

Information Sheet for Social Workers

MUTUAL RECOGNITION AGREEMENT (MRA)

Between

Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW)

and

New Zealand Social Workers Registration Board (NZSWRB)

Implemented from 1 April 2014

Revised May 2016

Information for Social Workers who hold an Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) accredited social work qualification OR hold a recognised New Zealand social work qualification AND are currently registered by the New Zealand Social Workers Registration Board (NZSWRB), who wish to have their Qualifications/Registration in the One Country, Recognised in the Other.

The Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) and the New Zealand Social Workers Registration Board (NZSWRB) have entered into a Mutual Recognition Agreement to mutually recognise social workers who are credentialed or registered in Australia and New Zealand.

The Mutual Recognition Agreement (the MRA) will **only apply** to:

- Social workers who have completed an AASW accredited social work qualification; OR
- Social workers who have completed a recognised New Zealand social work qualification, are currently fully registered with the NZSWRB and are eligible to hold an Annual Practising Certificate (APC).

The Mutual Recognition Agreement will **not apply** to:

- Social workers who are registered in New Zealand but did not qualify in New Zealand.
- Social workers who qualified in New Zealand but are not registered with the NZSWRB.
- Social workers who are registered in New Zealand under Section 13 of the *Social Workers Registration Act 2003* <http://www.swrb.govt.nz/new-applicants/section-13-applications>
- Social workers with any restriction or condition regarding their practice in their country of registration/credentialing.

It should be noted that the MRA is neither legally binding nor enforceable in a court of law. However, it should also be noted that if social work becomes a registered profession in Australia, this agreement will be replaced by the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Agreement (TTMRA), which states that a person registered to practise an occupation in Australia is entitled to practise an equivalent occupation in New Zealand, and vice versa, without the need for further testing or examination.

The AASW and the NZSWRB have agreed that the standards for AASW accredited qualifications and NZSWRB registration are sufficiently equivalent to enable a mutual recognition of social workers to be achieved.

These standards cover:

- Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS) 2012
- AASW Practice Standards 2013
- New Zealand Core Competence Standards
- The Process for Recognition/Re-recognition of Social Work Qualifications in New Zealand: Policy Statement (specifically standards relating to Graduate Attributes and Curriculum)

Other requirements:

- The AASW and NZSWRB also agree that differences exist in their cultural competency requirements, and that these differences can be addressed by the completion of specialised study and assessment, as determined by the AASW and the NZSWRB respectively.
- Australian qualified social workers seeking registration with the NZSWRB will be subject to the NZSWRB Fit and Proper Person Policy.
- The mutual recognition respects that the MRA, as it relates to the NZSWRB, must be consistent with the requirements of the *Social Workers Registration Act 2003*.

Mutual Recognition Agreement Conditions:

The Mutual Recognition Agreement applies to Australian social workers who have completed an AASW accredited social work qualification, and to New Zealand qualified social workers who are fully registered with the NZSWRB and who are eligible to hold an annual practising certificate (APC).

Such social workers with AASW accredited qualifications are acceptable to the NZSWRB to apply for registration for practice within New Zealand, and social workers registered by the NZSWRB are acceptable to the AASW for credentialing for practice within Australia.

Which Social Workers Can Apply For Mutual Recognition?

The mutual recognition arrangement between the AASW and the NZSWRB applies to social workers:

- Who have completed an AASW accredited social work qualification; and
- Who have completed a recognised social work qualification in New Zealand, who are fully registered with the NZSWRB, and who are eligible to hold an annual practising certificate (APC).

Confirmation by the AASW (where the social worker is an AASW member) or NZSWRB to the other that an applicant has good standing with their credentialing/registration and practising status, will suffice to identify that the social worker complies with the requirements of the authority with which she or he is registered/credentialed, along with the information provided on the AASW Mutual Recognition Agreement application form or the SWRB Application for Registration form.

Procedure for Application for Mutual Recognition

Australian qualified Social Workers Seeking Registration in New Zealand:

1. Social worker confirms that they have completed an AASW accredited social work qualification by providing the information required in the Application Form for Registration as a Social Worker in New Zealand. NZSWRB confirms this by consulting the AASW website for the list of currently accredited and discontinued programs.
2. Social worker confirms that they are of good standing. If the social worker is an AASW member the NZSWRB will request a letter of good standing from the AASW. If the social worker is not a member of the AASW, the social worker must satisfy this requirement by any other means deemed appropriate by the NZSWRB.
3. Social worker submits a complete Application Form for Registration as a Social Worker in New Zealand.

New Zealand qualified Social Workers Seeking AASW membership eligibility and/or a migration skills assessment in Australia:

1. Social worker submits application for credentialing.
2. AASW checks with NZSWRB on the status of registration and good standing of the applicant.
3. Social worker addresses any other requirements as set by the AASW.
4. Social worker is provided with a positive migration skills assessment and/or an AASW membership eligibility statement (whichever applicable).

Application and payment forms

Further information for Australian qualified social workers seeking registration in New Zealand, please refer to <http://www.swrb.govt.nz/> .

Further information for New Zealand qualified social workers seeking AASW membership eligibility and/or a migration skills assessment in Australia, please refer to www.aasw.asn.au . As of 1 April 2016 the NZSWRB will be charging a fee for the requests of 'Certificates of Good Standing'. Applicants will be invoiced by the NZSWRB for the fee. Once paid by the Applicant, the Certificate of Good Standing will be issued to AASW to finalise the MRA application.