NURSES IN THE SPOTLIGHT

In every second issue of the nurses[HUB]news, we feature the views of a nurse working in palliative care or an associated area.

Roslyn Lockhart

I have a Bachelor in Nursing and a Graduate Certificate in Health (Palliative Care) from Flinders University.

I did a graduate year of nursing at a hospice, worked as a Clinical Nurse Specialist in community palliative care part time, and worked for six years as Project/Research Officer for a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation.

I have also worked at a small local multi-purpose service (MPS); with 15 beds including one palliative care bed, acute, A&E and aged care.

More recently, I have started working in a new role for Rumbarala, Aged Care and Disability Services as a Case Manager for Aboriginal Elders, for a large area in NSW which is about five hours from one end to the other.

My personal background

My grandmother is Baakandji and my grandfather is Wemba Wemba. As a Matrilineal society, this thus means my mum, I and my children are Baakandji. I am a daughter, niece and granddaughter of some very strong Aboriginal women. My mother and some aunts and cousins are also nurses. I have worked with five members of my family at the local MPS; four are nurses and one is an assistant in nursing.

I talk about family because they are why I do what I do. I look at how we, as individuals and a community, each in our own way shape the health systems in which we work. We shape it in a way that is influenced by the culture norms in which we are raised. We do for others what we think is normal. I know that I have justified what I have done for a person with the thoughts or the words; “This is what I would like done for me,” meaning that this is what I consider to be the highest level of care, the very best of care (sometimes
at great expense to time, emotions and resources for me, as a nurse) but at the assumption of this being a cultural norm or a wish of the person you are caring for.

The CareSearch Knowledge Network Management Group (KNMG)

I am on the Care Search Palliative Care Knowledge Network Management Group. This group is made up of a number of people with diverse backgrounds and skills. I have been on this group since its inception. I feel very passionate about people needing information to make the decisions which are the best for them. I love that the individual, families or carers can access information that is appropriate for them, whether they are a layperson with limited health knowledge, or a specialist in the palliative field. The website does not block what level of knowledge you can access, but you choose what information you need for the purpose in which you intend. The website is about making available a suite of palliative care information and resources.

My role as part of the KNMG is to look at the project with a big picture view bringing my expertise as a palliative nurse, who lives rurally (Jerilderie) and who raises the question, how will this help the Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander person, family, community or organisation?

What I would like palliative care nurses to consider?

I would like you to think about what links you have with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health services. I would also like you to think about how many have you or are you caring for; and does this reflect the population of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in which you live? If not, why not?