



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

Hello colleagues,
It is encouraging to have seen the significant interest in the recent election for the NT Branch Secretary. Such an election provides a stimulus for interest in the ANF and its activities. With the election over, our Branch (and you the membership) can more definitively focus on the ongoing issues challenging the work environment for nurses across the NT. The few issues summarized in this newsletter represent a familiar pattern of issues to all of us. Safe, adequately staffed work areas continue to be elusive for many Territory nurses, as they are nationally.

It is essential that members across the NT continue to develop their relationship with the ANF. Through this ongoing and growing interest, our Branch can increase its capacity to 'rattle the tree' and get the attention of those who have influence over the way we experience our daily professional lives. I look forward to my time in this new role and trust that through working together we will effect meaningful improvements to the Territory nursing experience.

Following is a summary of my nursing and ANF background.

- Nursing since 1982 - general training at Prince

Henry's Hospital, Melbourne.

- ANF member since 1982.
- Nursing since 1987 - 16 years working in the mental health sector across the NT.
- ANF workplace delegate since 1988.
- ANF Branch Councillor since 1996.
- ANF National Conference Delegate NT representative 1995, 1997.
- Oral/written submission to Senate Select Committee on Workplace Relations Act 1996.
- ANF Vice President NT Branch 2000-2002.

Top End Mental Health Services (TEMHS) Inpatient Nursing Crisis

TEMHS nursing staff sought the support of the ANF in early July to formally raise their concerns about excessive workloads, related staff 'burnout' and high levels of fatigue.

This issue has been developing for many months now, with a consistent trend of growing admission rates without any definitive 'ceiling' to the number of patients that can be admitted to the two inpatient areas. Staff have been working large amounts of overtime and defacto overtime, ie working extra shifts as agency nurses.

Staff are very concerned at their ongoing plight as, despite a number of attempts to have their concerns addressed by DH&CS, their daily work experience has not been improved - in fact, all indications are the situation will become progressively worse. The ANF NT Branch has since entered into formal discussions with the DH&CS CEO and the Minister for Health to encourage the Government to provide solutions to this urgent matter as soon as possible.

Katherine Hospital

Working 10 positions down on their current FTE's became too much for Katherine nurses who put the Department on notice that immediate changes occur or industrial action would be entered into seven days hence.

As a result of urgent consultation with the Executive Officer and various other senior department management the ANF managed to get some action on the long term organisational structure of the hospital.

Senior department staff appeared concerned at how the full time/part time positions in Katherine were being allocated and we are assured steps are being taken to rectify this.

All areas of nursing in the Northern Territory are experiencing staffing shortages. It is imperative that we keep these shortages at the forefront of our dealings with the Department because of their ramifications for work safety.

Gove District Hospital

The NT Branch has been active in pursuing some recognition by the Government and the Department of Health of significant security and staffing issues at Gove District Hospital.

The aggression/violence suffered by nurses, both at Gove and generally in East Arnhem communities, was the centre of considerable heated debate in the recent legislature sittings. The common consensus, though, seemed to be that as a crisis it has been ongoing for a long time. Too long we say!

To this end, we have upped the ante to try and get some long standing issues addressed NOW.

We have had some modest success but would be mistaken to sit back and make ourselves too comfortable just yet. We will keep you informed on progress, or listen to your radio and read your local newspaper for more information.

visit our new website: www.anfnt.org.au

Help us to help you

It is timely to consider and confirm the role of the ANF in relation to the professional and industrial issues confronted by nurses on a daily basis.

The employment landscape of understaffing and resource issues is resulting in more and more nurses accessing our services. To that end it is fair to say the issues being brought to our attention are often many layered and increasing in complexity. Also, the role of the ANF is to contribute to the ongoing promotion of the nursing profession via lobbying, strategic planning and participating in government and non-government forums.

The ANF office is made up of the Secretary, two Organisers, and one Membership/Administration Officer providing services to many hundreds of members.

Unfortunately, time constraints do not permit us to run issues to their conclusion without your help. Therefore, we remind you of the general extent of our assistance and the importance of your role.

When you first approach us with an issue, it assists greatly if you can attend with all relevant documents and a chronology. The chronology should take the form of setting out, in sequential form, the dates and the subsequent event occurring on that date. This assists us to get our bearings quickly on the issues and, where it is most appropriate, to take/refer your issue.

Having received this information we are then in the position to fully brief ourselves and to advise you on what we believe are your options.

This advice may be a matter of recommending you write to or arrange a meeting with a designated person. More rarely your problem may merit our immediate intervention.

It is important that you stay in contact to keep us abreast of the progress of the matter.

Where we may accompany you to a meeting, and as a result action is foreshadowed at that meeting, the onus will fall to you to act upon and to notify us of the progress of that action.

The key theme to the assistance we offer is the proactive role you must play. This places us in the best position to assist you.

Workloads aside, experience has taught us that contacting members involved in ongoing matters can be a time consuming and at times a cause of frustration for both parties. This is because the sensitive nature of the issues usually dictate that we cannot always leave messages for people in their workplace and then we have the difficulty of contacting nurses at home during working hours. Our primary aim for you, the member, is to provide you with support and advice when you are confronted with a work problem.

Your assistance in achieving this allows us to help you more efficiently.

Godfrey Pembroke Limited Financial Consultants

Godfrey Pembroke is a national financial planning organisation which specialises in providing personal financial planning services to individuals. Godfrey Pembroke was formed on 1 July 1995 following the merger of two of Australia's largest and most successful financial planning groups - Godfrey Weston (established 1981) and Pembroke Financial Planners (established 1986). Godfrey Pembroke has been in the NT for the last 10 years, initially under the title of Pembroke Financial Planners.

The Team in Darwin comprises Barry Savage and Sue van-Cuylenburg and in Alice Springs, Geoff Crowe. Their combined expertise brings many years of financial planning knowledge and local experience enabling them to personalise financial advice and investment recommendations to each individual.

Godfrey Pembroke is also one of the few financial planning organisations with national coverage. We have over 120 consultants located in over 50 practices in all capital cities and most major regional centres.

As a group, Godfrey Pembroke has around \$3.2 billion of assets under management on behalf of approximately 20,000 clients.

Over the past decade Godfrey Pembroke has won many of the major financial planning industry awards. We were voted 1997 Investment Adviser of the Year by Personal Investment magazine.

Advice covers all aspects of financial planning including:

Wealth creation

We can help you set short and long-term goals and review both strategic and investment performance at regular intervals.

Investment advice

We can provide thoroughly researched recommendations covering a variety of investment alternatives: managed funds, master trusts, fixed interest products, shares and property.

Taxation planning

Where appropriate, we can work with your accountant or professional taxation adviser to assess the possibilities of income splitting, discretionary trusts, dividend imputation and depreciation allowances to maximise after tax returns on your investments.

Superannuation planning

Our consultants can provide a personalised tax-effective superannuation strategy covering issues such as self-managed superannuation, reasonable benefit limit management strategies, excess benefits, superannuation surcharge, undeducted contributions, topping up and retirement income.

Salary packaging advice

We can help you to select the optimal mix of salary packaging features, if this option is available to you.

The next step

If you would like further information, then call our office on 8941 2916 to arrange your free, no obligation consultation.