



A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE

National Enrolled Nurse Association of Australia (NENA)

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1994-2015

The formation of the National Enrolled Nurse Association of Australia (NENA) was an historical achievement for Australian Enrolled Nurses (ENs).

The project began as a dream of Anne-Louise Stolzenhain, an EN who was on secondment to the Australian Nursing Federation (ANF) as a Special Project Officer with the Victorian Branch. Anne-Louise contacted each ANF State Branch to find out the number of ENs represented and employed by the ANF.

This resulted in a national network and the ideas floated promised to create an organisation that could promote, educate and value the contribution of ENs on a national level.

1994

The initial meeting of the national network representatives occurred at the 3rd State EN Conference on 24 October 1994 in Melbourne. The theme for this momentous Conference, offered support and strength to what was envisaged as achievable for the future of ENs.

In the years since, there has been hard work, dedication and persistence by the national network representatives from across the States and Territories to action those resolutions raised at the 3rd State EN Conference.

The inception of NENA gave rise to a unified body. This has led to professional recognition within the nursing fraternity for ENs as an integral and valued member of the health care team.

The National Network Representatives were:

- Betty Crombie (WA)
- Terri Daktyl (SA)
- Cheryl Dorrton (Qld)
- Agnes Stanislaus-Large (Tas)
- Anne-Louise Stolzenhain (Vic)
- Pam Tobin (NSW)

At this time there was no contact with the ANF ACT Branch or the ANF NT Branch.

At the 3rd State EN Conference, the theme was 'The Future is in Your Hands'.

The introduction by EN guest speakers showed the challenges, the perception that not only the community had of nursing, but also that of ENs own peers. It provided a powerful insight into the diverse and complex roles that ENs were carving out for themselves in the delivery of health care across Australia.

1994 Resolutions

National network representatives were required to make resolutions at the 3rd State EN Conference.

What is a resolution?

'An act or process of reducing something to a simpler form; the act or process of solving or resolving something; statement of firm intent'.

A more practical definition:

- A resolution is a subject proposed as a basis for discussion.
- A member introduces the resolution and explains the reason behind it.
- The resolution needs to be seconded and the person seconding can speak to the resolution.
- The resolution is then discussed and each speaker for and against is invited to add new information.
- The original proposer of the resolution has the right of reply before it is put forward for a vote.
- The resolution is carried or defeated by a majority vote.

The three resolutions for 3rd State EN Conference were:

1. 'That a national Special Interest Group (SIG) for State ENs with representation from all States and Territories be set up to promote the professional organisation of ENs'.
2. 'That interstate members take this recommendation back to the respective State SIGs and Reference Groups for discussion, formulation and nomination of a representative with a view of establishing such a group at the EN Conference in May 1995 in Newcastle NSW'.
3. 'That this Conference of ENs recommends that each ANF State Branch employ an EN Officer. That this Officer's role be to enhance and improve education, professional status and networking of ENs and to increase the ANF membership of ENs'.

Post the 3rd State EN Conference, the national network representatives met to discuss the formation of the national group.

A series of conferences were implemented to empower ENs. Each conference was to have a different theme, and ENs would be encouraged to be the presenters of topics, to make their voice heard, and through this, to be recognised by their peers.

At this time there was a lack of uniformity in EN education across Australia. Western Australia had the most highly educated ENs, with the most hours of theory and a Diploma status, where other States received only a Certificate IV, and their hours also varied. The national network representatives became more determined to have a national group who could work towards a standard level of education to transition ENs from State to State.

On 28 October 1994, the Victorian EN Liaison Group appointed Anne-Louise Stolzenhain as coordinator of the national group. This was in recognition of her work in getting the national network representatives group started.

1995

In 1995 Cheryl Shirelnomda of the Northern Territory joined the national network representatives.

In 1995 national network representatives attended the 2nd NSW EN State Conference in Newcastle NSW.

The Conference was aptly themed 'Towards 2000 Enrolled Nurses CAN do that'. During the Conference the National Working Party was elected.

The National Working Party members included:

- Mrs Maureen Bourke (NSW)
- Ms Betty Crombie (WA)
- Mrs Cheryl Dorrn (Qld)
- Ms Kim Forsyth (ACT)
- Ms Debra Hanlon (NT) (Co-Representative)
- Ms Judith Johnson (SA)
- Ms Leonie Kelly (Vic)
- Ms Rosemary Nunn (SA)
- Mrs Debbie Saville (NT)
- Mrs Agnes Stanislaus-Large (Tas)
- Ms Angela Wallace (NT) (Co-Representative)

1995

Inaugural National EN Conference - Hobart

There were 124 participants.

In September, it was agreed to seek a ceding grant from all ANF Branches to assist with starting up the national group. The National Working Party went through ANF Federal Executive to assist with the initial establishment of the national group, with the aim of eventually becoming self-funded.

In October, the EN position paper was provided to the delegates at the ANF National Biennial Conference in Canberra. To obtain approval and achieve SIG of the ANF Federal Office, the National Working Party was required to write the national groups Constitution. The Constitution needed to include:

- Proposed Name;
- Membership;
- Purpose;

- By Laws;
- Management;
- Special Interest Meetings;
- Rules of Debate;
- Voting;
- Election;
- Powers of Duty of Committee Management;
- Powers of Duty of the Special Interest Group (SIG);
- Annual Report;
- Financial Year Report;
- Financial Reports and Statements;
- Finance;
- Control of Funds;
- Dissolution of the SIG; and
- Formation of Sub Branch or Section.

1996

2nd National EN Conference – Adelaide

The theme was 'Enrolled! Keeping all Nurses in Nursing' and there were 134 participants.

The Constitution was discussed and accepted by Conference participants.

The aims of NENA were outlined:

- to provide a forum for the sharing of information and ideas between members;
- to enhance and develop the role of members to secure employment opportunities across a broad range of health care settings;
- to facilitate participation in conference and decision making forums;
- to raise the public profile of Enrolled Nurses;
- to facilitate participation in research relevant to Enrolled Nurses;
- to provide a forum for reference on issues relevant to Enrolled Nurses;
- to keep members and related organisations informed; and
- to promote awareness, interest and membership of NENA and the ANF.

The following resolutions were debated and voted on at the 2nd National EN Conference:

1st resolution

That the 1996 National EN Conference recommends that, in order to protect and enhance the role of the EN, the national group develop national guidelines for developing workplace based policies relating to the role of the EN in Australia and present them to the next EN Conference in 1998 – carried unanimously

2nd resolution

That the ANF Federal Office consider a process that would enable Division Two nurses to become credentialed, and job satisfaction in all areas of the EN practice, so that these roles can be maintained and promoted as nursing roles rather than providing greater opportunity and, therefore, greater risk by using unqualified, untrained workers - carried

3rd resolution

That the National EN Conference recommends that the ENs of Australia not become associate members of the Royal College of Nursing Australia (RCNA), as this discriminates the professionalism of the EN and negates their democratic right to vote and hold office in the RCNA decision making process – carried

4th resolution

That further investigation of EN membership of the RCNA take place – carried

5th resolution

That this 2nd National EN Conference endorses the establishment for the ANF SIG to be known as National Enrolled Nurse Association of Australia (NENA) and the Constitution as presented in the conference papers, and for the current National Working Party members to remain in caretaker mode until State representatives are elected to the NENA Executive Committee.

Nominations to be put forward to Leonie Kelly, who will remain as the coordinator during that caretaker period, by 20/11/1996. Also, if appropriate, for the National Working Party members to remain in the caretaker role for a further three months as preceptors to the new representatives – carried unanimously

6th resolution

That this 2nd National EN Conference calls on the ANF State Branches and Federal Office to continue lobbying for national consistency of EN education –unanimously carried

7th resolution

That this 2nd National EN Conference endorses NENA to develop a process of submission of application for hosting future EN Conferences and this process to be communicated 12 months prior to the Queensland National EN Conference – unanimously carried

1996

In September, the ANF NENA SIG Constitution was adopted by the ANF Federal Council, and NENA as a group became official. To follow was the election of the first NENA Executive Committee.

1997

NENA Executive Committee nominations were accepted and as follows:

- President – Margaret Ormerod (Vic)
- Vice President – Betty Crombie (WA)
- Secretary – Agnes Stanislaus-Large (Tas)
- Assistant Secretary – Vacant
- Treasurer – Vacant
- Fundraising Officer – Cheryl Dorrton (Qld)
- Public Relations Officer – Karen Sheriden (SA)
- Ordinary Member – Kim Forsythe (ACT)
- Ordinary Member – Angela Wallace (NT)
- Ordinary Member – Vacant

Establishing future directions of the NENA Executive Committee was the immediate aim including establishing the membership and generating effective communication between States and Territories.

It was deemed important to encourage the State EN SIGs within the ANF, as well as non-ANF EN members to get together. ENs needed to be made aware that there was now an opportunity in the national plan for developing a national standard for the role and function of ENs and the levels of education for the Australian EN.

The participation of individual ENs, as well as various groups, is still vital if ENs are to have an influence through NENA.

1998

A ceding grant of \$100 from each ANF State and Territory Branch to assist with the establishment of NENA and to provide for office requirements was granted to NENA.

The first NENA Magazine Vol 1. 1998 Winter Edition was sponsored by HESTA .

1998

3rd NENA Conference – Brisbane

Its theme was 'Enrolled Nurses – The Vital Link' and had 150 attendees.

2000

On 25 May, an expression of interest was put out for qualified consultants to undertake the Australian Nursing Council Inc (ANCI) EN Project on the 'Examination of the Role and Function of the EN – Revision and Validation of Competency Standards'. NENA was invited to nominate one member to participate on the Project Management Committee.

2000

4th NENA Conference – Darwin

The theme was '50 years of Enrolled Nursing: Our Gold Millenium' with 112 attendees.

2001

2001 saw the development of the NENA website.

2001-2002

Dynamic years for NENA

The following is a glimpse of what the NENA Executive Committee was involved in on behalf of ENs of Australia during this time:

- NENA participated in the National Review of Nursing Education 2001-2002 conducted on behalf of the Federal Department of Health and Ageing, Canberra.
- NENA contributed to the Industry Position Paper on Aged Care Workers Qualifications and Medication Administration May 2001, Department of Health and Ageing, Canberra.
- NENA contributed to the Senate Enquiry into Nursing June 2001.
- NENA participated in the ANCI Review of EN Competencies 2001-2002.
- In October 2001, due to NENA submitting an application to the National Nurses Organisation (NNO), ENs were accepted as members of the NNO.
- In 2001, RCNA granted full membership status to ENs in recognition of the work done by NENA and the ENs from States and Territories.

2002

5th NENA Conference – Melbourne

The theme was 'Endorsed Enlightened Enthusiastic'.

2004

6th NENA Conference – Sydney

The theme was 'Now and Forever – a Sustainable Enrolled Nurse Workforce'.

2006

7th NENA Conference – Canberra

The theme was 'The Professional Nurse – A National Perspective'

2008

8th NENA Conference – Perth

The theme was 'Enrolled Nurses – The Future is NOW'.

2010

9th NENA Conference – Hobart

Themed 'Moving Mountains-Enrolled Nurses Effect Change'.

2012

10th NENA Conference – Melbourne

The theme was 'Enrolled Nurses – The Future'.

The 2012 Conference was held in conjunction with the ANF Victorian Branch *Professional Issues in Practice Conference* with the NENA Executive Biennial General Meeting held on Day 2 of the Conference.

Unfortunately there were not enough nominations for the NENA Executive Committee at the time therefore the ANF decided to use this opportunity to review NENA including the NENA Constitution. Consultations on the revised NENA Constitution were conducted in each State and Territory of Australia in 2014.

2014

11th NENA Conference – No Location

This Conference was originally going to be held in Adelaide however, as the NENA Executive Committee was yet to be formed and the NENA Constitution under revision, this Conference was cancelled.

2015

12th NENA Conference – Adelaide

The theme for this Conference is 'Focusing on Today's Enrolled Nurse'.

So, here we are in 2015 and how exciting it is to be a part of NENA of the future!

NENA has been a driving force in the evolution and recognition of Australian ENs, from lobbying for a consistent national approach to EN education to increasing the awareness of the value of the EN in the health care system of today.

What will NENA set its sights on for the future? We can't wait to find out.

Information sourced from:

NENA – The first years: The History Of The National Enrolled Nurse Association 1994-2002, B.M. Crombie.

ANMF/NENA records including Conference Programs and meeting minutes.

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