 18,500–24,000 GPs
- 9,000 practices
- Average 1 GP : 900 people (1 : 2000 in some areas)
- 90% of the population visit a GP annually
- 5.5 attendances/patient/pa
- Over 40% of practices have a general practice nurse (4,000 practice nurses nationally)



Challenges for health care provision

- Growing levels of chronic disease and obesity
- An increasingly ageing population
- Increased consumer expectations
- Rising health costs
- A diminishing health workforce



Primary Health Care Teams

- Insufficient GPs to meet future demand
- Evidence shows that multidisciplinary practice teams can enhance health outcomes, particularly in chronic disease.
- Nurses play a key role in the practice team



General Practice Nurses

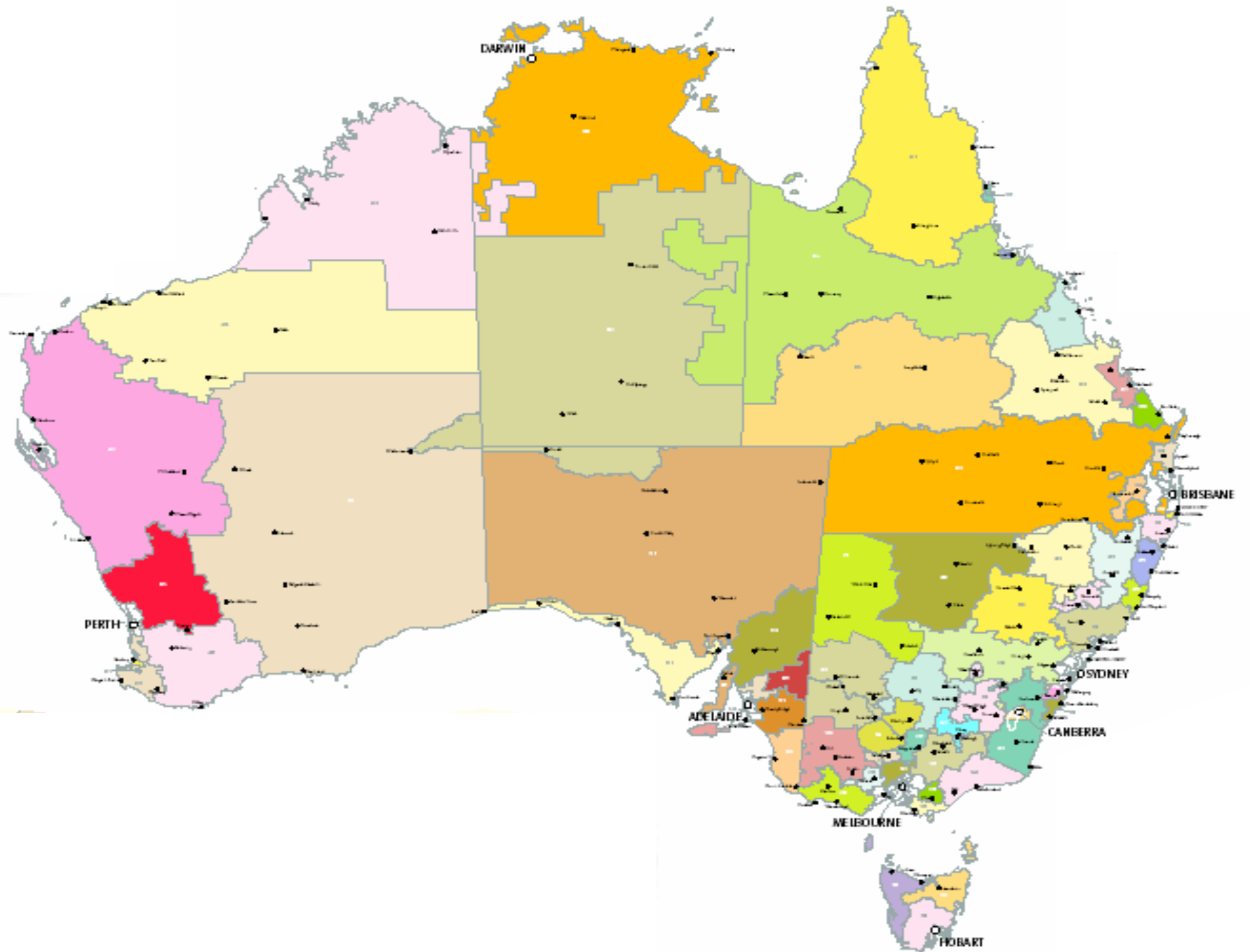
- Increase consumer access to primary care
- Enhance the range of services available
- Provide collegiate support & assistance to GPs
- Enhance management of people with chronic disease
- Support, influence & manage change
- Promote safety & quality
- Encourage team based care



Divisions of General Practice Program

- Divisions funded by Federal Government since 1992 :
 - Assist general practice to provide services to the community
 - Responsiveness to local community population health needs
 - Partnerships linking GPs and other health care providers





Australian Government Incentives

- Practice Nurse Practice Incentive Payment
- Practice Nurse Medicare Items
 - Immunisation
 - Wound management
 - Pap smears
- Enhanced Primary Care
- New Chronic Disease Items (July 2005)



Australian Government Incentives

- Support for education and training
- Development of Competency Standards for nurses in general practice
- Information for general practices
- Australian Practice Nurses Association



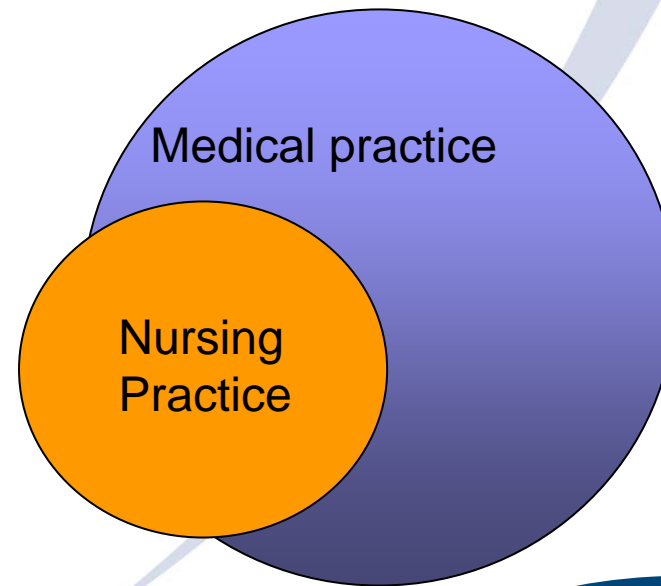
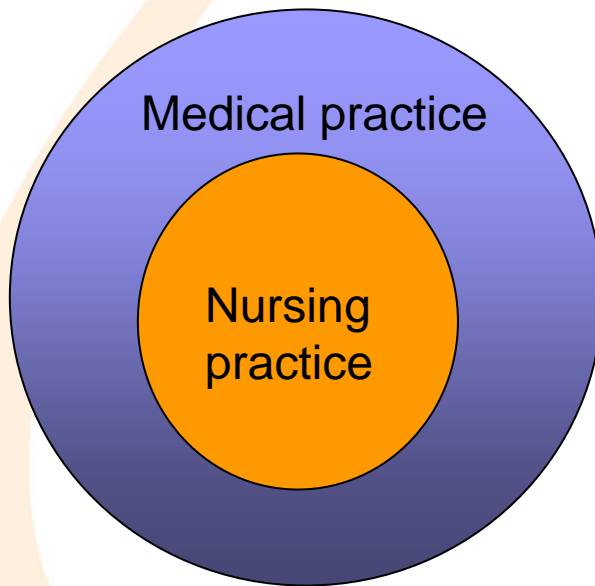
Benefits of working in general practice

- Family friendly/flexible hours
- Small team environment
- Patient continuity
- Diversity of skills
- Self directed with few hierarchal structures



Multidisciplinary team models

Provider Substitution Collaborative Practice



Adapted from Hastings, C 1997. The changing multidisciplinary team

Australian Divisions of General Practice



The future

- More nurses in general practice
- Expanded role for the general practice nurse
- Changes in consumer expectations about general practice



Implications

- Increased primary care /population health focus in undergraduate nursing programs
- Increased student placements in general practice
- Opportunities for post graduate programs in primary care
- Professional support programs and ongoing professional development



GP Quote

"As a solo practitioner, I could not practice effectively without my practice nurse. This has been a positive collaboration with the nurse relieving me of many time consuming tasks, adding positively to the practice bottom line and, by bringing a whole set of complementary skills to mine, enhancing the services we are able to provide. A must in the 21st century."

Dr Gary Kilov, Clarinda Vic.

