



Yvonne Falckh
NT Branch Secretary

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MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

March 27 saw the introduction of the Workplace Relations Regulations. Within days of this legislation being introduced, workers were sacked and offered new jobs at lesser pay and conditions and were offered Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs). AWAs will be introduced into some workplaces in the NT and nurses will be affected in some areas. These new laws are designed to damage unions. The ANF is an active and organised union and will be there for its members under this new environment.

The Martin Labor government has assured public sector employees they will not be subjected to AWAs. As your union, it is important that you contact us to help you through the process if an AWA is forced on you. I have included guidelines and information in this newsletter about AWAs based on information provided by the ACTU.

I attended a union management course in Currawong at the end of March where I had the opportunity to meet organisers and secretaries from a wide spectrum of other unions. A key learning from the course was understanding how other unions work, recognising that as a union we need to do things differently in the future (to avoid the harsh financial penalties that may be imposed on us through this new legislation) and to better utilise our job delegates and active members, who are crucial to any union.

Nursing and Midwifery Awards

The Northern Territory Nursing and Midwifery Awards 2006 celebrate excellence in our nursing profession. A reception was held in the Main Hall at Parliament House, Darwin, on International Nurses Day 12 May 2006. This year 99 outstanding nurses were nominated. The Australian Nursing Federation NT congratulates all nominees, especially the category winners:

Acute Care Nurse - Mary Williams - Acting general manager and director of nursing, Tennant Creek Hospital.

Aged Care and General Practice Nurse - Mary Greenup - Nursing director, Tiwi Gardens Aged Care.

Community Health Nurse - Tim Emerton - Alcohol and other drugs.

Graduate Nurse of the Year - Brigit Frank - Currently working in ICU, RDH.

Mental Health Nurse - Deb Spurgeon - Top End Mental Health.

Remote Area Nurse - Janet Rigby - Wadeye Remote Community Health.

Midwife - Heather Hancock - Home Birth Service, Alice Springs.

Living Legend - Nan Miller - was at the Communicable Disease Centre, RDH.

Midwife of the Year - Heather Hancock

Nurse of the Year - Mary Williams.

Mary contributed two excellent articles printed in our last ANJ insert (April-May 2006), 'Remote Emergency Care Course' and 'Adventures in Egypt'.



MembersEquity
The Super Funds Bank



ANF members participate in the May Day march

May Day celebrations

A successful May Day was celebrated in Darwin during a busy weekend for all involved. Unions were invited to a reception given by the Government at Parliament House which 15 ANF members attended. ANF members also attended the May Day dinner the following day. Reg Mombassa, artiste extraordinaire, did the artwork for the NT May Day T-shirts. The framed original artwork was auctioned off in a Dutch auction. I am pleased to say Matthew, our organiser, was the successful bidder and the framed artwork now resides in the ANF NT office. Please feel free to come and view it.

The May Day march was well represented by ANF members and their families. Participants carried placards with statements such as 'What's your health worth?'; 'Safe staffing saves lives'; 'Nurses, you can't live without them' and 'What's a life worth?'. The march concluded at the Darwin Esplanade, where bands and a variety of food and drink stalls were appreciated by the large crowd. Thank you to all ANF members and families for your participation and support over the long weekend.

NTPS Certified Agreement Taskforce

Hospital Staffing Update - ANF is due to receive the report from the CEO, NT Department of Health and Community Services.

Enrolled Nurses Scope of Practice - The project is continuing at this moment and the report is expected with the Minister in June.

Nurse Practitioner Project - Minister Toyne has stated he is committed to the project. A report is due to be tabled in June and will be acted on immediately.

NTPS Nurses 2006-2008 Certified Agreement

Survey forms have been distributed by the ANF NT to all public sector nurses. This survey provides an opportunity for NTPS Nurses to rate the importance of key issues affecting nursing in the NT and seeks feedback in the form of open comment.

NTPS Nursing Career Structure (NCS) Review

The CEO, NT Department of Health and Community Services, Mr Griew, has agreed that the nursing appeals process has been going on for far too long. Outcomes are expected to be known soon.



Still time for family at the May Day march

from the branch office



Organiser's Desk

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Big Shoes to Fill

Angela has finally gone on maternity leave and we all wish her well. I have taken over full time in

the office. So far we've had new IR laws, a practice cyclone - Cyclone Monica, a May Day march, parliamentary delegations, a private sector Collective Agreement (Frontier Services), commencement of the Public Sector Collective Agreement, hospital orientations and roadshows. This will soon be followed by the Darwin job delegates training. It has been a pretty steep learning curve but I have survived so far.

Northern Territory Public Sector Collective Agreement 2006

The NTPS nurses have commenced their bargaining period for the Collective Agreement. A questionnaire has been distributed to all NTPS nurses. Responses have been collated and noted. As we are currently in a negotiating period, please keep yourself informed about what is happening by keeping an eye on your notice boards, maintaining contact with your job delegates (JD) for information and noting when meetings to discuss the Collective Agreement are being held.

Darwin job delegate training

The dissemination of information and communication can be quite a challenge at times in the NT. The ANF often comes to the workplace to distribute flyers to ensure all members are kept up to date and informed. Information is also distributed through the job delegate in your work area or through surface mail and email.

We would like to continue this process and keep expanding the service. At present we have around 200 worksites and 74 job delegates - as you can see we have a huge gap that needs to be filled. So if you do not have a job delegate in your work area and you are interested in becoming a JD or a contact person, please let the office know.

During times like this, communication is vital because information is power.

This brings me onto the subject of the Darwin job delegate training. This will take place from 24-26 July at Christ Church Cathedral meeting room, Darwin. It is open to any new or existing job delegate from the Darwin, Gove and Katherine areas. Nominations are closing soon so make sure that you return the JD training nomination forms to the office as soon as possible so we can finalise numbers. Remember, as we are now subject to new industrial relations laws, this is your opportunity to understand what they mean and how we can work around them.

Updating of Records

If you change your address or move workplaces please drop us a line so we can update your records and continue to get information to you in a timely manner.

While we continue with our negotiations with the various Collective Agreements, and as we advance into the world of AWAs and uncertainty, I would like to use a quote from James Madison, a previous American president: *'The trade union movement represents the organised economic power of the workers...It is in reality the most potent and the most direct social insurance that the workers can establish.'*

Alice Springs Visits

ANF will continue the monthly visits to Alice Springs (see below). The ANF is still looking for more JDs. If your work area does not have a JD and you are interested in becoming one or even a contact person for your work area, please contact the ANF Organiser 8920 0703.

Location	Dates	Visiting Official
Alice Springs	Tues 13 June 2006	Organiser
JD Training	Wed 14 June 2006	
	Tues 18 July 2006	Branch
	Wed 19 July 2006	Secretary
All other areas worksite visits will continue as usual		

news briefs

AWA's or Individual Contracts

This information is provided to assist members who are considering entering into an Australian Workplace Agreement (AWA) or individual contract with their employer. It is aimed at making you aware of the conditions within the agreement and what you should consider before signing such an agreement.

General Information

An AWA or individual contract is a type of workplace agreement between you and your employer. Please be aware that with AWAs or individual contracts it is assumed that:

- you are signing it of your own free will
- that you know and understand what you are signing; and
- you cannot later say 'I didn't really know what that meant'.

Once you are on an AWA you are no longer covered by an Award safety net. That is why you need to make sure your conditions are safely covered in the AWA.

- Q. Is there a Union Collective Agreement already in the workplace which you could be covered by instead of the AWA or individual contract?
- A. Call the ANF to find out if there is a Union Collective Agreement already in existence in the workplace you are considering.

Your Rights

If your employer or future employer is proposing an AWA they are required to:

- give you access to the agreement document at least seven days prior to its approval;
- give you an information sheet which should include information about the time and manner of approval and the right to a bargaining agent; and
- advise you that you are entitled to appoint a bargaining agent to negotiate the agreement on your behalf.

Payroll Deductions

The ANF NT Branch has requested in previous issues that nurses still on payroll deductions for their ANF Membership fees consider changing over to direct debit. This direction has been taken by the branch as protection from the WorkChoices legislation.

Direct Debits - Apology

Some nurses were incorrectly debited their fees on a Wednesday instead of a Thursday. The ANF NT apologises for the inconvenience this error caused and have put measures in place to avoid the problem occurring in the future.



ANF members and NT ANF Organiser and Secretary with Dr Chris Burns, Minister for Public Employment

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