

## In this issue:

- Better Practice Call for Papers
- Fancy a cuppa?
- Holiday of a lifetime
- Improving service levels through surveys

**FRONT COVER:**  
George Schofield shows off the sports memorabilia in Amity at Newcomb's men's TV room

Correspondence to:  
The Editor,  
The Aged Care Standards  
and Accreditation Agency Ltd,  
PO Box 773,  
Parramatta, NSW 2124  
email  
editor@accreditation.org.au For  
more information including  
guidelines for contributors, see  
the Agency's website at  
[www.accreditation.org.au](http://www.accreditation.org.au)



## Award for Amity at Newcomb



**W**hen you walk in the front room of Amity at Newcomb in Geelong, Victoria, you'd be forgiven for thinking you'd stepped back in time and into an old-fashioned parlour.

The room has been set up this way to make residents feel a sense of familiarity, particularly for those living with dementia – they walk into the room and feel instantly at ease. The sewing machine is set up, so Mum can't be too far away, and there are plenty of things to touch and feel, like 'Mum's' fur coat and photographs of old times to spark memories.

Amity at Newcomb has been awarded a merit certificate by The Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency Ltd. The merit award (part of the Higher Ratings) is now being replaced by the Better Practice in Aged Care awards.

This is the second time the home has been awarded a merit, the only aged care home in Australia to have received the award twice.

The home received the award for the high level of resident involvement and resident feedback. There are a number of creative ideas in place at the home.

"All of our ideas for improvement are a direct result of resident feedback," Aged Care Service Manager of the home Heather McKibbin said.

### Remember the good old days

As well as the front room parlour there is an old-fashioned 'display' kitchen complete with old canisters and original mixers and cooking implements. Residents with dementia feel comfortable in these areas while other residents bring their grandchildren and show them how life was in the 'olden' days. Off the kitchen is a living room with various old-fashioned items, donated by residents' families.

*Cont'd page 3*

# Just a word...



The 'Demystifying dementia' satellite television project last year had a positive impact in aged care homes, according to an independent evaluation completed by the University of Technology Sydney.

The satellite TV series was funded by the Australian government through the Department of Health and Ageing and was produced by the Agency in conjunction with Anglican Retirement Villages and the Aged Care Channel.

It involved the connection of 96 homes in rural and remote areas to the Aged Care Channel, and

the development and production of six programs and learning packages to pilot the delivery of education using satellite television; and more recently, the evaluation of these learning methods.

The pilot project assessed the impact of three groups of homes with different learning methods:

- the 'Demystifying dementia' program only
- the 'Demystifying dementia' program and training package
- the 'Demystifying dementia' training package only.

The evaluation found that all three groups of homes reported positive impacts and said the program was well received by staff and had provided them with quality training, usually not readily available to them.

There were some common success factors – homes that put more into the training got more out of it; the existing culture of the home resulting in a positive and committed approach to training; a qualified, active and committed facilitator who added value to the

learning, and a proactive approach to making time for the facilitator and staff to engage in the learning. There was strong evidence that the homes that also used the flexible learning packages were more effective than just using the broadcasts alone.

The pilot project was a useful exercise in testing the use of satellite television technology to deliver training to aged care homes and the feedback has been valuable for all involved to improve other projects. Judging by the interest shown in the project at the recent IAHSIA conference in Norway, Australia is leading the way in this technology and approach.

Details of how some of the homes have put the learning into practice will be reported in next month's newsletter.

Mark Brandon  
Chief Executive Officer

## Better Practice 2006 Call For Papers

Better Practice 2005 has been an overwhelming success with over 1150 delegates having attended the first four events. This is an increase of around 50% on the 2004 delegate numbers. The aim of the better practice events is to provide an environment where ideas, innovations, knowledge and experiences can be shared amongst colleagues who are all striving for the same goal of improving the quality of life for older Australians.

By submitting an abstract to present at Better Practice 2006, you too can inspire others to find solutions to problems and motivate them to implement new

ideas and practices. A call for papers will be released in October asking for submissions to present at the 2006 event. Watch this space!



# Better 2005 Practice

**Western Australia  
10 & 11 November**

**For more information or to register, go to  
[www.accreditation.org.au](http://www.accreditation.org.au)  
or contact the Better Practice events team on  
(02) 8831 1028.**

**Cont'd from page 1**

"There's washing that needs to be folded, books, old magazines, old camera equipment, knitting in progress and a suitcase to pack for when residents decide they're leaving!" Diversional Therapist Kathy Thomson said.

**Boys and their toys**

Recognising that many nursing homes have a female bias, the home has introduced a men's living room, complete with TV



*Frank in his shed*

sports channels, sporting memorabilia and photographs. "This is a lively area on a weekend when the footy is on, especially when the Cats are playing," Kathy said.

The men have also dabbled at brewing beer. "Some of us are better at drinking it than brewing it!" resident Graham Birrel said. And the men also have their own shed for 'tinkering about' and even an old car. Resident Frank Cameron holds the key and he particularly likes to potter about in the shed. "I just do bits and pieces in here," he said.

**Animal magnetism**

Pets are popular at Amity at Newcomb, with three dogs, many



*Maud in the old-fashioned kitchen*

birds, rabbits, guinea pigs, a cat, chickens, and fish. Recently a couple was admitted, with their dog Lucy, who also received a care plan!

"The animals adopt different residents at different times. At the moment our cat ET has taken a liking to Mavis, and is often found in her room, on her bed or chair" said Kathy.

Two of the dogs Shadow and Misty get involved in the residents' exercises, and even do their own tricks, knowing that at the end there is a treat and an eager lap for them to sit on.

**Young at heart**

Children are more than welcome at Amity at Newcomb, with young ones even holding their birthday parties there. Local school groups visit for education sessions about the past, and what it's like to be old. One of the areas is also decorated with framed paintings from local schoolchildren and the home sponsors a child in Africa. The home is also planning a playgroup and playground.

**Home grown**

Resident Ron Davidson is in charge of the gardens, growing various herbs and vegetables, which are used in cooking, and



*Kathy with resident Jane with "Shadow"*

the residents also feed the chickens and collect their eggs.

**Dying with dignity – being covered with love**

The home's sewing group came up with the idea to create a 'sacred quilt' to cover residents who have passed away.

"It's a warm and loving gesture that is comforting for the residents as well as for the staff," Heather McKibbin said. "It is nearly finished, currently a relative is doing the final quilting on it."

Amity at Newcomb is a real home for the residents. It addresses so many of the leisure interests and cultural and spiritual needs of the residents who are clearly happy in their surroundings and staff who love their work.

# Fancy a cuppa?

Residents at Goodwin Aged Care Services in Monash, ACT can now enjoy a cappuccino in a café setting all without having to leave the facility.

The brainchild of activities co-ordinator, Janet Murray, the coffee shop "Pot of Gold" was established to give residents, particularly those unable to leave the facility, a place to meet.

The coffee shop is run by the residents with Goodwin staff assisting with serving and preparation. All food served at the Pot of Gold is cooked on site with tempting slices, cheesecakes and savouries all on the menu. While more than half the money made at the coffee shop goes back into purchasing ingredients, the rest is put away in saving for a cappuccino machine.

Ms Murray said the coffee shop has been a huge success with numbers visiting the shop growing from 20 on their first day of trade on 17 March to over 70 people.

"The coffee shop has filled a void in the facility by providing a meeting place for residents and their families," said Ms Murray.

"Usually, families meet with residents of the nursing home in their rooms, but now they are able



Standing L to R: Pat Dwyer, Maxine Paine, Mary McDonald, Joan Coyle  
Sitting L to R: Margot Harlovich, Anna Schwarzburg

to go out and enjoy each other's company in a different setting."

Although the coffee shop only opens once a fortnight, Ms Murray explains that a lot of hard work goes into it as it takes up to a day to prepare.

"Even though it's a lot of work, you can't put a price on the happiness it brings to residents. For many nursing home residents, it is something they really look forward to each fortnight."

Looking to the future, Ms Murray says that ideally they would like to be able to open the coffee shop weekly. "We'd love it to go weekly but at the moment, the room we use is shared with the unit residents and we have to assemble and disassemble everything on the day the shop is opened."



"We are just so thrilled that it has been such a success," Ms Murray said.

## Award for Certificate IV

Baptist Community Services NSW and ACT has been awarded the NSW Training Initiative Award for its work in the development of a Certificate IV in Aged Care.

The Certificate, developed together with Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council enables aged care workers to legally and safely administer

medication (up to Schedule IV) under the supervision of Registered Nurses within the aged care sector. The course also provides a specialised career pathway for aged care workers, providing expert training in areas unique to aged care.

# Holiday of a lifetime



*The tour group*



*Dinner!*

**By Kathy Eberl, Chief Executive Officer of St Hedwig Village, NSW**

A number of years ago, recreational activity officer, Birgit Hellwig approached management about taking some of the nursing home residents on a holiday. While most people would say this would be too hard, we thought it would be a great idea.

After a lot of research and weekends spent 'checking out places' Birgit found Clark Bay Farm at Narooma, five hours south of Sydney.

Clark Bay Farm's cabins have been designed specifically for wheelchair bound and disabled people. The 'resort' features a swimming pool, spa with lifter and tennis courts.

The cabins have cooking facilities specifically designed for people in wheelchairs, even the cooking top and sink can be moved up or down. We were so impressed that we did the same when we renovated our nursing home and now we have cooking classes almost every week.

On holidays the residents enjoy deep-sea fishing, the boat hire staff help with baiting, and any fish that are large enough are kept, cleaned and cooked for dinner. There is a boat made to take wheelchairs and residents can fish or just enjoy the opportunity to be out on the



*Champagne in the pool*

water, breathing in the sea air and looking at the scenery.

There are walks along the boardwalk, picnics, meals at the local club and scenic drives. We take board games just in case the weather turns bad. Evenings are spent talking about the day's events, the fish that got away, memories and a glass or two of 'something special'.

The facility also has a few pet dogs and the residents enjoy a bit

of pet therapy every morning when they open their front doors.

We usually take up to nine nursing home residents. The staff mix includes Birgit who doubles as the bus driver, and three carers, one of whom is a registered nurse. We also bring two volunteers who are usually relatives of the residents who go on the trip.

Our holidays have become so popular with our residents that we have to ask them to take turns so everyone has a chance of going, our oldest holidaymaker (so far) being 100 years old.



*Going for a dip*

# Improving service levels through surveys

**By Judith Anderson, Aged Care Services Emergency Team, Greater Western Area Health Service; John Rae, Aged Care Coordinator, Greater Western Area Health Service, NSW; and Linda Grenade, Research Fellow, Centre for Research into Aged Care Services, Curtin University of Technology, WA**

In rural areas, residential aged care is often provided in multipurpose services (MPS) that combine acute care, primary health care, residential aged care and other services. Currently, there is no consistent and coordinated process for assessing resident satisfaction in multipurpose services despite the fact it would provide valuable opportunities to benchmark results, identify leading practice and improve quality of care for residents.

As part of its Leading Practice Support Program, the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing sponsored several projects in six multipurpose centres in the Mid Western Area Health Service of NSW. The aim was to establish a sustainable system for measuring and improving resident satisfaction in multipurpose centres.

We chose a survey instrument developed by Boldy and Grenade (2002) at Curtin University – *Exploring Residents' Views in Aged*

*Care Facilities: A Practical Guide*. This instrument, which forms part of a resident survey manual, was specifically developed for use with Australian aged care residents and has demonstrated validity and reliability. The manual provides two survey options – a personal interview schedule and self complete questionnaire – each comprising 11 sections covering various aspects of service and care.

**Survey results were compared between sites and 'benchmark champions' identified to make presentations to other sites about how they achieved these results.**

We used the interview approach, with independent volunteers (Health Council members) interviewing the residents. Two surveys, involving 82 residents and/or their carers, were conducted in 2003 and 2004/5. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected.

Response summary forms included in the Resident Satisfaction manual were used to collate responses. Data was then

graphed for each facility. For each section covered in the survey a benchmark was determined – this represented the highest score that had been achieved for that section. Survey results were compared between sites and 'benchmark champions' identified to make presentations to other sites about how they achieved these results. Posters were also developed to enhance the dissemination process.

Each site agreed to implement their own quality improvement projects with the aim of improving their resident satisfaction results and providing clinicians with 'hands on' learning in quality improvement.

The resident satisfaction survey was found to be a useful means of identifying opportunities for improvement at multipurpose centres. The benchmarking approach developed during the process helped to identify leaders in specific areas and enabled dissemination of leading practice between sites. The second survey provided evidence of improved outcomes in the sections of the survey that had been identified as priority areas.

For more information, contact John Rae on (02) 6339 5631 or [John.Rae@gwahs.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:John.Rae@gwahs.health.nsw.gov.au); or Linda Grenade on (08) 9266 3549 or [L.E.Grenade@curtin.edu.au](mailto:L.E.Grenade@curtin.edu.au).

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