

Hon. Anne Tolley  
Minister for Social Development  
Parliament Buildings  
Wellington

13 October 2014

Dear Minister Tolley

**Briefing Information on the Social Workers Registration Board.**

Please find enclosed a briefing report from the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB).

The SWRB has appreciated the Government's support over the last three years and looks forward to working with you in the future.

With your support the SWRB believes that a move to mandatory registration for social workers will support the Government's goal that the most vulnerable in New Zealand society can achieve their potential and secure a brighter future for them, their families, and their communities.

After eleven years of operation the Board believes that to truly achieve the purposes of the Act in terms of assuring public protection we need to move to mandatory registration. The preferred system of mandatory registration would accommodate all practising social workers who meet the minimum standards for public safety and professionalism.

Mandatory registration will

- ensure that all of the social work profession is held accountable for how social work practice is delivered not just the approximately 5000 who have voluntarily committed to upholding their professional responsibilities through the current registration process,
- enable the SWRB to further develop and enhance the delivery of social work practice in New Zealand without the confusion and uncertainty that the current voluntary system has created for the profession, employers of social workers and the public,

- ensure minimum standards of integrity and conduct that are to apply to registered social workers and that should apply generally in the social work profession,
- enable all members of the public to be able to lodge a complaint in respect of any social worker, either to an employer or to the SWRB Complaints and Disciplinary Tribunal, when they do not have other effective avenues of complaint.

In summary the attached briefing sets out background information on the Social Workers Registration Board and matters relating to the Board in the short to medium term.

The Board has also enclosed a copy of the Social Workers Registration Act Review Report from October 2012, a Crown Law interpretation of Section 25 of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 and a draft Memorandum of Understanding between the Minister for Social Development and the Social Workers Registration Board for your consideration.

We look forward to discussing this briefing and a programme to move forward with mandatory registration with you in the near future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shayne Walker', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Shayne Walker  
Chairperson