Final Report

1. *Executive Summary*

Key achievements of this project were:

- The development and screening of four interactive palliative care satellite television programs targeted at personal care staff/ nursing assistants working in residential aged care facilities; and
- To demonstrate the effectiveness of satellite television technology to deliver interactive staff training to staff working in residential aged care, in particular those working in rural and remote Australia.

This project used satellite television technology to deliver four one hour interactive palliative care education programs developed by Anglican Retirement Villages (ARV) for residential aged care facility workers. These programs were developed to address the ARV's need to provide palliative care education to its residential aged care workers. The project also sought to improve staff palliative care knowledge with a view to reduce the organisations transfer of clients between facilities.

The ARV is a large multi-site aged care provider that has experienced a number of challenges in providing appropriate training to its residential aged care workers. Prominent among these difficulties were the recruitment of Nurse Educators, traditionally the organisation's primary training facilitators, and the release of frontline staff to attend training sessions due to the lack of adequately skilled replacement staff.

To meet these challenges the ARV choose to utilise Satellite television technology to deliver the palliative care training programs on-site. This initiative not only reduced the need to find stand-in staff during training sessions, but also provided a cost effective means of accessing industry experts while eliminating the time commitment and travel expenses for staff attending off-site education sessions. The one hour duration of the sessions also allowed facilities to provide skeleton staff coverage whilst the programs were aired, with staff attending sessions readily available as back-up.

The Health Television network was employed to produce and screen all four programs. ARV staff provided the educational expertise, script development, program talent and venue for filming. Following the screening of the first program the Aged Care Channel (ACC), a satellite television company, devoted to the development and delivery of staff training was launched and subsequently became involved in the project. The ACC offered the project the opportunity to reach a national audience and use a professional anchor person.

The decision to utilise the ACC for program screening enabled the project to meet a key objective, the establishment of a cost-effective, high quality palliative care education program with the potential to be utilised by remote and isolated communities.

The ACC provides training and education for the Aged Care Sector. The Channel is entirely membership-driven, every member has the right to participate in the program development process, thereby ensuring that the product exactly matches member group needs. ACC welcomes feedback, consistent with a philosophy of continuous improvement.

ACC is a valuable resource for all facilities, irrespective of size. For the large institution, with an existing training structure, ACC can provide increased cost efficiencies and complement existing education programs. For the small institution, with a minimal education budget, ACC provides a solid foundation on which to build a comprehensive staff training program. The Channel currently delivers over 50 broadcasts a year. Programs may be videoed in order to ensure staff on all shifts benefit.

Since the launch of the ACC in September 2003, membership has grown rapidly to over 300 sites nationally. This consistent growth has enabled the channel to increase the number and range of programs planned for 2005 and the frequency of repeats of each program. Membership of the ACC involves a one off establishment and equipment fee, plus an annual membership fee calculated on the number of high and low care beds provided by the applicant organisation. The average cost of ACC membership is usually in the order of $50 per staff member per year.

The ARV project was implemented on time and on budget. Evaluation findings were extremely positive and clearly identified the project as meeting all key objectives including improved staff knowledge and decreased resident transfer rate. In addition, a number of issues were identified where ARV could further maximise the benefits of future satellite programming by instituting new work practices addressing program participation rates.

Project Recommendations

Recommendation 1: *To utilise the Aged Care Channel for ongoing staff training.*

The project evaluation clearly identifies satellite television as an effective way of delivering training to staff working in aged care facilities, particularly those in rural and remote areas. With the launch of the ACC there is now an established mechanism for broadcasting programs to the Aged Care Industry. It is recommended that future funding initiatives utilise this already established training delivery network.

Recommendation 2: *To develop programs explicitly for* Registered Nurses in the aged care sector.

The palliative care training programs developed by the ARV project were targeted at personnel care workers and assistants in nursing in Residential Aged Care. It's this projects recommendation that a similar palliative care training program is developed for Registered Nurses (RN) working in Aged Care Facilities.

Recommendation 3: *To develop written Training/Assessment Material to compliment satellite training programs.*

Only minimal written training material and no assessment material was developed as part of the ARV project. It is recommended that comprehensive written and staff assessment material be developed to complement the satellite programs. These written resources could then be used by workplace trainers and supervisors to reinforce and evaluate the outcomes of the programs. In addition, assessment material could be used to enable program participants to demonstrate *recognition of prior learning* when enrolling in a relevant Vocational Education Training Accreditation Board (VETAB) approved program.

2. *Project Profile*

Anglican Retirement Villages is a large Sydney Diocese based aged care organisation with over 4,000 residents and clients, 33 facilities on 24 sites located between the Hawkesbury River, Blue Mountains and the far South Coast of New South Wales. The organisation has 1550 employees working in 5 nursing homes, 11 hostels and 14 independent living villages and over 550 clients in the community through the Community Aged Care Package (CACP) program. In addition the organisation owns and operates a number of support services including a Registered Training Organisation and a commercial laundry and kitchen that produces more than 12,000 meals a day and washes more than 18 tonnes of laundry per week.