

AGED CARE TASK FORCE ANNUAL REPORT 2007

Members:

Br Bill Beninati fms
Mrs Janet Boyle
Sr Berenice Cornish rsj **Secretary**
Ms Beverley Hackett **Chair**
Sr Elizabeth Johnson ibvm
Br Damian Keane oh
Br Vincent Keating fsc
Mrs Joan Rafferty
Mrs Marion Rudge
Fr Hugh Walsh ofm
Sr Sharon Price rsm Executive Director

MEMBERSHIP

2007 was a year of change for the Aged Care Task Force. The Task Force is advantaged by the dedication and commitment of some long-standing members and the expertise and different viewpoint of newer members, in the main the lay colleagues employed by congregations to care for the health of congregational members. At the end of 2006 Sr Angela Grant rsj –the long-standing chair of the Task Force, Sr Irene Crockett rsc and Sr Noni Mitchell ibvm resigned after many years of dedicated service to the Aged Care Task Force. Although we have missed Angela, Irene and Noni greatly, we applaud their concern for the continued efficacy of the group and we welcomed them back for our end-of-year dinner.

A couple of major objectives provide focus for the Aged Care Task Force: firstly, to keep a watching brief on the aged care environment and respond to the needs of congregational members and carers by offering services and secondly, operating as a strong support network for carers and for each other. So members of the Aged Care Task Force benefit from inclusion in the Task Force, at the same time as they are providing benefits to others. We always have room for new members who bring a wealth of new ideas and different experiences to the group. If you have any suggestions for membership, please contact a member of the group.

MEETINGS

At our meetings we share information and ideas, we discuss topics of interest and concern to Task Force members, we address issues referred to us by leaders or the Executive Committee and we plan topics for our seminars, actually getting down to details about the organisation and operation of the seminars. The Task Force met on five occasions in 2007: February 9, March 30, June 1, August 24 and the final meeting on 23 November was an opportunity to review the year's work, plan for 2008 and enjoy dinner together.

SEMINARS AND SERVICES

The main service provided by the Aged Care Task Force is the organisation of a number of Aged Care seminars each year. In 2007 we offered two seminars and collaborated with the Bursars' Working Group to organise a seminar for the personnel from small congregations on Saturday September 15. The provision of care for older members is an issue of concern for leaders of many smaller congregations and the Aged Care Task Force is committed to each year providing some information and advice from excellent aged care experts to assist leaders to deal with these issues of concern. On September 15, Bev Hackett and Janet Boyle, congregational aged care coordinators and members of the Aged Care Task Force, spoke to leaders in an afternoon session about the different avenues through which aged care services available in the community can be accessed.

Seminar May 4: Challenging Behaviours in Older Religious

Dr. Sandy Beveridge a geriatrician from St Vincent's Hospital provided two extremely helpful presentations on the issues associated with the topic of challenging behaviours and some successful strategies for dealing with challenging behaviours, backed up by an afternoon panel of carers who commented on successful strategies.

Seminar September 21: Discussing Dementia

Professor Henry Brodaty Professor of Aged Care Mental Health at UNSW gave wonderful keynote address on *Discussing Dementia*, followed by Pam Davis of the Dementia Advisory Service, Mercy Community Care, Lower North Shore who entertained and informed the participants with *Mind Your Mind/Mind Aerobics*. In the afternoon session we were extremely privileged to have a conversation with Barry Fegan accompanied by Marilyn MacArthur (Alzheimers NSW, Early Onset Program) about living with Early Onset Dementia.

The evaluation forms we collect after each seminar continue to provide us with ideas for future seminars. The seminars covered a wealth of material of interest to those engaged in working with older religious and we are fortunate that our Task Force members are willing and able to take a role as presenters and panellists as well as facilitators for the seminars. Bev Hackett has instituted a well-received service for members in the showbags –collections of material for easy reference from a huge variety of sources about issues connected with the seminar topic.

Continued excellent attendance at seminars indicates that the Task Force is meeting the needs of older religious and carers of older religious. We notice some changes in our audience: for some seminars the audience is mainly older religious, while at other seminars the audience is mainly carers of older religious. As more congregations access the services of providers like Catholic Health Care aged care services and Southern Cross Homes, we notice more employees of those providers are attending our seminars. In 2008 the Task Force plans the usual two seminar days.

Also the Aged Care Task Force will contribute to the New Leaders and Leadership Teams Workshop on March 4, 2008.

LAY CARER'S NETWORK

Cognizant of the fact that more congregations are employing lay health/aged care coordinators, the CLRI(NSW) Aged Care Task Force sought in 2007 to make contact with and, if appropriate, provide support for, such employees.

Our task force membership does include some lay congregational health/aged care coordinators and those members are aware that other congregations have retained, or are in the process of retaining, such coordinators. Their roles are quite diverse, but their main task area relates to congregational members, usually those living independently in the general community. There are however, some employees who are the 'family member' for congregational members who live in assisted living circumstances. At this time we are interested in these two areas:

- health/aged care coordinators for congregational members living in the general community;
- 'family members' for congregational members who live in assisted living environments.

In order to make initial contact with lay health/aged care coordinators employed by congregations, we sought the assistance of congregational leaders and invited the lay carers to attend a luncheon at CLRI(NSW) office at Rosebery on June 20. About a dozen carers attended and began the process of being in contact with each other for support. A further luncheon will be held in 2008.

MEN'S HEALTH FORUM

The Aged Care Task Force of CLRI(NSW) began considering in 2007 the presentation of a men's health forum, for male participants only and with predominantly male presenters, covering topics such as the prostate (normal functions, prostatitis, prostate enlargement or benign prostatic hyperplasia, prostate cancer); testicular cancer; male hormones/ "male menopause"; depression and loss of identity in the older male; bowel function (normal functions, irritable bowel, diverticulitis, bowel cancer); nutrition and diet; addictions: alcohol, smoking; OMNI: older men new ideas.

The initial men's health forum is planned for Tuesday April 15, 2008 at the Marist Brothers Community at Randwick and will comprise a morning information session followed by a BBQ. We look forward to working more closely with male congregations to provide services for the brothers and priests.

ROTA

Always on the lookout for opportunities to increase services to members, the Task Force spent some time in 2004-2005 investigating the Victorian initiative ROTA (Religious of the Third Age). Believing that this would be a good service for older members of religious congregations, the Aged Care Task Force took the initiative to

introduce the organisation in NSW in 2006. ROTA is run by the Executive Director of CLRI(NSW) and during 2007 we have held ten activities for participants (each month from February to November) that have been well-attended and appreciated. Our calendar of 2008 activities was distributed in November 2007 and received a warm welcome. Newsletters for ROTA members are produced quarterly by the Executive Director and posted on the ROTA page of the website.

OTHER SERVICES

The Aged Care Task Force relies on leaders and leadership teams advertising both seminars and ROTA through congregational networks and is most appreciative of that advertising reaching congregational members in a timely fashion.

The *Enduring Guardianship Kit* was updated by the Executive Director and signed off by the Aged Care Task Force during 2006. This updated kit was then sent to all congregational leaders for their information, is on the website and is always available on request from the CLRI(NSW) office.

The Task Force exists to provide support to leaders and to congregational personnel working in aged care, as well as to those who work with aged religious. Leaders are encouraged to contact the Task Force, either through a member or the Executive Director, if ever there is a need that the Aged Care Task Force could address.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

A set of Terms of Reference state the objectives and functions of the group as well as outlining membership requirements and meeting structure.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Aged Care Task Force members wish to thank the Executive Director, Sr. Sharon Price, and her administrative assistant, Ann Paynter, for the significant support they offer to our group. The efficiency and high level of organizational skills of the CLRI(NSW) office make the work of the Aged Care Task Force possible.

Thank you to the Executive of the CLRI(NSW) for their consistent encouragement to the Aged Care Task Force. The support of the older members of congregations and those who care for them will be a long-term responsibility and it is rewarding to contribute to this ministry.

Ms Bev Hackett
Chair
Aged Care Task Force
December 1, 2007