

## **Aotearoa New Zealand’s Scope of Practice Supporting Narrative**

### **Context for social work practice in Aotearoa New Zealand**

Social work in Aotearoa New Zealand is practised within the context of our international and national laws and codes, and our constitutional setting, which recognises Te Tiriti o Waitangi as a founding constitutional document.

Changes to the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 effective from 27 February 2021 include the introduction of mandatory registration for social workers, protection of the title ‘social worker’, and implementation of a general scope of practice to describe social work practice in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The General Scope of Practice has been developed as a high-level description of social work in Aotearoa New Zealand. The Scope of Practice applies to practitioners working across the breadth of social work roles.

Aotearoa New Zealand qualifications prescribed for the Scope of Practice prepare newly qualified social workers to begin practising across a range of practice settings.

Registered social workers who have an overseas qualification that is recognised by the SWRB, and social workers who have been registered through section 13 the Experience Pathway, are included in the General Scope of Practice.

### **Global definition of social work**

The professional bodies of social work in Aotearoa New Zealand are signatories to the Global Definition of the Social Work Profession approved by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) General Assembly in July 2014. The SWRB recognises the Global Definition of Social Work as applying to social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand.

**Global Definition:** “Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility, and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledges, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing.”

### **IFSW Joint Amplification of the Global Definition for Asia, Pacific Region**

Professional social work in the Asia Pacific Region has an emphasis on:

- realising the care and compassion of our profession in ensuring all people are provided with adequate social protection so their needs are met, and human rights and dignity safeguarded
- recognising the importance of faith, spirituality and/or religion in people’s lives and holding respect for varying belief systems
- the celebration of diversity and peaceful negotiation of conflict
- affirming the region’s indigenous and local knowledges and practices alongside critical and research-based practice/practice-based research approaches to social work practice
- encouraging innovative, sustainable social work and social development practices in the preservation of our environment.

## **More detailed description of social work practice**

The General Scope of Practice describes social work practice as defined in the Global Definition. It references the principles, purpose and breadth of social work common to all practising social workers.

Each social work context and field of practice will have its own practice parameters which include: who social workers work with; the community needs being served; and the communities within which the work is located. Often social workers will work within an organisational practice framework that describes their work in more detail.

ANZASW members have developed a resource called ‘Social Work Explained’, which can be used alongside the General Scope of Practice as a more detailed description of practice.

The General Scope of Practice has been developed with the understanding that Social Work Explained will provide additional contextual detail for social workers to draw on. A copy is at the end of this document, and can be downloaded from the ANZASW website.

## **Development of the Scope of Practice**

Reflecting a commitment to active participation by the sector to the development of a Scope of Practice, the SWRB conducted a number of community-based, and virtual workshops in February and March 2020, asking social workers what they thought was important to include in a Scope of Practice.

To honour the feedback calling for a visible incorporation of Tangata Whenua values and equality of cultural perspectives, a sector-led working group was established. The working group included four Tangata Whenua social work leaders and four Tauwiwi social work leaders, one representing a Pacific perspective. In addition, the group was chaired by a SWRB Board member and the SWRB’s Kahui Chair provided kaumatua support.

Te Awa Whiria, The Braided Rivers conceptual model<sup>1</sup> developed by Angus Macfarlane, was used to consider the equal value of Tangata Whenua and Tauwiwi ways of knowing. The Negotiated Spaces model developed by the Te Kotahi Research Institute provided a way of describing different knowledge systems, recognise and value both the negotiated space where these systems come together, and the new learning that is created from this. These conceptual models informed the approach taken by the working group to develop the Scope of Practice.

The working group took the insights and feedback from the SWRB’s sector engagement with social workers and developed a draft Scope of Practice for social work in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The draft Scope of Practice was circulated to the sector for feedback in September 2020. The working group considered all feedback received and finalised the Scope of Practice. This was then gifted to the SWRB by the working group, acknowledging the contributions of the wider sector.

The SWRB Board received the Scope of Practice for approval in early December 2020. Once signed off, the Scope of Practice notice was published in the New Zealand Gazette (government’s official newspaper).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://thehub.swa.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Bridging-Cultural-Perspectives-FINAL-0.pdf>

## Scope of Practice structure

The Pepeha introduces the Scope of Practice, referencing Tangata Whenua principles, using the Niho Taniwha kaupapa to describe the essence. The Niho Taniwha kaupapa is part of the development of our social work history in Aotearoa New Zealand, and by its inclusion we look back to understand how the past can inform the future – encapsulated in the whakatauki “Awhinatia ngaa taonga tuku iho” Embrace the Wisdom of the Past with the Present. The selection of the Niho Taniwha kaupapa is further explained on page 6.

The multiple lenses informing social workers’ approaches to engagement and relationship-building are acknowledged in the Practice Lens statement. All paradigms that contribute to a rich diversity of narratives are valued. The use of the term ‘paradigm’ is deliberate, and is inclusive of the theories, fields of practice, knowledge, experience, and worldview that each social worker brings to their role.

The Practice Statement builds on the Pepeha:

Mana tangata - the respectful relationship  
Manaakitanga - the core of social work.

Manaakitanga is understood broadly in this context as the reciprocity involved in the relationship between social workers and the people they are working with, in a way that recognises the mana of each, and the importance of the kaupapa, or purpose of the work.

Social work is a relationship-based profession, and the Practice Statement connects this with the guiding principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility, and respect for diversity. The theory, knowledge, values and skills gained through social work qualifications, critically reflective supervision, and on-going training and professional support, contribute to social workers practising within a professional, safe and accountable framework.

## Prescribed social work qualifications for the Scope of Practice

In order to become registered as a social worker in Aotearoa New Zealand, social workers must have a qualification that has been recognised by the SWRB, an overseas qualification that is deemed to be equivalent to this, or be registered through the Experience Pathway pursuant to section 13 of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003.

The programmes to deliver social work qualifications include a range of components including social work values, ethics and theory, specific social work methods and techniques, and supervised practice in an agency setting.

With the commencement of mandatory registration of social workers on 27 February 2021, a Scope of Practice for social work is required to be in place.

At the same time, the Aotearoa New Zealand qualifications that were previously *recognised by* the SWRB become qualifications *prescribed for* the Scope of Practice.

Social workers overseas qualified and registered via section 7 of the Act, have a qualification that has been *recognised as equivalent to a prescribed qualification for a scope of practice*.

Social workers registered via the section 13 Experience Pathway, are assessed as having enough practical experience to compensate for the lack of a recognised social work qualification.

## **The Niho Taniwha kaupapa**

The Niho Taniwha kaupapa was selected to bring the essential components of a Tangata Whenua perspective to the scope korero in a way that would uphold the authenticity of the tipuna korero and facilitate the potential for social workers working in different fields of practice to develop this further.

### **Connections**

#### *Marae*

For those of us from tribal areas where the Niho Taniwha is evident on tukutuku panels, it is to remind us of connections. The connection to whare tipuna, even though this is a relatively new innovation.

Traditionally the marae atea was the meeting place because there was no whare tipuna, but more significantly, to bring the importance of marae into focus.

If we are to look at identity as a major consideration for working with trauma for example, then the marae and connecting to marae becomes an important part of our mahi, especially for families raised in an urban environment who may no longer be connected to marae.

It is also a reminder to us as practitioners that we need to realise the importance of connection to our own marae, which are located on specific whenua, and so the wero is to remember our humility when we are working in the rohe of other iwi.

#### *Material*

Tukutuku panels are directly connected to Papatuanuku in the material that is used.

This connection is to ensure we are grounded in our practice and not elevated because we have a tertiary qualification or a particular job title. The privilege of working with families must never be overlooked.

Also, the method of tukutuku is how matauranga and skill are always integral to the way we practice, each balances the other woven in such a way as to produce an engagement that is mana enhancing.

### **Relationships**

#### *The Taniwha*

To serve as a kia tupato, the distinction between what is tangible and intangible.

As Tangata Whenua we do not work just on the level that is physically evident, we are also open to the level of feeling. Each may bring its own taniwha.

#### *The Kingitanga*

He piko, he taniwha.

While some of us may come from tribal areas that do not subscribe to the Kingitanga, it is however a reminder to us of a kaupapa to try and offset colonisation and all that this means.

The korero is that in every way we as Tangata Whenua need to be able to offer a comparable alternative to a mainstream way and that it is no less valid, rather the power lies in the authenticity of its origins.

## Social work

The Niho Taniwha as a framework has a relationship with social work, both in the people who gave rise to its presence but as well, in how it was used as a competency process for the Tangata Whenua Takawaenga Caucus members.

The comparable option was to embed competency in a Tangata Whenua perspective and enable Tangata Whenua practitioners to evidence competency while demonstrating mana motuhake, in a profession that is dominated by Tangata Whai Muri.

The value of the Niho Taniwha in this respect is it brings in the tipuna korero, John Bradley and koro Turoa Haronga, and the practice to enhance mana motuhake.

While Tangata Whenua have moved to developing more innovative frameworks, Niho Taniwha provides crucial context: benefit from the past to enhance the present in order to create opportunities for the future.

Also, in selecting the kupu *mana* because of the reference to the pure essence of who we are, there was the opportunity to enhance a word that is used frequently, but the depth of meaning may not necessarily be understood.

The kupu references the integral contexts that form part of the entirety of the word manaakitanga. A word that is again used frequently by tangata whai muri, without possibly being aware of the extent of its meaning.

The Niho Taniwha kaupapa visually displays the depth of meaning with a degree of familiarity.



TE RŌPŪ TAUWHIRO I AOTEAROA

# HE WHAKAMĀRAMA MŌ TE TAUWHIRO TANGA

HE MĀTANGA WHAI TOHU, KUA RĒHITA HOKI NGĀ KAITAUWHIRO TĒRĀ KA:

**Whakahaere i ngā aromātai pāpori ā-hingaro, te tātari me ngā mahi wawao**  
e whai whakaaro torowhānui ana ki te horopaki hauropi o te noho o te tangata, me ōna taiao.

**Whakamahi pūkenga whanaungatanga hōhonu, i roto i ngā take matatini maha,**  
e pā ana ki te haumarutanga, te wairuatanga me te oranga o te tangata, te whānau, me ngā hapori.

**Tautuhi me te whakatau i ngā take pūmate, wharanga rānei,** pēnei i te whakarekerekere me te waranga, me te whakahau i te kauawhitanga, te angitutanga whaiaro, te toi whenua, te whanaungatanga me te hononga ā-pāpori.

KA WHAKATIKA, KA WHAKAKAHA HOKI NGĀ KAITAUWHIRO I TE ORANGA ARONGANUI, ME TE ORANGA PĀPORI MĀ TE:

**Whakanako me te whakakaha i te āhei o te tangata ki te whakatau me te whakahaere**  
i ngā wero, ngā uauatanga me ngā noho whakaraerae ka kite wheakotia i ngā wā me ngā wāhi me uaua kē ka panonihia.

**Āwhina i ngā tāngata e taumahatia ana kia tū māia, kia urutau hoki**  
i te ngākauatanga, te mate me te pōuritanga, me ētahi atu pānga, pēnei i te uruwēhi, te mohoaotanga, me te anipātanga.

**Whakamahi i te whānuitanga o ngā tikanga tauwhiro tanga ake hei whakahaere, hei whakaatu hoki i te āhua noa ngā urupare kare-ā-roto,** me te tuku taunakitanga e whakarauora ana anō i te oranga, me te āwhina i te manawaroatanga o te tangata, te whānau me ngā hapori.

KA NGANA NGĀ KAITAUWHIRO KI TE AWEAWE I NGĀ TAKE RAWAKORE PAKEPAKE, TE KORE MANA TAURITE, TE WHAKAREKEREKE, TE WHAKAHĀWEATANGA ME NGĀ HAPA MOROKI O NGĀ PŪNAHA PĀPORI MĀ TE:

**Whakatau i ngā pānga whānui**  
pēnei i ngā pānga o mua o te tāmitanga, te whakapākehātanga, te whakatoihara ā-whakanōhanga, te whakahāwinitanga, te whakarekerekere me te aupēhitanga, tae atu ki ētahi atu take whakatau hauora.

**Whakatara i ngā mahi whakahāwea, te kore mana taurite me ngā take tūkino ā-pāpori i roto i ngā wāhi mahi, me te iwi whānui.**

**Mahi tahi me ngā hapori ki te whakawhanake i ō rātou ake whakataunga ki ngā take kua tautuhia.**  
Ka mahi rātou ki te aweawe i ngā panonitanga i ngā taumata takitahi, ā-whānau, ā-hapū, ā-iwi, ā-hapori, ā-kāwanatanga hoki.

KA MAHI NGĀ KAITAUWHIRO I ROTO I NGĀ PEKA MAHI HUHUA O AOTEAROA PĒNEI I NGĀ:

**Rōpū ā-iwi Māori, ngā ratonga hauora, tauwhiro, ture, tiaki tamariki, ā, ka pūmau ki ngā whakaritenga o te ture e pā ana ki ēnei mahi katoa.**

**Ka whakamahia ō rātou pūkenga i ngā take whānui, kaupapa maha,** pēnei i te mahi ki te kiritaki takitahi, te whakawhanaketanga hapori, te āta tohutohu, te rangahau, te mātauranga, te tiroiro, te huawaere, te taunakitanga, te whakahaeretanga, te hanga kaupapa here, me te kaiārahitanga.

**He tautōhito ngā Kaitauwhiro ki te whakamahi i te huritao arohae me te pātaitai,** me te ū ki te tukanga o te ako tonu me te whanaketanga tonutanga, tae atu ki te haepapa ngaio, kia tukuna ai ngā ratonga tino pai ka taea ki te tangata me ngā hapori.



TE RŌPŪ TAUWHIRO I AOTEAROA  
AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND  
ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

# SOCIAL WORK EXPLAINED

## SOCIAL WORKERS ARE QUALIFIED REGISTERED PROFESSIONALS WHO:

### Undertake psychosocial assessments, analysis and interventions

that holistically consider the ecological context of a person's situation and their environments.

### Apply in-depth relational skills to work with a range of complex factors

that impact on the safety, wairuatanga, and wellbeing of individuals, families, whānau and communities.

### Identify and address danger and harm factors

such as violence and addiction and promote inclusion, self-efficacy, belonging, whānaungatanga and social connectedness.

## SOCIAL WORKERS RESTORE AND STRENGTHEN EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL WELLBEING BY:

### Enhancing and strengthening people's ability and capacity to address and manage

the challenge, difficulty and vulnerability that is experienced in situations where circumstances are not easily changed.

### Assisting people experiencing crisis to endure and adapt

to uncertainty, loss and grief and other impacts including fear, feelings of isolation and anxiety.

### Using a range of specific social work methods and techniques to manage and normalise emotional responses

and provide support that restores wellbeing and assists with resilience both for individuals, families, whānau and communities.

## SOCIAL WORKERS SEEK TO INFLUENCE PERSISTENT ISSUES OF POVERTY, INEQUALITY, VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION AND ONGOING FAILURES OF SOCIAL SYSTEMS BY:

### Addressing wider impacts

such as the historical impacts of colonisation, assimilation, institutional racism, exploitation, violence and oppression and other social determinants of health.

### Actively challenging discriminatory practices, inequality and social injustice in organisations and wider society.

### Collaborating with communities to develop their own solutions to identified issues.

They work to influence change at individual, family, whānau, hapū, iwi, community and government levels.

## SOCIAL WORKERS WORK ACROSS A NUMBER OF FIELDS IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND...

Such as:  
**Iwi Māori organisations, health, social services, justice, and statutory child protection services, and adhere to the requirements of legislation associated with these.**

### They apply their expertise in a variety of ways and roles

including one to one clinical work, community development, advising, research, education, supervision, facilitation, advocacy, management, policy development and leadership.

### Social workers are skilled in the application of critical reflection and questioning

and commit to a process of ongoing learning and development and professional accountability in order to deliver the best service to people and communities.

