

## Thorny Issues 5 - Dollars and \$ense

Thursday August 12th 2004

As a small entity in the aged care industry we believe that we punch above our weight in attempting to bring attention to issues of importance.

We are proud to be able to present issues in an independent forum being answerable to no single master, employer or membership group.

Some are not pleased because we present a vision of aged care that does not fit into their perception. Aged care is no longer a genteel quiet little backwater to the acute sector. In point of fact, in many rural areas it is aged care that has enabled a community to maintain its acute care services.

It is a growth industry struggling to maintain high standards for challenging customers provided for by staff that are often under trained and overworked.

Hiding or ignoring problems will not make them disappear nor will wishing and hoping that someone else will come up with the magic formula. What is required is a good understanding of the realities of the situation and a planned manageable approach to dealing with the issues.

Aged care funding remains the subject of huge debate.

In the recent past although we have had two Aged Care Ministers who appear to have listened compassionately and

expressed verbal concern, little has changed. Have we been duped? Has it all been about developing a pre-election high with little real change to be seen in the post-election hangover?

Keynote speaker, Jill Pretty is just the person to address these thorny problems.

Jill is currently a member of the RCS Industry Liaison group and is fully aware of the changes that have been mooted and of future directions under consideration.

As Policy Officer with Aged and Community Services NSW/ACT, her role is to keep abreast with change and she is always gauging the atmosphere, a barometer so to speak of what change we might expect.

Implications of the Hogan Report, RCS modification and when we are likely to see change and can we survive until change occurs, will be discussed.

We have given Jill free reign to present the situation as she sees it; where we currently stand, possible changes and implications if we have a change of government..

There will be good opportunities for questions, comments and discussion.

Are you feeling confident about your facility's

current Accreditation status and on track for the next round?

Our second speaker Angela Halsey, State Manager of the Aged Care Standards Agency recently spoke at N & C Baron's conference on leisure and will now address this conference on the 'Forgotten Standard' - Resident Lifestyle and the expectations therein.

If you have been following reports on the Accreditation website, you will know that some facilities have been non-compliant in this area and it may (should) well be receiving more attention in the next round.

Also on the agenda this year is the Changing Face of Aged Care. Doug Strain, CEO of Masonic Homes SA & NT is a "new kid on the block" coming to aged care from the engineering industry. From this perspective, he sees aged care with fresh eyes and is able to identify opportunities for positive change.

He will be joined in addressing this topic by Jan Marlborough, recently appointed Group Director of Care with the Salvation Army Aged Care Unit SA & NT.

Jan has successfully managed the Darwin site of the Salvation Army Group for nearly five years before

taking on this new challenge. And a challenge it is with one site holding an Accreditation with Merit and another being able only to achieve a one-year Accreditation status.

And she continues to live with change; it is highly likely that her organisation will have changed ownership by the time that Thorny occurs.

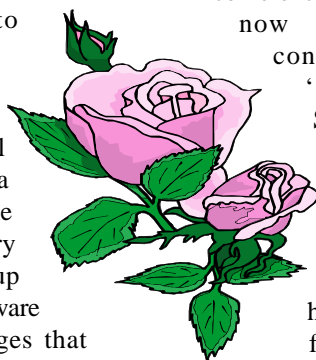
For an industry that has several 'badges' for its management staff, CEOs, Administrators, DONs, DON/CEOs, DOCs, Site Managers, CNCs, Nurse Managers and so on, there are huge problems in finding effective management staff.

Robert Godden from Speakman, Tanner & Menzies will address this thorny issue. Who or what is a manager and how do we go about recruiting and selecting the right manager for our service. This should be A MUST FOR BOARD MEMBERS AND SENIOR MANAGERS.

Allison Willis, Senior Project Officer at the Nurses Board of South Australia has been specifically looking at the changing role of the Enrolled Nurse. This is an issue that is affecting not only aged care but the whole health care industry and is one that will be defined by the determinations of the Board.

With shortages of RNs beginning to bite deeply, many are looking to their EN staff to fill the gap, but just

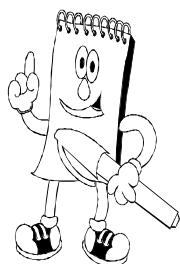
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# Specified Services - No Excuses

by Carla 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



**N & C Baron  
& Associates**

ABN 35 041 713 303

PO Box 687  
Mitcham SA 5062

Ph. (08) 8276 9763  
Fax. (08) 8277 0300

[www.ncbaron.com](http://www.ncbaron.com)

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While Regulatory Compliance remains a problem for many it is not often identified as non-compliant by Accreditation auditors. Instead we are constantly questioned about matters of compliance and observe non-compliance in areas that should be clearly understood by those managing facilities.

It is difficult at times to know just what legislation is pertinent to residential aged care but many remain blissfully unaware of one area that is clearly outlined specifically for our sector.

The Aged Care Principles clearly delineate expectations of Approved Providers in *Schedule 1* of the *Quality of Care Principles* and these are further set out for your perusal in The Residential Care Manual, Section 12: Specified Care and Services.

Some of the key areas that we still see as problematic are:

Provision of "recreational furnishings (1.4)... [and] communal recreational equipment (2.5) ... suited to residents."

Very often we see Activities Staff or Diversional Therapists forced to fundraise for the basic equipment they need to carry out the activities program.

Is your facility one of the many hundred gaining the benefits of the self-learning packages and if not how are your staff gathering or updating on this knowledge?

Recent benchmarking showed that these valuable staff members have little enough time to meet their goal of facilitating residents' leisure activities without having to



work with insufficient resources and/or needing to take valuable time to raise the funds to provide activities.

Another area of which some providers are unaware is with regard the cost of medication packaging aids.

Under Treatments and Procedures (2.4), the requirements are explicit:

"If it is the provider's policy to assist residents by storing and dispensing medications in dosette packages or multidose blister packs then the aged care home should pay for those packs."

This cost cannot be passed on to the residents. And, for those thinking that maybe these packaging systems are not worth the cost, be sure you meet the requirements of Expected

Outcome 2.7 Medication is managed safely and correctly. These aids may just be what are enhancing your medication safety and ensuring you meet your duty of care to residents.

With regard to Nursing Services to High Care Residents (3.8), again the requirements are very clear.

"Initial and on-going assessment, planning and management of care for residents, carried out by a registered nurse."

What does this mean?

1. The reference is to Nursing Services: suitably qualified staff will manage (assess, plan and evaluate) leisure and therapy needs and programs.

2. An enrolled nurse is not a registered nurse; even in Victoria where they are designated Registered Nurses Div 2, this has been deemed unacceptable.

It is hard to argue that "high care" meaning those with complex nursing or health care needs.

There is little excuse for Approved Providers and Residential Aged Care Managers to plead ignorance of these and other aspects of Regulatory Compliance. Get out your Residential care Manual and have a good look.

## Self Learning Packages

Specifically designed for people who work in aged care they are an inexpensive resource that can be used either individually or in group sessions. They are ideal for orientation and

some facilities are even showing them to relatives on matters such as vitamised meals etc.

See the enclosed forms for more details.

# Clearing the Air about Leisure in Aged Care Conference - Success

Was a conference about leisure really necessary? Feedback from the vast majority of the 110 plus lifestyle and management staff who attended this one-day conference indicated that this type of function was indeed necessary and that more events should be held in the future.

Frankly, if your staff did not attend, valuable information may not now be in your facilities hands.

The day started with Neil Baron explaining the difference between Leisure and Therapy and the importance of leisure. Participants were given a concise rundown on definitions and concepts in order to determine whether what they are doing is leisure or something else.

The chief determining factor being 'freely chosen' by the individual. Too often what is happening is someone's concept of therapy and it is critically important that facilities ensure that their residents are able to receive leisure.

RCS presenters Peggy Morgan, Rosemary Elliott and Anne Eastwood were clear in their message: there is very little documentation required to achieve a claim for Question 15.

If a resident's 'Social & Human' needs have

been assessed and a plan to meet those needs documented and regularly evaluated, DAILY RECORDING IS NOT REQUIRED to prove attendance. Exceptional reporting combined with the regular review and evaluation is normally sufficient.

In regards to Question 19, the program must be assessed, planned and evaluated by a QUALIFIED THERAPIST – that is someone who is suitably qualified to be able to prescribe therapy. Many facilities are under the mistaken belief that all Diversional Therapists are able to this, while most at the present time are not able to.

Angela Halsey addressed the group about the requirements of Standard 3: Resident Lifestyle and much of her presentation complimented and extended the idea of resident choice in their daily activities. She also reviewed the process used by Accreditation Auditors to assess compliance with this standard.

Margaret Watson, President of the Diversional Therapy Association of SA surprised many by agreeing with Neil about the difference between leisure and therapy. She indicated that the role of the diversional therapist is therefore to:

assess choice and participa-

tion in leisure and social programs; facilitate a program of the resident's choice; plan processes, which enhance and support independent participation; document and assess the outcome of participation. She further indicated that there are different levels of membership in the Association and that attainment of Level One usually requires a university degree, an appropriate diploma or other considerations as dictated by the Association.

This led on to considerable discussion about qualifications, training and the Diversional Therapy Association.

Gaynor Jackson from TAFESA Panorama Campus indicated that the Certificate Three in Leisure and Health which once was the baseline education component is no longer being offered having been replaced by a Certificate Four. She also indicated that a diploma is currently being introduced. Those people who so wish may go onto study at Diploma or Degree level; that is a matter of choice. Gaynor further highlighted the many different titles and duties that encompass people working in the area. It is definitely not one dimensional.

There is no legislative requirement for organi-

zations to hire specifically 'Diversional Therapists' or even to hire people with the Certificate in Leisure and Health. There may be other qualifications that are equally applicable. Some very effective Lifestyle staff hold qualifications or come from a background in such areas as teaching or hotel services.

The Diversional Therapy Association is not a licensing organisation, it is a membership organization with the purpose of supporting its members through programs to enhance their knowledge and keep them current.

Carla Baron highlighted the substantial amount of time that residents have available for leisure activities, yet the limited time actually being spent as indicated by benchmarking results.

The day closed with a delightfully enlightening talk by Josephine Boylan, Director of Care of Fullarton Lutheran Homes on strategies that they have incorporated to ensure that their residents do have leisure in their lives.

A half day interactive workshop on Leisure Documentation will be held on August 24. Places are limited and filling fast.

Would this event assist your staff?

## Thorny 5 continued from page one

how far can this go? What are reasonable expectations and what are the boundaries? And how will expected Board changes affect aged care? Do we have an opportunity to express our own unique aged care concerns?

And to finish to day off in high style, we will have the battle of the Robs.

Rob Bonner from the ANF always provides

controversial and thought provoking information (whether we agree with it or not). While Aged & Community Services SA/Nt CEO Rob Dempsey, with a strong back ground in acute health care, doesn't mince words and is passionate about representing his members and getting the best outcome for the industry.

These two formidable

forces will look at the ongoing dispute about payment of Registered Nurses in aged care.

Many say aged care providers simply cannot afford to pay their RNs acute care rates, but can they afford not to? Many are already paying these rates to Agency staff with the additional costs that entails. Just where is breaking point?

## Thursday August 12th

Thorny 5 will confront you with these contentious issues but will also hopefully stimulate you with some ideas of how using your good sense will ultimately save your business dollars.

This is definitely not a day that you should miss and one that bringing a board member to could really benefit your facility.

## AUDITOR'S COURSE -Full but for One

The Aged Care Quality Assessor Training Course has had tremendous response and would now be full except for a withdrawal due to family commitments.

This means that one lucky person would still be able to do the course, but they will have to be quick.

This course has been revised to meet the new requirements of the Aged Care Standards and

Accreditation Agency and, to our knowledge is the only such course offered in SA.

Course coordinator and presenter is Brian Sharp of the Systems 3 Group. Brian has extensive experience in the design and delivery in a range of training courses and has been running the external auditors course since its inception. He has trained hundreds of auditors across Australia.

Those who would like to explore the option of becoming an auditor with the Agency should make contact with them BEFORE enrolling to familiarise themselves all of the requirements.

But not everyone who takes the course plans to become an auditor. Many feel that the real value in the course is the confidence it gives them in managing their internal quality activities and

understanding and preparing for the Accreditation process. If you are serious to advise us promptly by telephone, e-mail or fax. The receipt of your \$300 deposit will then confirm your booking.

For further information and registration form, contact us by phone 8276 9763 or e-mail [neil@ncbaron.com](mailto:neil@ncbaron.com)



This workshop will help to move on to better documentation by covering:

1. Basics of good documentation practice
2. Developing useful Leisure documentation
3. Meeting requirements without over-documenting

### BE WARNED

This workshop, like any workshop, will not magically provide all the answers and solve all of your problems. Mere attendance is not enough to 'get all the answers' or 'get the right forms to fill in'.

It will provide clues on how you can develop strategies that will allow you to produce good documentation. At only \$39.00 including GST