

Onboard

Newsletter of the Social Workers Registration Board

View from the Chair

Tēnā koutou katoa!

This year has started at pace for Social Workers Registration Board as our current legislation goes under scrutiny in Government. We continue to hope mandatory registration and better legislation will be introduced.

I am delighted to announce that we have now successfully recruited a new CE/Registrar, Sarah Clark. I would like to extend a warm welcome to Sarah and the Board is very pleased she has accepted this role.

I would like to update you on what has been happening.

1. Introducing our new CE/Registrar and Professional Standards Manager
2. Review of the Act: Update
3. Definitions of Social Work, Social Worker, Social Work Practice and a General Scope of Practice for Social Work – call for comments
4. Memoranda of Understanding with Ministry of Justice and ANZASW
5. Call for new Competence Assessors and Complaints Assessment Committee members
6. Revised Policy - 'Fit and Proper Person'
7. Annual Practising Certificate Renewals – open **5 May**.
8. Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki (MVCOT) – launched 1 April. All registered social workers who are now at MVCOT to update email addresses
9. Tribunal decisions – summary of the latest decisions.

Noho ora mai

Shayne Walker (Chair, Social Workers Registration Board)

Introducing

My name is Sarah Clark, CE and Registrar

Tēnā koutou katoa. At the end of the May I will be fortunate to be joining the team at the Social Workers Registration Board as the new CE/Registrar. Originally from Christchurch, I began this journey with a Masters in Geography, my thesis being on female offending. Since that time my career has taken me on a diverse path, from working on the frontline with youth unemployment; to Parliament as a researcher; and tackling a variety of environmental issues with the Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment. More recently I was the Director of the Office for Seniors at the Ministry Social Development - a role which allowed me to grow my understanding of the opportunities and challenges presented by an ageing population – followed by Superu (formerly the Families Commission) as Director of Client Services and Sector Change. Away from work, I'm married to Richard, an environmental engineer and we have two daughters (currently 10 and 13) who keep us from resting on our laurels. My favourite ways to spend time include catching up with friends, hot yoga, flamenco, and I've just begun to develop my interest in oil painting. I am very much looking forward to starting this role, with the prospect of some exciting work ahead. The proposal for new legislation stands out as one example, and offers great opportunity for increasing recognition, and supporting the professionalism of social workers.



Introducing

My name is Susan Yorke, Professional Standards Manager

I joined the SWRB in late January as Professional Standards Manager. I have worked in regulation since coming to Wellington in 2004, first with the Midwifery Council as Registrar then Chief Executive/Registrar before moving to the Medical Council as Professional Standards Manager then Deputy Registrar. Prior to that I ran my own legal practice in Golden Bay. I was born in England and came to New Zealand with my parents and two sisters half a lifetime ago. We settled in Christchurch and I still consider that city as home. I have three adult children, all of whom live overseas (Sydney, the south of France and Amsterdam) and visiting them provides purpose for pursuing my love of overseas travel. I teach yoga and appreciate that my 30 hours a week working for the Board allows me to pursue that as well as tending my organic garden, sewing, reading, singing in the Wellington Community Choir, playing piano etc Oh.....and you want to know what's always in my fridge? Sheep feta, black olives, red peppers and chocolate.



Review of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 Update

The Social Workers Registration Act 2003 (the Act) is under review. The Ministry of Social Development has been working with the Board and identifying issues in the Act and possible ways of improving the legislation. The costs to the government in making registration mandatory have now been estimated and all of this information has now gone to Cabinet.

The Minister of Social Development, Anne Tolley, is supportive of legislative reform however it is Cabinet who will decide if amendments to the Act are warranted and whether it is placed on the legislative agenda for Parliament to consider. We await Cabinet's decision on the matter.

We expect that there will be some legislative change next year. If you have colleagues who are not registered who are 'registerable' you may wish to suggest to them that they should register in the near future. We now have over 6000 social workers on our register – which is a sizable profession.

Definitions of Social Work

The Board are developing definitions of 'Social Work', 'Social Worker', 'Social Work Practice' and a 'General Scope of Practice for Social Work'.

[Consultation Document](#)

If you want to make any comments or suggestions on these you will find a link to the draft below. Please forward any comments or suggestions to: consultation@swrb.govt.nz by **Friday 19 May**.

Memoranda of Understanding

The SWRB has recently signed two MOUs.

ANZASW – in order to make our relationship and communication more transparent between ANZASW and the SWRB, we entered into a MOU. Areas where our organisations intersect are policy development, competence assessments, CPD, and complaints.

Ministry of Justice – the SWRB and MoJ have also entered into an agreement whereby MoJ will check whether registered social workers have been convicted of any criminal offences in the last 5 years and request that Court Registrars report these to the SWRB. Courts are required to notify the SWRB of convictions (under section 63 of the SWR Act) however social workers use over 100 different job titles and Court Registrars were unable to identify if registered social workers had come before their courts.

Competence Assessors Needed

The Board is now seeking experienced registered social workers who we can call on from time to time to sit on Competence Assessment Panels. Competence assessments are conducted where the Board needs to seek further assurance that a registered social work is meeting the professional standards expected. All travel, accommodation and expenses are covered and you will be paid at a daily rate. A competence assessment is an educative process that is hopefully a positive experience for those involved.

If you are interested in applying to become a competence assessor, please can you send your CV and a covering letter to: Susan Yorke, Professional Standards Manager, susan.yorke@swrb.govt.nz or SWRB, Level 6, 11 Chews Lane, Wellington 6140. If you require any further information about the role please do not hesitate to contact Susan on 04 931 2650.

Complaints Assessment Committee Members Needed

The SWRB invites appropriately qualified and experienced Registered Social Workers (RSWs) to submit expressions of interest for appointment to the Complaints Assessment Committees (CACs). CACs are appointed by the Chair of the Social Workers Complaints and Disciplinary Tribunal from time to time to investigate complaints about registered social workers and make determinations under the Social Workers Registration Act 2003.

Complaints Assessment Committees are made up of 2 registered social workers and one lay member.

If you are a RSW, have at least 4 years post qualification experience and have an interest in helping maintain the high standard of professionalism in social work, please contact us.

For further details contact Susan Yorke, Professional Standards Manager on 04 931 2650 or email Expressions of Interest to susan.yorke@swrb.govt.nz. If you wish to send your CV and cover letter by post the envelope should be marked "Confidential" and sent to Susan Yorke, Social Workers Registration Board, PO Box 3452, Wellington Central, Wellington 6140.

Revised Policy

The SWRB have implemented a new policy – 'Fit and Proper Person'. The Act requires all registered social workers to be 'a fit and proper person to practise social work' and this policy describes what this actually means. Click on the button below to find out more.

[Click Here](#)

Annual Practising Certificate (APC) Renewals

Applications for APCs will be open on **Friday 5 May**. You will receive an email once the APC online renewal system is available. Please go online and renew your APC at your earliest possible convenience. You will note that the website looks a little different.

If you are practising social work without an APC and you are a registered social worker, this is illegal. It is your personal responsibility to renew your APC regardless of what your job title is or whether your employer has told you that an APC or registration is not required for your job.

If you do not know whether to renew please contact our office to discuss your situation.

Your Online Profiles

Please regularly check the details of your register profile on the Board's website (www.swrb.govt.nz). If you provide us with up-to-date contact details (such as a non-work email address) we can keep you informed of any important updates.

Please note that you may want to update your profile photo prior to completing the online renewal process. The new photo with your name attached needs to be sent to our office prior to completing the online process otherwise you will be charged for an additional ID card.

Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki

You will all be aware that the Ministry for Vulnerable Children Oranga Tamariki (MVCOT) was launched on 1 April as a stand-alone agency to deliver the services that were previously delivered by Child, Youth and Family. The SWRB would like to acknowledge that this transition was difficult for some registered social workers and we hope that the new environment provides good support for you all.

If you are a social worker now working for MVCOT please can you **go online and update your email address** on our register.



Tribunal Decisions 2016

The Social Workers Complaints and Disciplinary Tribunal have released the following decisions regarding registered social workers. Full case decisions can be found on our website by clicking the button below.

[Tribunal Decisions](#)

In summary:

1. *Complaints Assessment Committee v Bhana (RSW7/D1/SWDT/2016)*.

Ms Raewyn Bhana was first registered in 2010, is a Justice of the Peace and was employed as a Service Manager for Te Runanga a Iwi o Te Orana Ake in Auckland and as a General Manager for Safer Aotearoa Family Violence Prevention Network in Auckland. Between 31 March 2015 and 1 May 2016, she was employed as Manager for the Safer Aotearoa Prevention Network. Ms Bhana's competence certificate expired on 31 March 2015 and despite being granted an interim practising certificate to enable her to complete it, along with numerous reminders, emails and letters, Ms Bhana failed to renew her competence certificate. Ms Bhana applied for name suppression but this was denied by the Tribunal because of public interest and open justice principles. Ms Bhana admitted the charge of practising without an APC and the Tribunal found

the charge proved. Ms Bhana was censured, fined \$350 and ordered to pay costs of \$2200.

2. ***Complaints Assessment Committee v Going (RSW8/D1/SWDT/2016).***

Ms Selena Going was employed as a Probation Officer by the Department of Corrections between July 2015 and May 2016. Her APC had expired on 30 June 2015. Ms Going maintained that she was not practising social work as she was employed as a 'Probation Officer'. The CAC obtained an expert opinion from Mr Michael Dale (which the Tribunal accepted) that stated that probation officer practice has a lengthy association with the social work profession, it continues to reflect core social work values, knowledge and skills and that probation is still regarded as a social work field of practice. Ms Going did not take issue with Mr Dale's evidence that she was using her social work training, skills, knowledge and that she applied her core social work practice theory as a Probation Officer. Her role included establishing client rapport, interviewing and assessment, motivational interviewing, working with client resistance, cross cultural practice, case management, sentence planning and sentence management. Ms Going acknowledged in her CPD log that the Probation Officer role utilises her social work skills being 'analysis, report writing, counselling, advocacy...'. The Tribunal stated that 'Lack of employer support does not obviate the practitioner's personal responsibility' and that despite the regime being voluntary 'does not remove the personal responsibility for registered social workers to comply with the legal requirement to hold a current practising certificate if they are continuing practise social work.' Ms Going was found guilty of the charge of 'conduct unbecoming', and was censured, fined \$200 and ordered to pay costs of \$600.

3. ***Complaints Assessment Committee v lakimo (RSW9/D1/SWDT/2016).***

Mr Ben lakimo was employed by the Mahitahi Trust as a Kaupapa Māori Packages of Care Support Worker around May 2012. The Trust is a mid-sized Māori mental health organisation which provides mental health and addiction services to tangata whai ite ora. A CAC laid a charge against Mr lakimo that he was employed or engaged as a social worker without a current annual practising certificate between July 2015 and May 2016. The Tribunal assessed his role and what the functions and accountabilities involved. It was found that while the role did involve undertaking some social work tasks, 'overall it was not one which involved him being 'employed or engaged as a social worker'. Mr lakimo, in his role, was not 'exercising the level of professional judgment or responsibility one would reasonably expect a person who was employed or engaged as a social worker to be exercising.' The charge was therefore not proved. The Tribunal added further comments and described the difficulties that Board had with getting any response from Mr lakimo and stated that the 'onus is on practitioners to be proactive about communicating with the Board about any actual or perceived changes to their practising status' and that had Mr lakimo communicated his position to the Board he may not have found himself the subject of disciplinary processes.