

# The Baron Report

Volume 2, Issue 5, 2001

## *What a Beautiful Day - BUT!*

by Neil Baron

*"...auditors must have an excellent understanding of both the standards and of the residential aged care process"*

Michael Menso - Systems 3 Group

In the past there was a logo that was found on bumper stickers, t-shirts etc. which went along the lines of "What a beautiful day, now watch some b\*#-ard stuff it up". Sound familiar? Well a variation on the theme has been coming in loud and strong from many quarters of late; areas that we feel need discussing.

BUT first we must present a few disclaimers.

1. We believe that time and effort must be spent on improving the quality of life of the residents, not making life easier for auditors.

2. We believe in the accreditation system and feel that it has been a good force.

3. We believe that the Standards and Accreditation Agency has a difficult job to do.

4. We believe that often perception rather than reality is a motivating factor in disputes.

Having said that, let us start to assess the situation.

Last edition of *THE BARON REPORT* we published a letter from Angela Halsey on behalf of the Standards and Accreditation Agency. We thank Angela for explaining the Agency perspective and providing clarification.

BUT many facilities

are still uncertain about the process; frankly some are terrified and apparently for good reason. Recent articles in *The Advertiser* only reinforce their concerns.

We have recently been told by a facility that an auditor had suggested that "it would be easier for us to understand what

you are doing if it was more visual". Well we

suggest that if there is any auditor out there who wants an easier life or does not sufficiently understand information used in aged care practice, then they should seriously question their ongoing role.

Aged Care is not an easy area and most staff feel overworked and undervalued. BUT if by graphing some aspect of their service the quality of life of their resident will improve then by all means they should incorporate it

into their practice.

Most people involved in aged care agree that the accreditation system while difficult is beneficial. Most want to do what is right for their 'customers' and appreciate any help they can receive. Most will go

backwards through low morale and burnout if a punitive bureaucratic structure evolves from the Agency.

In discussions with many places it is interesting to hear their comments on both Accreditation and

now follow-up visits. Often without names being mentioned it is possible to determine who oversaw the process. Auditors, it seems, have characteristics that become easily recongised.

Firstly, most auditors are seen in a positive light, not because they are push overs but quite the opposite. The general concensus is that most are "firm but fair"; you can't ask for any more, really. BUT there are exceptions.

Stories abound. As we all know stories can be

embellished and perhaps distorted and we present this caveat in regards to what we hear. That aside, we do believe that most stories do have a strong basis of fact. After all we are dealing with people who are honest, hardworking and have the residents' interests at heart.

Suggesting, for example, that a DON "go and check out the butcher to see if he is doing the right thing" appears bizarre and pointless. Unless the DON understands butchering practice and is familiar with the regulations in regards to that industry she will be at a loss.

BUT if the DON requires the butcher shop to demonstrate that they are performing all their duties under HACCP regulations and that procedures are in place, then a level of confidence in the supply can be established. That is not to say that problems will never occur, but rather it says that everything possible has been done to reduce the risk.

Many of the issues are too big and complex to be addressed here. A second Thorny Issues One Day Conference will be held on September 26th at The Lakes to address these issues with an informed group of speakers. A not to be missed event.

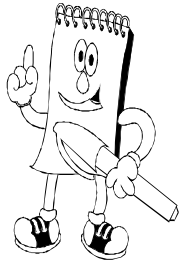
Current information for the Aged Care Industry

# Attention Boards and Proprietors

## Protect Your Best Assets

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.



**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)

E-mail:  
[neil@ncbaron.com](mailto:neil@ncbaron.com)

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This is a special plea to all board members and proprietors in regards to your greatest asset, your staff.

For quite some time we have noticed that many staff members have been under a lot of stress and strain. Why? The accreditation is over; it should all be fixed now. Wrong, it has only just begun. The process will be ongoing and ever more demanding. The problem is one of frustration due to situations out of their control.

The notion of ensuring that a person must have the right tools if they are to get the job done is one major reason for frustration. In aged care the main tools are knowledge.

Very well you say but they should all have the knowledge, that's what we pay them for. Agreed, but please keep in mind that the goal posts are constantly moving and what might have been a more than adequate level of knowledge a few years ago is considered pretty basic today. For example, on the radio recently the past president of the Australian

Medical Association of SA mentioned learning that stress was seen as a producer of ulcers when he was in training. Now we know that this is not the case but rather a bug in the stomach is the culprit. He hastened to add that he had not done his training that long ago either.

### So What do We Do?

Develop a strategy that will ensure sufficient money and time is allocated for training and education.



Listen to your staff when they mention training needs and treat their requests seriously.

Don't just look at cost as a criteria. Often the benefits of any training will far outweigh the costs. Rather look at training as an INVESTMENT.

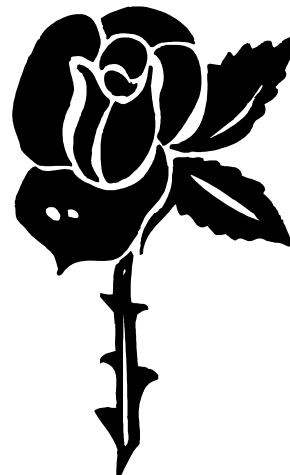
Please, please, please give this area the serious consideration it needs and help to develop a strategy to ensure that your residents are not disadvantaged due to poor or inadequate skills.

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

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.

Following the success of last year's event we expect this one to be bigger and better.

As part of our continuous improvement process

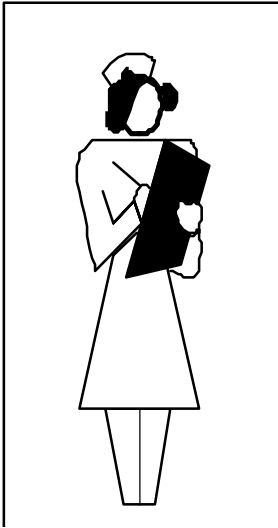


we have booked a bigger facility and have checked that the chairs are comfy.

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.

See the pamphlet for full details.



# THE CLINICIAN'S CORNER

## *Keeping Up With the Resident Classification Scale*

by  
**Carla Baron**



With most organisations suffering information overload, it is imperative that really important information is not overlooked or lost in the in trays of someone's desk.

One such urgent and important document that all facilities need to study carefully is the revised RCS Principles and Guidelines that were recently distributed. Many may be tempted after reading the covering letter to think that only behaviour questions were modified as expected but it is worth taking a much closer look.

There is now included a large section about ACAT Teams (5.8.3; p.5-10) clearly delineating their role and

advising that it is absolutely the responsibility of the facility to ensure a valid ACAT assessment even when someone is being transferred from another home be it Commonwealth approved or not.

The sections on the Appeal Processes (10, 11,12; pp.5-11 to 5-15) have also had a rewrite with some modifications noted.

But, for most the real area of interest is with the Scale itself. In some instances, there have been changes to the *Approved Principles*; these are the explanations that proceed and include the Ratings Boxes and are the legislative base of the Scale. It is imperative that you are aware of this information.

Additionally, there is now further information with each question entitled 'Considerations' aimed at assisting facilities to make more accurate claims. This will be useful if followed but does not have the legal weight

of the legislated material.

The following are modifications to specific questions that may be of most interest:

**Q2 Mobility** – will now accept a B Claim for residents who use wheelchairs (a plus).

**Q5 Toilet** – positioning of a resident on a continence sheet for planned evacuations now constitutes a B claim (most were claiming D in the past).

**Q 6 B l a d d e r Management** – changing of continence sheets (ie kylies) for a resident who cannot wear external aids – C rating (a plus).

**Q7 Bowel Management** – monitoring and recording bowel actions is seen as part of a bowel management program for a C claim (a plus).

**Q9-14 Behaviour Questions** - change from

those obscure definitions of 'monitoring and supervision' to the more clearly understood terms 'observation and intervention' (much easier for all concerned)

**Q12 Emotional Dependence** – is only claimable for dependence on another person or persons NOT animals or objects which move to Q14 Other Behaviour (a loss).

**Q17 Medication** - excludes medication administered less than weekly including 3 monthly injections previously claimed as C (a loss).

These are just the highlights of changes; it is both urgent and important that you make the time to familiarise yourself with all of the possibilities prior to the implementation of this new instrument on July 1, 2001.

## Aged Care Quality Assessor Training Course

### August - Sold Out - October Session Booking Fast

N & C Baron & Associates are very pleased to announce that the five day Aged Care Quality Assessor Training Course in Adelaide between August 6th and 10th has fully booked out and a strong waiting list has formed.

In order not to disadvantage anyone we have organised a second course to be run between October 22 and 26. Running this course in Adelaide means a big saving in terms of both time and money in not having to go interstate.

Once again, Brain Sharp of the Systems 3 Group will be the presenter.

While the course is the basis for external accreditation of aged care facilities on behalf of the Aged Care Standards Agency this has not been the motivation of current participants.

It is generally agreed that becoming an external auditor may not be possible, at present, but that the knowledge gained will prove invaluable in the future including:

- ◆ internal preparation for the ongoing accreditation process
- ◆ internal self assessments, or development and implementation of management systems in aged care facilities, such as nursing homes and aged care hostels.

The need to have both the knowledge and understanding of the accreditation process cannot be underestimated.

# The Penis Mightier than the Sword

*Edward Bulwer Lytton*

1805 - 1873

WHAT!

Is this a typo, a deliberate mistake or a Freudian slip?

Glad you asked, it was a mistake made purposely to illustrate a point.

See the difference a lack of a little break can make? We all know that the quote is "the pen is mightier than the sword". Then again.

No, it is a personal plea to you to demonstrate that we can all make mistakes by not having a break when it is required.

Breaks are an important part of our lives and lately I have been noticing that some of you are not taking a break and getting some much needed relaxation (or at least a change of pace and surrounding).

Well do it! No excuses; you need to look after yourself before you can look after anyone else, be that at work or at home. Burnout is a problem for workers in aged

care.

Recently I was discussing a mistake in a form with a senior administrator only to be told that it happened because "I was doing it at eleven o'clock at night".

Is it any wonder that mistakes are happening?

Someone still working so late in the evening, having started work early and either gone without meals and breaks or at best grabbing something on the run is a recipe for

mistakes. Those breaks are so important. You are all clever so why aren't you taking them.

I bet I know; you all want to be martyrs and admired for your supreme efforts OR you want to be burnt out and of little use to yourself or your facility.

It has to be one of the above.

Give yourself a break on a regular basis and come back refreshed, relaxed and efficient.

Cheers,

*Neil*

## Upcoming Dates & Events

### Nutrition Education Series July 13 & 14th

*Friday July 13th*

MORNING Nutrition & Food Service Delivery  
AFTERNOON Nutrition Assessment & the Elderly

*Saturday July 14th*

MORNING Drugs & Nutrition Status in the Elderly  
AFTERNOON Me and You - Dealing with Type II

*Fullarton Park Centre*

*411 Fullarton Road*

*Fullarton*

*Wednesday September 26th*

### 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*

## Networking Group

*The next session will be on:*

*Wednesday August 15th*

*1630 - 1830*

*Churchill Court ACF*

*470 Churchill Road*

*Kilburn*

*Focus - WORKCOVER*

*(with guest speaker George Karlis)*

*Really understanding the Process*

*Please confirm your attendance by calling*

*Neil on 8276 9763*

## 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).*

The undying adoration of your dog is not absolute proof of how wonderful you are.

*Ann Landers*

