



The Collective Perspective

DECEMBER

2011

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Merry Christmas

The ACT ANF Office staff wish all our Members, Delegates and Branch Councillors a safe and happy holiday season, and hope that everyone enjoys some time relaxing with family and friends!

Over the Christmas – New Year period the ACT ANF Branch Office will be closed from the 23 December 2011— 9 January 2012. If issues arise at work during this time that require ACT ANF help:

First contact your Delegate. Workplace Delegates can provide immediate help with the issue at hand. Delegates, or indeed any other ACT ANF member, can attend any meetings as support.

Email the ACT ANF with details of the issue and actions being taken, or

Call the office and leave a message with the details and actions.

Staff periodically check the Branch emails and messages during close down, and will respond to queries as soon as possible.

Please also remember to check the adjusted dates (listed on page 4) for fee deductions if you pay by either Direct Debit or Quarterly Credit Card deduction.

Update—ACT Public Sector Responsibility Statement

The ANF has been contacted by a number of concerned Nurses and Midwives working in the Public Sector who report having to sign “Responsibility Statements”. The ANF recently sought clarification regarding the status of the document. The ANF has received assurances from ACT Health Directorate that staff **DO NOT HAVE TO SIGN THE DOCUMENT** and the document is solely for information purposes.

The ANF also sought clarification on a number of issues of the document:

Regarding the reference to “*Cooperating with ACT Health to enable compliance with any duty imposed upon them by law*” the ANF understands this statement relates to duties imposed on both the individual and the organisation by OHS laws.

Regarding the reference to “*Moral responsibility to ACT Health*”, the ANF understands this statement relates to a staff member meeting Health Directorate’s expectations in relation to an employee’s behaviour, conduct and compliance in regards to workplace safety.

Regarding the reference to “*Perform all aspects of their work...as per specific instructions received from their supervisor/manager*”, the ANF understands these specific instructions must be lawful and reasonable directions.

If you have any questions or issues regarding the document please contact the ACT ANF Office.



From the Branch Secretary



It seems no time since I was writing last year's Christmas newsletter. The Branch has had a very busy and successful year. The workload has remained consistent throughout the year. A number of Enterprise Agreements have been negotiated and finalised, a number are nearing completion and a number are still ongoing. The challenge, as always, is to extend the benefits of collective bargaining to those worksites that are not currently covered by a Enterprise Agreement. This year has seen inaugural Agreements negotiated with Canberra Imaging Group, Goodwin Aged Care and Kangara Waters.

A big thank you to the ACT ANF Staff, Council and Delegates for all their hard work, commitment and support throughout 2011. A special thank you to Ms Natasha Merry and Ms Denise O'Toole who assisted the branch with administrative duties during the year and have now moved on; and a special welcome back to the ACT ANF Office Manager, Ms Helen Agnew, who returned to work on a GRTW program on Wednesday 26 October 2011, following her accident on 4 July. We are all very glad to have Helen back and on the mend.

An ACT ANF delegation and a number of observers attended the National ANF Biennial Conference on 20-21 October 2011. This was a very inspirational and enthusiastic gathering and will set the national direction for the next two years. Federally, the ANF is now the second largest union in Australia, representing 214,000 members and growing. The ACT ANF Branch is also growing with a 14.88% increase in membership over the last 12 months.

The ANF is a vibrant and active union with a strong and relevant voice on behalf of nurses and midwives, and the professions of nursing and midwifery, representing the industrial and professional interests of the 332,000 nurses and midwives registered throughout Australia.

ACT ANF members are again encouraged to submit ACT ANF Critical Incident forms to the office. These forms are available by contacting the office on: 62829455 or through the website: www.actanf.org.au

Members are also encouraged to utilise worksite specific incident notification processes such as Riskman. By so doing, the incidents can be documented and quality improvement measures instituted. By providing the information to the ACT ANF, the matters can be addressed with management on members' behalf and management

held responsible for ensuring that both a safe clinical environment is available for patients, and a safe workplace environment is provided for staff.

The Industrial program of the Branch continues, be that by visiting facilities, continuing to negotiate enterprise agreements or providing day to day advice and support to members as they contact the ACT ANF for assistance.

Nominations for Work Place Delegate positions have resulted in all nominees being elected unopposed. A list of Workplace Delegates, their workplaces and contact details is included in this edition. Congratulations and welcome to you all. An in-house orientation will be notified shortly and a formal study day in respect of the role will be held in March 2012. During the ACT ANF office Christmas close down, your WPD remains your first contact point for matters raising concern within your workplace. Systems will be in place, through your WPD, should matters need to be escalated through the ACT ANF during the holiday period.

The President and I attended the Unions ACT AGM on 2 November 2011.

The President, Industrial Officer and I met with the Chief Minister/Minister for Health, Ms Katy Gallagher, on 3 November 2011 to discuss outstanding matters in respect of the Public Sector negotiations, ongoing staffing and workload issues within the health portfolio and future directions for health care provision within the territory.

The ACT ANF Annual Report is now available on the ACT ANF website, within the members' only section. Printed copies of the report are also available from the ACT ANF office.

I wish you all a very happy and safe holiday season and a great 2012.

Thank you again for all your encouragement and support.

Yours In Solidarity,

**Jenny Miragaya
Branch Secretary**

HALL OF FAME

The ACT ANF wishes to farewell and acknowledge another long standing member, Lindy Ritzen, who has been drawn away from her beloved profession of nursing in the ACT to warmer coastal climes.

As of the 6th of October, Lindy had practiced as an EN for 25 years, spending the majority of her career in surgical and theatre anaesthetics. Lindy's time nursing in the ACT was not only limited to hospital work, and she worked occasionally in Queanbeyan at a methadone clinic. Over the years Lindy found nursing, and in particular being an EN, a highly satisfying and rewarding vocation and she is a strong believer in the abilities of a team regardless of qualifications; given a good team that gets on well together makes a job less like work. Lindy also strongly believes that ENs have an important and valuable role to play in hospitals and shouldn't be thought of as less than RNs, rather possessing a different skill set. As a career EN, Lindy believes that experience was one of the most vital assets a nurse could have and she found that the focus and skills of her nursing career flowed into her life outside work, helping overcome professional and personal challenges.

Reflecting on her career, Lindy firmly believes that nursing is the best profession a person could be involved in, and Lindy maintains a keen interest in the sector even after retirement from permanent part time work. Lindy joined the ACT ANF early, and took part in industrial action in the 1980s under former ACT ANF Branch Secretary Prue Power, at the Royal Canberra Hospital. She feels that nursing in Australia faces a tough future, with increasing patient loads and the sheer diversity of illnesses demanding higher education and extensive experience. However, Lindy is confident that future nurses will rise to meet the challenge. Despite a move to the coast, Lindy feels that she will keenly miss the people and patients she has worked with during her career.

The ACT ANF wishes Lindy and her family all the best for their coastal change and success in all their future endeavours.

Money Sometimes Costs Too Much

During a period of enterprise bargaining, the ANF understandably receives an increased number of inquiries around the progress of bargaining, with members excited to know just how much the pay increase will be. However, it must be accepted that employers do not willingly offer a pay increase that will remedy the rising costs of electricity, water, petrol, food prices and the overall increase in cost of living (let alone adequately recognise your hard work) unless encouraged to do so by bargaining agents on behalf of employees. Therefore, over time, the ANF has looked to also improve the working conditions and benefits afforded to Nursing staff including paid leave, penalty rates, allowances and the rest.

As a default bargaining position, the ANF will demand maintenance of conditions unless addressed by ANF members during the bargaining period. However, some employers consider money can compensate for a reduction in beneficial conditions and will look to divide the membership on controversial issues by offering a small increase in pay for the removal of a substantial benefit that may only be accessible to some. In the excitement of bargaining members must remember this and also the struggles of those who have fought and won these conditions to ensure they remain for future nursing generations. This is particularly relevant at the moment regarding two issues.

The first is Paid Parental Leave. As you are aware, the government recently introduced a Paid Parental Leave scheme that will see eligible employees able to access 18 weeks paid parental leave at minimum wage (funded by the federal government). This leave is in addition to any other paid parental leave the employee may be entitled to under an existing enterprise agreement. Recently, an approach by some employers in the healthcare sector has been to offer reasonable pay increases contingent on the removal of the employer funded paid parental scheme, or to convert the existing paid parental leave to "top-up" pay (meet the gap between the minimum wage and the employee's current wage) effectively removing a condition that took years to achieve.

The second is Annual leave. Under the current Modern Award, Nursing staff are now entitled to 5 weeks annual leave as a base rate. During enterprise bargaining, it is a current practice of some employers to "buy out" this extra 1 week of annual leave by offering an additional pay increase. However, the amount rarely recognises, nor compensates for, the benefits an extra weeks leave provides (e.g. time spent resting or with family).

Employers will continue to employ this technique in bargaining to divide membership and save money. In these times members must remember that all beneficial conditions have been hard fought for and gained by those before you. To bargain away these entitlements, along with other beneficial conditions, for money, will be to the detriment of nursing staff into the future, losing initiatives for attracting people to enter Nursing, or incentives for remaining.

2012 Workplace Delegates

Adjacent is a list of the new and returning Workplace Delegates for the ACT ANF in 2012. Congratulations to all delegates and a warm welcome to those new to the role, the ACT ANF looks forward to working closely with you in the coming year.

Though Workplace Delegates are the first point of contact for members and other employees in their facilities, there are other forums for ACT ANF members to contribute and become involved in protecting and improving working conditions, namely the Workplace Consultative Committee (WCC) and Reasonable Workload Committee (RWC). These committees serve as a direct representation of employees' interests during consultation with the employer, and sit with the ANF during industrial negotiations. Committee members also provide valuable insight into the reality of working conditions, which is then communicated to the ANF and employers. They play a vital role in representing the ideas and views of co-workers, and if it is something you would be interesting in being involved in, or would like to set one up at your workplace, please contact the Branch office for more details.

Bereavement and Compassionate Leave are NOT Personal Leave

Any time a member of your immediate family or household: a) contracts/develops a life threatening illness b) sustains a life threatening injury c) dies, you are entitled to a minimum of 2 days paid compassionate leave under the National Employment Standards. Compassionate leave does not accrue and is available as a set amount for each occasion it is required.

The entitlement to compassionate leave is more generous in the Public Sector Agreement where 5 paid days are made available on each occasion of a death. Extended provisions are also available under the NCPH, CJJH and Calvary Private Agreements. Aged Care facilities generally follow the provisions of the National Employment Standards.

In any workplace, discussion of your situation with the appropriate manager may lead to an extension of the leave made available to you; however this is solely at the discretion of management.

If you are taking compassionate leave you must specify that it is for this purpose. Compassionate leave may appear on your payslip as "personal leave". If this is the case you should check to ensure that the leave has not been deducted from your accrued personal leave. It is a distinct entitlement.

ACT ANF Workplace Delegates

Calvary Public

Sandra Mahlberg – Ward 5E

Cheryl Thuillier – Maternity

Calvary Private Hospital

Lyndsey Ohman – 6W

Raymond Vella – Hyson Green

Calvary John James Hospital

Geraldine Lynch

Clare Holland House

Rachel Bilton -Simek

QEII Family Centre

Nancy Smith

Australian Red Cross Blood Service

Heather Marchant

Brindabella Gardens Nursing Homes

Cathie Harris

The Canberra Hospital

Jude Dodd – Gastro

Leanne Ehrlich – Centre for Newborn Care

Louise Bottega – Centre for Newborn Care

Janice Flaherty – Coronary Care Unit

Susan Kitto – 9B

Walk in Centre

Lia Leung

ACT Health

Viveka (Viki) Cowsill – Community Health, North Team

Louise Murphy – Community Health, South Team

Rod Menere – Mental Health Crisis Team

Ron Cawthron – Alexander Maconachie Centre

Anne Marie Tully – Phillip Health Centre

Peter Carter – Brian Hennessy Rehabilitation Centre

Because We Care About Aged Care

The **Because We Care** campaign continues. Members are again encouraged to access the website and add their voice to the BWC campaign: <http://www.becausewecare.org.au/index.html> and send an email or postcard to the Prime Minister to remind her that Aged Care Can't Wait. The direct link to the PM is: <http://becausewecare.org.au/home/campaigns/aged-care-can-t-wait/send-an-email-to-prime-minister-julia-gillard/>.

Enterprise Bargaining Update

Public Sector Agreement

The final Common Terms and Conditions (CTC) document was released on 31 October. A number of issues remain including:

- wording of the Qualification Allowance clause;
- wording of the Agency Consultation Committee clause;
- breaks from ordinary duty; and
- personal leave.

It is hoped that a finalised document can be agreed between the parties soon.



BWC National Morning Tea (14 Feb 2011)

Uniting Care

Although Uniting Care was hopeful for a December sign-off, there have been no further meetings held (although substantial progress has been made and the agreement may be able to be finalised after one or two additional meetings).

Salvation Army

Aged Care Services, who will be assisting the employer is happy to meet in late November – date to be confirmed.

QEII

The draft agreement is complete, negotiations to commence shortly.

Goodwin

After a number of issues with Goodwin Aged Care EBA including ongoing disagreement regarding a number of draft clauses and the status of the agreement, the ANF met with the CEO on 21 October. The matter was then later referred by FWA to formal hearing. Commissioner Deegan requested that Goodwin make a number of changes to the agreement and give undertakings on a number of matters. The ACT ANF will review undertakings and, if satisfied, will submit the required F18 form in support of agreement to ensure pay increase implemented as soon as possible, and to ensure coverage.

Calvary Private

A Log of claims has been endorsed by members and forwarded to management with an initial bargaining meeting to follow shortly.

CJH

A Log of claims has been endorsed by members and forwarded to management with an initial bargaining meeting to follow shortly.

Baptist Care Services

NSWNA satisfied with final Agreement – ANF to get endorsement from members in coming weeks.

IRT Kangara Waters

A Log of claims has been endorsed by members and was tabled at initial bargaining meeting with HR director and ANF Industrial Officer on 8 November.



Local support for the "Because We Care" campaign

Photos of 2011



Nursing & Midwifery Excellence Awards (May 2011)



ACT ANF Biennial Conference 2011



Branch Councillor, John Acs, presents ACT resolutions to the National Biennial Conference



ACT ANF delegation at National Biennial Conference



Public Sector EBA Member Meeting



National Biennial Conference 2011



(Left) Hosting a BBQ at Canberra University

(Right) Presenting a wreath at the Nurses Remembrance Ceremony (May 2011)



Notice Board



SO CLOSE...

The ACT ANF
Is nearing its
2000th MEMBER milestone!!!!!!


A GREAT Prize will be issued to the 2000th Member
and the Member that Signs them up!

More information next issue...



Annual Audit Report

The ACT ANF Annual Audit report is now available on the ACT ANF website www.actanf.org.au in the members' only section. Printed copies of the report are available on request from the ACT ANF office: 62829455; actanf@actanf.org.au



****An important reminder:** Any ACT ANF Member who requires a Certificate of Currency as proof of their Professional Indemnity Insurance can contact the Office to have one sent out.

For more information contact the ACTANF on 02 6282 9455.**

ACT ANF Membership Fees effective 1 January 2012

	12 months	6 months	3 months	Fortnightly
RN L1Y1	\$600.68	\$300.34	\$150.17	\$23.10
EN L1Y1	\$543.70	\$271.85	\$135.92	\$20.91
ARN	\$522.20	\$261.10	\$130.55	\$20.08
SEN	\$472.85	\$236.43	\$118.21	\$18.19
AIN	\$459.38	\$229.69	\$114.84	\$17.67
Aged Care				
RN L1Y1	\$513.06	\$256.53	\$128.26	\$19.73
EN L1Y1	\$454.78	\$227.39	\$113.69	\$17.49
AIN (Cert III)	\$392.29	\$196.15	\$98.07	\$15.09
Associate	\$60.00	\$30.00		

Ahead of the latest membership fee increase, effective 1 January 2012, I thought I would again clarify how the fees are calculated and when increases are implemented.

Membership fees are calculated at 1% of the lowest increment for each classification, across all sectors. Therefore the annual fee for an EN is 1% of the EN Level 1 Year 1, an RN is 1% of the RN Level 1 Year 1, and so on.

Towards the end of the calendar year the current pay rates are reviewed. If there has been an increase in pay rates there will be an increase in membership fees effective 1 January the following year.

Membership fees are used to maintain the ANF ACT Branch premises and staff which in turn are used to negotiate workplace agreements and provide member advocacy, amongst other services.

Julie Ede

Membership Officer

Automatic Fee Payments

December 2011 - January 2012

Direct Debit dates remain unchanged:

Friday 9 December 2011

Friday 23 December 2011

Friday 6 January 2012

Friday 20 January 2012

Quarterly Credit Card debits will take place on Tuesday 10 January 2012



“ THE COLLECTIVE-MUCH STRONGER THAN THE INDIVIDUAL ”