Dear Graduate nurse/midwife,

Each year after the release of the Postgraduate Medical Council of Victoria Computer Match results, ANMF (Vic Branch) is contacted by graduate nurses/midwives who were unable to secure a graduate program position. ANMF (Vic Branch) has been increasingly concerned about the growing shortage of graduate nurse/midwife program positions available for new graduates.

This problem was also evident in other states and territories so the ANMF conducted a national campaign urging all political parties to make this issue a top priority to help sustain the future nursing and midwifery workforce. Following this campaign, the ANMF (Vic Branch) was pleased to reveal that some 150 additional graduate placements have been allocated throughout Victoria to assist graduates who have not found employment in a graduate program.

The following suggestions have been compiled to give newly graduated nurses and midwives, who may not have received a graduate year program offer through Computer Match, more information about other options for employment.

**What happens if I miss out on a Computer Matched graduate nurse/midwife placement and what can I do?**

- Computer Match provides unmatched candidates with a list of hospitals that still have positions available; those hospitals/health services also received a list of unmatched candidates. It is the responsibility of all new graduates to be proactive in contacting hospitals for these existing vacancies.

- It is a good idea to look at hospital websites and contact hospitals or graduate program educators (although not too often) prior to graduate program commencement dates and shortly after just in case positions have become available. Speaking with graduate educators also gives you an opportunity to make a positive impression and demonstrate your enthusiasm.

- The Nursing and Midwifery Graduate Information Portal (nmgj) is an online register for graduates seeking employment opportunities. Designed to support nursing and midwifery graduates who have not secured a position through Computer Match, it provides direct access to information about all vacancies suitable for graduates across the public and private sectors. Newly graduated nurses and midwives can access the website at www.nmgj.org.au

- There are hundreds of organisations that do not participate in the Computer Match process. This does not mean however that they do not also offer graduate programs. Many organisations advertise through their website or place job advertisements in newspapers.

- Numerous private hospitals offer graduate nurse programs, many of which do not participate in Computer Match; therefore application needs to be made directly. As many of these facilities are smaller than the major metropolitan hospitals, they may provide more personalised attention/support.
• Consider interstate and rural/regional opportunities. Many regional areas have a greater need to recruit nurses than metropolitan and graduates in these areas often experience opportunities that metropolitan nurses do not have the privilege to experience because the facilities are smaller, they provide more supported practice and attention to newly graduated nurses, as well as enormous variety in clinical practice.

• The most popular time to commence a graduate role is at the beginning of each year, however many health facilities also offer a midyear intake. These hospitals advertise through Computer Match as well as externally. Again, it is advisable to contact hospitals directly or check their website for the details relating to mid-year graduate program intakes.

How can I increase my chances of getting noticed?

• ANMF (Vic Branch) runs an Undergraduate Nurse/Midwife Student Study Day each year assisting final year students to get the most out of the computer match process and to develop an effective Curriculum Vitae and interview skills.

• Make sure your Curriculum Vitae is well presented and that it clearly represents your strengths. It is important that your application addresses all the selection criteria and shows you have researched the health facility. Prospective employers will notice job applications that are positive and display an understanding of the health services they provide.

• Practice your interview techniques with preceptors and colleagues even if you haven’t been offered an interview yet – it’s important to be well prepared and have some thoughts about what you might be asked, this helps you to be more relaxed.

• As with any job application process, there will always be many other candidates and they will most likely have similar grades and experiences to you. It is important that in your application you focus on what sets you apart, why you are a great nurse/midwife and how you will benefit the organisation.

• If you are offered an interview, take advantage of the opportunity to sell yourself and try not to be too stressed. Be aware that you are being assessed from the minute you enter the room. If you are not successful interviews give you some experience of the process and the questions you might be asked to assist you for the next time.

What if I don’t ever get a place in a graduate nurse program, how will I get the experience I need?

• Whilst graduate nurse/midwife programs provide graduates with a structured and supported introduction to their practice, there is no mandatory requirement by AHPRA to undertake a graduate program. A graduate nurse or midwife is able to apply for a position based on merit, just as any other nurse or midwife would.

• Some health facilities will provide “supported practice” into the workforce, although it isn’t an official graduate year program. This may be an alternative as you enter the nursing workforce. The aim behind this is to provide a supported introduction by ways such as supernumerary support.

• Joining a nurse bank may also appeal to some. Many hospitals offer an orientation program. The consistent presence in an organisation can be favourable when applying for a permanent position.

Please rest assured that the ANMF (Vic Branch) is continuing to work on this issue to help graduate nurses and midwives gain greater support as they launch their careers and enter the health care system.

I wish you all the best of luck and encourage you to continue to seek employment in the wonderful profession of nursing and midwifery.