

Terms of Reference for the AASW (QLD) Social Policy sub-committee

The Queensland Branch sub-committees provide a means to assist the Branch Management Committee (BMC) in the development and execution of key governance responsibilities. The sub-committees' purpose and functions support and align with key AASW documents including National and Branch Strategic Plans, the Code of Ethics, Practice Standards, the Reconciliation Action Plan, The Constitution and the By-Laws. The sub-committees are supported by, and work with, the Branch Manager in meeting its purpose and functions.

Purpose and Functions

The AASW Queensland BMC is committed to having a strong voice representing a social work perspective, which is critical to ensure holistic and comprehensive policy development in relation to a range of human services areas.

The purpose of the sub-committee is to:

- Provide a strong social work perspective on social policy issues, to represent our members and the people we serve.
- To influence and support policy development from a social work professional framework.
- To address important areas of policy, legislation and reviews that advocates for social justice and human rights.

Specifically the Social Policy sub-committee will:

- Advocate/lobby for the role of social work on behalf of the social work profession
- Prioritise, develop, and advocate about particular social policy issues relevant to the social work profession
- Provide a forum for members and non-members to engage and contribute to social policy responses
- Identify key areas of focus on an annual basis
- Contribute to Queensland Branch strategic planning as required

Criteria for AASW Queensland engagement in social policy activities

The following criteria will be used to assist in the decision making.

- The subject matter is one that social work plays a key role in
- The subject matter is one that social workers have particular expertise.
- A submission would highlight and promote the expertise and role of social work. This then links with increasing the profile of social work in our community.
- The subject matter has particularly important implications for client groups/areas that social workers are engaged with, for example social justice and human rights issues.
- Responding to the subject matter has strategic benefits for the Association.
- The area of interest has strong connections with the key values, philosophy and strategic areas of interest of the Association, either branch or national.

Resourcing

- Queensland Branch sub-committee business is funded through the Queensland Branch budget. Funding for these sub-committee activities are determined and approved by the BMC during the annual budget planning cycle.
- Sub-committees will liaise with the branch office to arrange access to video and teleconferencing resources to facilitate communication amongst members

- Sub-committees will liaise with the branch office to arrange periodic notices and updates e.g. through the website, facebook page and e-news bulletins.

Membership

- Membership of the social policy sub-committee is open to all AASW Queensland Branch members.
- The sub-committee is facilitated by two co-convenors at least one of whom must be a member of the BMC.
- All sub-committee convenors must be approved by the full BMC.
- The sub-committee membership term is 12 months with opportunity to roll-over the term when the BMC review sub-committee functioning and terms of reference.
- The membership of the sub-committee must not exceed eight.
- A pool of social workers¹ who express interest in contributing to the social policy sub-committee will be developed via an annual call for expressions of interest. The names of these social workers along with their areas of interest will be maintained by the social policy sub-committee and updated on an annual basis. The contributions of members and non-members will not be restricted to this pool, with any submission being promoted through the Newsletter and/or facebook to ensure inclusivity.
- Membership of the social policy sub-committee pool of social workers can include non-members.

Meetings

- Sub-committees are required to meet at least four times per year
- Sub-committee members are expected to attend a minimum of 3 meetings
- Meetings can be facilitated through face to face, phone or video conferencing
- sub-committees will attempt to engage and support membership from across the Queensland Branch geographic region

Reporting requirements

The AASW (QLD) Social Policy sub-committee will;

- Distribute meeting minutes to members within one week of each meeting
- Provide copies of meeting minutes to the Branch Manager
- Provide a report to the Branch Manager seven working days prior to BMC face to face meetings for distribution to BMC members five days before BMC face to face meetings
- Provide an annual report to be included in the annual Branch Year in Review for members
- Seek prior approval from the BMC for any public activity, publication or statement
- Report any significant deliberations and decisions to the BMC in a timely manner (this may include outside of scheduled BMC meetings)
- Record conflicts of interest as they arise
- Report any concerns about the sub-committee operations to the Branch President

Evaluation and review

The BMC will review the sub-committee's terms of reference, leadership and membership during its strategic planning process.

¹ This pool will provide opportunities for social workers who have expressed interest in contributing to social policy to participate. Key areas of interest and knowledge will be identified so that the social policy sub-committee can draw on them to respond to requests for input urgently.