



Australian Nursing and
Midwifery Federation
(SA Branch)

*in*touch

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Online!



INCLUDED IN
THIS ISSUE:

**ANMF FEDERAL
SECRETARY LEE
THOMAS STEPS
DOWN FROM ROLE**

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MEMBERS PLAY A STARRING ROLE—IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE

Bed closures, overcrowded emergency departments, unsafe staffing levels, pay cuts, plateauing graduate intakes, bullying and intimidation, unsustainable workloads, violence in our workplaces, insufficient training, and inadequate government responses to staffing issues at country hospitals... These are just some of the issues facing our professions on an almost daily basis.

But when you stop and think about the critical role you as nurses, midwives and personal care workers play in caring tirelessly for South Australians around-the-clock in perhaps one of South Australia's most challenging healthcare environments, we don't think you get nearly enough recognition.

This is the impetus behind our brand new Member Recruitment video.

The idea for the video is simple: It's not about us, it's about you. Our members.

Because each and every one of our 20,000+ members *are* the ANMF (SA Branch)—we're your union. And when you really drill it down, everything we do is to thank you for what you do. Every. Single. Day.

As nurses, midwives and personal care workers, you are the foundation of our healthcare system. But in the midst of all the early starts, late nights, double shifts, challenging patients and difficult family members, we know there are two very important words that are often forgotten: *Thank you*. Your tireless efforts and unwavering commitment to providing care is appreciated more than you know.

As you can see, a few ANMF (SA Branch) members play a starring role in the video, which you'll see across many communication channels in the New Year.

You'll see it on Facebook, on YouTube, on our website and in your inbox. You can share it, like it, love it and comment on it, so as many people in your networks (both in and out of the nursing and midwifery workforce) can be reminded of the pivotal and sometimes thankless role you play in our health system.

Thank you.

CLICK HERE TO
VIEW VIDEO

You deserve

20,000

'Thank You's'

01:18



SMOKE & MIRRORS

ANMF FINDINGS BACK URGENT NEED FOR AGED CARE REFORMS

The spotlight has further been put on for-profit aged care operators, who are making significant profits; however they are not prioritising or providing sufficient staffing and levels of care.

With aged care a largely government funded industry, many for-profit providers are tweaking their business models to ensure the fees they charge residents increase their revenue.

Latest research by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Foundation (ANMF) shows existing government funding to the sector provides profits to investors, rather than improving the quality of care to Australia's ageing population.

There is also evidence some providers in their drive to maximise profits are becoming increasingly aggressive in the way they implement practices for tax avoidance.

The larger family-owned for-profit providers commonly use discretionary trusts to avoid paying corporate tax, while many of the aged care and retirement village companies are set up as stapled securities for tax avoidance purposes.

Earlier this year, the Australian Taxation Office issued a tax alert on the use of stapled structures to avoid tax; however the focus hasn't yet been on the aged care sector.

Adj Associate Professor Elizabeth Dabars AM CEO/

Secretary of ANMF (SA Branch) says quality care outcomes and staffing ratios should never be compromised because of revenue targets.

"ANMF (SA Branch) will step up its fight against the current practices of some of the big for-profit providers in our ongoing push for meaningful aged care reforms," Ms Dabars says.

"Better regulation and reform is needed to increase staffing levels and improve the quality of care and these operators should be held accountable for how government funds are spent."

The aged care industry has an annual revenue of \$15.8 billion. During the 2015 financial year, \$10.4 billion in government funding and \$4.2 billion in resident fees was recorded. It is predicted government funding in the aged care sector will continue to rise annually by 6.7 per cent.

To meet Australia's growing ageing population an additional 76,000 licensed aged care places/beds will need to come online over the next decade.

ANMF (SA Branch) will continue to keep you informed on upcoming campaigns and ongoing lobbying on this issue. Members are encouraged to watch out for updates on the ANMF (SA Branch) News Hub and via our Facebook and Twitter pages.

SUPPORTING GRADUATES LOOKING FOR WORK

Around 70 nursing and midwifery students who have completed their final year of studies recently attended ANMF's (SA Branch) inaugural Graduates Day Workshop.

The end-of-year event is a very important one, as members are armed with all the information they need to maximise their chances of securing employment in their chosen career.

Adj Associate Professor Elizabeth Dabars AM CEO/ Secretary of ANMF (SA Branch) admits it can be a very challenging time for graduates as there are only a limited number of graduate nursing positions that come online each year.

"We've established this forum to help give graduates the best chance of success and stand out from the crowd with their job application," Ms Dabars says.

"The workshop is a great hands-on event where we provide graduates with key survival tips for entering the workforce and we even put two of our staff through their paces during a role-play to show how to nail a job interview."

The Graduates Day Workshop accounts for six of the 20 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) hours required to maintain, improve and broaden nurses and midwives knowledge, expertise and competence, and develop the personal and professional qualities required in their professional roles.

A wide range of topics are covered including industrial and legal issues, pay and entitlements, interview and resume preparation as well as nursing and/or midwifery registration.

One of the participants was a Registered Nurse (RN) who recently completed a Re-entry to Practice

Program and found the event invaluable after not engaging in her nursing career for a period of time.

The RN said the session on the current industrial and professional landscape was particularly helpful and credited the workshop in giving her more confidence and security knowing ANMF (SA Branch) Support Officers are available to help with her transition back to work.

"We thank our members who are former graduates and have already secured successful employment for their commitment to volunteering their time and attend the workshop," Ms Dabars says.

"It was invaluable to hear from these members who are happy to share their own personal journeys and provide tips on starting a career dedicated to helping others."

ANMF (SA Branch) remains committed to being a major support network to members who are new graduates and helping them plan for the future.

"We've previously fought the State Government for extra graduate positions and we won! ANMF (SA Branch) will never stop fighting to protect and enhance conditions and entitlements for our members, whether it's for students, new graduates or senior-level nurses and midwives." Ms Dabars says.

"We are all about standing up for nurses, midwives and personal care workers and negotiating positive outcomes for our over 20,000 members – and in turn their patients – at a local, state and federal level."





SUPPORTING MEMBERS STILL AFFECTED BY OAKDEN 'TOXIC' COVER-UP CULTURE

State and federal public servants have revealed years of abuse at the government-run Oakden nursing home was left undetected because of a very 'toxic' environment.

The alarming claims have been made at a public Senate inquiry into aged care accreditation standards after the Oakden facility was closed in September this year, following a damning report which exposed a decade of patient abuse and neglect.

Northern Adelaide Local Health Network Chief Executive Jackie Hanson told the inquiry she asked family members of residents who had been mistreated why they didn't complain.

"They complained internally to the management team. I'm not speculating when I say they were intimidated in relation to using any of the external agencies to make further complaints," she said.

"It was a very closed environment. The wards were locked wards. The clinical view from the staff working there was that it wasn't really a safe or appropriate place for too many visitors to enter because it stimulated the residents to the point they would get very upset."

The Aged Care Quality Agency Chief Executive Nick Ryan also told the Senate committee that there was a culture of cover-up at the facility.

Full three-yearly Commonwealth accreditation was granted to Oakden in 2010, 2013 and again in February last year.

Mr Ryan acknowledged the Federal Government is working on an action plan to approve accreditation practices and had made a commitment to move to unannounced visits.

"I accept responsibility that our system needed improvement," he told the inquiry.

Former residents of the Oakden facility have been transferred to Northgate House, other residential aged care facilities and inpatient mental health units within Northern Adelaide Local Health Network (NALHN).

Adj Associate Professor Elizabeth Dabars AM CEO/Secretary of ANMF (SA Branch) says it is important the main area of focus is delivering effective patient care.

"ANMF (SA Branch) has provided significant input on a statewide draft model of care for older persons mental health services in an effort to drive rapid and positive change," Ms Dabars says. We are continuing to argue for changes to the model of care- particularly in relation to the location of services, the relationship between the levels of service and the need to protect safe staffing arrangements

The overarching framework under SA Health's Oakden Response Plan Oversight Committee through extensive consultation and research into evidence-based best practice includes three tailored models of care:

- people with extreme behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD), including people under 65 with early-onset dementia
- people with severe BPSD, including people under 65 with early-onset dementia
- older people with complex, enduring mental illnesses (such as psychotic or severe affective disorders).

"We have remained active in supporting members being transferred from Oakden to Northgate House and our recent negotiations have ensured appropriately qualified staff are available."

ANMF (SA Branch) has been clear with members that they must uphold their legal and ethical responsibilities to their patients regardless of the circumstances.

If there are nurses that have failed to meet those standards, our role is to ensure they are afforded a fair and balanced process of review and inquiry. Trial by media reporting is not an acceptable or fair manner to deal with any allegations or complaints.

ANMF (SA Branch) will continue to lobby on behalf of members working in aged care. Members are encouraged to contact ANMF (SA Branch) if they feel unsafe at work or are not being fully supported by their employer.



ANMF FEDERAL SECRETARY LEE THOMAS STEPS DOWN FROM ROLE

After almost eight years as Federal Secretary of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF), Lee Thomas has announced she is moving on to pursue a career in law.

Ms Thomas has been at the helm of Australia's largest union steering ANMF membership growth to 270,000 members.

New members have joined the ANMF from public and private hospital settings, aged care facilities, medical practices as well as nursing and midwifery students. Membership increased by over 12 per cent during Ms Thomas' role as Federal Secretary.

Adj Associate Professor Elizabeth Dabars AM CEO/ Secretary of ANMF (SA Branch) says it has been a privilege and honour to work closely with Ms Thomas over recent years to fight the good fight on behalf of nurses, midwives and personal care assistants.

"Lee is to be congratulated on her leadership and strong advocacy to ensure working conditions are protected and healthcare funding is at the forefront of all government agendas," Ms Dabars.

"ANMF (SA Branch), in conjunction with our Federal Branch, will continue to remain a strong force to be reckoned with when it comes to protecting members' rights and creating a future they deserve in health, aged care and the industrial and professional arenas," she says.

"Protecting penalty rates is an example of the campaigning we do both at state and federal levels as a united voice for members.

"Penalty rates are an important part of nurses, midwives and personal care assistants incomes and is always a top priority.

"ANMF (SA Branch) will never support the possible introduction of a two-tiered wage

system in which some workers will be entitled to penalty rates while others are not. We will always stand in solidarity, both with our members and workers in other industries."

Earlier this year, following campaigning by the ANMF, health provider Sonic HealthPlus backed down on its proposed 25% cut to Sunday penalty rates

The attempt by this health provider to slash penalty rates follows the Fair Work Commission's removal of Sunday penalty rates for retail and hospitality workers.

Lee has been studying law and, prior to becoming ANMF Federal Secretary, held the position of Assistant Federal Secretary and Branch Secretary of ANMF (SA Branch).

She commenced her nursing career as a personal care attendant in aged care and holds a Bachelor of Nursing, a neonatology certificate and is also a registered midwife.

"We wish Lee all the best for the future and thank her for the tremendous and tireless work she has carried out in representing Australia's nurses, midwives and personal care assistants," Ms Dabars says.



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEAVE AS A NURSES OR MIDWIFES RIGHT

Domestic violence has increasingly become a workplace issue because many victims are in the workforce.

Evidence suggests people experience some aspects of domestic violence while on the job including stalking and harassing phone calls.

Last year in Australia, more than 70 women were killed as a result of domestic violence and according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics - two out of every three women who experience domestic violence are in the workforce.

Authorities are alerted to thousands of domestic violence cases each year; however the Department of Human Services estimates that the majority of them go unreported.

Domestic Violence Leave is becoming more prominent in agreed EB negotiations and ANMF (SA Branch) is leading the way in protecting members who are affected by family violence.

“There is currently no minimum standard or entitlement to paid Domestic Violence Leave in modern awards

or the National Employment Standards, and so it’s necessary that ANMF (SA Branch) seeks to include employee protection in enterprise agreements through bargaining,” Adj Associate Professor Elizabeth Dabars AM CEO/Secretary of ANMF (SA Branch) says.

“In recent negotiations, Eldercare has included two days paid domestic violence leave and ACHA five days, as part of their new agreements,” Ms Dabars says.

Further pressure is being mounted on the federal government to back growing calls for 10 days paid family and Domestic Violence Leave under the National Employment Standards. The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) claims such a reform would cost five cents per employee.

In July, the Fair Work Commission left the door open to the possibility of providing unpaid domestic violence leave in the future after rejecting 10 days paid leave to be included in all modern awards.

Family violence is estimated to cost the Australian economy \$13.6 billion each year and according to Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s



Safety, this will increase to \$15.6 billion by 2022 if the issue isn't addressed.

"Paid family and domestic violence leave will enable employees to escape violent relationships, attend court hearings and seek counselling and support to enable recovery," Ms Dabars says.

"It also allows for children and family members affected by family and domestic violence to be cared for, without the risk of jeopardising employment opportunities."

Last month, marked White Ribbon Day, the only national violence prevention campaign that aims to raise awareness among Australian men and boys about the roles they do play to prevent violence against women.

The annual event encourages people to wear a white ribbon or wristband as a visual symbol in support of an oath swearing to never commit, excuse or remain silent about violence against women.

The facts on domestic violence in Australia:

- One woman is killed every week by a current or former partner over 12 months
- 25 per cent of women in Australia have experienced sexual violence by someone they know
- One-third of all Australian women have suffered physical abuse from someone known to them
- A quarter of all Aussie women have reported suffering emotional abuse by a current or former partner
- Medical attention is five times more likely needed among females than men after being abused by a partner

*If you or someone you know is impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence, call **1800RESPECT** on **1800 737 732** or visit [1800RESPECT.org.au](https://www.1800respect.org.au) - In an emergency, call **000**.*



LOBBYING EFFORTS SECURE PERMANENT CONTRACTS AT PUBLIC SECTOR SITES

ANMF (SA Branch) has been on a mission to clamp down on the escalation of temporary contracts among its members working as Registered Nurses and Midwives across every classification.

The 'Our care is not casual, so why are our jobs?' campaign has successfully brought the issue to the forefront of SA Health, who has analysed its current temporary contract data for nurses and midwives.

Adj Associate Professor Elizabeth Dabars AM CEO/ Secretary of ANMF (SA Branch) says any rise in the use of temporary contracts is alarming.

"Insecure employment for our members will not be tolerated, as temporary contracts can put nurses and midwives under unnecessary stress when it comes to planning their future," Ms Dabars says.

"It's pleasing to see our lobbying has been heard loud and clear, and permanent contracts have now been awarded to a significant number of nurses and midwives who were previously granted temporary positions."

Staff at Southern Adelaide Local Health Network (SALHN), Women's and Children's Hospital (WCH) and Central Adelaide Local Health Network (CALHN) have successfully had wins in securing permanent contracts.

The number of full-time equivalent nursing and midwifery roles now allocated as permanent positions include:

- SALHN - 45
- WCH - 25
- CALHN - 85

All these positions were converted directly from temporary to permanent contracts with members not required to take part in any interview process.

120 permanent roles have come online at the new Royal Adelaide Hospital (nRAH) in addition to the 85 full-time equivalent nursing and midwifery roles CALHN created. These were permanent positions that were in a holding pattern until the nRAH was officially opened in September this year.

"Without our members, this successful outcome would not have been able to be achieved," Ms Dabars says.

"Thousands of nurses and midwives showed their support by wearing stickers at work, which carried ANMF's (SA Branch) campaign message 'Our care is not casual, so why are our jobs?' in a push for permanent job security.

"Protecting working conditions and entitlements for members is ANMF's (SA Branch) top priority."

We encourage members to contact ANMF (SA Branch) if they feel they are not being fully supported by their employer.