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NT Branch Secretary

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## MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

Time moves quickly. We have experienced busy months, staff changes and frequent media coverage of issues. These issues will be discussed later in the newsletter. We would like to welcome Matthew Gardiner to the ANF NT Branch as trainee organiser. He will be taking over from Angela Phillips who will be on Maternity Leave from the 7th April 06. Matthew has provided some information about himself later in the newsletter. Carol Hobson our finance and membership officer will commence her long service leave from the 13th March 06. I'm sure she will enjoy her well earned break. All membership issues are to be referred to Heather Jarrott.

### Increased Membership Rates and Payroll Deductions

In the previous issue of the NT Newsletter in the ANJ it was identified that a fee increase would occur to incorporate the ACTU levy. This is now effective from March 1 2006.

The ANF NT Branch is requesting Nurses that currently have their fees going to the ANF via payroll deductions to consider changing over to direct debit. With the introduction of WorkChoices legislation in the near future, we are uncertain as to how long the Government will allow Unions to receive membership fees through this method of payment. We are dependant on your membership fees to allow us to provide support to you our members and if the Government ceases this method of payment, there is a potential to cripple the Unions.

### NT Health Crisis

RDH staff have been concerned with the recent communications advising that all approval for hiring of staff at RDH must go through the Assistant Secretary of Acute Care. It appears that RDH have employed staff past their approved targeted numbers.

Bed block is a major issue in Territory hospitals. This issue has the potential to get worse, with a directive from the CEO of Health, Robert Griew, that all overflow beds at RDH, are to be closed. Such action will only compound the issue in ED with patients numbers waiting for beds and time spent waiting for a bed to be allocated, increasing. RDH regularly has 30 patients on trolleys in the ED waiting for beds, whilst Alice Springs hospital quite often has 15 patients on trolleys in ED and the plaster room, waiting for beds. It is important to note the NT population is steadily increasing. Presentations to NT hospitals have increased. The NT Health Issues have warranted being covered by Stateline - ABC TV on 10th March 2006.



**MembersEquity**  
The Super Funds Bank

## Introducing Matthew Gardiner

Just a quick note to introduce myself. My name is Matthew Gardiner and I am a Registered Nurse, who until recently was working in the Peri-operative Area at RDH, I am a graduate of Charles Darwin University and have strong family ties to both the Territory and Nursing. I am a recent convert to nursing after careers both in the Defence Force and the building industry.

I look forward to the facing the challenges of working in the Australian Nursing Federation, NT branch and also look forward to meeting you in our workplace visits and roadshows to discuss the issues that are concerning you and your colleagues, especially in the uncertainty of the new "Workchoices" era. Now is the time to encourage those who aren't members or those who have let their membership lapse to join up before the Howard Government changes the laws about your professional representation.

For more information about issues that are concerning you contact your Job Delegate or the Branch Office.



## News in Brief

EBA	Current Situation
Catholic Schools EBA	Should be finalised by the time this edition goes to print.
Kormilda College EBA	Should be finalised by the time this edition goes to print.
Frontier Services EBA	Negotiations are about to commence.
Danila Dilba EBA	Unfortunately negotiations have stalled due to funding issues.
Central Australian Aboriginal Congress	Should be finalised by the time this edition goes to print.

## Remote Emergency Care Course Tennant Creek by Mary Williams (Clinical Nurse Manager)

From Friday 17 February through to Sunday 19 February 10 staff from Tennant Creek Hospital and 1 staff member from Anyinginyi Health gathered in the Training Centre in Tennant Creek to undertake the Remote Emergency Care Course run by CRANA.

With in trepidation we went along to the course hoping that we would survive the full on course and pass our individual assessments. We learnt about the importance of assessing every situation that we are confronted with in particular taking care of our own safety. The facilitators who were involved were Sue Leister from CRANA, Wendy Bowyer, Nicole Klæbe, Rae Kenny from Alice Springs Hospital and Dr Deb Mitchell.

The 100% successful pass rate of our assessments was a good reflection of the quality of the course; the ability of the facilitators and the deduction of the staff that attended. Congratulations to all concerned and a thank you goes out to the facilitators, CRANA and also to the Office of Commissioner of Public Employment who approved a grant to fund the course here in Tennant Creek.

## NTPS Nurses 2006-2008 Certified Agreement

The Current NTPS Nurses EBA is due to expire on the 9th August 2006. EBA negotiations will begin in May 2006 we hope certification will occur by 9th August 2006.

## NTPS Salary Review increase of 5.34%

NTPS Nurses have just received a salary increase of 5.34%. This is due to Clause 21.6 - Salary Review, in this current NTPS EBA 2003-2006. NTPS Nurses salaries are to remain within an average of the top three States and Territories for Registered Nurses Level 2, year 7. If the NT was 3% or greater outside the averaged calculation, then the Nurses would be eligible for the percentage required to reach the average wage. This was identified as being 5.34%. Nurses will have received the increase in their pay dated 9th March, backdated to 23rd February, delays will occur with penalty pay. Most allowances have also been increased accordingly, with the exception of CNM allowances.

## NTPS Nursing Career Structure (NCS) Review

Unfortunately the DH&CS Executive are still sitting on their hands in relation to advising Nurses of the outcomes of all appeals of promotional Nursing positions to the new NCS which were re-evaluated in November 2005 from the initial structure introduced in the latter part of 2002. ANF NT are seeking results of the appeals process to be made available.

## Assistants in Nursing (AIN) - Alice Springs

Alice Springs Hospital introduced Assistants in Nursing (AIN) for a three month trial period. This has recently been extended for a further three months to allow for an evaluator to assess the service. We will keep you informed on this issue.

## from the branch office



### Organiser's Desk

Angela Phillips  
*angela.ntanf@octa4.net.au*

On 7th April 2006 I will be handing over the Organiser role to Matthew Gardiner as I will be commencing maternity leave for 12 months.

Grievances in the workplace seem to just keep rolling in, besides the untenable situations in our public sectors, the private sector grievances have increase dramatically over the last four months. The ANF is hoping that this trend is not a taste of what is to come under the new Workchoice legislation.

#### How to handle a grievance.

So what do you do if you believe you have a grievance within your workarea or your employer?

1. The best thing to do is not to let your problem get bigger and bigger.
2. Try and address the issue with the person involved, it is an advantage in trying to resolve it in the early stages.
3. Contact your workarea ANF Job Delegate for advice. If there is no Job Delegate in your area look for workplace policy and procedures this should guide you on how you should respond, you also find this in your Certified Agreement or Award.
4. If you cannot find the policy and procedures ask your Human Resource person or your manager for a copy.
5. Keep on top of the issue, if you feel that you are getting the run around in your efforts to resolve the issue, put it in writing to your DON or appropriate person.
6. Always keep a copy of any correspondence.
7. Reasonable time frame for a response - If a minor issue 14 days is reasonable, if the issue is more serious, allow 2 - 7 days.
8. If all above fails contact the ANF Office for further guidance.

#### **Top End Job Delegates Training**

Darwin Job Delegate training will commence on the 4th - 6th July 2006. Please start making your leave arrangements now.

### Dates to put in your diary 2006

Alice Springs Visits	Date	Visiting Official
Central Australian Roadshow	13 - 17 March 2006	Organiser
Alice Springs JD Training	Mon 3 April 2006 4-6 April 2006	Organiser
	Thurs 11 May 2006	Branch
	Friday 12 May 2006	Secretary
	Tues 13 June 2006	Organiser
	Wed 14 June 2006	
	Thurs 15 June 2006	
	Tues 18 July 2006	Branch
	Weds 19 July 2006	Secretary
	Thurs 20 July 2006	

All other areas worksite visits will continue as per normal

### NTPS Certified Agreement Taskforce

Hospital Staffing Update - report has been completed. Awaiting implementation and decision from Assistant Secretary Acute Care.

Enrolled Nurses Scope of Practice - Implementation of expanded scope commencing in Alice Springs as a trial before commencing at other sites. There is a need for project person to take carriage of this to ensure it progresses to it's fullest potential.

Nurse Practitioner Project - Business cases for proposed Nurse Practitioner candidates are being completed. Potential demonstration sites identified. Main issues still need to be resolved, such as prescribing, admitting and discharging patients, radiology and pathology. There is a need for project person to take carriage of this to ensure it progresses to it's fullest potential.

Security for Remote Accommodation - This is an ongoing matter as many issues have been identified. Again appears that this will require a project person to ensure all issues are addressed with the relevant departmental agencies.

### Free internet access

The ANF NT office at Casi House, Vanderlin Drive, has an internet computer available for use by members. Please feel free to ring the ANF NT office to book a time to access the computer, the service is free of charge.

## Adventures in Egypt by Mary Williams

In January 2006 my family and I went off on our longed for holiday to Egypt. We were so excited to be in the land of the Pharaohs imagining all the ruins, temples and history we would experience during our time there. We enjoyed our first three days seeing the incredible sights around Cairo including the Pyramids, which were 15 minutes from our hotel. Also getting acquainted with our fellow passengers who came from all over Australia and one family from Canada.

On our third day we headed off to El Alamein and Alexandria to take in the history of the area. It was during our trip back to Cairo after a long and tiring day that disaster struck. The two buses we were using for the day were travelling in convey. At 10.20pm on a dark stretch on the highway to Cairo the leading bus in our group was involved in a horrendous bus accident. Fortunately for myself, I didn't witness the actual accident but I did see the after effects. There were 35 people travelling on that bus and at my first glance of the scene it looked like a war zone. There were people and bodies lying all around. Some being flung from the vehicle as it rolled during the accident. Unfortunately 5 of the passengers died instantly from their injuries and 1 more died at the scene.

Trying to triage the injured with no light, no resources and local people shouting in Arabic was very difficult. We had a steady stream of ambulances that arrived within 30 minutes of the accident. However these ambulances had next to no resources on board, they were literally transport vehicles only. Even a bandage or a sling was not available for the injured. A couple of the injured would have benefited from having oxygen therapy during transport but that was obviously a luxury that was not available to the ambulance officers to utilise.

My triage skills that I acquired through working in the Emergency Department here in Tennant Creek were put to the test. I initially assessed all the injured and prioritised the injured for transfer to hospital. It is amazing what you can use when there is minimal equipment around. Even the common bra can be used as a tourniquet I know because that is what I had to use on the lady with the trapped foot under the bus. There were a number of upper limb injuries, which benefited from the support of slings made from headscarves of the milling Egyptians.

We were on the scene for 2 to 3 hours following the accident and to this day I cannot imagine how both the rescuers and the injured stayed so calm in such a difficult situation. I was proud to be able to assist in the way that I did but I do feel sad for the ones that died from the accident and felt helpless that I could not do more. I was one of many involved in this disaster and to be part of that team was incredible. We needed each other to help the injured. Of the 35 people on that fateful bus 6 died, 26 ended up in hospital and 4 could be treated and released from hospital.

I am glad that both my sons and I and the rest of the uninjured continued on our tour of Egypt as it gave a chance to de-brief, offer support to each other and to take back home to Australia some positive thoughts about our holiday in Egypt. Also from a tragic disaster that happened on January 10 strong friendships have been forged with us all that will last for a long time to come. I was proud to be Australian and to be part of such a dynamic group that without hesitation helped others.

### When contacting the branch

When contacting the Branch for assistance or an enquiry, it assists us greatly if you can provide us with your ANF NT membership no. This can be found on your membership card provided at the time joining the Branch and it is also on the ANJ front address sheet that you receive each month as part of your membership.

### We will get back to you!

The ANF NT is the smallest and least resourced Branch in the Federation. Our small team, based in Darwin is responsible for the whole of the Territory. Consequently we get many contacts from nurses everywhere with a variety of requests for information and support. If we are not there to take your call at the time, do not hesitate to leave a message. We will respond and acknowledge your message within a reasonable time frame. Our goal to get back to you within 24 hours. If it a work conditions related matter, your employer is obligated to provide this to you in the first instance. You never know they could have the answer? Nevertheless we will always respond if you contact us.