

AASW Code of Ethics Review 2009/2010
Consultation Strategy

Introduction

At the June 2009 Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) Board meeting, approval was provided to undertake a review of the *Code of Ethics* (1999). A *Draft Consultation and Review Strategy* was developed. It outlined the composition of the Code of Ethics Review Committee, the purpose of the review, the risks in not conducting a comprehensive review, a list of performance indicators and a proposed process.

The Code of Ethics Review Project Officer was appointed in late September and building on the work of the previous document, a *Draft Consultation Strategy* was developed. It outlined the proposed consultation strategy for the Code of Ethics Review Committee (COERC) and offered an opportunity for Branch Ethics Groups (BEG) to provide comment and feedback. Once the feedback was collated the Consultation Strategy was presented to and approved by the AASW Board at their face-to-face meeting in Melbourne on Sunday 29 November 2009.

Overview of Consultation Strategy

Essentially the consultation strategy involves a nine stage process, commencing with a 'Think Tank' in late January 2010 and concluding with the launch of the new Code at the 2010 AASW Annual General Meeting in November. A commitment of the Code of Ethics Review Committee, is to ensure that multiple voices are heard in the consultation process and in particular the unique histories, knowledge and culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia as well as the unique perspectives of services users.

Stage One: National Ethics Think Tank

The first stage of the review involves the establishment of the Code of Ethics Review Reference Group. This group will be comprised of a broad range of social work practitioners and academics, including the AASW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander National Working Group. The members of the Reference Group, all with specialist expertise in ethics, will be invited to attend a one-day face-to-face meeting to discuss the *AASW Code of Ethics*. The purpose of the National Ethics Think Tank is to recommend changes to the current Code. The purpose of the Reference Group is to provide ongoing feedback throughout the review process.

Stage Two: Develop First Draft of New Code

Following the Think Tank a first draft of the new code will be developed. It will ensure that there is consistency with International Federation of Social Workers policies on ethics and other AASW

documents, such as the various Standards documents. The Code of Ethics Review Reference Group will provide further input before the new code is presented publicly.

Stage Three: Broad Consultation on First Draft of New Code

Six strategies will be utilized to consult widely on the first draft of the new code. These strategies aim to ensure that multiple voices are heard and represented in the drafting of the new code of ethics. Stakeholders include but are not limited to: members of the AASW, non-members of the AASW, social work academics, including Heads of Schools, students, service users and employers.

- 'Call-in' Week: An invitation to the 'call-in' week will be advertised widely. It will give participants a simple and direct opportunity to respond to the new draft code.
- State/Territory Focus Groups: Branch Ethics Groups, where possible, will run focus groups on the new draft code in each state and territory of Australia.
- Web-based Survey: Surveys will be developed for different stakeholder groups and distributed via email to the AASW membership and will also be available on the AASW website.
- Local Ethicist Advice: Australian ethicists will be approached to provide feedback on the new draft code.
- International Social Work Ethics Experts Advice: International social work ethics experts will be approached to provide feedback on the new draft code.
- Organisations: A range of organizations both within and outside of social work will be approached to provide feedback on the new draft code.

Participants will be provided with the opportunity of participating in the second round of consultations.

Stage Four: Develop Second Draft of New Code

The information received from the various strategies employed in stage three of the Consultation Strategy will be analysed and used to develop a second draft of the new code.

Stage Five: Consultation on Second Draft of New Code

The second draft of the new code will be presented back to stakeholders and the Code of Ethics Review Reference Group for further consultation. The specific strategies utilized will be developed following the first round of consultations, to ensure that strategies used were in fact effective.

Stage Six: Develop Final Draft of New Code

The final draft of the new code will be developed after the second round of consultations.

Stage Seven: Legal Advice Regarding New Code

Legal advice will be sought regarding the new code. Any recommendations for change will be incorporated into the final draft of the new code.

Stage Eight: Present Final Draft of New Code to Board of Directors

The final draft of the new code will be presented to the Board of Directors for approval at their October 2010 meeting.

Stage Nine: Launch New Code at AASW Annual General Meeting

The new *Code of Ethics* will be launched at the November 2010 Annual General Meeting of the AASW.

Code of Ethics Review Committee

The Review is being led by the Code of Ethics Review Committee.

The Code of Ethics Review Committee consists of:

- Donna McAuliffe, AASW National Ethics Group Convenor
- Ros Giles, AASW Practice Standards Committee Convenor
- Gail Slocombe, AASW National Ethics Group Board Appointee
- Kym Daly, National Ethics Officer
- Sharlene Nipperess, Code of Ethics Review Project Officer

For more information or to get involved, please contact Sharlene Nipperess at sharlenen@asw.asn.au or on 03 9326 2333.

Approximate Consultation Timeline

Date	Consultation Activity
January 2010	Stage 1: Establishment of Code of Ethics Review Reference Group and the National Ethics Think Tank
February-March	Stage 2: Develop First Draft of New Code
End March – early April	Stage 2: Confirm First Draft of New Code with the Code of Ethics Review Reference Group
Mid April	Stage 3: Broad Consultation on First Draft of New Code <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Call-in' week • State/Territory Focus Groups • Web-based Survey • Local Ethicist Advice • International Social Work Ethics Experts Advice • Organisations
May	
June	Stage 4: Develop Second Draft of New Code
July	Stage 5: Consultation on Second Draft of New Code
August	Stage 6: Develop Final Draft of New Code
September	Stage 7: Legal Advice Regarding New Code (Code of Ethics Review Project Officer complete 12 month contract)
October	Stage 8: Present Final Draft of New Code to Board of Directors
November	Stage 9: Launch New Code at AASW Annual General Meeting