



Protecting independence

By Petra Neeleman, CEO Dutchcare

The elders we care for come from their homes, still able to do many things for themselves and able to determine how, what, where, and when they will do things. They can take all day to make their bed, have a cuppa or sit down. When they come into care we want to do everything for them. Typically, the most difficult part of making things happen is our (the staff) own perception of what the elder should/could, do and whether it is too risky.



We see our role as carers rather than enablers. If we examine this, most of the tasks we do, enable our residents to live their lives as fully as possible – whether it is showering, dressing, giving medications, getting to the dining room or providing an activity – we assist our elders in living their life. Yet the complaint often is that we are controlling the elders' living. Looking at the terminology 'carer' has more connotations of protection, guardianship and control whilst 'enablers' facilitate, make possible, and allow.

When we look at the world through the eyes of an enabler, rather than a carer, our perspective changes. Although the safety of the elders in our homes is a priority, for the elder, thinking about what they can do is the most important consideration.








Providing elders with independence is a challenge because together we must work out the elder's understanding (and ours too) of their abilities, strengths and priorities, and remember that sometimes it is their choice to undertake a task or make a particular decision. We should stay focused on what elders can do, rather than what they can't.

At DutchCare we endeavour to promote independence for our elders and to enrich their lives. Here are some examples of how:

By providing a computer terminal in each of our facilities, one of our elders is able to continue writing for professional journals. Most of the

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Just a word



This month we see the introduction of a new feedback system for the Agency. While we currently receive very positive results from our current feedback methods, this doesn't help in identifying areas in which we can improve.

We have revised the feedback forms to include one form for all visits, and another for all reports. We have also introduced a new feedback form for assessors to tell us about their experience and importantly, we have engaged an independent organisation to analyse feedback received. See the article on this page for more detail.

Just last month I attended the IAHSA conference in Malta, where I took the opportunity to meet up with various other accreditation bodies and providers from other parts of the world. It was a very valuable experience and I will provide some highlights in an upcoming issue of *The Standard*.

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

Mark Brandon,
Chief Executive Officer

Improved feedback

Homes will benefit from new feedback forms designed to help us better understand approved providers' expectations.

The feedback we receive from homes has been generally very positive and remarkably stable for a number of years. During round three of accreditation, 92 per cent of respondents said they found the site audit a positive and satisfying experience.

However having such high and stable feedback means there are limited opportunities to feed suggestions into our own continuous improvement programs, and nor is it helping us better understand your expectations.

We contracted professional research firm Campbell Research and Consulting to develop a new set of questionnaires, and then 'road test' them with approved providers, both not-for-profit and for profit, of varying sizes and from various states.

The purpose of this additional consultative loop was to ensure that the questions we are asking of approved providers are of importance to them, as distinct from what we might think is important.

We have also simplified our feedback systems and have contracted out management and processing of feedback to ensure that the process will be confidential.

There will now be one feedback form to cover all visits, whether it is a site audit, a review audit or a support contact, announced or unannounced.

And there will be one feedback form to cover all reports we send to homes, whether it is an audit report, or a support contact record.

Each time we provide a feedback form, we will also provide a reply-paid envelope. The envelope will be posted direct to our contracted company, Datatime Services Pty Ltd, an ISO-certified company which is a market leader in data capture and data entry services.

The feedback forms will remain with Datatime and the Agency will not see them. The feedback forms still contain a section where homes can write additional comments, and homes can ask to be contacted if they wish. While this information will be relayed to the Agency should a home make such a request, homes are advised that Datatime will be providing a monthly aggregated analysis of feedback to the Agency. Therefore if a matter is urgent or important, homes should contact their local Agency office directly.

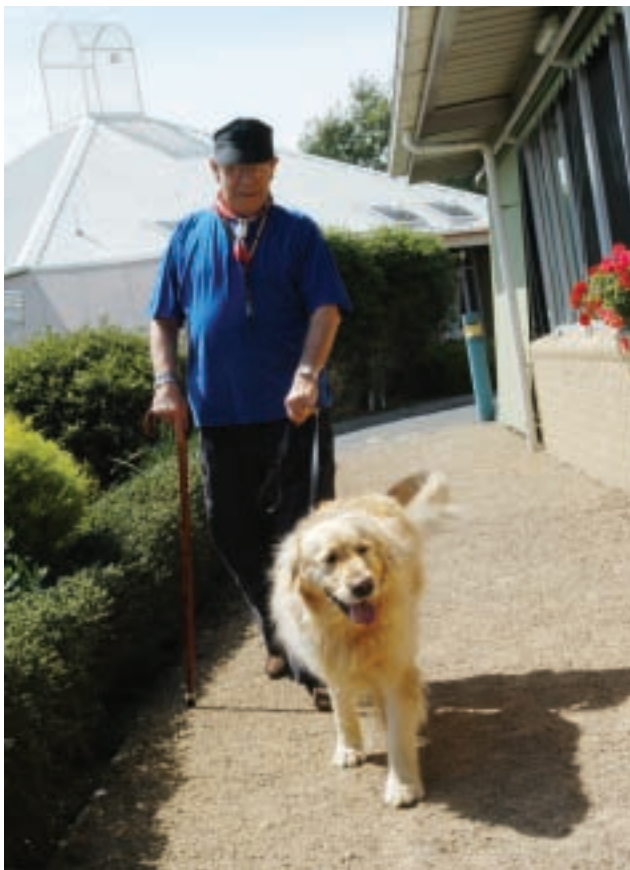
We have also introduced an assessor feedback form, following a successful trial. The feedback from the trial helped us develop the information pack which was sent to all homes across Australia in May.

The assessor feedback form will be filled out by the assessment team leader, but will not form part of the Agency's decision-making processes, and will not be seen by an Agency decision-maker prior to an accreditation decision.

All forms are on our website, www.accreditation.org.au. The Agency will publish quarterly feedback analysis in future editions of *The Standard*.

elders who use the computers play poker or other games but even this gives them a level of independence, choice and fun.

Last year a 100 year-old resident flew to Cairns to speak at the Eden International Conference (her first performance) and spent a wonderful week with her daughter even though she was frail and everyone had concerns about her ability to cope with the trip and the stress of speaking at the conference. She was a 'pro' once she had the microphone in her hand and it was difficult to get it away from her! But in the process she shared her wisdom with the 300 delegates.



A shopping centre has recently opened next door to our Carrum Downs facility and this has opened a whole new world to our elders. Many enjoy going for a walk to the supermarket or to just sit and have a coffee out of the facility. The decision to 'let' them go has been difficult for most staff – Will they find their way? Will they be safe? Firstly, a staff member accompanied elders when they went to the shopping centre and now staff just watch the time closely when they go.

The men in our facilities love to be involved in activities and have shown a lot of interest in the renovations going on at one site and have been involved in small ways. Princess Margriet Lodge in Kilsyth is shortly to be redeveloped and an elder with a building background is eagerly awaiting some involvement. We are talking with the builder to make it happen!



As Eden facilities, DutchCare's elders live with plants and animals. A number of elders are involved in a productive worm farm and a community tree planting project, while others walk the dogs (even an elder with limited mobility enjoys this task). These projects serve to make elders feel useful and needed and indeed they are and are often the continuation of things they were doing in their home.

Giving our elders independence requires soul searching on the part of staff – what is the worst that can happen? But it is our responsibility to empower people to maintain, improve and/or retain their independence and to let them make their own decisions.



My write foot

Maurice Lock, a resident of Clarence Estate in Albany WA has recently published his book of memoirs. Born with cerebral palsy, Maurice wrote 30 pages of his memoirs in an exercise book using his feet and a biro, which he then typed into a computer. He has called the book "My Write Foot".

Maurice was born in South Australia 1939 with cerebral palsy. A lifetime of struggle followed as he tried to make the most out of what ability he had. A six-month period in the hands of chiropractors in Adelaide at the age of seven, saw him literally get on his feet without the support of others. Maurice was on his way to the independence that was to be such a big feature all his life.

Two days after turning ten, Maurice flew over to join his family who had moved to WA. He had been left in the temporary care of a children's nursing home in Adelaide, but due to lack of beds the matron

sent Maurice over to his parents earlier than planned. However, no one was told and Maurice arrived in Perth alone, the last little traveller left at the airport. Someone found a note in his shirt pocket introducing him. So began Maurice's adventures in WA!

Maurice does most things with his feet including writing 30 pages about his life in a school exercise book. He can use a computer with his feet, strike matches, fold paper aeroplanes, put letters into envelopes, money into a wallet, and undo nuts and bolts – all with his feet. He has stripped lawn mowers, changed the wheels of cars, and painted. On the farm he rounded up the sheep, helped clear paddocks and light fires, cart water and set rabbit traps. All with his feet! He is a regular at Scrabble club and used to drive a foot-controlled car.

For the past 11 years, Maurice has worked as courier at Albany Regional Hospital, following four years of mowing their lawns on a voluntary basis.



Maurice is an amazing person and his fascinating story has been told in a new book titled, "My Write Foot". Written by Maggie Greathead, Maurice shares his difficulties and triumphs, and seeks to raise awareness and encourage others with a disability to pursue their goals and dreams.

My Write Foot is A4 size, 250 pages and costs \$25 plus postage. More than 210 people attended the launch held recently. The book is available from the author Maggie Greathead, (08) 9841 6483 or email lockfoot@bigpond.net.au

The oldest blogger in the world?

Olive Riley, 107 year-old resident of Woy Woy Aged Care Community Hostel in NSW, whose life was featured at last year's Sydney Better Practice event, now has her own 'blog'. Short for 'weblog', a blog is like an online journal to share your thoughts with the world. Have a look at her blog on www.allaboutolive.com.au.



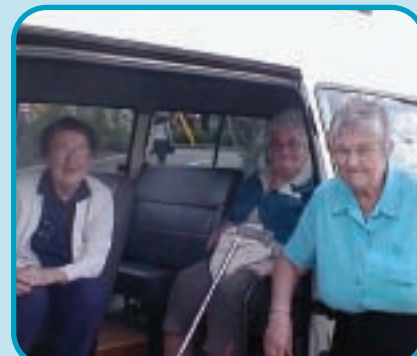
Out 'n' about

Residents of Bodington in Wentworth Falls, NSW, report an increased sense of independence and control over their lives since the introduction of a free shuttle bus.



prior to moving to Bodington, including visiting other people, shopping and getting to and from appointments.

Visiting other people was important to the residents because it helped them maintain connections with friends in the Blue Mountains community.



The shuttle bus service between Bodington and upper Blue Mountains towns was introduced for residents and relatives in December 2003. It runs twice a day, three days a week, between Wentworth Falls, Leura and Katoomba and meets east and westbound trains at Wentworth Falls railway station.

In its first month of service, 16 residents used the bus. This has grown to an average of 70 people using the bus each month.

A recent survey found overall residents were very satisfied with the bus service, timetable and bus route. Importantly, they reported that their sense of independence has improved, enabling them to participate in activities they had done



"The bus drops me at the railway station and I catch the train to Blackheath. I visit friends at Blackheath it's great that I can catch up with them, I miss them when I don't see them," one resident said.



"I catch the bus to the RSL club, I have a few beers with my mate, then I get a cab back to Bodington," said another.

Residents reported that they now schedule their shopping trips and appointments to fit in with the shuttle bus, increasing the level of control they had over their lives and their independence.

"Back in 2004 I was not too happy about going out, but I feel better about it now. I feel better when I get out and about, it gives me some more independence."

Bodington recently received a Better Practice in Aged Care Award from the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency Ltd for promoting independence through the introduction of a shuttle bus service.

For more information about the Bodington shuttle bus service, contact Melissa Sinfield on msinfield@chcs.com.au.

Aircraft old and new a treat for men's group

The men's group from Castra's Retirement Home and Hostel in Murgon Queensland, recently went on a day trip to view aviation at Toowoomba airport and the Army Aviation Training School at Oakey.



The driver for the day was Castra 'Adopt-a-Cop' Senior Sergeant Rod. After a break at Crows Nest where morning tea was shared with a family member, the group was warmly greeted by owner Lynette Zucconi at the Aerotec hangar at Toowoomba Airport.

The residents admired vintage aircraft including a T-28 Trojan, a Harvard T-6, a Chipmunk, a Stearman and a unique Fiat G59 and enjoyed reminiscing about their wartime experiences. Residents were lucky enough to see the T-28 Trojan flying on the day.

After lunch at the Oakey RSL, the residents were welcomed by the Castra 'Adopt-a-Soldier' Warrant Officer Wayne Vonhoff at the Army Aviation Training School at Oakey. While on active service in Timor, Warrant Officer Vonhoff was adopted by Castra with he and the residents exchanging regular emails. The residents were shown a Blackhawk, a Kiowa and the brand new Tiger helicopters.

Warrant Officer Wayne explained that today it takes nine months to train a helicopter mechanic which was of great interest to Harold who had become a Spitfire mechanic during World War II after just six weeks of training. Frank, who is a former engineer discussed with enthusiasm the electrical system of the Blackhawk while Noel was in awe of the 30mm cannon on the front of the Tiger.

The day generated such reminiscence that for days afterwards the walkways echoed with stories of exploits past, so much so that the Castra ladies are now planning their trip. The opportunity for socialisation with their modern-day counterparts provided memories of intrinsic value and validation.

Focus on independence from *Results and processes guide*

Each month we are profiling some of the expected outcomes of the Accreditation Standards. This month we focus on expected outcome 3.5 Independence.

Assessors look for the following results:

- Management demonstrates residents' achievement of maximum independence, maintenance of friendships and participation in the life of the community are appropriate to residents' needs and preferences.
- Residents/representatives confirm they are satisfied with the assistance provided by the home in relation to residents' independence, maintenance of friendships and participation in the life of the community within and outside the home, according to residents' individual needs and preferences.

Assessors consider the following processes:

- How does the home ensure regular assessment of residents' needs is conducted to achieve maximum independence, maintain friendships and participate in the life of the community within and outside the home? This may include:
 - o identification of what independence means in different aspects of each resident's life, for example, physical, intellectual, emotional, cultural, social, civic and financial
 - o the identification of existing friendships and community activities
 - o consideration of sensory needs of residents when promoting independence (for example, those with vision, hearing, communication needs)
 - o regular consultation with residents/representatives and others
 - o consultation about any risks associated with activities.



- How does the home plan and communicate strategies for independence, friendships and participation? For example:
 - How are relatives and friends encouraged to be part of the life of the resident?
 - How does the home encourage participation in activities within or outside the home, including through the utilisation of appropriate support strategies, for example, access to taxis and community transport?
 - How does the home identify authorised representatives to make decisions on behalf of residents who are unable to act for themselves?
 - How are strategies to assist residents with mobility, communication and cognitive difficulties implemented?
 - How are strategies to enable participation in appropriate spiritual and cultural activities implemented?
 - Is there consideration of independence in care planning?
 - How are environmental issues considered when they impact on maximising physical independence? For example, the internal and external physical environments and access/egress.
 - How does the home review its services to maximise independence, friendships and participation for each resident and determine effectiveness in meeting the needs of the residents? For example, how does the home ensure:
 - staff are competent and monitored to achieve independence for residents
 - each resident's ongoing needs and preferences are identified
 - the effectiveness of current strategies are assessed?

Links to related expected outcomes

Expected outcomes of Standard Two

Poor and inappropriate promotion of independence may affect the provision of health and personal care services to residents, for instance, in relation to the ability of residents to self-administer medications, residents' mobility and dexterity, and personal care tasks such as going to the toilet, and oral and dental care.

Other expected outcomes of Standard Three

The facilitation of residents' independence and participation in the life of the community both within and outside of the home may have connections with the home's leisure activities program, and processes used for ensuring the cultural and spiritual needs of residents are met. Community participation may also assist in the provision of emotional support and providing residents with choice. Aspects of expected outcome 3.5 Independence are also encompassed in the charter of residents' rights and responsibilities (*User Rights Principles 1997* Schedule 1)

For more information on the results and processes of other expected outcomes, you can download the Results and processes guide from the Agency's website, (97 pages) or you can purchase a copy of 'The Accreditation Essentials'. Go to www.accreditation.org.au and click on 'Resources for sale: Accreditation essentials'.



Director profile - Peter Toohey



◀ Peter Toohey

The Standard is featuring a profile on the directors of the Agency.

This month, we profile Peter Toohey.

Mr Toohey was appointed as a director of the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency Ltd on 22 September 1997.

Now semi-retired, Mr Toohey's background includes:

- Former Executive Chairman of TriCare Limited
- Sessional member of the Queensland Commercial Consumer Tribunal
- More than 20 years' experience in the aged care industry
- Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

What perspective/historical experience do you bring with you?

I suppose if you live long enough and occupy a similar career space for many years you become eligible for the historical/ experience question. My first involvement with aged care was in 1982 and I've been involved, in varying capacities, since.

There is a truism which I believe is applicable to aged care – "the more things change, the more they remain the same". Whilst the structures of the industry have changed enormously in 25 years I believe the same generic strengths and weaknesses remain in play.

How do you see aged care compared with other human services?

Aged care is not unlike maternal and early child care in that they evoke similar strong community emotions that come with caring for the weak and vulnerable although at the opposite ends of the life cycle. Certainly we tend to judge civilisations by the way its people respond to these challenges. It takes a breed of very special carers to meet the high standards we set in both these vocations and yet we tend to reward them fairly poorly.

What has been the biggest change in aged care over the past ten years?

Aged care can no longer be categorised as the "cottage industry" it certainly was in 1982. This terminology was sometimes used by a small minority of providers as the excuse for poor and unprofessional standards. In 2007 not only do we have more professional management and

systems in place but community expectations have risen exponentially. Respect, dignity, privacy and choice are no longer just "motherhood" statements but have today become the cornerstone of everyday practice in the overwhelming majority of aged care facilities. Commensurate with the great increase in public expectations, governments (and to be fair the industry as well) have gradually ratcheted up the quest for quality assurance via continuous improvement and a complementary regulatory regime.

Where do you think the industry will be in ten years' time?

The demographic reality of today's aged care market means that whether we like it or not aged care is a market for big business. There are very significant advantages in this change not the least of which has been the adoption of first class management practices and systems which have gradually spread across our very diverse (in terms of size, ownership and structure) industry.

There has been no evidence that this evolution has in any way seen a diminution in care nor standards, quite the contrary. Having said that one of the strengths of aged care in our country has been this diversity. We go from some very small not for profit centres in rural and remote parts of Australia to large organisations (including church and charity and major commercial players) with multiple outlets. In my opinion it's to our national advantage that we preserve this diversity at all costs.



The Aged Care

Standards and Accreditation Agency Ltd

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