



## Growing their own in rural Victoria



Being in a rural or remote region of Australia can make recruitment difficult at the best of times, but the Darlingford Upper Goulburn Aged Care Facility has achieved success by 'growing its own' staff.

The 51 bed stand alone home in Eildon, central Victoria, had been through some very tough times where recruitment is concerned, says CEO and Director of Nursing Elizabeth Sinclair. "Because of our remote geographical location at the end of a big shire, staffing has been a real issue. Therefore we have had to be really flexible and creative in attracting and retaining our staff."







Darlingford currently has a full quota of 87 staff, four of which are full time. To achieve this, Elizabeth said, the

facility has employed significant numbers of personal care staff (PCAs) with Certificate Three or Four in Aged Care. Then, by accessing traineeship funding the home has been able to enroll them in further training to complete a Division Two Nursing. From there, many of the organisation's Division Two Nurse's have accessed scholarships through the Royal College of Nursing to convert their qualification to Division 1.

"This has been very beneficial for both staff and the home," says Elizabeth. "We have been able to 'grow our own' staff with people whose skills are improving all the time, and solve some of our recruitment issues. Meanwhile the staff are able to broaden their job roles without huge personal financial burden."

**Continued page 3**

### *In this issue:*

-  *Just a word*  
Page 2
-  *Up-skilling in WA*  
Page 3
-  *From cleaner to carer*  
Page 5
-  *Training for leadership*  
Page 6
-  *Student help has multiple benefits*  
Page 7
-  *Registration of aged care quality assessors update*  
Page 7



## Just a word



This issue focuses on the way some residential aged care providers have developed human resource management strategies to ensure they meet the needs of their residents as part of their pursuit to provide quality care.

As we head into the accreditation round, it is worth considering what we are trying to achieve. All of us in aged care - providers, owners, managers, front-line care workers - exist to provide better quality of care for residents.

But do you strive to provide high quality care and chase excellence - or do you

just want to be accredited and pass your assessment 44/44. In any event, what does 44/44 at your home mean for each, individual resident?

Do you say 'yes, passed the test' or do you say "we delivered high quality care'?

This issue you'll read examples how residential aged care providers have developed strategies to ensure their existing staff are developed to meet the changing needs of their residents.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mark Brandon'.

Mark Brandon  
Chief Executive Officer



She points out that the township of Eildon is one of the lowest socio-economic areas in the state and as such, there are often limitations on people who would like to study, yet are unable to be supported financially in order to move beyond their baseline training.

**“We adopt the policy that if our staff are well looked after, so too will be our clients.”**

“Education is a huge priority for us,” says Elizabeth, “so much of our resources are directed toward enabling staff to maintain and expand their skills and knowledge.”

The recent introduction of ‘clinical resource personnel’ illustrates this. Darlingford has appointed approximately 15 nurses and PCAs to these roles, with each having particular responsibility for areas such as wound management, diabetes, oral and dental care and behaviour management.

“Following the appropriate training in these areas, these people are given administrative time to manage their particular portfolio.

“We have found this to be a very productive way of ensuring high quality care for residents, whilst offering a great opportunity for staff to expand their scope of practice and skills.”

Elizabeth also highlights how the home makes itself attractive to potential staff by offering flexible hours and a supportive work environment. “We are a small community here, and all recognise the personal commitments our staff may have, such as the care of children or elderly relatives. We adopt the policy that if our staff are well looked after, so too will be our clients.”



## Up-skilling in WA

**In a bid to stave off the skills shortage in WA, the Hall and Prior Residential Aged Care organisation has seen success in offering its care staff the chance to train to become enrolled nurses.**

Julie Beaton, coordinator of quality, safety and staff development programs for the 17-home group, says it was lucky to be offered the chance for staff at the Albany TAFE to come to their facilities to provide staff with training in the Certificate Three in Aged Care over an 18 month/two year period.

“Upskilling our staff has proved a very effective way of catering for both our staffing needs, as well as providing further career scope for these staff,” says Julie. “The staff did not need to attend any other centre for the training and could complete a lot of the practical side ‘on the job’.”

In total, six of the 16 staff who began the training have now completed, with some having gone on to work in registered nursing for Hall and Prior.

In addition, said Julie, Hall and Prior over the last two years, also aimed to better support its registered nurses by implementing a ‘Personal Carers Advanced Practice (PCAP) Program’.

This enables the facilities’ care assistants the chance to broaden their skills in areas such as simple wound care and administration of ‘sachet’ drugs (whereby no clinical assessment is required).

“Being armed with these more advanced skills, means these care assistants are able to further support our registered nurses, who are then more free to concentrate on the clinical tasks that they would otherwise have been pushed for time with,” says Julie.

She says that in addition to very positive feedback from the registered nurses, “this initiative again, broadens the care assistants’ job prospects and enables them to consider a career in enrolled nursing.

“Nine of our homes currently have PCAP assistants, and we are hoping for all seventeen to eventually have one at least,” adds Julie.



# Better Practice 2008

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To register your interest in attending Better Practice, please visit [www.accreditation.org.au](http://www.accreditation.org.au) phone (02) 8831 1028 or email [betterpractice@accreditation.org.au](mailto:betterpractice@accreditation.org.au)



## From cleaner to carer

As a small 20 bed facility in rural Victoria, the Barwo Homestead knows all about multi-skilling as a way of making the most of its staff's qualities.



**Maryce Quarrell, 57, has been an excellent example of this, says administrator Kaye Bernhardt. Originally employed as the cleaner of the aged care facility some ten years ago, Maryce was more recently promoted to the dual position of cleaner/care assistant.**

"I knew Maryce was right for the job from the start," says Kaye. "She always knew what was going on around the home and was very in tune with our residents' needs. For example, she knew if there were any problems with residents who may have stopped

showering. Because I knew she had the right, caring attitude and she expressed an interest in taking on care work, I had no hesitations."

The time that Maryce was taken on for the role also coincided with the government decision to provide funding for educating staff in aged care.

**I believe that everyone adds their own value.**

As a result Maryce began study for the Certificate three in Aged Care. She now works four days per week and also offers relief and weekend shifts.

"As the manager at Barwo, I believe that everyone adds their own value.

"This includes the cleaner being just as valuable to us as a doctor," says Kaye.

The Barwo Homestead also received recognition in 2007 as a 'Compassionate Employer' from bereavement organisation, The Compassionate Friends of Victoria.

In 2006, one of Barwo's care staff suffered the tragic bereavement of her son in an accident. The aged care facility was nominated for the award by this employee for the understanding support they provided and their decision to allow her 12 months off prior to making a decision about returning to work.

# Training for leadership

Improving leadership and building a network of leaders is the aim of a current management development program being undertaken within the Western Australia-based Bethanie Group.



"The 13 facility aged care group identified in 2007, that in order to drive its strategic plan, the group needed to have a solid foundation of leadership and management responding to growth, diversity and development at the operational/service level of the organisation," said Chief Operating Officer Irene Mooney.

The first phase of development training was therefore agreed to be focused towards the managers of facilities, services and key operational support functions.

Perth-based training and consulting organisation Integral Development, was brought in to help Bethanie staff build their skills in how to coach and develop their staff, deal with poor performance and effectively manage cultural and organisational change.

weaknesses of their leadership," said Joanne. "This was a good way of discussing your personal attributes and helped to focus the following sessions."

In addition, all participants undertake four personal coaching sessions as part of the program, and these included the completion of a development plan.

Overall, Joanne said the course had helped to improve her communication skills with her staff. "Keeping everyone informed about issues is crucial in aged care but is something that can slip if you are not careful. The course was good at suggesting new ways of achieving this.

"The course also taught me how to coach my staff to take ownership of their own roles, in order to positively develop their communication skills with residents and their relatives."

**"Keeping everyone informed about issues is crucial in aged care but is something that can slip if you are not careful."**

With a total of 40 managers having completed the 13-session 'Reach to Achieve' program so far, positive participant feedback illustrates its success.

Joanne Douglas from the Bethanie Warwick Aged Care Facility was a recent participant. She said the 360 degree feedback process that was carried out at the start of the program, was particularly beneficial as a starting point for the course's teaching.

"The Integral 360 was used as an assessment and as feedback for managers on the strengths and

Additionally, said Joanne, the course was helpful in providing new ideas for the recruitment of staff. "Asking the right questions during interviews to ensure that you get the right person for the job was a useful area of the course for me, given the current tough market conditions."

Bethanie Group states that the next phase of Reach to Achieve will be to put supervisors through it.

## Student help has multiple benefits

Staff shortages at the Cunningham Nursing Home and Ray Lodge, in Busselton, WA, were the impetus behind its successful student work experience program.

Last year, the two facilities, which are managed by Ray Village Aged Care Services, found itself chronically understaffed, says Director of Care Services, Joanne Penman.

As a result the facilities looked to Busselton TAFE, who offered them several 'gap year' students who were keen to help out and further their own skills in aged care prior to going to university.

The student group took on an intensive two week training placement at Cunningham and Ray Lodge, which led to them gaining a Certificate 2 in healthcare with a focus on aged care.

"The course comprised a lot of theory alongside 90 hours of practical training, covering all the critical areas such as personal care, infection and OH&S," says Joanne.

In addition to funding the training for the students, Cunningham provided the students with 'senior nursing assistants' from its own staff, in order to supervise and mentor them. "We were able to offer these staff a slightly increased hourly rate as an incentive for this," says Joanne, "but more than this, it has been a recognition of their expertise which has empowered them within their roles".

She says she was initially worried that the young school leavers, may not like the work involved and may find some areas of aged care confronting, but was pleasantly surprised that they all ending up lasting the course.

"They all coped very well with the rigours of aged care and responded well to being directed by their mentors," says Joanne.

She says that the Cunningham Nursing Home and Ray Lodge are now seeking to have placements for students each year.

"For the residents, its all been very positive too. They really love the interaction with the young people."

## Registration of aged care quality assessors update

For the past 10 years the RABQSA International (RABQSA) was the Registrar for aged care quality assessors. The Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency Ltd (the Agency) has valued the work RABQSA undertook in setting up and managing the registration scheme and the strong relationship with the assessors.

From 1 October 2008 the registrar arrangement changed as the Agency made a strategic decision to appoint an individual Penny Fraser, as the Registrar located at the Agency's Parramatta office.

All assessors whose registration was due on or before 30 September 2008 should have re-registered with RABQSA contacting Terri Ballerum by email [TBallerum@rabqsa.com](mailto:TBallerum@rabqsa.com) or by phone 02 4728 4612.

All assessors on the register as at 30 September 2008 will remain on the register until their expiry date when they will be required to be re-registered and subject to any new registration requirements agreed to by the Agency and the Registrar.

Any enquiries about registration due on 1 October 2008 or any date thereafter should be direct to Penny Fraser on email [Registrar@accreditation.org.au](mailto:Registrar@accreditation.org.au) or phone 02 8831 1070.

Assessor registrations due in October and November 2008 were contacted individually by Penny Fraser. If you haven't heard from Penny by now, please call her on 02 8831 1070.

The new registration documents including the assessor register, are now available on [www.accreditation.org.au](http://www.accreditation.org.au).





## Are you a manager, clinician or care worker?

*Accelerate your career through becoming a registered Aged Care Quality Assessor*



### Make a commitment to ensuring quality of care for elderly Australians.

The Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency Ltd is looking for permanent assessors right now to join our offices in Brisbane, Parramatta, Newcastle, Melbourne, Geelong, Adelaide, Mittagong and Perth.

Appointment is conditional on achieving registration, which we will pay for, and assist with the necessary training. In addition, appointment is conditional on successfully completing a national police check.

We're committed to creating an environment where you receive training and support using our learning and development framework. This is part of our commitment to our employees.

Good analytical, computer, written and verbal communication skills, strong interpersonal skills and a commitment to residents are required to succeed in this role.

Travelling to aged care homes throughout the state is part of the job. A driver's licence is essential.

Our team of assessors is responsible for conducting audits of the quality of care provided in residential aged care homes. They also conduct support visits and participate in education and strategies to enhance the care for the elderly.

A remuneration package commencing at \$71,292 increasing to a maximum of \$87,000 (inclusive of super) will be offered to successful candidates based on skills and experience.

#### How to apply:

Download the Aged Care Quality Assessor registration requirement and application from [www.accreditation.org.au](http://www.accreditation.org.au). Together with the completed application form, a cover letter and resume should also be submitted to [careers@accreditation.org.au](mailto:careers@accreditation.org.au) or call Grace Sevilla, HR Officer on 02 8831 1001.



Aged Care

Standards and Accreditation Agency Ltd

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