AASW Press Kit

Information for journalists
The AASW is the national association for Australian professional social workers.

Our vision

The AASW is the national association for Australian professional social workers. We set the benchmark for professional education and practice in social work. We have a strong voice on matters of social inclusion, social justice, human rights and issues that impact upon the quality of life of all Australians. We seek a close and collaborative relationship with educational institutions, industry, government, client associations, and the community. The AASW acknowledges the critical importance of the contribution made by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members.

- The AASW has over 9,000 members. Our members work in a range of fields and settings.
- The AASW is a member of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW).
- There are nine AASW branches around Australia, as well as a vibrant community of committees and practice groups further supporting the work of the Association.
- The AASW has corporate responsibility for promoting and regulating the social work profession in Australia. It represents social workers by ensuring the sustainable development of the profession, the maintenance of accountability and compliance with benchmark standards, and the promotion of professional identity.

Social work

Social workers assist people through professional models of intervention to deal with personal and social problems, either directly or by planning or carrying out programs that benefit groups or communities. Social workers provide a wide range of services in many settings to assist people who are distressed or overwhelmed by problems such as poverty, substance abuse, homelessness, conflict or parental difficulties. With its focus on people in need, social work is a profession committed to social justice and respect for human rights.

The social work profession is committed to the pursuit and maintenance of human wellbeing. Social work aims to maximise the development of human potential and the fulfilment of human needs.
As the only professional body for Australian social workers, the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) is dedicated to providing information on the profession and the communities we serve.

We aim to respond to requests for information in a timely manner. To better serve your needs, we have the following resources available:

**Interviews**
AASW can provide media contacts for print, radio and television interviews.

**Latest media releases**
We distribute our media releases via email. You can also view the lastest releases at www.aasw.asn.au.

**Articles/opinions on request**
Articles on a particular topic can be written upon request.

**Position papers**
You can find AASW position papers on a range of topics at www.aasw.asn.au.

**Specialist committees**
The AASW has a number of committees who provide leadership and strategic focus in a range of areas. Please page 4 for committee focus areas.

**Contact us**
For any other information of requests, please do not hesitate to contact:

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Professional social work emerged in the late 19th century and over more than one hundred years has become an increasingly diverse profession. Social work activities vary from assisting disadvantaged individuals to achieve better access to resources and services, and providing therapeutic interventions through to major policy reforms in fields such as domestic violence, child protection, ageing, and the recognition of the human rights of people living with disabilities and mental illness. In the future, social workers expect to become increasingly involved in assisting communities where people are affected by the impacts of global warming. However, while they work with vulnerable people delivering critical services in multidisciplinary environments alongside registered professionals such as psychologists and teachers, social workers are not registered in Australia.

**Social work registration**

The AASW is campaigning for the regulation of professional social work for the future of the profession and the people it serves. Social work continues to be unregistered in Australia by the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS) which regulates other practitioners such as nurses, psychologists and occupational therapists. As the status and importance of NRAS evolves, there are many significant unintended consequences for the profession, service delivery entities, the community and particularly the vulnerable clients of social workers. It is crucial that vulnerable people can be confident that the professional social workers they seek help from are trained in accredited university courses, are monitored as to their professional conduct and behaviour, and as such be nationally registered.

**Other issues**

- Aged Care
- Child protection
- Disability
- Domestic and family violence
- Ethics
- Health
- Mental Health
- Refugee and asylum seekers
- Welfare & income support

**Our committees**

- International social work & qualifications
- Child protection practice
- Classification in health
- Social work education & professional development
- Ethics and practice standards
- Mental health
- Research
- Social policy
Glenys Wilkinson
Chief Executive Officer

Glenys Wilkinson holds Bachelor and Master of Social Work, and a Master of Organisational Dynamics and has more than 35 years’ experience as a social worker, including 30 years in management positions.

Glenys has held senior management roles in child advocacy, child and family support, and local government services and is driven by addressing issues of social justice and working towards eliminating inequities and injustices to create more opportunities for people to live their lives with meaning and dignity.

Professor Karen Healy AM
President

Professor Karen Healy AM has a PhD in social work and social policy, and is the Research Director for the School of Social Work and Human Services at the University of Queensland. As well as working in professional and academic posts, Karen has also worked in a variety of practice fields including child protection, community work and health services.

She was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia in January 2016 for her services to for her significant service to community welfare in the field of social work, particularly child protection, and to higher education and research.

To arrange an interview with the AASW or other social Work professionals, please contact Emma Pegrum, AASW Media and Marketing Manager on phone 02 6199 5011 or email emma.pegrum@aasw.asn.au