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FRONT COVER:
Tom Burlinson with his father Tony, on the cover of the Agency's DVD *Quality of Care Quality of Life*

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QUALITY OF CARE QUALITY OF LIFE

Story to lessen fears of aged care homes

Federal Minister for Ageing, the Hon Julie Bishop launched The Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency's DVD "Quality of Care Quality of Life" at the Better Practice event held in Sydney in July.

The DVD tells the stories of actor and singer Tom Burlinson and his father Tony, Steve Tracey and his mother Ella, and nursing and management staff. It is aimed at older Australians and their families who are thinking about moving into aged care. It can be a fearful and worrying time and the DVD aims to lessen those fears and help people feel like they are not alone.



Steve and Ella Tracey



Presented by TV news reporter Leigh Hatcher, the DVD explains the role of the Agency, the Accreditation Standards and highlights the positive aspects of aged care in Australia.

All aged care homes will receive a copy of the DVD to have available for potential residents and their families. It is reassuring for them to know that the Agency is there to ensure all homes meet certain standards and continue to improve in order to provide the excellent care older Australians deserve.

For more copies of the DVD, contact your state office on 1800 288 025.

Just a word...

In response to our reader survey this issue contains more case studies, and a profile of a Victorian care worker making a difference. Each better practice story has a helpful information link, either explaining where further information can be obtained, or details of the relevant Standard and what is the expected outcome in each case.

Last month I had the privilege of attending the IAHSIA Sixth International Conference “Creative Solutions for an Ageing Society: Sharing the Wisdom” in Norway, as well as meeting with some aged care leaders in the UK. The stories are similar – much has been achieved in the last five years and the majority of aged care providers are doing a



great job – notably, the quest for improvement is universal.

The Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee Inquiry into Aged Care Report was tabled in June. The Agency Board will be considering the recommendations and submissions over the coming months.

With the next peak in accreditation applications now starting, more improvements have been made to streamline the process. The on-line application form is being well-received. The revised audit handbook

was used during the first assessor update training course in July and will be available on our website this month. We will also have an updated Results and Processes Handbook available soon on our website.

In addition, after substantial testing, a revised format for assessment reports will be introduced soon. This is in response to calls from residents, their carers and providers for a report that is easier to read and understand, yet still gives an accurate and useful report of the home.

I hope you enjoy this bright and informative copy of *The Standard*. We welcome your feedback and ideas on issues you wish to hear more about.

Mark Brandon
Chief Executive Officer

Margery Irving OAM, Actress

Margery Irving was a guest speaker at the Agency’s Better Practice event held in South Australia in May, and featured in last month’s edition of *The Standard*. She was also a well-known personality in

Adelaide, achieving almost cult-like status as a regular guest on ABC Radio.

Sadly, Margery passed away last month, the week after celebrating her 98th birthday.

At the Better Practice event, Margery spoke about what she would like to see if she ever moved into a nursing home. As it turns out, she never did have to go into “one of those places.”

Living with dementia



Roy, Mort and John

One of the highlights for many attending the Agency's Better Practice event held in Tasmania in June, was the appearance of three older men who recounted their experiences of living with dementia.

The three gentlemen, all in their late 70s are still living in the community and attend activities as members of Alzheimer's Australia. For Mort, the diagnosis of dementia was painful, but he discovered his gifts for painting and poetry. Living with memory loss, he began new creative activities.

A sometimes emotional Mort described his symptoms and diagnosis as a "sense that the threads of life anchoring

me with the past, present and future initially meant there was no hope." But, he says, he has learnt to do "old things in new ways."

Mort has learned to express himself through

painting and poetry, which he says, "together with the support of my wife, family, helpers and activities and faith in God, wonderfully combine to nurture my spirit, even with memory loss."

Roy, a former research scientist and Chief of Fisheries CSIRO, brought all his training and talent to understanding his lapses in memory. He now keeps a note book of his experiences, reflections and poems. He says he has "a new vision." Roy likened his memory loss to a fish swimming around in a tank looking

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Roy, Mort and John's personal stories illustrate the core principle behind Standard 3 of the Accreditation Standards. This principle promotes the notion of residents maintaining meaningful and positive lives through participation in activities and relationships both within the residential aged care service and the community.

We encourage staff like Pat Baines to identify the subtle ways in which residents' past experiences and interests can be used to maintain self worth and dignity in the person with memory loss. The messages got to the heart of what expected outcomes such as privacy and dignity, independence, leisure interests and activities, cultural and spiritual life, choice and decision making actually mean in terms of a positive outcome for the resident.

By Rosemary Angelotti, Education Coordinator, Victoria/Tasmania office of The Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency.

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Living with dementia

for something, and he stressed the importance of holding onto precious physical memories of childhood to bring comfort to older people in later years.

John, a distinguished pharmacist, is living moment by moment, balancing his appreciation of what he can no longer do, with exercise and activities. He can find a poem to quote for almost every occasion.

John said the negatives of his condition are not being able to drive his beautiful 1962 Wolseley, the inability to play bowls and golf, and the loss of the ability to converse freely. "I can no longer finish an entire sentence. Having formed it quite clearly in my mind, it

evaporates as I speak.

"The positive aspect of this condition," John said, "is that it makes one make the most of every day and opportunity."

All three men attended a Living with Memory Loss course run by the Alzheimer's Association.

"It took away the fear of the unknown and gave us confidence to believe in ourselves. We now know that living with dementia, is like living with anything else. You take one day at a time and extract every good thing available from that day. I am well aware that this is not a journey one undertakes alone. It affects everyone connected to you," John said.

Pat Baines, Art Therapist and Counsellor with Alzheimer's Australia

(Tasmania) also spoke at the event, highlighting the need to bring creative processes to nursing homes and all those living with dementia. She said many older people with dementia have an imagination that is often intact even though their memories aren't. She encouraged all at the event to go back to their homes and work on "warming up the imagination" of residents with dementia. "It gives them a sense of self-worth and enhances their sense of belonging in the community. Even with dementia, we can still reach parts of the person that deals with images and helps them to communicate and feel worthwhile," Pat said.

"I am moved by the courage I meet in those living with dementia," Pat said.



**Better
2005
Practice**

**Victoria
25 & 26 August
Register now!**

**Queensland
29 & 30 September**

**Western Australia
10 & 11 November**

**For more information or to register, go to
www.accreditation.aust.com or contact
the Better Practice events team
on (02) 8831 1028.**

Profile: Leeane Monagle

Title: Diversional Therapist, Shoreham Aged Care Facility, Shoreham, Victoria

Describe your job:

The role of a Diversional Therapist is to maintain and give the ones in care a purpose, something to look forward to in life, to maintain one's interests in life and explore new experiences together. To give them new experiences in life and to be there when they feel the need to share their past experiences.

As a Diversional Therapist I recognise each person as a unique individual. I respect their individual personal needs of dignity, independence, choice, their levels of participation, their self-esteem and recognise their spiritual and cultural needs.

It's also very important to keep in contact with the local community. This can be achieved in many ways: church, local schools and visits to the local RSLs, as examples.

Career Background:

I have been working in aged care for eight years, which has been at the one aged care facility. I spent

the first three years working in a Personal Care/Activities Coordinator role and the past five years as the Diversional Therapist.

Challenges of your job:

A challenge I face in aged care is giving all the residents the same level of attention. Some are extremely frail and deserve the same amount of time as those able to participate in every day activities.

Another challenge is the emotional feelings I face when a resident passes away, and the need to stay strong and supportive for their families.

Highlights of your job:

The major highlight of being a Diversional Therapist is the friendships you develop, not only with the residents but also their families. I have made friendships that will last a life time.

Another highlight is seeing the residents' emotional expressions after being on an outing, and the gratitude I receive for giving them a wonderful day.

The "good morning"



greetings I receive every day especially after I've had time off.

What you look forward to:

I look forward to going to work every day and making a difference in people's lives. I enjoy being there for the residents, whatever their needs are on the day. They may need a cuddle, someone to listen to them and just give them time. And I always look forward to taking the residents out into the community.

Your biggest buzz:

My biggest buzz was being referred to as a daughter by a resident's family, at their loved one's memorial service.

And also the pottery therapy workshop that I am implementing in the near future.

What/who inspires you:

The residents inspire my life with the stories they have to tell, the friendship and the smiles.

Clown doctors “operating” in aged care

Education and therapy coordinator Vanessa Redhead’s inspiration to introduce clown doctors at her home came from a session at The Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency’s Better Practice event held in Queensland last year.

By Vanessa Redhead, St Mary’s Aged Care

“Laughter is the best medicine” and at St Mary’s Aged Care, clown doctors have recently commenced duty and are setting the scene with their unique brand of creative chaos!

There is plenty of evidence to suggest that the environment affects how people behave or respond. A smile goes a long way in making all the difference to your day. While clown doctors have been ‘operating’ in children’s hospitals for some time, it is relatively



Bringing love, light and laughter to the residents



Clown doctors ready for work

novel to see them introduced into aged care.

The purpose behind the introduction of the clown doctors is simple - to bring love, light and laughter into the lives of residents and staff. Humour is a wonderful tonic. It relieves anxiety, alleviates boredom and allows us to move through life’s

challenges and sometimes sensitive times.

The clown doctor program aims to provide best practice with best fun. The clowns are sensitive to the needs of individuals at all times, and they maintain dignity and respect for the residents. The clowns make surprise fortnightly visits, are on call to make room visits, and make daily performances as part of the mail delivery.

While pleasure is the measure for success, there is also formal evaluation conducted after each program. So far the smiles say it all.

St Mary’s clown doctors

The team is made up of the home’s lifestyle therapists, administration staff, enrolled nurses and personal care assistants:

Dr D Doolittle

Dr B Crook

Dr Arthur Itus

Dr Funny Bones

Dr Cuddle MeQuick

Dr Stitch me up

Dr Feelgood

Dr Chili Pepper

Props include costumes, as well as happy pills (sweets), singing pills, coloured worms, and a variety of odd-looking medical instruments.



Clowning around - clown doctors in training

Evacuation plan saves home's residents



Resident, Ella Simmons with Care Team Manager Sandra Sanabria

With the spate of deaths due to fires, media attention turned to Southern Cross Nordby Apartments in West Pennant Hills, a Sydney suburb, when a fire in June forced the evacuation of all its residents.

Originating in a resident's room, the fire set off smoke alarm in the room. With systems in place, staff were prepared for such an emergency and, following procedures, were able to ensure the safe evacuation of all 41 residents.

According to Acting Chief Executive Officer, Andrew Fleming

“everything went like clockwork.”

“Our fire systems worked well and, as a result we had a successful evacuation with no injuries,” he said.

Subsequently, the home received media coverage in TV, print and radio with Andrew Fleming and resident, Nancy Godwin joining Kerri Anne Kennerly on “Mornings with Kerri-Anne” to talk about the importance of having fire systems in place as well as smoke alarms.

“The story was a positive spin for the aged care industry as well as emphasising the importance of fire systems and smoke alarms,” Andrew Fleming said.

Testing and tagging of electrical equipment

Faulty electrical equipment is a major contributor of residential fires including those in residential aged care services. Under Standard 4.6, Fire Security and other emergencies, providers of residential aged care homes are responsible for ensuring the safety and protection of residents. As a matter of good practice you should undertake testing on both equipment owned by the home and that brought in by residents.

WorkCover NSW has published a comprehensive position paper on their web site on the topic of testing and tagging of electrical equipment including a list of frequently asked questions. This document may be viewed on their website at www.workcover.nsw.gov.au.

No secrets on aged care needs



If there comes a time that Charles 'Bud' Tingwell might need to move into aged care, there will be no secrets about what he wants.

One of Australia's best loved actors, Bud will be a key speaker at the Agency's upcoming Better Practice event to be held in Melbourne on the 25th and 26th August.

82-year-old Bud will enlighten the audience with his views on what he'd like to see in aged care. Bud has first-hand experience as a carer, nursing his wife of 45

years, Audrey, until she died eight years ago. With this insight, Bud's presentation promises to be thought-provoking.

Bud has had a long and distinguished career appearing in the television series *Emergency Ward 10*, *The Sullivans*, *Flying Doctors* and *Breaker Morant*. More recently he's appeared in *The Castle*, *Wog Boy*, *Innocence* and *The Carer* – a play about a man who cares for his elderly wife who has Alzheimer's.

The Better Practice events promote the positive aspects of the residential aged care industry in Australia, to share ideas for improvement among staff of aged care facilities and celebrate the excellent work of so many staff within the industry.

For more information on the Agency's Better Practice events or to register to attend, go to www.accreditation.aust.com or phone 1800 288 025.

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