



Yvonne Falckh  
NT Branch Secretary

**IN THIS ISSUE:**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Message from the Secretary             | 1 |
| Organiser's desk                       | 2 |
| IR Information                         | 2 |
| News briefs                            | 3 |
| From the membership officer            | 4 |
| Branch Executive and Council Elections | 4 |
| Job Delegate Conference                | 4 |

## MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

### IR Laws

The High Court upheld the Howard Government's new Industrial Relations legislation late last year after a challenge from State and Territory Governments. However the ruling doesn't mean that the laws are just and fair. Howard's IR laws are about giving power to employers at the expense of employees. Millions of workers around Australia have lost many of their rights at work because of the legislation.

Australia has long prided itself on giving people a fair go. The new IR laws stand in stark contrast to the principles of fairness. Future generations of workers will be deprived of the conditions that took hundreds of years to establish if the laws become entrenched in our society. The ANF NT Branch will take a stand against employers who try to erode nurses working conditions. In the current climate nurses need to be vigilant about defending conditions of employment. Once conditions are lost it is very difficult to get them back.

### Public Sector Negotiations

As we welcome in the New Year the NT Branch continues to pursue a fair collective agreement for public sector nurses. It has not been easy as the government insists that its wages policy of 3% per year is all that it is prepared to offer. Nurses deserve more than 3% per year! The process has also been lengthy with the government trying various ways to secure an inferior agreement.

Despite the strong rejection by nurses of the governments position on no less than three occasions the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment (OCPE) has now decided to ballot all NTPS nurses, without agreement with the ANF, in an attempt to get nurses to accept the same miserable offer. Ballots closed on 19 January 2007. Please visit the ANF website for updated information on the ballot. We await the outcome of the ballot and the opportunity to recommence negotiations for a better deal.

A better deal that ensures that nurses receive wage increases in line with their colleagues in Qld and in NSW; a better deal that recognises the imposition of being on call and working long hours, often without recompense. And a better deal that requires the government to belatedly recognise the need to introduce appropriate recruitment and retention strategies, and to provide an increase to the professional development allowance.

In response to the OCPE ballot the ANF NT sent out five fact sheets including: (1) ANF to press ahead for better agreement, (2) Wage rates, (3) Qualification allowance, (4) How is a collective agreement approved?, (5) 10 hour night shifts to go: double staffing/overlap to go.

Matthew and I traveled around the NT to talk to nurses and answer their questions on the implications of accepting or rejecting the offer. These meetings have been well received by nurses. The national and international shortage of nurses is of major concern especially in the NT where we constantly see difficulties recruiting in all health sectors. The unique needs of the NT should be considered when negotiating a new agreement.



**MembersEquity**  
The Super Funds Bank

## from the branch office



### Organiser's Desk

Matthew Gardiner - [matthew.ntanf@octa4.net.au](mailto:matthew.ntanf@octa4.net.au)

Welcome to the first newsletter of the New Year. I hope that you all had a chance to spend time with family and friends over the festive season. 2007 brings with it new challenges and opportunities.

The Branch continues to work on collective agreement negotiations in the Public and Private Sectors. Aged Care and Remote sectors also continue to negotiate agreements both collective and individual.

During the course of these various negotiations and ballots, we will be regularly updating the ANF NT Branch website to ensure that all members can access the most current information available.

The Job Delegate Conference will be held in Darwin in May 2007 with JD's from around the Territory and a variety of speakers to attend. Now is the time to start preparing motions to be put forward at the conference.

The Federal Election will be held towards the end of the year. If you want to have your say against "Worst Choices" or any other issue that you don't agree with, you must ensure that you are correctly enrolled to vote. The Howard Government is changing some of the rules around enrolments in the coming year so get in early with any changes of details or new enrolments. Enrolment forms can be picked up from any Post Office or the ANF Office. If you're not enrolled properly you have no say in what happens to you, your family or the country.

I hope that you are all recharged and refreshed as 2007 is going to be as big or even bigger than 2006. The strength of any organisation be it political, social or recreational is through its members, so get involved in any way you can.

### IR Information

The Australian Nursing Federation NT Branch has been involved with many nurses on developing statements for incidents that have occurred in the workplace. We therefore feel it is important to provide the following information.

#### Making Statements

There are a range of circumstances where nurses may be asked to provide a statement. Nurses are increasingly being asked to provide statements to regulatory or law enforcement authorities, courts, commissions and tribunals, for example the Nurses Board, the Coroner's Court, specially constituted commissions of inquiry and WorkCover. Statements may also be requested by employers as part of local investigations into grievances or alleged incidents of inappropriate workplace conduct.

Any statement you make could have serious legal, professional or industrial ramifications. This is the case whether you have merely witnessed an incident or are directly involved. It is also important to be aware that anything you write could be used against you.

#### General advice about making statements

Do not make any statement (other than simple incident reports) until you have contacted the ANF for advice.

You are not obliged to give a statement to the police in relation to any investigation they may be conducting.

You are only required to give the police your name and address. You should always seek advice from ANF before agreeing to be interviewed by or giving a statement to police.

If you believe that any statement you make could incriminate you or make you liable in an action for negligence, then you should politely decline to make any report to any person in authority until such time as legal advice is received. Never be pressured into making a statement in these circumstances. Refrain from discussing the issue with any other staff members. You must be given adequate time to prepare and seek advice on any statement you make. You should not refuse to provide a statement, but you should make it clear that you require time to prepare and seek advice about the matter.

If a statement is required in a matter involving a patient's medical and nursing charts you must be given the opportunity to sit down and read the patient's file before preparing the statement. Health agencies maintain records for at least seven years from the last entry. For babies, this period extends to when the person reaches the age of 21.

If you are under pressure to provide a statement in a timeframe which does not allow you adequate time to properly prepare, you should contact the ANF for assistance.

## news briefs

## Collective Agreements

Juninga  
Frontier Services EBA

Danila Dilba  
Katherine West Health Board

Australian Red Cross Blood Service (NT)  
Darwin Private Hospital

NT Public Sector Nurses

## Current Situation

Nurses will be invited to access the agreement negotiated for Frontier Services. Negotiations are progressing slowly. A draft agreement should be available soon for members to make comment.

Staff reject management offer. Negotiations to continue.

Nurses have developed their Log of Claims. Negotiations should commence by the end of March 2007.

Negotiations have commenced, a draft agreement has been developed.

Meetings have been held with nursing representatives, management and ANF. Negotiations progressing well, draft agreement developed.

The OCPE had sent out ballots to all NTPS nurses to vote on an offer that has already been rejected three times by the ANF on behalf of members. Further information on the ballot and its outcomes is available on the website.

## Biennial Job Delegate Conference

The Biennial Job Delegate Conference will be held on 2-3 May 2007 at the Palms City Resort Darwin.

Resolutions accepted from the Conference will be taken to the Biennial National Delegates Conference held in Melbourne on 11 and 12 October 2007. Registration forms, accommodation and travel forms are available on the website.

If you want to influence nursing in the Territory, start working on your submissions for consideration as a resolution for the conference.

## Website

Check the ANF NT Branch website ([www.ntanf.org.au](http://www.ntanf.org.au)) regularly for updates on current negotiations. The website also has Membership Application forms which can be downloaded for non-members wishing to join the ANF NT Branch. Method of Payments forms and Review of Membership details forms are also available for download.

## Dates to remember

Please note that the below dates may be altered, or increased due to circumstances, issues and bargaining negotiations.

| Site                                   | Date   | Visiting Official                           |
|--|--|---|
| Darwin                                 | Roadshows and site visits will be confirmed with each work site in the near future |   |
| JD Conference                          | 2nd & 3rd May  | JD's to Darwin                              |
| Alice Springs                          | 11th & 12th January  | Organiser                                   |
| Alice Springs                          | 22nd & 23rd February   | Secretary                                   |
| Alice Springs Roadshow                 | 27th to 29th March   | TBC   |
| Alice Springs                          | 14th & 15th May  | Secretary                                   |
| Alice Springs                          | 18th & 19th July   | TBC   |
| Alice Springs                          | 4th September  | TBC   |
| Alice Springs Roadshow                 | 16th to 18th October   | TBC   |
| Alice Springs                          | 19th & 20th November   | Secretary                                   |
| Katherine                              | 17th January   | Secretary                                   |
| Katherine Roadshow                     | 11th & 12th April  | Organiser                                   |
| Katherine                              | 24th July  | TBC   |
| Roadshow Katherine                     | 2nd & 3rd October  | TBC   |
| Tennant Creek Roadshow                 | 26th & 27th March  | TBC   |
| Tennant Creek Roadshow                 | 15th & 16th October  | TBC   |
| Gove                                   | 12th January   | Secretary                                   |
| Gove                                   | 30th May   | TBC   |
| Gove                                   | 19th September   | TBC   |
| Job Delegate Training                  |  |   |
| Darwin                                 | TBC  | JD's to Darwin                              |
| Alice Springs                          | TBC  | JD's to Alice Springs                       |
| Biennial National Delegates Conference | 11th & 12th October 2007 Melbourne   | Elected Job Delegates from NT JD Conference |

## news briefs

### From the Membership Officer

Jane Wilde - [ntanf@octa4.net.au](mailto:ntanf@octa4.net.au)

Hello and Happy New Year. I would just like to remind all members that if you change any of your details e.g. address, phone numbers, workplace or bank details, please contact the office so we can keep the database current. You can either phone: (08) 8920 0701, email: [membership.ntanf@octa4.net.au](mailto:membership.ntanf@octa4.net.au) or fax: (08) 8945 4171 details to us. If you are going to work in another state or have already moved please call us and we may be able to arrange a transfer to your new ANF Branch.

### ANF NT Branch Executive and Council Elections

Nominations were called for Branch Council and Branch Executive positions, with the exception of the Branch Secretary position. All nominees were declared in an uncontested election. Results for your Branch Council are as follows:

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Branch President  | Shirel Nomoa - Royal Darwin Hospital  |
| Vice President    | Chris Murray - Community Health   |
| Executive Council | Karen Brown - Royal Darwin Hospital<br>Frank Pearson - Nurse Educators Darwin<br>Andrea Moriarty - Renal Darwin   |
| Branch Councilors | Denby Kitchener - Medical Division RDH<br>Simon Murphy - Paliative Care Darwin<br>Craig Pullen - Katherine District Hospital<br>Michael Wright - Tennant Creek Hospital & Mental Health<br>Leslie Gay - Remote Health<br>Michelle Callard - Alice Springs Hospital<br>Branch Councilor Kellie Franciis – Gove |

Vacancies still exist for one NT Branch Executive and two Branch Councilors. Thank you to the nurses from outside of Darwin that have nominated to Branch Council. It is important to have a well represented and balanced committee to enable nurses from throughout the NT to have a voice in decision making involving the union and nursing.

## AUSTRALIAN NURSING FEDERATION - NORTHERN TERRITORY BRANCH



### 2007 BIENNIAL JOB DELEGATE CONFERENCE

on the  
**2nd & 3rd May 2007**  
from  
**8.30am to 4:30pm - Wednesday**  
**8:30am to 4:00pm - Thursday**  
at the  
**PALMS CITY RESORT, DARWIN**

Registration forms, accommodation and travel forms are available from the website

**Please send completed Registration forms no later than 26th February 2007 to the**

ANF NT BRANCH  
PO BOX 42533  
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