



Social Workers at the heart of responses to disasters and crises

Social Workers are indispensable in the response efforts to disasters and crises. Social Workers have been at the heart of responses to the floods in Queensland and to tropical cyclone Yasi, to the Victorian Bushfires and internationally in New Zealand and now in Japan.

Social Workers were the largest professional group in the Victorian Bushfire case management service, making up 24% of the entire counselling service.

Marking World Social Work Day 2011 today, the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) is holding [events in most capital cities and in some regional centres](#) to highlight the role that social workers play in response to disasters and crises.

A forum in Brisbane tonight will hear from Social Workers in Government and non-Government services who have contributed to the disaster responses in Queensland.

A members' meeting in Adelaide will hear from National President Professor Bob Lonne on the future workforce challenges of the human services sector and how the AASW can respond.

The AASW has created [several Youtube clips](#) to highlight the roles that Social Workers played in this year's Queensland floods and the Victorian Bushfires of 2009. Social Workers in Federal and State Government agencies and in the not for profit sector all played their roles.

Social Workers uniquely have the skills and values to support clients throughout the duration of disasters. From the immediate aftermath, where practical support is often needed, to long term support for grief and loss and post-traumatic stress disorder.

AASW CEO Kandie Allen-Kelly said, "Social Work has unique skills to provide immediate and long term support to people affected by disasters and their families. The important role that Social Workers have played in Queensland, Victoria and internationally needs to be better appreciated by those responsible for finding the future workforce in Government and non-Government agencies."

AASW National President Professor Bob Lonne said, "Today's events across Australia celebrate Social Work and the people that we work with. Members feel proud of the skills and experience they can offer to support vulnerable and disadvantaged people with high quality services."