

Onboard

Newsletter of the Social Workers Registration Board

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR



Tēnā koutou katoa!

We hope that you've all enjoyed the amazing weather that summer (and the start of Autumn) has blessed us with. The drop in temperatures and the return of early dark evenings is a reminder that we need to prepare for the cold winter months ahead.

In looking ahead, this is also a good opportunity to update you on some significant milestones from the Social Workers Registration Board (the Board):

1. Introducing the last of our Board members and Wellington office staff.
2. The majority of investigations involving Registered Social Workers (RSWs) practising without valid Annual Practising Certificates (APC) in 2015/2016 have now been completed. However please read our update to avoid any action being taken by the Board.
3. There has been increased media coverage regarding the review of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 (the Act). For more information please read our review update.
4. Recently, Board staff have had to respond to a number of queries regarding the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Log, notification of convictions and RSW's online profiles. Please read our "Off the wire" section for more information.
5. The new, updated Code of Conduct (the Code) is now available on our website. Please familiarise yourself with the Code below.
6. The Board is developing a new Competence Review process. Have a look at some of the proposed changes.
7. Some of our RSWs have asked us about our face-to-face competence interview process – when they take place and what happens. The brief summary of the process is outlined in the newsletter.

If you have any questions or comments about our Onboard publication then please contact our office at office@swrb.govt.nz.

Noho ora mai

Shayne Walker (Chair, Social Workers Registration Board)

ON-THE-BOARD

(View individual Board profiles on our website)



Michelle Derrett



Toni Millar



William Pua



Social Workers
Registration Board
Kāhui Whakamana Tauwhiro

New Zealand Government

INTRODUCING...



My name is... Helen Piercy

I work for the Board as... Account Clerk. This is a part-time role working three days a week.

Previously... I worked for the Vet Council of NZ in a similar accounting role.

My job includes... paying the accounts for the Board including any meeting expenses, salaries and processing direct credit payments of registration/certification fees made by or on behalf of RSWs.

What I enjoy about my job is... working with a great team of people at the Board.

The most challenging part of my job is... trying to match payments that we receive in our bank account without a reference to who or what it is for. In order for us to identify your payment, we need our invoice no. or your registration no. to be included in the reference section of the payment.

When it's time to leave the office I look forward to... joining my 'sisters' in the Faultline Chorus – a Sweet Adelines barbershop group based in Lower Hutt. Faultline is a competitive chorus and we work hard at our craft. When on stage we get to wear wigs, red nails and lots of bling!



My name is... Alex Mills-Wallis

I work for the Board as... Professional Standards Coordinator and Legal Advisor.

Previously... I graduated from Victoria University with a double degree in law and political science. After being admitted to the Bar I

left NZ to travel and work as a ski instructor in the US and Canada. My legal experience includes legal research and writing for a Wellington barrister and assisting the Legal Team at the Medical Council of NZ.

My job includes... dealing with notifications of concern and complaints, organising Complaints Assessment Committees (CACs), providing legal advice as well as some policy development.

What I enjoy about my job is... that my job is varied and different every day, I never know what might cross my desk in terms of a complaint or a new issue. I like that it has enabled me to learn and develop new and different skills.

The most challenging part of my job is... chasing people who have not responded to our letters/emails/calls. It would be much easier if people updated their contact details or/and kept us informed of any changes in circumstances.

When it's time to leave the office I look forward to... travelling, wine, skiing and spending time with my family and friends.



My name is... Fleur Nicholas

I work for the Board as... Executive Hearing Officer for the Social Workers Complaints and Disciplinary Tribunal (the Tribunal).

Previously... worked as a lawyer in a range of different roles in private practice, government and the commercial sector. I also have event management experience.

My job includes... co-ordinating the Tribunal process once charges have been laid against registered social workers. This involves preparing paperwork and liaising with the social worker, lawyers and the Tribunal members.

What I enjoy about my job is... the variety. There are lots of different aspects to my role and no day is ever the same.

The most challenging part of my job is... juggling different files with competing deadlines.

When it's time to leave the office I look forward to... spending time with my family.

ANNUAL PRACTISING CERTIFICATE RENEWALS

We are now in the final stages of concluding the Complaints Assessment Committee (CAC) investigations of Registered Social Workers (RSWs) who did not hold valid APCs at the start of the 2015/2016 practising year. Of the 29 RSWs who had not renewed their APC, five have been referred by the CAC to the Tribunal.

It is in everyone's best interest that things do not escalate to a CAC or/and Tribunal hearing as it is a costly process for the Board and can be stressful for those RSWs involved. It also means that registration and APC costs are unlikely to be reduced. To avoid any action being taken by the Board:

- **read the reminder emails and letters** that we send you **and respond accordingly** to avoid any further action being taken by the Board.
- 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 believe that you are not in a social work role then please contact our office** to confirm whether this is the case.

Current APCs expire on 30 June 2016. You can **renew your APC when the online renewal process goes 'live' on 6 May 2016**. All RSWs will receive an APC renewal reminder email on this date.

Please note you may want to update your ID card photo prior to completing the online renewal process. The new photo with your name attached can be emailed to our office prior to completing the online process. Your photo must be a head shot to the standard of a NZ passport photo and needs to be received prior to completing the renewal process or you may be charged for an additional ID card. Email your photo to apcrenewal@swrb.govt.nz.

REVIEW OF THE SOCIAL WORKERS REGISTRATION ACT 2003 UPDATE



The draft review of the Act has been discussed with the Minister for Social Development, Hon. Anne Tolley (the Minister), and the Minister has indicated that she would like the Board to progress further with Board's strategic direction as set out in the review.

The draft review contains five core recommendations and outlines the changes needed to improve the regulatory framework. Nevertheless the Board is mindful that any law change needs to be fit for purpose.

The Minister agreed with the content of the draft recommendations and requested the Board's agreement to refer draft recommendations 1 & 2 to Parliament's Social Service Select Committee (the Select Committee) – the two recommendations set out the Board's position that legislative changes are required for mandatory registration. The Board agreed to the Minister's request and she met with the Select Committee on Wednesday 6 April 2016. The Minister asked the Select Committee to consider conducting an enquiry into the issue of mandatory registration and changes to the legislation. The Minister stated that if Select Committee agreed to undertake this work it would need to be completed before the end of 2016 and recommendations made to the Minister on how to proceed. The Board eagerly awaits the decision of the Select Committee which is expected soon.

The draft review also contained a number of recommendations regarding the future funding of social work education, funding and support of graduates in their first year of employment, the development of a post qualification framework and scopes of practice. The Minister has asked the Board to progress these recommendations further and report back to her before the end of the year with detailed information on the implementation of the recommendations. The Board have agreed to undertake this work and will be consulting with the profession, social work educators, employers of social workers, and the public to further advance this work.

OFF THE WIRE...



Competence five yearly re-certification

Registered social workers who are recertifying are now only required to complete one piece of work, a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) log. A separate self-reflection is no longer required.

As from 1 January 2016 the re-certification is based on the social workers critical reflection contained within their CPD log. This means that social workers will need to transfer the work they have done on the old CPD log template onto the new template.

The cost for re-certification is \$153.32. An example CPD log, the CPD log template, application form, Police vetting form and guidelines are available on our website at www.swrb.govt.nz. If you have any queries about this process please contact the Board on **0508 797 269** or email SWRBcompetence@swrb.govt.nz.

Notification of Convictions

When you renew your APC you are required to declare if you are under investigation for any criminal offence and/or if you have been convicted of a criminal offence in the last practising year. If at any time you are charged with or convicted of an offence please ensure you contact the office and explain the charge/conviction. A member of the Professional Standards team may request a written explanation or further information about the circumstances. Always be open and honest with your employer and the SWRB so that these issues can be resolved.

RSW Online Profiles

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

CODE OF CONDUCT



The Board has recently updated the Code. This was issued on 14 March 2016 and applies to social workers conduct from this date.

The new Code sets out the minimum professional standards of integrity and conduct expected of RSWs and social workers in general. The Code has been expanded. For example, it specifically outlines what and what isn't acceptable online behaviour on social media and networking sites.

The new Code consists of a framework of 11 overarching principles:

1. Act with integrity and honesty
2. Respect the status of Māori as tangata whenua
3. Respect the cultural needs and values of the client
4. Be competent and responsible for your professional development
5. Protect the rights and promote the interests of clients
6. Strive to establish and maintain the trust and confidence of clients
7. Respect the client's right to privacy and confidentiality
8. Work openly and respectfully with colleagues
9. Maintain public trust and confidence in the social work profession
10. Keep accurate records and use technology effectively and safely
11. Be responsible in research and publications

The Code is **NOT** a code of ethics – which is a set of desired values and standards to use when making decisions or taking actions (e.g. try to work for social justice). The Code is about whether specific actions are appropriate or not (e.g. never discriminate).

A copy of the new Code can be found on our website at www.swrb.govt.nz.

COMPETENCE REVIEWS



Competence reviews are conducted where the Board needs to seek further assurance that a RSW is adhering to the professional standards expected. The Board is looking at how the Competence Review process can be improved.

After meeting with regulatory colleagues from the health and teaching professions, we have begun developing a new process which identifies a 'toolkit' of options for reviewing the competence of RSWs. At present the Board uses a face-to-face interview process involving the Board's Senior Social Work Advisor and external experienced social work practitioners (more information about the face-to-face interview process is outlined below).

The 'toolkit' will provide a range of different options for determining the competence of RSWs depending on the issues and risks identified. For example, low risk concerns may be better assessed without needing to have a face-to-face competence assessment. Some of the options already used by health and teacher regulator colleagues include the use of practice study scenarios, undertaking desktop paper reviews and using a competence review panel/interview process in the most serious of cases. As the work progresses we will continue to share some of the proposed developments over the next few months.