

# Magnet Recognition



## CASE STUDY: Magnet® as a Global Framework for Nursing Excellence

PRINCESS ALEXANDRA HOSPITAL

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### BACKGROUND

Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH) is a large, complex public healthcare organization in Australia with a long-standing commitment to high-quality, patient-centered care. In the early 2000s, PAH recognized the need for a more structured and sustainable approach to strengthening nursing practice, workforce engagement, and quality outcomes.

Rather than pursuing incremental fixes, PAH leadership adopted the Magnet Recognition Program® as a strategic, evidence-based framework to transform nursing culture, strengthen professional practice, and improve organizational performance. Magnet was selected not as a U.S.-centric accreditation, but as a globally applicable leadership model capable of driving long-term workforce stability, accountability, and excellence.

PAH became the first hospital in the Southern Hemisphere to achieve Magnet designation and has since sustained Magnet alignment over multiple designation cycles.

### CHALLENGES

As an organization operating outside the United States, PAH encountered challenges familiar to many international healthcare systems:

- High nursing turnover and low engagement at the outset of the journey
- Limited national benchmarking for nurse-sensitive indicators and patient experience
- The need to establish effective shared governance structures from the ground up
- Increasing expectations and rigor with each iteration of the Magnet Application Manual
- Sustaining engagement and momentum across a large, diverse workforce over time
- Navigating global healthcare disruptions while maintaining cultural alignment.

These challenges underscored the need for a **disciplined, scalable framework** rather than isolated improvement initiatives.

## SOLUTIONS AND STRATEGIES

PAH implemented Magnet as a **long-term operating framework** for nursing and organizational excellence, supported by strong executive leadership and structured governance.

Key strategies included:

- Integrating Magnet principles directly into the **nursing operational and strategic plans**, ensuring alignment with organizational priorities
- Embedding a Professional Practice Model to underpin all nursing actions, professional behaviours, and accountability structures within the plan, ensuring that shared decision-making is embedded at every level of care.
- Establishing **robust shared governance structures** that actively engaged nurses at all levels in decision-making
- Creating a large, formal **Magnet Champion network** to sustain engagement and ownership across the organization
- Strengthening **leadership development, succession planning, mentoring, and transition programs**
- Investing in **data transparency**, including unit-level nurse-sensitive indicator reporting and performance monitoring
- Conducting structured reviews and gap analyses after each designation cycle to continuously refine structures and processes
- Ensuring visible, sustained **executive sponsorship**, with Magnet positioned as a leadership responsibility—not a nursing project.

## RESULTS

The Magnet framework produced sustained, measurable improvements over time:

- Nursing turnover decreased significantly and was sustained at low levels following designation
- Nurse engagement improved, progressing to a recognized culture of success
- Unit-level transparency of performance data strengthened accountability and improvement
- Leadership capability and succession readiness were enhanced across the organization
- Shared governance participation expanded and matured, supporting frontline ownership of outcomes

These results reinforced Magnet as a reliable mechanism for stabilizing and strengthening the nursing workforce.

## OUTCOMES

***“Magnet Recognition is an ongoing journey that has enabled our organisation to continually set new stretch goals as the Magnet program has evolved over time.”***

- Nursing turnover declined from 25% in 2002 to less than 8% after first Magnet designation and reached 0% in 2015.
- PAH sustained Magnet alignment for more than 20 years as a five-time designated international Magnet organization.
- More than 350 Magnet Champions and 100+ nurses in Nursing Excellence Taskforces supported ongoing practice improvement.

Beyond the metrics, Magnet strengthened PAH’s culture by embedding professional standards, accountability, shared decision-making, and performance visibility into daily practice.

This alignment helped sustain nursing excellence across multiple designation cycles and changing healthcare environments.

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## CONCLUSION

Princess Alexandra Hospital's experience demonstrates that the Magnet Recognition Program® is a globally relevant leadership and performance framework, not a U.S.-only accreditation. When implemented with executive commitment and strategic intent, Magnet supports workforce stability, leadership capability, transparency, and sustained excellence—regardless of geography.

For international healthcare leaders, Magnet offers a proven structure to elevate nursing practice while strengthening organizational resilience, accountability, and patient care outcomes.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- **Magnet succeeds when positioned as a strategic operating framework.**  
Embedding Magnet principles into organizational strategy provides leaders with a disciplined approach to advancing workforce performance and accountability.
- **Executive sponsorship is a decisive success factor.**  
Sustained commitment from senior leadership ensures alignment, accelerates decision-making, and reinforces nursing excellence as a core priority.
- **Shared governance unlocks frontline capability at scale.**  
Engaging nurses at all levels strengthens ownership, leadership development, and execution of improvement initiatives.
- **Transparency enables confidence and control.**  
Clear monitoring structures and visible performance data allow leaders to identify risks early and sustain momentum through complex change.
- **Magnet is a continuous performance journey.**  
Long-term value is achieved through learning, adaptation, and collaboration across roles and disciplines—not through designation alone.

Discover how ANCC Magnet® Recognition helps organizations elevate nursing excellence and outcomes.  
Contact [magnet@ana.org](mailto:magnet@ana.org) to learn more.

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