

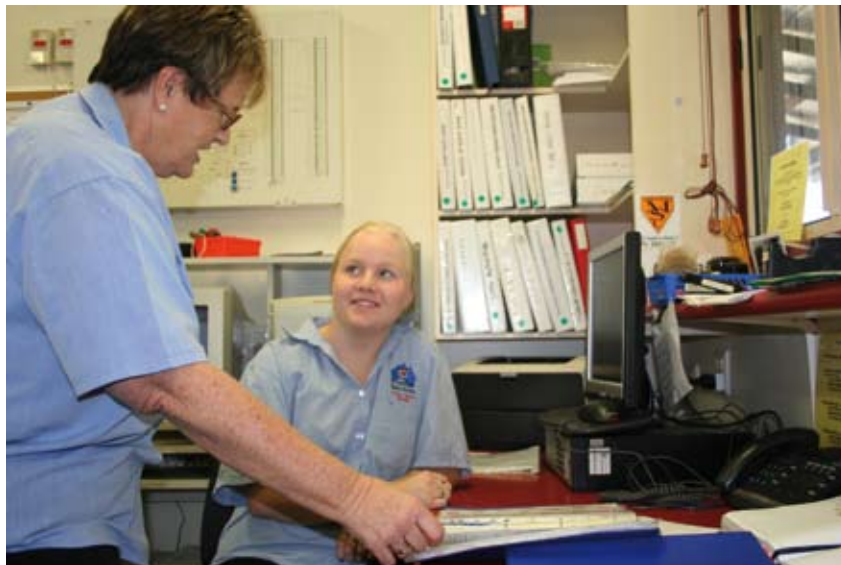


Australian Government

07  
minister's awards for  
**EXCELLENCE**

## Frontier Services

Winner of the Minister's Award for Excellence for Employers of  
Australian Apprentices 2007 (Northern Territory Region)



*"This program was evaluated by Rosemary Jeffery for 15 months, and three mentors have been engaged since the beginning of this year. We encourage trainees to look this as the first of a lot of little steps with constant encouragement to do another certificate. We tell them it makes a difference in their own life. We will support our trainees as far as they want to go."*

***Ms Sharon Davis, Regional Manager NT,  
Frontier Services***

*All the trainees that go on to become enrolled nurses – we know their hearts are in aged care.*

***Ms Rosemary Jeffery, Training Manager NT  
Frontier Services***

A century ago Reverend John Flynn (Flynn of the Outback) was involved in the beginnings of Frontier Services. His vision to provide care to the people of the outback remains adapted to today's needs.

The major provider of aged care, health and community services, and pastoral support to people in outback Australia, Frontier Services is this year's winner of the Minister's Award for Excellence for

**A U S T R A L I A N  
A P P R E N T I C E S H I P S**

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Employers of Australian Apprentices in the Northern Territory region.

The two objectives of Frontier Services' Australian Apprenticeship program are: to develop a sustainable workforce with a focus on the employment of indigenous Australians in caring for their aged people; and, to offer an alternative career pathway to enrolled nursing and registered nursing within aged and community care.

Regional Manager NT Sharon Davis says, "We committed time to establishing the training unit – Rosemary's program. To support the trainees we have three full-time mentors who travel right across the territory."

"We believe in training within the facility, then the rest of the organisation and externally. The employer needs a passion for it as well, and must recognise the need for guidance and mentoring."

Rosemary Jeffery has 20 years' experience in aged care and was a director of nursing for seven years. "We are looking for people who are enthusiastic about being employed in aged care. Also, those who are looking for a path into a nursing career," she says. "There are some older people wishing to be a nurse but who previously had no opportunity."

"We are also seeking a cultural difference and mix to suit the clientele. This includes indigenous and non-English speaking backgrounds."

Mrs Davis says, "In the smaller centres we look for locals as they are more likely to stay. They also understand the local culture and will encourage other locals to work there as well."

In one facility eight enrolled nursing positions have been filled by previous Australian Apprentices who completed Certificate III in Community Care – Aged Care Work.

"Doing traineeships put them in a position to be trained as an enrolled nurse," Mrs Jeffery says. "A sprinkling have finished their enrolled nurse training and gone on to further their careers. Traineeships allow them to see their own potential."

Frontier Services also has Australian Apprentices undertaking business and food preparation courses, and are considering traineeships for activities staff.

Mrs Davis and Mrs Jeffery agree the skills shortage is near crisis point in their industry. "It is getting harder to find qualified staff – and sometimes impossible to get them to go to remote areas," Mrs Jeffery says. "The industry is struggling. It is not glamorous work and it is for low pay. We have to try to sell the job on how to make a difference in someone's life."

Of the program, Mrs Davis says, "A long term effect is expected. We are still in the establishment stages.



There is a good retention rate of well trained staff.”

Registered Training Organisations ensure all Australian Apprenticeships standards are met and there is constant in-house training in core competencies. Mrs Jeffery says, “A big variety of work is covered, and we send trainees to outside providers. We also have cultural training, and training dealing with specific conditions the residents might have.”

Mrs Jeffery describes a good relationship with the field officers from Australian Apprenticeships Northern Territory: “They visit the trainees and there is open communication. They always make themselves available.”

At Frontier Services, the Australian Apprentices are considered part of the team. “They get the same training and feedback as everyone else. They are included in everything,” Mrs Davis says. “Everything Rosemary learns gets passed on to all staff. Trainees are very much part of that network.”

“There is a feeling of accomplishment for us too. We give a lot of encouragement and support with assignments and help them to believe in their own ability. It is all part of building self-confidence,” Mrs Davis says.

Frontier Services has many Australian Apprentice success stories. Mrs Jeffery says, “One indigenous lady started as a cleaner. She was happy enough but we encouraged her to get her certificate. She is now a manager. Once she got the opportunity she grabbed it.”

Mrs Davis continues, “I came across her when visiting a WA facility. We had no idea where she had gone and there she was - as the manager. She had returned back to her people in a positive way. It makes a difference for them and also for herself.”

Mrs Davis says, “From my position as manager, I see the difference Rosemary’s team has made for the directors of nursing and facility managers. They’ve always wanted to train staff, but the demands of their roles meant they had no time.”

Mrs Davis is mindful of the emotional investment of these people in charge dealing with people 24-hours a day. “They select their staff and Rosemary’s team guide them. This allows the director of nursing to be one step away from the training. She is someone else to turn to, walk through any issues with.”