



Denis Blackford
NT Branch Secretary

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Moving interstate?

If you are a financial member of the ANF, QNU or NSWNA you can transfer your membership by phoning your union branch.

Don't take risks with your ANF membership - transfer to the appropriate branch for total union cover. It is important for members to consider that nurses who do not transfer their membership are probably not covered by professional indemnity insurance.

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

I would like to start by inviting members/nurses to consider contributing something to this bi-monthly newsletter.

It can be anything and everything, so long as it is 'nurse worthy', has potential to be an ANF issue (this can be broadly interpreted) and doesn't offend or slander anyone (this part may be hard). The point is that it's about caring and sharing.

If you care about something particularly pertinent and important in your area, share it with us so we may share it with other nurses who may connect in some

way with your experience.

We can't guarantee to print everything received, but everything will be acknowledged and responded to. Scanned or high resolution digital photos also are encouraged and will add to the story.

The next edition will be included in the December *ANJ* so we will be waiting in anticipation. Email or snail mail, whichever you prefer. The deadline for receipt of articles for December will be the 10th of November.

Kerry's retirement

Kerry Ridley has left the ANF NT Branch to start a new phase of her life - in Tasmania.

After 41 years as an ANF member and 14 years working for the NT Branch as Field Officer/Industrial Organiser Kerry will be a greatly missed member of our team.

Over the years with the Branch, Kerry has worked with some thousands of ANF members, providing professional industrial advice and emotional support to nurses with a variety of workplace issues and concerns.

I have had the pleasure of knowing and working with Kerry for much of her time here. I have always been aware of her capacity to give much more than 100%.

Even in the last month or two before retiring I would discover her working over the weekend ensuring every aspect of her work for members was noted and completed.

Kerry Ridley

Kerry, the nurses of the NT thank you for all you have contributed to the ANF and wish you a relaxed, comfortable and stimulating change of direction in your new environment.



Enterprise Bargaining Agreements

NPS Enterprise Bargaining Agreement

The ANF NT Branch has been engaged in negotiations with the NT Government over a new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement for NTPS nurses since early July 2003.

Our negotiating team has comprised: the ANF Branch Secretary; Jan Gibbet, RDH; Shirel Nomoa, RDH; Angela Wallace, ANF organiser; and, Kerry Ridley, ANF organiser. The Government has included representatives from the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment (OCPE) and from DH&CS.

The process has involved going through each item on our 'log of claims', as developed from consultation with NT ANF members, to explain and expand on the issues behind each item.

We were able to bring in specific expertise of members when available. Remote area nurse, Gayle Blennerhassett from Ti Tree, was able to link in by teleconference to the discussions on remote areas issues and was able to elucidate in a clear and articulate manner, the very valid positions behind the remote area nurses log.

As this newsletter goes to print, the Government has circulated its offer to NTPS nurses. The offer does not meet the first requirement as indicated by ANF members - that the agreement should be for two years. The draft offer from the Government is a three-year package offering in summary:

- > Quantum: 3%, 4%, 4%.
- > Expansion of salary sacrifice arrangements for some nurses (this is dependent on Australian Taxation Office rulings relating to community care nursing areas, in the main).
- > Qualification allowance provision.
- > In charge of shift allowance provision for N2's.
- > Adjustments to N2, N3 increments.
- > Retention of professional development allowance.

These highlight the main Government 'carrots' as they see them. The ANF has emphatically stressed throughout the negotiations that ANF NT Branch members were not interested in any other configuration other than a two-year package. This is the key factor impeding progress.

We also have concerns that future movements in other southern states' EBA processes over three years will compromise our salary competitiveness. We will be consulting across the NT when we have a package we think will be considered by ANF members!

TEMHS crisis update

The ANF NT Branch, representatives from DH&CS, Top End Mental Health Services (TEMHS), and TEMHS ANF members met as a steering committee for the second time on 28 August.

There now appears to be more formal acknowledgement by DH&CS of the critical staffing/workload issues impacting upon TEMHS nursing staff.

The creation of the steering committee and a project officer position to work together to address identified and emerging issues is seen as the beginning of a potentially positive and constructive process.

The steering committee is comprised of nursing representatives from the inpatient areas and the community mental health teams as well as DH&CS and ANF representation.

The ANF made strong representation at this meeting that although there appeared some scope for developing optimism, there continued to be high levels of workload demand on nurses on a daily basis with no indication of there being any expected improvement. When asked what could be done now to ease the pressure on nurses in clinical areas, it emerged that nurses could be recruited relatively quickly if there were nurses looking for temporary positions. Indications were made by TEMHS nursing management that this option would be looked at with some urgency.

The steering committee will meet again in late September or early October, by which time, it is expected the Project Officer will be appointed.

Darwin Private Hospital (DPH) EBA

The ANF NT Branch has met with nurses in the DPH to finalise a log of claims for their sector.

This log has formally been lodged with the employer, Healthscope and the Industrial Registrar to prompt the beginning of the negotiation process. A DPH negotiating team has been identified and the ANF expects talks to begin soon. The current agreement ends in November 2003.

GDH, ASH and KDH

Gove District Hospital (GDH) Alice Springs Hospital (ASH) and Katherine District Hospital (KDH)

Regional hospital members have been encountering challenges in recent times. GDH ANF members have had to contend with actual and potential threats of violence and harassment after hours when having to move along a walkway between two buildings at night to collect patient records.

ANF intervention, working in conjunction with workplace delegates and members in the area, has seen an interim solution implemented with commitment by management to enclose the walkway.

There are also changes in the management structure at GDH which has significant implications for nurses. The ANF has strongly indicated that it will need to be involved in the consultation process associated with these proposed changes.

The ANF was contacted by members at ASH and KDH expressing concerns to changes in the operating theatres/day surgery nursing management at ASH and removing/changing the nursing management structures within KDH.

In the case of ASH these changes were expected to be happening within a week or so from the time of members contacting the ANF office. In the case of KDH, the timeline was not so clear.

The ANF faxed a letter to the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment and the CEO, DH&CS, indicating that unless the proposed changes were adjourned and a commitment to engage the ANF in a consultation process, as per the current certified agreement, was undertaken, the ANF would lodge a notice of dispute with the AIRC.

The Government response was quick. By the end of the day the ANF had verbal undertakings, later confirmed in writing, to begin talks with ASH management the following week and written confirmation from KDH hospital management that there were no plans to make any changes to the nursing structure at KDH.

RDH Emergency Department dispute

The RDH Emergency Department (ED) dispute flared up again in early September. A follow up meeting between nurses from ED and the ANF NT Branch to review the progress of previously arranged strategies agreed to earlier in the year (Feb/Mar) and aspects of the move to the new ED facility, resulted in the lodgement of a 'notice of an industrial dispute' with the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC). This step was taken by the ANF NT Branch following indications given at the meeting, that ED nurses wanted to progress the matter more formally through the AIRC.

As a result of the conference in AIRC, the DH&CS, RDH management and the OCPE have begun formal talks with ANF, to address and resolve the issues to the satisfaction of ANF members. ED nurses views have been articulately represented at these forums by Marg St Leone and the ANF takes this opportunity to thank her for important involvement.

One possible EBA negotiation outcome?



Roadshow in October

Roadshow in October

The ANF NT Branch is conducting another recruitment roadshow in October this year. We had our inaugural roadshow extravaganza, earlier this year with the support of the ANF Victorian Branch's Maggie Ormerod working with our own Organiser, Angela Wallace.

The response and feedback received from this roadshow has encouraged us to repeat it.

The event allows the ANF to present a profile and presence in as many worksites as possible across the NT.

Education and information about the ANF's role is presented in a relaxed and informal way and members are encouraged (and yes, perhaps even induced) to bring along potential new members to the presentations/stalls to find out the benefits of ANF membership.

At the time of writing, the itinerary is:

20 October - Tennant Creek (TCH)
21-23 October - Alice Springs Worksites
24 October - Darwin Private Hospital
27 October - Gove
28-29 October - Royal Darwin Hospital
30-31 October - Katherine

The ANF encourages members to come along and be updated and rejuvenated with ANF information and 'give aways'.

Disclaimer

The ANF NT Branch Council has indicated that it wishes a retrospective disclaimer to be published in this ANF NT Branch Newsletter. The disclaimer refers to an article provided for publication offering financial advice from Godfrey Pembroke Limited Financial Consultants.

With regard to the published article in the ANF NT Newsletter for August/September 2003, referring to financial products being offered to ANF NT members by Godfrey Pembroke Limited Financial Consultants, the Australian Nursing Federation, NT Branch bears no responsibility for any outcome experienced by an ANF member as a result of making contact with Godfrey Pembroke Limited as result of reading the published article in the specified edition of ANF NT's Newsletter.

Email addresses please

The ANF NT Branch office would like to know your email address (personal and/or work). This is in order to be able to more efficiently and readily communicate with the membership and elicit views and opinions directly.

As new Branch Secretary, I am interested in having greater capacity to connect with ANF members across the whole of the Territory. I know there are nurses tucked away in all sorts of locations from Casuarina to Kintore to Lake Nash to Lajamanu to Bickerton Island to Gapuwaiak to Pirlangimpi and so on.

If we are to be a more integrated and connected group of nurses sharing common and diverse issues, we need to be talking and sharing more often and efficiently. I see Email as part of the solution in the Branch being more able to communicate issues and information to members in as many areas of the NT as possible.

I am aware that technology is not as far reaching as it perhaps needs to be, but, if you have an Email address please send it to:

ntanf@octa4.net.au

We will send a confirmation message and the address will be included in the expanded information loop. I look forward to you connecting soon.

Website

www.anfnt.org.au

The ANF NT Branch is interested in your views as to how we can improve your website.

Please contact us with your ideas. You can use the feedback form on our site or email me directly at:

denis.ntanf@octa4.net.au

I look forward to your comments.