

In this issue:

- Bringing back a resident's smile
- Profile: Leanne Klatt, Administration Officer
- Understanding the survivors' journey
- Seniors' online challenge

FRONT COVER:
Our new look website

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New-look website for the Agency

The Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency Ltd has launched its new-look website and new address

www.accreditation.org.au.

The new website has a simple design with positive images of ageing, and a focus on easy navigation for our diverse range of stakeholders. The new brighter cleaner look is consistent with our brand image and our goal to make it easier to communicate with our customers.

The redevelopment of the Agency's website took into account feedback from various consumers – homes, residents and their families, assessors and others. We have included a section under "Accreditation" entitled "For residents and families" which has an easy to understand explanation of the accreditation process, with the option to find out more.

Apart from the website address, another significant change is that the new website will only display a home's current report rather than also displaying all the archived reports.

Archived reports can be obtained by writing to the Agency, specifying which home



and date of the report. As the next peak of accreditation commences, a new simplified format for reports is also being introduced to make them easier to read and understand.

Website visitors that enter the old address www.accreditation.aust.com will be redirected to the new address www.accreditation.org.au for a period of six months.

As a consequence, the Agency's email addresses will also change to end in .org.au. Again, there will be a transition period when emails to the old address will redirect to the new one.

Please ensure you update your contact details for the Agency, both the website address and email addresses.

Take a look at the new site, and let us know what you think by emailing national@accreditation.org.au.

Just a word...



As the Chairman, Jim Harrowell and I have been touring each of the Agency state offices in recent weeks to talk about our 2005/06 plans, I have borrowed the phrase *Act today with tomorrow in mind*.

It is a useful reminder that all of us need to be thinking in the longer term about the consequences of what we are doing now and asking “Are we collectively ensuring that the standards of care are

keeping pace with the expectations of tomorrow’s residents?” ... “Are we planning for the future, today?”

As we have heard at our Better Practice seminars we all need to take stock now and then, and ask “Is what we are doing in the best interest of the residents or our customers?” *Standard 3: Resident lifestyle* is all about understanding and respecting the needs and preferences of residents. The expected outcome 3.9 goes into more detail about gaining information from residents.

The best quality systems, whether in health care or retail, engineering or education, are based on continuously studying the changing markets and determining what

customers’ needs are today, and to anticipate what they will need years down the road. It helps all of us focus on where the greatest attention and resources are needed, and develop a more robust system for assessing and managing risk.

By gathering this data, analysing it and discussing it, even in the most simplistic way, we can make sure our energy and attention is directed at improving the quality of care for residents of aged care homes – and continually raising the standards.

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

Mark Brandon
Chief Executive Officer



**Better
2005
Practice**

Queensland
29 & 30 September

Western Australia
10 & 11 November

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

Bringing back a resident's smile

He always sat alone. He slept. He ate. He slept again. He showed little interest in what went on around him. He barely smiled. This was Dimi, an 82-year old resident at Fred Combridge House, a nursing home in Northcote, Victoria.

The nurses knew very little about Dimi except that he believed he had no family. So when a letter arrived at the nursing home from the State Trustees Office requesting details of Dimi's next of kin should funeral arrangements need to be made, Loes Morter, a nurse at the home decided to investigate.

She discovered that Dimi had fled Bulgaria in 1946 after the country came under Soviet control. As the eldest son of a prominent Bulgarian politician who opposed the Russian regime, Dimi had been told to escape. He had assumed his family was killed after he left for Australia.

With little hope, Ms Morter wrote a letter to the family name and sent



Happy to be home

it to the village where Dimi was born and grew up. To her amazement, a phone reply came in ten days and with it the news that Dimi still had three



Dimi reunited with his brothers, nephew and friend

brothers alive and many nieces and nephews. The family in Bulgaria had tried to find Dimi but had given up thinking he was dead.

"When Dimi was brought to the phone the only reply he was able to get out was to cry," Ms Morter said. "For so long he had thought no-one was alive and now he was hearing his brother on the phone."

Dimi's wish was to return to Bulgaria to die. It became Ms Morter's mission to grant his wish. For the next 11 months, she contacted various organisations including the Immigration Department, Centrelink, State Trustees, Public Advocate's Office, Australian Embassy, Bulgarian Embassy and VCAT, all in the hope of getting Dimi back home to Bulgaria.

Twelve months after sending the first enquiry letter Dimi, together with Ms Morter, were on a flight to Bulgaria.

"At the airport reunion the family was all excited and kissing and hugging and all Dimi could do was sit there with a huge grin on his face," Ms Morter said. "The love and respect he received from his family was overwhelming. For me, it was a lesson in how important family and your own language is as you grow older."

In helping Dimi fulfill his dying wish to spend his final days with his family,

Cont'd page 4

Cont'd from page 3



Dimi with staff and friends from Fred Combridge House. (Loes pictured second from the right back)

Ms Morter went beyond the call of duty. She devoted so much of her own time sorting through bureaucracy to get Dimi home but it was worth it.

“To see the difference in Dimi while he was at our nursing home and when he was at home with his family, was much greater than I imagined.”

For Dimi was smiling again.

Standard 3 of the Accreditation Standards outlines the following principle about resident lifestyle: “Residents retain their personal, civic, legal and consumer rights, and are assisted to achieve active control of their own lives within the residential care service and in the community.”

The gentle art of P-ing

When Dr Tracey McDonald got up to speak at the conclusion of the NSW Better Practice event on 22 July, no-one expected her to end up talking about the gentle art of ‘p-ing’.

But Tracey, as Professor of the RSL Veterans’ Retirement Village Chair of Ageing at the ACU National Faculty of Health Sciences, was keen to share an approach to auditing that attempts to de-mystify the process.

“It encourages staff to be brave enough to talk about quality systems,” she said. “By knowing the four ‘Ps’ all staff can feel confident that they have something to tell any auditor about, should they be asked their opinion”.

Judging by the nods of heads and the small ripples of laughter, there was agreement this mnemonic would be useful.

She said a quality system is capable of collecting data (auditing and testing) which can

be thought about (reflection and intuition) and analysed (reasoning) so that it can be turned into useful information – to guide policies and procedures, which can be implemented and then monitored, evaluated, adjusted and audited – and so it goes - in a circular motion !

There are 4 Ps – Purpose, Processes, People and Proof.

1. Purpose is the policies linked to the purpose statement, or the mission and vision statement.
2. Processes are the procedures and protocols linked to purpose and policies.
3. People – are proficient in their discipline, particular about detail, precise in their accountability and “pernickety” about standards.
4. Proof is found in the perseverance in documentation; prepared carefully and logically and presented on demand.

And then...you get pleasure, pride and positive feedback followed by the presentation of the accreditation certificate and a party!

Profile: Leanne Klatt

Title

Administration Officer

Place of work

The Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency Ltd (Queensland Office)

Describe your job

The role of my job includes administrative activities for scheduling audits, support contacts and other activities to ensure that all work is conducted within legislative requirements. I am also involved in processes and document production to support accreditation processes in accordance with Agency procedures and decisions.

Career Background

I have been working with the Agency for just over a year. Previously, I have completed a Bachelor of Education (Primary).

Challenges of your job

What I find challenging about my job is juggling training new staff while learning a new role myself. Also, ensuring the approximately 60



Leanne (right) consulting with Janice Lutke-Schipolt (Principal Assessor)

files a month for different aged care homes around Queensland are up-to-date and following legislative timeframes.

Highlights of your job

Working with a really nice group of people who support you.

What do you look forward to?

Training more staff because I love helping people. Being given opportunities for career development.

Your biggest buzz:

Being a mentor.

What/who inspires you?

The whole team in the Queensland office because of their dedication to wanting to improve the quality of care for residents in aged care.

Note: The Queensland Better Practice event will be held in Brisbane on 29 and 30 September. Leanne has helped behind the scenes with the organisation.

Understanding the survivors' journey

Australia is home to about 35,000 survivors of the Holocaust – the largest number of survivors per capita outside Israel. Up to 40% of the residents at Sir Moses Montefiore Jewish Home's two campuses - are survivors.

The home in the Sydney suburb of Hunters Hill has introduced an integrated program to help staff understand the ageing Holocaust survivor, which includes strategies to cope with some of their behaviours and the skills to validate their experiences.

Staff from Sir Moses Montefiore Jewish Home presented their Holocaust Awareness Program at the NSW Better Practice in Aged Care event.

Many Holocaust survivors experience post-traumatic symptoms, including chronic states of anxiety, depression, guilt about having survived, nightmares, flashbacks, isolation, loneliness and social withdrawal. These problems may develop years, even decades after the Holocaust ended.

Symptoms can be triggered by the environment, clinical care and the multiple losses that may occur as survivors age – from failing health to loss of friends and family, loss of independence and entry into a residential aged care facility.

With about half of the residents of the Sir Moses Montefiore Home diagnosed with dementia, the resulting failing short-term memory allows older memories of trauma to come flooding back to residents.

The Holocaust Awareness Program aims to help staff understand the experiences of residents, the consequences of their post-traumatic symptoms and a way to empathise. Staff attend an information session about Jewish culture as well as visit the Sydney Jewish Museum for an emotional account of the Holocaust.

Following the visit to the Museum, staff receive a 'debriefing' and have reported a better



Survivor, Simona Farmer

understanding of the residents and an increased awareness of incidents that might trigger challenging behaviour – events such as showering or going hungry can lead to hoarding food or reacting at shower times.

As many of the home's staff may also be survivors of some form of trauma, the program also aims to provide staff with support and strategies to cope with their own memories that may arise when working with resident survivors.

The Better Practice events aim to highlight the many positive programs being run in aged care facilities across Australia, with a vision to sharing information and knowledge to help homes provide a high quality standard of care to older Australians.

Hugh Lunn “telling it like it is”

Following the success of Better Practice events in SA, Tasmania, NSW and Victoria, Queensland promises to be just as successful with author and journalist, Hugh Lunn, taking the stage to talk about the things he expects from aged care.

Hugh is renowned for “telling it like it is” both as a journalist and in his seven memoirs including: *Over the top with Jim*, *Spies like us*, *Head over heels*, and *Vietnam: A reporter’s war*. His latest book on our lost language is due for release in 2006.

Hugh also writes a weekly column “My

Backyard” in Queensland’s *Sunday Mail*.

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.org.au or phone (02) 8831 1028.

Demystifying Dementia

The education package from the satellite TV series *Demystifying Dementia* is now available on the Agency’s new website: www.accreditation.org.au

The six-part series was shown on the Aged Care Channel last year and a package of education materials was distributed to those tuning in, or can be used as a stand-alone resource.

Other fact sheets and industry information are also available by clicking on Industry Education.

Further details of other Aged Care Channel series can be obtained by going to: www.agedcarechannel.com.au

The standards explained

A Pocket Guide of the Accreditation Standards is available. The handy spiral-bound guide reproduces the 44 expected outcomes of the standards and includes notes about the focus and results one might look for in relation to each expected outcome.

An order form is available on the Agency website www.accreditation.org.au, which should be filled in and sent with a money order or cheque for \$10.

The facts

Agency activity

1 April to 30 June 2005

No of accredited homes (at end of quarter)	2935
No of Site Audits	97
No of Review Audits	17
No of Support Contacts (Visits)	1054
Total site visits	1168
No of visits that were made without advance warning	220

Seniors' on-line challenge

The Australian Government developed the Seniors Portal to provide relevant and helpful information to older Australians. It also aims to create an online community of older Australians to provide support, information and entertainment. The latest addition is the new trivia game, Seniors Portal Challenge.

Now you can keep your mind active by challenging yourself with ten different categories, covering sport, history, science, entertainment and geography. Each player is able to log in with their own nickname. This means you can compete on the 'highest

Now you can keep your mind active by challenging yourself with ten different categories

player scoreboard' and challenge a friend to beat your score through the 'challenge a friend' function.

The first topics for the game include: World War II, Life in the 1970s, Rivers of the World, Australian Entertainment, Human Anatomy and Marsupials

and Mammals. So if you know how many miles of nerves are there in the skin of a human being or Which band had a number one single in 1966 with 'Friday on my mind' log on to www.seniors.gov.au now.

Topics will change regularly so that you can come back and play any time.

Correction:

Last month's issue of *The Standard* featured a story about a clowning program at St Mary's Aged Care Facility in Queensland. The article referred to the program as "Clown Doctors". The program is not associated with The Humour Foundation which runs Clown Doctor programs across Australia.

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