ISSN 2209-0053 (ONLINE) ISSN 2209-0045 (PRINT)





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ISSN 2209-0045 (PRINT) | ISSN 2209-0053 (ONLINE)

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Guidelines

Articles and advertisements must meet the requirements of our contributions guidelines and advertising specifications.

Editorial and advertising enquiries

Marketing and Communications Officer P: 03 9320 1005 editor@aasw.asn.au www.aasw.asn.au

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NEXT EDITION

Contributions for the Winter 2021 issue will be accepted until 30 April 2021

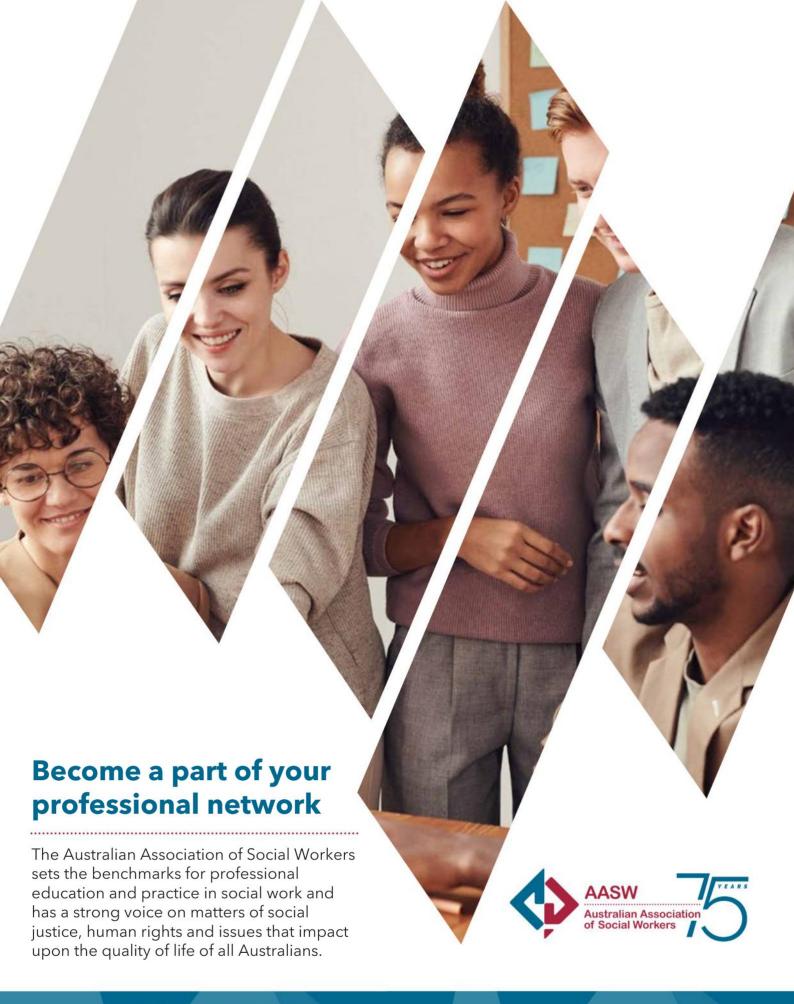
AASW Members whose articles are published in *Social Work Focus* can claim time spent to research and prepare them towards CPD requirements, specifically Category 3.

EDITORS

Noel McMahon Marketing and Communications Officer

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The AASW respectfully acknowledges Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians, and pays its respects to Elders past, present and emerging.



Celebrating a 75 year journey

This year we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW). At our foundation in 1946, Australia was embarking on a massive program of post war reconstruction. Australians had just approved a ground breaking Constitutional amendment introducing a national income safety net and better health care funding; a pivotal moment in strengthening our social bonds.

We were still in many respects a British province, narrow in our cultural outlook and ignorant of the true nature of the struggles of our First Nations peoples. We were yet to experience the benefits and challenges of massive post-war migration from Europe.

Our founders had the foresight to understand the advantages of forming a national association, thinking beyond state borders and giving our profession a united voice, both at home and abroad. And so, in 1946, seven women, Norma Parker (NSW) the inaugural President; Vice Presidents Lyra Taylor (Vic.), Kate Ogilvie (NSW), Dorothy Sumner (NSW/USA), Amy Wheaton (SA), Margaret Grutzner (Qld) Honorary Secretary and Viva Murphy (NSW) Assistant Secretary were elected as the first AASW executive.

To quote from Norma Parker herself from her Presidential Address to the 1st Australian Conference of Social Work in September 1947,

"Doubtless there will be new developments in which social workers will have a place. We have no time to attempt to prophesy here. But we can be quite sure that in this world of today and in this land of ours, we have an immediate place and an urgent task. We are at a stage when we need tremendously in our international and national life the values social work should have to give..."

"The Commonwealth of Australia can only grow towards the future we hope it will have if we are able to develop in better fashion than we have in the past-attitudes of tolerance, of appreciation of difference, of readiness to share, of generous indignation about the injustices of others as well as about our own."

Back then the AASW had approximately 400 members and an Association administered by volunteers. Today, we have branches in each state and territory and 14,000 members supported by hundreds of volunteers and 41 (EFT) employees.

Over the last 75 years much has changed for the better. We enjoy the benefits of rich cultural diversity. Thirty percent of our population were born overseas. We have made big strides in human rights for women and the LGBTQI plus community.



VITTORIO CINTIO **AASW National President**

But there is still much to be done by way of recognition and reconciliation with our First Nations peoples and shockingly, inequality is on the increase. The former British Prime Minister once famously said,

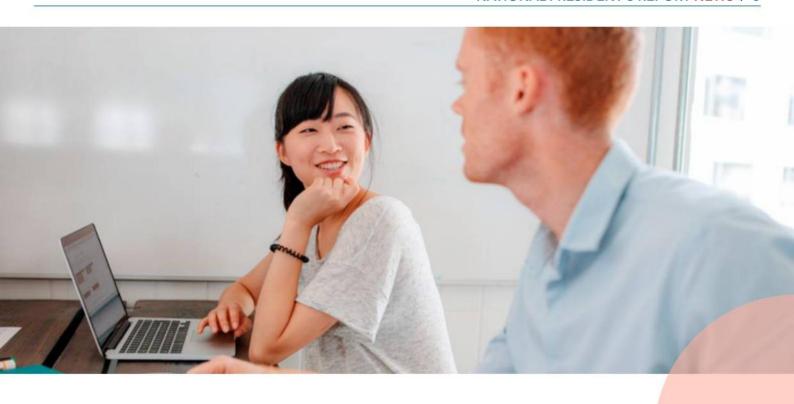
"I am homeless, the Government must house me' and so they are casting their problems on society and who is society? There is no such thing. There are individual men and women and there are families and no government can do anything except through people and people look to themselves first."

This is the exact opposite of the 2021 World Social Work Day theme; I am because we are.

Debt, unemployment and precarious employment are on the rise. Governments are keeping themselves at arm's length from their social obligations by outsourcing and underfunding. Confidence in our institutions is eroding, and the bonds of civil society are being tested. Sadly, the ravages of COVID and the snapback from it seemed destined to further increase the gap between rich and poor, both here and globally.

Seventy five years on, it is clear that our communities need a strong social work profession more than ever; and that professional associations such as ours are an essential thread in the fabric of civil society. As it was in 1946,





the tasks remain urgent. We roll up our sleeves and relish the challenges and uncertainties ahead, armed with high levels of skill and our code of ethics.

To all our Members and to all professional social workers- you can be assured that the AASW has your back when it comes to supporting your ethics and practice standards. To add muscle to this assurance, we are working hard to provide more opportunities for Members to connect with each other and support each other- no matter where you are or what kind of work you do.

Our real strength lies in our networks, so I encourage you to join a practice group in your field of interest and if one doesn't exist, create it. If you are starting off in your career, or if you are experienced and enjoy mentoring, I would encourage those who are interested to sign up for our mentoring program.

Seventy five years ago our founders understood that mentoring was an essential aspect of their professional lives; and it was easy in small communities where everyone knew each other. We understand the importance of creating the space for a safe and supportive conversation around skill development, ethical challenges and career opportunities. We now have better technology to support the creation of those spaces.

I would like finish by highlighting some of our work with First Nations peoples. We congratulate AASW National Vice President Linda Ford on her appointment, as an Asia Pacific Region representative on the IFSW Indigenous Commission.

Congratulations also, to AASW Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Director, Susan Green who has received the 'Contribution to Indigenous Research Award' at the 2020 National Indigenous Allied Health Awards, in recognition of her work with Aboriginal communities and the significant contribution to the development of social work ethics, practice, theory and education. This has changed the way social work practices with Aboriginal people are taught at university.

Professor Green's work has played a vital role in increasing the number of Aboriginal people undertaking social work courses and working in the social work profession, as well increased the profession's awareness of its need to decolonise its practices and include culturally responsive practice.

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Vittorio Cintio

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Seventy five years

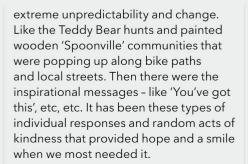
We've got this!

After an unexpected, tough and seemingly endless year, that often resembled Bill Murray's Groundhog Day, we are fortunately on the other side of 2020 and we find ourselves a quarter of the way into 2021.

Thankfully in many ways the lessons of last year have seemingly improved society's adaptability and better prepared us for potential future disruptions. Many of us are better armed with new skills and coping mechanisms to improve how we work together as a community, face unforeseen change and make any rapid, necessary adjustments in a volatile environment.

I was so humbled by the examples of random acts of kindness seen throughout the community that continued to provide hope at times of

I was so humbled by the examples of random acts of kindness seen throughout the community that continued to provide hope at times of extreme unpredictability and change.



The new year, however, didn't magically end the dislocation, the financial and emotional pressures of the past 15 months, and our communities and especially the more vulnerable are still exposed to the volatility of life, the uncertain labour market and systemic uncertainty that leaves them unprotected and susceptible.

Without doubt there will be challenges ahead but with the measures that have been put in place across Australia and with the roll out of the COVID-19 vaccine in both Australia and overseas we are seeing light at the end of the tunnel and some semblance of normality in the foreseeable future.

There is much work to do but with the strength, resilience and spirit of our Members, I am confident that together we are more than up to the task and we can start to turn the corner and make some genuine change in what is the 75th Anniversary year for the AASW.

Registration SA

One of the highlights of 2021 and a major step forward for the social work profession has been the South Australian Parliament's bipartisan commitment and national leadership, as the first Australian state to develop



CINDY SMITH Chief Executive Officer

specific legislation for the statutory registration of social workers.

The ground breaking legislation that was recently introduced into the South Australian Parliament has been a major focus of the AASW advocacy and will significantly improve the quality of social work services in the South Australian community and will hopefully be replicated in every state and territory in the near future.

Social workers work with extremely vulnerable clients in challenging and complex circumstances in relation to a range of issues and for individuals, families and communities that need assistance, it is vital that they receive supports from highly trained and skilled professionals.

Once the legislation is passed, it will go a long way towards reinforcing and building public confidence in the skills and accountability of Australian social workers.

One of the highlights of our 'diamond' year will be the AASW IFSW Asia Pacific Regional Social Work Conference to be held from November 11-13 in Brisbane, Australia. The three day conference centres around the theme of social work and the sustainable development goals, and a hybrid model (in person/online) has been chosen for the 2021 Conference to ensure attendance is accessible to those not only within Australia but also within the Asia Pacific region and beyond. Make sure you keep the date free.

Congratulations to Australian Association of Social Workers Members, Norma Tracey, Professor Margaret Alston, Professor Margarita Frederico and Mary Jo McVeigh, recognised in the

2021 Australia Day Honours list for their outstanding contributions to social work and the community. You can learn more about these amazing social workers on page 12 of this edition of Social Work Focus.

The AASW 2021 Mentoring Program has been developed after nation-wide Member consultation and feedback to assist both new and existing Members on their social work journey and will present opportunities that enhance skill development and create career pathways and learnings.

The program will provide a forum for social workers at all stages of their careers or professional journey to develop an on-going mentee/mentor relationship foster knowledge sharing, insights and learnings.

The program has seen incredible demand and we are delighted to have received so many applications from Members looking to enrich their career or professional journey. We are currently assessing applications, matching and pairing and to optimise the participant experience and looking forward to the program commencing in May.

With the recent launch of the AASW's podcast "Social Work People" we now have another wonderful channel to highlight the advocacy work of the organisation and bring a focus on the outstanding day to day work of AASW Members and those in the sector.

"Social Work People" explores the diverse world of social work and connects listeners to the people driving change, providing advocacy on the issues that impact upon the quality of life and improve the wellbeing of all Australians. Researched and hosted by Social Advocacy and Policy's Angela Scarfe, 'Social Work People' is available on all major streaming services including Apple, Google Play and Spotify, so subscribe and check it out. It is definitely worth the listen.

The AASW has established four National Excellence Awards that will be awarded at the 2021 AASW IFSW Asia Pacific Regional Social Work Conference, in November. The Awards will provide an opportunity to recognize and reward AASW Members across multiple career stages and specific social work categories.

The Awards are:

AASW Social Work Researcher of the Year AASW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Worker of the Year

AASW Social Worker of the Year

AASW Social Work Student of the Year

Further details will be provided via our Member newsletters.



EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

NATIONAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS

The AASW has established four new National Excellence Awards that will be awarded for the first time in 2021.

The aim of the Awards is to promote excellence and celebrate achievements within the social work profession and the Award categories include:

AASW Social Work Researcher of the Year

AASW Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Social Worker of the Year

AASW Social Worker of the Year

AASW Social Work Student of the Year

We are seeking Expressions of Interest from our Members to form Selection Committees, who will play a significant role in the selection of our Award winners.

Each Selection Committee will include relevant stakeholders from specific groups of Members, including: our Life Members; experienced researchers; National Research Committee; Members employed in the Education & Research sector; students; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Members; Officeholders (Branch Presidents and Branch Management Committees, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander BMC Members) and National Advisory Panels Members. Expressions of Interest will close at 5pm (AEDT) on Thursday 1 April 2021.

If you are interested in being part of a Selection Committee, please submit an Expression of Interest. If you'd like to participate but don't meet the broad criteria, please submit an EOI and we will consider your involvement further. We anticipate Selection Committees will meet at least twice, with meetings held via Zoom.

Throughout April/May the Selection Committees will have input into the development of the Award criteria. Further details regarding the Award criteria and nomination process will be released to Members in May and will close in July.

The Award winners will be announced at the 26th Asia-Pacific Regional Social Work Conference Dinner in November, in Brisbane.

The National Excellence Awards well complement the current AASW Branch Awards and State & Territory Awards, and winners will be eligible for a National Excellence Award in the same year.

RAP update

Approaching the end of the third quarter of the AASW Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2020-22, there has been development in several areas.

Linda Ford was elected to the position of National Vice President marked an historic event for the AASW, Professor Sue Green was elected to the Board as the new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Director, so two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social workers now hold key positions in the Association. The RAP Working Group chaired by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Director also has a minimum of two other Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander members.

The RAP Working Group monitors and reports on the progress of the achievement of actions and deliverables.

In this period RAP actions have included:

- A very successful Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Social Work symposium that was held in November, featuring an online Truth-Telling session to mark NAIDOC Week, and registration numbers of 1000+.
- A new group has been established in the Community Hub in response to a Member request, on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Work in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous members can participate.
- AASW staff, Managers, BMCs and Working Group members were encouraged to participate in and report on NAIDOC Week events. In total staff and managers attended and reported on a total of 27 events.
- A dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Work edition of Social Work Focus was released in October.
- The Social Policy and Advocacy Framework has been updated to ensure targeted consultation with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander members and stakeholders are consulted on AASW submissions and policy activities, where relevant and as appropriate.
- Cultural Awareness training for all staff is being held in March 2021.
- Acknowledgement and Welcome to Country Protocols are being reviewed.
- Mentoring Program for all AASW Members was launched in February 2021 and includes the development of a specific professional mentoring network for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Members in 2021.





Social Work Focus on Ethical Practice

In late 2020, the AASW released an updated 2020 Code of Ethics and revised Ethics Complaint Management Process. These signal the Association's ongoing commitment to strong ethical practice and robust standards across the profession and the community, and are aligned with the Association's commitment towards registration and collective efforts at a legislative level in South Australia.

The AASW's Ethics Complaints and Consultation data highlight common threads across social work practice where ethical dilemmas and misconduct issues can arise. These include:

- · The sharing of clinical records, consent, and confidentiality, particularly in private practice
- Complex matters related therapeutic practice with families and children in the context of family violence, the family court and parental separation. This includes social workers finding themselves ethically caught or enmeshed in these dynamics, with demands for case notes and case records that may be in opposition to a client's best interests, and even used as forms of abuse/control
- Implementing and understanding conflicts of interest, professional boundaries, and dual relationships
- · Working within one's scope of practice, particularly with respect to the preparation of reports and provision of private practice
- The scope of social work practice within schools, with issues relating to consent, confidentiality and record keeping in multidisciplinary teams
- Understanding and applying mandatory reporting requirements across states, territories and areas of law and practice, such as in the context of historical sexual abuse. Such ethical issues are common to



both private practice and to social workers employed by organisations where there may be a lack of (or at times problematic) policy guidance and support from employers.

The service has also experienced a number of social workers reporting the complexities faced by COVID-19, with respect to the demands on their own mental health and impacts on ethical practice boundaries. Members have likened 2020 to an extended crisis response experienced concurrently by clients and social workers alike, with little sense of beginning or end. As such, we have observed a growing potential for professional burnout; brought about by the high demand for complex mental health services, the demands of quick adaption to telehealth and online communication (including for clients), a sense of professional disconnection, a lack of distinction between work and home life, and a reduced scope for critical and ethical reflection. Such challenges in practice enhance the likelihood for ethical issues to emerge.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A PREVENTATIVE ETHICAL APPROACH TO PRACTICE

Since the implementation of the updated Ethics Complaint

Management Process in October 2020, the AASW has received approximately 80 discrete enquiries about potentially concerning social work practice. While not all of these will result in formal complaints, these data highlight the AASW's responsibilities towards the profession in lieu of registration, and the importance of embedding strong ethical principles as a cornerstone of practice, as a means of ensuring client care and avoiding issues of misconduct.

Ethical dilemmas and complexity are fundamental and unavoidable aspects to social work practice. This is by virtue of the profession's commitment to equity; our support of vulnerable and marginalised individuals and communities; and the often structural and systemic forms of oppression and disadvantage that informs both social

work practice, and the challenges faced by our clients.

Given that ethical dilemmas are common, and their consideration necessary aspects to critical social work practice, adopting a mindful and deliberate early intervention or preventative approach to minimising avoidable ethical dilemmas is vital. This is particularly advisable for social workers in private practice and/ or fee-for-service settings, where broader organisational support is not always available for guidance in the management of complex ethical or legal matters should they arise.

AVOIDING THE "SLIPPERY SLOPE"

Ethical dilemmas and issues of professional misconduct, often emerge as "slippery slope" or "stealth issues", arising from circumstances where appropriate boundaries, processes or standards of practice have not been adequately considered, prepared for, identified, or acted upon, in the early stages of practice.

In such instances, matters that may at first seem minor, negligible or unlikely to be problematic, can eventually become significant issues over time. This can eventuate in social workers facing difficult ethical, and even legal, circumstances that could have otherwise been avoided. Such instances can often arise with respect to professional boundaries and conflicts, and in practice settings where clear processes and permissions around client engagement have not been thoroughly developed or adhered to.

Should a social worker suddenly find themselves on this "slippery slope", they may recall "feeling or having a sense that something was not right". They may also recall finding it hard to institute an early boundary, often from interpersonal, organisational, or commercial perspectives, or out of a well-meaning desire to not disappoint or refuse a service to a client in need. In these instances, access to objective supervision is critical.

It is the experience of the AASW Ethics and Complaints team that these very stealth or seemingly minor ethical dilemmas, are those that social workers should be particularly mindful of from an early intervention and prevention perspective - particularly before they "slide" into potential areas of professional harm and misconduct.

To reiterate, ethical dilemmas cannot be entirely avoided, as critical practice is core to our profession's scope of practice and professional values. Therefore, it is incumbent on social workers to:

- Proactively minimise and manage ethical dilemmas that are within their control, as early as possible
- To remember that it is the responsibility of the social worker (not the client) to manage, as best as possible, the potential for conflicts by establishing clear, upfront professional boundaries (as per 2020 AASW Code of Ethics, Standard 4.5)

SOCIAL WORK FOCUS AND ETHICAL PRACTICE

Given the centrality of ethical practice to the social work profession, from this issue of Social Work Focus onward, a section on ethical practice will be included. This will provide a space for the AASW to explore areas of ethical practice interest with Members, informed by general Member practice experiences and emerging trends identified through the Complaints and Consultation service.

If Members have ideas for future discussion and reflection, or would like to seek an individual ethical consultation, they are encouraged to contact the Ethics team via ethics. conualtaion@aasw.asn.au

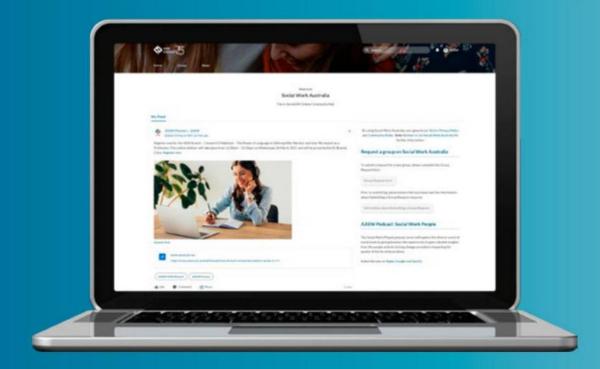
Members are also strongly encouraged to access the <u>AASW suite of Ethical</u> <u>Practice Guidelines</u> that embed and expand upon the ethical principles articulated in the <u>Code of Ethics</u>, by applying them to range of topical and common direct practice areas.

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Congratulations to Australian Association of Social Workers Members, Norma Tracey, Professor Margaret Alston, Professor Margarita Frederico and Mary Jo McVeigh, recognised in the 2021 Australia Day Honours list for their outstanding contributions to social work and the community.

NORMA TRACEY

Norma Tracy AM received her Medal of the Order of Australia "for significant services to mental health, and to Indigenous children and their families".

Eighty two year old Norma Tracey is a pioneer, reforming and creating new services since the earliest stage of her career and introducing many of the things that we take for granted in how hospitals look after patients.

An AASW Member since 1987, an Accredited Mental Health Social Worker since 2009 and Member of the NSW Branch Reconciliation Action Committee since 2018, Norma said there were 26 people in her class when she started social work and she felt so honoured and thrilled to be accepted.

"I was under 21 which was the admission age so I had to go before a special board. When I think now of those 26 dedicated, rather conservative people from Sydney University who did social work in those days, and that now there are hundreds each year from every university around the country, and all youngsters out of school, moving so

much more towards the left. It is an enormous shift," she said.

Norma started her career as an Assistant to the Professor of Child Health at Sydney University in a role that involved teaching young doctors about the emotional and psychological needs of babies and children, and the need to maintain strong relationships with their parents while the children were in hospital.

In the mid 1960's, children and babies were tied to the cots and beds (to stop them from falling out) and parents were allowed to visit for only an hour and one of the children's wards was next to the mortuary with trolleys being wheeled past the door. It was very plain to Norma that lots of things that needed to be changed. So she joined the social work team at the hospital, even though the professor saw this as representing a 'step down'.

"In working with mothers and infants, I was greatly influenced by John Bowlby (a pioneering theorist of Attachment Theory), who personally gave me the advice that developed my entire career right to this present day."

"I had been invited as a social worker at the Children's Hospital to meet with

him. I was eager to show him my plan on how to change the entire hospital into a warm and receptive place for mothers and children. He looked at my grand map, rolled it up and put it in the corner of the room. 'We might just leave that for now, remember the most anyone human can do is create one brick in the edifice of life, choose a small area, working it into a model of excellence, and then disseminate it'. I cried for three days but decided I would work on our very small burns ward unit."

Norma set about transforming the the burns unit which she worked into a warm and caring place for the children. She recognised things that were hampering the children's progress, such as the lack of communication between professionals, a lack of contact with parents and was very concerned about hospital cleaners being used as interpreters, even for sensitive conversations about serious medical problems.

"All the staff met every morning on every single case, parents were invited in with no limited visiting hours, every profession would have one or two social workers there and maybe one or two for the rest of the hospital. I quickly learned the ward sister, not the doctor, was the centre and all revolved around her. Soon it became a model for the whole hospital, and all my previous plans were so supported, that we changed the very nature of our work there."

The doctors were so impressed at the difference in the quality of the communication that the hospital funded her to set up an interpreting service. Things that are now taken for granted in children's hospitals, were started by Norma.

Norma currently runs an organisation called 'Strong Mothers', in Sydney's inner city Redfern.

"I am still now building little models of excellence, right here in Redfern in our new little organisation called Strong Mothers and while the Organisation is new, at 82 years of age, I am not. We in 'Strong Mothers' work with Aboriginal Mothers and babies from pregnancy through to age six. We have two social workers, a psychologist, two psychotherapists specialising in treating trauma, Indigenous art therapists, a speech therapist and two nutritionists. Each mother's group is run weekly for a period of six years, and women can choose to have any of these services."

"The results are quite stunning and the wonderful feeding in from psychoanalytic theory, attachment theory, have deepened and enriched our work beyond belief. So strange when I look back that I am still using that one model from John Bowlby, and how well it has served me."

Norma said the Social Work profession is now so much broader, and as many more skilled people join it, there are so many different pathways now to fit each individual worker.

"I have currently three young social work students from New South Wales University, Catholic University and Wollongong. They bring new life to me daily and to my profession and I love to share in the way they think and in the work they do. I am excited about the future of social work and as I know all too well how change brings chaos and disorder, and disrupts identity, as a new identity is born within the profession. I can't help thinking it is just like mother and father having a baby... I believe that is a good model for social work and our future," she said.

I am excited about the future of social work and as I know all too well how change brings chaos and disorder, and disrupts identity, as a new identity is born within the profession



Her message to her fellow AASW Members is that we all need to be skilled in disaster related social work, in assisting communities to prepare and build resilience, the immediate mobilisation of resources and workers and post disaster social work

PROFESSOR MARGARET MARY ALSTON

Professor Margaret Mary Alston AM, Professor of Social Work at the University of Newcastle and Head, Gender, Leadership and social Sustainability Unit, received a Member of the Order of Australia for her significant service to tertiary education, to social sustainability, and to women.

Professor Alston was active during the Rural Women's Movement of the 1980s-1990s and her academic works have directly informed policymakers and encouraged rural women to continue lobbying and networking. She has been involved firsthand with a number of rural women's networks including the Women on Farms Gatherings, the Foundation for Australian Agricultural Women, and the Rural Women's Policy Unit.

Her main interests of research are gender, climate and environmental disasters, rural women and social work; and she has pursued these topics through work in Australia, and overseas, for NGO's and the UN.

This interest started when she was working at Charles Sturt University, which like many regional universities, maintains strong connections to the communities in which it is located, in a period coinciding with the worst of the millennium drought, which, she noticed was treated primarily as an economic problem. Even when the social dimensions were discussed, there was no acknowledgement that it was having different consequences for women and men. She commenced research into this, which guickly broadened into studying the way that women's contribution to agriculture throughout Australia's history has been overlooked.

The author of several books that focus on the role of farming women in Australian agriculture, Professor Alston argues that Australian farming women have been neglected, ignored and silenced in mainstream narratives about rural Australian life and has urged media, government and researchers to take more notice of what she calls the 'hidden heart of rural Australia'.

Overseas she has studied the gender impacts of climate change

in Bangladesh, Laos and India and has held several posts with the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and UNESCO. As Professor of Social Work and Head of Department at Monash University, in 2008 she established the Gender, Leadership and Social Sustainability (GLASS) research unit, investigating diverse issues such as climate change, violence against women, leadership and social sustainability.

Her work epitomises social work's ability to show the links between people's lived experience and the systemic, structural issues at work. Since she started in social work, she has seen how the changes underway in the climate have made their way into social work practice, and the emerging field of disaster related social work. Publishing, Social Work in Post-Disaster Sites in 2018.

Professor Alston said that the fundamental commitment to social justice that underpins the work of all social workers, is what distinguishes her work from that of other professions. She describes hearing a presentation from an engineer about a new piece of machinery about to be introduced into a village. It was Margaret who asked him how many women would lose their jobs and livelihood because of its introduction, and it was Margaret who pointed out the unfairness of the plan, when his answer was 25.

Her message to her fellow AASW Members is that we all need to be skilled in disaster related social work, in assisting communities to prepare and build resilience, the immediate mobilisation of resources and workers and post disaster social work.

Professor Alston is currently a Chief Investigator on an Australian Research Council project on social sustainability in the Murray-Darling Basin area and on the ARC Invisible Farmer project with the Victorian Museum to develop awareness of rural women's contribution to Australian society. She is also a guest editor for a special edition of Australian Social Work on social work and disasters

PROFESSOR MARGARITA FREDERICO

Professor Margarita Frederico AM received her Member of the Order of Australia for significant service to tertiary education, to social work, and to the not-for-profit sector. With more than 50 years' experience as a social worker Margarita is currently the Graduate Research Co-ordinator in Social Work and Social Policy at La Trobe University, and Principal Research Consultant at Berry Street's Take Two Program.

She was drawn to social work because of its sense of purpose, and its aim of social justice and she said that although the human rights paradigm is challenging for her, it still provides a valuable vision for global social change.

From the beginning of her career, Margarita has been dedicated to linking research and practice, and asserts the need for evidence (WHERE WHEN WHAT?), understanding that this takes on a particular flavour when working with marginalised groups. Illustrating the point, after post graduate studies at Yale University's Child Studies Centre, she was the first social worker to be employed in the local community health centre and realised that the local people had been not only the subject of extensive research but had feeling of having been the objects of that research which had a created distrust of professionals. Her conviction that everyone's contribution had value, led her to involve the people she was working with in the design of the evaluation. A process we now call co-design.

Returning to Australia, Margarita's first social work role was in the social work department at the Royal Melbourne Hospital and throughout her career has continued to concentrate on child and family wellbeing, childhood trauma and child protection, maintaining this interest while moving onto academia in 1976. In 1995, she led the development of the new School of Social Work at Australian Catholic University, where she was the Inaugural Head of School.

Margarita is well known in the child protection sector for establishing the Take Two program with Berry Street,

which commenced in 2004. Her belief is that simply removing children from the risks in their environment is not enough to counteract the effects of trauma and in fact can compound them. Together with the Take Two team she has worked hard to improve the evidence base by identifying outcome measures that are both validated and appropriate to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children in state care.

In her current role at La Trobe university, Margarita supervises the higher research degree students in child wellbeing and trauma, and leadership and human service organisations, combining this with extensive work on evaluation, leadership and governance in human services.

The many threads of her work have enriched each other, so that she now has extensive expertise in engaging children and young people in research in an ethical and meaningful way. She has undertaken process and outcome evaluations and action research with vulnerable populations, into complex issues, in Australia and overseas.

A member of the AASW since 1965, and now a life Member, Margarita's active involvement with the AASW has seen her fill many voluntary roles, including a period as a national director from 1996 to 2000, Victorian branch president from 1997 to 2000, and Chair of the Ethics Tribunal from 2001 to 2006. Her contributions to our sector are similarly impressive and she is currently a director of Jesuit social Services and Odyssey House, both of which are in Victoria.

Reflecting on her more than 50 years' experience, she is struck by the continuity in the profession's dedication to social change, driven by our values and human rights and points to the opportunities to work with and build relationships with all people in all settings and from all backgrounds.

She believes that because of these relationships, social workers are also exposed to the broadest possible



cross section of professional knowledge and personal experience. Social workers' deep appreciation of how a person's context creates barriers against change, means that many social workers have understood the experience of intersectionality before the term was in common use.

Margarita describes herself as being lucky and privileged to have worked with and learned from many inspiring and interesting people, from Anna Freud to Aunty Mollie Dyer and Professor Muriel Bamblett AM.

When asked about the next challenges for the profession, she returns to the topic of evidence for practice. She nominates the way our evolving scientific knowledge in fields like genetics are making it possible for the medical professions to individualise treatments to particular patients. She looks forward to social work developing an evidence base that is similarly validated and individualised.



MARY JO McVEIGH

Mary Jo McVeigh is a social worker with more than 35 years' experience, an AASW Member since 1996 and AMHSW since 2009 and received the Medal of the Order of Australia for 'service to the community through social welfare organisations'.

Mary Jo is the founder and director of Cara House 'a place for healing, discovery and growth' and the CaraCare charity, that both support vulnerable children, young people and their families through trauma - specific counselling and human rights practices.

As a trauma therapist and an Accredited Mental Health Social Worker, Mary Jo has worked with children and families who have experienced child abuse, violence and trauma by assisting them to tap into their own resilience and strengths, to look at how they have survived in the face of adversity.

Mary Jo completed her Honours degree in Social Science in 1983 and worked in the community of North Belfast in the United Kingdom, before returning to university and completing a master's degree in Social Work in 1986.

More recently, Mary Jo's curiosity for knowledge has led her down the path of exploring and studying comprehensive bodies of literature, creatively utilising it within her therapeutic and leadership practice and more recently for undertaking a research PhD in Social Work at Sydney University, focusing on children's rights and participatory values.

While the importance of children's human rights has been nationally and internationally acknowledged on larger socio-political and systemic scales, Mary Jo's research and literature review has highlighted that within the context of every day social work and therapeutic practice, children's rights often remain invisible. This has inspired her to champion a children's rights agenda across these sectors.

As a passionate writer, Mary Jo has sole authored a leadership resource and training course called Without Question, the Language of the Mindful Leader. She has also written numerous training programs for practitioners and managers in government and charitable organisations within Australia and has published three innovative social work resources for working therapeutically with children and young people.

Mary Jo is acknowledged in her field as an expert in child protection, trauma therapy and leadership coaching. Her expertise has been sought on advisory panels such as the NSW Domestic Violence reforms and the Royal Commission into institutional abuse. She continues to present at national and international conferences, giving further voice to children, adults and families who have been impacted by the oppression of abuse and trauma.

Mary Jo has "absolute faith in the social work profession" and is excited to see so many young people coming into social work in a world which values money, even though it isn't well paid.

"I believe the practice of critical self reflection is 'the bounty of social work', because we constantly examine our own position and this way we avoid replicating the oppression that vulnerable people are experiencing," she said.

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AASW Podcast "Social Work People"

The launch of the AASW Podcast "Social Work People" in January was dedicated to exploring the diverse world of social work and connecting listeners to the people driving change and providing advocacy on the issues that impact upon the quality of life of all Australians.

Social Work People explores what social workers are doing and thinking, the stories behind their work, the issues they grapple with and the vision that keeps them going.

Podcasting is a time-efficient and very portable form of communication and subscribers can listen while they do other things at work or at home, or during their commute and as an on-demand technology, they aren't

intrusive with listeners deciding what they want to hear, and when they want to hear it.

The aim of the AASW "Social Work People" was to highlight the people and stories of social workers and take the opportunity to personalise and expand on bigger issues that we think about but don't have time to explore in depth through other mediums.

The Podcast is designed to appeal to social workers but has the potential to impact on and touch a audience broader than that AASW Members. Each episode is a very accessible audio capsule, featuring a person working in the field of social work, talking about their speciality area and underscoring it with the reality, the issues/problems and emotions they deal with on a daily basis.

Researched and hosted by AASW Social Advocacy and Policy's Angela Scarfe, "Social Work People" is available on all major streaming services. Subscribe now on Apple, Google Podcasts and Spotify

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Social Work People

Discover the latest podcast from the AASW

Social Work People explores the diverse world of social work and connects listeners to the people driving change and providing advocacy on the issues that impact upon the quality of life of all Australians.

South Australian registration campaign update

The AASW has commended the South Australian Parliament for its bipartisan commitment and national leadership, as the first Australian state to develop specific legislation for the statutory registration of social workers.

On 18 March, South Australian MP Tammy Franks asked Parliament to note the final report of the Joint Committee into the Registration of Social Workers Bill, the key recommendation of which is for South Australia to implement this nation leading legislation.

Ms Franks said before Parliament that the Australian Association of Social Workers has been calling for this reform for more than 20 years.

"Multiple reviews and reports have recommended the registration of social workers. It's time to get this done."

"Social workers represent one of the largest professional working groups in Australia but have no formal registration requirements. They work with vulnerable people every day. But at the moment, people have limited options for recourse or action if a social worker is either acting inappropriately or is calling themselves a social worker without any formal qualifications."

This legislation will provide the South Australian community the assurance that the social worker they see is a qualified social worker and will hopefully have a ripple effect across the nation. We are closely reviewing the legislation in anticipation of it being voted on by the South Australian Parliament in early 2021 and will keep Members informed as this process continues.







World Social Work Day



On World Social Work Day 16 March 2021, the AASW celebrated WSWD by hosting Branch events across Australia, as well as an online National event.

During the national event, AASW National President Vittorio Cintio provided an opening address and was followed by a panel of speakers who contributed to the discussion on the role of social work and social workers in progressing social justice, solidarity and connectedness between people, communities and environments.

The panelists for this event included:

- Professor Margaret Alston: Professor of Social Work at the University of Newcastle and Head, Gender, Leadership and Social Sustainability Unit
- Professor Sue Green: AASW Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Director
- Linda Ford: AASW National Vice President and Asia Pacific Region representative on the IFSW Indigenous Commission

Watch the National World Social Day event.

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REGISTER YOUR INTEREST

Cultural influences on social work practice

a Vietnamese Australian's account

TRI NGUYEN

Social work is not a value free, technocratic practice. The social work profession and each individual practitioner's values cannot be 'left at the door': they unavoidably influence social workers' work and relationship with clients (i.e. individuals, groups, families and communities).

In this short essay, I apply Ishido's (2010) autoethnographic approach to explain how my background as a second generation Australian of Vietnamese ethnic background, with my hybridised identity of Western and Confucian values and experiences, informs my professional identity and future practices as a social worker. I will demonstrate that critical dialogue between my cultural identity and professional identity results in an anti-oppressive mode of social work practice that prioritises the reflective and relational 'lens' of working with clients. This requires conscious, critical reflection and sharing my own positionality with clients in open dialogue about our values. Practicing in this way will best enable me to fulfill the other two 'lenses' of social work, social justice and change, in a way that brings honour to how I work with clients and dignity to their experience and wishes.

I will first describe my cultural identity by applying Ishido's (2010) concept of hybridised identities, "being across and between two cultures", using an autoethnographic approach.

Autoethnographic approaches involve critically reflecting and deconstructing one's own self-concept and identity as they are revealed through social contexts. Raised in a household of ethnically Vietnamese family of one parent, six aunts, two uncles and maternal grandparents, who came to

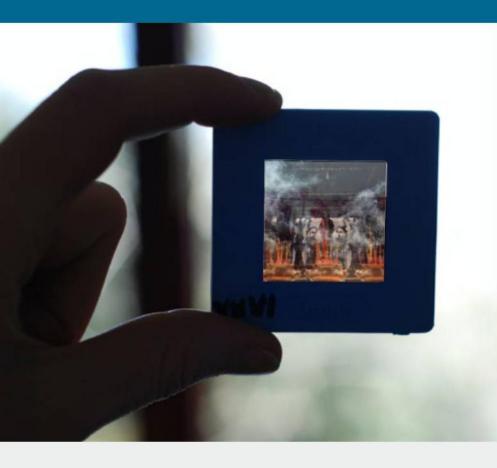
Australia as refugee migrants, I obtained Confucian, communitarian ways of viewing the world. At the same time, I was also 'raised' by the Australian education system and Australian television, adopting Western world views that privilege claims to objectivity, rationality and individualism. My background as a second generation Australian of Vietnamese ethnicity, represents a third, hybridised identity of Western and Confucian values that are not wholly Confucian, nor wholly Western: what I colloquially call a "Confus-ern"-"West-ucian" identity. The extent to which I hold and are perceived to hold certain cultural identities, values and worldviews that are Western or Confucian, varies on the issue and may also be viewed differently depending on the cultural background of the person I interact with and the context. These experiences of cultural disjuncture and difference are part of my cultural identity.

My hybridised cultural identity influences my professional identity as a social worker in how I view and apply the social work profession's ethics and values. The foundational document for the Australian social work profession, the Australian Association of Social Workers [AASW] Code of Ethics (2020) (Code), outlines the ethical rules, values and principles for social work practice. While the Code explicitly states that the rights



About the author

Tri Nguyen is a newly graduated social worker, having completed a Masters of Social Work (Qualifying) at the Australian Catholic University. Tri's previous career involved policy and political analysis, advice, advocacy and government relations roles with the federal government, private industry and not-for-profit health practitioner and consumer bodies, throughout which he applied Bachelor of Arts (Hons) and Laws (Honours) degrees obtained from the University of Sydney. Tri has worked in the settlement services, out of home care and homelessness sectors and is due to start working with youth and community development.



My background as a second generation Australian of Vietnamese ethnicity, represents a third, hybridised identity of Western and Confucian values that are not wholly Confucian, nor wholly Western

of individuals and communities are to be recognised by social workers, the Code nonetheless heavily preferences individualist conceptions of choice, wellbeing and freedom; reflecting the Western origins of the social work profession (and Australian society) more broadly. For example, the Code states social workers are to respect others' cultural and group identities and needs "within a framework of human rights and social justice" (clause 4.1), it provides no further guidance on how this is to occur. Similarly, the Code's requirement that social workers oppose all violations of human rights, appears to subtly prioritise preferences on civil and political rights, noting that those rights "will be accompanied by economic, social and cultural rights" (clause 2.2) Furthermore, although the Code requires social workers to recognise cultural diversity and engage in culturally safe practice, and appropriately states that social workers own acknowledgement of the significance of their own culture impacts such practice, it does not provide further guidance on how social workers can do this.

Although the Western parts of my cultural identity have an affinity with those individualist ethical and value orientations of the Code, my own experience of tensions with the Confucian aspects of my cultural identity provides an opportunity to strive to be consciously aware of how there will be situations where certain clients may not agree with or prioritise the ethics and values of social work in the way the Code has. The larger lesson I therefore draw is that everyone, whether from the same cultural background or not, can have differing views on the extent to which certain values should be prioritised over others.

My cultural identity's experiences as a migrant minority living in the dominant white Australian society also has some resonance with the social work profession's history of cultural domination. Social workers' not-so-recent participation in the Stolen Generations was driven by the profession holding notions of (Western, white) cultural superiority and dominance. I connect with this history through my experience of tensions and oppression from both 'sides' of my Western-Confucian hybridised cultural identity and from white privilege in Australia. This experience and understanding of social work's history reveals to me that social work, as a profession and institution, has considerable power

and privilege that can negatively impact clients if inadequate critical reflection and consideration is given to clients' values and worldviews.

This critical reflection on my cultural and professional identity and the relationship between them therefore shapes the approach I take to the 'four lenses' of my social work practice. My social work practice prioritises the reflective and relational lens of social work by adopting Healy's (2014) Anti Oppressive Practice (AOP) approach to Critical Social Work practice. AOP reflects my personal orientation to social work practice: Social justice can be advanced by supporting individuals' empowerment to overcome inequity. I will only directly challenge structural inequities if my partnership with the client is not compromised and no harm comes to them. Attending to the reflective and relational aspects of social work will be the best way I can contribute towards social justice and change. I will do this by being critically reflective and open about my own positionality, values, and world view, in the social worker-client relationship. Through this, I aim to engage clients in a respectful, cross cultural dialogue about what is important to the client and what is possible. This way of practicing

represents the true spirit of the social work value of "respect for persons" and working in a way that is culturally safe and respectful of cultural diversity. Working in this way can also act as a form of restorative, healing relationship to offset clients' usual experiences of oppression, advancing the cause of social justice.

This short essay has been an attempt to articulate my own positionality as a second-generation Vietnamese Australian in relation to my professional identity and future social work practice. My hybridised Western-Confucian cultural identity and experiences of cultural tension and contestation associated with my cultural identity and as a minority vis a vis white society, unavoidably informs how I practice as a social worker. My cultural identity puts me in a position to critically understand the cultural and value positionality within Australian social work practice and the profession's past, and its continuing real potential to inadvertently oppress clients in the present. All of this has driven me to adopt an Anti Oppressive Practice approach to social work: to engage in critical reflection, and declare my positionality in working with clients to engage in transparent and mutual dialogue that will hopefully, as much as possible result in work that respects the client's own world view, values and aspirations.

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Mental health

New service supporting Queensland workers

KARINA MAXWELL

With 13 years' experience as a social worker, I have worked in a number of different areas including with First Nations families, asylum seekers on community detention, Queensland Government policy and cabinet work, crisis accommodation, group work, and mental health.

In 2019, I was fortunate to land an opportunity to be the pioneer in a new program to support workers who are experiencing psychological issues due to the workplace, such as bullying, violent clients, etc. This new program, as far as I am aware is the only one of its kind in Australia.

The Queensland Council of Unions won the tender to run this program and specifically wanted a social worker for the position, who is registered with the AASW and has more than 10 years' experience.

My role was to develop and run the program (Workers' Psychological Support Service) while adhering to the Queensland Governments' Office of Industrial Relations funding specifications. In the initial stages, there was some robust discussion about how the service should be presented and the types of records kept. As a social worker who strongly adheres to the AASW practice standards and Code of Ethics, I often pushed back about protecting the workers information and privacy regarding reporting requirements and the delivery of the best service possible to support workers who are struggling.

The service is free, confidential and independent, providing support, advice and links for Queensland workers into services they might need to assist them while going through a psychological injury due to the workplace. Although this service is placed within the

Queensland Council of Unions, you do not need to be a union Member to contact the service.

The first two years

I get calls from workers in every type of industry, from funeral workers right through to university academics and everything in-between and now two years old, more than 1,000 workers have contacted the service. Sadly, most of the psychological injuries I see and hear about could have been prevented. The most common injury being bullying. Bullying by colleagues, bullying by management, sometimes not enough being done to address and mediate the bullying concerns. I have noticed that this is guite prevalent in the community services sector where a lot of us social workers work.

There are many issues that workers' experience in the workplace including: abductions, suicide, horrendous workplace accidents, fatalities, micro-management, violent clients, unmanageable workloads, vicarious trauma, sexual harassment, rape, and many other issues. And in some cases, workers have already experienced a number of traumas in their lives and the work issue has then been the catalyst to impact their already fragile mental health. All of this has the potential to impact their private lives with greater tensions in their personal relationships, as well as sleeplessness, stress,



About the author

Karina Maxwell is a Ngugi woman from Quandamooka (Moreton and Stradbroke Islands, and Wynnum area), Queensland, single mother, and currently in her "downtime", the deputy chair on the Murri School Board, casual academic and tutor for the University of Queensland, industry division member for the Services Union, Queensland Branch Management Committee Member with the AASW.

self-esteem issues, and well-being among many other challenges. Some also experience physical symptoms due to the impact of the psychological injuries.

Building on my existing skills and new skills

A new skill I learned while on the job for this role, is promotion of the service. In every role I have held previously, as I am sure most social workers know, sadly there is a waiting list of clients wanting to utilise the services and no real need to promote further. As this is a new service, promotion was very much needed. Getting into the promotional space was difficult at the start, but it is now second nature that I promote the service wherever I go, both professionally and personally.

Definitely in this role, I have learned a lot about the workers compensation, Fairwork Commission/Ombudsman and Industrial Relations systems, processes, procedures and what can be achieved for workers. As well as the income protection insurance system as an alternative to workers compensation.

Through my own past experiences in bad work environments, I have experienced first-hand what it feels like to be in a toxic work space on more than one occasion. Since that time, I have played an active role in my Union as a Union Delegate and through my current role, I understand more and more about how Unions can support workers through difficult times and ensure better working conditions for all.

Selfcare

Dealing with all of this, while being a sole practitioner in a new and innovative service, I don't have the luxury of debriefing with others who are in a similar role. Therefore, regular external supervision is a must. I am also fortunate enough to have my dad who is a psychologist and step-mother who is a fellow social worker, who are both very supportive of me and understand workers' rights, to then bounce off and debrief with when needed.

To ensure I look after my own wellbeing, I am quite strict on my selfcare regime, allocating a few times a week to do things like going to trivia with good friends who are not in the social work space (sorry to my social work friends).



Therefore we don't resort to talking shop and I get a complete break from the sometimes heavy work that social workers are so passionate about. As well as taking time out catching up with good friends and going away on short trips when I can. From time to time, I have taken up walking and try to keep this as a constant (although I am not always successful in this).

Protecting my future

Since undertaking this role and hearing all the things that can go wrong in a workplace usually outside of the workers' control, it has made me make sure that I have things in place to safeguard myself. I have and will now always ensure that I am a member of the AASW as my professional group, have income protection insurance and be a member of a Union. I see these like an insurance policy just in case anything untoward happens. And I would strongly encourage all to do the same.

Additionally, I voluntarily contribute to my superannuation to make sure I have enough to retire on, if and when I get to that age, although I doubt I will ever really stop doing the work that I love.

Great experience working in the Union environment

Working within the union movement, I have realised how closely aligned the union point of view is to the social work point of view. The sign on the front door before entering my

workplace states: Leading Unions to achieve industrial, political and social justice for Queensland workers. I am so proud to be a part of this, and to see first hand what unions do to support workers. But it is more than this... the Queensland Council of Unions and its affiliates (which are other unions) are a strong advocate for domestic violence policies, assisted dying laws, coercive control, and, climate change, just to name a few. This is the first time ever, I have been a part of an organisation that strongly encourages staff to attend rallies and protests to support a good and worthy cause. An organisation that also actively pays respect to First Nations people and proudly invites the elder in the union space, Uncle Bob Anderson (also the elder in my family), to all events deservedly treating him as royalty for his lifetime of service to the union movement. And one that is always inclusive and supportive of First Nations people and the issues, even holding NAIDOC day events and presenting awards to honour First Nations people and union initiatives in this space. My boss even attended the Black Lives Matter events.

Contact details

If you or someone you know is going through difficulties in the workplace, by all means give me a call during business hours. Phone: 1800 370 732.

Email: info@wpss.org.au. Website: www.wpss.org.au

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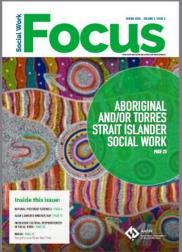
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Social Work Focus is the Australian Association of Social Workers' Member magazine. It is published four times a year and is accessible to Members via email and on our website in accessible digital formats, such as PDF, flipbook and a webpage.

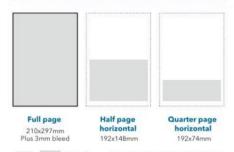
You can advertise in Social Work Focus.

BULK DISCOUNT

		Single issue rate	4 Issue Package
Full Colour	Full page (inside covers)	\$1,100.00	\$3,970.00 (\$992.50 per advert)
	Full page (back cover)	\$1,330.00	\$4,760.00 (\$1,190.70 per advert)
	Half page (horizontal)	\$685.00	\$2,465.00 (\$616.25 per advert)
	Full page	\$1,030.00	\$3,380,00 (\$845.00 per advert)
	Quarter page (horizontal)	\$365.00	\$1,320.00 (\$330.00 per advert)

Prices are inclusive of GST and per advertisement.

Advertising Specifications (Sizes)



Page trim

To Book Your Print Advertisement

Please complete the booking form at the end of this document and email it to: editor@aasw.asn.au

To discuss your advertising needs, contact:

Social Work Focus Editor

Phone: 03 9320 1005 Email: editor@aasw.asn.au

Supplying Artwork

AASW will only accept final art that is supplied as a print ready, high resolution PDF with minimum 3mm bleed and crop marks. Minimum of 10mm margins are recommended for full page ads. All images must be 300 dpi.

Please send your artwork to editor@aasw.asn.au

Please check that the size of your advertisement reflects our specifications.

If your advertisement does not reflect the quality of our magazine, we will contact you before we make any changes to it.

2021 SWF Deadline Dates

2021 deadlines

2021 deadlines				
Issue	Bookings & artwork	Publication		
Autumn 2021	January 29th	March 5 th		
Winter 2021	April 30 th	June 4th		
Spring 2021	July 30 th	September 3 rd		
Summer 2021	November 29th	December 3 rd		

