



Continuing Professional Education (CPE) Review

Discussion Paper

September 2009

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW

12 months ago the Board approved a review of AASW CPE policies and practices.

The Board had become mindful of the need to,

- improve ease of access to CPE, including better use of technology and the need for more effective partnerships with CPE providers and schools of social work,
- minimise any barriers to access to CPE. (eg, procedural barriers or geographical remoteness)
- Ensure that CPE policies are consistent with related ethics, education and membership policies
- diversify revenue streams and therefore make a reasonable return from engagement in CPE activities

ISSUES THAT THE REVIEW ADDRESSED

The current CPE regime that supports accredited status has many strengths, and has made a significant contribution to supporting the lifelong learning of AASW members. It is also apparent that Branch CPE committees play a vital role in brokering and/or providing CPE.

There are, however, some structural issues that need addressing.

Specifically;

- Not all members are mandated to engage in CPE, despite our ethical obligations in this area
- Uptake of accredited status in rural and regional areas is significantly lower than metropolitan areas
- Compliance to the CPE regime is perceived as unnecessarily onerous
- The CPE regime is not tailored to the changing needs of members through their career pathways
- There is little, if any, tangible reward for the significant achievements that many members make in improving their skills and knowledge
- There is insufficient rigour in the appellation standards and these standards are not linked to career pathway practice standards
- Different types of membership are emerging (eg, accredited, mental health accredited) without an overarching structure

REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) All members should be required to submit evidence of appropriate CPE, in keeping with our ethical obligations (See Section 3.5, AASW Code of Ethics)
- 2) Membership should be tiered to reflect the careers of members who have made significant advances in knowledge and skill (see table)
- 3) The accreditation of educational providers courses should also be tiered to reflect membership tiers
- 4) The accreditation of educational providers will be based on providing curricula that matches the educational needs of members at all career stages
- 5) Members with higher levels of skill and knowledge should be better rewarded for contributing to the CPE of fellow members
- 6) The CPE compliance tools should be administratively simplified for ease of use, and greater emphasis placed on qualitative elements such as reflective practice and career planning
- 7) The Board should give consideration to creating an entity that is an appropriately registered education provider. This entity would meet needs not sufficiently addressed by the current market, as well as targeting rural and regional areas
- 8) Branch CPE Committees should be provided with better infrastructure support. In particular all the “back office functions” regarding bookings, fee collection, accreditation, venues, and the like should be centralised via the web and communication technologies
- 9) The AASW should strongly promote the tiered structure to state and federal governments, the community and relevant trade unions, so that members with higher levels of skill and knowledge will be appropriately remunerated.
- 10) That the AASW recommended fee scales be adjusted to reflect the tiers of membership

PROPOSED MEMBERSHIP TIERS

Member Level	Educational standard	Required CPE to maintain level	Required CPE to advance a level
Qualified Social Worker	4 year degree or equivalent	A fixed number of hours aimed at maintaining or improving entry level practice standard	Sufficient additional hours equivalent to a graduate certificate within a 2 year cycle, at the appropriate higher level of skill and knowledge
Advanced Practitioner	Post graduate achievement equivalent to a graduate certificate	A fixed number of hours aimed at maintaining or improving graduate certificate practice standard. This should include sufficient reward for providing CPE to other members	Sufficient additional hours equivalent to a masters within a 3 year cycle, at the appropriate higher level of skill and knowledge
Master Practitioner	Post graduate achievement equivalent to a masters	A fixed number of hours aimed at maintaining or improving graduate certificate practice standard. This should include substantial reward for providing CPE to other members	

THE CURRENT POLICY FRAMEWORK: ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

1. OBJECTIVES OF THE CURRENT CPE PROGRAM

The AASW Continuing Professional Education (CPE) program is designed to promote and facilitate AASW members' professional development and life-long learning.

2. ALIGNMENT WITH AASW STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The CPE program is a key activity towards the Associations' strategic objective of promoting social work as a profession of skilled and knowledgeable experts capable of a wide scope of practice within a social justice framework.

Award of the title 'Accredited Social Worker' demonstrates to employers and clients that an AASW Accredited Member is committed to further developing their skills and knowledge.

The AASW is also the accrediting body on behalf of Medicare Australia for assessing applicants for the 'Better Access to Mental Health Care' and 'Enhanced Primary Care' Programs.

3. POSITION OF THE CPE WITHIN AASW ACTIVITIES

The AASW Continuing Professional Education (CPE) program is a voluntary program offered to members. AASW members meeting the requirements of the CPE program during a financial year (CPE cycle) are awarded 'Accredited Social Worker' status for the succeeding CPE cycle.

The CPE program is in addition to, and in support of; the eligibility requirements of membership as established in AASW Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards 2008; a members obligations under the AASW Code of Ethics 2004 and AASW Practice Standards for Social Workers 2003.

CPE Accreditation has also been incorporated as a basic requirement for attainment and ongoing maintenance of Accredited Mental Health Social Worker status.

4. REQUIREMENTS OF THE CPE PROGRAM

During a financial year a member undertaking the program is required to earn seventy five CPE 'points' (forty five if working part time). CPE Points can be earned from a wide range of activities but roughly equates to one point per learning hour.

Reflecting the needs, opportunities and obligations (under the *AASW Practice Standards for Social Work 2003*) of members the total requirement includes a minimum of ten points each in three compulsory categories; Accountability; Skill Development; and Gaining New Knowledge and Information.

In effect a member that has met the requirements of the CPE program has as a minimum; undertaken reflection through supervision or like activities (Accountability); further developed their practical skills through hands on workshops or other training (Skill Development); and deepened and broadened their knowledge through study, reading or attending conferences (Gaining New Knowledge and Information).

Award of 'Accredited Social Worker' status to a member obliges a member to document, in a provided logbook system, a record of their CPE activities for the CPE cycle. Accreditation may be awarded via declaration of having met the requirements of the CPE program, made during membership renewal each year (subsequent provision of a completed logbook as part of the CPE Audit is an obligation of gaining Accreditation by this method) or by provision of a completed logbook, demonstrating a member's attainment of the required CPE points, outside of the renewal period.

5. UPTAKE OF THE CPE PROGRAM BY AASW MEMBERS

The AASW CPE program is not a requirement of continuing membership; rather it is an 'opt-in' program. As of late 2008 the percentage of AASW members completing the requirements of the CPE program to gain 'Accredited Social Worker' status was 41.6%. An increase in uptake of the CPE program by members has been linked to the development of the AASW role as accrediting body for eligibility to practice under a number of Medicare Australia programs. There has however been some member criticism of the program.

In a Victorian survey, some members stated that they had opted in to the CPE program because of the credibility and recognition that comes with it. Others felt however that accreditation and CPE had little value in the job market and with current employers. Members also reported that there was little support for CPE in the workplace unless the CPE activities were directly related to the workplace. Members also reported that they were often expected to engage in CPE in their own time and/or at their own expense

There have been comments in both the National and the Victorian survey that the program, particularly reporting, is cumbersome and time consuming, but that the planner in the logbook was very useful.

The points-based system was also described negatively, with adjectives such as “time consuming”, “frustrating”, “complex” and “problematic” used. Although many members were happy using a points-based system to record CPE, they found that 75 points were sometimes too much to achieve, especially in a rural/remote area.

It is reasonable to conclude that participation in the CPE program would be more attractive with a less cumbersome system.

6. METROPOLITAN/RURAL IMBALANCE IN UPTAKE OF CPE PROGRAM

Uptake of the CPE program by AASW Members located in remote and rural areas is significantly lower than uptake by metropolitan based members. Approximately one third of accredited members are located in remote and rural areas. While metropolitan members represent a greater percentage of overall members this represents a serious imbalance in uptake of the CPE program.

6.1 Issues and implications

In the CPE Questionnaire 2008 many comments were made by members that related to CPE in rural or remote areas. The comments mainly dealt with the problems of access to training, workshops, seminars etc in rural/remote areas. Appellated training appeared to be scarce in remote areas, and some rural workers said they did not have much choice when it came to CPE activities. Therefore, they either attended the training available (whether or not it was relevant to them) just to accrue points, or they did not attend at all. High costs of travelling to activities kept people in rural/remote areas from attending them. It therefore became difficult for rural members to accrue the 75 points needed for accreditation. Comments were also made that employers/supervisors in some rural or remote areas did not expect social workers to be accredited, and that employers/supervisors therefore did not support them to take part in CPE (Dore 2008). Rural Victorian members also reported that they chose not to attend CPE activities because of the inaccessibility (Borderlands 2007:50). A majority of rural workers in Victoria were only prepared to travel 30 minutes to attend CPE activities and they preferred evening-activities during weekdays or programs that run for no more than one day, since longer workshops might involve costs for accommodation (Borderlands 2007: 44-49)

For the AASW as a national association representing the interests of all Australian social workers, the issue of access and services for remote and rural social workers is of serious concern.

7. PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION AND EMPLOYER SUPPORT

Those members who have complied with CPE requirements are eligible to use the title, *Accredited Social Worker*, and to use the post-nominal *MAASW (Acc)*. The AASW promotes the Accredited Social Worker status to employers and the general community (AASW 2006:4). Many respondents in the Victoria survey said they 'chose to be members because of the *recognition and credibility that comes from accreditation*' (Borderlands 2007:53).

Comments in the 2008 survey were made that employers/supervisors in some rural or remote areas did not expect social workers to be accredited, and that employers/supervisors therefore did not support their wish in taking part in CPE (Dore 2008).

Respondents in Borderlands AASW Vic CPE Report (2007) stated that employers were reluctant to grant study leave or otherwise subsidise training costs. They also stated that many employers (in both metropolitan and rural areas) did not support CPE that was not directly relevant to the workplace. This made it difficult for respondents to attend activities in their area and broaden their knowledge in related fields of practice. (Borderlands 2009:75). Nearly half (47%) of all respondents said they paid all costs associated with CPE, while 44% said they shared the cost with the employer. In a previous survey (Borderlands 2007: 50) only 25% of respondents said that the workplace covered the costs of CPE.

Some members reported a '*perceived irrelevance*' of keeping up with CPE. It was not often raised at job interviews (Borderlands 2007:37).

Given that the CPE program is a demonstration of the professionalism, expertise and value of the social work profession in Australia, the perceived lack of relevance of the program to some members and employers signals that more needs to be done to raise the profile of CPE, and to demonstrate its value to the broader community.

8. ACCREDITED MENTAL HEALTH SOCIAL WORKERS AND MEDICARE AUSTRALIA

Accreditation is required for mental health social workers to register with Medicare Australia for a Medicare Provider Number. Successful applicants are able to apply to Medicare Australia for a Medicare Provider Number and access referrals under the following programs; Better Access to Mental Health Care; Chronic Disease Management ('Enhanced Primary Care') Program.

Applicant must also provide evidence of compliance with the Practice Standards for Mental Health Social Workers (2008). This includes; at least 2 years of supervised social work practice in mental health, evidence of pre-qualifying, qualifying or post-qualifying education and/or recognised professional development or training that addresses the mental health standards, and the evidence-based practices as identified by Medicare Australia, as well as a testimonial

from an employer or other supervisor (past or present), summarising the applicant's skills and competencies in the field of mental health (AASW 2009:8).

8.1 Issues and implications

The mandatory completion of the requirements of the CPE program as a requisite for application and maintenance of 'Accredited Mental Health Social Worker' status, and eligibility to access referrals under the Medicare programs has resulted in a significant increase in the uptake of the CPE program by AASW members.

It is in the interests of the AASW to ensure that there is sufficient specific and relevant training for mental health social workers and prospective mental health social workers in light of the demand and opportunities of the Medicare regime.

Levels of membership reflecting specialist knowledge and skill, is emerging as a response to both membership and industry needs. Managing these emerging trends calls for a clear articulation between CPE, accreditation standards and tiered membership levels.

9. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS OF THE CPE PROGRAM

Award of 'Accredited Social Worker' status to a member obliges a member to document, in a provided logbook, a record of their CPE activities for the CPE cycle. To receive accreditation members, having completed a logbook demonstrating that they have met the requirements of the CPE program in order to gain accreditation have a number of options to be formally recognised as accredited.

For a period of approximately two months over the membership renewal period (late June – August) members can gain accreditation by making a declaration, within the renewal process, that they have met the requirements of the CPE program and subsequently gain accreditation for the forthcoming CPE cycle. While this option for accreditation does not require the presentation of a completed copy of the CPE logbook it obliges members to participate, if part of the randomly selected 5% of accredited members, in the CPE Audit. Those selected to participate in the audit are required to submit a completed copy of their logbook for examination and assessment by an external auditor. Failure to comply with this request or failure to be successfully assessed by the external auditor may result in a member's accreditation being revoked.

Outside of the period of membership renewal members seeking accreditation are required to submit a completed copy of their logbook, along with relevant supporting material to the AASW for assessment with successful assessment resulting in the award of accreditation.

9.1 Logbook

The CPE Logbook is a document provided to all members. The logbook outlines the requirements of the program and provides a framework for the recording of a members activities, fields to be completed include; date; activity; whether the activity has AASW Appellation or is an AASW Branch Activity; Evidence; category of activity; number of hours; number of CPE points.

The system is designed to allow a member, on a regular and ongoing basis, to record their CPE activities, and in recording the relevant category and total points to identify the progression towards meeting the requirements of the program for the cycle.

9.2 Logbook compliance

Compliance with the reporting requirements of the CPE program has been identified by members as being both cumbersome and unnecessarily onerous.

Both the Borderlands report (2007) and 2008 CPE survey identified that members felt that the logbook system and the expectation of providing documentary evidence in support of their claimed completion of the requirements of the CPE program was confusing, complicated, overly time consuming. Additionally it has been identified during the annual CPE Audit that it would appear that many members only undertake to complete a logbook when selected for participation in the audit.

In seeking to meet the requirements of the program members have identified the need for suitable recognition of available training opportunities that fall outside the categories defined in the CPE policy.

Of additional concern was policy in regards to the requirements for members working part time. While it is specified that members working part time have a reduced total requirement (45 points), while still earning the minimum 10 points in the three mandatory categories, there was confusion surrounding; the rationale behind this; the specific requirements for qualifying as part time. While the objective of granting consideration to members working part time is apparent, the issue merits further consideration in regards to options for suitably recognising members participating in the CPE program that complete a significantly reduced requirement to all other participants.

Appellated and Branch CPE activities, and the appropriate points allocated to each has been identified by members as a point of confusion. Lack of clarity regarding the relevant points, recording and reporting requirements for such activities appears to be common.

The most recent audit (2008) found that approximately 75% of participants demonstrated that they had met the requirements of the program. Of the remaining 25% that did not satisfactorily demonstrate completion, the leading reasons were; failure to meet the required minimum ten points in the three compulsory categories; failure to submit a logbook consistent with requirements (ie. Identification of the relevant category, number of points accrued).

9.3 Member CPE declaration

From July 2009 the CPE program runs over the financial year. Previously to facilitate accreditation at the beginning of the calendar year, members received a written declaration which they could sign and return to gain accreditation for the forthcoming year. The change to running over the financial year has allowed the declaration to be incorporated into the membership renewal process. Members are asked whether they have met the requirements of the CPE program in order to gain accreditation for the forthcoming cycle and additionally are informed of their obligation to maintain and provide a completed logbook should they be selected to take part in the CPE Audit.

While information regarding the reporting requirements and the obligation to maintain and provide a logbook for the CPE Audit on request is clearly stated with the declaration there is a widespread lack of awareness in regards to this obligation.

10.AASW APPELLATION OF CPE PROVIDERS

Formal endorsement by the AASW of training activities, referred to as 'Appellation' is an ongoing program managed by the national office. Training providers seeking appellation of an activity are required to complete and submit an application containing a self assessment against a number of criteria, along with supporting evidence outlining; objectives and outline of the program; details on presenters; provision of evaluation for participants; statement of endorsement by an AASW Branch or a statement of benefit to AASW and its members.

Appellated training activities receive double CPE points (2 points per learning hour).

Successful appellation attracts a fee with the level of fee determined by the nature of the training organisation. AASW Members acting as individuals and AASW Accredited Schools of Social Work do not attract a fee while other providers may attract a fee ranging from approximately one hundred to five hundred dollars.

Training activities that are appellated are provided with an AASW Endorsed Activity Logo and Appellation Number to promote the activity as endorsed by the AASW.

10.1 Quality assurance of appellated programs

The current system for application for appellation includes the completion of a self assessment against the 'AASW CPE Definition' and provision of outlines, information about trainers and evaluation. However within these requirements there is a lack of suitable mechanisms to ensure that the training provided is; of demonstrable benefit to the professional development of members (whether broadly for general practice or a specialised field); presented by a trainer not just knowledgeable of the content of the program but qualified as a trainer; presented in a learning environment where objectives, outcomes and evaluation requirements are clearly defined and implemented with some rigour.

10.2 Appellation: value to membership

In response to the 2008 national survey, members said that they did not actively seek out appellated training as opposed to non-appellated training. Members chose training for its relevance, rather than the points it accrued. The issue of accessibility for rural/remote members has also been raised, with little or no appellated training available in those areas. Price was also an issue with many considering appellated training to be too expensive compared to non-appellated training (Dore 2008: 11).

As per the issues pertaining to quality assurance the current appellation program does not promote the development and delivery of programs linked to the specific requirements of members. Given that the professional development requirements of a member will change throughout the course of their professional life, and relative to their type of practice and any specialisation the need to promote the delivery of relevant training must be considered an important priority.

Additionally there is no policy to offer incentives for rural or regional provision. Training providers are mostly located in metropolitan areas and face significant extra costs in delivering programs outside metropolitan areas.

Confusion regarding the point value of both appellated and AASW Branch activities is a further issue for members and indicative of the need for a more coherent suite of policies.

10.3 Appellation: value to training providers

Successful appellation of a training activity attracts a fee for the majority of applying providers. Appellated activities receive an 'AASW Endorsed Activity' logo, appellated number, participating AASW members received double CPE points, and the activity is listed on a published list of endorsed activities.

Establishing the value provided to providers is problematic. At this time there is no formal mechanism for the receipt of feedback from providers as to the relative worth of having received appellation for an activity. The rate of application for appellation would suggest that providers find value in the activity. Formal feedback would assist the AASW in adding further value for providers.

10.4 Terminology

The term “appellation’ is unique to the AASW. “Accreditation” is a more properly descriptive term.

10.5 Appellation within the AASW education standards framework

CPE policy and practice is not well integrated either educationally or strategically into the professional mission of the AASW.

The accreditation of CPE providers needs to be part of an articulated continuous framework that encourages the provision of quality lifelong professional learning.

11. BRANCH CPE

AASW Branches undertake to organise and present a wide range of training opportunities for Branch members. Branch activities, like appellated activities receive double CPE points.

11.1 Branch CPE activities

The number, frequency and range of CPE activities presented by AASW Branches vary relative to the size of the branch. Outlined below is a brief description of a number of branch CPE activities.

- Monthly 2.5 hour events on a variety of subjects. Speakers volunteer their time and receipt a small gift of appreciation. Attendees are required to register online and events attract a payment. Members and students receive a significant discount.
- 3 Day Supervision Training, targeted at different experience levels, offered five times a year.
- Activities relating to the annual World Social Work Day.
- Memorial Lectures

- Branch Conferences
- Several branches liaise with local AASW Accredited Schools of Social Work towards offering co presented training events.
- Co presented Training Events with a professional presenter. These activities attract a reduced fee for members and the Branch receives a small percentage towards costs.
- Regional CPE Programs. Branches with a geographically diverse membership have developed regional programs, with a calendar of regular events for members.

For members, issues of access and cost are the predominant concerns identified (Borderlands 2007). Access, particularly for members in remote/rural location has been identified as a significant impediment to participation. The development of regional CPE programs is a potential model for delivery however this is resultant of the 'clustered' nature of the geographical distribution of members within that particular branch.

Members have identified that the cost (direct and indirect) of Branch CPE activities has at times been a disincentive for participation.

11.2 Policy gaps and structural inefficiencies

At this time there is a lack of coordination, communication and clearly defined policy and procedure at both the National and Branch level in regards to the CPE Program.

Currently, at differing levels of formality and details, each Branch relies upon a unique set of procedures in regards to all aspects of CPE training. Policies in regards to quality assurance for activities, funding, costing, payment, and advertising differ across all Branches. It should be noted that Branch staff work tirelessly to develop and run CPE activities.

Communication and support between Branches and between National Office and Branches is generally ad hoc in nature. Given the national nature of the association there remains the potential to develop policy to increase the capacity to development and deliver Branch CPE, particularly in regards economies of scale and the utilisation of the National Office as a resource centre and broker for Branches.

12. CPE IN LIKE PROFESSIONS AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS

On behalf of the AASW, Borderlands Cooperative undertook an examination of other like professions and professional organisations in regards to their professional development policy. Outlined below are details of models currently employed by a number of professions and organisations.

12.1 Training Endorsement

A range of professional organisations, such as the Australian Psychological Society, Australian Physiotherapy Association, Speech Pathology Australia and Royal College of Nursing Australia, endorse CPE opportunities offered by both internal and external providers. There appears to be a common process that associations use to endorse training/education, where providers are generally required to submit written proposals to the relevant professional association which assesses them according to a set of specialist criteria and professional standards (Borderlands 2009: 4).

The Australian Psychological Society, for example, has an endorsement procedure for CPE activities to be awarded generalist or specialist points. The list of criteria for endorsement include requirements that activities should enhance psychological knowledge and skills and contribute to practice, teaching, consultation and research, be relevant to ongoing clinical practice, conform to high professional standards and to the APS code of ethics, and that it specifies clear learning objectives in terms of what new knowledge, skills or techniques the participants should be expected to acquire and demonstrably fulfil. The endorsement is valid for 1 year (Borderlands 2009: 4). The Australian Physiotherapy Association has an explicit and detailed accreditation process which all education/training providers (both external and courses run under the auspices of the APA) have to go through in order to ensure quality standards relating to: course content, learning objectives, activities and outcomes, value for money, evidence based practice, tutor ratios and practice versus theory issues, evaluation and follow up activities and a budget based on at least cost recovery. APA members must be offered a reduced fee when attending external activities accredited by the APA (Borderlands 2009: 5).

It was found that most Australian professional associations endorsed CPE offered by both internal and external providers, and all associations had endorsement procedures which assessed activities according to a list of criteria and professional standards. Endorsed providers were given the permission to display the association's logo or insignia on promotional material (Borderlands 2009: 4).

12.2 Professional credentials and CPE

Universally, professional practice requires initial credentialing, such as formal degrees and post-graduate qualifications provided by tertiary institutions. CPE is not considered to be part of formal credentialing, but is closely linked with ongoing professional practice. In professions where registration is required in order to practice, CPE is linked with requirements for continuing registration. Social workers in the United States are required to be licensed with state boards. Members of the National Association of Social Workers sign up to codes of ethics, practice and CPE, and continuing education courses are required for renewal of licenses. In New

Zealand, social workers have a voluntary registration process with the Social Work Registration Board (separate from the professional association ANZASW) in which registration is dependent on holding a renewable practicing license which requires 150 hours of CPE over 3 years, and confirmation of employment and supervision. Members of ANZAWS who hold a competency assessment certificate are exempt from CPE when it comes to registration (Borderlands 2009: 9-11).

The promotion of accredited members seems to have one thing in common among Australian associations: accredited members are promoted as having high standards of practice, actively maintaining their professional knowledge and skills, and providing safe and effective care/services. All associations canvassed promote accreditation on their websites. As one example, the website for the Australian Association of Occupational Therapists, has this stated under the topics of Finding an OT and About OT, arguing the benefits of accredited practitioners (Borderlands 2009: 20).

12.3 Role of professional organisations in CPE

CPE programs in most associations work on a point-based system with different categories of CPE and annual audits are carried out. The Australian Psychotherapy Association requires its members to accrue at least 100 points over a three-year period, with one hour of recorded CPE-activity worth 1 point. Activities accredited by APA count as double points. Members are given a portfolio to facilitate planning of the CPE activities, since goal setting and planning of professional development activities are considered key aspects. The association measures compliance through annual audits (Borderlands 2009: 15).

Occupational Therapy Australia requires its members to accrue 60 points during a two year period and then submit their records which will be assessed for eligibility for accreditation for a two-year period (Borderlands 2009: 15).

CPE activities can be provided by both external and internal providers, but all have to be endorsed by the association in question. Very few associations provide the activities themselves. One noted example is the Singapore Association of Social Workers which runs a company that provides all CPE activities for members (Borderlands 2009: 14). Training is generally brokered by associations at national and /or regional levels, but the APA is 'currently developing a tiered system of membership which will involve the APA itself offering training in physiotherapy specialisations' (Borderlands 2009:22).

Activities defined as appropriate for CPE vary between associations, common to all are formal training activities, such as workshops, and seminars and conferences. Other activities may include discussions with colleagues, committee involvement, lecturing, and public relations activities (Borderlands 2009: 13).

12.4 Provision of CPE for remote/rural members

The Borderlands report regarding CPE in other professions and professional organisations found that all Australian professional associations canvassed in the report had state-branches with offices in capital cities, and some had regional office as well. Most of the associations have policies which promote equal access for urban and rural members, but seek to achieve this in different ways. Most of the training provided by the associations was in the cities with only some conducted in regional areas.

The Australian Physiotherapy Association, for example, has developed special services for rural members and these included quarterly rural e-news, access to journals via the association's website, PD courses at special rates, and video conference series.

The Australian Physiotherapy Association also plans to use technology to improve access to PD activities for rural members. Programs will be developed which utilises education models such as video link-ups, satellite broadcasts, web-streaming and video recording lending libraries at each branch. There are also ideas of broadcasting monthly lectures (held in Melbourne) via the web so interstate members can take part (Borderlands 2009: 16-17).

Overall, most of the Australian professional associations use technology, such as video conferences and web streaming, to make access to CPE activities easier for remote members.

13. COLLEGES OF PRACTICE

Colleges of Practice (CoPs) are set to be introduced in the near future. These CoPs will be collegial groups of social workers who have achieved advanced practice in a specialised area of social work and take responsibility to further that area's knowledge, practice, identity and influence. In summary, the purpose of a CoP will be to develop its specific area of specialisation, to provide recognition and status for social workers in the area, and to establish standards. The Colleges will be established by the AASW Board, and the AASW Practice Standards, Values and Code of Ethics will be core to all CoPs.

The activities of the CoPs will be in the interest of their areas of specialisation and include:

- Identifying particular knowledge, expertise and practice standards for the area.
- Defining lifelong learning and reflective practice for the area.
- Advising on, or delivering, advanced CPE.
- Determining supervision standards and the amount and type of supervision required within the area.

- Providing a support network, mentoring and professional gatherings.
- Informing and collaborating with the specific industry.
- Contributing to the development of knowledge in the area.
- Carrying out advocacy, as defined by the AASW Board of Directors (Pattison 2009).

Given the above, it is crucial that the emerging revision of CPE policy be consistent with the development of Colleges of Practice

September 2009

CPE REVIEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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FEEDBACK ON DISCUSSION PAPER

To provide feedback to the AASW board on this discussion paper please write to:

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CLOSING DATE FOR SUBMISSIONS: 14th December, 2009