



Papua New Guinea Nurses Association (PNGNA)
South Pacific Nurses Forum (SPNF)
Draft Country Report 2026

Theme: "Strengthening National Nursing Associations to Support Our Members: Amplifying Pacific Voices."



**PREPARED BY:
PNG NURSES ASSOCIATION**

Introduction

It is an honour and privilege to present the 2026 South Pacific Nurses Forum (SPNF) Papua New Guinea Country Report on behalf of the 4,000 financial members of the Papua New Guinea Nurses Association (PNGNA), representing more than 10,000 nurses serving across Papua New Guinea.

As President of the Papua New Guinea Nurses Association, I am pleased to provide an overview of the significant changes, ongoing challenges, and emerging opportunities affecting the nursing and midwifery profession since the presentation of the 2024 SPNF Country Report.

1. Provide an overview of the changes and opportunities within Nursing and Midwifery since the 2024 SPNF Report

Papua New Guinea has experienced several positive developments in nursing and midwifery, including:

-  Stronger collaboration between PNGNA and Government stakeholders
-  Improved partnerships with Provincial Health Authorities (PHAs)
-  More graduate nurses entering the workforce to strengthen health service delivery.
-  Increased advocacy for nurses and midwives at the national level.
-  Implementation of the 2025–2027 Nursing Award, including new salary adjustments and improved employment conditions.

These developments demonstrate a growing recognition of the important role nurses and midwives play in improving the health of the people of Papua New Guinea.

Current Challenges

-  Despite these achievements, several challenges continue to affect the nursing workforce:
-  Ongoing shortages of nurses, particularly in rural and remote areas.
-  Heavy workloads due to insufficient staffing levels.
-  Limited medical equipment, supplies, and essential resources.
-  Difficulty retaining experienced and specialist nurses.

-  Limited opportunities for continuing professional development and career advancement.
-  Safety and security concerns in some health facilities.
-  Delays in recruitment, employment, and promotion of newly qualified nurses.
-  Increasing demand for health services due to population growth and the rising burden of disease.
-  These challenges contribute to staff fatigue and burnout, reduce morale, and affect the timely delivery and quality of health care services.

Opportunities

While challenges remain, they also present opportunities to strengthen the profession through:

-  Stronger partnerships between PNGNA, Government, and key stakeholders.
-  Continued investment in nursing and midwifery education.
-  Expanded specialist training and continuing professional development.
-  Leadership development programs for current and future nurse leaders.
-  Improved workforce planning and retention strategies.
-  Expansion of digital health technologies and health information systems.
-  Greater regional collaboration and knowledge sharing through the South Pacific Nurses Forum (SPNF).

2. What are the significant issues impacting Nursing and Midwifery in your country?

The most significant issues affecting nursing and midwifery in Papua New Guinea include workforce shortages, poor working conditions in some facilities, limited resources, increasing workloads, and challenges in retaining experienced nurses.

These issues have resulted in increased pressure on the nursing workforce, contributing to fatigue, burnout, and reduced quality of patient care, particularly in rural and remote communities

Progress Towards Improved Working and Fair Employment Conditions

PNGNA continues to advocate for improved working conditions and fair employment practices for all nurses.

Through successful negotiations and collaboration with Government and key stakeholders, PNGNA has contributed to:

-  The implementation of the 2025–2027 Nursing Award.
-  Improved salary and employment conditions.
-  Progress towards fair pay for equal work.
-  Improvements in staff accommodation in some provinces.
-  Ongoing advocacy for safe and supportive working environments
-  Continued efforts to improve workforce welfare, retention, and professional recognition

These achievements reflect PNGNA's commitment to strengthening the nursing profession and ensuring nurses are valued, supported, and empowered to provide safe, quality health care for the people of Papua New Guinea.

3. What recruitment and retention strategies do you have for Nurses and Midwives in your country?

-  Recruitment of nurses and midwives in Papua New Guinea is undertaken through the Government employment system, with vacancies advertised and filled at national, provincial and district levels according to workforce needs.
-  To improve retention, PNGNA has continued to advocate for better employment conditions through collaborative negotiations with Government. One of the most significant achievements has been the implementation of the 2025–2027 Nursing Award, following the three-year salary review.
-  The revised salary package and improved employment conditions have strengthened workforce retention, particularly for nurses and midwives serving in rural and remote areas.
-  PNGNA continues to advocate for additional incentives, career development opportunities and improved working conditions to retain an experienced and motivated nursing workforce.

4. What initiatives are in place to uphold the professional, social and economic position of Nurses and Midwives?

Since its establishment, the Papua New Guinea Nurses Association (PNGNA) has played a dual role as both a professional association and a registered union representing nurses and midwives throughout the country.

As a union, PNGNA advocates for improved staff welfare, fair remuneration, safe working conditions and employment rights.

As a professional association, PNGNA promotes excellence in nursing and midwifery through:

-  Celebrating International Nurses Day and International Day of the Midwife
-  Organising nursing symposiums and professional conferences.
-  Promoting research, evidence-based practice and policy development
-  Sharing new developments in nursing education, clinical practice and leadership.
-  Supporting continuing professional development for nurses and midwives

PNGNA also contributes to the social and economic wellbeing of its members through improved salary packages, employment benefits and life insurance for eligible members.

PNGNA remains committed to ensuring nurses and midwives are respected, professionally recognised and fairly rewarded for their contribution to improving the health of the people of Papua New Guinea.

5. Outline your preparedness in the event of a disaster

Papua New Guinea is vulnerable to a wide range of natural and human-induced disasters, including earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods, landslides, droughts, disease outbreaks and tribal conflicts.

Recognizing the important role nurses and midwives play during emergencies,

PNGNA encourages disaster preparedness by:

-  Supporting disaster preparedness and emergency response training
-  Strengthening communication networks among members.
-  Promoting workplace health and safety
-  Collaborating with Government agencies and health partners during disasters and public health emergencies.
-  Supporting coordinated emergency response and recovery activities.

PNGNA continues to advocate for strengthening the resilience of the nursing workforce to ensure continuity of quality health services during emergencies.

6. What are the goals of your National Nurses Association (NNA)?

-  PNGNA's goal is to work collaboratively through Public-Private Partnerships to improve health service delivery by advancing nursing priorities and strengthening investment in nursing.
-  PNGNA also seeks to strengthen the nursing voice and leadership at National, Provincial, District and Local Level Governments.

Goals of PNGNA

- Advocate for improved welfare, remuneration and working conditions for nurses and midwives.
- Promote professional development, education and lifelong learning.
- Strengthen leadership, networking and regional collaboration through the South Pacific Nurses Forum (SPNF).
- Promote high standards of professional ethics, nursing practice, education and leadership.
- Collaborate with Government and stakeholders to strengthen nursing policy and workforce development.
- Continue advocating for the establishment of the position of Chief Nursing Officer within the National Department of Health to provide national leadership for the nursing profession.

7. What are your aspirations and suggestions for the South Pacific Nurses Forum (SPNF)?

PNGNA looks forward to continued collaboration through the South Pacific Nurses Forum and recommends the following priorities:

-  Strengthen collaboration among Pacific National Nursing Associations.
-  Increase leadership development opportunities for Pacific nurses and midwives.
-  Expand regional education, specialist training and continuing professional development.
-  Strengthen the voice of nurses and midwives in health policy and decision-making.
-  Share best practices in disaster preparedness, emergency response and climate resilience.
-  Promote research, innovation and workforce sustainability across the Pacific region.

Conclusion

The Papua New Guinea Nurses Association remains committed to working in partnership with the South Pacific Nurses Forum to strengthen the nursing and midwifery profession through leadership, education, advocacy and workforce development.

Together, Pacific National Nursing Associations can amplify the voices of nurses and midwives and contribute to stronger health systems and improved health outcomes across the Pacific.

PNGNA sincerely thanks the SPNF Steering Group and all member countries for the opportunity to share our journey. We look forward to continuing our partnership as we work together to strengthen our profession and improve the health and wellbeing of our Pacific communities.



Mr. Frederick Kebai
President
PNG Nurses Association



Mr. Mulina Kwalimu
General Secretary
PNG Nurses Association

References

1. Asian Development Bank. (2017). *National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework 2017–2030, Papua New Guinea*.
2. Dawson, A., Kililo, M., Geita, L., Mola, G., Brodie, P. M., Rumsey, M., Copeland, F., Neill, A., & Homer, C. S. E. (2016). *Midwifery capacity building in Papua New Guinea: Key achievements and ways forward*. *Women and Birth*, 29(1), 1–8.
3. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. (2024). *Papua New Guinea–Australia health partnership strategy 2024–2034*.
4. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. (n.d.). *PNG maternal and child health initiative phase II: Final report*.
5. Government of Papua New Guinea. (2014). *Papua New Guinea national health plan 2011–2020*.
6. National Broadcasting Corporation, Papua New Guinea. (2025, May 5). *Health workforce shortage straining Papua New Guinea’s medical system, says DPM secretary*.
7. National Department of Health, Papua New Guinea. (2014). *Ministerial taskforce report*.
8. Papua New Guinea Nursing Council. (2014). *PNG NC overseas nurses and midwives registration policy*.
9. Papua New Guinea National Disaster Centre. (n.d.). *Hazards in PNG*.
10. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (n.d.).
11. Rumsey, J., Joseph, K., & Kilama, T. (2019). *Strengthening nursing and midwifery education in Papua New Guinea* [Conference poster]. United Nations Population Fund, Papua New Guinea. (2021, May 4). *The data is clear – invest in midwives*.
12. University of Technology Sydney. (2024, November 18). *Papua New Guinea nursing and midwifery educators drive change*. World Bank. (2024, February 20). *Empowering Papua New Guinea’s frontline health workers*.
13. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (n.d.). *Papua New Guinea commits to improving midwifery education, increasing the number of obstetricians, improving access to drugs and equipment, and developing comprehensive plans to improve existing health services*.
<https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/papua-new-guinea-commits-improve-midwifery-education-increase-number-obstetricians>
14. World Health Organization. (2025). *Papua New Guinea: Strategic partnership for health security and preparedness*.
15. World Health Organization. (2020). *Human resources for health: Papua New Guinea country report*.