

# The Baron Report

Volume 4, Issue 2, 2003

## *CARERS - Aged Care's Front-line Troops*

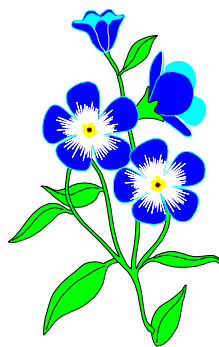
Ever notice how some places are always in front with the latest information, knowledge or techniques while others seem to lag behind. Why? Are the places in the know wiser, more sophisticated or simply better planners?

If the truth be known there are people out there who ensure that their facility is not going to get left behind on any issue. They will fight to get what they believe is best, and usually they are able to get what they want.

There are others who are content to have a make do mentality, always behind trying to catch up. Always running around bemoaning why other facilities have the edge.

With all the talk in recent days of war, it is perhaps appropriate to spare a thought for those that will

actually have to 'go into battle' - the front line troops. They don't make the decisions, nor are they asked



for opinions.

Rather they must go and get the job done. Some unkindly see them as cannon fodder, easily replaced if they fall over and not really valued.

The aged care equivalent of those front-line troops are personal care workers. Many tell us that they are there to do the dirty work, cop the abuse that

might be around, remain silent and 'just get on with it.'

Yet, in the main, they are a dedicated bunch that provide the necessary support to ensure that facilities are able to function. Simply put without the carers, aged care would not function.

As with all aspects of aged care, change is a concern for personal care workers. The Carer's Conference will address issues of change in status from unregulated workers, educational requirements and handling difficult situations effectively. The ability to be part of a dedicated aged care association will also be highlighted.

Every facility should ensure that they have a representative who can collect this valuable information and bring it back for all other staff.

### *Who Cares for the Carers?*

*A one day user  
friendly conference  
especially developed  
for Personal Carers  
Monday  
March 24th 2003*

Education  
Development  
Centre  
Milner Street  
Hindmarsh  
0845 - 1500  
*Forget me Not*

## *Early Bird Extended - Due to Many Requests*

It appears that the festive season caught some people on the hop and as such they have been calling to seek extensions on the early bird pricing for the Carer's Conference.

Okay, we can appreciate that items get overlooked, people are away and that generally the December-January period is

chaotic. And sooo, they forgot, no not forgot, they misplace, no they didn't receive the information.

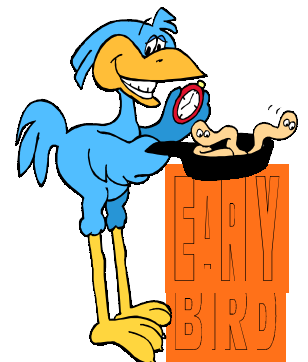
And the early bird price does look attractive and couldn't they have it because they did mean to get it in on time.

To prevent any further calls and stories, (although we do enjoy talking to you at

any time) we will extend the Early Bird deal until the 5th of March.

Now we can't be any fairer than that.

But for everyone's sake and to avoid disappointment, get your forms in quickly, even if the money needs to come later. Otherwise you or your staff might miss out.



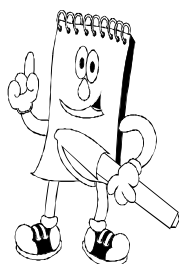
**Current information for the Aged Care Industry**

# Project Volunteer Information

by Tracy Baron

Would you like to have something you have written or said published?

Simply mail, fax or e-mail us a copy with your details and we will try to make it happen.



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Recently N & C Baron & Associates was approached by Adelaide Zoo Education Officer, Jess Langley to solve a problem the Zoo was experiencing with volunteer recruitment.

The roles of volunteers within the Zoo vary according to what section they are involved in, and many are not aware of what is required of them for various roles.

Jess runs an interesting program called, *Zoophoria*, which 'brings the Zoo to You.'

She needed to develop a cost effective way of informing existing Zoo volunteers about *Zoophoria* in the hope of recruiting more help for this special program.

Previously a lot of time was spent repeatedly having to take people through the whole process and explain what was required in each area. This situation is very similar to aged care, where hours are spent showing people around the site and explaining what is happening.

Often with the result that people then feel they are not suited for the task.

Discussions resulted in a decision to produce a video depicting a typical *Zoophoria* day, showing all the aspects the potential



volunteers would be required to complete. A big ask considering the ideal finished product was to be less than ten minutes long.

Apart from drawing interest and the support of volunteers to *Zoophoria* this method of promotion has the potential to save time and resources in informing or training people.

Details that needed to be covered in the video included tasks such as:

- Preparation of equipment

- and creatures
- Loading the vehicle
- Getting to the site
- Setting up and performing a one hour production
- Packing up and reloading the vehicle
- Returning to the Zoo
- Cleaning up.

The finished product, a zippy seven-minute video was the result. It included a total day's work encapsulated in an easy to follow, self-explanatory feature complete with music and special effects.

The video has had a terrific response and plenty of positive feedback with some enthusiastic volunteers taking it home for viewing in their own time. A time consuming problem easily and economically solved.

This method could be easily adapted to highlight your facility to potential volunteers and save you endless hours of repetitive tours. Contact Tracy Baron on 8276 9763 for further information.

## *Zoophoria* – Great for Aged Care

Bringing the *Zoo to You* is a novel concept and one that many aged care facilities are embracing to provide residents with an exciting and fun filled activity.

Developed to enable community groups of up to thirty people to experience native amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals the approximately one-hour program is an ideal interactive group activity.

Seeing, touching and hearing the various creatures is sure to bring back endless

stories of resident's experiences and tales of times past as well as providing action and colour for today.

Costs for this event are very reasonable.

Whether its meeting a magpie, patting a possum or seeing a snake (believe it or not, residents really like the snake!) *Zoophoria* is sure to delight.

For further information, or to make a booking contact



Adelaide Zoo Education Service on 8267 2434. You will not be disappointed.

# The 'So What' Test

Imagine if you will that you wake up from a dream in which you have just completed your accreditation site visit and the auditors are heading out the door.

How do you now feel? Relieved, sick, ecstatic or ho hum just another day?

Well for many the notion is not just a dream but a reality. They have completed Round 2 and are saying "We're going to be better prepared next time and we're starting NOW."

But how? Where to from here?

We recommend using the "So What"? test. What is that you ask. Simply put, evaluate an issue by asking the question "So What?". Here are some examples.

You have audits that show you have procedures for all 44 expected outcomes. "So what?" Are residents or staff any better as a result? Of course, you say. Tell us how.

Your staff have just completed a food survey and presented you with a nicely coloured graph. It looks lovely but we now need to ask "So What?". How will having this graph benefit your residents? "But we spent a lot of time doing it and everyone says that we need graphs", I hear you say. Again, "So what?"

If you have a graph that indicated the reason/rationale for the project, how you went about it, what data was collected, how it was analysed and what you plan to do with the information to benefit your residents, Ah now we are talking.

For example: So what

if a resident survey shows that 85% of residents like the new winter menu? Does that mean every element, every day? Or does it mean that it looks all right on paper? And what about the 15% that don't like it? Why not? What can be done for them?

A more useful strategy might be a resident satisfaction observation study. Staff observe during the mealtime what the residents are eating and what they are not. They ask residents what they enjoyed most about the meal and what they enjoyed least.

They observed what items were being left on the plate. These observations can be further qualified by asking a random sample of residents how the meal was and should it stay on the menu.

Again those answers are collated. And then, "So

what?' The meal was a success and residents want to see it on the menu again except for Mrs Jones who will have a sandwich instead next time around.

The same test can also be used with your benchmarking activities. You have fewer falls than 75% of participating facilities across Australia. "So what?" Sounds good but is it? If you can demonstrate positive initiatives that have led to the result, it might be good. But, if the outcome was achieved by reducing residents' independence and an active restraint program, it is of questionable value.

Results data is only useful and valid if linked to positive outcomes for residents. A really good result is one that shows that your residents have a better quality of life as a result of your interventions.

## Have Your Say - NOW

One of the most consistent and enduring demands we hear in aged care is that of 'too little money.' That is we need more money for this, that or the other. We are always happy to listen but it might be better if you channel your concerns to where they might just get noticed.

The Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing (DHA) is seeking submissions from everyone on THE REVIEW OF PRICING ARRANGEMENTS IN RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE, so here is your chance to tell them what you think.

As the advertisement in The Advertiser on January 25th 2003 indicated:

*All interested individuals and organisations are invited to make a submission. Submissions may present views on a single issue in a short letter, or e-mail, or they may canvas a wide range of issues in more detail. Submissions will become publically available on the Review Website unless marked confidential or*

*accompanied by a request to delay release. Any sensitive information that is not to be made publicly available should be provided under a separate cover and clearly marked confidential.*

*The closing date for submissions in Friday 28th March 2003.*

*An information booklet on submissions can be printed from the*

*Review Website [www.health.gov.au/acc/rescare/acprtask.htm](http://www.health.gov.au/acc/rescare/acprtask.htm) or obtained by calling the Review on (02) 6289 4555.*

So don't pass up this golden opportunity to have your say. If you do you then have no one to blame but yourself.



Using the net to make things happen.

# How Did Your Facility Measure Up?



An opportunity was exploited by clever aged care facility managers to measure their care and support hours against others in South Australia.

Approximately 30 respondents, representing a

10% sample of SA facilities have taken part and will soon know how they 'measure up'.

So what? (To use our own advice)

These people now know how they will fare if they come under ANF

scrutiny.

They can see if staff claims of feeling overworked might have any validity; they can use this information to further advise their board and finally, they will be more

informed when deciding where to put further human resources.

It has been suggested that this valuable exercise become an annual event - we will keep you informed.

## Appropriate Boundaries for Aged Care

Recently all Registered and Enrolled nurses received a copy of Nursing Board of SA's Standard on Therapeutic Relationships and Professional Boundaries that outlines "expectations of nursing practice" in this area. SO WHAT?

While relevant from a nursing perspective this is an issue that has implications for all Aged Care Workers.

Aged Care is an area where staff and clients have prolonged contact and develop a closeness unlikely and uncommon in other areas where contact is less

intensive and more time constrained.

The holistic nature of gerontic practice requires staff to get to know their clients' backgrounds and develop a care approach in which social-emotional support takes centre stage. Many residents and staff in facilities describe themselves as a family.

But, getting to know individuals this intimately can put both client and carer at risk of overstepping the bounds.

Aged care workers are the professional partners of the relationship and

regardless of the care and emotional link with clients and their families, must maintain a distance that does not impinge upon their privacy or plays on their vulnerability.

Residents/clients may love to hear about our family extending their interest through us and that is fine to a point. They should never, however, be burdened with discussion of our personal/family problems.

They may enjoy a newsy chat and they certainly enjoy a bit of community gossip but news should be just that, not drawing them

into staff conflicts or gossiping in a way that undermines their relationship with others. Overdependence can also result.

The key word is "therapeutic". Our clients rely on us to meet their needs. It is the primary reason for admission to facility, but the issue that must always be asked is "are we a help or a hindrance?"

Appropriate boundaries ensure residents can continue to feel part of a happy family and are not burdened by relationships that are NOT therapeutic.

## STOP PRESS

### Agency Comments on Accreditation Concerns

We have recently heard from a variety of facilities that have experienced some level of discomfort or concern during the accreditation process.

N & C Baron & Associates has often acted as a communication conduit for facilities with the Agency, the Department and peak bodies when staff have felt uncomfortable approaching them directly. While everyone should be able to communicate at

this level, the reality is that many are not.

On approaching the Agency on behalf of one concerned individual we were politely told that we had no role. They indicated that facilities are directed to look up and follow the Aged Care Principles, that they could use their peak bodies and that facilities themselves have the right to complain or praise via their evaluation form given at the end of the audit.

It is the Agency view that facility staff are all adults and that there will be no repercussions or victimisation as a result of feedback.

Whether you completely believe that premise is left to you; many facilities still do not have total confidence that the system will be as robust as is often stated.

You have a legitimate right to comment and complain on any aspect of the

accreditation process.

In this instance YOU are the customer, having paid a great deal of money to have the service. Ensure that your money has been wisely spent.

We will continue to monitor and report on this situation, we believe that we provide a valuable service to the industry through this type of process.

If you have a comment, please let us know.