



# australian nursing federation

national news - march 2009

## > IAC

The Industrial Advisory Committee is scheduled to meet in Melbourne on 11 March 2009. The agenda for the meeting will concentrate on the industrial activities of ANF in the environment of the Fair Work Act 2009. It is expected that the ACTU officers will be available to provide a report on the legislation and ANF lawyers have also been invited to discuss issues relating to the new national system.

## > Model OHS laws

The ANF attended the ACTU Occupational Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation annual conference in Sydney. The main item of discussion at the conference was the recent release of the Reports of the National Review into Model Occupational Health and Safety Laws. The Reports make recommendations on the content of model OHS laws that will be adopted by each State and Territory. Unions attending the conference expressed concern that the Reports do not recommend the highest OHS standards and rights for Australian workers and instead water down existing entitlements, and resolved to lobby governments and continue to campaign for the retention of existing entitlements and the introduction of improved OHS laws across Australia.

## > Nurses Paycheck

The next issue of Nurses Paycheck will be available on line from 2 March 2009. Latest updates include the wage rates from the new Northern Territory Public Sector Nurses agreement as well as changes to the section containing a comparison between public sector and aged care wages and interstate comparative wage data.

## > National Registration & Accreditation - Industrial issues

The ANF together with other relevant unions have commenced discussions with members of the project team involved with transitional issues and staffing arrangements relating to the implementation of a national registration body for nurses and midwives and other health professions. We are currently waiting on a response to issues raised in relation to members currently employed in the existing State/Territory registration bodies. The ANF will be involved in on-going discussions including the negotiation of a new union collective agreement covering the wages and conditions for staff employed under the new arrangement.

## > Aboriginal Hostels Limited

The Federal Office is involved in negotiations for a collective agreement to cover nurses employed at facilities run by Aboriginal Hostels Limited. Employees at AHL are currently covered by a variety of instruments including AWAs. Employees remaining on the expired 2003 collective agreement have not received a pay rise since 2006. Branches will be kept informed of developments.

## > Award Modernisation

The final consultation hearings in relation to the new modern awards that are to apply to the health and welfare industries were held in Sydney on 23 February 2009. The consultation hearings allowed the industrial parties to put their views about the draft awards. The Commission will make final awards on 3 April 2009 and they will apply from 1 January 2010.

#### > New Immigration Officer Role for Federal Office

The ANF will take part in a Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DlaC) program designed to assist unions to deal with immigration issues such as 457 Visas and migration issues generally. As health, and nursing in particular, is one the largest users of 457 Visas, the ANF was pleased to accept an immigration officer on secondment from DlaC. The position will be fully funded by the department and be for approximately 18 months. It is envisaged the officer will take part in education and training of Branch officers and help develop tools and strategies for the federation to assist members and Branches with migration issues. We are in the process of finalising a job description and the employment contract with DlaC and will have more information shortly.

#### > NHHRC

The National Health and Hospital Reform Commission interim report was released in February, with a range of recommendations that will affect nursing and midwifery. None of them particularly advancing the role of nurses and midwives much further than they are currently able which is extremely disappointing. The NHHRC has requested an extra briefing with the ANF to discuss their interim report. That meeting will take place in March. The ANF FO is coordinating a response from the Federation with the Branches. Our submission will be available on our website at the end of March.

#### > Maternity Services Review

The Maternity Services Review and recommendations was released in February. The review made recommendations which among other things included the better use of the midwifery workforce. It suggested that midwives having access to PBS and MBS would improve access to services and expansion of practice for midwives. The improvement of indigenous birthing outcomes particularly supporting women who want to deliver on lands and further supporting the models of care that are working particularly well for indigenous women. The review stressed that a more collaborative

approach to maternity services was needed. The review is available on line at <http://www.health.gov.au/maternityservicesreview>

#### > Aged Care Campaign

The aged care campaign continues to take much time in the lead up to the launch.

'Because We Care' has been selected as the slogan for the campaign. The campaign, supported by all Branches except Western Australia, will be launched in Canberra on March 17<sup>th</sup> at Parliament House. The campaign has as its broad objective the enhancement of membership in the sector through addressing important issues.

These include:

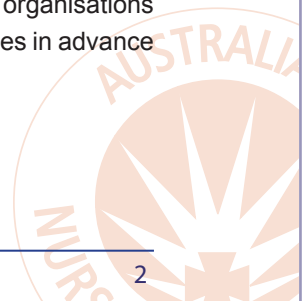
- seeking mechanisms that ensure openness and accountability in the way taxpayer funds are spent;
- fair pay for nurses and care staff in aged care who are now paid up to \$300 a week less than other nurses doing the same job;
- introducing the right balance of skills and working hours so that nurses and care staff can provide quality care; and
- recognition of the professional skills of assistants in nursing and care staff through a national licensing system.

A DVD featuring aged care workers was completed in late February with the assistance of Chesalon Care in Beecroft, NSW. The political, media and state Branch plans have been completed and Branches have been provided with updated copies for their internal use.

Ged Kearney and Lee Thomas have been attending Branch Councils and organisers' meetings to discuss the campaign.

#### > Political meetings

Lee Thomas and Lisa Fitzpatrick met with Daniel Andrews, Victoria's Health Minister, to discuss outstanding issues in relation to the National regulation and accreditation scheme. The ANF and other nursing and midwifery organisations continue to lobby hard on these issues in advance of the drafting and release of Bill B.



> NACA

The National Aged Care Alliance (NACA) met for the first time for 2009 in February. Issues discussed included the NiLS report, ACFI, clinical indicators and a presentation from the Clinical Oncology Society regarding cancer in the elderly.

> Consensus View on Nursing in Primary Health Care Project

The ANF is a member of the Primary Health Care Working Group who are conducting a project funded by DoHA to develop a nursing and midwifery perspective of primary health care in Australia. Amanda Adrian, project researcher and writer, has completed draft 3 of the evidence-based consensus view which has been circulated to the Project Advisory Committee and the Coalition of National Nursing Organisations (CoNNO) membership for their information and feedback. This paper will have broad and ongoing application to health reform and will be timely to contribute to discussions on the formation of the National Primary Health Care Strategy. The project is due to be completed on 20 April 2009.

> IT Competency Standards Project

The ANF is conducting a national project in conjunction with Queensland University of Technology (QUT) to develop, validate and publish Informatics Competency Standards for the nursing profession in Australia. The on-line survey for the project will be posted on the Federal Office website for two weeks commencing 4 March and closing 18 March 2009. It will also be circulated via email by participating Branches. Focus groups for the project will be conducted immediately following completion of the on-line survey.

> Review of the Existing PBS Supply Arrangements in the Context of Residential Aged Care Facilities and Private Hospitals

Healthcare Management Advisors (HMA) were engaged by the DoHA to undertake the review of the existing arrangements for PBS medicines supplied to patients in residential aged care facilities and private hospitals. The ANF made

a submission to the HMA discussion paper in January following feedback on the draft from the Branches. The submission is available on the ANF website. HMA are now conducting workshops in each State and Territory to assess the feasibility of the options identified. The registration and consent forms for the workshops can be accessed at either of the following two web page addresses and must be received by the 6 March 2009:

Department of Health and Ageing : [www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/pharmacy-4cpa-reviews](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/pharmacy-4cpa-reviews)

Pharmacy Guild of Australia: [www.guild.org.au](http://www.guild.org.au)

> National Primary Health Care Strategy

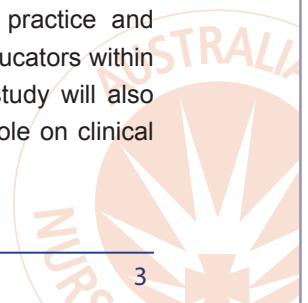
The ANF made a submission in response to the discussion paper 'Towards a National Primary Health Care Strategy' on 27 February 2009 following feedback on the draft from Branches. The submission is available on the ANF website.

> Core Competencies and Educational Framework for Maternity Services in Australia Project

The University of Technology Sydney is undertaking a project funded by the National Health Workforce Taskforce (NHWT) to determine core competencies and educational framework required to provide safe, effective and appropriate maternity services. This will take into account the range and complexity of skills, knowledge and attitudes (core competencies) required, and full range of professions involved, to deliver evidence based maternity care. The ANF Federal Office is represented on the Reference Group for this project which will hold its first meeting on Friday 6 March 2009.

> Nurse Educator in Acute Care Hospitals (NEACH) Study

The ANF has been invited to be a member of the Steering Committee convened to guide a research study on the Role of the Nurse Educator in Acute Care Hospitals (NEACH) being conducted by Curtin University of Technology, Sydney. The purpose of this two year study is to investigate the role, scope of practice and performance standards of nurse educators within acute hospitals in Australia. The study will also identify the impact of the nursing role on clinical



outcomes and the inherent relationship between education and practice performance. The first meeting of the Steering Committee is scheduled for Thursday 9 April 2009.

> Rural and Remote Health Workforce Roundtable

ANF Federal Office is participating in a rural health workforce roundtable in Melbourne on 4 March. Participants will discuss the workforce implications of the interim report of the NHHRC, the Preventative Health Strategy and the Primary Health Care Strategy. The NHWT will present on the rural health workforce research priorities, innovation and reform and directions for the new agency.

> National Health Reform Summit

The Australian Health Care Reform Alliance (AHCRA) is holding the National Health Reform Summit 2-3 March 2009 at the Victoria University Convention Centre in Melbourne. The registration form is available at [www.healthreform.org.au](http://www.healthreform.org.au).

> Issues Paper

The ANF Issues Paper on the economic case for nursing care: ENSURING QUALITY, SAFETY, AND POSITIVE PATIENT OUTCOMES: WHY INVESTING IN NURSING MAKES \$EN\$E is completed. The paper will be available in hardcopy through the Federal Office or on-line at the Federal Office website.



GED KEARNEY  
Federal Secretary



LEE THOMAS  
Assistant Federal Secretary



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).