



australian nursing federation

national news - december 2010

> Application for penalty rates on Christmas Day rejected

Fair Work Australia has rejected an ANF application to vary the modern Nurses Award to ensure public holiday penalty rates are paid to employees working on Christmas Day when it is not a declared public holiday because it falls on a weekend. Christmas Day falls on a Saturday in 2010.

This means that award-reliant employees in those states that have not declared Christmas Day to be a public holiday are only entitled to receive Saturday penalty rates (time and a half) for working on 25 December. However in those states and territories where an *additional* public holiday has been declared because Christmas Day falls on a weekend, 25 December remains a public holiday and so public holiday penalty rates (double time) are payable for any work performed on 25 December and/or the additional day (either the following Monday or Tuesday, depending on the state). At the time of writing, Victoria and South Australia were the only states not to have declared an additional public holiday. The Christmas Day public holiday in those states is observed on Monday 27 December instead.

FWA rejected the ANF's application partly on the basis that the loading was not a prevailing standard across Australia in the awards that applied before the modern Nurses Award took effect this year and partly on procedural grounds.

> Health Services Division of Medibank agreement negotiations.

The negotiations with the Health Services Division of Medibank have concluded and the draft agreement has been circulated to staff for consideration. The voting process closes on Wednesday 8 December 2010. If the agreement is voted up, payment of the first increase will be paid immediately, prior to approval by Fair Work Australia.

> *Because We Care* Campaign

The campaign continues with plans for a national day of action on Valentine's Day 2011. In preparation for the Valentine's Day activity representatives from the Federal Office have met with aged care providers and consumer groups to ensure the day of action is well supported.

Meetings so far have been extremely positive with the following groups indicating a willingness to join in the action:

- Aged Care Association Australia (includes all for profit homes);
- National Seniors;
- Alzheimer's Australia;
- Aged and Community Services Australia (includes all not for profit homes);
- Catholic Health Australia; and
- COTA Australia.

Correspondence has been forwarded to LHMU and HSU requesting meetings.

In addition to the national day of action the union is planning activities outside the Productivity Commission hearings in February and March. Some members will be asked to give evidence at the hearings particularly in relation to issues of staffing levels and skills mix.

> Productivity Commission

The Productivity Commission sought an extension to allow sufficient time to consider the large number of submissions provided by stakeholders and to more closely align release dates with those of the Disability Care and Support inquiry. There has also been a delay in the receipt of a key submission.

The draft report will now be published on 21 January 2011 and the final report will be provided to the Government by the end of June 2011.

On the release of the draft report, the Commission will also provide a revised due date for submissions commenting on the draft report and the location and timing for draft report public hearings.

> South Pacific Nurses Forum (SPNF)

The 15th SPNF was held in Auckland, New Zealand, from 8-11 November 2010 and was hosted by the New Zealand Nurses Organisation. The official Australian delegation included Yvonne Chaperon and Coral Levett (ANF), Debra Cerasa (RCNA) and Sally Gould (CATSIN). Observers from Australia included Gay Hawksworth, Mark Staaf, Yvonne Falckh, Kim Ryan, Desley Geraghty-Rudd and Nola White. The ANF also supported attendance by Faye Clarke a member of the ANF and CATSIN. Faye is a registered nurse employed at the Baarlinjan Medical Clinic in Ballarat, Victoria.

The majority of South Pacific nations were represented at the forum. The main presentation themes were leadership, workforce development, education, collaboration and disaster preparedness. Yvonne Chaperon and Faye Clarke presented a paper on the ANF Reconciliation Action Plan.

Australia will host the 16th SPNF to be held in 2012.

> National Agency Liaison Group (NALG)

The ANF participated in the NALG meeting on 23 November. The main agenda item was the Review of the Accreditation Standards and Process. The review of the Standards has also been referred to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Aged Care. The Department of Health and Ageing is working with key stakeholders to further refine the draft Standards which will then be the subject of broader consultation in the aged care sector.

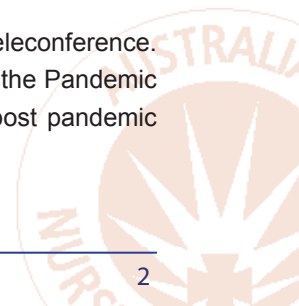
> Ageing Consultative Committee (ACC)

The ACC met in Canberra on 22 November. The Department of Health and Ageing provided updates on the following issues:

- National Health and Hospitals Network Measures;
- Review of the Aged Care Funding Instrument;
- outcomes of the Aged Care Approval Round;
- Community Programs and Carers Branch;
- 2010-2011 Budget measures;
- Review of the Aged Care Complaints Investigation Scheme;
- Review of Accreditation Process and Standards; and
- National Round Table/Aged Care Workforce Initiatives.

> Joint ANF/RCNA Pandemic Influenza Working Group

The last meeting for the Joint Working Group for 2010 was held on 23 November via teleconference. The Working Group noted that the World Health Organization has not provided updates on the Pandemic Influenza (H1N1) 2009 since August 2010 as global activity from this virus is low in the post pandemic



period. While influenza like illness remains at a low level within Australia the Working Group consider that nurses, midwives and other health professionals should remain vigilant for signs of the virus, and also still be encouraging the community to seek vaccination. The Working Group reconvenes in February 2011 and will continue throughout next year to provide information to members and the broader nursing and midwifery professions through print and electronic media.

> Working Group on Promotion of Therapeutic Products

The ANF is represented on the Working Group on Promotion of Therapeutic Products, which is chaired by the Medicines and Therapeutic Association of Australia. The fourth meeting of this group, held on 24 November 2010, progressed work on developing an agreed framework which includes high level principles and operational guidelines, to be applied to the therapeutic products industry when dealing with health professionals.

> ANF Professional Advisory Committee (PAC)

The ANF PAC met for their second face to face meeting for 2010 on 16 November. Professional Officers from the State and Territory Branches were in attendance. Topics for discussion included: advanced practice for Diabetes Nurse Educators; the nursing and midwifery workforce; national registration and accreditation; nurse practitioners and eligible midwives access to the MBS and PBS; credentialing; the School Nurses Professional Practice Standards; and the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia's English language skills registration standard. Federal Office and State and Territory Branch reports were provided.

> Respecting Patient Choices (RPC) National Reference Group

The second meeting of the RPC National Reference Group for 2010 was held on 24 November. This group is responsible for the oversight of the RPC Program funded by the Australian Government. The RPC Program provided a response to the Clinical, Technical and Ethical Principal Committee of the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council's *Consultation Draft of a National Framework for Advance Care Directives* in October. The Residential Aged Care Facility (RACF) specific Advanced Care Plan pilot project is underway and is currently being trialled in 19 RACF's in metropolitan Melbourne. The RPC Program was successful in obtaining a grant from the Victorian State Government to develop an interactive electronic training module for advanced care planning. The International Society of Advance Care Planning and End of Life Care will be hosting their International Conference in London from 22-24 June 2011. For details go to: <http://www.acpelsociety.com/conference/>

> Productivity Commission Early Childhood Development Workforce Study

The ANF and a representative of the Victorian School Nurses Special Interest Group (ANF Vic Branch), met with the Commissioner, Assistant Commissioners and staff in relation to the Productivity Commission study on the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Workforce sector, on 4 November. In the initial scoping phase of the project, the Commission has been meeting with key stakeholders to develop an understanding of the ECD sector and the policy environment, define its scope, and identify key issues for focus. The Commission has been asked to consider and provide advice on: current and future demand for ECD workers, and the mix of knowledge and skills required within the workforce to meet quality objectives; the current and future supply of the ECD workforce, and the impact of quality objectives on that supply; the structure of the ECD workforce, and its efficiency and effectiveness; ECD workforce planning and development in the short, medium and long-term; and institutional arrangements impacting on the ECD workforce.

The ECD workforce includes, but is not limited to, those involved in delivering or administering childcare, preschool education, maternal and child health services, family support services, and services for children with additional needs. An issues paper was released on 18 November with submissions due 31

January 2011. Roundtables will be held in February 2011 and the draft report will be released in June 2011. Final submissions are due on 31 August 2011, and a final report will be sent to Government on 21 October 2011. For further information on the commissioned study or for a copy of the issues paper, go to: <http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/study/education-workforce/early-childhood>

> Australian College of Nurse Practitioners (ACNP) Conference

The ACNP held a conference on 1 November 2010 in Canberra to mark the first date that nurse practitioners and eligible midwives are able to offer their patients access to MBS and PBS rebates. This date was an historic landmark in health reform in Australia. The aim of the one day event was to provide nurse practitioners with a broad understanding of the requirements to comply with the new legislation.

> National Prescribing Service (NPS) AGM and Members Day

On 19 November the ANF was represented at the AGM of the NPS and the Members' Day Forum. The event, held in Sydney, provided a valuable forum for NPS members to receive first hand updates of work completed by NPS during the previous 12 months, as well as previews on future campaigns and projects. The Members' Day forum, titled *Working together for a medicinewise Australia*, featured discussion on NPS programs in relation to: the quality use of medicines; diagnostics; priority communities; generic medicines; a new campaign towards building a medicinewise Australia; prescribing competencies; and packaging and labelling. In line with a new logo introduced during 2010, the NPS is broadening its focus beyond prescribing practices to encompass a more comprehensive role in promoting quality use of medicines. There is a nurse on the Board of NPS, Dr Kay Price and ANF works closely with Kay and with the staff of NPS to make sure nursing is recognised as a major player in the quality use of medicines.

Further information can be found on the NPS website: www.nps.org.au.

> 9th Vivian Bullwinkel Lecture

The ANF was represented at the 9th Vivian Bullwinkel Lecture held at the Nurses Memorial Centre, Melbourne, on 17 November. The event, co-hosted by Monash University, La Trobe University and Royal College of Nursing Australia, honours the memory of Vivian Bullwinkel, an outstanding Australian nurse who was determined that the experiences suffered by herself and other nurses, as prisoners of war of the Japanese in World War II, would not be forgotten. The Lecture titled *Nursing Heroics: What it means in the 21st Century*, was delivered by Professor Philip Darbyshire. Philip talked about nursing 'heroes' and challenged the audience to identify and celebrate current day nursing 'heroes' who are making a significant difference in their field of practice.

> National Dementia Program Evaluation

A submission was made by the ANF to the Department of Health and Ageing, Dementia Policy and Programs Section on the *Dementia Initiative National Evaluation* document released by the LAMA Consortium (La Trobe University - Australian Institute for Primary Care, Applied Aged Care Solutions, University of Melbourne and Access Economics) in early October 2010. Given the level of the funding allocation for the Dementia Initiative and the importance of the issue for the community, the ANF is supportive of the Government's decision to undertake an independent evaluation of the program. The ANF submission identified dementia as an issue of central concern to aged care as it impacts on every part of residential care and community care systems. People with high levels of care needs, such as those with dementia, often have their care compromised in an environment where staffing and skills mix is chronically inappropriate.

The ANF has consistently argued there is little incentive to provide the level of care required for such residents in the form of specialised accommodation or skilled nurses. Further, the issue of funding for special needs of older people with dementia is vitally important. A funding formula that rewards those

providing a high standard of care, such as more staff supervision and opportunities to develop therapeutic relationships, the use of nurses expert in dementia care, and improved layout of facilities is recommended. The ANF supports continuation of funding for dementia specific research to provide an evidence base for early intervention and care, both in residential facilities and in the community.

The ANF has made specific comment to a range of issues relating to the dementia initiative evaluation and these can be found in the response to the Department at: http://www.anf.org.au/html/publications_submissions.html

> **Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) Review of the Nurse Practitioner Standards and Guidelines**

A submission was made by the ANF to the NMBA on the revised nurse practitioner endorsement registration standard and proposed guidelines. The new guidelines, once completed, will be an important resource for nurse practitioners, nurses and midwives, the community, health professionals and other relevant stakeholders. The ANF has recommended additional work needs to be undertaken, for both the registration standard and guidelines, to clarify the requirements for advanced nursing practice and continuing professional development. The full submission can be found at: <http://www.anf.org.au> under 'Submissions'.

The ANF Federal Office would like to wish you all a safe and happy festive season and best wishes for 2011.



LEETHOMAS
Federal Secretary

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'lee'.



YVONNE CHAPERON
Assistant Federal Secretary

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yvonne'.

For more information about any of the above items contact your ANF state or territory Branch, the NSW Nurses Association (ANF NSW Branch) or the Queensland Nurses Union (ANF QLD Branch).