



Denis Blackford  
NT Branch Secretary

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## MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

Welcome to the June/July NT newsletter. The NT election may have happened by the time this newsletter reaches you. We could have new NT Government or another term for the incumbent regime. If the election is still looming, it is the ANF NT's recommendation that nurses cast their ballot in the best interests of themselves as professional nurses and of those who are entrusted to our care.

An evaluation of the performances of the political parties is a good place to start. Take a close look at the health and social policies being presented to see if what is on offer will benefit the NT health sector and nurses' capacity to work effectively within the sector.

There is a new reality for ANF members looming in the near future. This, in essence, is the same for all union members when the Federal Government in Canberra gets a 'rubber stamp' to pass any legislation it wants after it gets control of both houses of Parliament on 1 July 2005.

Prime Minister John Howard's Government has already indicated there will sweeping changes to industrial laws determining how unions can access and provide services to their members. These changes will restrict the capacity of unions to operate as never before.

It is important to remember that unions, such as the ANF, have fought long and hard over the years to gain benefits such as: the eight hour day, sick, recreation, maternity, and long service leave, superannuation and fair wage increases. Employers simply did not agree to hand over these benefits, they only occurred through the collective bargaining power of union membership.

The Federal Government has clearly indicated it prefers to see the majority of the Australian workforce on individual contracts (AWA's). This means individuals will have to negotiate directly with their employer - with no power to negotiate a fair outcome.

The ANF believes all nurses should be aware of these imminent changes and encourages them to communicate this information widely to their colleagues. The only way to diminish the effect of these legislative changes is through a negative public response to the proposals so the Federal Government will 'tone down' elements of their plans to neutralise the effectiveness of unions such as the ANF.

For more information consult the ANF Federal website [www.anf.org.au](http://www.anf.org.au). The ACTU website has more information. Look out for and be a part of the national campaign in the months ahead.



**MembersEquity**  
The Super Funds Bank



NT Branch Secretary, Denis Blackford, presents flowers to Organiser, Angela Phillips, for her work on the Delegates Conference

## News briefs



### Organiser's Desk

Angela Phillips (nee Wallace)  
*angela.ntanf@octa4.net.au*

Angela was not able to update you personally on her Organiser's role in time to meet the publisher's deadline. Her hectic schedule, which has included dealing with a range of membership matters, Branch Roadshow visits, and preparation for the NT Job Delegates Conference, has kept her away from the keyboard. She will return in the next newsletter.

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

- Roadshow: 28 - 30 September, Katherine
- Roadshow: 3 - 4 October, DPH, RDH
- Roadshow: 10 - 14 October, Central Australia
- Federal ANF Job Delegates Conference:  
20 - 21 October, 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.

### NT Nursing and Midwifery Awards 2005

The award winners were announced in Darwin on International Nurses Day, May 12th. Category winners were:

- Mental Health: Brian Mitchell, Alice Springs.
- Remote: Janet Fletcher, Ngukurr
- Community Health: Marg Tyrrel, Alice Springs
- Aged Care: Rosemary Jeffries, Darwin
- Acute Care: Simon Murphy, Darwin
- Midwifery: Theo Allen, Alice Springs

Simon Murphy, who is also an ANF NT Branch Councillor, took out the top award of NT Nurse of the Year as well. Congratulations Simon and to all the category winners.

*Right: ANF NT Branch Secretary, Denis Blackford, with Simon Murphy, winner of the NT Nurse of the Year Award*

### RDH Emergency Department

Access block and security issues at RDH ED continue to confront nurses working in this area. Nurses have been contacting the ANF NT Branch indicating that attempts by DH&CS to address the issue effectively are working.

The ANF NT Branch was able to arrange opportunities for senior DH&CS representatives, CEO Robert Griew, Assistant Secretary Acute Care Services, Peter Campos, and the Health Minister Peter Toyner, to meet with RDH nurses from ED and 4A and 4B to hear their concerns.

The nurses presented a clear and passionate view of how desperate they were regarding the ongoing pressures they and their patients were under as a result of the access block and unsafe working environments.

The Minister provided a response to their concerns on 10 May which included:

- Extending HITH to cover seven days a week;
- Establishment of a transit lounge for patients awaiting discharge;
- An independent review of the access block issue at RDH to be completed within two months with a commitment to act on the recommendations;
- Increased security presence in ED with a negotiation to have increased police patrols to occur between the police and health ministers; and,
- Promotion of the greater use of Darwin Private Hospital.

The ANF NT Branch will monitor and evaluate the progress of these commitments to ensure they are impacting meaningfully in addressing the pressures that nurses are encountering as part of their daily experience.



## News briefs

### Alice Springs Hospital (ASH) update: Joint Consultative Committee (JCC)

Alice Springs Hospital job delegates have been meeting fortnightly with ASH management since the lifting of the workplace bans at the hospital. Feedback from delegates indicate the progress is slow in developing greater insight into issues such as the allocation of staffing resources, rostering, and, addressing the lack of staff to attend to non nursing duties.

Also, the first meeting of the joint unions and ASH management JCC was held on 11 May. This was attended by Denis Blackford, ANF NT Branch, the LHMU rep from Alice Springs, and a representative from the AMA. ASH management reps included Vicki Taylor, Carol Barnes and ASH HR representatives. The forum will allow discussion on issues specific to the relationship between unions with members at ASH and management such as, budget, staffing and related activities.

### NTPS Certified Agreement Taskforce

Details of steering committee minutes and related information can be accessed through the Taskforce Newsletter circulated monthly and 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.

### NTPS Nursing Career Structure (NCS) Review

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

### 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.

*Katherine District Hospital Renal Unit Staff*



*NT Nurses at May Day march 2005*

### May Day 2005

The May Day celebrations in Darwin seemed the biggest and most supported in recent memory. The weekend began with a dinner under the stars next to Parliament House and a reception in the Great Hall at Parliament House for union members and guests. The May Day march through the streets of Darwin was followed by a festival on the esplanade. The theme this year was 'strong unions need women' - a statement about the pivotal role female employees play in the union movement.

*ANF NT Roadshow at Katherine District Hospital, April 2005*



Visit our website: [www.anfnt.org.au](http://www.anfnt.org.au)



ANF NT Roadshow at Katherine District Hospital, April 2005

### Aged care EBA: A first for the NT

As we go to print, the first meeting around the development of an EBA with age care provider Frontier Services is expected toward the end of May. Consultations with members in the various worksites within Frontier Services will need to occur to develop a log of claims. Meetings with the other union - who also have members involved - and management will be part of the initial process.

### 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 on 8922 7249. If you do not receive the answers or solutions you require, contact us at the ANF NT Branch office.

### ANF NT Branch industrial services

There has been a change to industrial services provided for ANF NT Branch members. Due to the departure of Jane Carrigan, who was the first industrial officer employed by the Branch, industrial services will continue through the support of the ANF Federal Office in the short term and a review of the role by ANF NT Branch Council will determine the future direction of this aspect of the Branch.

All ANF NT members were contacted directly by mail to inform them of the issues around the staff changes at the Branch. Please contact the office if you have not received the letter.

### When contacting the Branch

When contacting the Branch for assistance or enquiry, it helps us greatly if you can provide your ANF NT Branch membership number. This can be found on your membership card provided at the time joining or on the ANJ front address sheet you receive each month as part of your membership benefits.

### We will get back to you!

The ANF NT Branch is the smallest and least resourced in the ANF. Our small team, based in Darwin, is responsible for the whole of the NT. Consequently, we get many contacts from nurses with a variety of requests for information and support.

If we are not there to take your call do not hesitate to leave a message. We will respond within a reasonable time frame. Our goal to get back to you within 24 hours. If it is a work conditions related matter, your employer is obligated to provide this in the first instance. You never know they could have the answer. Nevertheless, we will always respond if you contact us.

### 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 us 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 around the reasons why nurses are not staying in the NT. Great information to put before employers particularly at EBA times. Our fax is 8945 4171, or email [denis.ntanf@octa4.net.au](mailto:denis.ntanf@octa4.net.au)

ANF Assistant Federal Secretary, Ged Cowin, at the NT Delegates Conference



Authorised by Denis Blackford Branch Secretary Australian Nursing Federation (NT Branch)  
PO Box 42533 Casuarina NT 0811 Ph: (08) 8920 0700 Fax: (08) 8945 4171