

A Quality of Life

The quality of life in Brotherhood nursing homes and hostels is the subject of an evaluation project recently taken up by Sally Ryan, Special Projects Officer with the Brotherhood.

Sally, who has been seconded from her usual role as Co-ordinator of the Coolibah Day Centre, has an extensive background in Psychiatric Nursing especially Geriatric Wards and an additional 15 years experience with Residential Care. She will be assisted on the project for two days a week by Marilyn Roper from the Brotherhood's Community Services Section. Marilyn has studied social gerontology and has six years experience in aged care, providing the project with some indepth knowledge and a suitable overview.

"The project came about as a result of a Commonwealth Govern-

The Brotherhood of St Laurence

action

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Sally Ryan, assisting Coolibah Day Centre members.

ment draft paper on the quality of life in nursing homes and minimum standards required," said Sally. "I was asked to look at the standards of our own hostels and nursing homes with a view to drawing up a similar document for the Brotherhood".

The Brotherhood's facilities for older people will be evaluated according to the objectives stated in the Government Draft Paper on quality of life. These emphasise that health, independence, variety of experience, freedom of choice, privacy, dignity and safety of residents should be recognised and respected.

"It is more important that the nursing home or hostel be as 'home-like' as possible for the people that live there rather than a rigidly struc-

ture and timetabled institution" said Sally Ryan. "This is what the Normalisation Process is all about — an environment suiting the age and culture of those who live in it."

"A place you can walk into and know that people not patients live there," explained Marilyn.

In the initial phase of the evaluation, they were involved in visiting each of the Brotherhood facilities and consulting with staff.

"I'm very encouraged by the amount of interest being shown by the staff in what we're doing. Our next step is to spend time in each of the nursing homes and hostels working alongside staff in a 'hands on' capacity," Marilyn said.

"We were also impressed by a couple of the other nursing homes

in Melbourne which are operated on the normalisation principle," said Sally. "Family involvement is emphasised and there is a greater use of volunteers, a lot of these from families of the residents themselves".

The first draft of the Brotherhood's Quality of Life document is expected in November and will be the result of an intense few months for Sally Ryan and Marilyn Roper. Not only will they be visiting, talking and working with Brotherhood staff in the nursing homes and hostels, they will be attending a week long PASSING workshop on normalisation, as well as visiting other nursing homes and hostels in Victoria. They will also spend a week in Adelaide looking at the more progressive facilities for the aged offered there.

Dear Friends of the Brotherhood,

At the time when we were celebrating our annual St Laurence Day Festival in August, two events became newsworthy. In a curious way they are inter-woven with each other.

The first was the financial difficulty of the First Fleet and community efforts to ensure that eventually it will arrive in Australia in time for the Bicentenary. This has triggered further discussion about the point and purpose of our Bicentennial celebrations, with a number of people renewing their expressions of concern about celebrating 200 years of European settlement in Australia.

The second item was the news of the 18th Aboriginal person to have died in an Australian prison, bringing the total to 44 in this decade. The matter has become sufficiently serious to warrant the establishment of a Royal Commission to investigate the conditions of our prisons and the circumstances leading to the suicides.

It is a strange irony that our convict

forebears, transported here for trivial offences, their military jailers and those who followed them, inadvertently displaced the Aboriginal people from their traditional lifestyle. This has been quite disastrous for them and at one stage it almost destroyed them as a race. The irony is that when an injustice is perpetrated on one group, it usually leads to new injustices being imposed upon others. Such has been the case as far as our Aboriginal people are concerned. They have little cause to celebrate the Bicentenary and one can understand why groups such as Aboriginals, the poor, and the homeless, would be wondering exactly what they had to celebrate in 1988.

Certainly the idea of a monster birthday cake in Kings Cross borders on the obscene and the Bicentennial Authority would do well to review the usefulness of such activities.

But the Bicentennial celebrations do provide us with an important opportunity to face frankly the circumstances of European settlement and the outcome for the original inhabitants of this continent, to review the considerable progress

that has been made over the past 200 years and then finally to seek a vision for the future.

There are many individuals and groups in the community who want to make Australia a better place, where values of caring and justice are paramount and where everybody has the opportunity of achieving their full potential as human beings. In the end this is the real challenge that lies ahead of us all. We should all give some serious thought as to how the Bicentenary can be made a really worthwhile event, which everyone will want to share in and from which no one will feel that they have been excluded. For our Aboriginal people, a treaty of some kind would certainly help, as has been the case in other parts of the world. The critical issue is one of economic independence.



Bishop Peter Hollingworth
Executive Director

Metropolitan Shop Volunteers

Do you have time to spare and an interest in helping the Brotherhood?

The Brotherhood's City, Glenhuntly and Parkdale shops need people who will work on a voluntary basis; no experience is necessary. Please contact Thelma Tuxen,

Retail and Auxiliaries Manager, 67 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy 3065, telephone 419 7055.

Christmas Cards

The Brotherhood's new range of Christmas cards for 1987 are available from the Combined Charities Christmas Card Shop from 21

September until Wednesday, 16 December, at 21 Swanston Street (opposite St Paul's Cathedral). The cards can also be obtained from most Brotherhood shops and from Head Office, 67 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy. For further details please contact Bonnie Turnbull on 419 7055.