



AASW
Australian Association
of Social Workers

12/04/2021

The Hon. Rebecca White, MP
Leader of the Opposition
33 Cole Street
Sorell
Tasmania 7172

rebecca.white@parliament.tas.gov.au

Registered Office
Level 7, 14-20 Blackwood Street
North Melbourne Vic 3051
PO Box 2008
Royal Melbourne Hospital
Parkville, VIC 3050
T 03 9320 1022
E alene.mcgowan@aatw.asn.au
www.aatw.asn.au

Dear Minister,

The Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) is the professional body representing more than 14,000 social workers throughout Australia. We set the benchmark for professional education and practice in social work and have a strong voice on matters of social inclusion, social justice, human rights and issues that impact on the quality of life of all Australians.

The Tasmanian branch of the AASW has more than 400 members across the state who are employed in a range of roles in government departments, non-government organisations and in private practice, in areas including child protection, family violence, health, mental health, justice, housing and homelessness, disability, aged care and work with many other disadvantaged individuals, families, and communities. Social workers aim to enhance the quality of life of every member of society and empower them to develop their full potential. We believe that everyone has the right to an environment (social, economic and natural) in which it is possible to flourish and thrive.

In the lead up to the Tasmanian State election, the AASW is calling for the registration of the social work profession in Tasmania. The profession of social work is yet to be registered under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS). Internationally the dangers to the public of unregulated social work have been recognised, including in the USA, New Zealand, the UK, Ireland and Canada, and Australia is now out of step with most comparable countries. This is despite several recommendations, including in Coroner's reports, that this be corrected.

You may be aware that a Social Worker Registration Bill was introduced into the South Australian parliament in 2018, by the Hon. Tammy Franks, Member of the South Australian Legislative Council for the Australian Greens. The Report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Registration of Social Workers and draft legislation was tabled in the Parliament in December 2020. The AASW has welcomed this initiative.

The AASW recommends the introduction of legislation to register social workers in Tasmania, as is currently in train in South Australia, to protect the best interests of children and the community. **We are keen to hear your response on this matter, and whether your party would commit to the statutory registration of the social work profession in Tasmania.**

On behalf of our members, we are requesting your party's position on the statutory registration of social workers in Tasmania and other areas. We will share your response with our members to assist in informing their voting decision in the election.

Please find attached our Tasmania Election Statement 2021.

1. Social Work Registration

- What is your commitment to statutory registration of social workers in Tasmania?

2. Child Safety Services

- How are you going to protect children and young people leaving out-of-home-care from homelessness?
 - What is your commitment to providing Child Safety Services with the appropriate resources, including workload ratios to achieve the wellbeing and safety of children and young people?
- 3. Health and Well-being of Children and Young People**
- Will you commit to develop student wellbeing teams in every secondary school, at a minimum ratio of one school social worker per 500 students?
 - What are your plans to improve the mental health of children and young people?
- 4. Domestic and Family Violence (FDV)**
- Given that gender inequality is so inextricably linked to family violence, what policies and initiatives will your party implement to address gender inequality and prevent family violence?
- 5. Homelessness**
- What are your plans to address homelessness and the shortage of affordable housing supply in Tasmania?
 - What is your commitment to ensure the inclusivity of current housing schemes so that the needs of people of all backgrounds can be met?
- 6. Closing the Gap & Reconciliation**
- What is your commitment to implementing the National Agreement on Closing the Gap?
- 7. Sustainability & Climate Justice**
- Will you commit to introduce a supportive legislative environment for sustainable enterprises and subsidise renewables?
 - What is your commitment to assist Tasmanian in adopting to the impacts of climate change?

Thank you for taking the time to consider our questions and we look forward to sharing your response to our members in the lead up to the election.

Yours sincerely,

**Cindy Smith
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Association of Social Workers**