

# LIONS CLUB OF SUNBURY

Elderly Peoples Homes Incorporated (Reg. No. A2699M)

President: John Hoban

Secretary: Stewart Sellars



P. O. Box 182  
Sunbury, Victoria 3429  
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27 October 2004

Mr. Elton Humphery  
Committee Secretary  
Community Affairs Reference Committee  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600.

Dear Sir,

We wish to respond to statements made to the Committee of the Senate Inquiry into aged care in the Health Services Union submission.

The Lions Club of Sunbury Elderly Peoples Homes Inc is a Not for Profit organisation which prides itself in offering quality care and service to the elderly in an environment that is open, friendly and respected. It is with this reputation in mind that we have responded to the scandalous statements written about our Aged Care facility.

Also attached are Submissions by staff members Jessica Frangos, Mary Crowle, Jenny Ford and Yvonne Townsend refuting the allegations of harassment and bullying at this facility.

In the interests of fairness these submission should be posted on the Committee's Website.

We fully support any inquiry whose terms of reference are to promote and support quality in Aged Care but feel we are collateral victims of an orchestrated effort by the Hospital Services Union using the Committee to further industrial aims regardless of the feelings of the aged residents or their families and the public reputation of our Aged Care facility.

We note the repetition of whole paragraphs in identical terms in a number of the HSU members' witness statements.

We are happy to supply further evidence to the Melbourne hearings called by the committee as part of the ongoing inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

J.R. HOBAN

President Committee of  
Management.

Encls.

## **SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE INQUIRY INTO AGED CARE.**

### **RESPONSE TO MENTION OF LIONS CLUB OF SUNBURY – DUTY LIST NIGHT SHIFT 9.20 P.M. – 7.10 A.M. AT PAGE 6 OF HSU SUBMISSION**

This is presented as an example of overwork for night staff.

Firstly the information on this page starts at 9.20pm and finishes at 4.30am, but the completion of this shift is 7.10 am, not 4.30 a.m. (see page 33).

The second page is missing. We believe that this was deliberate, as the second page contains information stating that all domestic duties are secondary to resident care, and that priority will be given to residents care needs at all times. We attach page 2.

The HSU state that this duty list shows that only 20% of time is spent on resident care. 25 of our 27 residents sleep restfully through the night, as illustrated through our Sleep Assessment Charts with evidence collected by the *night staff carer* who performs 1 hourly checks on all residents.

The housekeeping and domestic duties performed by the night shift carer are secondary to residents care needs and, as a result of the minimal care requirements, are the only duties available during this period of time.

There is no action taken by management if and when housekeeping and domestic duties have not been completed on this shift as the “ Shift Changeover Sheets “ documented by the night carer will document reasons for non-completion.

Action would only be taken if a pattern of bad work practice was apparent.

The daytime domestic staff will assist with any duties not completed.

### **RESPONSE TO PAGE 34.**

#### **We wish to dispute all points in this submission**

We believe that Mrs. Glenda Free, a past employee harbours a vindictive streak towards the current manager, stemming from her initial appointment of our

manager in 1998. Suzannah Bereshnyi brought to the facility a professionalism not seen previously, and much needed changes prior to the first Accreditation round.

Mrs. Free was of the opinion that she should have been considered for the position of Manager even though she was unqualified and had no previous experience in management. She was extremely disgruntled and set on a path to disrupt and undermine the new management at every possible turn. Mrs Free had made many of similar reports against the previous manager, resulting in his resignation. Mrs Free is the person responsible for using intimidating bullying methods, not our manager. During her employment, she continually manipulated the other staff to believe that if you did not agree with her or her methods, then you had to be against her. Most staff were caught up in this intimidation. Many of the current staff remember only too well the situation at that time.

Minutes from Staff Meetings and Managers reports at the time record her constant agenda to disrupt, harass and undermine management.

Mrs. Free resigned from this organisation 3 years ago. She did not state in her written resignation that she was leaving due to stress as she has states in her submission. She made it widely known that as soon as her long service leave was due she would resign, which she did immediately it was available. She continued to make derogatory remarks against the manager and members of the committee after resignation and at one point in time a solicitors letter had to be written to her husband as it was reported to the committee of management that he was making slanderous comments about the manager and the facility that had no substantial base and was completely false.

Mrs. Free's submission is a fabricated malicious story intent on making mischief and causing grief, stemming from a perceived wrong done to her by the committee of management prior to the current manager being appointed. This resentment was then transferred to the current manager as Mrs. Free was unable or unwilling to accept or implement the changes occurring in Aged care for the improvement and conditions of all elderly people in care.

As for the other two persons named on the same submission, namely Jacqui Kendall and Ava Brophy. Jacqui Kendall was employed by this organisation for a period of 6 months in 1999, during which time she went on Workcover and never returned to the workplace.

This organisation and especially management, ensured that all entitlements were paid to her along with assistance in getting her back into the workforce. She remains on workcover to this date suffering from a back injury and depression. We can only conclude that her condition has contributed to her name being on this submission, as she could not be in a position to know what achievements or otherwise have happened at this facility for the last 5 years.

In reference to Ava Brophy, we are at a loss as to why she would put her name on this submission other than we are aware that she is friendly with the two previously named persons on the submission.

Ava Brophy was first introduced to us by way of completing her PCA Certificate 3 with this facility. Management has always shown a keen interest in furthering any student carer by offering "placement" for local people to learn practical aspects of PCA duties in an accredited Aged care facility. On completion of her placement ( 6 weeks ) management offered Mrs. Brophy a part-time position which she was thrilled to accept. Mrs Brophy was employed for 12-18 months and resigned to take on nursing studies. There has been no contact either directly or indirectly with Mrs. Brophy since this time, although current staff have mentioned that she has monthly contact with some past employees, namely the ones mentioned above. Again she would not know the things she put her name to. None of these 3 complainants ever made a complaint through our Grievance Procedure.

I have been an employee of the Lions Hostel for the Aged for more than eleven years and feel I must respond to the front page article dated 12<sup>th</sup> October where three former employees attempt to discredit the facility. Let me reflect a little light on the situation so that there is a clearer image than the one portrayed in your paper.

I knew these three staff members when they worked here and they were always good to the residents and friendly with the staff members, however, when new accreditation standards required government funded aged care facilities to prove they delivered the care they said they did. Things had to change.

Suddenly, staff who took long and frequent breaks and could have lengthy chats with residents and visitors throughout the day, were asked (by the Department of Health & Aging) to document all care given to each resident. Care plans needed to be put in place, we had no files, next of kin details, doctor's notes. There were no drug charts to follow, medications were stored in an unlocked cupboard, there was no Food Safety Plan, no Preferred suppliers list etc. etc. etc. I do not want to paint a poor picture of the hostel, the staff have always been good caring people (past and present), residents have always received the utmost care and respect, the food has always been of the very highest quality and safely handled and prepared, there were just no records proving any of it. There had to be changes.

Naturally this meant that the party was over! It was a time for learning good time-management skills, attend training meetings (and heaps of them). A time for acceptance and understanding of change. A time for TEAM WORK. Suzannah Bereshnyi, the new manager at the time knew what was needed and attempted to implement all the new programs and initiatives necessary for the Hostel to pass accreditation and continue to provide the elderly with a caring home. What happened next is simple, some staff could and did. Others couldn't and did everything in their power to put a spanner in the works. Unfortunately, they could not cope with their failure to accept change and embrace the autonomy Suzannah extended to ALL, and it still haunts them today (more than three years later) that they could not "cut it" like the rest of us did.

My advice to them is to find another, less demanding career where they might cope better. My advice to the readers of your newspaper is: do not believe everything you read and if you want to know what our facility is really like come and talk to our wonderful staff who are delighted to work here, come and talk to our great residents, visitors, relatives, volunteers, health professionals, come and talk to our Manager, Suzannah, who is the warmest, caring and most approachable Manager I have ever worked with.

Yours truly

Mrs. Mary Crowle.



To whom it may concern. 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2004.

I was employed at The Lions Club of Sunbury Elderly Peoples Homes inc for over 12 months, during my time there with the help and support of the Management, I successfully completed my Certificate 3 in Aged Care Studies, which would not have been possible without the Management offering the training.

During my time at the Facility, I noted all staff were treated well, with no favoritism. I faced a difficult situation at the hostel with another staff member, it was dealt with appropriately by Management with us both sitting in the office with the manager discussing our problems. At no time was either of us singled out and the situation was resolved.

I was never treated badly during my time at the Hostel.

Resident care is excellent and it shows, residents who have been unwell on entry to the facility, show a remarkable improvement after being there a short time, this is due to the excellent professional care given.

The Compassion, Kindness and Care, Management give to their Staff, Residents and Families was beyond anything I have ever seen in my life, and I am truly looking forward to returning to the Hostel after my Maternity Leave.

I would be happy to extend on this information if required. Please do not hesitate to contact me.



Jessica Frangos.

## To the Senate Inquiry

I have worked at the Lions Hostel in Sunbury for over 2 ½ years.

In my employment the Manager has always been very supportive and open minded when needing to approach her, she always gives general care and concern to any issues that arise within the Activities program. I cannot believe that people of past employment can think that our Residents are ill treated in any way by Staff or Management. I have a large photo album filled with fun days over my time there, not many managers will include themselves in the Activity side of an Aged Care Facility. Well our Manager has helped out with many, photo's of Rock 'n' roll day, dressing for Christmas Plays, our day in India and including herself when possible. One resident spent over an hour asking the Manager about a new pet for the facility ( we already have 1 dog and 2 cats) which she thought would be nice for the Hostel. The resident was requesting our very own Lama, the Manager spent a great deal of time going thru with the resident how we would manage a Lama, how we would look after it etc etc, the resident decided it would be too hard to have a Lama here . This conversation carried on over 2 to 3 days, the Manager giving her time, support and encouragement to the Resident throughout.

We run an extensive Activities program here all residents are invited to attend all activities and most do if not out with families and friends. In the last month we have been able to purchase a bus with the support of current residents and families and a major donation coming from a family of a past resident. If the facility was so bad and intimidating as has been reported why would these people donate these large amounts of money if they thought you were ill treating a person. I dont think they would.

Jenny Ford - 14-10-04

Jenny Ford.  
Lifestyle Co ordinator.

I have worked at The Lions Club of Sunbury Elderly Peoples Home Inc, for 6 ½ years.

During my time at the facility I have never seen a Resident mistreated in any way. I don't believe the Residents feel intimidated by Management in anyway as there has always been an open door policy which the Residents use on a regular basis. The Hostel has a delightful atmosphere with Staff, Residents and Families often sharing a joke and participating in the many wonderful theme days that are held. I believe anyone who visited the Facility and spoke to the Residents or their Families will hear only praise for the Facility. We have 2 Lifestyle Program staff who provide an incredible program which enhances the residents lifestyle immensely. The Care Systems are of a high standard and residents Care needs are met.. I would like to comment that if Staff are not happy in their work environment they should move on to a place where they can be happy, as disgruntled Staff have done, Staff that were unable to accept or meet the High Standard of Care offered to the Residents of this facility.

I find it amazing that 3 previous Staff members who left up to 3 years ago are now coming forward about their concerns. If I had been working in a Facility and had the concerns that these Staff stated, I would have reported far sooner any concerns that I had on the behalf of the Residents, whom they say suffer the most at this Facility. Surely that would show anyone reading this document to wonder why they would take so long to report these concerns.

In one document one staff member states she works on her own from 10am – 3pm daily, I cannot believe this statement. I am on duty from around 8.30am to 5.30pm to 6pm each day, In my capacity as the Care Coordinator, I liaise with most of the Doctors, Pharmacy and Health Care Professionals on a regular basis, I write the Care plans and Care Summaries, I have trained the staff in simple wound dressings which I monitor on a regular basis, if the staff requires assistance I will always assist if able if not one of the Lifestyle staff who is also a personal carer will assist them. I am on call 24 hours a day as the staff know and are able to and do ring at any time with any issues they are having concerns with. I have even travelled 50 minutes to work to assist staff with issues if it so they were comfortable, reassured and supported, I cannot understand how this is a stressful workplace. Like any Aged Care Facilities we have times when we are busier than usual, usually due to illness of several residents at once and yes the work load may be increased, but Activity Staff, OH & S representative and Myself will assist. I have even known the Manager to toilet a resident, dress a wound, assist with the hoist to lift a Resident if required.

In another document staff complained about having no kitchen hand on the weekend. The Chef and myself have both cooked weekends and can describe first hand what happens on the weekend. The Chef usually starts off the breakfast and then one staff assists with the serving when they are finished care duties. A resident fully cleans dishes of the table and loads them onto a trolley, staff then wash the dishes and place back on trolley, whilst staff are washing dishes, resident washes tables down and when dishes are completed resident resets tables which is a task she thoroughly enjoys and requests to do daily. So the staff are kitchen hand for approximately 1 hour in the morning and the same procedure is repeated at lunchtime with staff spending approx 1 hour on kitchen hand duties the rest of their time they are with another carer completing care tasks. The Care hours are 7.00am – 1.30pm and 7.00am to 3pm, the weekend notably quieter as the phones ring very rarely, Doctors don't usually visit unless there is an emergency.

On all the duty lists it is noted that residents care needs are a priority over cleaning duties etc and it is incredible that the duty list for Nightshift which was listed finishes at 4.30am when the shift goes until 7.10am, and at the bottom of this page which wasn't added states that residents care is always a priority. It is also interesting that out of 26 residents the facility the majority sleep throughout the night.

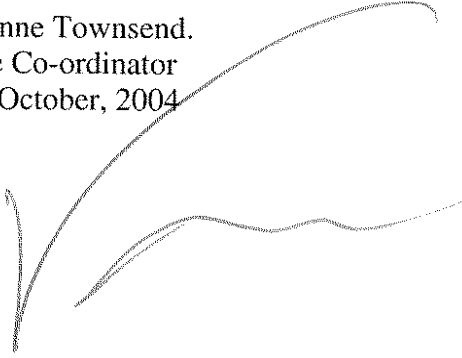
I find that facts stated by these staff members derogatory and upsetting causing trouble for no reason other than their own vindictiveness.



The Manager of the facility is a very caring woman who shows compassion to the residents and their families she has also assisted staff including those who have complained, with their personal life and has counselled them through various stages of their private life which another manager would have told them to get help from the outside. These disgruntled have done nothing but try to smear a Facility that gives outstanding Care and Lifestyle to 27 Aged residents and i would welcome anyone to visit our facility and see for yourself.

We have during both Accreditation visits complied with all 44 standards and one Accreditor even said this is thr type of Facility she would like her Mother to go to. That says it all.

Yvonne Townsend.  
Care Co-ordinator  
12<sup>th</sup> October, 2004

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Yvonne Townsend', written over the typed name and date.