



# NURSING & MIDWIFERY OFFICE NEWSLETTER



Volume 15 July 2008

## From the Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer

Dear Colleagues,

I am delighted to acknowledge the long awaited appointment of Australia's new Commonwealth Chief Nurse, Ms Rosemary Bryant. Rosemary is one of the nations best known nurse leaders and she has always been strongly committed to the advancement of nursing and midwifery.

On behalf of you all, I have congratulated Rosemary on her appointment and I look forward to supporting her professionally in these exciting times.

On the education front, there is more exciting news. Some new and innovative educational programs will be offered in ACT next year: A Bachelor of Midwifery at the University of Canberra and a three year

Bachelor of Nursing at the Australian Catholic University will be provided in addition to the accelerated two year articulation program for ENs.

New post graduate programs for registered nurses and post enrolment programs for enrolled nurses are under development for commencement in 2009 and, the Nursing and Midwifery Scholarship Scheme has more funding available to help nurses and midwives further their education. Advice will be provided on course availability later in the year but it is time to start thinking if you would like to commit to a study program in 2009.

*Joy Vickerstaff*  
Chief Nursing & Midwifery Officer

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## Appointment of the first Australian Chief Nurse

Congratulations to Rosemary Bryant on her appointment as Australia's first Chief Nursing Officer.

As Commonwealth Chief Nurse (CCN), Ms Bryant will be a strong voice within government on all issues relating to Australia's 200,000-strong nursing workforce. She will also contribute to the maternity services review being conducted by the Australian Government. This announcement recognises how important nurses and midwives are within the health system.

Ms Bryant is currently Executive Director of the Royal College of Nursing and has worked in hospitals and community settings. She was previously the Director of Nursing Policy and Planning in the Victorian Government, and the Director of Nursing at Royal Adelaide Hospital. She was elected as a member of the Board of the International Council of Nurses (ICN) in 2001 and was elected as its Second Vice President in 2005. She has also provided advice to the World Health Organisation on nursing in Nepal.

The Australian Chief Nurse will:

- Work towards building and strengthening the nursing profession as a career of choice.
- Play a key role in developing a strategic and collaborative approach to national nursing policy across all jurisdictions.
- Provide advice on key Government commitments, including our plan to bring 10,000 nurses into the health and aged care sectors through a combination of cash incentives and new graduate places.
- Contribute to the Maternity Services Review.
- Participate in the development of our primary care strategy.

## Enrolled Nursing News

### College of Nursing – Emergency Nursing Workshop for the Enrolled Nurse

The two day workshop, Principles of Emergency Nursing Care for Enrolled Nurses was held on the 29-30th April. Feedback from the workshop indicated that it was a great success with comments made such as 'very useful and enjoyable days, I got so much more than I ever thought I could from these 2 days' and this 'I found the course very informative and knowledgeable. I am looking forward to returning

to work and putting my new skills and knowledge into practice. I think my new skills will be very valuable to not only myself but my patients.' The two educators from the College of Nursing provided an informative and interesting overview of the six month distance education course offered by the College. This course is being offered by the Nursing and Midwifery Office for all interested Enrolled Nurses.



### College of Nursing – Distance Education Course: Principles of Emergency Nursing Care

The nursing and midwifery office has received over thirty expressions of interest from Enrolled Nurses across ACT Health. Congratulations to the twenty nine Enrolled Nurses who will commence the six month distance education course on the 14 July. The benefits from this course will be enormous not only for the Enrolled Nurses but for their areas of work.

The nursing and midwifery office staff look forward to assisting the

Enrolled Nurses in completing this exciting and dynamic course.

For more information on this course or others offered by the College of Nursing please contact Denise Sharp on 6205 1417 or by email at [denise.sharp@act.gov.au](mailto:denise.sharp@act.gov.au) alternatively you can go to the College of Nursing website to view other courses offered to Registered or Enrolled Nurses and Registered Midwives at [www.nursing.aust.edu.au](http://www.nursing.aust.edu.au)

## Perinatal Society of Australia and New Zealand Conference

Recently three of our Nursing and Midwifery staff presented at the Perinatal Society of Australia and New Zealand Conference on the following topics:

- Michelle Hanzic – Education Program for Gavage Feeding Preterm Infants

- Gillian Pini – Every Drop Counts
  - Cathy Ringland – Post traumatic Stress Disorder & the NICU graduate mother
- Well done to all three for sharing with the conference delegates such a wide range of topics and representing ACT Health at this international conference.

## Aged Care Forum

The third and highly successful aged care forum 'Initiatives, Innovations and Inspirations in Aged Care' was held on 20th May at the Australian Catholic University.

The afternoon was again facilitated by Grant Carey-Ide, Director Aged Care and Rehabilitations Service ACT Health. Grant warmly welcomed all nine of our presenters, facilitated discussion and, as always, was simultaneously professional and entertaining!

We were fortunate to have Joy Vickerstaff, A/Chief Nurse and Heather Austin, A/Deputy Chief Nurse present for the afternoon and as Joy commented, in her closing remarks, there are some incredible achievements across the entire aged care sector and we all need to continue to learn from and celebrate these.

Also in attendance were Directors of Nursing from Residential Aged Care Facilities, Registered Nurses, Personal/Direct Care Workers, Academics, Policy Officers, Allied Health staff and Educators.

The content and quality of presentations was excellent and certainly demonstrated the wide range of innovations and initiatives occurring in the Aged Care Sector. We would like to once again thank all those who contributed to the presentations for sharing with us their important work, strategies and inspirations. We can only hope that these talented and dedicated people continue to work in aged care for many years to come!

The number of attendees continues to rise each time a forum is held, so if you were unable to attend this forum be sure to watch this space for future not-to-be-missed events!

## Following up on the successful International Nursing and Midwifery celebrations Oration by Professor Philip Darbyshire...

The nursing and midwifery office received the following letter from Julie Beydoun, an Enrolled Nurse Graduate from Ward 10A at the Canberra Hospital. With her kind permission we thought that we would share her words with you as her letter encapsulated all the thoughts, emotions and passion that other attendees had shared with the staff of the Nursing and Midwifery office following the oration.

### The Nurse in a Kilt

In celebration of Nurses and Midwives week, my colleagues and I were invited to attend an oration by Professor Philip Darbyshire, Chair of Nursing, the University of South Australia, at the ANU on the 12 May.

We proceeded into the great hall, to be greeted by a thoroughly distinguished looking man in robes... and a kilt. This did not detract from his distinguished presence and confirmed my suspicion that he was indeed a Scot, when he proceeded to dance what seemed to be the pride of Erin with our own director of nursing Joy Vickerstaff!

This provided some hint as to the character of the man we would be listening to, I decided instantly that I liked him and this was not going to be a boring, self absorbed ramble, by a stuffy academic, on the contrary, his words were as welcoming as a fresh warm breeze. I was enthralled. I listened attentively to the tongue in cheek scorn of his jovial tirade, directed at the powers that be, and the politics that govern their decision making and planned direction for the future of nursing. He made us laugh.

I was heartened at his recognition and praise for the humble yet vital role nurses perform and the importance of the tasks we do, day to day that are often dismissed as menial. His words were inspiring, encouraging, passionate yet gentle and I felt within me a welling of pride not to mention tears, at his affirmation that I belonged to a fraternity of caring, nurturing, compassionate humanitarians. It reaffirmed to me, my reasons for pursuing this career in nursing and all the day to day struggles we sometimes complain about. I realized that I should

wear these as a badge of honour, for if we weren't there to do them, who would?

Sometimes it takes humour or tears, frustration, passion and pain to create something good, hard work gets results. Nursing is so much more than a set of tasks, it is a complex web of intertwining events, that creates a fabric that is society. Nurses provide a supportive community, a cradle of caring and a dedication to and an expression of love for ones fellow man.

Before us stood a man who truly understood who we were and our importance to society and celebrated our trials, tears, struggles and triumphs as only a fellow nurse could. A nurse who knows that some aspects of our profession are irreplaceable. The gentleness, the compassion, patience, and perseverance, the fire in our bellies to assist in healing and the emotional connection that we as humanity need to survive.

*Julie Beydoun EN  
Ward 10A TCH*

## Nurse Practitioner Framework Document

Last year saw the completion of the project which evaluated 'Nurse Practitioners in the ACT: The Framework'. This package contained four parts which could be read and used collectively or as stand alone documents.

The evaluation revealed that although current and useful at the time of publication the documentation was now outdated and cumbersome. The overwhelming feedback was that the documentation required refining and rewriting to accurately reflect the current state of Nurse Practitioner roles, ongoing development of established positions and a more streamlined approach to the identification and creation of new Nurse Practitioner positions.

The process of refining, updating and rewriting has now commenced and updates will be available via this newsletter and the N&MO website over the coming months.

There will be a reference group for this project, with key stakeholder representation, to guide and advise throughout the process, however, we are always keen to obtain feedback from any Nurse or Midwife in the ACT and would welcome your email or telephone call. If you have read or used the documents and have comments or suggestions please do not hesitate to call on 6205 0893 or email [N&MO@act.gov.au](mailto:N&MO@act.gov.au)

## Sharing experiences - Nurses and Midwives of the ACT

In this issue the Nursing and Midwifery Office would like to showcase two dedicated midwives who provide care to pregnant teenagers and pregnant women who may require additional support throughout their pregnancy. Nola Wong and Fiona Le Mesurier work for the main part at the Canberra Hospital in a job share position. Fiona also spends time working with the Step Ahead Outreach Program which is not only offered at TCH but also at the Junction in Canberra City (a youth service for young people 12-25 years) and at one of the Canberra Colleges as part of the CC Cares program.

### Firstly, about Nola and her work...



Nola had retired from her work as a midwife after spending more than 30 years working in the birthing suite but found it very hard to 'let go.' So when the chance to work in the clinic, which was challenging and involved the discipline of

midwifery arose, Nola decided to return to this exciting and very rewarding environment. In the role, Nola works with women who are mainly over 30 and use substances such as marijuana, heroin, cocaine and alcohol during pregnancy. Additionally, the women may be experiencing mental health issues. The cohort of women, are from multiple cultural backgrounds, which can be another challenging layer to the complexity of their situations. Women referred to the clinic can come from a wide demographic area – from Queanbeyan to the coastal areas of southern NSW. Nola works very closely with allied health and of course the drug and alcohol nurses who play an integral part in supporting these women and their families. As Nola said 'when working with the women it is very important to engage with them early and to try to build up a relationship of trust – to not judge them in anyway'. Some will continue to see Nola throughout the

pregnancy and others will tend to be 'flighty' however, this is to be expected, as not all cases are 'wins'.

### About Fiona and her role...



Fiona started on her journey to where she is today in the paediatric and adolescent environment. Her first encounter with marginalised women was in 1999 whilst completing her graduate diploma in midwifery.

In 2005 Fiona was asked to relieve in the 'Step Ahead Program' and couldn't wait to do more. Therefore, when the position became vacant Fiona jumped at the chance to apply. When asked what makes these girls needs different from the mainstream pregnant women Fiona pointed out the following: the girls are still physically developing, they have issues with self esteem and image and a number of them will be homeless or have social issues. Additionally, these girls tend to have babies who are below normal birth weight, complications can occur during pregnancy and at birth and they tend to have an increase in postnatal depression. They need help with issues as diverse as diet/nutrition/budgeting/housing. Like Nola, Fiona works closely with the social work department and allied health to provide holistic care to these girls. In the future Fiona would like to see the clinic scope expand to include a postnatal service, which would be incorporated into mid call in the home.

In conclusion both Nola and Fiona feel that some of the most important things to remember when helping the women and their families is that confidentiality is extremely important. The woman must be made to feel empowered and not to create the situation of dependency. Nola and Fiona both agreed that they are privileged to be part of the lives of these women and to make a difference.

## Authorised Nurse Practitioners in the ACT

An ever increasing number of ACT Nurses are completing their studies and becoming authorised Nurse Practitioners in the ACT. As of February 1st there are 18 Nurse Practitioners registered with the Nurses and Midwives

Board, ACT and of these six are now practicing.

As always we would be very pleased to hear from any Nurses or Midwives who are currently enrolled in Masters courses and working towards Nurse

Practitioner registration. Equally, if you are considering this clinical career pathway please do not hesitate to call for information or advice.

Any enquiries can be made to Debbie Hagen on 62072078 or [debbie.hagen@act.gov.au](mailto:debbie.hagen@act.gov.au)