WORKFORCE PLANNING: A STRATEGY:

RESPONSE:

TANGATA WHENUA SOCIAL WORKERS ASSOCIATION.

NGĀ KŌRERO WHAKAWĀTEA:

There has never been an in-depth kōrero about what does the profession and practice of Social Work mean *for* and *in* Aotearoa New Zealand.

Therefore, if a Workforce Planning Strategy is to be developed, we need to articulate the meaning of the words to realise what we are sustaining, preserving and conserving.

The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) developed a 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. The above definition may be amplified at national and/or regional levels."*

In 2016 at the General Body meeting of the IFSW Asia Pacific Association of Social Work Educators the following was distilled from the global definition:

> *The Asia Pacific region represents many different communities and peoples. The region has been shaped by its indigenous and colonising histories and migrations. It contains some of the richest and some of the most economically deprived nations. It is a region where East meets West, and North meets South with differing religious, philosophic and political perspectives being represented. It is a region that has been severely impacted by natural, and human-made disasters where the strength and resilience of its peoples have been demonstrated over and over again.*
>
> *Social work in the Asia Pacific Region is committed to:*
> - *People being provided with a basic social safety net to ensure that their living needs are met.*
> - *Recognising the importance of spirituality or religion for people's wellbeing.*
> - *The celebration and peaceful negotiation of the vast differences that exist between the people and countries in the region.*

- *Rediscovering and reaffirming the region's indigenous and local knowledges and practices alongside critical and evidence-based approaches to social work practice.*
- *Encouraging sustainable social work and social development practices in the preservation of our planet and its people.*

In March 2018 the Tangata Whenua Social Workers Association went on to distil the definitions as they might mean for Aotearoa New Zealand in te reo rangatira and under the guidance of the kaumatua Morehu Kara, the following was crafted:

Rangatiratanga
He iti te kupu engari he nui te korero

In April 2018 the pū kōrero was tabled for the hui of the IFSW Coordinating Body for Aotearoa.

As can be seen by the kōrero above the definitions are both varied in expression and yet significant in implication.

PŪ KŌRERO: TANGATA WHENUA:

Rangatiratanga
He iti te kupu engari he nui te kōrero

The Tangata Whenua Social Workers Association would like to share that 'social work' under the uarā of *mana a ki* and *tiakitanga* is not new, but is understood and practiced contextually within the kaupapa and tikanga of tangata whenua throughout the motu.

It is the wording that has accorded a different prescription.

The poukai which were initiated by Kiingi Taawhiao in 1885, with the express purpose of:

"Kua whakaturia e hau tēnei tāonga hei awhina i te pani, i te pouaru, i te rawakore. He kuaha whanui kua puare ki te puna tangata me te punakai."

I have instituted this gathering to feed the widowed, the bereaved and the destitute, it is a doorway that has been opened to the multitudes of people and the bounty of food **– Kingi Tāwhiao.** Poukai still going strong after 132 years | RNZ

Is this not 'social work'?

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In 1975 Whatarangi Winiata initiated the strategy of *Whakatupuranga Rua Mano,* which could also be argued as 'social work'. [Te Wānanga o Raukawa](#)

> *The Raukawa Trustees shaped four principles that became their focus:*
> - *The people are our wealth; to develop and retain*
> - *The Māori language is a taonga; to halt its decline and revive*
> - *The marae is our principal home; maintain and respect it*
> - *Self-determination* (Winiata, Petina)

If language is the *window to the soul*:

Ko taku reo taku ohōho, ko taku reo taku mapihi mauria.
My language is my awakening, my language is the window to my soul.

then the ramifications of the 1867 Native Schools Act, where English was the language of instruction and progressively, te reo Rangatira became forbidden to be spoken at school and indeed ākonga were physically punished for doing so. [The native schools system, 1867 to 1969 – Te Ara Encyclopedia of New Zealand](#)

Is the deprivation of the soul arguably a precursor to the loss of identity and therefore a major contributing factor to the social indicators that tangata whenua have and are experiencing today and if so, then is Te Wānanga ō Raukawa and the environment thereof a response to these experiences and therefore, could be considered a form of a *scope of practice*?

Are the essential elements of *language*, a *home* and *self determination* indicative of
promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people (IFSW: Global Definition of Socia Work)

RESPONSE OF THE TANGATA WHENUA SOCIAL WORKERS ASSOCIATION:

TOITŪ TE ARA TAUWHIRO: SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL WORK PATHWAYS: 2025 – 2030:
- *culturally responsive social worker workforce.* (Page 5)
  The Association is very aware of the Core Competence Standards and especially Competence 1 *Competence to practice social work with Māori*.
  - But what does '*culturally responsive*' mean?
    - Is it to be able to greet in te reo Rangatira?
    - Does this mean we first need to know our own culture and the status / prevalence it may hold?

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- Does it also mean we need to know *how* to be *culturally responsive* and if so, by whom and how will we acquire this knowledge?
- Do we also need to know that culture is an integral part of identity and therefore our social work practice could have an influence on people's perception of their identity?
  + For example, if we do not take our shoes off when entering a house, are we denigrating that house and all those who live in it. However, if we take our shoes off are we according respect to the house and showing mana a ki to those who live in it? Is this being *culturally responsive* and if so, is this taught on social work programmes?
- If we do not recognize how *culture* is embedded in *identity* then does social work practice run the risk of *recolonizing* the very people our practice is supposed to be *mana enhancing*?
- Is *culturally responsive* determined by a simple action or the degree of capability that is indicative of the action: a karakia to understanding the significance of concepts in te reo Rangatira?

- *This includes encouraging more social workers, who are critical to delivering government priorities*…(Page 5)
  - What if *government priorities* are in contention with the tenets of social work as a profession and as a practice, for example the Repeal of 7AA of the 2017 Children's, Young Persons and their Families (Oranga Tamariki) Act.
    - How does a social worker and particularly one who is tangata whenua, maintain their rangatiratanga when contracts and pūtea determine their compliance?

- *The SWRB will publish an Annual Report showing progress against agreed actions and will over time develop a range of indicators and targets.* (Page 5)
  - What if the *indicators* and *targets* are set politically, as outlined in the *Regulatory Standards Bill* and as a Crown entity, the Social Workers Registration Board is obligated to conform, where is the reality of the aspiration in this instance?
  - Does social work then quite simply become an instrument of government and not as a profession for *social change*.

- *safe and sustainable social worker workforce.* (Page 6)
  - What is meant by *safe* in this context?
    - Only according to the intent of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003

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- Free from political influence contrary to what is proposed in the Regulatory Standards Bill?
- *Safe* in the sense that academic rigor is preserved, but what if the academic rigor is not *culturally responsive*?
  - Safety is itself a conundrum, as Irihapeti Ramsden and subsequent authors have debated. when discussing '*cultural safety*'.
  - *Safe* from harm, when we work, as has been stated, with people who are *significantly* vulnerable and possibly reactionary because of that vulnerability, therefore there is an ambiguity in the word both in meaning and intent.
  - *Safe* in the workforce being preserved and if so, what does that look like?
    - Does it presuppose that the social work workforce is accorded the same value by all interested parties and therefore is *safe*?

- *all components of the workforce lifecycle* (Page 6)
  - Is the workforce given life by these components or is it that the profession has its own lifeforce which is simply enhanced by the practitioner?
  - What happens if the workforce is no longer in existence, does that mean the profession is no longer in existence or is it reinvented in another form?
    - The query is simply that language assigns a name and the name might be instrumental in defining the profession and or mahi but if the name does not exist, the work may still go on but in a different guise.
    - The Association is conveying the whakaaro that base concepts can remain the same but how they are languaged and applied may differ. + Identifying risk maybe one driver but in another perception it maybe the pursuit of oranga.
  - A lifecycle also includes death or in some people's belief, movement into another life, so is that potentiality implicated in the use of lifecycle?

- *New Zealanders to lead happier, healthier and more productive lives*. (Page 6)
  - Can social workers really support in achieving these outcomes?
  - The political implications that are the possible causal factors of these social indicators, needs to also be addressed.
  - Or, is it to work *collaboratively with other services, communities and iwi* in supporting ...?
  - Or, is the vision *to work collaboratively with other services, so that the need for such engagement is reduced, the political context of the need addressed and the rangatiratanga / mana motuhake of communities, hapū and iwi to pursue oranga are commensurately raised*.

- *New Zealanders that need them most*. (Page 6)

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- Who and how is '*most*' defined?
- Is there a scale that goes from *least* to *most* and how has that been devised?
  - Blue collar workers are now being affected by financial difficulties and so their *need* could be considered less than a solo parent, how could this judgement be made?

PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY:

- It is not just the workforce strategy but also the drivers that require the workforce strategy.
  - The drivers are economic and social in realisation, local, regional, national and global contextually and these also need addressing in line with workforce development. The more the context, the more the need, the more the demand. Work locally but think globally.

THE CASE FOR CHANGE:

- *social workers provide culturally responsive support aligned with Tiriti o Waitangi principles*. (Page 8)
  - Reference to Tiriti o Waitangi principles is contentious at best given the recent Bill.
    - The Association advocates that the entirety of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and indeed Whakaputanga, are not included when reference is made to the Principles.
    - The reduction to Principles implies that they encapsulate both language versions of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and if we consider the pū kōrero of Moana Jackson, then Principles are based on perception and interpretation. [Moana Jackson: There is no word in te reo Māori for 'cede' | E-Tangata](#)

- **Recent evidence both nationally and globally validate that social workers are also vital in climatic disasters** [Climate Change and Public Health: How Social Workers Can Advocate for Environmental Justice - Social Work Today Magazine](#)

  And political events [Climate Change and Public Health: How Social Workers Can Advocate for Environmental Justice - Social Work Today Magazine](#)

ATTRACTION AND RECRUITMENT PIPELINE: (Page 14)

- Introducing social work as a profession and a practice to secondary school and vocational students through school guidance counsellors and social workers in schools.

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RETENTION: (Page 15)
- Ensuring there is organizational and procedural understanding of wellbeing to offset stress and possible burnout.
  - Production of printed material, drop down boxes on websites and using professional associations, tertiary, and training institutions to disseminate information and or to offer training to organizations, communities, and iwi about wellbeing / oranga.

INDUCTION AND ONBOARDING: (Page 15)
- Establishing clear professional social work expectations that meet the demand of the work and the context of demographics rather than contractual criteria and pūtea.

LEARNING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT: (Page 15)
- Ensuring accessibility to education, specialisation and professional development is recognized and facilitated by training providers, organizations and social services agencies.

REWARD AND RECOGNITION: (Page 15)
- Implementation of information collection and pū kōrero in keeping with data sovereignty that validates and evidences the work and practice of social workers.

CAREER PROGRESSION: (Page 15)
- Explore the possibility of 'talent lending' for skill development and professional progression such as practitioners being 'loaned' to tertiary institutions to lift practice experience for ākonga.
- Creation of fieldwork practice supervisors as a position of professional progression within social services agencies that support ākonga on fieldwork placement. (Page 15)

HOW THIS STRATEGY FITS WITH OTHER RELATED STRATEGIES: (Page 16)
The aim is to have a coordinated approach, agreed priorities, to reduce gaps and any overlaps in work across agencies so that effectiveness and competence are evident in response to the needs and demands of whānau, tamariki, communities, hapori, hapū and iwi.

- Te Mahere Whai Mahi Māori (Māori Employment Action Plan) which focuses on improving employment outcomes for Māori workers and is relevant for growing the Māori social work workforce, emphasises the importance of culturally appropriate training pathways, growing Māori participation in professional roles including social work and supports development of kaupapa Māori social services requiring Māori social workers. The importance of such a workforce is the effectiveness of connection and competence of practice with which to meet

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the needs particularly of tangata whenua and the increasing demand for such services.

HOW WILL WE DO IT

OUR FOCUS: (Page 21)
- To ensure competence in practice and effectiveness in delivery of services meet the need and demand of the recipients.

Toitu te ara Tauwhiro - Sustainable Social Work Pathways 2025-2028 – Government's Social Worker Workforce Strategy to collectively address sustainability challenges facing Aotearoa New Zealand's social worker workforce (Updated Draft V3)

OUR CHALLENGE:
- We also know that capability, competence, and effectiveness are contextualised by need and demand that are ever changing according to social indicators that in turn are influenced by economic and political factors.