Key Dates:
Offer opens 23 October 2017
Closing date for applications 15 December 2017
Notification of successful applicants 12 January 2018
Acceptances confirmed by 16 February 2018

Overview
The Department of Health and Human Services (the department) is now offering scholarships for Victorian registered nurses (RNs) to undertake and complete a master’s program (or other appropriate units/modules at master’s level) that will lead to endorsement as a Nurse Practitioner (NP). Nursing & Midwifery Workforce administers the NP scholarship program as part of the Victorian Nurse Practitioner Project (VNPP).

1. Eligibility
The following eligibility criteria apply to all NP scholarships.

1.1 Eligible services
Registered nurses employed at the following services are eligible to apply for NP scholarships:
- All public hospitals, metropolitan health services and multipurpose services identified in schedules 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the Health Services Act 1998
- Victorian public residential aged care services
- Community health services (both registered and integrated)
- Forensic mental health services operated by the Victorian Institute of Forensic Mental Health
- State funded drug and alcohol treatment services.

1.2 Eligible courses
Courses of study that may be undertaken with NP scholarships funding are:
- A master’s program leading to NP endorsement that is approved by the Nursing Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA)¹
- Module/equivalent units of study for nurse practitioner preparation at masters level such as therapeutic medication management (pharmacology) and advanced clinical assessment
- Discipline specific or multi/inter-disciplinary clinical course that is likely to be eligible under NMBA Pathway 2 (e.g. Master of Rural Health)

1.3 Funding eligibility

Individuals who have received a full NP scholarship of $6000 prior to 2016 or $8,000 in 2016/17 are not eligible for further scholarships.

Other applicants should note their eligibility as per table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligible amount in 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Previous Nursing &amp; Midwifery Workforce postgraduate scholarship of $4000 or less</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 or less Semesters study remaining in academic year 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No previous Nursing &amp; Midwifery Workforce postgraduate scholarship and 2 or more semesters study remaining academic year 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student enrolled in Commonwealth Supported Places</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2. Key Selection Criteria and application process

2.1 Key Selection Criteria

Applicants must demonstrate or confirm that they meet the following key selection criteria:

- The applicant is an Australian or New Zealand citizen or permanent resident and resides in Victoria.
- The applicant is currently registered by the NMBA as a Registered Nurse (Division 1).
- The applicant is currently employed in a Victorian public health service or public residential aged care facility.
- The applicant has the appropriate educational preparation, experience and commitment to a clinical area (career trajectory) that indicates the applicant is positioning to be successfully endorsed as a NP in a timely way.
- The applicant has evidence of organisational support for their preparation as a NP, including evidence of candidacy arrangements.  
- The applicant is enrolled in relevant postgraduate study in 2018.

2.2 Submission of Applications

The application must be signed by all parties and submitted on the 2018 Application Form, and emailed to: nmw@dhhs.vic.gov.au: Subject: NP Scholarships 2018

The closing date for 2018 applications is 15 December 2017.

Applications that do not address each criterion, are late or incomplete, will not be considered.

2.3 Selection process

Selection of applicants involves assessment of applications by the department's officers:

1) against the eligibility and selection criteria and
2) against other applications in the round.

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2 A Nurse Practitioner Candidate is a Registered Nurse engaged to study and undertake clinical experience leading to endorsement as a NP. A Registered Nurse engaged as a Nurse Practitioner Candidate (as defined) shall be classified and paid their substantive salary (Australian Industrial Relations Commission 2006). Appointment as Nurse Practitioner Candidate usually involves a formal employment agreement between the employer and the nurse.
Applications are scored against the criteria and higher weights are given to applications where the evidence clearly demonstrates how the applicant meets the specifics of the criteria and is presented in the required format.

Where the number of eligible applications is greater than the available funding, scholarships are awarded based on industry need and government workforce priorities. Preference may be given to those in full fee-paying places.

Scholarships are granted at the discretion of the Department and the decision of the Department is final. Applications that do not include the signatures of the applicant, supporting Director of Nursing and Chief Executive Officer will not be accepted.

### 2.4 Successful applicants

Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified of the outcome by 12 January 2018, via email.

Successful applicants will be provided with a “letter of offer” and are required to complete, sign and return the letter of offer acknowledging they accept the scholarship and scholarship conditions, along with scanned copies of:

- Evidence of Australian citizenship or permanent residency or New Zealand citizenship as required (Applicants from New Zealand must submit a copy of their current passport)
- Current NMBA registration (front and back) - showing name, registration number, endorsements and if there are conditions or restrictions on registration
- Confirmation of enrolment in 2018 Semester 1 or 2, **AND**
- Evidence of payment or deferment of fees (full fee paying students only) either:
  - An official university letter confirming enrolment, **OR**
  - An official Student Tax Invoice or Statement of Account
- Note: Students with CSP places need only provide evidence of enrolment (that clearly demonstrates a secured CSP).

Details of:

- Course – enrolled units, subjects or courses for 2018
- Enrolment status – part-time/full time course load
- Type of place – e.g. CSP (HECS) or Full-fee paying (FFP) place

### 3. Conditions and disbursement

#### 3.1 Scholarship conditions

The following conditions of funding apply to all NP Scholarships in 2018:

- **Continued Employment**
  
  Successful applicants must be employed in an eligible health organisation for a period of one year full-time, or pro rata equivalent, following the completion of the postgraduate course for which the scholarship was awarded. Students unable to fulfill this condition are required to return part or all scholarship monies to the Department.

- **Participation in data collection**
  
  Successful applicants are required to provide their contact details to the Department for a period of five years to assist in the collection of workforce planning data. This data may be collected and used to inform future policies relating to the Nursing and Midwifery Workforce and the nursing scholarship program.

- **Deferment from course**
  
  Students who defer their studies (for any reason) are required to notify Nursing & Midwifery Workforce within one week of the change in study arrangements. All or part of the scholarship money will be recalled by the Department. Students may then re-apply when they recommence the course.

- **Withdrawal from course**
  
  Students withdrawing from the course are required to notify Nursing & Midwifery Workforce within one week of withdrawal. All or part of Scholarship funds will be recalled by the Department, after appropriate communication with the co-signing DON on the NP Scholarship application template.
3.2 Disbursement of scholarship funds

Scholarship funding for successful applicants will be paid to the recipients employing health service to be disseminated to recipients for the purpose outlined in these guidelines.

Scholarship funds will not be released until Nursing & Midwifery Workforce receives all required documentation. Scholarships will be reallocated to other students if the required documentation is not received by the due date.

Successful applicants are responsible for enrolling and paying course fees (or deferring fees) or HECS by the due date, and are responsible for debts incurred in the course of study including FEE-HELP and HECS-HELP loans. Students with CSP may be eligible for a discount if the student’s HECS contribution is paid ahead of the census date for each semester.

Scholarship funds are considered taxable income. For further information, consult your taxation agent or the Australian Taxation Office**.

Please Note

** In alignment with other scholarship programs provided by the Department, all payments are made to health services for dissemination to students enrolled in eligible courses (as described above).

An email will be sent to supporting Directors of Nursing and scholarship applicants upon successful application and again when the Budget Payment Schedule date has been confirmed by the Department’s Finance Branch.

The Department has an expectation that payment of the student will occur within two pay periods or a mutually agreed timeframe that allows for local salary packaging or equivalent tax saving arrangements.

Further Information

For more information about the departments 2018 VNPP Scholarship, please contact:

☎  (03) 90968227
✉  nmw@dhhs.vic.gov.au