

Stepping through the mire

Aged Care Homes – The Complete Australian Guide by V. Nigol & A. Wynn, Litehouse Books, Box Hill, 2008, 234pp, \$29.95. ISBN 9780646487366.

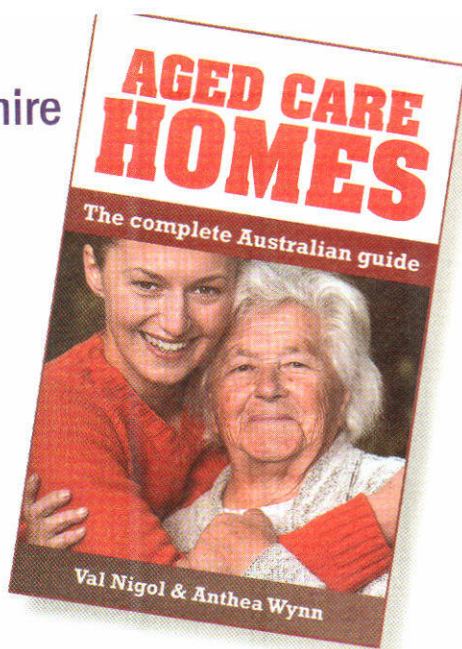
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AT LAST – A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO assist families and carers to understand and work their way through the mire known as ‘aged care’.

The authors, an accountant whose work focuses on financial issues affecting older persons, and a writer, have combined their talents to produce a one-stop shop in respect of the issues associated with “accessing, moving into, and maximising Mum’s stay in an aged-care home”.

The book, which has as its intended audience the carers of those older persons requiring residential care, is written in a simple, friendly style. Notwithstanding, or perhaps because of, this style, the book is an invaluable resource for anyone with an interest in aged care, irrespective of their background or professional status.

Simple checklists at the start of the text draw the reader’s attention to the various aspects to look for when inspecting a facility. These checklists highlight issues such



as the facility’s attitude towards culture and religion, environment, activities, and management/legal issues, to name but a few. A more detailed checklist is set out for dementia-specific facilities.

Through the use of logical steps the reader is then guided, and educated, effortlessly along the path of who is who and what is what in aged care. Starting with the basics of ‘when is it time?’ through to the nightmare of the financial

aspects, that is, accommodation bonds, charges, fees, income assessments, getting the bond back and so on.

The book is interspersed with relevant scenarios, many of which the reader can readily identify with. In this instance though, the authors have taken the use of scenarios one step further and provided a lesson to be learnt at the conclusion of each of the stories.

A particular highlight of the book is the excellent use of appendices. These include a directory of relevant organisations (Appendix A), a comprehensive national list of low-care facilities (Appendix B), a comprehensive national list of high-care facilities, including extra-service and dementia-specific (Appendix C), a list of supported residential services homes for Victorian residents (Appendix D), a list of all the ACAT Centres (Appendix E) and, finally, Appendix F, a glossary of commonly used terms in aged care.

If it were possible, this book should be mandatory reading prior to choosing a residential care facility. Not only for all those associated with the painful and difficult task of finding suitable accommodation for their parent, loved one or family member but for any professional acting for older clients and/or their families. □