Are you ready for this?
A continuing professional development (CPD), national registration requirements and portfolio development project

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Introduction:
The project began as a tiny germ of an idea after one of those ‘OMG’ moments while reflecting on the learning gained from attending a conference on ‘Nursing and the Law’ and how it would apply to my practice. Was I the only one who didn't realise how complex preparing the evidence that would be required to prove my CPD and recency of practice in the event of an Australian Health Practitioner Registration Agency (AHPRA) audit? Colleagues attending the conference assured me I was not alone. I didn’t act immediately. I reflected then asked questions of nursing staff who work on the Royal Newcastle Centre wards and units. Finally, armed with their feedback, I discussed my idea with my Service Manager.

Method:
The project was designed to simulate an AHPRA audit. Nurses from each of the seven units at the RNC were randomly selected, representing approximately ten per cent of the total nursing staff. Letters were sent to the twenty one nurses selected, requesting they submit their professional portfolio (including evidence of CPD and recency of practice) within 30 days. The letter outlined the review panel and feedback process. Portfolios were independently reviewed, using a checklist, by the Clinical Nurse Educator for the area of specialty and the Nurse Unit Manager of the unit and me. The results of each review were then given in written form to staff during a face to face feedback interview. 21 portfolios were submitted.

Findings:
Three of the 21 portfolios were deemed to contain sufficient evidence to pass an AHPRA audit without further revision. There was a common theme to evidence most often missed: Self-assessment against National Competency Standards, learning plans with goals/ timeframes as well as proof of recency of practice.

Conclusion:
This project highlighted the need for further education regarding AHPRA requirements for registration and portfolio development.