



Denis Blackford  
NT Branch Secretary

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Request for volunteers in office

The Branch Office is frequently in need of volunteer support from members to assist the small ANF team on various tasks and projects. Contact our Branch Organiser, Angela Phillips on 8920 0703. Members who can spare some of their time to assist can be in the running for winning free movie tickets.



**MembersEquity**  
The Super Funds Bank

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

Hello colleagues,

Welcome to the February/March issue of the ANF NT newsletter. Another year is ahead of us and for NT nurses we hope working environments will reflect positive and satisfying professional experiences.

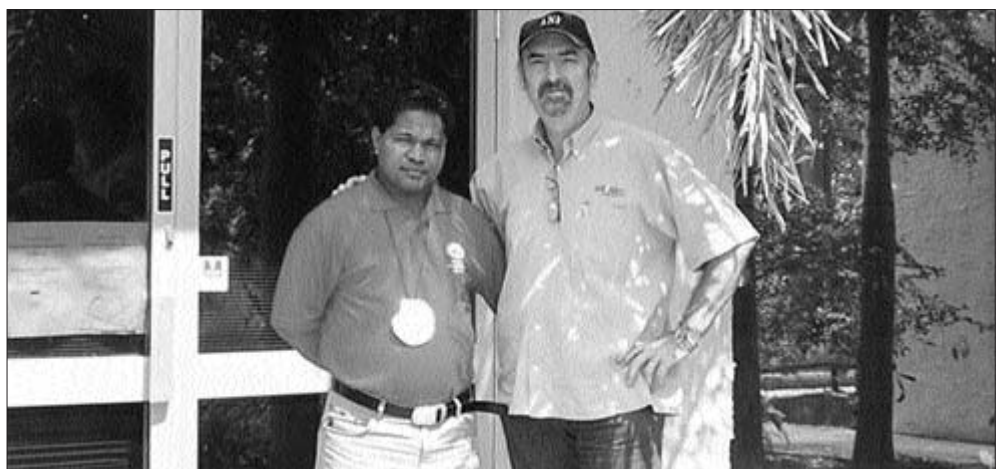
This will be a hectic year for the ANF NT Branch. As well as the two regional and local Roadshows and the ANF NT Job Delegate conference in May, the Branch will be hosting the ANF National Biennial Delegates Conference in Darwin in October. This is the national forum for job delegates from across Australia, meeting every two years, to provide direction for the ANF- from debate and development of resolutions directly from the conference. NT job delegates will have the opportunity to participate in these forums later in the year.

The election result last year has meant that industrial relations between employees and employers will be evolving into something different. This is particularly the case after 1 July when the Federal Government assumes control of the Senate. The Federal Opposition is effectively out of the picture and the Coalition government has indicated that it intends to review aspects of Federal industrial legislation under which unions operate. This effectively means that the capacity for the ANF to address workplace issues is expected to be more difficult.

In returning to the theme of my comments from the last newsletter, I believe, that in order to contribute to confronting the challenges this expected new reality implies, nurses need to be more attentive to their own workplace through getting organised and involved in their own local processes. The ANF NT Branch is the smallest in the country with the least resources and some of the biggest challenges potentially compromising our capacity reach and connect with nurses across a diverse and vast geographic area.

We want to improve this capacity through the improved involvement of ANF members in their local areas. The strength and clout of the ANF NT Branch in professional and industrial terms relates directly and indirectly to the resolve of nurses in getting involved in their own workplaces.

Also, in the last newsletter, I expressed a wish for more hope and less anger and frustration for 2005. Whilst it is potentially going to be more difficult to achieve, we can move towards hope through remembering to focus on the positive aspects of what, after all, is still a rewarding and satisfying profession. We look forward to hearing from you and your workplace.



East Timor Nurses Association Rep. 'Augustinho de Costa Tilman', visiting ANF office with Secretary, Denis Blackford in November

## From the branch office



### Organiser's Desk

Angela Phillips  
[angela.ntanf@octa4.net.au](mailto:angela.ntanf@octa4.net.au)

### What's happening in 2004

Happy new year to you all, I look forward to presenting this column in 2005 for the NT Newsletter.

Worksite visits will begin in February and continue throughout the year with each work area being visited on a regular basis (at least twice a year). The visits will be informal and either the ANF or Job Delegates (JDs) in your work areas will keep you informed of when the meeting will take place.

Information and communication are a challenge at times. Information is distributed through the JD in your work area or directly from the ANF office. We would like to continue this process and keep expanding the service. But we need your assistance, the ANF JD network has expanded in the last year to 84, but we are still well short of covering all work areas. So if you do not have a JD in your work area and you are interested in becoming one or a contact person, please let the office know. The bigger the communications tree the better.

### Dates to put in your diary this year:

14-18 March: Roadshow, Central Australia

30 March-1 April: Roadshow, Katherine, Pine Creek, Adelaide River

4-5 April: Roadshow: Darwin Private Hospital, Royal Darwin Hospital

12-13 May: Biennial Job Delegates Conference

28-30 September: Roadshow, Katherine

3-4 October: Roadshow, DPH, RDH

10-14 October: Roadshow, Central Australia

20-21 October: ANF National Biennial Delegates Conference, Darwin

Remember - the ANF Office or your JD can assist you with up-to-date pay and workplace conditions, award or certified agreement enquiries, professional or industrial issues - or in fact any query about nursing or we will point you in the right direction. Make sure you keep yourself 'in the know'. If you are unsure of anything or rumours are circulating ring the ANF office and we will keep you informed.

### NTPS Nursing Career Structure Review (NCSR)

The committee's last meeting for 2004 was on 17 November. Issues emerging include an agreement to send a letter to all outstanding appellants updating them on the process and apologising for the delay. Mercer, the provider of the work evaluation tool, will be putting a proposal to address identified issues from the steering committee relating to these concerns. This will be discussed at the next NCSR steering committee meeting. At the time of writing this is scheduled for 19 January.

#### NCSR Steering Committee Membership:

Greg Rickard, Principal Nurse Advisor (Chair)  
Mark Hathaway, Director HR&WD and HR Representative  
Denis Blackford, ANF NT Branch Secretary  
Gloria Göpel, Project Coordinator  
Carol Barnes, Director of Nursing Representative  
Denby Kitchener, Nursing Director Representative  
Debra Young, Clinical Nurse Manager (Katherine)  
Mary Williams, Clinical Nurse Manager (Tennant Creek)  
Lorin James, Top End Mental Health  
Beryl McEwan, Nurse Educator  
Libby Clegg, Clinical Nurse RN  
Maureen York, Clinical Nurse EN  
Chris Murray, Community Health RN  
Kirstie Hawkins, Project Officer Nursing Taskforce  
Heather Traeger, Coordinator Nursing Taskforce (Technical Support role)

#### Broad project objectives:

- \* Audit the nurse 'Work Evaluation System' results and review areas within the structure where significant levels of variance in work evaluation have resulted.
- \* Develop an appeals and dispute process.
- \* Evaluate the current Nurses Career Structure model and make recommendations of proposed changes.
- \* Identify and process current appeals.
- \* Review exemplary practice processes.
- \* Identify linkages between the Nurses Career Structure Review and the Nurses' Certified Agreement Taskforce Project activities and work in partnership to ensure outcomes meet nursing and organisational requirements.

NTPS nurses can access more information about the NCSR steering committee process through the NTG 'intranet' site.

## News briefs



*Katherine Hospital Roadshow*

### NT public sector nurses

Got a problem with entitlements, allowances or issues relating to your employment conditions? Your employer is obliged to provide these to you, answer your queries and resolve your issues. Contact the DH&CS Human Resources and Workforce Development Branch at Casuarina Plaza in Darwin through calling the NT Government switchboard on 8999 5511. If you do not receive the answers or solutions you require, contact us at the ANF NT Branch office.

### Audit Report Information

The ANF NT Branch Audit for 2003/04 has been completed and endorsed by Branch Council. All members are welcome to scrutinise the papers through contacting the ANF NT Branch office. Details of the Audit are currently posted on the ANF NT website: [www.anfnt.org.au](http://www.anfnt.org.au).

### ANF NT Branch Membership Fees

The ANF NT Branch Council recently decided to continue aligning membership fee increases with the wage increases occurring for NT Public Sectors (NTPS) nurses. This is in keeping with the practice of other ANF Branches. Fee increases are never popular, however, it is necessary to increase them from time to time to maintain the financial position of the Branch and ensure that the resource base is maintained for the benefit of all members. The ANF is solely funded by the fees of its members.

NTPS nurses received a 3% salary increase on 30 August. ANF NT fees will increase by 3% from 1 January 2005. The effective yearly increase for a RN will be about \$13 and for an EN around \$10 per year. Membership fees are tax deductible.

### NTPS Certified Agreement (CA) Taskforce

There have been some concerns expressed from members about the Professional Development Allowance (PDA) for public sector nurses. Information was circulated in October last year from the employer (DH&CS) and through ANF NT Branch about changes that needed to be made following a new Australian Tax Office (ATO) ruling relating to how the PDA was to be taxed. As well as this, the DH&CS decided to 'interpret' the 'continuous service' requirement of the Certified Agreement clause determining eligibility for the allowance. This interpretation initially meant that any nurse who had one day's leave without pay forfeited access to the allowance. The Department amended this to ten days following representation from the ANF NT Branch.

The Nurses CA Taskforce is reviewing the issue of professional development as part its project. The ANF NT Branch, being part of the Taskforce, will be attending to optimising the outcome for the professional development interests of nurses.

Details of steering committee minutes and related information can be accessed through the NTG 'Intranet' website. The ANF NT project Officer on the Taskforce, Kirstie Hawkins can be contacted at [kirstie.hawkins@nt.gov.au](mailto:kirstie.hawkins@nt.gov.au) or on 8922 7025.



*Members meeting at Katherine Hospital*

### Job delegate thank you

The ANF NT Branch office would like to thank the JDs who have assisted us with our mail outs and at the RDH Orientation Days. Your assistance and continued support is greatly appreciated.

### Know your job delegate

The Alice Springs Job Delegate (JD) network has developed further recently. The training last September attracted many participants and activity among 'centralian' JDs has maintained its momentum. Some delegates include: June McGowin ASH, Surgical; Paul Knott ASH Child and Maternal Health (SCN); Wendy Corkill ASH ICU; David Schultz Remote Area; John Hodgson Mental Health. For more information about Centralian JD's contact Angela Phillips at the ANF NT Branch Office.

## From the branch office



### Industrial Officer's Desk

Jane Carrigan  
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OK, hands up those who feel like they haven't been on leave. It was clear, upon return from my own leave, that my 'in tray' testified to the fact that most of you didn't have leave! However, one way or another we are all facing a new year with refreshed optimism that maybe those things that didn't work out last year will this year (no I don't believe in the tooth fairy!).

Industrially it is a busy year with a number of Certified Agreements (CAs) up for renegotiation. We are also looking to negotiate CAs in areas not previously canvassed, most notably pushing further into the area of aged care, that being particularly long overdue. Further to this are the usual day-to-day issues and challenges which all go to ensuring my days are not dull.

I will end this message by reminding you all that as professionals you work under a regulatory regime and will be held legally accountable for any errors resulting out of working in excess of standard hours. Fatigue and general exhaustion is a problem that I see far too often. Your loyalty and work ethics are being seriously misplaced if you are working long hours without appropriate relief (that goes for both paid over time and unpaid). Your employer should not be asking it or expecting it of you but the responsibility also falls to you to monitor your own hours with OH&S and your registration in mind. If you have concerns in this area please do not hesitate to call this office. We would far rather move to assist you resolve this issue constructively early in the piece than have to try and pick up the pieces after you have succumbed both physically and mentally to the 'workload predicament'.

I wish everyone a happy - and let's hope productive - year. Thank to the many of you who keep the words of encouragement up and appreciate what we are doing, such response is always gratefully received.

### When contacting the Branch

When contacting the branch for assistance or enquiry, it helps 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 benefits.

### ANF NT Branch Council/Executive

The new Executive and Branch Council are:

President Neil Spencer, Darwin; Vice President Libby Clegg, Gove.  
Executive Councillors, Sherrie Pilkington, Darwin; Vickye Coffey, Gove; John Hodgson, Alice Springs; Wendy Corkill, Alice Springs.  
Branch Councillors, Andrea Moriarty, Darwin; Simon Murphy, Darwin; Paul Knott, Alice Springs; Denby Kitchener, Darwin; Jenny Palmer, Darwin; Cheryl Winter, Darwin; Richard Ashburner, East Arnhem.

The new Executive met for the first time on 10 January and the new Council is to meet on 14 February.

Appropriate accommodation infrastructure needs to be in place - among other issues. The Branch will be watching this process closely as it sure to produce implementation issues along the way.

### Exit letter copy to the ANF

Leaving your job or thinking of leaving your job, because of issues with your employer and/or workplace?

Why not think of sending a copy of your resignation letter describing your concerns and reasons for leaving. This will allow us to develop a database of evidence informing the debate about the reasons why nurses are not staying in the NT. Great information to put before employers - particularly at EBA times. Our fax number is (08) 89454 171, email [ntanf@octa4.net.au](mailto:ntanf@octa4.net.au)

### ANF Federal Election

The Federal ANF is running an election for the Federation's Vice President. Ballot papers will soon be sent to eligible ANF NT Branch members.

### Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII) registration requirements

Recent changes to NT legislation pertaining to nurses has meant that it is now a requirement of registration with the Health Professionals Licensing Authority (New version of the NT Nurses Board) to indicate that nurses have adequate professional indemnity insurance. ANF membership covers most nurses in employment with its PII cover. Nurses who work in some private contract arrangements earning more than \$20,000 per year are not covered.

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