



Yvonne Falckh  
NT Branch Secretary

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## MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

Negotiations are currently under way with The Department of Health & Community Services (DHCS) which is the largest employer of public sector nurses in the Northern Territory (see below). As the largest employee group nurses tend to be targeted due to costs to the employer. The ANF NT Branch works to ensure your rights at work are protected and we need to be prepared to make a stand on behalf of future generations. We should never forget that we have the ability to be a very powerful force.

In this issue of the newsletter Matthew succinctly discusses the new industrial relations reforms and what WorkChoices (Worst Choices) means for nurses managed by unscrupulous employers, with key focuses on profits, without any consideration for a fair go for Australian workers. Some of this poor behaviour can be seen within the NT.

### Changing of the Guard

September saw the resignation of Minister for Health, Peter Toyne, for health and personal reasons. A new Ministerial reshuffle saw Chris Burns take on the senior portfolio of Health. We look forward to forging a sound working relationship with Minister Burns and wish former Minister Toyne a happy retirement.

### Passing of Ms Llorabel Reynolds OAM

It is with sadness that I inform members of the passing of a lady actively responsible for the development of the ANF in the NT. Ms Llorabel Reynolds passed away early in September at Maroochydore, Queensland. Ms Reynolds came to the NT as a Survey Nurse in 1958 and later became Deputy Director of Nursing at Darwin Hospital in 1961. She later became the Director of Nursing on the retirement of Ms Brennan. Ms Reynolds became part of the ANF NT in 1964 and was made a life member on her retirement from nursing. I fondly remember Ms Reynolds during my nurse training at Darwin Hospital in the early 70s. Our thoughts are with her and her family.

### ANF NT Branch Executive and Council Elections

All positions in the Branch are up for elections with the exception of the Branch Secretary position. The vacant positions are:

Branch President	(1)
Vice President	(1)
Executive Council	(2)
Branch Councilors	(8)

Nominations opened on 7th September and close on the 27th September. Ballots have been sent to all financial members by the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC). The AEC identified a financial member as *those that were financial as of midday Thursday 31st August 2006*.



**MembersEquity**  
The Super Funds Bank

## from the branch office



### Organiser's Desk

Matthew Gardiner  
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#### Darwinism and Industrial Changes

The title may seem odd but unfortunately in these modern times it is becoming self evident as the Federal Government continues with

its draconian and punitive industrial reforms. The "laissez faire" attitude to big business means that our rights are being slowly but surely eroded as these changes start to take hold. Recently I had the misfortune of seeing several offers for new Collective Agreements pass over my desk, in every single one large sections of previous Award entitlements have been removed or ignored.

The Awards were established as a safety net, with minimum standards to protect workers in their respective industries from unscrupulous bosses. Under the previous Award system there was a 'no disadvantage' test that compared a new agreement to the Award to ensure employees would not lose out. This is no longer the case. These protections have been removed under the "Worst Choices" Legislation and replaced with 5 minimum standards:

- Minimum wage of just \$12.75 an hour (less if you are under 21)
- Annual leave of 4 weeks a year
- 10 days of sick or carers leave
- 52 weeks of unpaid parental leave, and
- A 38 hour working week (which can be averaged out to avoid paying overtime)

These five miniscule conditions have replaced comprehensive Award systems that protected our rights for years.

There is no longer any guarantee that you will get basic entitlements such as overtime, shift penalties, weekend penalties or paid maternity leave. All of the hard won conditions that were once regarded as minimum standards have been torn up.

This brings me back to the title. Darwin devised the theory that, in evolutionary processes, only the strongest and most adaptive survive, a well proven theory that has been embraced by modern corporate cowboys in all sectors. These entrepreneurial egotists like to say that the markets dictate which business will survive and which will fail. Here is a newsflash for those fat cats, we ARE the market.

The theory that the strongest survive may be a truism in nature but it is less true in the corporate world. The threats of closures and lockouts may be something that factory owners, manufacturers and mine consortiums can bandy around as threats against their workforce but these threats cannot be used against nurses. You can't close a hospital without denying every single person in the community their basic human rights.

We can use this to our advantage, as these laws make it easier to say no to unfair wages and conditions. While the laws make it harder to carry out industrial action and strike for what we think is fair and just in the old fashioned manner, they give us the opportunity to use the single strongest weapon at our disposal, our feet.

Why should we put up with third world conditions of employment? We are the ones with the power. You can't take a hospital "offshore" and you can't staff hospitals with unqualified and untrained staff.

We can use this power and this industrial Darwinism to our advantage by ensuring only the fair and decent employers survive. Not the selfish, tight fisted, money obsessed, self serving employers, the ones who are willing to squeeze the last drop out of their workers but those willing to listen and ensure workers are treated fairly and with respect. We did not get to where we are now in the 21st century by bowing and scraping to the masters from bygone eras. We achieved what we have today by kicking and fighting against unjust and unfair systems that held down the quality of life for average Australians. Now it is time to start fighting back.

If your employer offers you a poor contract or agreement that strips away your entitlements, what are you going to do? Are you going to reject it and walk away or meekly accept it with the knowledge that things are not going to get any better till someone makes a stand. If you make a stand as an individual you are but one voice, but if we all make a stand that voice becomes deafening and it can not be ignored. Not by Governments, employers or anyone.

We have worked hard to get what we have, let's not be the ones who let it slide through our fingers.

*"Hasta la Victoria Siempre!"*

(Struggle until victory forever!)

Ernesto "Che" Guevara (1928-1967)

#### New Arrivals

I would also like to announce that the ANF NT Branch is continuing its recent baby boom, with my wife Andrea giving birth to Patrick Gardiner on the 25th of July. Patrick is the latest addition to our family with Liam enjoying the changes that a baby brother brings. So if some of you have wondered why I have sounded tired and slightly distracted recently you can probably now understand why.

#### Updating Details

Please contact the Branch to update you details if you have changed addresses, phone numbers or bank accounts.

#### Job Delegate Conference

Plans are well underway for the Biennial Northern Territory Job Delegates Conference.

The Conference will be held on the 2nd and 3rd of May at the Palms Resort, The Esplanade.

**Website Update**

The ANF NT website is constantly being updated with the latest news on collective agreements, especially now with the Northern Territory Public Sector Nurses negotiating their next agreement. Please access the site for the latest up to date NTPS Nurses offer. Please provide feedback on this issue to the branch.

The website now has a *membership application* form which can be download for those wishing to join the ANF NT. You will also find forms for altering *Method of Payments* and *Review of Membership* details.

Jane Wilde, our new Membership officer, is currently investigating the possibility of developing electronic membership forms. This would be of great benefit and assist in recruiting. We welcome any suggestions of material and information you think should be included on your website.

**Good News for Aged Care in the NT**

The ANFSA Branch has joined with Royal Darwin Hospital (RDH), to make it possible for the delivery of the Certificate 3 in Aged Care. Frank Pearson will be the first educator in the NT to be seconded by the ANFSA Branch. Frank will spend one day a week out of his primary role as a Clinical Nurse Educator for the Graduate Nurse Program at RDH to teach the Certificate 3.

Tiwi Aged Care has made their facility available for training. This is the beginning of a exciting new era in regulating the delivery of aged care in the NT. All participants are currently employed in the aged care sector and will undertake an initial one week introductory block followed by one day of education each week over 40 weeks.

Rob Bonner, the ANF Federal RTO, has been instrumental in bringing the NT on board as well as having developed the modules for Certificate 3 in Aged Care.



*Pauline Burnside, Sue Mark and Alison Pyper  
Old Times, Aged Care facility*

**Alice Springs Visits**

ANF will continue the visits to Alice Springs on the dates below.

As I stated in the last newsletter the ANF is still looking for more JD's. If your work area does not have a JD and you would be interested in becoming a JD or a contact person for your work area, please contact the ANF Organiser on 8920 0703.

Dates		Visiting Official
<b>Alice Springs</b>		
September	Thursday 21st	Branch Secretary
October	Thursday 12th	Branch Secretary
	Friday 13th	Branch Secretary
<b>Alice Springs and Tennant Creek</b>		
November	TBA second half of month	Branch Secretary and Organiser
All other areas worksite visits will continue as usual		

**NTPS Nurses 2006-2008 Certified Agreement**

Australian Nursing Federation NT has been in negotiations with the OCPD and DHCS for the new Collective Agreement. The previous agreement expired on 8 August 2006. A separate package has been developed for remote area nurses. The Collective Agreement offers are on the Australian Nursing Federation NT website, your feedback is important in providing direction to the Branch.

Collective Agreements	Current Situation
Juninga	The ANF are hoping to include Juninga in the negotiation with Frontier Services.
Frontier Services EBA	An initial draft document has been received by LHMU and ANF NT. Next meeting will occur beginning of October.
Danila Dilba	Nothing to report. Progress has stalled.
Retirement Care Australia	The facility owned by RCA has been sold to Masonic.
Australian Red Cross Blood Service (NT)	Negotiations in progress.
Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia, Central Operations Inc. (Alice Springs)	ANF has been provided with a document for comment and advice.
NT Public Sector Nurses	Negotiations continue - refer to website <a href="mailto:anfnt@octa4.au">anfnt@octa4.au</a>

## news briefs

### Industrial Relations 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 Corner's Court, specially constituted commission 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 might make would tend to 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 the 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 making any statement. Health agencies maintain records for at least seven (7) 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 your statement, you should contact the ANF for assistance.*

### Welcome to our New Membership Officer

We are pleased to introduce the ANF NT Branch's new Membership Officer. Jane Wilde joined our office in May as the Admin Assistant and due to unforeseen circumstances has since taken on the role of Membership Officer.

Jane is married with 3 boys and moved to Darwin last year. For the last 12 years Jane has been busy raising her family and is coping well with the '21st century' office. During her time raising her children Jane was involved with playgroup, preschool and APEX in volunteer roles which enhanced the skills she had learned in retail management, her job B.C. (before children).

Jane is new to unions but is learning fast. She works part time and is available to answer your questions and assist in your membership queries.

### Special Offer for ANF NT Members

ANF NT Branch has a special offer presented to members by Mick Stumbles, Fleet Sales Consultant for Kerry's Automotive Group. Following meetings between Mick and the Australian Nursing Federation NT Branch the company is offering fleet sales prices for Australian Nursing Federation NT members on the purchase of a new car. Contact Mick Stumbles personally to negotiate a great deal to purchase a new car. His number is 0417843452.

### Territory Nurse accepts a position at Royale Hayat Hospital in Kuwait

Alison Pyper a Registered Nurse working at the "Old Timers" aged care facility in Alice Springs for the past 18 months, has accepted a one year contract to set up an infection control and quality management program in a new hospital for Women and Children - Royale Hayat Hospital, Kuwait.

Alison has had an interesting and varied nursing career. She has worked in the NT since 1967 at Alice Springs Hospital and for Air Med Service. Alison was the first nurse employed at Pine Gap in 1968, she worked on the Tanami Projects as an industrial nurse, was one of four midwives in the first training program for midwives in the NT in 1981 and has been the Assistant Director of Nursing, Infection Control at Alice Springs Hospital from 1984 to 1997. In 1997 she went to Saudi Arabia, where she spent seven and a half years nursing. We wish Alison all the best for her future venture in Kuwait.