

The Baron Report

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Ageing in Place - *Navigating a Mine Field*

Aging in Place, a concept introduced with the Aged Care Act 1997 has been philosophically embraced by most 'low care' facilities who have seen it as a great opportunity to provide better services and security to the residents.

Many, however, never imagined the minefield of practical considerations that faced them.

CERTIFICATION

Under the Building Code of Australia, a building does not need to change to meet new building requirements unless the original purpose or use of the building has changed.

In this case, hostels were built to house residents with low care needs; the conversion to now house both low and high care residents means that the original purpose of the building has altered and the building therefore must meet the new requirements (soon to be defined for us in the new building code/certification standards).

ADMISSIONS

Low care bed licences in effect prior to October 1997 have the option of admitting either high or low care (as per ACAT assessment) residents to those beds. If the low care licences were obtained post October 1997, then only residents assessed as low care can be admitted to those

beds and then aging in place may occur.

RCSRAMIFICATIONS

Many facilities have had problems explaining to residents and families why residents receive apparently different service supports.

If the facility has not been scrupulous in explaining the Act at the time of admission, residents may believe they are being discriminated against in having to pay for products apparently provided by the facility to others.

Some facilities have had additional problems where they have assessed a resident as high care and proceeded, as they are obliged under the Act to provide a larger range of 'Specified Services', only to have an RCS validation reduce the level back to Low Care. The service is left less well off financially but in the invidious position of either continuing to provide the products or services or explaining and withdrawing these to the consternation of the resident and their family.

STAFFING ISSUES

Specified Services under the Act require only that "Initial and ongoing assessment, planning and management of care for [high care] residents [be] carried out by a registered nurse". The same directive goes on to talk about specific procedures and the need to meet "Quality of Care principles".

Herein lies the problem. While many low care facilities now have at least one RN on staff, at what point does that need increase to cover 7-day weeks and 24-hour days?

The real issue is that if a single resident has care needs requiring 24-hour RN supervision or intervention the facility must meet its duty of care.

This becomes a huge economic issue as the high care funding of one resident certainly does not cover this cost. It also has become a further problem in the current climate of nursing shortages that even those facilities that have decided to move in this direction are largely unable to do.

MEDICATION ISSUES

Closely aligned to the RN issue is probably the greatest care management dilemma - medication.

Most hostels have adopted a "credentialling" approach to enable care staff to administer medication as a delegated duty of the RN. But, how far does or should this extend?

What about insulin injections, DDA's and prn medications? Are these indicative of administration only or are carers required to make assessments beyond their knowledge and scope?

RESIDENTS RIGHTS

Residents rights are a priority in this legislation. The Act is explicit that the resident does not need to move to another facility if they chose not to regardless of the current facility's ability to meet their care needs.

Facility staff have negotiated this minefield on a daily basis since 1997. And yet industry peak bodies, nursing groups such as RCNA and ANF and, perhaps most significantly, the Agency and Department of Health and Aging have still not been able to come to agreement on many of these issues.



Current information for the Aged Care Industry

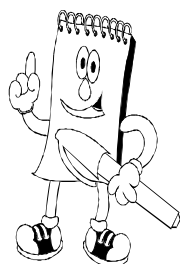


Getting Advice, Taking Advice



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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As an organisation that dispenses advice on a daily basis we are mindful of the consequences of getting it right. There is nothing worse than giving someone bad advice. Or is there?

Yes. What is worse is receiving good advice and then doing nothing with it. A sin of omission, one might say.

As you might remember in the last edition of The Baron Report we discussed the future of Cathy Freeman and her attempt to regain her past form. We have been keeping track (*oops*) of her endeavours to date and will report on what we find.

One interesting article in a recent *Advertiser* was entitled, "Cathy told to forget Games bid". It was about Cathy receiving advice from her doctor and from Australia's head coach to delay a return to professional form.

While acknowledging that their advice was valid, she indicated that she was choosing to ignore it. This is all very well if, like Cathy, we are dealing with our own issues. It is much more difficult when we are dealing with matters that might result in adverse outcomes for others.

Risks are a part of any aspect of our lives. We must learn to evaluate risks and to balance the costs and benefits.

With Cathy the risks she faces are varied. One is the long term medical problems if she does not sufficiently rest her injuries as opposed to putting herself out of contention by not being part of the process. The other perhaps more serious one is that of having to

endure long term disabilities through improper healing.

Like Cathy we all need to develop a risk assessment on issues that may cause concern both personally and professionally.

How do we best achieve that?



Firstly it is important that we have all the facts, details and information in front of us. This allows us to make a judgement based on fact and knowledge. Sometimes we are not in the position to get all of this information and that is when it is important to receive proper external advice.

In Cathy's case she is receiving advice from people she trusts, but also from sources that are involved in the same area and understand her particular problems. There would be very little point in her seeking advice from someone who does not fully understand the complexities of running.

The best horse trainer or race car driver may not be the most appropriate person to provide advice on these matters. Neither might be her accountant or publicist.

The same is true with aged care. Someone who has a vast knowledge of mechanical engineering might not be able to make that knowledge relate to aged care. So what criteria should

we use in trying to determine if the person giving the advice is best placed to give it?

Firstly, are they involved and familiar with the area? How do we know this? By checking to see who they are dealing with. Ask for references. Discuss issues that you are knowledgeable with to see if they are thinking along the same lines.

Knowing computer programs is great, it becomes less helpful if they do not relate to aged care.

Secondly, What is their motivation? Is it a one shot get rich scheme or are they in the business for a long haul. One aspect wonders will often talk a good story but the next time you see them the story has changed to another topic or area. " Oh you want to know about aged care; sorry we are into sports rehabilitation this month."

Finally, is the provider of advice really concerned about your long term problems and what they are doing to assist in the process.

Good advice can be worth its weight in gold. It can save time, effort and a lot of frustration, BUT remember that it will do you little good if you do not heed it.

While we would all be disappointed in not having Cathy involved in the Commonwealth Games, it would be a far greater disappointment to know that she could no longer run at all.

Thorny Three

Accreditation issues "Exposed"



Thorny Issues number three will be fantastic this year.

A realistic look at the potential problem areas that may have a major impact on your facility's future and on your career standing.

The first issue will be examining the 'minds and motivations' of auditors. What makes them tick, what are they really trying to do, what impact do they have on you? Sounds provocative, well it is meant to. So interesting that the Agency has declined to be part of the process. We did invite them.

Brian Sharp has trained and mentored many of the current auditors throughout Australia. As such he intimately

understands the workings and nuances that are involved. He is knowledgeable, friendly and entertaining. You won't be disappointed.

Other issues that need addressing include appeals, harassment, resident's rights and facility obligations and rights.

An action packed day that will allow you to go away with a greater insight is envisaged.

As always your

participation is valued and we will be seeking any questions or comments that you wish to make.

These may be given prior to or on the day and your anonymity is assured, if you so wish.

This years venue is Next Generation on Memorial Drive, North Adelaide next to the tennis and Bradman Oval. It offers a lovely setting with great views and we have been promised a terrific menu.

Once again the day will allow networking



Letter to the Editor

Dear Carla and Neil,

Thank you for your recent article on making a move. Whilst the focus on money is an issue in making a 'moving on' decision it is not often the real deciding factor as you so aptly pointed out.

A cost benefit analysis is undeniably important, but one needs to consider a cost of life and lifestyle. We must remember that money cannot replace the time we miss out on our children and marriages by not being there for significant and sometimes even trivial events in their lives.

Moving on sometimes comes at great cost not only to yourself but to the organisation you are leaving. Think of all the knowledge that you take with

you that you can never effectively relate to another person.

While many places will survive your moving on and sometimes do better than just survive, does that tell you that you may have gone stale or too familiar in what you have been doing?

Just because you leave is no reason for the roof to fall in. As one door closes another opens and another person with other personal and professional qualities will fill your position and soon you will be forgotten. Can you afford the cost to your self-esteem?

On the other hand the cost to you is probably greater. After all you were the one who made the decision to move and despite the fact you can rationalise the move

as being a great opportunity, the right time and numerous other clichés that you may use, the fact remains that you will always leave unfinished business behind you (not to mention friends, colleagues and networks and the safety and security of a familiar system).

A financial analysis does not measure the stress that leaving causes and does not in any way reflect the stresses you are about to undertake trying to find your way around someone else's system let alone their filing cabinet!

But when does financial gain ever enter into a decision making process when the heart is ruling the head?

As an advocate for moving on (having done it

opportunities and a chance to examine and discuss products and services with quality suppliers.

We have tried to make this the best event yet to ensure that you are able to gain useful information that will assist you in your day to day improvement activities.

**Wednesday
July 17th**
Next Generation
Memorial Drive
North Adelaide

*See accompanying
brochure for
complete details*

many times, for almost as many different reasons), I believe there is nothing better than a good personal challenge to know that you are alive and keep you on your toes.

Moving on is not for the faint hearted and definitely not for those who do not cope well beyond their comfort zone.

However moving on can be one of the best things you can do for yourself. But do it for the right reasons.

*Heather Evans
Director of Nursing*

Have your say, simply send us your comments and we will publish them in upcoming issues.

Benchmarking Opportunities

Following on from a favourable Competitive Analysis Benchmarking program with a small but dedicated group prepared to 'blaze the trail' the benchmarking service will again be offered.

From all indicators it has been an exciting and fruitful year with participating services benefiting from audits, exclusive education sessions and of course comparative data about issues related to staffing qualifications and numbers.

N e t w o r k i n g

opportunities rated highly as did the often difficult to enunciate concept of "misery loves company" or perhaps more positively an identification that others are in the same situation.

It has been pleasing and exciting to see people put in place and benefit from information attained through this program.

On the basis of further enquiries from those seeking benchmarking opportunities and feedback from current participants, a greater array of Benchmark opportunities is

now available.

A PROGRAM FOR EVERYONE

Three benchmarking service options mean that there is literally a program for everyone from a fully comprehensive service to basic comparative data to work with independently.

◆ A **full benchmark service** including two on-site audits, three exclusive education days, comparative analysis, exclusive newsletter and ongoing support and information

◆ A **basic benchmark service** including a single audit, two education days, newsletter, comparative analysis and support.

◆ Access to **separate benchmarking components** such as audits, comparative analysis data, advice and support on a fee for service basis.

All programs are for twelve months July 2002 - July 2003.

See enclosed circular for further details and bookings.

Does Your Facility Need Management Skills?

At a recent Food Services seminar it was sad to have supervisors ask why we didn't run something for them on how to run their departments, manage their staff and generally deal with the day to day challenges such as conflict resolution.

While we would like to believe that people in senior management recognised their own need for these skills many do not see the same need for their supervisory staff.

Is it a case of omission, or a matter of being able to flaunt to underlings that they "know more than you do"?

We hope that it is not the latter as those sort

of notions should well and truly be passe.

All staff members who take responsibility for a department, a specific service area or a shift, need to have basic skills in people management.

How a person gains these is often varied. The most usual way is through an apprentice type scenario by working and learning for a 'master'. This method works well if the master knows the answers and is willing and able to share.

The second is to attempt to secure this information externally through a variety of courses, seminars etc.

This method is very

good if it relates to the area that you work in. Business management with a focus on sales or production does not always equate to good results in aged care.

While we all acknowledge that we need aged care specific information, we must remember that the area is considered too small and specific for many traditional courses.

At N & C Baron & Associates we have tried hard to fill this gap with practical knowledge that can be easily understood and directly applied on the floor.

The Better Management Skills Series

will be providing management skills with the next three sessions focusing on Human Resource and Conflict Management. This is a prime opportunity to demonstrate your own leadership skills by assisting your middle management staff to access the training they need to more effectively run their areas.

See the enclosed circular for topics, dates and times.



Change

To change and change for the better are two different things.

German proverb

On the Move

We would like to hear from anyone who has recently had a change, addition etc. so that we can include it in The Baron Report. While we often know of these changes we will not publish them without consent.