

**Share it
with all your staff**

The Baron Report

Justine Elliot-Number 8

by Neil Baron

'A new broom sweeps clean', the old saying goes and as a result of the 24th November 2007 elections we have a new government and a new minister, number 8 since the inception of the Aged Care Act 1997.

Justine Elliot is a former police officer and juvenile justice convenor who represents the northern New South Wales seat of Richmond. She was first elected in 2004 and was aware and mentioned aged care in her maiden speech.

As Minister for Ageing, Justine now becomes the sole shareholder of the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency Ltd. and as such it is hoped that she will instigate the much needed review of the Aged Care Act 1997.

The Act has served its purpose in shaking up the industry and moving services forward but it has also ensured that the aged care industry is one of the most heavily regulated in the nation. Today we have facilities that in the main are modern and appealing, although one must wonder why some are allowed to exist in their primitive form. Let us forget certification scores for a moment and

seriously question how some old and unpleasant buildings can be compliant under EO 4.4 Living Environment.

I would not wish to be there, nor have to submit a loved one to that environment.

The staffing crisis situation that has existed looks likely to intensify in 2008 with the changes required in order to adapt to the Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI) and in preparing for the next round of accreditation being the straw etc. for some experienced DONs and senior staff.

Time to give it away is being vocalised louder and more frequently by greater numbers.

The main problem revolves around staffing at all levels; getting them, keeping them and ensuring that they are doing everything right. Many carers entering the industry have the paper but little practical knowledge and even less empathy. Trying to convert long term unemployed or supporting benefits parents into proficient aged care workers may sound good in theory, but does not always work in reality.



Not so long ago it was seen that staff *issues* were the domain of the smaller less organised players with the 'big players' able to attract staff due to their reputation. From all indicators it now appears that there would be few facilities that are not suffering to some degree. Granted some are able to attract experienced staff with more lucrative offers, but invariably what is a gain for one is a loss for another. There are just not enough skilled and trained staff to fill the need.

We receive many calls asking us to suggest replacement staff for shortfalls due to retirement or staff wanting to 'down size' in order to still have some quality of life.

A recent discussion with an informed source mentioned the pleasure a friend was having after

downsizing her DON position and she was happy to say that she now has time to have lunch.

Personally I have spoken to at least a dozen experienced DON's who are starting to make noises about getting out of the industry or at least taking a less demanding role. Evidence would say this number is greatly understated.

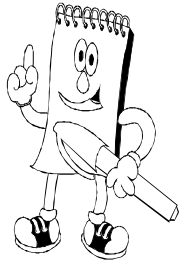
Some are prepared to take on a second or third in line position, others say they would be happy to do a few days with a nursing agency, which would allow them greater freedom, less responsibility and in some instances more money.

N & C Baron & Associates acknowledges this deficient area and are proud to be in a partnership with the Australian Nursing Federation in commencing in early 2008 a Certificate IV in Service Coordination (Ageing and Disability) which will provide practical, relevant and current information for those wishing to take on managerial positions in aged care.

The industry must ensure that qualified staff are able to take over important roles.

Kevin can save you money

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

Managing your Occupational Health and Safety systems to minimise workplace accidents and injuries is both a major obligation in your duty of care to employees and a major cost saver.

Consistent with the changing nature of aged care, Workcover too has changed outsourcing many of its activities so like our industry, some long term players are leaving and many facilities are unclear of where they can get the best advice and support.

Well the good news is, there is good professional help available, through our colleague Kevin Wilhelm. Many of you will remember Kevin from his presentation about Workcover and the RISE Scheme at Thorny Issues Seven.

Kevin is now with Applied Innovative Services (AIS), who provide a multi disciplinary



risk management service to both small and large businesses to assist with the implementation and training of employees in risk management programs, claims management and rehabilitation services.

They can offer cost effective programs which enable companies to self manage their risk programs in the long term or an advisory and monitoring service to

companies that require this on a long-term basis.

Effectively, the service provided is based on a "train the trainer" approach that enables companies to minimise risk management costs and maximise value from workers compensation and OHS expenditure.

To find out more about Applied Innovative Services, or to access any of their services, contact Kevin Wilhelm Business Development Manager on 08 8342 64 88, mobile 0417 840 363 or email

kevinw@appliedinnovativeservices.com.au

Farewell Angela

Editorial Rights

The Baron Report reserves the right to publish as a whole, or in part, any articles submitted and included for publication.

Articles may be edited to a suitable size for publication.

Views expressed in articles submitted and included are not necessarily those of N & C Baron & Associates.

No responsibility is accepted by N & C Baron & Associates for the accuracy of information contained in the text.

Angela Halsey, State Manager, SA/NT of the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency Ltd has resigned.

Angela was appointed to the position

in 1998 and has overseen three rounds of accreditation, sanctions, disputes and protests and as such is well known in the aged care community.

Despite attempts

we have been unable to find out who her replacement will be and as we go to press we are still awaiting a return of our call from the Agency.

We wish Angela well for the future.

Thorny 8 – maintains the tradition

by Carla Baron

The title of this year's Thorny 8 Conference "It Isn't Getting Easier" says it all. When we started the Thorny Issues conferences the industry was still coming to terms with the recently introduced Aged Care Act 1997 and all of the adjustments that entailed.

Somehow we all believed that once we got those changes under our belts, life would get easier or at least go back to some semblance of normality. What has actually happened is that we have found that constant change and challenge is now the norm and it isn't getting any easier.

The first challenge discussed this year was Nursing Professionalism (an additional challenge for us being the Nurses Board's inability to attend to answer some of the questions DONs were putting to us – we will try again another time!).

Rob Bonner gave an excellent presentation which addressed three major issues of:

1. Performance: reminding participants about the need for clear performance management procedures that provide natural justice and

clear evidence for decisions and actions taken to remedy.

2. Accountability: noting that although the role of Enrolled Nurses is expanding, "EN's are not interchangeable with RN's" still being required to operate in a framework of supervision.

3. Costs: indicating that nurses are worth the cost and unless or until our industry deals with this issue, aged care will suffer.

On professionalism, three panel members supported Rob's contentions:

Cathy McGovern (Adelaide Care Solutions) gave us insight into her role as a provider of Nursing Agency services in keeping staff accountable.

Mary Spudic (Director of Aged Care, North Eastern Community Hospital) was passionate in indicating that there is nothing inferior about aged care nurses that supports the argument that they should be paid less than their colleagues.

Sara Mill (DON, Kangaroo Island Health Service) gave participants a very practical model to assist in determining levels of

evidence required to support various staff remedial or reporting actions.

Two very powerful presentations addressed the perceptions of aged care by relatives. Rose Crabb, EN with Kangaroo Island Health Service, spoke about the difference in her views when her dad came into care in her facility. Dr Jenny Booth, who cared for her father provided a few home truths and challenged some of our practices in competing with families for "the body and soul" of the resident. Feedback indicated all aged care nurses and carers would benefit from hearing these two speakers.

The South Australia Police representative, indicated that they was confusion and perhaps a communication glitch about the recently introduced Mandatory Reporting requirements but are working hard now to accommodate legislative needs.

The good news is, we meet our obligations by telephoning 131 444, making our report, following any advice given and receiving a file number.

No sleeping after lunch when Sex Industry Network Project Officer, Ari Reid spoke about the taboo subject of Sex in Aged Care. Just because people are elderly and in residential aged care doesn't mean that they may not still be sexually active. We will very soon be unable to avoid this issue and will need to accommodate a range of sexual needs and preferences.

The day finished with a presentation by Senator Jan McLucas, Shadow Minister for Aged Care who gave a brief presentation and then discussed with participants their concerns and what they might expect from a Labor government. In a nutshell, many things would not change but there is openness to exploring regulated care funding ratios and reviewing standards. Like the rest of us, she is anxious to see how ACFI progresses.

Mark your diary now
– Thorny Issues 9 –
Thursday 28th
August 2008

ACFI brings new challenges

Everyone is excited, anxious and curious (to name just a few emotions) about the impending introduction of the new Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI).

By now each facility should have received the free education provided through TAFE.

We hope you have

taken this opportunity but our feedback suggests that people are not fully ready to meet the new challenges the change will bring.

Increasingly we are receiving feedback and queries about how we can help.

Some of the challenges facing facilities now are:

- How will you modify your documentation (minus RCS requirements) without inadvertently dropping something important?
 - Will changes that you make in response to ACFI affect your compliance with Accreditation requirements and audits?
 - What levels of staff need more or re-education about ACFI and / or documentation?
- If these or other ACFI related matters are concerning you, we would like to help.
- Just fill out the enclosed expression of interest form and return to us by mail or fax.**

Certificate IV in Service Coordination (Ageing and Disability)

by Carla Baron

At last! A nationally recognised course specifically developed to provide the basis for current and future aged care managers/supervisors.

N & C Baron & Associates in partnership with the Australian Nursing Federation are delighted to present an aged care specific management course that will provide successful participants with clear; relevant and practical information to enhance their job performance and a Certificate IV in Service Coordination (Aging & Disability).

For some years, N & C Baron had offered an aged care management course but recognised that participants wanted more

rigor, assessment and recognition for their study.

Thanks now to collaboration with ANF – SA, we are in a position to do so resulting in an exciting milestone for Aged Care management in this state.

Although other generic supervisor and management courses have been available and completed by many, managers and potential managers indicated that they were just not meeting the need.

People were telling us that courses like 'Frontline Management' were just too simplistic or generic to be really helpful in meeting the rigorous requirements of the heavily regulated aged care sector.

Even diploma and degree course graduates have been indicating difficulty in applying the theory to the day to day realities of managing community and residential services as required by the Aged Care Act 1997.

This course organised and presented by N & C Baron is designed to specifically prepare nursing and non-nursing personnel for management positions in Aged Care and is suitable for:

- ◆ managers already working within the industry and wanting to formalise their skills,
- ◆ managers working in similar sectors (ie acute care) but wishing to enter aged care

- ◆ persons within aged care who aspire to management positions or
- ◆ persons taking on team leader responsibilities in aged care.

The course commencing in 2008 is a first being totally aged care focused and enabling participants to study, learn and implement practical management skills.

An information session is planned for early January.

For more information see enclosed brochure and/or contact either Neil or Carla with your questions and expressions of interest on 8276 9763 or e-mail neil@ncbaron.com.

Avramis Software Services

- Web Design
- Databases; design, implementation & reports (MS Access)
- General Programming
- Problem definition; helping translate ideas, goals and objectives into software products
- Help with managing your software, information and files
- User Manuals and User Training

To discuss your needs please contact Stathis on 8269 3187 or savramis@cobweb.com.au

Seasons Greetings

We wish you and yours a happy holiday and a wonderful year

