

# The Baron Report

## *Political Football*

by Neil Baron

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If one was cynical, as I happen to be, one might be thinking that the area of aged care is a political football.

And like footie, the grand final is in the near future, the teams are posturing and fine tuning their skills and strategies and looking for weak spots in the opposition.

The difference might be that while footie is seen in a positive light, aged care is still PERCEIVED in negative terms by some in the community.

Recent headlines such as "BISHOP UNDER FIRE AGAIN" is a reasonable starting point. Wow a 'kick the Vics' story, but we have had our own stories as well.

It appears that there is no confusion over which Bishop we are talking about and definitely no questions about the show girl. This Bishop is definitely the Minister responsible for Aged Care and it appears that all is not well in her area of responsibility.

But is the media overreacting, being political or merely reporting what is happening.

Is the focus on the Minister, or the service? Are some facilities being given different treatment? Is someone just stirring? Big questions but also important ones. Allow me to explain how I see the situation.

One: the area of Aged

Care is a sensitive one and could be seen as being a poison chalice for anyone taking it on.

Why such a problem area? It's all a matter of money, really; high growth costing big dollars. But wait- there's more! Within our society there is a sense that we must look after our

elderly. Therefore if we are seen not to be doing this then we are in trouble. So the solution is to be seen to be doing a great deal, at the least possible cost.

If we read recent articles in Aged Care Industry papers such as Insite we see this notion in brilliant detail. Clawing back the RCS by \$71 million makes one wonder what exactly are the perceptions of those administering these areas. Are not the levels of care growing on a daily basis? Is not the need for more services obvious? Well it appears not to everyone.

But an election is coming so it must be seen that an area as sensitive as aged care will have lip service

paid to it but could still be a victim of fund reduction long term. So lets go to the old issue of making everyone justify the money they are receiving.

Well why not get rid of one submarine and then spend all that money on aged care? Or reevaluate the perks bestowed on our elected

members. Well that just couldn't be done, afterall submarines are important, so are overseas travel for the polities.

But we protest, aged care is an important and valuable part of many people's lives. The question might be who are we telling. Preaching to the converted is a nice exercise but it won't necessarily gain us much. It is critically important that the decision makers and public are informed.

I remember in a time past organising a day of visiting for an aspiring future prime minister. One visit was to a nursing home. I must say that he was a bit nervous about what reaction he might receive.

And that is the whole

point of my story, politicians are nervous about the issue of aged care. When was the last time that your organisation discussed your concerns with your federal member? When was the last time you had a politician visit?

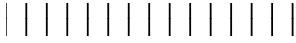
Two: the onus is on the Industry to promote the good things that are happening and to make all decision makers aware of future needs. The days of any government throwing money at a problem are long gone. If money is required you need to be prepared to justify every last cent. No plan - no money. And that notion doesn't relate only to aged care.

Three: plan ahead. Senator Amanda Vandstone on television the other night discussed the aspect of community care as the way of the future and stated that people are "going for it like a cat to cream". Money flowing to the community sector will not be able to be used in the institutional sector.

There will be even greater need to justify any money you receive in the future. Be warned and prepared but make sure that you do everything possible to get what you require to run your facility.

*The author holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and has managed numerous political campaigns at local, state and federal levels.*

**Current information for the Aged Care Industry**

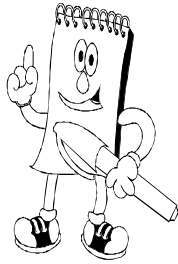


# Making a Move

## Is this the "right" time for a change

*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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Thinking about a change in your employment? Nothing wrong in that, it is always good to reevaluate your options. Often in looking at our situation and if indeed the grass is greener on the other side we come to the conclusion that life is not so bad where we are.

The best way to do an assessment in this area is by way of a cost/benefit analysis (cba). Simply put make a list with all the negative points (cost) on one side and all the positive points (benefits) on the other. Then balance the result and see where you end up. If you get a positive then maybe you should consider if a move will gain you anything. BUT, if the result is in the negative then it might be the time to start looking at the job vacancies section of the paper or start asking around about jobs that might be going.

Don't just use financial aspects as part of your measure. While we are all aware of the importance of money it is necessary to look at the intangibles.

Research into this area always shows money, while an important factor, down the list after things like job security, a good working environment and a sense of achievement. Who we work with and how we are seen are important issues that often outweigh the dollar etc. Yet those notions are often lost in the scuffle. Employers often fail to acknowledge this aspect.



One question that you might want to ask yourself if you do have a negative balance is "what would have to be done to make me happy in my job."

Be honest and serious about this one. If you are less than happy what would have to happen to correct the problem? Is the problem you, the facility or both?

Some will argue that money is not always about dollars but an indication of how one is valued - an important esteem issue currently in Aged Care.

## Thorny Two - *Who's Running the Show?*

### This One is for YOU

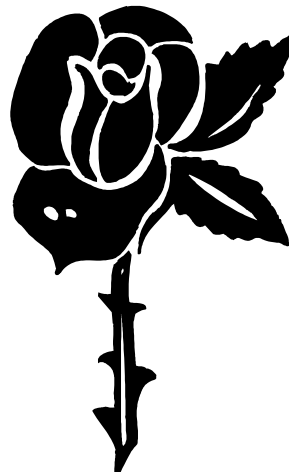
Circle the 26th of September in your calendar and make plans for the second Thorny Issues Conference - *Who's Running the Show?* which will be held at the Lakes Resort Hotel, West Lakes.

This is the conference for YOU.

As part of our continuous improvement process we have booked a bigger facility and have checked that the chairs are comfy.

Like last year we will endeavour to provide a value packed day.

A knowledgeable



group of speakers and panelists, from relevant areas including the Agency, ANF, the Department of Health & Aged Care and the Nurses Board will be contributing to ensure that many of the vexing issues will get a public hearing.

A further bonus is the addition of trade displays to further assist participants.

See the pamphlet for full details.

*Want to see your facility mentioned here? Then let us have an article on what you are doing that is different, exciting or interesting?*



## A NEW LEVEL OF SERVICE OFFERED TO THE COMMUNITY

### Trogenza House

Located at 15 - 27 Knowles Road, Elizabeth Vale, SA 5112.

For the past number of years an effective community accommodation and Client Support Program specialising in aged care partnerships has existed with Trogenza Avenue Aged Care Service (TAACS) and Elizabeth and Districts Housing Assoc. Inc (EDHA).

The relationships between EDHA, Northern Domiciliary Care, Lyell McEwin Health Service and TAACS has seen developed initiatives to offer accommodation with appropriate aged care support services in varying locations enabling clients to remain within their local neighbourhood environment and stay out of hospital or aged care facilities.

A two-year trial and practical experience has heightened efficiencies and ensured continuous quality improvement in areas of rehabilitation, convalescence and short term accommodation for the elderly.

This ambitious plan to rationalise and draw together a unique skill mix of health

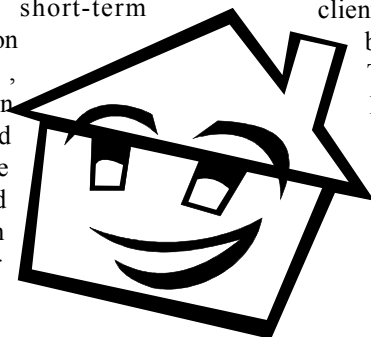
professionals to offer a complete multi-disciplinary range of services and then include accommodation in a structured manner is now confirmed.

This community service meets the diverse and specialised health service needs, short-term accommodation needs, rehabilitation and convalescence care and information services for older people included in the community of the North Western Region.

Trogenza House's future direction is based upon; the Aged Care Act 1997, Ten Year Plan for Older People, and the Department of Human Services Moving Ahead Program: Strategic Plan for Health and Community Services for Older People and the Review of Domiciliary Care Services.

Lee Martin, the current Manager/Nursing Director of TAACS, has taken

the direction to develop the future of this remarkable community facility of Trogenza House from a six bed unit two years ago to now have twelve beds. A further eight beds are being built over the next six months. He then went on to say that



clients who have been at Trogenza House have a confirmed R C S Category and are better prepared for care in High or Low care facilities.

Trogenza House is a licensed model of a Supported Residential Facility that assists in the provision of a total coordinated aged care service and is sought out for advice and guidance by many other agencies and the general public.

Trogenza House has been developed to demonstrate the full potential of the future services and coordination of care or

accommodation for the elderly. Governments have incentives towards better Health and Housing outcomes for Older People so opportunities have been identified for Trogenza House to become a specialist facility for the Aged Care Industry and TAACS to be proud of.

Future programs are planned to see Trogenza House become cost neutral in focus and developed within resources available throughout the health system and community services to partner efficiencies, share skills and develop a complete coordinated health and accommodation resource for the community. Trogenza House promotes working with older people, their families and carers to encourage a partnered program and self help avenues.

This project takes up the challenge for change towards Community Health, short-term accommodation and Care Services for the Older Person. It invites those who read this to join the partnership or use the facility/ services on offer.

## Benchmarking - A great Start

A great first training day was held on 1 August 2001 with participants being appraised of aspects of continuous improvement by Lynn Openshaw from the Aged Care Accreditation and Standards Agency as an added bonus.

An explanation of the benchmarking process was presented and discussed including what might be measured and learning from the experiences of other. The year long calendar was discussed and important dates were confirmed.

The Competitive Analysis Benchmarking program will provide numerous benefits to participants while being

mindful of costs. The program is not just a matter of crunching a series of numbers and then giving you an average. While an interesting exercise, the real question that needs to be asked is 'what does it mean?'

N & C Baron & Associates' program is unique in its partnership approach with participants to both gather and analyse data in a manner that gives true indicators of areas of strength and weakness within a service and establish priorities for continuous improvement.

The next intake for this program is in January 2002.

## Two Little Ducks - 22 The Joys of Bingo

Bingo, what a great past time! Or is it? Personally I don't play the game, but it appears that bingo is the number one activity in most aged care facilities. Many talk of residents rioting if bingo was withdrawn from the agenda.

But what is meant by bingo?

If we are seeking information from a new arrival in regards to their range of activities and bingo is mentioned is everyone talking the same

language. Is bingo the game that happens in your activity room on Tuesdays or was it the weekly event that they



went to at the church hall where they met all their friends, caught up on the gossip and had a good natter. None of those

elements are present at the Tuesday session.

They might have loved the local version of the game but can only tolerate the Tuesday event.

That's fair enough and something that we must all keep in mind.

In assessing resident needs we have to seek to facilitate what they want to do, rather than what we think that they should do. A small difference in the saying, a big difference in satisfaction.

## Upcoming Dates & Events

### THORNY TWO -

#### *Who is Running the Show?*

A full day of cutting edge situations that are currently impacting on the successful running of aged care facilities.

A MUST for all CEOs, DOCs, but also important for board members and proprietors.

### *The Lakes Resort Hotel*

#### *West Lakes*

*September 26th*

*For YOU - don't miss out.*

### Spot the Mistake

We keep getting asked if this fun game is still on.

Of course it is. So send in your answer, remember that the person identifying the most mistakes in each edition is in for a prize.

*(For new players - we have embedded mistakes throughout this publication. Search for them and note where they are. Mail, fax or e-mail your answer for a chance at a prize).*

## Networking Group

*The next session will be on:*

*Wednesday October 15th*

*1630 - 1800*

*Warinna Homes*

*56 George St*

*Paradise*

*Open Discussion*

*Please confirm your attendance by calling*

*Neil on 8276 9763*

## THE BONES

Almost every organisation has four bones:

1. The WISHBONES - Who spend all their time wishing someone else would do the work,
2. The JAWBONES - Who do all the talking and very little else.
3. The KNUCKLEBONES - Who knock everything the others do.
4. The BACKBONES - Who get on and do the work.

Thanks to Kath's husband Ron- Amaroo Gardens - Melbourne