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NT Branch Secretary

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## New Branch phone system

The ANF NT Branch have introduced a new digital phone system. The phone system is allowing greater efficiency in managing the many calls from members we receive each week.

The new system comes with voicemail options and a new Branch office phone number, so please call us on:

**(08) 8920 0700**

## MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

Hello colleagues,

Welcome to the October-November ANF Northern Territory Branch newsletter. We are publishing a consecutive month edition to compensate for not publishing in August.

*The Federal Election* has been called for 9 October. This newsletter should reach you just before polling day. The ANF nationally, as revealed in recent *ANJs*, has been encouraging nurses to consider very carefully the health policies of the major parties.

An ANF survey has indicated that more than 50% of nurses have not yet decided how they will cast their vote. Nurses can therefore be significantly influential in deciding the outcome in many seats across the country, none more so than the

Northern Territory seat of Solomon. With the state of the health sector being challenged more and more, the ANF recommends careful consideration of what is on offer to address these growing challenges and cast your vote accordingly.

*NTPS Nurses* Kirstie Hawkins (8922 7025), the ANF NT Project Officer on the Nurses Certified Agreement Taskforce, will be accompanying other Taskforce members in visiting regional areas through September and October. Please take note of when this is occurring in your region and attend the sessions. Your input is crucial to the outcome of the Taskforce Project.

See you on the other side of the election. Good luck to us all.

*ANF Branch Office, Tiwi in Darwin*



## News briefs

### NTPS Certified Agreement (CA) Taskforce

The development of the Nurse Practitioner (NP) role in the Northern Territory is one of the key reviews being addressed by the Taskforce. A key stakeholder's day workshop was held in Darwin on 1 September. These stakeholders included representatives of the medical profession, allied health, educators, Government and the nursing regulatory authority. Professor Sandra Dunn from Flinders University provided sound and comprehensive information to the workshop and spoke of the benefits that the introduction of NP's will provide. While there appears to be clear support from the Department of Health for the concept, there remains some more work to do to bring the medical profession on side. This project will run for two years, though it is anticipated that NP's will be operating at selected demonstration sites before the end of 2005.

### ANF Road Show

Throughout October the ANF will be hosting a Road Show at various worksites around the Northern Territory.

There will be an information table and the ANF Organiser will be there to provide information, give away some merchandise, as well as there being some available to purchase. Promotional flyers were circulated in September indicating the following itinerary.

**Tennant Creek:** 11 October 2004

**Ti Tree:** 12 October 2004

**Alice Springs:** 13-15 October 2004

**Katherine:** 21-22 October 2004

**Darwin Private Hospital:** 27 October 2004

**Royal Darwin Hospital:** 28 October 2004

Road Shows for the smaller worksites will be incorporated into the ANF worksite visits.

### NTPS Nursing Career Structure Review (NCSR) - It's underway...or is it?

It was reported in this newsletter that the NCSR was finally underway with the steering committee meeting in July. The process has been stalled effectively by the Department of Health and Community Services (DH&CS) through not appointing a project officer to facilitate the process.

The Principal Nurse Advisor and Chair of the Steering Committee had responded to concern from the ANF regarding this issue by indicating that he anticipated a project officer being identified in October. This is almost a year since the Review was due to commence.

Subsequently, following resolution of the ANF Northern Territory Branch Council, the Secretary has formally written to the CEO of the DH&CS expressing great concern at the lack of commitment from the Department, to the NCSR and indicating the ANF will consider its options under the Certified Agreement if a more satisfactory response is not provided as a matter of urgency.

We will report back in the December 2004-January 2005 newsletter.

*ANF Roadshow Darwin Private Hospital,*





*Job delegates at Alice Springs JD training in September*

### Alice Springs Job Delegate (JD) Training

The ANF NT Branch conducted its annual JD training course for Central Australian delegates from 7-9 September in Alice Springs. The course attracted 14 participants who were guided through a comprehensive program on industrial practice and the organising model of the JD role by Margaret Yates from the NSW Nurses' Association, supported by the ANF NT Branch Organiser, Angela Phillips. The course invigorated the Central JD network

which will contribute to greater involvement in the monthly Alice Springs JD meetings linked to Darwin by teleconference and enhance the communication process amongst Central JD's.

### 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.



### Aged care ANF NT freezes fees

Aged care nurses continue to endure great income disparity compared to their public sector and private sector colleagues. It is around \$170 per week difference.

The ANF NT Branch Council has therefore decided to freeze any ANF membership fee increases for aged care nurses at the current level until the issue of this wage disparity has been meaningfully addressed. ANF NT fees increases are linked to public sector nurses wage outcomes.

*Left: Northern Territory Nurse of the Year, Sharon Weymouth  
Northern Territory Midwife of the Year, Cynthia Prime*

## News briefs

### 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 send 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 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) 8945 4171 or email [denis.ntanf@octa4.net.au](mailto:denis.ntanf@octa4.net.au)

### Public Sector Remote Area Electricity Subsidy

The ANF NT Branch has attempted to reach remote area members recently, requesting a response to the Office for the Commissioner of Public Employment's (OCPE) proposal to introduce changes to the arrangements for electricity subsidy access for public sector employees.

The response was overwhelmingly opposed to the concept. The issues canvassed in the responses included resentment that power should not be available free to RAN's, how relief nurses would be charged, uncertainty about the detail, and implications and general anger at another erosion of benefits. A few areas accepted the proposal. The OCPE has indicated that it will attempt to communicate more effectively with employees in remote areas to provide more information regarding their position. Following this they will approach the unions again.

### 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 \$20,000pa are not covered.

### Advertisement - Australian Central Credit Union NT

'What happens when it all goes wrong?'

In this day and age of impulse buys, credit cards, in-store interest free offers and the attitude of 'I want it all now', there are times when it all goes wrong.

You've lost your job, you've fallen ill and don't have a lot of sick leave to cover your absence, you've over spent or you've just had a car repair bill that has taken all your money you've set aside to pay your bills.

Does this sound familiar? I think, at some stage in our lives, we have all been subjected to this kind of stress.

What do you do? When the bills mount up, a lot of people have a tendency to withdraw or go underground to avoid their creditors. This is definitely not the right approach.

In my experience, the best course of action is to be proactive and get in contact first - explain that you have come on hard times and that you intend to pay the debts back, but it may take a little time.

Most companies accept that these things happen and will agree to payment over a longer period. They will be pleased that you have contacted them before they have contacted you. Just remember that if you do make an arrangement, you must stick to it or keep the creditor informed the whole time of what is happening.

If you have got yourself in so deep that you are starting to drown in debt (for example you are using one credit card to pay another), then you should seek expert help.

Somerville Community Services, for instance, provides a free financial counseling service where an independent expert will, in cooperation with you, examine your personal situation and make recommendations on what you should do.

Just remember that the first step in fixing a problem is to admit that you have one. Then seek help and be prepared to listen and act on that advice.

In taking this action, you may be able to avoid having this financial trouble appear on your credit record history. Your credit record is a history of credit applied for, any repayments that are over 60 days late and any judgements made against you.

These records stay on the system for five years and can be accessed by financial institutions, rental agents and organisations that provide credit. Keeping a clear credit record history is important when you apply for rental accommodation, a mobile phone or a home or investment loan.

You should take all possible steps to ensure your credit record remains satisfactory so as not to affect your chances of securing a loan at a future date. This may not be uppermost in your mind at the time but asking for advice may help your long-term future.

This advice has been prepared without taking into account your objectives, financial situation or needs. Therefore, before you act on the advice, you should assess whether it is appropriate for you, in light of your objectives, financial situation or needs. If this advice recommends that you should acquire a particular financial product, you should obtain a Product Disclosure Statement for that product and consider the information in it before deciding to acquire the product.



*Disclaimer: ANF Northern Territory Branch bears no responsibility for particular outcomes for members through contacting any service advertised in this newsletter.*