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Bird watching builds self-esteem

When an aged care home at the foot of Victoria's Dandenong Ranges decided to develop a bird-watching club they had not envisaged the huge impact it would have on the self-esteem and the wellness of its residents.

Good Shepherd Aged Services Inc., Maryville Hostel has become the first member of the Bird Observers Club of Australia (BOCA) in an aged care home. The residents regularly survey or note the frequency and type of birds in their gardens to build the profile or knowledge of birds in

the region. While kookaburras and cockatoos are the most common, there have been recent sightings of eastern spine-bills, lorikeets, crimson rosellas, and variations of species.

Dean Gemmill, Quality Manager, said the idea developed from their strategic planning about two years ago. He said it was part of the process of surveying residents and relatives and holding focus groups that the residents, staff, and relatives

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*Maryville Hostel residents and staff enjoying the local bird wildlife
(L-R back: Faye, Emma, Kathy, Joan (staff), Margaret, Ria (staff), June, Janina, Marjorie.
L-R sitting: Jessica, Patricia, Aileen)*

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identified a number of factors which would meet their goal of what would keep residents as well as possible for as long as possible. Many of the Good Shepherd residents have lived with the support and care of the Good Shepherd family for most of their lives in the area. The Knox region is well-known for its bush, and environmental preservation policies.

“It was a natural fit with our goals to develop the interest in nature, and watching and feeding the birds,” Quality Manager Dean Gemmill told the Agency’s sixth Better Practice event in Perth on November 10. Activities Co-ordinator, Joan Redlich, was already an avid naturalist and drove the implementation of the project. She said when the idea of joining the Bird Observers Club of Australia was first mooted there were about six residents interested. Now after more than 12 months almost everyone gets involved, whether it be propagating and planting bird-attracting shrubs and trees,

researching birds and checking them against posters and books, feeding the birds, and daily walks in the extensive gardens within the four acre complex.

“It has led to a sense of being valued, of building self-esteem and opening up avenues and



opportunities to socialise that hadn’t existed. It further developed a sense of mateship amongst residents,” Joan said.

“There is sensory stimulation, exercise on a daily basis with a reason, intellectual stimulation and outings are organised to local nurseries to look at plants.”

“The annual fete gets everyone involved. This year just over \$3,000 was raised which has gone towards purchasing eight garden benches to place along the garden paths.”

Good Shepherd has monitored the effect of its bird-watching. In the last 12 months, they have been able to measure a positive impact on key indicators of wellness, including a 31% reduction in falls (from regular exercise and maintenance of balance skills by walking on different terrain), a continued minimisation in skin tears, and reduction in behaviour management issues measured against national benchmarks.

Dean says the delightful aspect of the bird-watching club involvement has been its uncomplicated way of providing residents with an activity that has been so enlightening and has brought pleasure, not only to residents and their families, but staff as well.

For further information contact Dean Gemmill at Good Shepherd Aged Services Inc on (03) 9419 3933, Joan Redlich (03) 9762 6506 or email Dean.Gemmill@gsas.asn.au or the Club on www.birdobservers.org.au

Just a word...

The end of the calendar year is a good time to do a stocktake. While occasional sensationalised stories about homes will still grab the headlines, there is no doubt we end the year on a positive note.

As the Minister for Ageing, Julie Bishop, told delegates at our Better Practice event in Perth on 11 November, this is no accident. Aged care has been transformed in the last decade, she said, with better homes, better skilled staff and better acumen. She said accreditation had been a major driver of this change. She said as she visited hundreds of homes during the year, staff acknowledged that accreditation is the best thing that could have happened to the sector.

Most homes now embrace accreditation



and continuous improvement as the way to do things. The community expects and accepts that the Agency, in conjunction with the Department, takes action if the Standards are not being met.

In recent weeks I have looked back at the figures for the year. The Agency undertook 4438 visits during 2004/05, compared to 3780 visits in the previous 12 months. While 13% of the visits were short notice, or spot checks, more than a third (33%) were with less than a week's notice.

In the last year, there

were 202 homes found to have some non-compliance.

As we enter the busier next peak in accreditation visits, the overwhelming majority of staff are striving for better practice. It is not a time for complacency. Those who attended any of our six Better Practice events, either as members of the audience, or telling their own story of Better Practice, would have us believe there has been a change for the better.

For those who are able to take a break, enjoy the rest and time with family and friends and reflect on a year of achievements.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Brandon', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Mark Brandon
Chief Executive Officer

Profile: Pat Clark

Approved provider and former DON at St Joachim's Nursing Home, Lidcombe NSW, and organiser of the aged care homes annual art and craft show.

In September, Pat organised the 31st annual art and craft show for aged care home residents. More than 1500 exhibits were received from 24 homes around NSW. Pat says she does it because it provides a showcase for residents and their creative work, along with some recognition for their efforts. For many years she has unsuccessfully lobbied the NSW Royal Easter Show to set aside a display area and run the exhibition. Independent judges take over four hours to judge

the displays; winners in each category get a ribbon.

A floral painting with sparkle was from the oldest exhibitor who is 103 years old, followed closely by a knitted patchwork rug from a 100 year old resident. Pat is pictured here with a winning creative entry in the Day Care section from the Crowle group at Meadowbank called "The Olympic Games". The sections include painting, tapestry, needlework, group projects, photography, knitting, craft made from recycled materials, woodwork and folk art.

Challenges of your job?

Assimilating the ethnic staff and elderly residents to work, relax and have fun together.

Highlights of your job?

Being successful in motivating the real "I don't want to do anything" residents.

What do you look forward to?

The presentation of the awards at the official opening, especially if a resident is present to receive an award.

Your biggest buzz?

Having a number of residents 100 years and older entering the competition.

Who or what inspires you?

Quiet achievers.



Agency DVD wins award

The Agency's new DVD *Quality of care, Quality of life*, starring actor Tom Burlinson and his father, has won a national award. The DVD explains the quality of care provided in aged care homes and the Agency's role to maintain those standards.

The producer, Laurie Tesoriero of Satellite Express, received the award for producing the best corporate DVD at the Australian Video Producers Association 2005 National Awards in Melbourne in November. The DVD will now be entered in an international competition.

About 4,000 copies of the DVD have been distributed free of charge to all aged care homes and key industry offices. Additional copies have been distributed at Better Practice events and on request. Copies may be obtained by calling 1800 288 025.

Don't speak English good?



Diversional Therapist, Henriette Louwse at the Netherlands Retirement Village in Birkdale in Queensland uses the Hendrika language system with a resident

accompanied by universal images. No previous knowledge of foreign languages or special training is required to use the system.

“The system makes communication possible for day-to-day contact with clients who can’t speak English and assists communication with the hearing-impaired, speech-impaired and people suffering from dementia,” Hendrika explained.

“Clients want to be heard and understood, and enjoy the care they pay for. This tool helps them do this.

“This language tool is like a walking stick, a shower chair, a hearing aid: it helps people to help themselves,” she said.

Hendrika spoke at the Better Practice event in Brisbane in September.

For more information go to www.hendrika.com.au

Working in aged care, Hendrika Johnson often became frustrated with the lack of resources available to help her to communicate with non-English speaking clients. Not to be hindered by these lack of resources, Hendrika set out to develop her own. The result: the Hendrika

language system, a simple, user-friendly language tool in 18 languages designed to enable health care providers and clients to communicate effectively with one another.

The language system covers 800 most commonly-used words and phrases

Revised pocket guide to Accreditation Standards

An updated new-look pocket guide to the Accreditation Standards is now available.

Copies can be purchased for \$10.

To order a copy visit our website www.accreditation.org.au

and download an order form.

A cheque or money order for \$10 must accompany the order form.



<p>bladder problem προβλήματα βλεννοκυστεως</p>	<p>blood pressure αρτηριακή πίεση</p>	<p>breathing problem προβλήματα αναπνοης</p>
<p>diarrhea διάρροια</p>	<p>fever πυρετός</p>	<p>giddiness ζαλάματα</p>
<p>itch φαγούρα</p>	<p>nausea ναυτία</p>	<p>pain πόνος</p>

Informed choices



Warrina residents Olive Jones, Les Kendal, and John Markowskei catch up for a chat with Maisie Coutts (front), who has just moved to the nursing home

Moving from home to retirement village to an assisted care facility can be a challenging experience for anyone. But the final move to a nursing home can be even more traumatic. It often happens at a time when health has seriously deteriorated and anxiety becomes high with control and independence shifting further from the resident and usually into the hands of family.

Raelene Blackledge, Activities Coordinator at Warrina Village, an aged care home in the hills area of Sydney, found a way to empower residents and ease their fears about moving into a nursing home. She

offered the opportunity to try before you buy, or look at the whole picture.

Warrina Village provides assisted care to 96 residents. It is part of the Anglican Retirement Village complex in Castle Hill which is made up of several co-located facilities as well as The Donald Coburn Centre Nursing Home.

“Traditionally, a resident has the opportunity to at least visit an assisted care facility before moving in. With a nursing home, usually, due to circumstance, a resident’s family chooses. But with greater insight residents can not only make better-informed choices

for themselves, but also relieve anxiety about the future”, Raelene said.

The program, “Village Visitors”, gives residents at Warrina Village the chance to visit and find out more about life at a nursing home. So far there have been six tours for six residents at a time.

Raelene said she hoped the tours would dispel some of the myths about nursing homes. “Many images have been from years ago where they were drab, dull, lonely places, where you simply go to die. The tours are about presenting the reality of nursing homes today, that they have changed, and life can still continue in a positive and meaningful way. Seeing them in this new light allays much of their fears. It takes away the unknown.

“So when a resident finds themselves confronted with the move to nursing home, the fact they have seen where they are heading allows that fear to be reduced and more focus to be placed on addressing health and lifestyle needs.”

Raelene acted as a tour guide with the then

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Diversional Therapy Coordinator from the nursing home, Linda Jackman, and the residents are lead through the multisensory room, garden, dementia care unit and the living areas. Of course the privacy and dignity of the current nursing home residents are kept in mind, with the groups kept small and permission gained.

This program has been expanded with now weekly visits from Warrina residents to the

nursing home to visit former residents, enabling continuity of the community Warrina values so highly. "It shows the residents that relationships and friendships don't have to end just because of the move", explains Raelene.

After seeing the healthy mix of high quality resident lifestyle and the many staff providing high level care, the prospect of moving into a nursing home becomes not so daunting, even a relief that everything will be OK when their turn comes. Surveys of the Warrina

residents before and after these tours confirm these views.

The Donald Coburn Centre was awarded a Higher Rating Award by the Agency for a strong commitment to residents and its innovative approach to staff training, increased leisure and lifestyle opportunities and benchmarking.

For more information contact Raelene Blackledge at Warrina Village Hostel on (02) 9634 0539 or raelene_blackledge@av.org.au

Applying for accreditation

The volume of applications for renewed accreditation is growing leading into the peak period in 2006. In the three months to 30 September 2005 we received 287 applications for further periods of accreditation. The feedback about the new application form is positive and homes are providing better information to demonstrate their performance against the Accreditation Standards.

Remember:

- check that the correct details of your home

have been included in the application form

- check that the correct fee is included - information on correct fees can be found at our website www.accreditation.org.au

- check that you have included information about the languages spoken by residents if they do not speak English

- check that you have attached any documents that you wish to submit by email - they do not attach automatically.

Help with the application form can be obtained on 1800 288 025.

Board changes



The Minister of Ageing, Hon Julie Bishop has re-appointed Professor Joseph E Ibrahim (*pictured*) for a further three-year term as a Director of the Agency, from 14 November 2005 to 14 November 2008.

Mr Shane Fracchia, appointed for a three year term on 14 November 2002, and Chairman of the Agency's Audit and Finance Committee, did not seek reappointment.

Consumer aged care website

As part of the Government's Aged Care: More Places, Better Care package, \$2.1 million is being made available to develop a one-stop-shop consumer website on aged care. This is being developed in consultation with the community and aged care providers.

The site will provide older Australians, their families and carers, with a user-friendly and comprehensive online guide to aged care services and choices.

The site is to be launched in the first half of 2006 and will include information on where to

start, help to stay at home, finding an aged care home, comparing features and services and will provide consumers with information about their rights and responsibilities.

One of the key features planned for the site will be an aged care home finder listing all Australian Government funded aged care homes, to support consumer decision making by providing comparable information on individual homes. This feature will be canvassed with aged care sector representatives.

The aged care sector will benefit through increased competition, a higher profile through representation on a national online database and from more focused enquiries to homes from better-informed consumers. The more informed consumers are, the more demanding of higher quality services they will become.

If you wish to find out further information or provide input into the site's development, please phone the Aged Care Information Line on 1800 500 853 or email: consumerwebsite@health.gov.au

OECD report on aged care

The OECD report on the *Long-term Care for Older People* examines the performance and quality of long-term care systems across 19 OECD countries, evaluating both formal and informal care situations.

Long-term care is gradually assuming greater priority in national policy debates, moving beyond traditional physiological concerns to consider broader economic, social and

environmental implications of care and public responsibility. The aim of public policy is to achieve sustainability, promoting the provision of quality care at a manageable cost to both government and private citizens.

The report seeks to discuss these broader issues within the context of current national challenges and regulatory approaches. Those countries that have undertaken substantive

reform over the last decade are evaluated to draw out key learnings and transferable lessons across care areas and national contexts. The report emphasises the importance of policy harmonisation to ensure quality and choice are provided across a continuum of care, from informal home-based situations to more institutional environments.

For more information or to obtain a copy of the report, go to www.oecd.org.



Merry Christmas

Wishing all our readers a Merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year.

There will be no January issue of *The Standard*. The first issue for 2006 will be out in the first week of February.

We welcome story ideas for the February issue NOW! If you or your home, are doing something great, our readers would like to know about it. Send us a line:

editor@accreditation.org.au

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