



**Social Workers
Registration Board**
Kāhui Whakamana Tauwhiro

BRIEFING FOR THE INCOMING

MINISTER FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

29TH SEPTEMBER 2014

This document has been proactively released.

Redactions made to the document have been made consistent with provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
CURRENT ISSUES.....	3
Mandatory versus Voluntary Registration:	3
Social Workers Registration Act 2003:	3
Promotion:	4
Barriers:.....	4
Complaints and Discipline:	4
Compliance:.....	5
Government and Non-government Sector:	5
Health.....	5
Ministry of Social Development / Child, Youth and Family.....	6
The Non-government Organisation Sector (NGO)	6
Social Work Student Preparation and Social Work Graduate Support:	6
SUMMARY – KEY DATA.....	8
THE SOCIAL WORKERS REGISTRATION BOARD.....	12
Reporting to the responsible Minister	12
MANAGING THE REGISTRATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS.....	12
COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL	13
Considering complaints against registered social workers	13
THE CURRENT SOCIAL WORK REGULATION ENVIRONMENT.....	14
Registration data.....	14
MOVING FORWARD.....	16
REVIEW OF THE SOCIAL WORKERS REGISTRATION ACT.....	16
APPENDIX A	17
Registration Categories, Criteria and Compliance	17
APPENDIX B	19
Social Workers Registration Act 2003 Review Report October 2012 – attached.....	19
APPENDIX C.....	20
Crown Law Interpretation of the Section 25 of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003.....	20
APPENDIX D	21
Draft Memorandum of Understanding between the Minister for Social Development and the Social Workers Registration Board for the Year Ended 30 June 2015	21

INTRODUCTION

The SWRB was established as a Crown agency under the Social Workers Registration Act 2003. The Board's primary purpose is to protect the safety of members of the public, by operating a registration system that ensures that social workers are competent to practise, and accountable for the way in which they practise.

The Board has implemented the voluntary registration framework established by the Act and the development and implementation stages have progressed well to the point that the number of registered social workers under a voluntary process is currently two-thirds of the estimated total number of practising social workers.

The Board is committed to ensuring that the registration of social workers in New Zealand reflects the high standards established by the Social Workers Registration Act.

CURRENT ISSUES

Mandatory versus Voluntary Registration:

The Social Workers Registration Act 2003 requires an amendment to move social worker registration from the current voluntary system to a system of mandatory registration for all practising social workers. As of 1 October 2014 there are 4701 Registered Social Workers. The Board believes that there are approximately another 2000+ social workers who would meet the requirements for registration but have not registered.

A survey completed in 2012 showed there is wide support for this move both by the profession and by the public. The main reason is that it will provide better support for the public. Social workers deal with the most vulnerable people in society, many of them young children.

Social Workers Registration Act 2003:

The absence of any decision to move to mandatory registration or proceed with legislative amendments to the current Act is a major cause for concern for the Board and has significant impact on the ability to implement the legislation as it is currently written.

The SWRB is currently undertaking a review of the Act as per section 104 (1)(b) (ii) & (c) in that the Board will "consider whether any amendments to this Act are necessary or desirable; and reports its findings to the Minister."

The report will provide the Minister with a section by section review of the Act, based on ten years of use, highlighting those sections that need to be amended and providing the rationale for each amendment.

Promotion:

Promoting registration and working with key employers to encourage registration is a time and resource consuming process while registration remains voluntary. Other regulatory authorities with mandatory registration do not need to actively promote registration as it is a requirement to practice. Employers have worked to ensure that their staff meet the minimum criteria for registration but many will not require them to become registered while registration remains voluntary. Many employers also have to manage the inconsistency of a workforce where some but not all of their social workers are registered and there is no clear direction from government to ensure that those they employ directly or fund indirectly meet minimum standards.

Barriers:

Voluntary registration is the main barrier to participation in the registration system with cost also an issue especially for the non-government organisation sector.

The Board supports a move to mandatory registration as this would provide a clear direction for employers and the profession while at the same time the economy of scale provided by having the whole profession included would allow for reduction of costs.

Complaints and Discipline:

The Board provides the only independent complaint and disciplinary process across the social service sector but is constrained by the voluntary registration system.

There is no protection for the title ‘Social Worker’. This means is that if a social worker is disciplined by the Tribunal and given the ultimate penalty of having their registration cancelled and being ‘struck off’, that same social worker can start work once again and call themselves a ‘social worker’ with no ramifications. As they are no longer on the register the SWRB have no jurisdiction over them and cannot investigate any further complaints or concerns against that ‘social worker’.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

As noted above the SWRB has no jurisdiction over deregistered social workers and cannot investigate any further complaints or concerns against that 'social worker' when they return to practise. This is a potentially damaging reality that will negatively impact on the safety of the public and the reputation of the SWRB and the Minister.

Compliance:

The issue of voluntary registration undermining the accountability of the social work profession is evident in the area of registration compliance. Social Workers currently registered who avoid holding valid annual practising certificates believe they can do so with little or no consequence under a voluntary system. As per the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 the SWRB is required to refer these individuals to the Complaints and Disciplinary Tribunal. If referred to the Tribunal both Registered Social Workers and their employers are subject to fines up to \$10,000.

A 2013 Crown Law opinion (Appendix C) clearly supports the SWRB view that anyone

- working directly with clients
- managing and/or supervising other social workers
- teaching social work practice or theory
- mentally engaged in social work decision making at any level be that in a clinical, managerial or advisory role

must have an Annual Practising Certificate if they are a Registered Social Worker.

The public, the social work profession, employers of social workers and other authorities need to have the consistency provided by mandatory registration to ensure all social workers are competent to practice and held accountable for their practice.

Government and Non-government Sector:

The lack of accountability for social work practice across the government and non-government sectors has been made evident through a number of high profile incidents involving unregistered social workers or individuals claiming to be social workers.

District Health Boards and Child, Youth and Family are the major government employers of social workers in New Zealand. The Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Health are also the major funders of social services in the non-government sector.

Health

Social Workers represent the largest group of allied health workers employed by District Health Boards but unlike the other health professionals such as nurses, doctors, psychologists, occupational therapists, etc., that they work with in multidisciplinary teams they are not required to be registered.

The social work profession employed in the health sector have however voluntarily engaged in the registration process with most of the 20 District Health Boards requiring registration. With a large sector of the health workforce already required to hold mandatory registration there is already

recognised acceptance of registration compliance and many District Health Boards will stand social workers down on leave without pay if they do not hold valid practising certificates and/or competence assessment certificates.

Approximately 90% of the social workers employed in state health sector are registered.

Ministry of Social Development / Child, Youth and Family

Child, Youth and Family are working to register their social workers with approximately 1300+ employees of Child, Youth and Family being Registered Social Workers. A significant proportion are however in leadership or senior advisory roles and do not interact personally with social work clients. The main concern is the number of the 1,400+ front-line social workers who are not currently registered.

The SWRB is also concerned about the number of social workers employed in the Social Workers In Schools programme who remain unregistered.

The Social Workers in School Service Specifications state the "Provider will:

- employ and support competent, qualified social workers
- support social workers to remain registered or to complete New Zealand Social Work Registration Board (SWRB) Registration where they are not currently registered

The Provider is to employ social workers who hold a social work qualification recognised by the New Zealand SWRB. Where it is not possible to recruit a suitably skilled and qualified social worker, the Provider may employ a social worker who is actively working towards a recognised social work qualification, as defined by the New Zealand SWRB. This will include a timeframe for completing the qualification."

Of the 62% of providers who responded to an SWRB survey only 38% of the social workers employed as social workers in schools were registered.

The Non-government Organisation Sector (NGO)

The NGO social service sector is heavily funded via the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Health and many other government departments through Whanua Ora and various other initiatives. There is no mandatory requirement however that those receiving government funds and providing social work services on behalf of the government are qualified, competent or held accountable for their practice.

Social Work Student Preparation and Social Work Graduate Support:

The SWRB is currently leading a project to review the preparation of social work students and the support provided to graduate social workers. This has involved bringing together the social work educators, employers, professional bodies and government agencies involved in the funding and oversight of tertiary education.

The project is as a result of

- the concerns raised by employers of the need for social work graduate practise to meet the needs of the client groups that employers represent; and
- the recognition by educators that the current funding model for social work education and the availability of work based entry to practise programmes limits the ability of educators to support graduates to meet the needs of employers.

It is intended that the SWRB will provide the Minister with reports on the outcomes and recommendations as the project proceeds.

SUMMARY – KEY DATA

Social Workers Registration Board		
Set-Up	Crown Agent	Established: 2003
	Staff: 7.5 FTE	Offices: 1
Key Functions	<p>The Board is required to advise and making recommendations to the Minister in respect of matters relating to the regulation of the social work profession.</p> <p>The key functions of the Social Workers Registration Board are:</p> <p>Managing the registration of social workers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> receiving and considering applications for registration, taking recognised educational qualifications and competence of social workers into account authorising the registration of social workers and maintaining a Public Register considering applications for, and issuing practising certificates <p>Setting standards for social work education and training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognise New Zealand educational qualifications promote and set standards for social work education and training in consultation with providers and other standard setting bodies <p>Considering complaints against registered social workers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> establishing a Complaints and Disciplinary Tribunal and providing administrative and related services for the Tribunal promoting the establishment by organisations that employ social workers, of accessible and efficient procedures for making, considering and determining complaints relating to social workers they employ <p>Enhancing the professionalism of social workers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> establishing and maintaining a code of conduct to apply to registered social workers and that should apply generally in the social work profession promoting and encouraging high standards of practice and professional conduct among registered social workers and the employers of social workers <p>Promoting the benefits of registration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> promoting the benefits of registration among people practising as social workers, to bodies and organisations that employ social workers, and to the New Zealand public. 	

Key Legislation	Social Workers Registration Act 2003
Purpose	<p>The Social Workers Registration Board (the Board) was established by Government under the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 (the Act).</p> <p>The purpose of the Act is to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) protect the safety of members of the public, by prescribing or providing for mechanisms to ensure that social workers are – <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) competent to practise; and b) accountable for the way in which they practise; and to 2) enhance the professionalism of social workers. <p>Review of operation of Act (currently underway 2011/2012)</p> <p>Section 104 of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 sets out the requirements for reviewing the Act and a review is currently underway. The Board has released a discussion document on whether it is time to move to mandatory registration and this discussion document forms part of the review process.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) As soon as is practicable after the expiry of the period of 3 years beginning on the commencement of section 99, and then at intervals of not more than 5 years, the Board must— <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) review the operation of this Act, and its own operations, since— <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) the commencement of this Part (in the case of the first review carried out under this paragraph); and ii) the date of the last review carried out under this paragraph (in the case of every later review); and b) consider— <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) the extent to which this Act, and the system of voluntary registration it provides for, are achieving the purposes stated in paragraphs (a) and (d) of section 3; and ii) whether any amendments to this Act are necessary or desirable; and c) report its findings to the Minister. 2) Within 12 sitting days after receiving the report, the Minister must present a copy to the

	House of Representatives.			
Financial Information	Income: Self-funding from registration fees and levies			
		2010/2011 Actual \$m	2011/2012 Budget \$m	
	Operating Revenue	0.996	1.057	
	Operating Expenditure	0.984	1.058	
	Net Surplus / (Deficit)	0.012	(0.001)	
	Net Working Capital	0.317	0.265	
	Total Equity	0.516	0.501	
Governance	The Board comprises 10 members (6 registered social workers and 4 other people) appointed by the Minister. Terms are for generally for up to 3 years. Members are eligible for reappointment but cannot serve for more than 6 consecutive years.			
	Member	First Appointed	Expiry date of term	Time in office
	Shayne Walker # Chair from August 2014	11 February 2013	31 January 2016	1 year, 7 months
	Jim Heays #	1 December 2012	30 November 2015	1 years, 10 months
	Toni Millar	1 September 2011	31 August 2014	3 years
	Sara Georgeson	1 September 2011	31 August 2014	3 years
	William Pua	1 September 2011	31 August 2014	3 years
	Turitea Bostad	11 February 2013	31 January 2016	1 year, 7 months
	Michelle Derrett #	11 February 2013	31 January 2016	1 year, 7 months
	Dianne Wepa-Belz #	11 February 2013	31 January 2016	1 year, 7 months
	Vacant Position #			
	Vacant Position #			
Chief Executive	Sean McKinley	August 2004		
	<p># denotes Registered Social Workers</p> <p>The Social Workers Registration Act states that the Board is to consist of 10 members: six registered social workers and four "other" people. While there is no provision for officially reducing the number of board members, the Act specifies a quorum of five (three registered social workers and two "other" people).</p> <p>Action on Ms Toni Millar, Ms Sara Georgeson and Mr William Pua's position has been deferred until 2015 due to its proximity to the General Election.</p>			

Complaints and Disciplinary Tribunal	<p>The Tribunal comprises the following:</p> <p>Members appointed by the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) a chairperson and 1 or more deputy chairpersons; and (ii) at least 1 barrister or solicitor of the High Court of not less than 7 years' practice (whether or not he or she holds or has held judicial office); and (iii) 5 other members. <p>Members appointed by the Minister:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) At least 1 lay person. <p>A current Board member is not eligible to be a member of the Tribunal.</p> <p>Terms are for generally for up to 3 years. The Chairperson of the Tribunal is eligible for reappointment but cannot serve for more than 6 consecutive years.</p>							
Tribunal	Member	Appointed	Expiry date of term	Time in office				
Appointed by the Social Workers Registration Board.								
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 35%;">Vicki HIRST (Chairperson)</td> <td style="width: 20%;">July 2012</td> <td style="width: 20%;">June 2015</td> <td style="width: 25%;">2 years</td> </tr> </table>					Vicki HIRST (Chairperson)	July 2012	June 2015	2 years
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<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 35%;">Jenny PRENTICE (other member1)</td> <td style="width: 20%;">November 2010</td> <td style="width: 20%;">June 2015</td> <td style="width: 25%;">4 years</td> </tr> </table>					Jenny PRENTICE (other member1)	November 2010	June 2015	4 years
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<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 35%;">Yvonne CRICHTON-HILL (other member1)</td> <td style="width: 20%;">November 2010</td> <td style="width: 20%;">November 2015</td> <td style="width: 25%;">4 years</td> </tr> </table>					Yvonne CRICHTON-HILL (other member1)	November 2010	November 2015	4 years
Yvonne CRICHTON-HILL (other member1)	November 2010	November 2015	4 years					
Appointed by the responsible Minister.								
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 35%;">Darryn RUSSELL (ministerial lay member1)</td> <td style="width: 20%;">April 2013</td> <td style="width: 20%;">April 2018</td> <td style="width: 25%;">1 year, 5 months</td> </tr> </table>					Darryn RUSSELL (ministerial lay member1)	April 2013	April 2018	1 year, 5 months
Darryn RUSSELL (ministerial lay member1)	April 2013	April 2018	1 year, 5 months					
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 35%;">Rachael SELBY (ministerial lay member1)</td> <td style="width: 20%;">July 2008</td> <td style="width: 20%;">July 2013</td> <td style="width: 25%;">6 years</td> </tr> </table>					Rachael SELBY (ministerial lay member1)	July 2008	July 2013	6 years
Rachael SELBY (ministerial lay member1)	July 2008	July 2013	6 years					
Attention is required to reappoint Ms Rachael Selby.								

¹ "Other member" and ministerial lay member is used in this context to distinguish between the Chairperson and legally qualified members of the Tribunal

THE SOCIAL WORKERS REGISTRATION BOARD

The Board is a self-funding crown entity. Under the Act the Board can comprise up to 10 members, appointed by you under section 28(1)(a) of the Crown Entities Act 2004.

The Board employs 7.5 full-time staff and may engage short-term contract staff (for legal, accounting and/or information technology support) when needed.

To ensure that the Government's priorities are met, the Board has a responsibility to ensure that those providing social work services meet the minimum criteria set by the Board and are held accountable for the services they deliver. The Board works in close partnership with the Chief Executive/Registrar to ensure that its objectives and goals are achieved.

The Board has a governance role and the Chief Executive/Registrar has a management role. The Board meet quarterly with the Chief Executive/Registrar and focus on:

- issues of organisational purpose
- assessing new applications for registration.

The following standing committees of the Board are tasked, along with the Chief Executive/Registrar, with the strategic direction of the Board:

- Finance, Audit and Risk Management Committee
- Policy Development and Review Committee.

Reporting to the responsible Minister

The Board have a Memorandum of Understanding with your Office setting out details on the way in which we consult and report to you on government's purchase and ownership interests. The Board are also required by the Crown Entities Act (s150) to provide you with an Annual Report on our operations for each year. As well as this formal reporting obligation, the Board also advise and make recommendations to you in respect of matters relating to the regulation of the social work profession as stated under section 99 (1) of the Act. The Board Chair and the Chief Executive/Registrar also meet with you regularly throughout the year to update you on relevant issues.

MANAGING THE REGISTRATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

The Board have built a robust and accountable registration system that is successfully providing benefits to both the registered practitioner and their client. We now need to continue this momentum by moving from a voluntary system to a mandatory one, ensuring that all social work clients gain a safe, professional and competent social work service.

The Act has allowed the Board and the profession the opportunity to:

- set standards for social work education and training in New Zealand, benchmarking them internationally as well as ensuring consistency of delivery across providers
- provide a clear definition for the title Registered Social Worker, ie a social worker who has a Board-recognised professional qualification and competence to work as a social work practitioner in New Zealand
- establish a code of conduct for the social work profession in New Zealand

- set a nationally accepted competence assessment programme to determine whether people have the skills and knowledge required to practice social work and meet the professional standards expected of a social worker
- set the minimum level of practical experience required for an individual to be recognised as a competent social work practitioner
- provide an independent complaints and disciplinary framework for making, considering and determining complaints relating to Registered Social Workers and their practice.

By harnessing the opportunities provided by the Act, we have identified the following unique risks that the current system of voluntary registration has created.

- practitioners identifying as social workers who do not have the qualifications, competencies or assessed practical experience to do so. Practitioners with poor social work practice can choose not to be accountable for their practice under the Act. Unlike Registered Social Workers, these individuals are not expected to be professionally supervised nor held uniformly accountable for the way in which they practise
- the public not being able to utilise the independent Complaints and Disciplinary Tribunal under the Act when they receive unsafe social work services from an unregistered social worker. This poses a significant risk to the public who are often not aware that the social worker is unregistered.
- registered social workers not renewing their Annual Practising Certificate (APC) as it is deemed voluntary. Under the Act, registered social workers must have an APC to practise legally as social workers. It is an offence for a registered social worker to practise without an APC and if they do both the employer and the social worker are liable for a fine of up to \$10,000 or term of imprisonment for up to 3 months, or both

Mandatory registration will mitigate the above risks.

COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL

The independent Social Workers Complaints and Disciplinary Tribunal (the Tribunal) was also established under the Act. The Tribunal's main functions are to:

- administer the complaints process concerning Registered Social Workers established by the Act
- exercise the disciplinary powers over Registered Social Worker conferred by the Act.

The Board provides administrative support to the Tribunal which can appoint Complaint Assessment Committees (CACs) to assess complaints against Registered Social Workers. A current Board member is not eligible to be a member of the Tribunal.

Considering complaints against registered social workers

When a complaint is received the Registrar will immediately notify the Chair of the Tribunal who will consider the grounds for the complaint and then decide either to:

- a) not pursue the complaint
- b) refer the complaint to a Complaints Assessment Committee (CAC).

The process for investigating a complaint against a social worker is very thorough and can take some time. If the complaint is referred to a CAC a determination will be made as to whether:

- a) the social worker to undergo a competence or fitness to practice review, or both
- b) the issue could be resolved through conciliation
- c) should be submitted to the Tribunal
- d) needs no further steps taken.

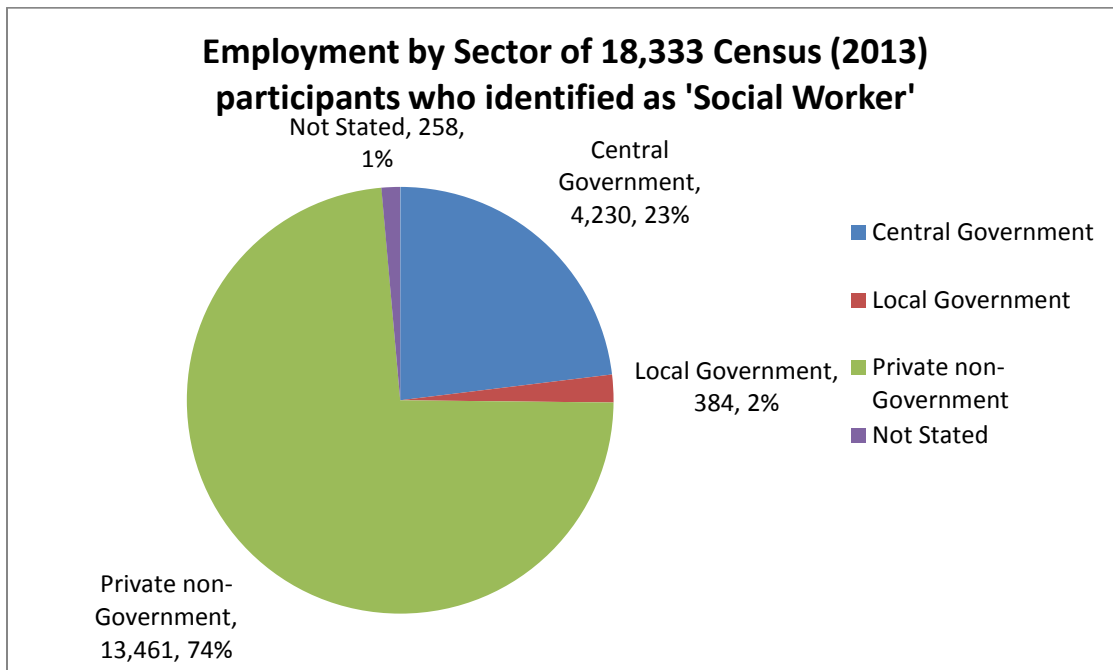
If the CAC determines the social worker has breached the Code of Conduct the complaint will be submitted to the Tribunal as a charge. The Tribunal will hold a hearing, which is likely to be conducted in public. Preceding the hearing the Tribunal may impose restriction of practice in relation to the social worker.

Dependent on its final finding the Tribunal may make an order resulting in a penalty against the Registered Social Worker (this would be open to appeal).

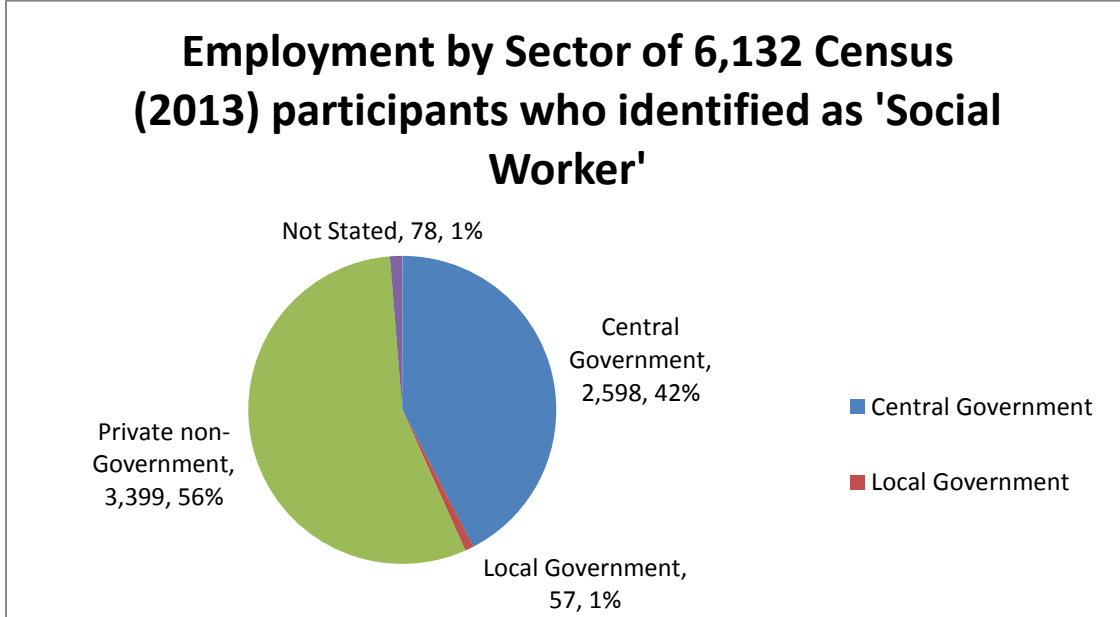
THE CURRENT SOCIAL WORK REGULATION ENVIRONMENT

Registration data

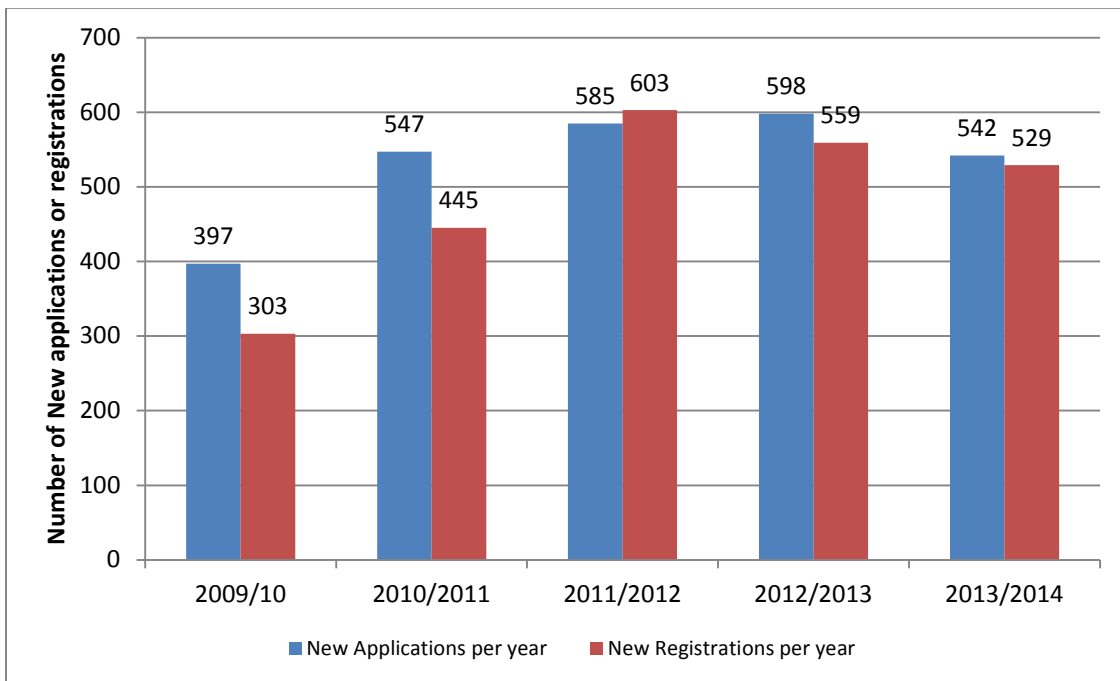
A review of the 2013 identified that of the 18,327 people self-identified as a Social Worker. 6,132 of those meet the minimum criteria for registration and are those the Board intends to register. The majority of remaining 12,000 plus individuals are not eligible for registration and most likely form a significant part of the unregulated social service sector. Mandatory registration and title protection for 'Social Worker' would help to clarify and identify the social service sector.



The Board estimates that there are likely to be around 6,000+ social workers in practice who could meet the registration criteria. As provided in the 2013 census information below 6,132 were degree qualified with 3,465 of this number holding a recognised Social Work Qualification.



As shown in the figure below, the number of applicants for registration and newly Registered Social Workers has remained steady over the last five years reflecting a continued recognition by the profession that registration is of value.



Regulating social work practice in New Zealand has provided a positive impact on the profession and improved the provision of social work for clients of registered social workers.

MOVING FORWARD

Clients of social workers are often our most vulnerable members of society, in many cases young children. Under the present voluntary registration system, social workers can choose to 'opt out' of the accountability and safeguards provided by the Act. Clients of unregistered social workers do not get this choice and do not gain the protection provided for under the Act.

Registration has been voluntary for over ten years to allow social workers to gain the skills and qualifications required for registration.

To encourage social workers to become registered we have:

- reduced the cost of applying for and maintaining registration
- provided online application and practising certificate processes
- provided a less complex, lower cost, paper-based option for competency assessment
- introduced a competency process for social work graduates so that they can gain professional registration on graduation (valid for two years)
- instigated a more user-friendly framework for accessing registration under section 13 of the Act.

The Board estimate that of approximately 6,000 social workers who meet registration criteria, around 2000 are still choosing not to become registered.

REVIEW OF THE SOCIAL WORKERS REGISTRATION ACT

In October 2012, as part of the five-yearly review process, the Board presented the Minister for Social Development with a Review of the Social Workers Registration Act as required by section 104 of the Act (Appendix B).

The main recommendation to the Minister for Social Development as a result of the review was that:

The Board recommends that the Government:

1. Agree to amend the Social Workers Registration Act (2003) to provide for a mandatory system of social worker registration through protection of the title "social worker" and by requiring that functions normally performed by social workers cannot be performed by unregistered persons;
2. Agree that policy work should be undertaken as soon as possible because of the potentially long lead time for legislative change.

Early decisions and announcements of the Government's legislative intentions could add significant impetus to engagement in the registration system by employers and social workers. Subject to the Minister's support for this recommendation, the Board will commence scoping work, in consultation with the Ministry of Social Development and others, on defining the scope of coverage of a mandatory registration system based on protection of the title "social worker" and associated limitations on who can practise social work.

APPENDIX A

Registration Categories, Criteria and Compliance

Registration Categories

The Act allows for three different categories of registration - full, provisional and temporary:

- full registration is granted only when all of the eligibility criteria for registration (set out below) are met
- provisional registration is available to social workers who are:
 - in the process of completing their practical experience, and/or
 - gaining a recognised social work qualification, or
 - applying with Graduate Competence
- temporary registration is available to overseas social workers who have come to practise social work in New Zealand at a particular place or institution for a limited period of time.

Registration Criteria

Under the Act, the following criteria are required 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 supervised practical experience in practising social work.

Section 42 (1) (a) and (b) of the Act provides for competency assessments. This section enables the Board to set programmes to help it to decide if people have the skills and knowledge required to practise social work, and meet the professional standards expected of a social worker.

The Act provides a framework within which the Board can set the criteria for registration. The Board has set the minimum New Zealand qualification requirement for registration at level seven, which is a Board recognised degree in social work. The Board will, however, recognise a diploma level social work qualification for those who commenced or completed this prior to 1 January 2006.

Section 13 – Board may Recognise Practical Experience in Certain Cases

Section 13 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. Section 13 provides for the registration of a more

diverse social work workforce by placing emphasis on the social workers' levels of experience instead of focusing only on their qualification.

Graduate Competence and Registration

In 2008, the Board introduced Graduate Competence. Students who graduated after 1 August 2008, from Board-recognised social work programmes, are deemed to have graduate competence and, therefore, eligible for registration. This competence is valid for two years from the date of completing the qualification, with the requirement that they will complete Board-approved competency assessments in that time.

Registration Compliance

Maintaining Registration – Annual Practising Certificates (APCs)

Under the Act, no registered social worker may be employed or engaged as a social worker unless they hold a current practising certificate (section 25 of the Act). Doing so could result in a conviction leading to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months or a fine not exceeding \$10,000 or both (section 148 of the Act).

Maintaining a practising certificate is an important part of registration because it helps to protect public safely by ensuring that the social worker is:

- in continuing employment and undertaking satisfactory practice
- participating in regular supervision that is commensurate with level and focus of practice and years of experience
- undertaking a range of continuing professional development activities. Registered social workers are expected to participate in a minimum of 20 hours of professional development per year.

APPENDIX B

Social Workers Registration Act 2003 Review Report October 2012 – attached

APPENDIX C

Crown Law Interpretation of the Section 25 of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003

APPENDIX D

Draft Memorandum of Understanding between the Minister for Social Development and the Social Workers Registration Board for the Year Ended 30 June 2015