



MANDATORY SOCIAL WORKER REGISTRATION

REPORT FROM THE DISCUSSION PAPER 2011

New Zealand Government



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INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR OF THE SOCIAL WORKERS REGISTRATION BOARD

Social workers are professionals who can make an extraordinary difference in the life of vulnerable children, young people, adults and families/whānau. It is a profession that requires specific skills and knowledge to enable the practitioner to successfully work alongside people coping with stressful events. Good social work practice can help clients improve the quality of their life, and support the development of individuals, groups, communities and society as a whole. Poor social work practice can have a negative effect.

After years of debate regarding social work regulation, voluntary registration of social workers was introduced with the passing of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 (the Act). The primary purpose of the Act is to protect the safety of members of the public by ensuring social workers are competent to practise. Under a voluntary system individual social workers can choose whether they are registered or not and whether or not they will be held accountable for their practice through the processes established by the Act. This voluntary registration system therefore leaves the public unprotected by the Act if they suffer poor social work practice from social workers who choose not to register. The Board wants to ensure that all recipients of social work services are protected by the Act and that the public has access to the independent complaints and disciplinary process if necessary as established by the Act.

As part of a five-yearly review of the Act, the Social Workers Registration Board (the Board) released a discussion paper on Mandatory Social Worker Registration to find out the views of New Zealanders on whether it is time to make registration mandatory for all social workers.

Feedback from this process is a resounding “Yes”.

NEXT STEPS FOR THE BOARD

The Board acknowledges the rich and thought provoking input provided by the submissions. The submissions have provided guidance for the way forward for the Board as it moves into the next phase of development.

Move towards mandatory social worker registration

Based on the feedback gained from the discussion paper, the Board is recommending to the Minister for Social Development and Employment that social work registration becomes mandatory. The Board will work with the Minister, Iwi and key social work organisations to ensure the transition from voluntary to mandatory registration is achieved as smoothly as possible.

Culturally appropriate registration

Demonstrating competence to practise social work with Māori and with different ethnic and cultural groups are key requirements of the Act. The Board must also ensure that the aims and aspirations of Māori are integral and on-going priorities, and that access to the views of ethnic and cultural groups within New Zealand is maintained. Ensuring this happens has always been an important priority for the Board and one which will remain a priority. In moving to mandatory registration the Board will work with Māori social service providers and organisations to ensure a bi-cultural approach to this process and to better provide for a culturally inclusive registration system.

The role of the Board

Feedback has highlighted confusion over the different roles and functions that the Board and the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW) fulfil. The Board and the ANZASW have complementary, but very different, roles.

The Board is a crown entity with accountability to the New Zealand public and the Government. The Board gives the public an independent voice. The ANZASW is a professional body for social workers, accountable to its members, giving social workers an independent voice.

The Board acknowledges that confusion can occur over the different roles and intends to take greater responsibility for minimising this confusion.

Cost of registration

Although the cost of registration has been significantly reduced in the past few years, it remains an ongoing concern. The Board is self-funding with registration fees covering the administration of the registration process, Board registration activities and the Complaints and Disciplinary Tribunal. The Board believe there are approximately 3,000 social workers who are eligible for registration who have not yet registered. It is likely that if this number became registered costs could decrease by up to 50%.

Information on section 13 of the Act as a criterion for registration

The Board recognises the wisdom, knowledge, experience and years of practice of a number of current social workers who may not think that they meet the criteria for registration, due to not having a recognised qualification. These social workers could be eligible for registration under section 13. From the feedback received, there is still some confusion over how social workers can use section 13 to gain registration. Over the last few years the Board has worked hard to make the process more accessible and will continue to support this group of social workers to register.

The Board has established a clear registration process and keeps people informed and updated through the Board website: <http://www.swrb.govt.nz/>, and regular Onboard newsletters to all registered social workers and their employers. The Board's secretariat has staff available to provide advice. The Board will continue to look at ways to keep people informed and is always open to any suggestions on how to better get messages out to the public and the social work sector.

This is an exciting time not only for the Board but also the profession. It appears the time has come to move from voluntary to mandatory registration. To make this move successful for both the public and the social work sector, the support of social workers and their employers is needed. The feedback shows that this support is there and it is time to move forward together, ensuring that the benefits of registration are accessible to all.



Toni Hocquard
Chair, Social Workers Registration Board

RECOMMENDATION

Historically the social work profession has operated under a system of self-regulation. When voluntary social worker registration was introduced with the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 (the Act), the Board was charged under this Act to review how this system of self-regulation worked in meeting the purposes of the Act.¹ Feedback from the discussion paper indicates that self-regulation is insufficient as a means of public protection because:

- voluntary registration does not meet the purpose of the Act
- the public are at risk from poor social work practice by people using the title Social Worker outside the safety framework provided by the Act
- moving to mandatory registration is a fundamental step in reducing public risk from poor social work practice by improving the professionalism and accountability of social workers.

The Board supports the feedback gained and recommends:

SOCIAL WORKER REGISTRATION BECOMES MANDATORY

The Board recommends that registration becomes mandatory with the title Social Worker reserved for registered practitioners only.



¹ The review looks at how well the Act protects the safety of members of the public by ensuring that social workers are competent to practise; holds social workers accountable for the way in which they practise; and enhances the professionalism of social workers. It is also to consider whether any amendments to this Act are necessary or desirable (refer page 8).

CONSIDERATIONS TO ENSURE A SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF A MANDATORY SYSTEM

A staged implementation of mandatory registration

Practitioners have had seven years to work towards gaining the required qualifications for registration. The Board estimates that there are now approximately 3000 unregistered social workers who meet the requirements for registration, and could be waiting for registration to become mandatory before applying. Due to the large number of social workers eligible for registration, the Board supports a staged implementation to ensure a successful transition to mandatory registration.

Working in consultation with Iwi Māori providers

Feedback supports the Board to progress and further develop work with Iwi Māori providers to ensure access to the registration process. The Board is looking at how best to improve our work with Iwi Māori providers.

Support and resources required

Feedback shows a clear need for support and resources, particularly in the NGO sector, to accompany the move to mandatory registration. The Board will advocate for the additional resources required and make recommendations to the Minister for Social Development and Employment.



FEEDBACK SUMMARY

The Board received 422 submissions from across a range of individuals and groups throughout New Zealand on the discussion paper – Mandatory Social Worker Registration. The following six key themes emerged from this feedback:

1. Support for New Zealand to move to mandatory social worker registration
2. Effects of mandatory registration
3. Public risk from poor social work practice
4. Transitional requirements
5. Whether the benefits of registration outweigh the costs
6. Additional comments

SUPPORT FOR NEW ZEALAND TO MOVE TO MANDATORY SOCIAL WORKER REGISTRATION

Of the 422 submissions:

- 399 (95%) are in support of moving towards mandatory registration
- 23 (5%) are not in support of moving towards mandatory social worker registration (it was unclear in this category whether respondents supported any form of registration).

EFFECTS OF MANDATORY REGISTRATION

Of the 422 submissions received, 412 (98%) provided comment regarding the effects of mandatory registration.

- 327 (79%) of these respondents note positive effects;
- 85 (21%) note negative effects.

Some of these respondents note both positive and negative effects of mandatory registration in their submission.

Submissions relating to positive effects of mandatory registration are centred around providing better quality and safer practice for clients by improving and maintaining social work standards and accountability.

Submissions noting negative effects focussed on how mandatory registration could affect the employer. For example, the financial cost could affect employers and impact on employment opportunities for social workers as a consequence. No negative effects to client safety are noted with moving to mandatory registration.

PUBLIC RISK FROM POOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Of the 422 submissions, 380 (90%) provided comment on this topic.

- 353 (93%) of these respondents state that there are public risks from poor social work practice causing clients emotional and financial harm. The most common reason cited for the current public risk is the use of the title Social Worker by people who do not have a social work qualification.
- Risks are particularly noted where there is risk concerning family violence, child protection, the elderly and mental health service consumers.
- Respondents see moving to mandatory registration as an essential step in reducing public risk from poor social work practice.

TRANSITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Of the 422 submissions, 198 (47%) of these provide comment on the transitional requirements needed to ensure a successful move to mandatory registration.

- 130 (66%) of these respondents support a set transitional period and 36 (18%) advocate for an immediate move to mandatory registration.
- 105 (53%) also comment on the need for resources to manage the transition to mandatory registration. This is a particular concern for the NGO sector.

WHETHER THE BENEFITS OF REGISTRATION OUTWEIGH THE COSTS

Of the 422 submissions received, 202 (48%) provided comment on whether the benefits of moving to registration outweigh the costs.

- 186 (92%) of these respond that “yes” the benefits would outweigh costs,
- 12 (6%) responded “no” and
- 4 (2%) were unsure.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

125 (30%) of the 422 respondents commented on alternatives to mandatory registration.

While 98 (78%) of these respondents state that moving to mandatory registration is the best alternative to the current voluntary system, 27 (22%) generally require employers taking more responsibility for social work practice, and/or require mandatory conditions prior to practice (such as, degree level qualification, competency, national register).

Additional comments were also provided in the following three areas

- better social work education (92 (22%) of the 422 submissions),
- usage of section 13 of the Act (43 (10%) of the 422 submissions) and
- confusion with the role and functions of the ANZASW and the Board (12 (3%) of the 422 submissions).



BACKGROUND

THE SOCIAL WORKERS REGISTRATION ACT (2003)

In 2003, voluntary registration of social workers was introduced with the passing of the Social Workers Registration Act (the Act). The Act was introduced to:

- protect the safety of members of the public by ensuring social workers are competent and accountable
- create a framework for the registration of social workers in New Zealand
- provide for the Social Workers Registration Board (the Board) to promote the benefits of social worker registration
- enhance the professionalism of social workers.

The Act provided for the Board and the Social Workers Complaints and Disciplinary Tribunal to administer the framework the Act created. The Act is intended to provide the public with the assurance that registered social workers meet professional standards of competent practice, undertake on-going professional development, and are held accountable for the way in which they practise.

Only social workers who are registered, however, are accountable for their practice through the complaints and disciplinary processes established by the Act. The Act does not regulate social workers who are not registered, or provide protection for clients of unregistered social workers.

REVIEW OF THE ACT

The Board is undertaking a five-yearly review of the Act, as required under section 104 of the Act, and will report its findings to the Minister for Social Development and Employment.

Section 104 requires the Board to:

1. review the operation of the Act and its own operations
2. consider the extent to which the Act, and the system of voluntary registration it provides for –
 - a. protects the safety of members of the public by ensuring that social workers are competent to practise;
 - b. holds social workers accountable for the way in which they practise; and
 - c. enhances the professionalism of social workers
3. consider whether any amendments to this Act are necessary or desirable.

On 15 March 2011, the Board released the discussion paper on *Mandatory Social Worker Registration* as part of the process for the review of the Act.

WHAT IS 'SOCIAL WORK'?

The International Federation of Social Work have as their definition of Social Work:

The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social.

Under the Act, the following criteria are required for a person to gain social worker registration:

- a Board recognised New Zealand or overseas social work qualification (or, under section 13 of the Act, enough social work experience in New Zealand to compensate for the lack of a Board-recognised qualification)
- assessed as competent to practice social work
- a fit and proper person to practise social work
- assessed as competent to practise social work with Māori
- assessed as competent to practise social work with different ethnic and cultural groups
- enough practical experience in practising social work.

The Board has determined that practising social work does not only involve direct interaction with clients but includes managing and/or supervising other social workers, teaching social work practice or theory and generally roles that utilise an individual's social work knowledge, skills, values and ethics.



MANDATORY SOCIAL WORKER REGISTRATION – A SUBMISSION SUMMARY

The Board released the discussion paper to gain feedback from the public on whether there should be a move from voluntary to mandatory social worker registration. Feedback gained will help inform reports made to the Minister for Social Development and Employment on this matter, including the Board's five yearly review report on the Act. To ensure that any recommendation made to the Minister is truly representative of the New Zealand population, there were no restrictions placed on those who could provide feedback.

DOES MANDATORY REGISTRATION BETTER PROTECT THE PUBLIC AND THE PROFESSION?

Countries that have introduced mandatory social worker registration include: Brazil, Canada, England, France, Hong Kong, Iceland, Israel, Finland, Japan, Lithuania, Northern Ireland, Russia, Romania, Scotland, Slovakia, South Africa, the majority of the United States, and Wales.

Although there appears to be a move internationally to mandatory social work registration, there has been little evaluation on how well mandatory registration for social work is working. There is also little evidence about the effects of registration on the profession. Articles on general occupational regulation, however, tend to see registration as improving professionalism and standards, but only if the application of the registration system is consistent and enforced. There is little information internationally or nationally to ascertain the extent that people are at risk from poor social work practice.

The discussion paper sought to find out whether people perceive there are public risks associated with the voluntary registration system and whether New Zealand should move towards mandatory registration. Public feedback also provides better information on the potential implications and costs of mandatory registration.

DISTRIBUTION OF DISCUSSION PAPER

The discussion paper was released for consultation on the Board's web site on 15 March 2011. Copies of the discussion paper and a letter from the Board's Chairperson were also posted and/or emailed to:

- Ministers of Government
- Members of Parliament
- District Health Boards
- Employers of registered social workers (approx. 658 organisations)
- All registered social workers (approx. 3000 social workers)
- Ministry of Social Development (MSD) non-government organisations (NGOs) social service providers (approx. 2,609 organisations)
- NGOs with employees using the MSD Social Work Study Awards (approx. 259 organisations)
- Main social service umbrella groups.

To help inform the general public of the discussion paper, articles were placed in several social service newsletters, and a public notice was placed in local and national newspapers. Members of the Board also made themselves available to speak to groups in the community. Approximately 4000 copies of the discussion paper were distributed.

The closing date for submissions was initially 1 July 2011. Due to a number of requests for an extension, the closing date was deferred to 1 August 2011.

SECTORS REPRESENTED IN THE SUBMISSIONS

The Board received 422 submissions from across a range of individuals and groups throughout New Zealand.

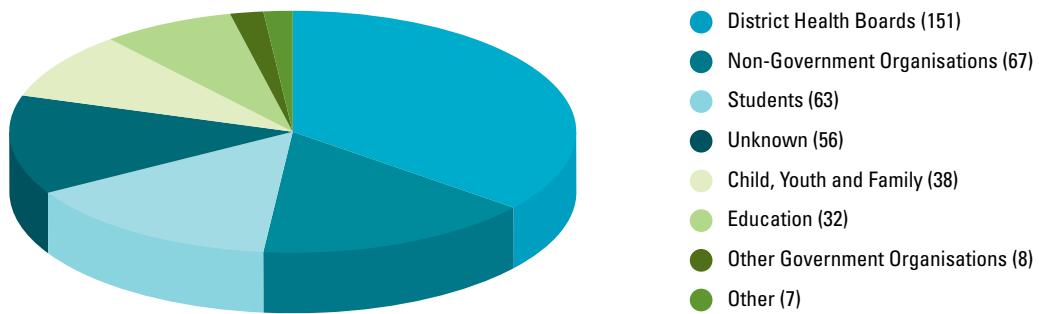
- 399 (95%) submissions were in support of moving to mandatory registration
- 23 (5%) submissions supported registration remaining voluntary
- 390 (92%) submissions came from individuals
- 32 (8%) submissions were made on behalf of a group or organisation(s). The largest number of individuals represented by one submission came from the ANZASW, a professional body for social workers.

ANZASW ran its own membership opinion survey based on the mandatory registration discussion paper. The ANZASW has a national membership of approximately 4,000 members and the submission represents the views of 1109 (27%) members who responded to the survey. Of this number, 51.5% support mandatory registration, 15.7% oppose, 5% neither support nor oppose and 28% did not comment on whether they supported or opposed mandatory registration. Comments from the survey reflect those in submissions received by the Board and are incorporated in the feedback.

Appendix A lists the groups/organisations that provided submissions. Due to privacy, individual names have not been listed.

Where identifiable, submissions are affiliated to the sectors shown in the diagram below.

Where submissions are from



REPORTING OF FEEDBACK

The discussion paper gave points and questions for people to consider when providing feedback. The Board also provided the option of a feedback form with questions from the discussion paper. Submitters chose to supply feedback using either the feedback form or by writing to the Board. The feedback form is included as Appendix B.

Through the thematic analysis of the feedback six key themes emerged. The number of respondents contributing to each theme varies significantly. In order to reflect this accurately, the number of respondents who commented within each theme is noted.

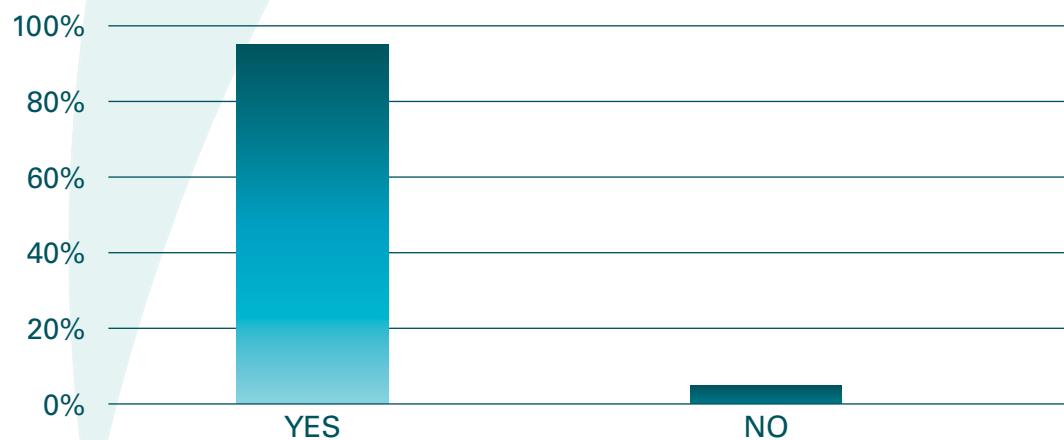
The following six key themes emerged:

1. Support for New Zealand to move towards mandatory social worker registration
2. Effects of mandatory registration
3. Public risk from poor social work practice
4. Transitional requirements
5. Whether the benefits of registration outweigh the costs
6. Additional comments

KEY THEMES

SUPPORT FOR NEW ZEALAND TO MOVE TOWARDS MANDATORY SOCIAL WORKER REGISTRATION

Support for New Zealand to move towards mandatory social worker registration



Of the 422 submissions:

- 399 (95%) are in support of moving towards mandatory registration
- 23 (5%) are not in support of moving towards mandatory social worker registration (it was unclear from submissions whether these respondents supported any form of registration).

Yes – move toward mandatory registration

The main reason cited by respondents who support moving towards mandatory registration is that it will provide better protection for the public than the current voluntary registration system offers. Mandatory registration is viewed as an effective tool in ensuring that all social workers have consistent and universal competency, accountability and on-going skill development.

The following comments reflect the feedback given by the majority of respondents:

I support a move from voluntary to mandatory registration of social workers. I believe mandatory registration will:

- be likely to enhance the protection of all those involved in interactions with social workers
- improve public perception of social work as a profession
- require a particular set of standards, common to all those using the title of social worker.

Social workers are involved in the lives of some of society's most vulnerable. The public are often quick to judge the actions of social workers and to lay blame on them for the ills of society; children who are abused and neglected, young people who offend or display behavioural difficulties, and families whose own problems and addictions significantly influence their ability to parent. Mandatory registration is likely to improve the way in which social workers are perceived. Along with other professionals who work with children, young people and families – midwives, teachers, lawyers – social workers will be more likely to be seen as being professionals with a real contribution to make, with accountability through a Complaints and Disciplinary Tribunal to which they may become subjected if their work is less than professional.

Social work registration in the current health environment has already been seen as improving professionalism within the health sector. Mandatory registration is the best solution for providing the public with protection against unsafe social work practice. Mandatory registration will ensure that all health social workers hold a minimum professional standard of qualification, are competent to practice, hold a current annual practising certificate and uphold the current Code of Conduct. Registration is essential in raising standards and provides a greater sense of public accountability.

Social workers work closely with people assisting them with important life changing decisions. It is essential that we can be certain that social work is provided to a set minimum standard, is of a consistent quality and is monitored through external transparent means. The potential for harm on emotional and psychological levels from social work not being delivered to a professional standard can be significant. By confirming mandatory social work registration, unregistered persons are prevented from practising social work and the risk of poor practice is minimised. We believe the risk to the public of not ensuring that all social workers are registered is far more costly (emotionally and financially) than the cost of registration. It is vitally important that employers and the public know that social workers are well trained, have a minimum qualification, are supervised, and are fit and able and proper to do this work. With mandatory registration the public will know that they can expect a standard of practice, that they have a way to address any concerns regarding social work services and that these concerns will be investigated by an appropriate agency.

No – keep registration voluntary

The main reason the 23 (5%) respondents who do not support moving to mandatory registration gave is that responsibility for ensuring safe practice should be with the employer, not a government organisation. The following comments reflect feedback for not supporting mandatory registration.

Supporting social workers with reasonable caseloads, adequate supervision and adequate professional development would be a much better solution (than mandatory registration).

I'm concerned at the variability in assessment process in social work programmes. I'm still hearing of too many marginal practitioners getting through programmes and being able to practise and register.

People can always manipulate systems to suit them. Social Workers may tick the boxes to meet registration but may still have some poor practice.

I find it really difficult to see what improvements have been made to my practice since being registered. Therefore I don't see how mandatory registration is going to improve other social workers practice.

Culturally appropriate registration

Of the 422 submissions, 24 (7%) respondents commented on the importance of ensuring that mandatory registration be culturally appropriate and be used as a means to ensure quality social workers who can work across cultures as well as ensuring a mandatory bicultural approach that is universal for all social workers. The following comments reflect feedback given for this theme.

Aotearoa New Zealand social workers need to be able to work effectively with a variety of people in a variety of contexts. We need a profession able to utilise diverse cultural world view and approaches. Rules around registration need to develop rather than diminish this capacity.

Currently the most significant problem with protecting the public against poor social work practice is that there is no current universal system which recognises biculturalism in practice. We suggest that Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the notion of partnership is an approach that requires collaborative and collective engagement to ensure a bicultural approach is mandatory and sustained to inform principle practice within the profession.

The status quo of voluntary registration signals inconsistencies towards public safety due to the following points:

- a. Bicultural principles are not universal.
- b. The current system does not currently recognize the place of tangata whenua and their contributions to social work practice in Aotearoa/New Zealand.
- c. Maintaining the status quo will maintain inconsistencies within the profession whereby standards will apply to some practitioners and not others.



Consider other methods to complement the competency assessment e.g. include a kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face) panel interview or implementing an organisational auditing system that focuses on practitioner's competency. We ask the registration board to consider the bi-cultural implications of mandatory registration. It is our belief that registration completed in its current form is a western process that does not sufficiently acknowledge other ways in which we could process registration, for example, including tangata whenua perspectives.

NZCCSS (New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services) understands the Board is trying to support people from marae based organisations and is open to talking about how people can be registered... It appears we need to find ways of being enabling, e.g. a recent Families Commission publication, Whānau Taketake Māori, (2010) calls for much greater recognition of the leadership provided by Māori women and kaumātua at the hapū and whānau level. In the same way, the Board needs to ensure clear benefits to the community flow from compulsory registration. The discussion document says that only 14% of social workers in the NGO sector are registered. NZCCSS's anecdotal knowledge suggests that this is likely to be even lower in Māori organisations. We are concerned that compulsory registration could undermine the ability of Māori for Māori initiatives to provide effective social work, and run counter to the Families Commission's aspirations for existing skills to be recognised.

We (the Māori Party) would like to support the Social Workers Registration Board, which was established in 2003, in the ways in which they seek to be inclusive of tangata whenua representation, and terms of reference which include Te Tiriti o Waitangi... It is vital that Te Tiriti o Waitangi is interwoven into social work training so as to encourage an understanding of kaupapa and practice, but also to improve practice including in association with relevant institutions such as DHB's and schools about the principles of partnership, protection and participation. Te Tiriti o Waitangi expresses a commitment to pursue social justice and to work against injustice.

Training needs to be bi-cultural, qualifications need to be updated to include bi-cultural practice and often they are not.

Of particular concern is that some of the smaller agencies are those delivering a service to Māori and Pacific people by Māori and Pacific people. There is a danger of these agencies being unable to employ all staff at degree level or to afford to help staff through study toward a degree while working.

NZCCSS would want to ensure cost did not mean the end of some effective marae-based programmes. This is particularly important given the disproportionate representation of Māori in benefit statistics (32.5% of all benefit recipients, and 36% of unemployment benefit recipients – MSD factsheets). Some marae based programmes have few or no registered social workers.

EFFECTS OF MANDATORY REGISTRATION

Number of submissions received on this section	412 (98%)
Percentage of submissions received under this section that note positive effects of moving towards mandatory registration	327 (79%)
Percentage of submissions received under this section that note negative effects of moving towards mandatory registration	85 (21%)

The perceived effects of mandatory registration provide the highest percentage of responses. Of the 422 submissions received:

- 412 (98%) provide comments regarding the effects of mandatory registration. Of these respondents, many note both positive and negative effects.
- 327 (79%) respondents note positive effects
- 85 (21%) note negative effects in moving to mandatory registration.

Positive effects of mandatory registration

These 327 (79%) responses are centred on increasing social work standards and accountability to provide safer practice for the public.

The following are the most common positive effects cited:

- provide compulsory minimum standards, accountability and qualification levels for all social workers
- improving social work practice as practitioners meet, maintain and develop set social work standards
- improving protection for vulnerable people by minimising the risk of poor social work practice
- promoting the profession
- enhancing public trust and confidence in the profession
- providing a central register/complaints and disciplinary governing body
- preventing unregistered social workers from practising
- removing incompetent/unprofessional social workers from practice
- bringing social work in-line with similar regulated professions
- decreasing the cost of registration.

The following comments reflect the main sentiments expressed in this section:

As an employer we support this proposal for the following reasons:

1. Registration with a regulatory authority allows for peer review that is external to the employer or the self-employed thus ensuring a framework which can maintain standards, improve performance and provide credibility.
2. There will be increased accountability by the social worker to the public as the registration process also allows for a professional conduct process should that be required. This is important as social workers work closely in people's lives and can, therefore, potentially have significant influence within the decision making process of those people. Further, social workers are often working with those who are most vulnerable within our society and so this accountability is essential.

Unlike the HPCA where regulation of the various health professions is mandatory, it is not mandatory for social workers to be registered under the SWRA. This fundamental difference results in only partial protection of the public by those social workers who choose to become registered. It also perpetuates the difference in professionals standards and standing between social workers and other health professions. Mandatory registration will redress these inequities and most importantly meet the primary purpose of the SWRA to protect the public. We therefore urge that the registration of social workers is made mandatory as soon as possible.

I support mandatory registration. Mandatory registration ensures the welfare and safety of the general public in many ways. Firstly, it contributes to preventing the most vulnerable groups in society from experiencing poor social work practice by ensuring that only competent and qualified social workers are in the field. Secondly, it promotes public trust and confidence in the profession by having social workers accountable in their jobs. Thirdly, it provides a way for ensuring that social workers are up-to-date in both knowledge and skills. The benefits of welfare to the community outweigh the financial costs involved with mandatory registration. Mandatory registration is strongly compliant with the ethics of social work, that is, to prevent harm and increase welfare to the communities we serve.

Mandatory registration increases professionalism, social work identity, and provides a legal pathway to deal with issues. Increases professional development and quality practice resulting in best outcomes for individuals and families.

Compliance has teeth (whereas voluntary registration doesn't). It ensures compliance with national standards, ethics etc. We see it as a strength, as a sound model and as best practice that registration for social workers is linked to competence. A voluntary system is not sustainable in the long term and cannot ensure maintenance of standards and protection of the public.

Mandatory registration will ensure all practising social workers have completed a uniformed competency assessment, professional development and adherence to a national code of conduct, essential elements to protecting the public and clinicians. This will provide national consistency across the various sectors supporting a flexible workforce whilst maintaining an agreed standard.

The skills, values and competencies required for effective social work practice are highly complex and require a disciplined, professional approach. The need for on-going professional development, as knowledge of human development and social dysfunction increases, is critical.

Registration is essential in raising standards and provides a greater sense of public accountability. Well-educated social workers, especially those that receive regular supervision and continuing professional development are much better equipped to develop strong advocacy and innovative strategies to meet the needs of a diverse group of clients/patients. The chances of effective social work practice are significantly increased if social workers are required to engage in professional development activities and regular supervision.

Having come from a country where registration was mandatory - I believe that social workers who are registered will be held in higher esteem by other professionals and by clients - it will raise the profile of social work as a profession as opposed to something that anyone can do. If a client gets bad service from a social worker we are all tarred with the same.

Members of the public who receive social work services are more likely to be vulnerable i.e. to be very young, very old, ill, mentally unwell. Mandatory registration would offer greater public trust and confidence within this vulnerable group in that when they access social work services only qualified, competent person's will offer services, and that should members of the Public feel the service they have received fall short they can seek redress from an independent body.

The social workers have responded today that social work registration being mandatory would add credibility to the social work field. It would eliminate unqualified social workers from doing social work both within government service lines and within non-government organisations. It is perceived by this group that the quality of social work provision is currently not guaranteed, as any person can be called a social worker. Registration will guarantee at least minimum qualification and competency. The social work group considered that the mandatory registration of social workers would also add a level of recognition to the role and to the title. The social work group recognised that preventing unregistered social workers from performing the tasks of registered social workers would be useful, as it builds confidence in the profession and would build this confidence within stakeholders, especially within the statutory social work field.

Negative effects of mandatory registration

These 85 (21%) respondents did not cite any negative effects to public safety, or the quality of social work practice. Negative effects mainly centred on how mandatory registration will affect the employer or the social worker or the financial costs involved.

The following are the most common negative effects cited:

- increased costs for employers/social worker
- impact on good social workers who do not have a qualification
- social work job titles changed to avoid registration costs
- lack of qualified social workers in the social work workforce (particularly in rural areas).

Themes that emerged included:

The cost of registration is quite prohibitive, especially for those in the NGO sector. Individuals on low salaries find it hard to justify expenditure on something that they don't necessarily need anyway, and NGOs, already feeling the pinch financially, struggle to meet the cost of registration, especially if they employ several social workers. Related to that is the fact that social workers quite rightly expect their wages to reflect the increased professionalisation of their working environment, yet many organisations are unable to pay higher wages and thus need to either pay less, or employ less; neither ideal scenarios.

Social workers may have a higher pay expectation once qualified and registered which has the potential to see those workers disappear to government departments leaving NGO providers merely as a stepping stone or 'training ground'. The latter would be due to the availability of the NGO Social Work Study Awards. Staff may stay with an NGO provider only until they have reached their qualification with the assistance of the agency and an NGO Study Award, then become registered and leave. NGOs contribute significantly to the development and training of Social Workers, but may find themselves in a position where they never reap the rewards of their efforts. This may also be significant with regard to Government or other funders requiring agencies to have a number/percentage of their staff registered in order to achieve and maintain approval status and funding, as NGOs may struggle to get staff to registration level and then retain registered staff.

Some agencies will be confronted by the challenge of providing social work services without actually employing registered social workers, and will need to remedy their practice - or 'come clean' about the services they actually offer. Individuals who have been practicing as social workers but not qualified as such may be impacted. There will be an increased cost to the community sector, which may currently employ large numbers of unregistered/unqualified social workers. These issues are not negative, as they will lead to more robust and safer practice, but they may in some quarters be constructed as such.

I think that some providers of social services will consider the costs too high and may 're-name' the work social workers currently undertake by giving it other titles such as 'resource assistant' 'whānau support worker' etc. thus creating a layer of 'para-professionals' who will be deemed to not need to meet the standards of education and accountability of social workers. This has significant possibilities to undermine our profession.

There will be winners and losers. The losers will be social workers who can't be registered because they don't have academic qualifications, can't meet section 13 criteria, can't pass a competency assessment. Social workers in my experience get uncomfortable when the spectre of professionalism appears to nurture elitism, or a two tiered status, and I think this will be inevitable. Ideological battles may begin with "registered" social workers seen as appendages of the state, and "unregistered" social workers being seen as advocates for the dispossessed and powerless. A great oppressor/oppressed debate is likely to ensue, and may have a polarising effect within the profession.

Possible effects of mandatory registration on main employers of social workers

Many of the submissions comment on possible effects mandatory registration could have on social work employers. Main employers represented in the feedback are District Health Boards, NGOs, and Child, Youth and Family. Submissions received are from social workers, managers and chief executives.

District Health Boards

Of the 422 submissions received, 151 (36%) are identified as coming from individuals or groups employed by a District Health Board. Of these 151 submissions, 150 submissions (99%) are in support of mandatory registration:

In the New Zealand District Health Board (DHB) Health environment, health social workers are active members of their multi-disciplinary teams. They participate in the team's assessments and daily make decisions regarding diagnosis, treatment interventions and risk to the service users and their families. The service users and families/whānau must be protected against unsafe social work practice. Mandatory registration is the best vehicle for providing the public with protection against unsafe social work practice.

At Hawke's Bay District Health Board, social workers have been actively encouraged to become registered. We are currently very close to a target of 100% registration of the social work workforce. We welcome mandatory social work registration and see this providing assurance to the people of Hawke's Bay that Health Social Workers are professional, competent and accountable.

In recognition of the value of registration for our social work workforce, for the past three years our organisation has actively supported social workers to become registered, employing only those with a registerable qualification and providing mentoring to assist with meeting the other requirements for registration. We also continue to work to support our existing staff to meet the registration requirements.

In the health environment, where a higher proportion of social workers have become registered since 2003, there are already noticeable improvements in professionalism and standards. It is understood that mandatory social work registration will see this happen across the wider social work sector. Mandatory social worker registration will ensure that only registered social workers will be able to work as social workers and will ensure they have: successfully completed an agreed qualification, are fit and proper to work as social workers, have attained sufficient practical experience, have been assessed as competent to practice social work in Aotearoa, have been assessed as competent to practice social work with Māori and with other different cultural groups in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Social work registration in the current health environment has already been seen as improving professionalism and standards, and this will also happen across the wider social work sector if the application of the registration system is consistent and enforced in other sectors (e.g. CYF and NGOs). Occupations within New Zealand that have mandatory registration include medical, nursing and other allied health professions including pharmacists midwives, physiotherapists, psychologists, nurses, teachers, dieticians, medical practitioners, occupational therapists and barristers/solicitors. Many of these professions work alongside social workers employed in mental health services and will absolutely support the mandatory registration of social workers so that they can safely refer clients to social work practitioners in the ADHB and across other community sectors.

DHBs accept the view that mandatory registration of social workers would place a potentially significant cost burden on the NGO sector, but we are willing and prepared to look at new ways of working with our NGO partners to ensure that all consumers of social work services have appropriate access to competent and safe health social work practice. These discussions and changed practices are already underway in the mental health setting.

Non-Government Organisations (NGOs)

Of the 422 submissions, 67 (16%) are identified as coming from individuals or groups within the NGO sector.

- 63 (94%) are in support of moving towards mandatory registration
- 4 (6%) against.

Cost and transitional requirements of mandatory registration for NGOs, however, are noted by many NGO submissions as needing to be addressed prior to mandatory registration taking effect

"Mandatory registration" provides a mechanism for ensuring a good standard of practice through its emphasis on continuous education and process for removal/deregistering. It ensures rigorous standards of practice, and offers a complainant a meaningful forum to which to take complaints.

UNICEF NZ supports the proposal for mandatory registration of social workers and in particular those with responsibilities for decisions concerning children's safety and welfare... We submit that requiring all social workers to be registered can reduce the potential for harm from inadequate, unnecessary, inappropriate or incompetent intervention.

NZCCS asks the Board to ensure that prior to compulsory registration being required, greater levels of funding to assist NGOs to achieve registration of their staff is in place.

The NGO sector is experiencing a significant growth in demand for working with families/individuals, often with complex issues due to other (Government) sectors tightening their criteria and referring clients to the NGO sector. Legislation needs to create an environment in which registration is achievable, affordable and able to be maintained both for individual workers and employers.

Child, Youth and Family

38 of the 422 submissions (9%) are identified as employees of Child, Youth and Family.

- 34 submissions (89%) are in support of mandatory registration.
- 4 (11%) against.

The stance from Child, Youth and Family as an organisation is as follows:

In principle, Child, Youth and Family is supportive of the increasing professionalisation of social workers. Mandatory registration is a significant step towards this. However, Child, Youth and Family's professionalisation strategy is not contingent on this.

Mandatory registration of social workers working with the most vulnerable children, young people and their families will strengthen social work accountability and the quality of social work practice.

the confidence of the public in social work as a profession and contribute significantly to improving the quality of practice. It would also provide access to an independent complaints process and regulation that does not apply to these social workers at present.

Child, Youth and Family support mandatory registration occurring over a three year period to enable organisations to ensure staff are able to complete qualifications and the registration process. Child, Youth and Family also see utilising section 13 of the Act as an important factor in ensuring staff with extensive practice experience become registered.

PUBLIC RISK FROM POOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Number of submissions received on this section	380 (90%)
Percentage of submissions received under this section that note current public risks from poor social work practice	353 (93%)
Percentage of submissions received under this section that see no current public risk from poor social work practice	27 (7%)

Of the 380 (90%) respondents commenting on whether there are current risks to the public from poor social work practice, 353 (93%) indicate public risk from poor social work practice can cause clients emotional and financial harm particularly when practice is concerning family violence, child protection, the elderly and mental health issues. Respondents saw moving to mandatory registration as an essential step to reduce public risks from poor social work practice.

The following are the most common reasons cited for the current public risk from poor social work practice:

- use of the title Social Worker by unqualified people
- a lack of consistent professional standards and accountability in social work causing the quality of social work practice to vary significantly
- social workers and employers of social workers not knowing what standards to expect
- clients not being aware of what standards to expect from their social worker and not having access to an independent complaint process that covers all social workers
- lack of adequate supervision, training and support for social workers.

The following comments give a general overview of the recurring feedback in this theme:

The public at the moment is protected against poor practice only by those who are registered social workers. Without mandatory registration – and protection of the title ‘social worker’ – the ability to protect the public is limited. Unsafe or incompetent practitioners do not risk being ‘struck off’ if they do not require to be registered in order to be employed as a social worker. The status quo allows unsafe or incompetent practitioners to be ‘social workers’ without any requirement for qualifications or quality assurance from the profession.

Organisations can potentially employ people in social work roles without appropriate qualifications, without ensuring they are fit for practice, without ensuring a minimum standard of practice competency, and without investment in continuing professional development of the practitioner. This potentially exposes clients to practitioners who have poor or unsafe practice. Social workers are attending to the needs of those most vulnerable – we should not be exposing them to greater risk by our involvement.

Currently there is no way that the public can expect that all social workers working meet minimum standards of education and competence. With a voluntary system of regulation uneducated and incompetent practitioners can call themselves social workers and therefore work with vulnerable clients without the necessary skills and knowledge required.

Social work practice is constantly becoming more complex and complicated. The profession needs to constantly review its theories, methods, values and practices to maintain risk management. Maintaining the ‘status quo’ is therefore not an option.

The view that a kind, well intentioned person from a helping agency who provides advice in a crisis is performing professional social work has been thoroughly debunked. New Zealand cannot risk decisions of life long consequence for children being made by inadequately trained or unskilled practitioners who have no accountability to an authority which defines and monitors standards and ethics for practice.

The title of social worker can be used by anyone, regardless of whether they have the training, knowledge and skills required. Well-meaning people, without a theoretical knowledge base, good self-awareness, a kete of appropriate skills etc. can lead to a worsening of a client’s situation.

“untrained” Social Workers tend to work from subjective, personal experience and belief systems rather than competencies, standards of practice and a recognised code of ethics.

There is no mandated requirement for social work practitioner competencies to be monitored and maintained as this is currently voluntary. Similarly there is no official mechanism to ensure that practitioners are regularly reviewed as fit for practice. The lack of regulated practice standards means that organizations and individual practitioners can develop a variety of practices that have the potential to fall outside of, or fall short of, the social work scope of practice. This potential for inconsistency of service presents a significant risk to the consumers or clients of such services. When inadequate or unsuitable practices are identified it is very difficult for organisations to then deal with the practitioner concerned, given that the ethics and standards of the profession are essentially voluntary.

As registration is not currently mandatory, it is up to individual agencies to ensure their workers are competent to practice as 'social workers'....Employers, who come from a variety of backgrounds, have a variety of interpretations of what 'social work' is, and bring to bear their own interpretations on what skills are desirable. Subsequently, there is no coherent view among social workers as to the skills, values and competencies required, and social work practice therefore varies hugely.

Organisations can potentially employ people in social work roles without appropriate qualifications, without ensuring they are fit to practice, without ensuring a minimum standard of practice competency, and without investment in continuing professional development of the practitioner. This potentially exposes clients to practitioners who have poor or unsafe practice. Social workers are attending to the needs of those most vulnerable – we should not be exposing them to greater risk by our involvement.

By retaining the status quo, children and families can get an unregistered, unqualified social worker who does not give a professional service and they do not know any better. Clients also don't know that they can, or where to complain. This makes it less likely they will seek help in the future which places them at risk.

A member of the public, using social work services, does not have a guideline upon which to base their expectations of social work, and they have no recourse of complaint should their experience fall short of these expectations, short of going through the employer. And again, the employer then places their own interpretation upon what a social work role is and acts accordingly. In such a muddled environment, it is inevitable that poor practice can occur; and it is not helped if there is no one body who defines what is 'good' and conversely 'poor' practice.

Currently an organisation's range of responses to poor social work practice is reliant on performance management practices and policies, which vary from employer to employer. Furthermore employment law sets a high threshold for misconduct and competency and therefore the failing has to be of a degree that harm could well have been ongoing for some time. There is limited ability to hold staff to account for their professional practice when adherence to the Social Worker Code of Ethics and standards is not monitored by a regulatory body and consequences applied. Currently there is a risk that a social worker with poor practice can simply move on and practice somewhere else without ever addressing the issues of concern (or being deregistered).

Registration also allows for de-registration if a person is deemed to practice in an unsafe way. If registration is mandatory, presumably there will be a record of people who have been subject to disciplinary action/de-registered, precluding them from being able to work in social work role until any issues have been resolved. Without mandatory registration, all it takes is for a potential applicant to omit to mention a previous employment where they have been disciplined, and there is no ability for the employer to know otherwise.

TRANSITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Number of submissions received on this section	198 (47%)
Percentage of submissions received under this section in support of a set transitional period for moving to mandatory social worker registration	130 (66%)
Percentage of submissions received under this section in support of an immediate transition to mandatory social worker registration	36 (18%)
Percentage of submissions received under this section requesting increased resources, funding, and subsidies to manage a transition to mandatory registration	105 (53%)

Of the 422 submissions, 198 (47%) provide comment on the transitional requirements needed to ensure a successful move to mandatory registration. The main area of comment is on whether a transitional period is required.

- 130 (66%) support a set transitional period, and
- 36 (18%) advocate for immediate transition.

Respondents in support of a set transitional period see this as an opportunity for un-registered social workers to gain the requirements needed for registration and enable employers to support workers in this task.

Of the 130 submissions supporting a transition period,

- 106 (81%) do not cite a specific time-period, only that one was required, and
- 24 (12%) cite a required transitional period of between one and five years

The following comments reflect the feedback in this theme.

Need to give those that do not make the minimum criteria time to get their qualification up to scratch – needs to be time limited though.

There should be a transition time (maximum two years) but not too long as this has been signalled for some considerable time already and the ability to be provisionally registered as long as engaged in appropriate study allows for a range of options.

Discussion was also had on a transitional plan for social workers who do not currently have registration. Once again, it was decided within this social work group that eight years has been the transition and that a date should be set in stone for all social workers to be registered or re-evaluate their status or their desire to work within the social work field. As such, no transitional requirement or transitional plan is recommended or suggested by this group.

Mandatory registration would impose significant transitional costs as a large number of social workers had to become registered. Provision must be made for those costs by the government, so that they are not borne by organisations – particularly non-governmental organisations which can ill-afford such cost increases – nor by individuals.

Even if they (NGOs) are fully supportive of compulsory registration, paying registration costs for the 86% of NGO social workers who are currently not registered is likely to be prohibitive. This is without any consideration of training costs incurred to meet registration eligibility criteria.

The PSA's members are generally supportive of mandatory registration...However, the PSA has a number of concerns about the implications of mandatory registration. These are around the cost and process for registration, in particular the burden that will be borne by individual members and their organisations if they are compelled to register.

There will be transitional costs (e.g. for NGOs) to factor in costs of registration – organisations will need partnerships with the Crown to carry these costs or risk dilution of qualified workforce/reduction of standards.

Other themes regarding transitioning to mandatory registration include:

- the necessity for the Board to educate, promote and work with key social service areas and the public regarding mandatory registration
- concern over whether job titles would change to avoid registration, need for defining social work.

The SWRB needs to promote registration and educate employers to the importance of this and how to support staff to gain registration.

There must be a major promotion within the NGO sector many of which have a negative view fostered by popular myths and lack of information.

Some agencies will be confronted by the challenge of providing social work services without actually employing registered social workers. There will be a risk that some agencies will avoid registration with job titles etc.

There are real risks that employers would react to mandatory registration by seeking to re-label social work roles and employ non-qualified staff to fill them, as a means to avoid paying appropriate wages. Defining roles and tasks that must be filled or carried out by social workers is therefore essential.

WHETHER THE BENEFITS OF REGISTRATION OUTWEIGH THE COSTS

Number of submissions received on this section	202 (48%)
Percentage of submissions received under this section that perceive the benefits of registration outweighing the costs	186 (92%)
Percentage of submissions received under this section that perceive the costs of registration outweighing the benefits	12 (6%)
Unsure	4 (2%)

Of the 422 submissions received, 202 (48%) comment on whether the benefits of moving to registration would outweigh the costs.

- 186 (92%) respond that “yes” the benefits would outweigh costs,
- 12 (6%) respond “no”
- 4 (2%) are unsure.

Reasons given for why benefits would outweigh costs are:

- ensuring all social workers have high standards, competency, accountability and qualifications
- increasing public confidence in social workers and the profession
- improving practice and safety for the public
- ensuring social work is in line with other professionals
- reducing cost of registration
- providing consequences for poor practice.

The following comments show the general feedback given on why the benefits of mandatory registration would outweigh the costs:

The overall benefits for the public far outweigh the cost of transition to mandatory registration. To remain without mandatory registration allows variation in safety and accountability regarding social work practice which has implications for vulnerable clients and for the future credibility and reputation of the profession.

Yes, the potential for harm on emotional and psychological levels from social work not being delivered to a professional standard can be significant. We believe the risk to the public of not ensuring that all social workers are registered is far more costly (emotionally and financially) than the cost of registration.

yes, the costs of mandatory registration will be an impact on resources of the NGO sector but this is outweighed in terms of having a body of professionals that are competent and ethical.

Given the projected decrease in costs if full registration of all practicing social workers is achieved, we would think the benefits of consistency, transparency and public protection would significantly outweigh the costs.

Cost of registration is the main reason cited for the costs outweighing benefits of mandatory registration.

Cost will always be an issue if wages do not reflect the profession and the professional body it represents.

Registration costs too much, reduce the fees.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Additional comments received through submissions on the discussion paper fall into the following four main themes:

- Alternatives to mandatory registration
- Social work education
- Section 13 of the Social Workers Registration Act
- Role and functions of the ANZASW and the Board

Alternatives to mandatory registration

Of the 422 submissions received, 125 (30%) commented on whether there were alternatives to mandatory registration.

- 98 (78%) did not see an alternative that would best protect the public from poor social work practice.
- 27 (22%) suggest other alternatives

The following comments reflect the main feedback received.

While it is optional there are no guarantees social workers will maintain competence etc.

It is our view that no voluntary system will adequately provide for public safety and the maintenance of competence. Continuing professional development, although a professional obligation, is best supported by agencies who are aware of the obligations of professional registration.

There are many “band aiding” or “damage control” methods that could be used however they would all be building on a weak foundation. It’s the foundation that is important not propping up the building.

The short answer is, until the title of Social Worker is protected, there is no other way to ensure protection of the public, regardless of how much continuing education, professional development or accountability is in place for people who call themselves social workers.

Employers ensure their social work practitioners receive and attend regular (a) Supervision (b) on-going Professional Development.

All that is needed is it to be compulsory for all social workers to have a 4 year degree, competency and to have a national register where social workers are named. Employers needed to check this before employing a social worker.

Employers agreeing to protect the public by establishing internal protocols to ensure all persons employed as, and using the title of social worker meet requirements for SWRB registration. Social Worker would then have the option of obtaining SWRB registration, or agreeing to practice within the employers protocol without becoming registered. If opting to remain unregistered, employers would have the responsibility of ensuring employee's practice did not compromise public safety. This may be better for the public as the employer may have greater capacity to monitor employee practice, and to identify and address unsafe practice before a negative impact on the public occurred. However, such an arrangement would not provide accountability for employers who failed to monitor and uphold social workers compliance with agreed protocols for safe practice, and it appears unlikely that employers would opt to become exposed to the risk of legal action should an employee breach the SWRB requirement for safe practice.

Social work education

Of the 422 submissions, 92 (22%) comment on the perceived low standards of social work education:

At present wide variation in graduate capability has an impact on the status of the profession, and significantly on the measure of respect it attracts especially with employers and other professions, because of this uneven standard. This is disheartening for good graduates who have invested heavily in their own education and find their profession adversely judged by the poor performance of 'qualified' colleagues.

Some training organisations are only interested in getting money and not on the quality of training. One organisation you don't even have to turn up for lectures yet you get a degree at the end of it for signing your name right.

SWRB needs to be active on stopping "buy a degree".

The Board needs to ensure social work training is of a high quality and monitor it before they allow it to be recognised. At the moment this is not happening and we have social workers who have degrees that mean nothing in practice.

Section 13 of the Social Workers Registration Act (2003)

Section 13 of the Act empowers the Board to decide if a person's social work experience in New Zealand is enough to compensate for the lack of a Board-recognised qualification.

Of the 422 submissions, 43 (10%) comment on whether section 13 should remain with 5% advocating equally for and against its retention.

Role and functions of the ANZASW and the Board

Of the 422 submissions, 12 (3%) indicate a lack of understanding of the role and functions of the ANZASW alongside that of the Board. A question was raised as to whether the ANZASW and the Board could work closer together to reduce membership/registration costs and provide a stronger united voice for social work.

APPENDIX A – GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS THAT MADE SUBMISSIONS

- Age Concern Auckland
- ANZASW (NATIONAL)
- ANZASW Manawatu-Whanganui Branch
- Auckland District Health Board, Community Child Health & Disability Service
- Barnardos New Zealand
- Child, Youth and Family
- Council for Social Work Education
- District Health Board Health Social Work Leaders Council
- District Health Board Social Work Leaders Group, Lower North Island Regional
- Fostering Kids: Whangai Whakatairangi
- Hawke's Bay District Health Board, Social Work Service
- Health Workforce New Zealand
- Lakes District Health Board Social Work Group
- Māori Party
- Massey University, School of Health and Social Services social work staff (Turitea campus)
- National Director of Allied Health, Scientific & Technical Professions
- Nelson Marlborough District Health Board - Clinical services support directorate
- New Zealand Council Of Christian Social Services
- Ngāpuhi Iwi Social Services
- Northland District Health Board, Social Workers, Dargaville Hospital
- Open Home Foundation - Lower Hutt
- Open Home Foundation of New Zealand
- PANIC (Positive Action Needed in Crisis) and the Auckland Single Parent's Trust
- Social Service Providers Aotearoa Inc (SSPA)
- Southern District Health Board, Mental Health Directorate
- Southern District Health Board, Social Work Professional Leaders
- Southland Family Works
- Te Pou (the national centre of mental health research, information and workforce development)
- Te Puna Whaiora (The Children's Health Camps Foundation)
- Te Wananga o Aotearoa
- The Methodist Mission, employees
- UNICEF
- University of Auckland , School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work, social work team
- Waikato District Health Board in consultation with Clinical Leaders in social work
- Wesley Community Action
- Whitireia Polytechnic, Year 2 Bachelor of Social Work students
- Youth Horizons Trust
- Youthlink Family Trust

APPENDIX B – FEEDBACK FORM

MANDATORY REGISTRATION DISCUSSION DOCUMENT RESPONSE

You are invited to respond to the following questions to provide feedback and if you need more room attach additional copies of this form or additional pages:

In the social work profession are there any problems, or potential problems, with protecting the public against poor social work practice? If yes, what are they?

Are there any risks to public safety by maintaining the status quo? If yes, what are they?

Is mandatory registration the best solution for providing the public with protection against poor social work practice?

Are there other ways to work within the current voluntary registration system to better provide for public safety and ensure that social workers are competent to practise, maintain that competence through continuing professional development and are accountable for their practice? If yes, what are they?

Do you consider there will be improvements in moving to mandatory registration? If so, what will they be?

Do you consider there will be any negative effects in moving to mandatory registration? If so, what will they be? How can these negative effects be addressed?

Do you think that the costs of moving to mandatory registration will outweigh the benefits, or will the benefits outweigh the costs? How?

If mandatory registration were introduced, what transitional measure(s) would be needed to ensure that any risks to social work services were managed?

Is there anything else you would like to comment on with regard to Mandatory Registration for Social Workers?

Print Name :

Date:

Please provide your contact details so that we can provide you with updated information on the outcome of the discussion document and review of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003.

Contact Details

Postal Address:

Email Address:

Thank you for taking the time to respond – please use the enclosed freepost envelope to return your questionnaire





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