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National President’s Report  
To the AASW Annual General Meeting  
Sydney, Friday 27 November 2015  

It is my pleasure to present my fourth annual report as National President and to be able to let our members and stakeholders know that the last 12 months have been great ones for the AASW.

On 30 June 2015 we reached over 9000 members – a 50 per cent growth in our membership since 2011. To every member who has encouraged a colleague to join, you have helped make us stronger. While, as always, there was turnover at the end of the membership renewal period, our goal of 10,000 members is well within reach. A large membership base enables us to be heard as a highly credible voice by the government and the community, a voice that represents the social work profession and its values.

We have also continued to rebuild the AASW’s financial base. Our equity for 2014-15 is just over $1.5 million and, as a result of this much improved financial circumstances, the Board has had some freedom to review revenue flow. This year we introduced a greatly reduced student membership rate to build on our intention to include a new generation. In 2016, we look forward to continuing to nurture the next generation by the continuing roll out of Continuing Professional Development initiatives for newly qualified social workers and by establishing an AASW national student council. We have also completed and evaluated our first Reconciliation Action Plan. We are pleased with the opportunity the RAP provided to focus our actions on supporting reconciliation and are currently developing our next RAP. I thank the members of the RAP taskforce and the reconciliation ambassadors for their work towards achieving reconciliation.

Several officeholders will be standing down in 2016 and the Board gratefully acknowledges their contribution and leadership: David Maxwell as Victorian Branch President; Jeanne Lorraine as Northern Territory Branch President; and Mark Hughes as editor of the Australian Social Work Journal. Mark has helped to build the Journal as a leading forum for contemporary social work research and theory and practice debates. This year, two of our members received Australia Day Awards: Congratulations to Professor Lesley Chenoweth who was awarded an Order of Australia (AO) medal in recognition for her contributions to social work and to the social inclusion of people living with disabilities, and to Jane Miller who was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in recognition for her lifetime contribution to community services.

While we continue to roll out the national trademark and to encourage members and employers to recognise it as a symbol of excellence in professional social work, achieving national regulation for social workers continues to be a high priority for the AASW. We view it as the best pathway to promoting high quality services and achieving public safety and took part in every consultation stage of the Australian Health Professions Regulatory Authority’s independent review of health professions. However, we were disappointed on two counts when the review’s report was published in August 2015: the first was when independent reviewer Kim Snowball did not recommend the inclusion of self-regulating professions in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS), and the second was when health ministers rejected Mr Snowball’s recommendation for governments to initiate a system of quality assurance for voluntary registers of self-regulated professions. At present, Australian governments are resolved to not extend the registration scheme to social work despite the recommendations by the South Australian Coroner and the South Australian Parliament which called for registration to protect vulnerable clients.

As well as continuing to advocate for the national regulation of social work under NRAS, the AASW is working simultaneously towards other avenues for regulating the profession. We are a founding member and have a seat on the Board of the National Alliance for Self-Regulating Health Professions (NASRHP) that comprises university qualified allied health professionals who are similarly involved in safety critical practices including speech pathologists, dietitians and sonographers. The Alliance is developing a common set of principles for self-regulation including that each of its member associations has standards for education, ethical practice and currency of practice knowledge. It is also working towards achieving government recognition and legislative support for self-regulating professions.
The AASW has also commenced informal discussions with advisors to health and child protection ministers at State and Territory level to promote legislation as an option to support a national system for the regulation of social work.

At this year’s AGM, members will vote on some key reforms to the AASW’s Constitution. One of the proposed reforms is to restore the membership eligibility requirements in the Constitution to those who hold AASW accredited qualifications or equivalent, or who are studying in an AASW approved program. These requirements for membership were removed from the Constitution in 2008 and the bylaws introduced then allow the Board considerable power to determine what constitutes a qualification suitable for membership. During the Pathways debates in 2010-11, many members were distressed to learn how the constitutional change in 2008 enabled the Board to change the Association’s membership requirements without members’ consent. In practice, we currently require members to have the AASW accredited social work qualifications (or international equivalent qualifications), or to be studying in an AASW accredited program. However the Board is not obliged by the Constitution to do this.

The constitutional reforms will strengthen eligibility standards and ensure that the leadership of the AASW is accountable to members for any changes to them. This is vital given that membership affects the standing of the AASW in the eyes of the community, employers, insurers and the National Alliance for Self-Regulating Health Professions. We see the reforms that will be put to members at the 2015 AGM important for protecting the professional standing of social work in Australia, protecting democratic processes within the AASW, and for ensuring compliance with the Australian Corporations Act.

In November 2015 we are also holding our National Symposium in Sydney. It includes an exciting line up of keynote speakers and of professional development workshops and will be a fabulous opportunity to connect with and to learn from each other. I hope to meet many members there. If you are not able to attend, some of the workshops will be uploaded to SWOT so you too can benefit from the professional development provided by the Symposium.

The AASW will celebrate its 70th anniversary in 2016. We have planned a series of activities and events to mark and celebrate this historic occasion including a commemorative calendar that captures some of the social justice events in Australia’s history. You can collect your copy at your branch. Please display it to show you are a proud member of the AASW.

I’d like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Board directors and the company secretary for their leadership over the last 12 months. It is an honour to work with a talented and skilled Board that is deeply engaged with all areas of social work. Our Board directors and company secretary hail from all the states and territories in Australia and this, in addition to our communication with the branches, helps us to maintain an understanding of local issues in our national context. I would also like to thank the branch Management Committees who engage members locally and our dedicated staff members who also continue to delight the Board with their commitment to providing a high quality service to members. In the senior management team, Peter Todd, our Chief Finance Officer, has supported the Board ably in steering the AASW into strong financial territory and Glenys Wilkinson, our Chief Executive Officer, has helped us achieve great things with and for the AASW.

All in all, it has been a great year for our Association. I look forward to continuing this growth and development in 2016 while we celebrate 70 years of commitment by social workers to professional excellence and social justice.

Professor Karen Healy
AASW National President
Chief Executive Officer’s Report
To the AASW Annual General Meeting
Sydney, Friday 27 November 2015

This Australian Association of Social Workers’ (AASW) Annual Report provides a snapshot of the many and varied activities that the organisation has undertaken in the 2014-15 financial year. It offers insights to the valuable contributions of the officeholders and staff who, with the support of our 8500 members, has been helping us achieve the goals in the association’s strategic plan. This type of collaborative effort is typical of the AASW and is behind our achievements and ability to fulfil our vision and mission.

The Annual Report highlights all the different roles within the association and demonstrates the commitment that unites us to our vision and mission and to improving the circumstances of the people with whom our members work.

I am pleased to report that the association has returned to financial health and we are using our resources for maximum benefit so we can continue to grow. We are now a robust professional association that is in a strong position to advocate for improved social justice with governments, independent inquiries and the media and to fulfil our obligations to maintain the educational and professional standards necessary to protect and strengthen the social work profession.

There is more to do however! As Chief Executive Officer, I am responsible for ensuring that the association’s resources are aligned with, and deployed in a manner that addresses the AASW’s core responsibilities. Our dedicated team this year has continued to review and accredit universities to ensure social work graduates begin their professional career with core knowledge and skills, and work has also begun on the scheduled review of our educational standards in 2016. This review will ensure these standards reflect best practice and adequately prepare graduates for entry to the workforce.

The AASW’s Social Work Online Training (SWOT) forum has continued to provide social workers with ongoing access to knowledge and skill development. However, SWOT is in its infancy and we have plans to develop it further, particularly to meet the needs of social workers in rural and remote areas who are unable to access the training resources provided in larger towns and cities.

Our social policy and communication teams have raised the profile of the AASW this year – in government circles and in the media. This has enabled us to contribute to improved social policy and be seen by our community as a recognised voice of integrity on social work, public policy and social justice issues. This core work of the association continues as we initiate and take up every opportunity available to us to express the experiences and expertise of our members on behalf of the people with whom they work. Another core AASW activity is upholding the Code of Ethics and Practice Standards. Inquiries to our ethics team have been increasing which is a reflection of the increasing complexity of the environments in which social workers practice.

Again collaboration between staff and volunteers is behind our effectiveness in upholding professional ethics and practice standards and this has become even more important in the context of our campaign for professional registration. Whatever model is eventually available to regulate social work will be dependent the AASW’s ability to ensure that robust ethical standards and processes are in place.

A huge success for us this year has been the growth in membership and this is important because it validates our advocacy for the profession. It also ensures we are financially viable and have the resources to participate in the activities of a contemporary professional association. Our membership and administration teams have been diligent in responding to enquiries from members and with helping them to improve their interactions with the association. Our aim is to make the experience of joining and renewing membership smooth and efficient. This process is also an opportunity for us to listen to
members’ expectations and aspirations and to understand if the AASW is providing good value in exchange for their membership fees.

The other team that works tirelessly behind the scenes of the AASW is finance. This area is the backbone of the association and vital to us in ensuring the association’s legal and fiduciary responsibilities are robust and efficient. The audit process this year was exceptionally efficient and uncomplicated and this reflected the new finance and administration processes and systems that we have developed in the last few years, on behalf of the Board and members. Our compliance in all external accountabilities is the culmination of significant organisational change.

Behind the growth in our membership are the activities of our nine branches. They engage with members and represent the association locally and do this by developing collaborative relationships between volunteers and staff that addresses member needs and identify social policy opportunities. Branches are vital in our organisational structure and recruitment activity and I would like to especially acknowledge the professional officers and branch managers who diligently work with branch management committees to address the goals of the association in each state and territory. This is not an easy task.

The AASW has a committed staff that collaborates with, informs and supports members and each other. I would like to thank them and also acknowledge the senior managers who diligently create the right environment and supports that enable staff to do their best work.

Glenys Wilkinson
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Capital Territory Branch

Prepared by Branch Management Committee & Branch Office Manager

Our Branch Management Committee has worked hard to provide professional representation for our members across local and national forums. Our major aim is the enhancement of the profession in the ACT and the wellbeing of our members. Over the past year, our range of CPD activities has provided valuable networking opportunities for members and the opportunity to enhance social work skills and knowledge. We hope to extend these opportunities in 2016 and look forward to meeting the needs of new and existing ACT Branch members.

Branch Office

Clare Munro has been the ACT Branch Office Manager for most of the year and in this time had the privilege to meet many of the local members, work with a passionate Branch Management Committee, and help deliver some great professional development opportunities, a highlight of which was the Annual Social Work Dinner in May. Clare will be moving in 2015-16 to work with the NSW Branch Office and undertake some post graduate study and would like to thank the local social work members for their passion and dedication to the field.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The CPD committee met in early 2015 to plan an interesting and varied calendar of events and training for the year. A range of topics were selected for the popular monthly Rose Garden Seminars at ACU, and an overview of each has been reported below. The sub-committee also agreed upon some topics for workshops (also reported below). Overall, the branch CPD for 2015 has been successful, and we plan to send a survey at the end of 2015 to get some member feedback and begin planning for 2016.

Rose Garden Seminars

March - AASW member Keith Mahar presented a 20 year case study into a wealth redistribution scheme in Canada, one which played an instrumental role in his interest in social justice and influenced his decision to study social work at ACU.

April – Dr Sherene Suchy presented a workshop based on her 2014 publication In Balance: Workbook on Resilience & Wellbeing.

May – On 19 May 2015, Greg Smith delivered an overview of the 2015 Federal Budget to a captive audience at ACU.

July – AASW member Peter Humphries explored the place of community work in social work practice.

August – Jennifer Ashton presented a snapshot of her career as a community social worker for the UNHCR.

Workshops

July – ‘My CPD Record and Collective Trademark’ - Half Day Workshop This workshop, presented by Branch Vice-President Michel Hansen, took members through the process of using the online ‘My CPD Record’ and also provided members with an overview of the AASW Collective Trade Marks.

Annual Events

March - World Social Work Day

The stall in Garema Place was a success for the second year running. We spoke with 30-40 people about what social work is, the services available, studying to be a social worker and membership of the AASW. We also promoted Social Work Registration and the Collective Trademark. The response to Social Work Registration and the current Collective Trade Mark was fantastic with the community very supportive of the idea and prepared to write in support of Social Work registration to their Minister of Health.


Theme: Shaping Australia through Values

Guest speaker Kate Alexander delivered a poignant and humorous speech about her own experience in social work, from her early career in child protection to her current role as Executive Director, Office of the Senior Practitioner for Community Services, NSW Department of Family and Community Services. Kate’s presentation highlighted two critical themes for social work: the importance of relationship building, and the need to remove entrenched barriers between ‘us and them’ when working with clients, families and friends.
**Branch Newsletter**
The branch’s Newsletter continues to grow in strength. The branch aims to publish this quarterly and it is posted on the AASW website. It has been warmly received by the membership and we continue to receive positive and encouraging feedback. The efforts of our editor, Trish Mackey and her team are greatly appreciated. Trish and the team are always looking for articles and social work profiles for each edition.

**Student Membership**
In 2016, the branch will elect a new student representative to the Committee. We are immensely grateful to current and outgoing student representative Belinda Gault, who will graduate in 2015. Belinda has worked hard in the past two years to promote student membership with the AASW, encouraging many of her fellow ACU social work students to join. Her efforts, along with branch and national student recruitment efforts have proven to be effective, with students making up nearly 15 percent of our total members.

**ACT Branch General Practice Group**
The end of 2015 marked the end of 3 years for the ACT General Practice Group. We are slowly building a following due to the fantastic topics on offer. The group continues to meet bi-monthly. The topics are interesting and varied and this is a great way to network with other social workers in the ACT/NSW. A sample of the subjects covered over the past year includes:

**August 2014** – Topic “Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace with guest speaker Judith Keys, a NSW Barrister who specialises in Workplace Law.

**October 2014** – Relational Frame Theory, the theoretical framework behind Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Mindfulness, led by Carolyn Minchin.

**February 2015** – Belinda Gault and Kate Haughey presented on Complex Trauma. There were 22 people in attendance for this group.

**April 2015** saw a follow on from the February Practice Group with Ray Simpson from Mental Health Education ACT presenting on PTSD.

**June 2015** – Topic “How we can let people know who we are and what we do” was a general discussion on social work, social work practice, and how we as social workers can encourage more involvement in the community.

**August 2015** – Topic “A contemporary approach to grief and loss, and bereavement care” with discussion led by Mandy Cox and Sonia Fenwick, founders of the Canberra Grief Centre.

**Outgoing ACT BMC members**
In August, the branch said farewell to Michel Hansen, Vice President and long standing Committee member. Michel has played an immense role in developing the branch over a number of years and facilitated the ACT Branch General Practice Group, a program that has grown significantly in the past couple of years. We are indebted to Michel for this contribution, her dedication and enthusiasm towards the branch will be sorely missed.

Early in the year, the branch said goodbye to Patricia Johnson and Linda Norris. Both were invaluable members of the committee. Particular thanks must be given to Linda for her assistance in planning the Annual Social Work Dinner in May. We wish all outgoing Committee members the best of luck with their next ventures.

**Strategic Priorities for 2016**
The following is a list of potential strategic priorities:

- Continue to improve local support to members;
- Continue to promote the General Practice Group and to encourage more members to attend the group on a bi-monthly basis to create opportunities for professional networking;
- Expand the Mentoring Program to include support for overseas trained Social Workers transitioning into the profession in the Australian cultural context – the BMC is committed to implementing this program, and we are hoping to gain some funding to further develop the program in 2016.
- Over the last year we have established a number of sub committees on the Branch Management Committee and these have proved very effective at sharing the load and achieving professional representation for our members while delivering varied and quality CPD for our members;
- In partnership with National Office, improve marketing of the Association to potential members, in particular student and new graduate members.
New South Wales Branch
Prepared by Jenny Rose, Branch President

Over the last year the NSW Branch has welcomed a significant number of new members and a new fulltime Professional Officer. The NSW e-News has been going out fortnightly, promoting CPD events and providing information for members. This last year has seen an increase in attendance at external events which has been well received. The branch ran nine well-attended CPD events and Membership has been rising steadily. There has been an increasing interaction with Social Work students which will be built on over the coming year.

The NSW Branch
The NSW Branch Management Committee (BMC) meets monthly to discuss activities, plans and new ideas. The Branch President is Jenny Rose and the Vice President Suzanne Noisen. We have farewelled long term BMC member Siraj Sarguroh. We welcomed David Briggs to our committee as our new student representative. We also welcomed and farewelled new members Babu Charles and Nina Azam who both now have other commitments which prevent them continuing on the committee.

In March 2015, Tracy Balzer, the new Professional Officer, started at the Branch full-time. We have recently welcomed Clare Munro as our part time administrative assistant.

The NSW Branch receives a number of requests to provide information about the role and activities of the AASW. There is a concerted effort made to ensure that these requests are met. Throughout the year, the requests have included speaking to social work students (at UNSW, ACU, Sydney University, UWS, UOW and ACAP) and presentations to the:

- Social Workers in Disability Practice Group
- Hunter/New England 7th Annual Social Work Conference
- Senior Social Workers Morning Tea
- Professional Practice Symposium.

World Social Work Day: 17th March 2015
The NSW Branch held its annual event at the branch office in Chippendale. Around 30 social workers attended to meet other social workers and hear the guest speaker, Martine Simons-Coghill from the Brain Injury Practice Group speak about her amazing advocacy work.

Continuing Professional Development:
2014-15 was yet another successful year for the Continuing Professional Education Subcommittee. The year saw the following programs facilitated:

- Couple Counselling – a two day workshop
- Bumps in the Road: Recognising & Diagnosing Mood Disorders in Young People;
- Supervision of Staff for Social Workers;
- Tackling Teenage Depression;
- Treating Bipolar Disorder from a Psychological Perspective;
- Dialectical Behaviour Therapy;
- Applications of Attachment Theory in Couple Counselling;
- Perinatal in Practice;
- Legal Issues for Social Worker (Slater and Gordon).

In addition the Committee undertook a survey of all members of the NSW Branch. The results of the survey will form the basis of the Continuing Education Program offered next year.

It is with much appreciation and great sadness that we bid farewell to the members of this committee: Leith Cooper, Helen Churven, Aveen O’Reilly, Joyce Snedden and Pamela Seraskeris who have made the decision to retire after many years of commitment and dedication to this committee. It is to the credit of these members that the NSW Continuing Education Program was an extremely successful program, meeting the professional education needs of many Social Workers over a number of years. We thank each of our members for their hard work and commitment and wish them every success in their future endeavours.
AASW National Symposium
We are looking forward to the Symposium occurring in Sydney later this year. Both Jenny Rose and David Briggs have been active members of the organising committee for this event.

Branch Representation
Naomi Spencer keeps a watchful eye with respect to ensuring that Shoalhaven and Illawarra social workers meet regularly throughout the year. The Social Work in the Shoalhaven Collegial Support Group (SWITS) alternates between breakfast and lunch time meetings. In July Michelle Moulos addressed the lunch time meeting on Trauma Informed Practice. A number of events and dinners in both the Illawarra and Shoalhaven marked and celebrated World Social Work Day.

Naomi also continues on the advisory body for the UoW program as a representative of the NSW BMC of the AASW and also continues as a member of the Board of the Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work. She met with others on the Board in London in June 2015.

Naomi attended the General Meeting of the IFSW as an observer in Melbourne in 2014 and intends to be present in Korea for the next IFSW general meeting in 2016. She appreciates that she holds corporate knowledge as the longest serving BCM member in NSW and is deliberate about fostering others to step up onto the committee.

It has been another great year for NSW Branch and we look forward to planning the new year which will bring us many new opportunities.
North Queensland Branch

Prepared by Rikki-Lee Curran, Branch Manager and Amanda Kruger, Branch President

The North Queensland branch has had some exciting changes and events throughout the year. These include:

- The move to a new office in Vincent
- The Branch Presidents’ face to face meeting in Melbourne
- North Queensland BMC face to face meeting in Townsville
- Networking meetings in Mt Isa, Mackay, Charters Towers, and Townsville
- Agency visits – Townsville Hospital and The Women’s Centre
- JCU Social Work Advisory meeting involvement
- O Week Stall at James Cook University
- Meeting with JCU students at different year levels
- Recording of CPD programs for SWOT
- World Social Work Day
- Deadly Families Day Out
- North Queensland Tour with National President Karen Healy and CEO Glenys Wilkinson

This last financial year has been an increasingly active year for the North Queensland Branch of the AASW with a number of events occurring throughout the period.

JCU New Graduate meeting

The branch manager visited James Cook University to meet with fourth year students who were about to graduate in October 2014. This meeting took place during the JCU fourth year placement integration day. Students received paperwork on how to become an AASW member, the benefits of membership, and were provided with USBs that contained educational material that new graduates would find beneficial as they transition into full time employment.

The Move

The branch moved to the new community service hub in Vincent on the Churches of Christ campus. This is also where QCOSS, North Queensland Volunteering, Pathways, and other service groups are located.

Networking Meetings

Townsville holds monthly networking meetings at our new office in Vincent which are free to attend. The meetings have raised the profile of different fields of practice and are creating further interest in the branch. We transitioned from general social themed networking to specific themes for discussion at the networking meetings. These have included: Mental Health Accreditation by Amanda Kruger; Pauline Woodbridge AO discussing her long term commitment and work surrounding Domestic Violence; Social Work in the Hospital System by Julie Watson (Director of the Social Work Department at Townsville Hospital); Suicide Prevention by Emma Wilson, representative for the Here4Life team.

There have been other networking meetings taking place across the region, with BMC member Eloise Phelps organising monthly networking meetings in Mt Isa, Eunice Donovan organising monthly networking meetings in Mackay, and Paula Christian working on Social Work networking meetings in the Charters Towers region. These have been quite successful, and we are slowly seeing interest in our branch within these areas.

JCU Social Work Advisory Meeting

The NQ Branch was invited to attend the JCU Social Work Advisory Group meeting to provide AASW input into the delivery of the social work program. Janet King (BMC member) and Rikki-Lee Curran (branch office manager) were in attendance for this event. The inclusion of the AASW for this meeting demonstrates the positive relationship growing between the local branch and James Cook University.

We have also been invited to speak to students at different year levels of their studies about the AASW, and the benefits of being an AASW member. Different BMC members have attended classes throughout the last year to discuss these topics. Vice President Ross Murray, President Amanda Kruger, and BMC member Janet King have visited the university several times to speak with students.
JCU O Week
This year the NQ Branch attended the JCU O Week market day and held a stall. Information on the association was provided to students and there were giveaways of water bottles and various brochures and booklets. The O Week stall gained some interest from students.

World Social Work Day
This year, Ross Murray (Branch Vice President) and Lee Towns (former BMC member) organised a sausage sizzle down by the strand to celebrate World Social Work Day. This event had a decent turn out with lots of positive feedback from the members who attended.

BMC Face to Face meeting
This was held in February and provided a great opportunity for BMC members to meet and discuss the direction of the North Queensland Branch. The input from Peter Todd and Glenys Wilkinson, especially in regards to SWOT CPD events provided enough information to action some new ideas for the branch.

SWOT
The North Queensland branch have had several events filmed so far this year which have been uploaded to the AASW SWOT centre. This has been an exciting start for the branch in the hopes of creating more interest for CPD programs within our region, but also, to provide quality CPD training to our rural and remote members who find it difficult to travel to larger cities for training.

Deadly Families Day Out
Branch President Amanda Kruger and BMC member Janet Kind attended this community event designed to promote positive happy families and to raise awareness on domestic violence and the prevention of domestic violence. Amanda Kruger operated a stall at the event which handed out promotional materials for the AASW to members of the community and to other agencies. This raised the profile of the AASW to other community groups who showed some interest from our involvement.

The North Queensland Tour
This by far had the most positive outcome for our branch. Both members and non member social workers have expressed their gratitude and appreciation that Glenys Wilkinson and Karen Healy took time to visit several locations within our region. The tour started in Mt Isa with a banquet dinner, followed by another dinner in Mackay, then Townsville, and finishing with a breakfast in Cairns. There has been amazing feedback, with each location keen to see something like this again in the near future.

Agency Visits
This year has been about connecting with our members and other social workers, and social work students within our region. This has been largely about connecting with agencies and taking the time to do agency visits.

During the North Queensland tour Karen Healy and Glenys Wilkinson visited the Townsville Hospital. The Townsville Hospital has one of the largest Social Work departments in Townsville, and the developing relationship which had previously been strained is now growing in a positive manner. Amanda Kruger and Janet King have also visited the Townsville Hospital to share with the social work staff how the AASW can assist them as social workers, and to share what we as an association can do for the social work community. This raised some further awareness and interest in the AASW and the NQ Branch.

The Branch Presidents’ Face to Face Meeting
The presidents’ face to face meeting held in Melbourne this year was well attended and all of the branches were represented. This was a great opportunity to network and put faces to names from many teleconference meetings.

The first afternoon there was training provided for presidents around governance followed by the next day meeting with the National Board. This was an opportunity to discuss issues that are common across all branches including membership, CPD and geographical constraints.

Membership continues to grow and all branches are contributing to this. There was discussion around CPD and the introduction of SWOT (social work online training) the AASW North Queensland branch is now exploring how the use of technology can assist with the challenge of geography.
Northern Territory Branch
Prepared by Jeanne Lorraine, Branch President

2014-15 has been a year of beginnings and endings and significant challenges. However Continuing Professional Development has a much better structure and process for delivery of a calendar of events. We have welcomed a new branch Office Manager, new members and Branch Management Committee members and said farewell to others. We look forward to consolidation and some new beginnings in 2015-16 with and for our members.

After a highly successful biennial conference in early 2014, 2014-15 has proved a year of highs, lows and challenges for the Northern Territory Branch.

We recruited a new Branch Office Manager (BOM), Cindy Fullerton (a welcome addition to our number) with an increase of a day to two days a week to help develop and promote CPD events. We secured a great location for our branch office with NAPCAN in Fannie Bay that abruptly ended with funding changes to NAPCAN. Continuing Professional Development under the leadership of Jenny Scott had a working group and along with Cindy as BOM began to plan and systematise our Professional Development and network offerings to members in 2015.

Another and not least of our challenges was my own grounding through the cold winter of South Australia following annual Christmas leave with family for six months in 2015 for medical reasons. Working remotely and virtually during that time posed some problems.

We have been involved in the National Review of the Constitution with a phone linkup with the CEO Glenys Wilkinson and our Branch Management Committee (BMC); advocacy for social workers in health; and ongoing work in partnership with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues to further our National and Branch Reconciliation Action Plan targets and strategies.

One of our members Pamela Trotman is a Reconciliation Ambassador and I represent the Presidents on the AASW Reconciliation Action Plan Taskforce.

In addition the Presidents have formed a Health Social Work Advisory Group reporting to the AASW Board to tackle ongoing and emerging issues for social workers in health particularly in relation to scope of practice and the increasing business case being made for Allied Health Assistants in Social Work.

The film of our 2014 AGM presentation is now available through AASW SWOT online: presented by Sue Roman and Barbara Cumming who were both involved in the Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse hearings held in Darwin with regard to children placed in the Retta Dixon Home. Topic - *Influence as a social worker: Understanding and response to the issue impacting Aboriginal people in relation to child sexual abuse and child protection practice and policies.*

AASW NT Branch continues to sponsor the prize for Outstanding Performance on Placement for Social Work to Charles Darwin University graduating Social Work students.

Congratulations to this year’s winner, Rebecca Methven from South Australia.

**Membership**
The NT Branch continues to grow its membership. Current membership 2014-15:

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<th>Category</th>
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<td>Student</td>
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<td><strong>155</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

Despite our membership being comparatively small, we continue to be creative in achieving outcomes thanks to a dedicated group of volunteers on the Branch Management Committee and from the membership. More volunteers are always welcome.

Networks in Katherine and Alice Springs have continued to meet regularly and Darwin has now followed suit with a successful networking event for World Social Work Day. We plan to continue this in 2016 and seek input from our membership to guide our activities.

Congratulations to the Alice Springs Conference Organising Group who are well underway in planning our biennial Northern Territory AASW...
Conference proposed for August 2016 with the theme of Diversity, Dust and Dedication. We look forward to AASW members joining us for what is shaping up to be an event not to be missed.

With considerable pressure on social work colleagues and increasing need for social work services in an environment of economic constraint, now more than ever we need to care for ourselves as social workers so that we can continue to provide valuable services to our clients and advocate for the needs of those most vulnerable in the Northern Territory.

Through our association we can develop our professional skills and ensure they are protected and valued. I look forward to re-energising our branch to meet the needs of our members and their clients and thank the hardworking Branch Management Committee members for 2014-15 for their efforts including Sue Moore who regrettably stepped down during the year as Vice President, and welcome Vikki Martin-Moller back to the role in 2015-17.
Queensland Branch
Prepared by Fotina Hardy, Branch President

AASW Queensland is a vibrant, thriving branch with a growing membership of over 1500 social workers across Southern Queensland. 2015 has seen the branch grow from strength to strength in its social policy and advocacy portfolio, practice group participation, continuing professional development engagement and increased connection with its membership in more regional centers. The branch has worked hard on creating meaningful partnerships with key stakeholders across the social work sector and has connected with the Queensland Premier and Ministers representing the work of our membership.

AASW Queensland has a committed Branch Management Committee, who pride themselves in being the voice alongside and on behalf of our membership.

2015 has presented significant opportunities and unexpected challenges which the branch has responded to, producing positive outcomes for the profession of social work in Queensland.

With our Branch Manager Mere Vitale on maternity leave with her beautiful baby girl Asuka, the branch has been in the safe and capable hands of Megan Hall (A/Branch Manager) and Rachel Austin (Administrative Officer) who have guided the branch with a high degree of enthusiasm and professionalism (all in a part time capacity!).

Membership
The groundswell for membership to the Queensland Branch has been massive, reaching 1,703 members by June 2015. We are delighted at the increased number of students and new graduates, and the opportunity to support emerging practitioners.

Social Policy & Advocacy
Our Social Policy and Advocacy portfolio has strengthened and gained significant momentum in 2015. It has been rewarding that the branch has received invitations to contribute to significant policy work, further enhancing the profile and contribution of social work. This was not possible without the support and input from our amazing members.

- Response to the Recommendations from the Queensland Domestic and Family Violence Taskforce
- Attendance at Queensland Community Sector Briefing with the Premier of Queensland, the Hon Annastacia Palaszczuk; Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Multicultural Affairs
- the Hon Shannon Fentiman; and Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland, the Hon Coralee O'Rourke
- Submission to the Mental Health Bill 2015 and Act
- Advocacy to Queensland Health to remove barriers to access for student social workers, which is now being followed through nationally
- Draft Options Paper – Statewide Spinal Cord Injuries Health Service planning project
- AASW (Qld) submission to Queensland Department of Health Brain Injury Rehabilitation Planning Project
- Invitation to attend Family Law Council consultation in Toowoomba on Families with Complex Needs and the Intersection of the Family Law and Child Protection System
- Branch submission to the AASW Governance Review Discussion Paper
- Partner in hosting the Refugee and Asylum Seeker conference with Mercy Community Services and QUT
- A highly successful World Social Work Day focussing on service users voices, hosted by Griffith University, reminding us of the privileged work we do
- Establishment of a Disability Practice Group.

Continuing Professional Development
Providing responsive CPD to our members' needs is key for the branch. Highlights included:

- The Forgotten Known – Attachment Theory in Practice
• Assessment and treatment of Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD) using Cognitive Based Therapy (CBT) focussed psychological strategies
• Creating a Successful Social Work Private Practice
• "Nobody Asked Me!" An exploration of the issues impacting on families and how social workers may assist with their navigation of complex mental health problems and systems
• Assessment and treatment of mood disorders using Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) - Focussed Psychological Strategies
• The lived experience of past adoption practice: Informing practice
• Responding to Trauma - an integrated approach to assisting trauma survivors, utilising a social work framework.

Practice Groups
The branch is fortunate to have a number of committed, passionate social workers who continually volunteer their time to convene and attend the practice groups across Southern Queensland. The majority of these practice groups have presented their own CPD opportunities for their members. We are grateful to each practice group for their commitment, dedication and hard work in continuing to support the needs of local social workers and those working in specialised areas Practice groups include:
• Private Practitioners
• Clinical and Mental Health
• Child Protection
• Toowoomba Social Workers
• Gold Coast Social Workers
• Gympie Social Workers
• Bundaberg Social Workers
• Disability
• Social And New Graduates Network.

It is through the commitment and wisdom of the participants of these groups that the bar for professionalism is continually raised, while also continuing to advance the profile of the profession and we thank each and every one who has been involved.

Regional Roadshow 2015
The annual Regional Roadshow tour has been held in Southern Queensland. It is vitally important for the branch to connect with our regional membership, hear their feedback, concerns and suggestions for future improvement of their Association. The tour this year took in Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Gympie, Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast and Toowoomba and provided an opportunity for members to meet with Branch Committee Members, followed up with a CPD workshop. We were thrilled to have the resourcing capacity to be able to offer this in each location.

Workshop topics included: Ethics in Social Work Practice; Understanding and Working with the ICD10 and DSM-V in Interdisciplinary Social Work Practice; Working through the pain of Loss and Attachment Theory in Practice.

Finally, the thing that stands out for me the most is that we could not have achieved any of these without the commitment of our voluntary Branch Management Committee, our Practice Group Convenors and their members and our membership who have so generously contributed to the work we have undertaken. Thank you and I look forward to continuing to support and promote the work of social work.
South Australia Branch

Prepared by Mary Hood, Branch President

The SA Branch has had a successful year with an increase of membership, particularly with students. We have made new efforts to support our private practice, student, new graduate and rural members, as well as those in metro. We have run many popular CPD events, a 1 day symposium on Child Protection, and an ethics hypothetical. We have raised the AASW profile by commenting in the media, making 2 lengthy submissions on Child Protection and Adoption and publicly advocating on social justice issues. Thanks and well done to all, particularly our branch manager.

We have had an extremely busy, and I think it is safe to say, successful year at the South Australian Branch. We reached 800 members for the first time.

We have upped our public profile through media comment: 3 letters to the Editor published, 1 opinion piece in online news-site, 1 radio interview on local ABC as well as appearances with our banner at a number of public events and marches.

Our CPD committee has successfully planned ahead to produce an advance Calendar of CPD events which have generally been well targeted, successful and profitable. A number of these have made their way onto the SWOT website.

We recently made some presentations in Berri and plan to visit all four main regional centres this financial year to more regularly support social workers in rural areas.

Miriam Hobson our Branch Manager continues to spark with new ideas and ways of extending our influence and meet members’ needs. As a result her position has been classified as a Professional Officer and we have gained additional administrative support time. We have had 5 social work students on placement in the branch office throughout the year working on diverse projects: support to international social work students; other health professionals’ attitude to social workers; the NDIS impact on social work. Thanks to Nevena Simic for supervising.

Our Social Justice Committee has been extremely active and responsive to topical issues. They led (and wrote) our submissions to the SA Royal Commission on Child Protection Systems and the Adoption Act Review. They are in contact with SACOSS and supporting various advocacy efforts in other ways. They are also leading the branch’s effort to support Indigenous social workers and reconciliation issues.

Our Private Practice Committee has worked tirelessly to connect social workers in private practice (both those beginning and those experienced) through 3 workshops during the year and individual support with issues that face them. Meetings have been held with influential stakeholders to extend the awareness of what private practice can offer. Other plans are in train.

Our Ethics Committee has provided talks and discussion forums in workplaces and University courses and finished the year with an “Ethics and Child Protection Decision Making” Hypothetical session.

Given the focus on social work and child protection in SA this year, a group coalesced to work on child protection issues during the year contributed to the Royal Commission submission and successfully staged a 1 day symposium with over 90 participants. I, as President, continue to comment in the press where possible. We have met with Families SA on social work issues, are included in Family SA discussions on social work education, and I have met with the Minister on 2 occasions.

In the health area I am included in an SA Health monthly meeting for professions with the Chief Allied Health Advisor, and also meet regularly with the Social Work Clinical leads. I also convene the National Social Work in Health Advisory Group to the AASW Board which is looking at defining the scopes of social work practice in health more clearly.

We have gained many new student members this year as a result of efforts to connect and support them and new graduates. Among these have been presentations on campuses, developing a group of students to liaise between AASW and student bodies ongoing, and an information session on career development. Much more is planned by our Students and New Graduates Working Group.
We also have an interesting project with the Flinders University Enterprise Centre where marketing students are looking at the “branding” of social work and how to get a more positive image. It will be interesting to see the results.

Next year is the 70th Anniversary for the AASW. SA is planning some social work awards and a presentation event. Look out for further details.

The Branch Management Committee and every branch sub-committee has social workers who volunteer lots of time and effort to extending the ideas and influence of social work and the social justice we believe in. I offer my heartfelt thanks for your contributions. Thanks to Chris Chalubek who due to a new job was unable to continue on the BMC or as Vice President. We welcome Jennie Charlton into the VP role. Many thanks to retiring BMC members Robyn Lingard, Michelle Osmond, and Daniel Maik for their valuable contributions.
Tasmania Branch
Prepared by Allyson Smith, Branch President

In 2014-15 the Tasmanian Branch has focussed on growing membership and providing value back to that membership by offering opportunities for quality CPD, networking and advocacy. We have prioritised building and strengthening the student engagement begun in 2013-14. We further developed the regional networking model of engaging with social workers in the three regional areas of southern, northern and north western Tasmania. The Tasmanian Branch Management Committee continues to be proactive in social policy advocacy. We provided representatives to key statewide allied health committees and community advocacy organisations. Committee members have participated in various AASW National Committees and consultations.

Membership
It has been pleasing to see the growth in membership of the Tasmanian Branch especially in the student and new graduate membership categories. Membership rose from 242 in July 2014 to 291 in June 2015. The branch regrets the passing in 2014 of longstanding member Debra Smith, and Life Members Dorothy Pearce and Audrey Hudspeth.

Committee Membership
2014-15 saw the retirement of Carol Dorgelo, Tracey Turner and Anne Easther from the committee and the election of retired social worker and university tutor Karen Ritchie, practising health social worker Hui-Yu Yao and UTAS final year student Tahlia White. Ally Smith was re-elected as Branch President while Stewart Millar and Anna Lovitt successfully renominated for general positions. One general position remained vacant.

Student Engagement Strategy
A statewide strategy for student engagement was implemented this year. The strategy aims to engage with students at their entry to the profession as university students, to continue that support through their transition to new graduate status by offering a pathway to the networking groups, and then to build mutually beneficial relationships and opportunities for experienced practitioners and service managers. The branch enjoys a collaborative working relationship with the School of Social Work at the University of Tasmania and we thank the School and Acting Head of Discipline for their support with this work.

A key factor identified in successful engagement was students working with students. Branch Management Committee members, student member representatives and other branch members attended various events throughout the university year. This included Orientation Week presentations, World Social Work Day activities, student coffee networking mornings, talks at pre-placement seminars and end of year seminars and celebrations. National President Karen Healy met with student members via teleconference to discuss AASW issues.

A display of posters and membership material was held in all three campuses at the UTAS Open Day in August. Committee members were in attendance at the Open Day at the Sandy Bay campus.

The AASW UTAS Social Work Student of the Year Award was awarded to Joanna Kohler. Joanna was presented with her award certificate, prize of $200 and one year's membership of AASW at the Launceston World Social Work Day breakfast. The prize is awarded each year to the final year social work student with the highest academic achievement who also demonstrates excellence in field practicums.

Regional Networking Events
The Regional Networking Groups have continued in 2014-15 with growth in attendance observed across all groups. The networking groups have been facilitated by Karen Ritchie in the north west, Russell McCashney and Stewart Millar in the north, and Jacqui Russell, Anthea Vreugdenhil and David Gould in the south. Groups meet in the Hobart CBD, Launceston CBD and alternate in the north west between Burnie and Devonport.

In 2015 the Southern Networking Group convenors trialled increasing the meeting frequency to monthly at a fixed venue and with guest speakers presenting at every meeting.
This proved to be successful in attracting new members and more consistent attendance. The North and North West Groups continued meeting bi-monthly. Each group has observed a core group of attendees with a changing group of new members attending depending on availability and the speaker or topics of interest.

Some of the speakers and topics this year have been:

- Glenys Wilkinson AASW CEO travelled around the state to talk about changes in CPD policy and the new SWOT online education module developed by AASW.
- Flomo Bannah spoke on his journey to social work as a refugee.
- Lynne Jarvis, Tasmanian Association for Hospice & Palliative Care spoke about the North West Networking End of Life Project along with the consulting artists.
- Lucy McEvoy, Specialist Youth Worker at ASeTTS (Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors) specialised youth program 'City of Courage: A Peer Led Holiday Program for New Arrivals'.
- Professionalism and Social Work with former Refugees was presented by Isaiah Lahai and Jenny Forward.
- Stewart Millar, Discipline Lead at the Launceston General Hospital, spoke on Social Work in Health.
- Isabelle Crompton, lawyer and policy officer at the Commissioner for Children (Tasmania) spoke on Child Rights.

**World Social Work Day 2015**

Tasmanian social workers celebrated World Social Work Day 2015 around the state with breakfasts in Ulverstone, Launceston and Hobart well attended by members.

This year a new initiative saw more than 30 southern social work students gather at Lazenby's for an AASW sponsored coffee morning to mark WSWD at the UTAS Sandy Bay campus. The Royal Hobart Hospital Social Work Department partnered with AASW TAS to host a display on social work in the hospital foyer.
Victoria Branch
Prepared by David Maxwell, Branch President

The past year has been a busy one for Victoria Branch. Our membership numbers have increased significantly and our CPD program has grown and is now a vital component of our branch. A clear focus over the past 12 months has been the development of connections with members through our Practice Groups. This has been demonstrated by our clarification of our mutually beneficial relationships, as we seek to offer additional support and to also seek greater engagement with the Practice Groups as the vital “working arm” of the branch. Our student program continues to grow and develop and is integral to our connection with students and universities. We thank our members, old and new and our dedicated Branch Management Committee, Convenors and Practice Groups for their continued support. We look forward to ongoing growth and success in 2016.

Membership
We are delighted with our increase in membership numbers again this year. We have consistently maintained our membership at well over 2100 for the past two years. This enables us to continue to improve the work of our branch and offer valuable CPD and other events to our members. We finished the financial year with a total of 2413 members.

CPD
Our CPD program for 2014-15 was developed by our dedicated CPD Committee and was based on our CPD survey and other member feedback. We are thankful to our members for providing this information which enabled us to offer relevant, valuable CPD throughout the year. The program included training and information sessions in:
- Cultural Competency
- Supervision skills
- Ethics
- Privacy & Confidentiality
- Student & New Graduate support
- Mindfulness
- School Social Work
- Mental Health
- Women’s Health
- Health Social Work
- NDIS

Practice Groups
We currently have a total of 10 active AASW Practice Groups who work closely with us to provide specific CPD events for members and support the branch in our advocacy endeavours. These Practice Groups are supported by the branch to enable them to offer CPD events for members. This year these events included workshops/conferences/symposiums by:
- Victorian Mental Health Social Work PG
- School Social Work PG
- Health Social Work Directors PG
- Women’s Health PG.

The Biennial Rural Social Work Conference is also scheduled to be held in July 2015 and promises to be a successful event.

Student and New Graduate program
The AASW Victorian Branch runs a 5 part seminar series for students and new graduates. This program is aimed at assisting students and new graduates with the necessary information, resources and support to better equip them to commence their social work careers and provides an opportunity to network with peers and senior social workers in the hope of creating a sense of connection and belonging in the profession. In 2015, the branch offered opportunities for students to connect with mentors. We intend to further develop this program in 2016. The BMC acknowledges the work of Lisa Derham and Laurenza Buglisi in coordinating these sessions.

Events
The Victorian Branch held its annual World Social Work Day Breakfast again this year at the Studley Park Boathouse. The breakfast event was attended by 50 social workers and the presentation by our guest speaker, Colleen Pearce, the Victorian Public Advocate was very well received.
Branch Reports

Publications
Each month the Victorian Branch produces a general e-news and a CPD specific e-news. Our hardcopy magazine, Social Work Connect is produced three times per year and is distributed to members throughout Victoria.

Social Policy
We continue to be active with regard to advocacy. This year, with the support of our Practice Groups we have developed position papers and media releases around the issues concerning our members including:

- National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program
- Child Sexual Assault reporting laws
- Transport Accident Commission claiming policy
- Racial Discrimination
- Centrelink support in hospitals
- Guardians for the Office of the Public Advocate.

Lyra Taylor
The Lyra Taylor Fund was established by the Victorian Branch of the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW). The Fund is administered to advance education in relation to Social Work by promoting, improving and maintaining standards of professional practice, education and research and establishing and maintaining continuing professional education opportunities for members.

In 2015 the Lyra Taylor Fund awarded a total of $7500 in grants to support social work education and research in Victoria. The Committee considered a number of proposals and were impressed with the quality of the applications received.

The following projects were awarded funding in 2015:

- What factors do social workers identify as influencing their practice decisions? - Social Work Department at Dandenong Hospital, Carol Quayle
- Measuring the impact on the social work role following the introduction of the HeLP Clinic at the Alfred - Alfred Hospital Social Work Service, Lorraine Xavier-Ambrosius.

Oral History Project
The AASW Victorian Branch has committed to the completion of the Oral History Project which was first started in the 1980s. The data gathered at that time has now been edited and collated and will be presented at the General Meeting in late 2015. This is a great achievement for the branch and we are very pleased to bring this project to fruition and to leave a legacy for future generations of social workers.

People
We thank the members involved in the various committees and groups operating under the Victorian Branch and the many members who assist with AASW events and activities – without their considerable volunteer input it would be difficult for these activities to take place. We also acknowledge the contribution of our committed BMC members and Life Members.

Aims for 2016
The Victorian Branch Management Committee has committed to:

- Continue to develop opportunities for Practice Groups, particularly in rural and remote areas
- Continue to enhance and improve our CPD program
- Improve our connections with University schools of social work
- Continue our work with students and new graduate social workers.
Western Australia Branch
Prepared by Sabina Leitmann, Branch President

Over the past year our driving focus has been ambitious in a number of directions. The branch has sought to:

- Continue to grow its membership
- Place Continuing Professional Development (CPD) on a firmer footing
- Implement the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)
- Promote the value of social workers to the community
- Comment on matters that impact on the clients we serve
- Support local initiatives through Practice Groups

We are proud of what we have achieved, acknowledge we did not always get it right and recognise that to do more and aim higher requires the active support of the membership.

Membership
Whilst it is pleasing that branch membership has steadily increased to over 800, there are a number of growth opportunities still to be realised. We wish for more students to become members, for they are the profession’s future.

To this end the branch has partnered with Curtin University, Edith Cowan University and the University of Western Australia to introduce social work students to the benefits of joining the AASW. The talks are well received but it remains a challenge to translate this positive feedback into increased student membership.

The branch works diligently to provide value to members. The Branch Management Committee (BMC) meets monthly to respond to local issues, review existing activities and develop new initiatives. At the same time, being volunteers impacts on the capacity of the BMC to achieve as much as it would like. The Branch Office Manager Sophie Mason and CPD Officer Mia Cotton played a critical role engaging with members and bringing issues to the attention of the BMC. They maintained effective communication with members on a daily basis and through the monthly newsletter and provided enhanced member services, in particular CPD.

Continuing Professional Development
The appointment of a Branch CPD officer one day per week proved successful with 12 CPD events covering diverse topics delivered over the year. Members were exposed to international presenters such Professor Pamela Trevithick from the UK as well as experts drawn from the local professional community. An exciting development has been member initiated requests for specific CPD events and presenter recommendations.

Regrettably in May 2015 Mia Cotton resigned to take up a position in the public sector. Building on the groundwork already laid, the position was extended from one to two days per week and Charmaine Lobo has been appointment to commence in July 2015.

Another branch strategy is to work collaboratively to support events outside the auspices of the AASW. Each year the branch works with the University of Western Australia and the WA Department of Local Government and Communities to deliver the Grace Vaughan Memorial Lecture. The 2015 speaker, Professor Carmen Lawrence addressed a ‘full house’ on the topic of ‘Twenty Years after the Beijing Declaration: how are women faring?’

Reconciliation Action Plan
The branch is committed to implementing the AASW Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and in July consulted with WA Indigenous social workers to gauge how best to progress RAP. At the meeting they expressed support for RAP but emphasised that the association needs to do the ‘heavy lifting’ and strategies should not be tokenistic. Rather than implement the RAP ambassador model we resolved in collaboration with Aboriginal social workers to design a professional development program on ‘Decolonising Your Professional Practice’. This project is gradually taking shape and we are seeking other human service partners to support the program to ensure maximum impact.

Promoting Social Work
The WA Social Worker of the Year Awards, a partnership between the branch, Curtin University and the University of Western Australia successfully continued into a sixth year.
The awards ceremony held in June 2015 was an inspirational night celebrating what is best about the profession. The Hon Helen Morton, Minister for Mental Health, Disability Services and Child Protection opened the event. WA Health social worker Fran McGrath was announced the 2015 Social Worker of the Year recognising her lifetime achievements as an outstanding social worker.

The branch was privileged to have Hon Stephen Dawson Shadow Minister for Disability Services, Mental Health and Child Protection address the branch AGM in October 2014 which afforded an opportunity to promote the value social work in these portfolio areas.

We continued to play a role lobbying for the inclusion of social work in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NARS) with BMC member Trudi Marchant on the AASW Registration Taskforce. The branch was represented at the NRAS Review Forum held in WA in September where we put forward a strong case to independent reviewer Mr Kim Snowball for the inclusion of social work in the NRAS.

**Social Policy and Advocacy**

The Branch Social Policy and Advocacy Committee chaired by Adam Peaty and supported by a small group of knowledgeable and experienced members undertook a number of projects which included:

- Submission to the WA Parliament Education and Health Standing Committee, Inquiry into mental health impacts of FIFO work arrangements.
- Contributions towards two AASW national submissions for Issues Papers for the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse.
- Providing evidence to the WA Parliament Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People.
- Contributing to the campaign to reinstate funding to Perth Financial Counselling Services with letters to the Premier and relevant ministers.

The branch continues to advocate on behalf of social workers in particular where workplace matters impact negatively on professional practice standards and client outcomes. We worked collaboratively with WA Health social workers who faced practice issues arising from the restructuring of Allied Health Services in metropolitan hospitals.

We were able to successfully advocate with senior management for an undertaking that the social workers would be consulted during the change process and that practice standards would be secured in the new Allied Health structure.

**Practice Groups**

The branch supports Practice Groups as an opportunity for members to come together to focus on matters pertaining to a particular field of practice. Four Practice Groups have been active over the year.

- Great Southern Practice Group chaired by Sheree Bootes offers a regular regional networking forum for social workers from diverse agencies to share ideas and issues.
- New Graduate Practice Group chaired by Sarah Mitchell has meet less frequently, instead using email lists and social media to share information and discuss issues.
- School Social Work Practice Group chaired by Sue Young has had an active year. They delivered a poster presentation on school social work at the 2014 International Social Work Conference. The group also lobbied the State Government and Opposition on the employment of social workers in schools and facilitated field education placements in government schools.
- Private Practitioner Practice Group chaired by Mary O’Brien is in its fifth year providing mentorship and collegial support to those in private practice and policy input on matters impacting on AMHSW.

**Future directions**

The achievements of the past year are the result of the dedicated work of the BMC, AASW staff, Practice Groups, the Board of Directors and members who supported the branch. To do more and aim higher will require more social workers to become members and for those who are already members to be more actively involved including taking up leadership roles.
National Social Policy Committee

Social Policy, Advocacy, Media and Communications

Prepared by Stephen Brand, Senior Manager

The AASW has been active in promoting social justice positions to our members and to the community with a view to bringing about change toward a just and caring society. The association has developed positions across extensive areas of social policy and promoted these positions through our various forms of media (website, Facebook eBulletins etc) and to the community via press releases, opinion pieces, letters to the editor, and media interviews.

The Social Policy and Advocacy portfolio was in transition during the year from the standing committee structure to the new committee structure based on time limited task force groups focussed on specific issues. From both structures this portfolio has produced extensive policy and advocacy initiatives. The media and communications component of the portfolio had the responsibility of ensuring AASW positions are in the public domain or at least known to our members and supporters. The goal has been ‘to be a strong voice for social justice, relevant and engaged with stakeholders’ with a view to ‘providing independent, articulate, highly visible advocacy on social policy issues’. The underlying objective is to be a voice for social change toward a more just society. To achieve this, the AASW provides the strong voice of social workers, and in so doing has contributed to the broader community voice for change in society, collaborating with like-minded organisations, delivering a similar message and adding to a joint movement in society for change.

There are a range of strategies to achieve the independent voice. The AASW has lodged fifteen submissions to Senate and Parliamentary Inquires and Royal Commissions (state and federal) and presented oral evidence on four occasions. There have been thirteen position statements, papers and government briefings. There have been numerous letters to Ministers, the Opposition or government departments advocating for matters of policy importance. The AASW has been published in newspapers or news sites with letters, opinion pieces and interviews with our President or board representative on at least 45 occasions.

The AASW has been active in the areas of the National Disability Insurance Scheme; domestic and family violence; institutional sexual abuse of children; child protection; out of home care; immigration and border protection; asylum seekers and refugees; children in detention; the rights of people with mental illness including the National Review of Mental Health Programs; income support for students and young people; cutbacks to health and welfare programs, Medicare and the co-payment proposal (in collaboration with ACOSS and other groups); disadvantage and discrimination in Indigenous communities; homelessness; the death penalty; the cashless welfare card; changes to job seeker processes; the proposed changes to the welfare system (McClure Report); the effects of inequality in Australia and marriage equality. The AASW has presented oral evidence to senate inquiries and parliamentary briefing sessions.

To develop positions consistent with the profession’s values, principles and extensive knowledge base, we have sought consultations and collaborations with member social workers with specialised expertise, knowledge, skill and experience. In this way, in addition to research undertaken by the secretariat, the professional depth of our members has been harnessed. Over the year we have accessed the expertise of hundreds of members, from practicing social workers to academics researching and publishing on key subject areas.

An important collaboration commenced this year between the university social work sector and the AASW where joint research on social policy will lead to advocacy on youth and student allowance. This is a growing area of serious discrimination and disadvantage.
Of particular importance is the extensive and emerging role of branches in the social policy area where state based issues have been promoted. The national secretariat has collaborated with some branches to assist them to either develop or consolidate their advocacy voice on key state based issues, often with national significance.

To communicate these messages based on the fundamental values and principles of our profession, the AASW has used a number of strategies. Our public presence is based on our website which is current, easy to access and changes daily. The website is a window to all AASW activities, processes and positions. All portfolios are accessed easily and comprehensively through this substantial repository of all aspects of the AASW. There is an active member-only section and a substantial area that is publicly available. The front page provides quick access to the latest activities and positions.

To communicate with our members, we have published a regular eBulletin fortnightly (with occasional additional special editions). The National Bulletin is published quarterly with messages from the President and CEO and summary news sections from each of the portfolio areas. Each edition has featured a number of articles based on social work practice. This year the AASW has developed a presence in social media with a particular emphasis on ensuring our Facebook page is updated regularly, at least twice weekly which has been exceeded on numerous occasions. Our aim is to ensure that everything the association does in the social policy and advocacy portfolio is reported in our social media presence.

We have also used Facebook to promote social workers who appear in the media and have increased our ‘twitter’ presence to use this strategic advocacy tool by targeting politicians and journalists.

The association has the responsibility to promote the expertise, knowledge, skill and experience of our profession broadly and our practitioners, particularly where they are either being marginalised or where their capacity is not known or understood. The AASW is developing a suite of ‘scope of practice’ documents to promote and explain what social workers have the capacity to undertake and achieve. The AASW has used these documents on many occasions where advocacy for our profession is required.

**National Social Policy Committee Members**

- Terry Simpson (Convenor)
- Jennifer Boddy
- Andre Zonn
- Jenny Charlton
- Gaylene Smith
- Joesphine Lee
- Martin Butler
- Alison Kearns
- Bruce Alcorn
- Donnie Martin
- Naomi Spencer
- Raelene Tabor
- Sue Nesham
- Peter Nixon
National Mental Health Committee

Prepared by Ann O’Kane, Convenor

The AASW has a broad range of roles in the mental health sector on behalf of social workers. An important member focussed component is our statutory role to assess social workers for eligibility for the Medicare Better Access Program. Ensuring standards of practice is an important function of the AASW in this program. The AASW represents social workers in the mental health sector at government and peak organisation level. Providing advocacy for people with mental health issues and their families and careers has always been an important function for the AASW.

Accredited Mental Health Social Worker (AMHSW) program

In 2014-15, 209 applications for assessment as an Accredited Mental Health Social Worker were received. 184 applications were approved; 1 applicant did not meet the criteria; 24 applications were pending and there were 1767 AMHSWs as at 30 June.

100 AMHSWs were selected to participate in a CPD audit. CPD audits are an important self-regulatory function and ensure the quality and standards of the AASW accreditation processes are upheld. One hundred percent of AMHSWs selected for the audit complied with the requirements.

Revised Practice Standards for Mental Health Social Workers

Revised and updated Practice Standards for Mental Health Social Workers were launched on 24 October 2014. The new standards reflect contemporary professional standards in mental health social work and are aligned with the AASW practice standards framework.

Advocacy

These are some highlights of the AASW’s participation in a number of advocacy initiatives throughout the year:

- The AASW lodged a submission to the National Mental Health Commission supporting equity of rebate for AMHSWs with Registered Psychologists. This followed a submission to the Federal Minister for Health. A favourable recommendation was included in the Report of the National Review of Mental Health Programs and Services.
- The AASW approached a number of private health funds proposing that AMHSWs be made available for rebate. At time of writing, negotiations and discussions remain ongoing.
- A submission was lodged to the Queensland Government in relation to their review of their policy to ‘lock all doors to acute psychiatric units’ irrespective of the acuity of patients. The AASW believed this to be a strong undermining of the rights of people with mental illness.
- A submission was lodged to the review of Child and Adolescent Services in South Australia. This followed adverse findings by a coroner into the death of a young patient.
- The AASW wrote to the Minister responsible for the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme with serious concerns about the possible loss of successful mental health community programs.
- There is ongoing advocacy about the role of social workers in the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service which is an ongoing issue.
- The AASW lodged a submission and met with the CEO of the National Mental Health Commission to communicate our issues in relation to the review of mental health programs. Following the release of the Mental Health Commission’s Review Report, the AASW joined other key stakeholders in consultations with government about the recommendations of the Review and the future of mental health services.
- The AASW is a foundation member of Mental Health Australia and participated in three policy forums throughout the year.
- In addition to the policy forums, the AASW was represented in a National Day of
Advocacy where significant mental health stakeholders lobbied government Ministers, staff and departments to bring to their attention the threats to the mental health system as it currently operates, particularly in relation to how funding cuts and uncertainty had led to a gradual breaking down of service systems.

• The AASW has significant numbers of members working in the primary health care sector which was radically changed during this year. Medicare Locals ceased to exist and Primary Health Networks were established with extensive roles in the planning and implementation of community based mental health programs. The AASW has addressed many issues from members and organisations about this change.

• The AASW also published a position paper on Older Person’s Mental Health during the year which has been a foundation for comment and member reference.

National Mental Health Committee Members 2014-15

• Ann O’Kane (Convenor)
• Vicki Cowling
• Robert Gardner
• Ravi Lulla
• Louise Whitaker
• Philip Siebler
• Eva Gross
• Keith Mahar
• George Karpets
• Vivienne Braddock
• Niel Maurellio (Board Director)
National Ethics & Professional Practice Standards Committee

Prepared by Sharlene Nipperess, Convenor

In 2014-15, the Professional Standards portfolio continued to oversee and develop the accreditation and self-regulatory functions of the profession, in order to promote best practice in social work and uphold professional standards and safety of the public.

Key highlights of 2014-15

- Development of new resource on culturally inclusive and responsive practice, primarily for newly arrived social workers with overseas qualifications
- Development of new ethics and practice standards resources for members
- Development of Declaration of Overseas Professional Conduct Matters policy for applicants applying for assessment of international social work qualifications and AASW membership
- Revised and strengthened English Language Policy
- New national supervisor directory launched.

Throughout 2014-15, much of the work of the Professional Standards team was led by the National Ethics and Professional Practice Standards Committee. The committee provided leadership, direction and consultation in relation to the following areas of work.

International Qualifications Assessment (IQA) program

The AASW continued its role as the national assessing authority for the assessment of academic social work qualifications and post-qualifying skilled employment for migration and employment purposes in Australia. The AASW assesses the level at which an applicant’s qualifications are comparable to an AASW accredited social work qualification.

In 2014-15, social work remained on the Department of Immigration’s Skilled Occupation List (SOL) and Consolidated Sponsored Occupations List (CSOL) for overseas qualified social workers seeking permanent and temporary skilled migration to Australia.

New applications

- 362 applications were received for assessment of social work qualifications for migration and/or AASW membership eligibility purposes through the IQA program, which is approximately a 3% increase in the number of applications received in the previous year.
- Of these, 43 applications included a Skilled Employment Assessment. A Skilled Employment Assessment is an additional optional service where applicants can submit evidence of post qualifying social work employment for the purposes of being awarded extra points under the Department of Immigration’s ‘points test’. Demand for this service has increased significantly (55% increase) in the last 12 months.
- The AASW also offers an optional Doctorate Degree Assessment, where applicants holding a relevant doctorate degree (in addition to their social work qualification) may apply to have this degree assessed for the purposes of being awarded extra points by the Department of Immigration. No applications were received for this assessment type in 2014-15.

Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA)

Since April 2014, the AASW and the New Zealand Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) have offered a Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) to facilitate the mobility of eligible social workers between Australia and New Zealand.

Recognising that the standards for AASW accredited qualifications and NZSWRB registration are sufficiently equivalent to enable a mutual recognition of social workers to be achieved, the MRA offers a streamlined and cost effective process for applicants.

In 2014-15, 19 New Zealand qualified social workers were assessed under the MRA.

Applicants

The majority of applicants through the IQA program in 2014-15 were from:

- International students graduating from AASW accredited courses: 111
- UK and Ireland: 93
New Zealand: 31 (of which 19 were eligible to be assessed through the MRA)
North America: 22
Asia: 21 (of which 15 were from India)
Europe: 16
Africa: 12 (of which 9 were from South Africa).

**English language policy**
The AASW launched a revised and strengthened English language policy in April 2015.

**Ethics and Practice Standards Consultation Service**
The AASW Ethics and Practice Standards Consultation Service is a free service for members to discuss and process ethical dilemmas and ethical practice issues. One of the primary objectives of the AASW is to ensure that social workers are equipped with the skills, knowledge and reflective resources to ensure high standards of practice and prevent ethical misconduct and harm to the public. The Ethics and Practice Standards Consultation Service is run by social workers.

In 2014-15, the service provided 785 consultations to members and relevant others, which is approximately 65 consultations per month, and a 21% increase in the number of consultations provided in the previous year.

**New Ethics and Practice Standards Resources**
The AASW also develops ethics and practice resources for members, particularly in relation to key themes which emerge through the consultation service.

In 2014-15, the following new resources were developed or updated:
- Working with child clients and child centred practices
- Mandatory reporting
- Social work records, record ownership and management
- Industrial and workplace relations
- Preparing for Culturally Responsive and Inclusive Social Work Practice in Australia: Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This new resource is primarily intended for social workers who have overseas social work qualifications and wish to migrate to Australia, however is also relevant to all social workers.

**New National Supervisor Directory**
A Professional Supervisor Directory was launched on the AASW website during 2014-15. The directory is another improvement in maintaining high professional standards. The Supervisor Directory is aligned with the Supervision Standards, CPD Policy and Collective Trade Mark Registration requirements.

**National Ethics and Professional Practice Standards (NEPPS) Committee**
The Board is supported by a range of structures, including Committees of the Board, standing committees, advisory groups and practice groups. Collectively these groups assist the Board to fulfil its role and responsibilities and provide critical grassroots input from members into the direction and work of the association.

Following a review of the AASW’s committee and advisory processes in 2014-15, the work of the NEPPS Committee transitioned from an ongoing standing committee to an advisory group structure. Advisory groups will be appointed to address key ethics and standards issues of the moment, drawing on members’ expert knowledge in the strategic area of interest of the advisory group. The NEPPS Committee held its final meeting on 27 April 2015 and the Board sincerely thanks the committee for its commitment, leadership and work.

**National Ethics and Professional Practice Standards Committee Members 2014-15**
The National Ethics and Professional Practice Standards Committee comprises:
- Sharlene Nipperess - Convenor
- Donna McAuliffe
- Chandalala Mambwe
- Eunice Donovan
- Jacklyn Whybrow
- Carol Dorgelo
- Biljana Milosevic
- Judith Merari-Lyons
- Michael Woolard
- Chris Perriam
- Lynelle Osburn
- Dorrit Schultz
- Margaret Gibson
- Sarah Connolly
- Anne Vranisan
- Tesfaye Alemayehu
- Robert Hansen
- Lizzie Baldi
- Helen Redfern
- Deborah Sauvage
- Anita Phillips (Board Director)
National Ethics Panel
Prepared by Kerryn Pennell, Chair

The National Ethics Panel (NEP) is the Board appointed panel responsible for overseeing the Ethics Complaints Management Process. The Ethics Complaints Management Process is the AASW’s formal system for receiving and responding to complaints about the alleged serious ethical misconduct of its members.

As a profession we are committed to high standards, ethical practice and protection of the public. The AASW’s Ethics Complaints Management Process is one of our key self-regulatory functions to uphold these shared goals.

The purpose of the ethics complaints process is primarily to protect those who use social work services from harm, and to address allegations of serious ethical misconduct.

The Ethics Complaints Management Process (ECMP) is managed by the Senior Manager Professional Standards and overseen by a Board appointed three member National Ethics Panel. Hearing Panels and Appeal Panels are formed from a national pool of AASW members with expertise in ethics and standards.

The 2014-15 review of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS) also provided further opportunity to strengthen the links between our ethics complaints process and our campaign to achieve the registration of social work, based on the shared underlying goal to protect the public.

Unfortunately examples of harm caused by social workers strengthen the case for registration of social work. Many (43%) of the potential complaints which were unable to be progressed over the past 12 months were because the social worker was not a member of the AASW. With no recourse against social workers who choose not to be members of the AASW who may act unethically or cause harm to others, the public is at serious risk. While every effort is made by the AASW to implement self-regulation, it is impossible to monitor the standards of practice of those working outside of this framework, and those who use the title ‘social worker’ without holding a professional social work qualification.

Overview of ethics complaint statistics for 2014/15
30 complaints received:
- 13 complaints (43%) could not be progressed due to the social worker not being a member
- 12 complaints (40%) could not be progressed as they were not a proper use of ECMP or did not demonstrate serious ethical misconduct
- 5 complaints (17%) were progressed to the respective member to seek their response, of those:
  - 4 complaints were determined following receipt of response, with recommendations to the members for practice improvements
  - 1 complaint referred to a Hearing Panel for determination
- 1 Hearing conducted, which resulted in a finding of serious ethical misconduct and a sanction put in place to support the member’s professional development
- 0 Appeals received
- 0 Appeals conducted
- 2 members successfully completed ethics sanctions
- 1 member determined ineligible for membership.

The AASW remains committed to supporting the reparative, rehabilitative and professional development opportunities for social workers who have engaged in serious ethical misconduct, and any sanctions are always set with these opportunities in mind.

National Ethics Panel Members 2014-15
- Kerryn Pennell (Chair)
- Fredri Kruger (from February 2015)
- Annette Ruzicka (from February 2015)
Ethics Pool Members 2014-15

Hearing Panels
- JoAnne Bevilacqua
- Vera Hempel
- Annette Ruzicka
- Fran Conway
- Judith Merari-Lyons
- Fredri Kruger
- Christine Vickers
- Jill Wilson
- Magio Konidaris
- Sam Howard-van Beek
- Doug Burke
- Sharon McCallum

Appeal Panels
- Sue Vardon
- Robert Bland
- Michael Salmon

During 2014/15, Lisa Brophy and Josie May resigned from the National Ethics Panel. The Board thanks them sincerely for their contribution to upholding the integrity of the profession.
National Registration Taskforce
Prepared by Anita Philips, Chair

For much of our near 70 year history, the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) has strived to achieve registration and protection of title for professional social workers because we strongly believe this is the best way to enhance public safety and uphold safe and ethical practice.

Throughout 2014-15, the AASW continued to pursue with vigour three specific strategies to enhance the protection of the public and the standards of the profession. While we continue to pursue the inclusion of social work in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS) as the gold standard, we are simultaneously implementing complementary strategies to optimise the protection of the public and upholding of standards.

Inclusion in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS)
This continues to be the first strategy being pursued by the AASW. Social work as a profession, regardless of the setting in which social workers work, is committed to high standards, ethical practice and protection of the public.

The first review of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS) occurred in 2014-15. This review of the National Scheme was a critical opportunity for the social work profession to pursue our case for the inclusion of social work in the Scheme, and we used every opportunity to raise our case for registration.

Key AASW activities in the registration campaign in 2014-15:

- Two meetings with the Independent Reviewer leading the NRAS review
- AASW representation at every consultation forum in each state and territory in September
- Written submission to the Review
- Meeting with Minister for Health, the Hon Sussan Ley MP
- Direct advocacy to all State Health Ministers, and meetings with several
- Direct advocacy to all State Ministers responsible for child protection
- Direct advocacy to the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Group (AHMAC)
- Direct advocacy to all Premiers and Chief Ministers.

The NRAS Review Final Report did not make recommendations regarding the inclusion of social work in the National Scheme, and the Health Ministers did not accept the recommendation to establish a voluntary register model for self-regulated professions.

However, the AASW is unwavering in our commitment to the regulation of social work for the protection of the public and professional standards, and will continue to work for inclusion in the National Scheme, as well as pursue our complementary strategies.

AASW Accredited Trade Marks
Simultaneously, the AASW Accredited Trade Marks continue to grow in recognition with members, employers and the public, as a mark of quality and a form of title protection.

The AASW Accredited Trade Marks have been approved by the Australian Trade Mark Office.

Social workers registered to use an AASW Accredited Trade Mark, instantly convey to the public, employers, colleagues and others:

- Confirmation of their AASW Trade Mark registration
- Verification that they hold a legitimate professional qualification in social work
- Verification that their overseas social work qualification has confirmed Australian equivalency, and that the social worker has the required English language skills to practice in Australia, where applicable
- Confirmation that they are accountable to the AASW Code of Ethics and an ethics complaint process
- Confirmation that they have completed the minimum amount of annual continuing professional development
- Confirmation that they have been formally assessed, on behalf of the Australian Government, as having skills and experience in the field of mental health, where applicable
✓ Confirmation that they have professional indemnity and public liability insurance coverage, where applicable.

Registered members are able to use the Trade Mark on their business cards, letterheads, web pages, e-mails and reports, wherever possible, towards building our brand of professional services. Over 1600 members have now registered to use a Trade Mark.

**Authorised self-regulation**

The third strategy we have continued to pursue in 2014-15 is authorised self-regulation through our role as a founding member of the National Alliance of Self-Regulating Health Professions (NASRHP). NASRHP is a network of 8 allied health professions which are currently not included in the NRAS, such as social workers, dietitians, audiologists, speech pathologists and sonographers.

The NASRHP network is currently finalising a model and standards in line with the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) requirements for the establishment, governance and operation of external accreditation bodies.

**National Code of Conduct for health care workers**

On 17 April 2015, the COAG Health Council agreed to the terms of the first *National Code of Conduct for health care workers*. This code will introduce national standards of conduct for all health care workers who are not registered under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS) for health practitioners.

The AASW has established an Advisory Group to consider the intersection of the national code with social work practice.

**Future actions and strategies**

- The National Registration Taskforce will continue to lead the association’s work in this area. In addition to current strategies, the Taskforce will also investigate developing a strategy for pursuing state by state registration as a means of entry to the National Scheme.

**National Registration Task Force Members 2014-15**

- Anita Phillips (Chair and Board Director)
- Karen Healy (National President)
- Trudi Marchant (WA member)
- Sue Cumming (QLD member)
- Sharon Bowen-Smith (NSW member)
- David Gould (TAS member)
- Mickey Skidmore (NSW member)
- Ruth Strout (SA member)
- Neil Mauriello (Board Director)
Reconciliation Action Plan Taskforce
Prepared by Stephen Brand, Senior Manager

The three year Reconciliation Action Plan concluded this year with a sense of success in bringing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues, activities and concerns to the notice of members, non-members and the community. The AASW took a public and open stand on many significant matters throughout the year including endorsing support for the recognition of the traditional owners in the Constitution, and condemning unjust and disrespectful Government and public positions and statements. The Taskforce met regularly with senior staff and planned and implemented a significant improvement in the status of Indigenous affairs in the life of the association.

This year was the final year of the AASW’s first three year Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). Of importance for the AASW and its 9000 members is the way we have significantly raised the profile of Indigenous issues across all our media: website, eBulletin, Facebook and National Bulletins. There is a regular Reconciliation section in our fortnightly eBulletin and items of significance have been highlighted on our website home page with a large section to go to which fully describes our reconciliation work. In addition the AASW has published articles in our National Bulletin exploring Indigenous issues.

A significant milestone was celebrated this year with Association support for an unequivocal commitment to reforming the Australian Constitution by recognising the first peoples in this founding document. This statement, endorsed by the Board appeared on our website home page and remains on our website. In addition to this significant event, the AASW joined with other peak bodies to sign the Lowitja Institute’s statement which recognises the important link between health and wellbeing and the recognition in the constitution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The AASW attended the Indigenous Allied Health Australia conference in late 2014 and regularly promotes this important organisation in our communications with members and on our website. The AASW is proud to be associated with this indigenous operated organisation and congratulates them on the work with all allied health workers but particularly social workers.

The AASW was a silver sponsor of the Third International Indigenous Social Work Conference. Although held in September 2015, the AASW strongly promoted the conference throughout 2014-15 and provided encouragement to the organisers.

During the year, the AASW issued media releases condemning a number of statements or government initiatives that undermine the place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Australia. In particular the AASW strongly condemned the Prime Minister when he referred in a negative way to remote communities being ‘lifestyle choices’. The AASW has also strongly condemned the proposal to introduce a cashless welfare card as it undermines human rights and dignity. The AASW has co-signed a statement with ACOSS on this issue. The Closing the Gap Report to parliament this year clearly indicated a failure to achieve significant progress and the government’s budget cuts to indigenous programs and move to the Prime Minister’s department has provided more impediments to progress to close the gap.

Finally the AASW can report that branches have significantly increased their activity to support the RAP objectives and activities. This has included cultural training events and working groups; Indigenous representation on branch management committees; Reconciliation Ambassador activities, in particular in the Northern Territory; and working with local leaders. A North Queensland branch Indigenous cultural training session has been recorded on SWOT (AASW online training platform) and will soon be posted on the website.

RAP Taskforce Members 2014-15
- Josephine Lee (Chair and National Director Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander)
- Karen Healy (National President)
- Jeanne Lorraine (NT Branch President)
- Cephas Griswold
- Peter Allen
- David Michie
- Katherine Monson
National Education & Knowledge Development Committee

Prepared by Melissa Robertson, Senior Manager

The National Education and Knowledge Development (NE&KD) Committee was established in November 2013 following the restructure of the AASW National Committees. This Committee merged the functions of the former National Education Committee, National CPD Committee and National Field Education Sub Committee. The objective of the NE&KD Committee was to provide advice to the Board of Directors on strategies and actions to advance knowledge and skill development by members, education standards review and social work program review, accreditation and ongoing professional development, in line with the AASW Strategic Plan. This Committee met monthly prior to being disbanded in March of 2015 following a review of the national committee structure and implementation of an advisory group model.

Some of the issues discussed by this Committee that are representative of the association’s broader education and professional development portfolio will be addressed through the newly established SWOT Advisory Group, the Education and Accreditation Committee of the Board and the 2016 review of the Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS).

Key achievements of the National Education & Knowledge Development Committee and National portfolio over the 2014-15 year

- Ongoing provision of advice to the Board as required regarding the implementation of the Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS).
- Contribution to the implementation of SWOT through presenter identification, content discussion and feedback
- Engagement of committee representation in the national project focused on face to face teaching and learning
- Participation of the NE&KD Committee Convenor and identified representatives in the review of the National Committee structure
- Submission to the Board of Directors on the review of the National Committee structure and alternate model.

2015-16 year priorities

To continue to contribute to the education and knowledge development of the social work profession, in the context of the new structure of an advisory group for SWOT and an Education and Accreditation Committee of the Board, the portfolio will have the following focus:

- Review and implementation of SWOT curriculum; development of new materials that address members’ interests and professional directions, professionally delivered and accessible.
- Continued in-depth advice to the Board in relation to CPD, accreditation and education (including field education) matters.
- Support the further directions of the SWOT Advisory Group and Education and Accreditation Committee.
- Lead the formal review of the Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS) through project coordination, stakeholder engagement, model development and resource documentation.
- Successful implementation of the National Symposium and evaluation against delegate, financial and professional learning contexts.

National Education & Knowledge Development Committee Members 2014-15

- Wendy Bowles (Convenor)
- Jenny Scott
- Anna Lovitt
- Alison McDonald
- Ilia Vurtel
- Susan Lewis
- Sally Watson
- Helen Cleak
- Ines Zuchowski
- Anne-Louise McCawley
- Anne Li
- Judith Irwin
- Jan Foster
- Jenny Rose
- Suzanne Noisen
- Wendy Rollins
- Brenda Clare (Board Director)
In the 2014-15 year the Steering Committee has focussed on further consolidation of the College through the development of College structures for specialisations and overall governance, and continuing our professional development strategy. We have implemented the new membership applications process and a communication strategy. There has been an expansion and change of Committee membership: two original members have stepped down and four people have joined. Future projects include launching and developing the Clinical Division as the first College division and opening a 2-tier membership structure (Member and Fellow).

The Steering Committee has continued to work with the AASW Board and staff to further develop the ACSW. Over this year our work has focussed on key areas of developing structures for divisions, professional development and further reviewing membership levels and entry requirements. We have held monthly teleconferences.

**Membership**

Membership applications reopened in late 2013 with two options for entry: Entry Point A holding either a post-qualifying Masters or a Doctoral degree directly relevant to advanced social work practice and Entry Point B via submission of a portfolio demonstrating advanced professional practice. An affordable fee structure was also established.

Memberships have increased modestly over this year and the College currently has approximately 70 members. 5 new members were admitted via Entry Point A and 2 new members were admitted via Entry Point B. We also worked on a proposal for two tier membership – Member and Fellow. This is still under development in conjunction with the AASW Board.

**College Structures**

The Committee developed a College structure that allows the development of specialisations for advanced practice within the College. The new structure includes formal Divisions which require a minimum of 25 active College members, and more flexible Communities of Practice which will require a minimum of 4 College members. Divisions and Communities of Practice will be led by Convenors. The first Clinical Division will be launched in November 2015, and a second Division is planned, possibly in Social Work leadership.

**National Symposium**

The Steering Committee is playing a role in the National Symposium held in November 2015. The program includes presentations and workshops delivered by College members. The new Clinical Division will be launched at the Symposium.

**Webinar Series**

The 2015 webinar/podcast series was launched in February with events offered free for all ACSW members. These are subsequently available to view via SWOT for all AASW members, with free access to ACSW members. Selected presentations will be available free to AASW and Accredited Mental Health Social Workers for a limited time. A range of topics has been delivered by national and international social work experts. The webinar series is continuing with sessions booked for the remainder of 2015.

**Website**

The Steering Committee continues to work with AASW staff to update the website which has its own ACSW logo, content and distinct identity. The website was relaunched on 1 October 2013.

**Communications**

In 2014 we introduced the College Communiqué, a regular e-newsletter to all members to keep them informed of news events and issues. This has been delivered in August 2014 and May 2015.

**Future plans**

The next phase of ACSW development includes the following activities:

- Explore options for the overall governance structure, particularly with respect to the development of specialisations within the ACSW and plans for the new Steering Committee from April 2015.
National Program and Committee Reports

- Appoint the first Convenor of the new Clinical Division, using an EOI process, with 3 year term to begin November 2015
- Review the webinar series and consulting with members and prospective members on professional development needs and preferences.

Australian College of Social Work Steering Committee Members 2014-15

ACSW Fellows:
- Lesley Chenoweth
- Carmel Flaskas
- Kerryn Pennell
- Tom O’Brien
- Peter Munn (until 2015)
- Linda Mondy (until March 2015)
- Geraldene Mackay (from March 2015)
- Sharon McCallum (from March 2015)
- Alex Zannoni (from May 2015)
- Paul Andrews (from April 2015)
- Karen Healy (National President)
Australian Social Work Editorial Board

Prepared by Bruce Lord, Chair

- In all, 198 manuscripts were managed, including new and revised papers. New manuscripts received in 2014 totalled 117, representing a 21% increase over the previous year.
- In 2014, ASW received an ISI Impact Factor of .580. The ranking remained similar at 26/40, compared with 25/40 the previous year. This indicates the journal has maintained a solid reputation as a source of scholarly publication in Social Work.
- Renewed the publication contract with Taylor and Francis.
- Journal Issues are now published in January, April, June and September.

Submissions, acceptance rates and publications

The journal metrics are analysed on a calendar year basis and reviewed at the annual major meeting of the Editorial Board in January each year. In 2014, a total of 198 manuscripts were processed by the editorial team, which included 117 new manuscripts. This represented an increase in new manuscripts of 21% over the number received in previous year. The overall trend, over the past 5 years, has been a steady increase in new submissions.

In 2014 the journal published a total of 38 articles, which included 28 reports of original research, 2 literature reviews and 8 theoretical papers. The growth in research articles is noteworthy and appears to indicate the increasing engagement of social work academics and practitioners in research.

Statistics for final decisions made during the year were: 35% accepted, 44% rejected and 19% rejected with the option of resubmission.

The journal would be unable to fulfil its mission without the support of a large number of reviewers. In 2014, a total of 175 people donated their time and expertise to reviewing manuscripts.

Impact factor and ranking

Data related to the influence and reputation of the journal are available on a calendar year basis. The Editor and Editorial Board were pleased to receive the 2014 results for the Impact Factor and journal ranking published in the Thompson Reuters Citation Reports. While the Impact Factor decreased slightly from .592 the previous year to .580, it is important to note that year-to-year fluctuations in the Impact Factor are common, and the outcome for 2014 indicates the journal has maintained a solid reputation as a source of scholarly publication in Social Work. The ranking remained similar at 26/40, compared with 25/40 the previous year.

Publication contract and governance of the journal

The AASW renewed the publication contract with Taylor and Francis in December 2015.

Further changes to the Terms of Reference for the Editorial Board were proposed to clarify ex officio positions on the Editorial Board and reporting arrangements to the AASW. These are currently under consideration by the AASW Board of Directors along with other provisions related to risk management.

Editorial policy and publication cycle

During the year the Instructions to Authors were updated and Book Review Guidelines were developed. Both will be accessible on the journal page of the AASW website.

Commencing in 2015, Issues of the journal are now published in January, April, June and September. Bringing the journal publication schedule forward increases the citation window (i.e. the period of time in which articles can be discovered and cited in other publications, on which the Impact Factor and ranking are based).

Special Issues

In the June 2015 Issue, a Special Issue on Applied Research Methods was published, guest edited by Grahame Simpson and Bruce Lord.

Four articles for a Special Online Issue on Norma Parker Addresses were published online and work is underway to complete this project in time for the 70th Anniversary of the AASW. Work has also commenced on a special issue on Mental Health Social Work, Risk and Regulation, to be published early in 2016.
National Program and Committee Reports

- **Norm Smith Award**
  Kate Freiberg, Ross Homel, & Sara Branch. The Parent Empowerment and Efficacy Measure (PEEM): A tool for strengthening the accountability and effectiveness of family support services. Sep, 2014.

- **Norma Parker Award**

**Editorial Board Changes**

The Journal receives the support of a highly committed and cohesive Editorial Board, which has continued to provide stable governance and policy direction.

During the past year, Prof Clare Tilbury’s appointment as Associate Editor and Member of the Editorial Board was extended for a further three-year term.

Notice of resignation was received from Prof Sandy Taylor, who had provided consistently helpful advice and wise counsel over a period of six years.

Dr Rosalie Pockett was appointed to the vacant position of Reviews Editor, leaving a second vacancy. With the support of the AASW steps were commenced to fill the vacancies.

The journal continues to receive the valuable support of Liz Morrison as Publications Officer and Kerry Kustra as Copy Editor, who are employed in part-time positions by the AASW.

**Editorial Board Members 2014-15**

- Mark Hughes - Editor
- Claire Tilbury – Associate Editor
- Reviews Editor: Vacant
- Bruce Lord – Chair
- Christine Bigby
- Beth Crisp
- Michelle Foster
- Pat Hansen
- Rosalie Pockett
- Grahame Simpson
- Sandy Taylor
- Mary Whiteside
National Research Committee
Prepared by Associate Professor Grahame Simpson, Convenor

The National Research Committee supports and promotes a culture of research within the AASW and social work profession. The committee provides consultation to members and branches regarding research initiatives and also actively promotes opportunities for members to undertake and contribute to ethical and robust research, for the advancement of social work practice and the profession.

One of the key roles of the National Research Committee is to consider applications to advertise and promote research to AASW members. Some of the key standards in considering research for promotion to AASW members include:

- Demonstrates consistency with social work values
- Demonstrates alignment with the AASW strategic plan
- Has relevance to the AASW and/or social work profession
- Has ethics approval
- Meets acceptable standards of research design.

With these standards in mind, the National Research Committee continually assesses applications from researchers throughout the year. In 2014-15, 20 applications to advertise research to AASW members were approved by the committee. This represents a significant increase in the number of applications received in the previous year.

It was recognised that this function was so important to members and for the creation of a research culture, that in October 2014 a new section was launched on the website to feature AASW approved research opportunities for member participation:


AASW approved research projects are also advertised on a fortnightly basis in the national e-Bulletins, emphasising research participation as an opportunity for members to contribute to the development of social work knowledge and skills and to simultaneously meet their annual Continuing Professional Development (CPD) hours, particularly in relation to CPD category 3, ‘Professional Identity’.

Researchers consistently advise how much they value the AASW’s support and role in research promotion. For example, one researcher reported that they could tell from their website statistics that the AASW was ‘by far the best referrer’ to their research.

One of the other major activities of the National Research Committee is to oversee the annual AASW Practitioner Research Grant scheme.

In 2014-15, the Practitioner Research Grant was awarded to Wanslea Family Services in Western Australia for a research project titled, ‘Child-Centred Reunification Practice – Accessing Children’s Voices to inform Practice.’ This research is proceeding and its findings will be reported as available.

The Autumn 2015 National Bulletin featured an article showcasing the findings and recommendations of the research undertaken by the 2013-14 Practitioner Research Grant recipients, Associate Professor Susan Gair and Professor Roslyn Thorpe, titled, ‘Lost contact: The impact on grandparents’ health and wellbeing of being separated from or denied access to their grandchildren – implications for social work practice.’

The National Research Committee is also committed to the development of resources for AASW members. A sub-committee is currently developing a series of training modules aimed at promoting and encouraging social work practitioner research. When completed the modules will be available on the AASW Social Work Online Training (SWOT) platform.

The Committee has also been successful in having two abstracts accepted for the AASW National Symposium to be held in Sydney in November 2015. The first will showcase “Pathways into research” for practitioners interested in getting more involved in research. The second will showcase research being conducted by social work Higher Degree Research students from across the country.

Research Committee Members 2014-15

- Associate Professor Grahame Simpson (Convenor)
- Dr Fotina Hardy
- Dr Sue King
- Associate Professor Angela Fielding
- Dr Anthea Vreugdenhil
- Janice Brown
- Kim Hobbs
- Josie May (resigned during 2014-15)
- Karen Struthers (resigned during 2014-15)
Branch Management Committee Members

as at 30 June 2015

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY
President: Chandalala Mambwe
Vice President: Michel Hansen (resigned)
Committee Members:
David Asbury, Noonee Doronila, Belinda Gault
(Student Representative), Cassandra Hanbridge,
Patricia Mackey, Alison McDonald, Catherine
Murnane, Wendy Rollins

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President: Jenny Rose
Vice President: Suzanne Noisen
Committee Members:
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Nina Trad Azam, Babu Charles, David Martin Briggs

NORTH QUEENSLAND
President: Amanda Kruger
Vice President: Ross Murray
Committee Members:
Eunice Donovan, Janet King, Eloise Phelps
(resigned), Paula Christian, Eleanor Gatto (leave
of absence), Bec Richards (leave of absence),
Lee Town (resigned), Julie Prideaux (resigned),
Mark Dunstan (resigned) and Rikki-Lee Curran
(leave of absence) (Student Representatives)

NORTHERN TERRITORY
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Vice President: Sue Moore (resigned 20/5/15)
Acting Vice President: Vikki Martin-Moller
Committee Members:
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Francine Koh, Paul Gibbs, Janice Tresize
(resigned), Suhaila Rizquallah, Rachel Oliver
(Student Representative)

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Vice-President: Jacklyn Whybrow
Committee Members:
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Marcela Moreno, Jessica Morrisey, Barbara
Ryland, Lauren Taddeo

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Ann Raith, Maria Scicchitano, Nevena Simic,
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McCashney, Stewart Millar, Karen Ritchie,
Jacqui Russell, Anthea Vreugdenhil, Tahlia
White, Hui-Yu Yao

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Mansel Lees, Alex Bhathal, Olga Gountras,
John Mathew

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