

PAC Chat

July 2008

Issue 6

Happy One Hundredth Doris!

Doris Rowe celebrated her 100th birthday recently with family, residents and staff at Croydon House. She was born Doris Lees, on 22 April, 1908 in Bowral, NSW. Her father, Denis Lees, was an English immigrant, and her mother, Martha Nepveur, of French and Irish extraction. Both families had career military backgrounds. Doris went to school in Bowral and then worked as a book keeper at the local butter factory for 25 years. She enjoyed a very active social life in the Southern Highlands and was involved in the local community and Catholic parish.

In 1953 she married Con Rowe, a widower with 5 young children, and moved to Newcastle, where they brought up their family. After she retired, Doris



took up embroidery and became an accomplished needlewoman and member of the Embroider's Guild. She also taught scripture at the local primary school, and knew all the local children, who greeted her enthusiastically with "Hello Mrs Rowe" as she walked to and from the bus stop. She reflected on her 15 years as a catechist in her local Parish paper in 1993 – "This period of time has been a great privilege and joy to me, as I have shared my faith with all these little ones, some of whom have never known a prayer, yet their response has been a delight, and they all looked forward to their weekly lesson, as I did also..... I thank God for all those Happy Tuesdays".



A great letter writer, Doris corresponded with her many old and new friends, and sent and received many Christmas cards until she was no longer able. It was fitting that she received many letters of congratulation for her birthday, including one from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth.



CEO's Desk, by Paul Sadler



This issue of *PAC Chat* focuses particularly on our staff and what they enjoy about working with Presbyterian Aged Care.

As many of you would know from your personal experience, without our staff we simply could not provide aged care at all. You may be interested in some statistics on PAC's workforce:

- PAC employs over 700 staff across all our operations.
- Excluding Wollongong and Canberra, we employ 610 staff, 14% of whom are full-time, 60% part-time and 26% are casual employees.

- 82% are women.
- 42% are from a non-English speaking background.

We are really proud of our staff and the marvellous job they do in caring for the people who live in PAC facilities and also in caring for people in their own homes.

I am also pleased to advise that we have completed the building improvement project at Thornleigh – we will provide more details on this in the next *PAC Chat*. The new building projects at Drummoyne and Canberra are also continuing on schedule, apart from a few rain delays.

Conquering Discouragement

How often do you hear the words “I quit!”, “I’m fed up!”, “I can’t take any more!”, “nobody seems to care!”? They are the kind of words which may go through your mind when you feel discouraged.

Discouragement is found in schools, in businesses, in government, in homes, in churches and aged care facilities. Many people, including Christian leaders, often go through times of discouragement in their lives. This was also true for one of the great Old Testament prophets, Elijah, who was once so discouraged that he wanted God to take his life. As you may recall from the Biblical account in 1 Kings, Chapter 18, God had used Elijah to win a great victory over the prophets of the false God, Baal at Mount Carmel. But Elijah's life was then in grave danger as King Ahab's wife, Jezebel, had vowed to kill him. In response, Elijah was afraid. He appeared to lose his confidence in God and ran for his life and hid in a desert and prayed that God would take his life. In 1 Kings 19:1-21, we see how God helps Elijah

deal with the problem of discouragement.

First of all, you need to recognize the causes of discouragement. Sometimes discouragement can arise from physical causes such as tiredness or hunger. For instance, Elijah had run 27 kilometres from Mount Carmel to Jezreel and then journeyed another 200 kilometres to Beersheba. To avoid discouragement, you need to look after your body and know its limitations.

Discouragement also has spiritual roots. Discouragement can arise when you feel a failure, especially when you compare yourself unfavourably with others. This is a form of self-righteousness or pride where you impose false standards on yourself rather than accept God's grace in your life by trusting in Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord. It can also arise when you fear others or look for their approval of your actions rather than trust in God. This was the case with Elijah who not only compared himself with his ancestors but

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also feared Jezebel's threat to take his life.

Discouragement also has negative consequences. It can cause you to lose sight of God's perspective in your life. Elijah could have encouraged the people after they had turned to the Lord at Mount Carmel and challenged the murderous intent of Jezebel. Instead, Elijah was sitting under a juniper tree, some 200 kilometres away, praying that he might die. Not only did he fail to challenge the forces of evil, but he had a false perspective of the world causing him to be full of self pity.

How then do you deal with discouragement?

Firstly, you should renew your trust in God and remind yourself of how He has worked in the past and in the present to love and sustain you – especially in sending Jesus Christ to be your saviour and friend. Elijah found that the Lord tenderly reached out to him and provided for his needs, even though God could have sternly rebuked him. Secondly, you need to have a renewed grasp of God's sovereign presence and power. God can intervene in the world when you pray, as he did in the case of Elijah, even when your situation may look impossible from a human

perspective. Thirdly, you need to see that God still has a purpose for your life and desires to use you in his service. Even though Elijah failed, God re-commissioned Elijah to his service and asked him to carry out a number of important tasks. Fourthly, you need to be challenged by the broader universal picture. Just as Elijah witnessed God overcoming the power of evil by humiliating the prophets of the false God, Baal, so we see how God overcame the forces of evil and death by raising Jesus Christ from the dead. His resurrection provides hope that we too can be resurrected and be with Christ in eternity and not be overcome by our present circumstances.

Yes – discouragement is one of the devil's chief and most effective weapons which he uses against people, especially those who trust in Christ. But it can be conquered through God's strength. You do not need to resign if you are a follower of Christ. You simply need to be renewed through the power of his spirit and re-commissioned to his service. God is willing for that to happen. Are you?

“
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National Presbyterian Aged Care Network

Chief Executive Officers from Presbyterian Aged Care services across Australia met for the first time on 14 May 2008 in Sydney. At the first meeting, CEOs from Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania were hosted by Paul Sadler, PAC NSW & ACT Chief Executive. Services in Victoria and South Australia plan to be involved in future meetings.

Nationally, Presbyterian aged care services represent a sizeable group of over 1,600 residential care beds and over 400 community care places.

The network aims to share information and resources across the nation, taking opportunities to work together in areas such as information technology and purchasing. The national network will also collaborate to lobby governments jointly, with the first priority being a submission on the future of the Federal Government's Conditional Adjustment Payment.

Another meeting is scheduled for Adelaide in October 2008.



A PAC FAIRY TALE

1

Once upon a time a long time ago (May, 8th 2008) in a far off land, (East Gosford) there was a 'little girl' called Alice who went to a wonderful party with some lovely people – plus the White Rabbit, Cheshire Cat, some soldiers and the bad old Queen of Hearts.



2

The Mad Hatter did the cooking and everyone was sipping tea and eating dainty cup cakes while waiting for the arrival of Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum.



3

But all was not well! Instead of our expected guests, we were all shocked when Robin Hood and the Sherriff of Nottingham made an entrance (they got lost on the way to their fairy tale)



4

Not too many people got robbed so a great time was had by residents and their guests, relatives and of course all the real wonderland guests.

THE END



What Is ACFI? by Pauline Solomons

On 20th March 2008 a new system for the Government to provide funding to the aged care industry came into effect. This system, called the Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI), is hoped will –

- better match funding to the complex health needs of residents, including those with dementia and palliative care
- help aged care nurses to more quickly and effectively assess the care needs of residents when claiming funding for the home
- reduce paperwork, meaning that nurses can spend more time caring for older Australians.

How will it affect people?

Changes to accommodation charges:

- The changes do not affect people who were already living in an aged care home before 20 March.
- Some new residents will be required to pay more for their accommodation costs in high care.
- Some new high care residents who enter a home from 20 March may be asked to pay up to \$26.88 per day for their accommodation. Others will have this paid for them by the Government. For others, it will be a combination of their and the Government's contribution.
- For the first time, new self-funded retiree residents who cannot meet their aged care accommodation costs will be eligible for Government assistance with these costs.
- The changes do not alter accommodation bond arrangements paid by residents entering low care and extra service care.

- The changes will not affect people who require low care when they enter the home.

Income Testing:

There will be a simplified income test which treats all income as the same and calculated the same way for all residents, regardless of whether it

is a pension or private income. This will benefit self-funded retiree residents who are less well off.

New aged care residents who have higher levels of income may be asked to contribute more towards the cost of their care.

No existing resident will pay more than they would have under the previous arrangements as a result of the changes to the income test and some will pay less. It is expected that about 45 per cent of self-funded retirees will pay less under the new income test.

Changes to the basic daily fee:

Previously, pensioners in aged care homes were asked to pay 85 per cent of the single pension rate to cover the costs of their food and basic living expenses. However, self-funded retirees and pensioners who have paid a very large bond paid more than this.

From 20 March, all new residents will pay the same – 85 per cent of the single pension rate. So most pensioners will pay the same as they would have under the previous arrangements and some pensioners and self-funded retirees will pay less.



The changes do not affect people who were already living in an aged care home before 20th March 2008

Who Cares?

Dear Editor,

I am writing this as both a volunteer and as a relative. It is a privilege to be a volunteer in aged care and I consider it an opportunity to give something back to the wonderful people who care for the aged.

The residents' needs are great in relation to their health but small in many personal ways. They are loving people who respond rapidly to a kind word, a hug and they show appreciation for any help forthcoming. It takes little effort to make them smile. That smile or thank you makes it all worthwhile.

As a relative I have nothing but admiration for Aged care workers. They are dedicated people who have been blessed with a very special gift as it takes a special type of person to work in aged care.

All physical responsibility is taken from the carer/family when a loved one is reluctantly placed in aged care. It is a very emotional time for all – the loved one moves on to a “new home” – the carer to a “new life”.

Aged Care Workers tend to walk the extra mile in the case of the aged and often comfort an emotional and/or angry family member when sometimes things are not as they feel they should be. When a loved one is placed in an aged care facility not all the responsibility should be over – they have become part of an extended family unit – the loved one needs family members to be part of this new family unity.

If we want our loved ones to be cared for in a loving and caring environment it is up to us to help the overworked aged care workers who care timelessly for our loved ones and bring smiles to their faces.

I am 72 years of age and should I live long enough I too will probably have to go to a “new home”. If and when this time comes I only hope there will still be these wonderful caring people to look after me.

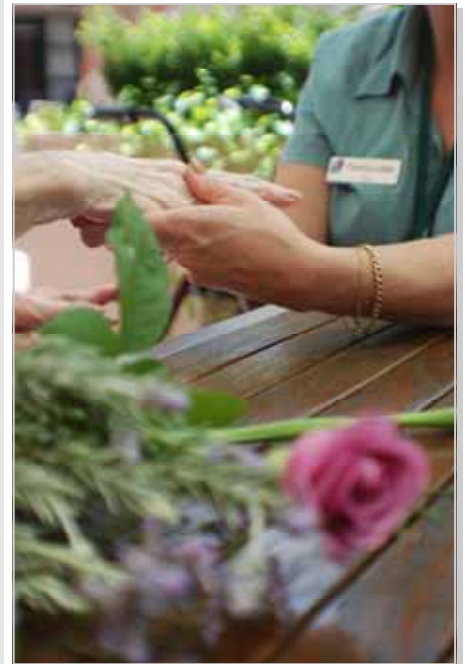
Joan Fordham



I have worked at Presbyterian Aged Care for ten years and feel privileged to have met so many living legends. I love the old values our residents uphold and their wisdom from living such long, rich lives. I love their strength of character that has come from facing difficulties and disappointments.

I wanted to work in an environment where I could make a difference, but little did I know how much the residents would be a blessing in my life.

~Staff member



Why do I work in aged care? One: I enjoy the family environment of my workplace. Two: For the same reason I wear a “Make Poverty

History’ wristband, donate blood and support overseas aid work - Older people are the same as you and me and deserve the same opportunities and standards of living as anyone else. Three: It’s a great feeling when something you do really helps someone else. Aged care gives me many moments like this.

~ Staff Member

Photo Update

Next issue of PAC Chat will feature an update on all current building developments. But here's a sneak peak of where things are up to at Canberra, Drummoyne and Thornleigh!



Canberra



Drummoyne



Thornleigh

A spot of Humour:

Issue 6

My Favourite Things

(to the tune of "My Favourite Things" from *The Sound of Music*.)

Maalox and nose drops and needles for knitting,
Walkers and handrails and new dental fittings,
Bundles of magazines tied up in string,
These are a few of my favourite things.

Cadillacs and cataracts ,and hearing aids and glasses,
Polident and Fixodent and false teeth in glasses,
Pacemakers, golf carts and porches with swings,
These are a few of my favourite things.

When the pipes leak, When the bones creak,
When the knees go bad,
I simply remember my favourite things,
And then I don't feel so bad.

Hot tea and crumpets and corn pads for bunions,
No spicy hot food or food cooked with onions,
Bathrobes and heating pads and hot meals they bring,
These are a few of my favourite things.

Back pain, confused brains and no need for sinnin',
Thin bones and fractures and hair that is thinnin',
And we won't mention our short shrunken frames,
When we remember our favourite things.

When the joints ache, When the hips break,
When the eyes grow dim,
Then I remember the great life I've had,
And then I don't feel so bad.

~*Author Unknown*

(*this parody is believed to have first appeared on the internet in 2001*)

Aged Care in the 2008 Budget, by Paul Sadler, CEO



The Rudd Government brought down its first budget in May. The Government had its first chance to address some of the key issues facing an ageing Australia.

Unfortunately, in aged care the budget was somewhat of a disappointment.

The key aged care initiatives did recognise some of the challenges we currently face, such as:

- Expanding access to transitional care for older people leaving hospital, with an additional 2,000 places allocated nationally. This will assist people to recover more effectively after an acute illness and to remain in their own homes for longer.
- Addressing the skills crisis by supporting an additional 1,000 nurses to return to the residential care workforce over the next five years.
- Offering \$300 million in zero real interest loans to encourage building or expansion of residential aged care in areas of high need.
- Committing to regularly review aged care planning ratios to take account of demographic changes.

Importantly, the Government also extended its additional payment to residential aged care,

known as the Conditional Adjustment Payment, for one more year. This will improve PAC's ability to meet the ever increasing cost increases we face, such as food, petrol and staff wages.

Unfortunately, there was no commitment in the budget to establish a proper method of increasing the government's payments to cover cost increases in the future. Over the past fifteen years, the value of the government's contribution to aged care funding has decreased markedly as inflation has outstripped funding increases. This is critical so that we and other aged care operators are not forced to cut the level of services we provide.

And while the budget acknowledged challenges to capital funding for new buildings and the workforce shortages, its measures were very modest compared to the size of challenges we face. Also, it was noticeable that none of the government's initiatives addressed the demand for additional community care programs, the area PAC expects to see demand rise fastest in coming years.

In concert with our Presbyterian colleagues in other states and with our state and national peak bodies, we are raising these concerns with Government Ministers and other MPs. I encourage all our readers to do so too if you have the chance.

Got a question? An idea for an article?

A great short story that needs to be published?

Is there something about Presbyterian Aged Care you'd like explained? Is there something about Aged Care that just doesn't seem to make sense?

Contact us by sending your queries, stories or articles to:

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- or -

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