



AASW

Australian Association
of Social Workers

ANNUAL REPORT

*from the National President,
Chief Executive Officer, Branches,
National Program and Committees*

2015-2016

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National President's Report To the AASW Annual General Meeting Brisbane, Saturday 26 November 2016

This year we celebrated 70 years of the Australian Association of Social Work. Throughout the year, we have recognised members who, over seven decades, have built the AASW to become a powerful voice for professional excellence and social justice. Our celebrations began at the 2015 Annual General Meeting with a giant birthday cake. We also issued a celebratory calendar highlighting some of Australia's social justice milestones and developed a 70th anniversary web page that includes links to historical social work resources, including the Norma Parker addresses. Across the country, branches have also planned events to celebrate diverse aspects of our history.

In our 70th year we also celebrated a membership milestone. In June, the AASW reached over 10,000 members. In 2012, the newly elected Board set the ambitious task of achieving this membership target by 2016. We knew it was a stretch given that membership numbers had languished for some time. However, we believed that a large membership base was necessary for the AASW to be a strong and effective voice for the social work profession and to provide a foundation for professional excellence in social work practice. The achievement reflects the hard work of many, including staff, branch management committees and members. On behalf of the Board I say thank you to the national office staff, particularly our amazing membership team led by Lisa McCarron, and branch managers who work hard to support members. To every member who has encouraged a colleague to join, you also helped make us stronger.

We will not rest on our laurels. We are now developing a strategy to achieve 20,000 members by 2020. We have been able to achieve so much as we become a larger and stronger AASW, imagine what we could achieve with 20,000 members! Over the next few months, we will provide members with more information about this strategy.

Alongside growing membership, we have continued to build a solid financial base. In 2015–2016, we achieved surplus of approximately \$500,000. This is an excellent financial result and provides a solid foundation for the AASW as we move forward in investing in initiatives for and with our members. In 2015 we were able to introduce a further reduced fee to enable new graduates to maintain their membership during the often financially challenging time immediately after graduation. This complements the reduced student membership fee introduced in 2014-15.

Our improved financial situation has allowed us to increase our resources to social policy and advocacy. Your Board is committed to the AASW's role as a strong voice for social justice. Over the past 12 months we are proud that the AASW has continued to develop a strong media presence on a variety of social justice and professional practice issues including anti-poverty action, child protection, creating more inclusive communities and social work registration. We continue our advocacy work through presenting AASW policy submissions to major local and national inquiries. Thank you to the social policy and media team for their work in achieving a strong public profile for our Association.

A major focus of the Board's attention this year has been on the review of the Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS). Through the ASWEAS, the AASW sets and monitors the educational standards for accredited tertiary social work education programs and shapes the knowledge, values and skills of the emerging generation of social workers. I want to thank Brenda Clare for her leadership of the ASWEAS review and I also acknowledge Christine Craik and Anita Phillips for their involvement in the ASWEAS reference group. The review involves submissions from stakeholders, an analysis of the research literature on educational standards and practices and an international comparison of social work education program and recognition requirements. It is intended that a final report on the new standards will be considered by the Board in February 2017. Thank you to all who have contributed to this important review.

This financial year has seen many changes at the AASW. I want to acknowledge Bruce Lord, Chair of the Editorial Board of the *Australian Social Work* journal who passed away in April. He is greatly missed. I want also to recognise Stephen Brand who left the AASW in 2016. Stephen held many portfolios in the organisation, most recently leading the social policy portfolio. We thank and recognise Stephen for his leadership. Thank you also to the many members who volunteer for AASW committees and activities. Your work makes the Association strong and vibrant.

A key priority of the AASW is to promote excellence in social work. We continue to campaign strongly for national registration and we are heartened by the recent decision of the Australian Health Ministers' Council to consider social work for inclusion in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS). The AASW has undertaken many actions to further promote the case for registration including commissioning Access Economics to prepare a paper on social work registration. This and other regulation of social work campaign material is available on our website.

As part of the National Alliance of Self-Regulating Allied Health Professions (NASRHP), the AASW continues to work on developing a government-recognised self-regulation model. This work complements our strong advocacy for inclusion in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. The AASW continues to roll out the collective Trademark as a symbol of practice excellence for members.

In 2016–2017 we will continue to build on these initiatives so as to strengthen our capacity for self-regulation, employer recognition of our standards and to support social workers to achieve practice excellence.

Next financial year will be my last year as National President. I am grateful for the privilege of working with a talented and dedicated Board of Directors; each is experienced and effective and I hope will continue to serve on the Board. I hope also that what has been achieved over the past few years will inspire a new generation of leadership in the AASW and that this next generation of leadership will continue to strive for sound financial and organisational governance and ensure that the AASW Board continues to listen to what members' value most – the importance of the AASW standing up for high professional standards in education and practice, and for the values of social justice, respect and professional integrity.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Board directors, the company secretary and our CEO, Glenys Wilkinson, for their leadership over the last 12 months. All in all, it has been a great year for our Association. I look forward to continuing this growth and development in 2016-2017.



Professor Karen Healy
AASW National President

Chief Executive Officer's Report

To the AASW Annual General Meeting

Brisbane, Saturday 26 November 2016

This year has certainly been a momentous year. Our Annual Report is an excellent opportunity for members to hear about the projects and campaigns that the Australian Association of Social Workers' (AASW) has undertaken in 2015-16.

We celebrated 70 years of representing the social work profession and grew our membership to 10,000. Reaching the significant member milestone gives us even greater strength to continue our work advocating for the regulation of professional social workers and for better social justice policies and legislative change. A solid membership base also enabled us to deliver ongoing professional development, networking and mentoring opportunities, and to continue to offer our ethics and complaints management collective trademark services. It also strengthened our role with government as its agency responsible for setting Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS) and as the assessor of Accredited Mental Health Social Workers, the latter of which is a role that has enabled a core group of our members to apply for a Medicare Provider Number. A strong membership has also helped us to facilitate and support social work research and employment opportunities.

At 70, the AASW is older than its counterparts in the United States and the United Kingdom. The beginning of our 70th year has seen the creation of new web pages featuring a story about the founding of the AASW, kindly prepared for us by Life Member, Jane Miller AM, member profiles and links to excellent practitioner resources such as the Norma Parker Addresses and the books about social work by John Lawrence and Elspeth Browne. The page also features the 70th anniversary events which will run until December 2016. To mark the anniversary, we also launched a new digital magazine, *Social Work Focus*, which has an exciting new editorial format that has been enthusiastically embraced by members.

Our enhanced policy and advocacy opportunities included being invited to give evidence at numerous government inquiries, such as the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Abuse and participating in child protection reviews like those in Tasmania and South Australia.

We also continued to lead the campaign for the formal registration of social workers on behalf of the profession. This included campaigning for registration with the National Registration Accreditation Scheme (NRAS) and, while we worked towards this goal, participating in the National Alliance of Self Regulating Health Professions (NASHRP) with other allied health professionals in order to demonstrate to the government our commitment to being part of a registration scheme.

Along with seeking registration, the AASW also embarked on an advanced practice credentialing program that aims to certify competent and skilled members working within a particular field of practice. Although we are just beginning this work, we have already determined some of the key practice focus areas, including disability/NDIS, child protection and family violence. As well as credentialing, we continued to roll out the collective trademark as a symbol of practice excellence for members.

The AASW has this year begun a review of the ASWEAS. We manage the standards on behalf of the government to ensure that graduates are adequately prepared for professional social work roles. So far our review, which aims to ensure the ASWEAS remains contemporary and benchmarked against international colleagues and other allied health professions, has consulted with higher education providers and with members. The review will continue in 2016-17, when the revised standards will be presented to the Board.

Key Reports

The AASW has also focused additional resources this year to improving the experience of members. Behind the growth in our membership have been the vital activities of the nine branches that engage directly with members, facilitate continuing professional development and social policy opportunities, and encourage collaborative relationships between members, volunteers and staff.

I look forward to an equally productive 2016-17 and the opportunity to build an even stronger AASW.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cindy Smith".

Cindy Smith, Deputy Chief Executive Officer
on behalf of
Glenys Wilkinson
Chief Executive Officer

Australian Capital Territory Branch

Prepared by Alison McDonald, Acting Branch President and Alara Miller, Branch Office Manager

Our Branch 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 Continuing Professional Development (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 Membership Committee

Our Branch Management Committee (BMC) has done exceptionally well given it has been operating through a time of change. It has been a challenging year with first the Vice-President Michel Hansen leaving the BMC in August 2015, then the President Chandalala Mambwe taking 6 months leave of absence from February 2016. Alison McDonald, who had stepped up into Vice-President role in August 2015 took on the Acting President role in February 2016 and Wendy Rollins became Vice-President. We also had a change of Branch Manager at the end of 2015 with Clare Munro moving on and Alara Miller taking on the role.

There were several new committee members and several resignations of longstanding committee members, which has led to some instability and a need to pull together to keep things going. We have created several sub-committees in order to spread the workload. This has worked well and many people have given generously of their time and energy.

This year, the Branch circulated an Expression of Interest to for students take up specially created student positions on the BMC. Two student representatives were elected however, while they initially attended meetings these representatives have since left the BMC. This is an area for ongoing investigation.

Membership

Over the 2015-16 financial year the Branch has seen a steady increase in membership to 352 in June 2016.

Continuing Professional Development

Despite the disruption we have kept a robust CPD program going with several practice group opportunities. However, the instability has had an impact on the mentoring program, which has been in abeyance.

The CPD committee met at the end of 2015 to plan events for 2016. A range of topics were selected for the popular monthly Rose Garden Seminars at ACU, listed below. Overall, the Branch CPD for 2015-16 has been successful, with only a few minor changes to the planned schedule. We plan to send out a survey at the end of 2016 to get some member feedback and begin planning for 2017.

- *July:* The Place of Community Work in Social Work Practice – 13/07/2015
- *August:* Reflections on a Social Work Career with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) – 10/08/2015
- *September:* Social Work in an NDIS world – 21/09/2015
- *October:* Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction – 19/10/2015
- *November:* Annual Members Meeting – 02/11/2015
- *December:* Christmas Celebration – 07/12/2016
- *February:* ACU orientation speaker
- *April:* Mental Health Act 2015 Changes and their Impact on Social Workers – 18/04/2016
- *May:* The Federal Budget – 16/05/2016
- *June:* 'Selfless – A Social Worker's Own Story of Trauma and Recovery' – 20/06/2016

General Practice Group

The General Practice Group meetings have been well attended during the second half of 2015 and have been run by Belinda Gault since Michel Hansens' resignation as Vice-President. In 2016, Belinda Gault and Kate Haughey have been tasked with the running of the Practice Groups. Due to a slow start to the year, the first Practice Group was not held until July 2016. Next year, we will be looking at increasing

Practice Groups back to bimonthly instead of quarterly. A survey is to be conducted toward the end of 2016 so that the year ahead can be planned better with more member input.

Promoting Social Work

Events

The World Social Work Day Stall Garema Place, held on 15 March this year, was a success for the third year running. We spoke with people about what social work is; the services available, studying to be a social worker and membership of the AASW, with many spending time to read the information available.

The ACT Branch Annual Social Work Dinner was held on Thursday, 19 May at the National Press Club of Australia. The guest speaker was Sarah Wendt, Professor of Social Work at Flinders University, who has written extensively on domestic violence. She presented an overview of the impacts of domestic violence and her ongoing research in the area. The night had a Chinese theme with dancing Chinese dragons as very noisy but amusing entertainment. It was terrific to see so many social workers come together to share stories, network and celebrate social work.

Unfortunately, we had to cancel our planned 70th anniversary event at the National Arboretum due to limited registrations. This was not a result of BMC changes but I think reflects

the current social work environment. It was to be a morning tea during the working week and feedback indicated that many people were unable to get leave from work. We were very disappointed about this due to the excitement and time given in planning.

Newsletter

The Branch's newsletter 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.

Aims for 2016-17

The ACT Branch will continue to provide valuable CPD opportunities in 2017 to all members and the following is a proposed list of strategic priorities:

- Continue to improve local support to members
- Continue to promote the CPD events and General Practice Group
- Review and restart the Mentoring Program to include support for overseas-trained social workers transitioning into the profession in the Australian cultural context
- 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

BMC members have been busy this year, particularly given the absence of paid staff for a significant period of the year. We have focused on reflecting and planning for the future, including bedding down a number of processes. One of our goals has been to engage more with regional members and this has been progressed with a range of initiatives taking place around the state. Our move to new premises in Parramatta has been a big achievement this year.

This year has kept our volunteer Branch Management Committee very busy. Their input has been greatly appreciated, particularly as we have not had any paid staff for the majority of the year. We have been very capably assisted by Branch staff from ACT and Victoria, in particular by Lisa McCarron the amazing membership officer.

This year saw the Branch move to new premises in Parramatta – all who have visited have made positive comments. A big improvement is a lift which makes physical access much easier. The premises are also close to the station and have a parking station a block away. This process took a lot of time from the BMC to ensure that the premises would be able to meet our needs. Hopefully we will finish unpacking soon!

Membership

Despite this challenge, we have continued to grow our membership and we currently have 2323 members, up from 2076 at the same time last year. It has also been a time of reflecting and planning for the direction of the Branch.

Practice Groups

We have focused on developing some new practice groups (Field Education and Self Employed SW) and building relationships with regional members. A new CPD committee has been working to familiarise themselves with the training needs of members and developing processes to ensure transparency in how trainers are selected.

Social Policy and Advocacy

The Branch is represented at a number of forums including:

- NSW Victims of Crime, NSW Children's Court Clinic (Biljana Milosevic)
- ACU Advisory Committee, AASW Education and Standards Committee (Jenny Rose)
- Uni Of Wollongong, IFSW, Korea (Naomi Spencer)

Promoting Social Work

Events

November 2015 saw the AASW National Symposium in Sydney, and this event was supported by the NSW Branch, which also hosted the Board meeting. We also hosted Christine Craik for a constitutional review consultation and Brenda Clare for a consultation with members regarding the ASWEAS review.

In keeping with our aim to engage more with our regional members, World Social Work Day was celebrated in two locations this year, Parramatta and Wagga Wagga, as well as speaking at the Wollongong Hospital celebration. We have also provided visits/talks at Orange, Bathurst and Wyong.

Living Histories

An exciting achievement has been the completion of the first stage of the Living Histories project. This is a collection of interviews with a number of retired social workers and gives an amazing insight into how the profession has developed. This project was the baby of past Branch President Annie Crowe and previous Professional Officer Nives Crvenkovic and is a real credit to their vision and hard work.

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North Queensland Branch

Prepared by Amanda Kruger, Branch President and Sharyn Dei Rossi, Branch Manager

The 2015-2016 financial year has been a busy and productive year for our branch. We continue to foster our relationship with James Cook University and have increased our student and new graduate memberships quite significantly. Our commitment to providing quality CPD Programs is paramount and our CPD calendar for the new financial year is already underway.

Branch Membership Committee

The Branch Management Committee (BMC) Face-To-Face meeting was held on a full day on a Saturday in May. It provided a great opportunity for BMC members to meet and discuss the direction of the Branch for the upcoming year.

The Branch Presidents' Meeting

The President F2F meeting was held in Melbourne this year and was well attended by all of the branches with Ross Murray (Vice-President) representing North Queensland. This was a great opportunity to network between branches and put faces to names from many teleconference meetings.

Branch Managers' Face-to-face Meeting

Sharyn Dei Rossi attended the Branch Manager meeting in Melbourne also, reporting the highlight was also to finally meet other staff members in person and discuss many matters of national and branch interest in an open and friendly environment.

National office informed that membership continues to grow and all branches are contributing. There was discussion around CPD and the introduction of SWOT (social work online training). The AASW NQld Branch have already been utilising this option and have placed training on SWOT with more lined up to do.

Membership

Membership numbers have remained steady throughout the year. The Branch had an increase in the number of members from last year, finishing the year with 308 members in June 2016.

Continuing Professional Development

This past year the branch has held quite a few Continuing Professional Development (CPD) events including Cyber-Safety Training, provided by the Office of e-Children's Commissioner to

provide information and training around the cyber world and dangers involved for families and children. Amanda Nickson, from James Cook University, provided training around 'Supervision', on which she researched for her PhD. A CPD calendar for the new financial year is currently underway.

The Branch has had several events filmed that have been uploaded to the AASW SWOT Centre. This has been an exciting start for the branch in the hope 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.

Networking Groups

Every month at the Branch, network meetings for members and non-members are held. A small fee of \$2 is charged to cover catering costs. These meetings have raised the profile of different fields of practice and have created further interest in the Branch. We have transitioned from general social themed networking, to specific themes and discussions presented by external providers, which have been well received by all.

There have also been other networking meetings taking place across the region, with Branch Membership Committee members Eunice Donovan and now Sandy McCristal organising monthly meets in Mackay, and Paula Christian in the Charters Towers region. These meetings are gaining momentum and are being highly regarded by those who have been attending. Cairns meetings are also on the agenda to take place soon. The meetings have been quite successful, and we are continuing to see interest build in our branch within these areas.

Social Policy and Advocacy

Branch President Amanda Kruger and BMC members Janet King and Emma Small attended the Deadly Families Day Out community event

designed to promote positive happy families and to raise awareness on Domestic Violence and the prevention of Domestic Violence. Amanda Kruger and Emma Small operated a stall at the event that handed out promotional materials for the AASW to members of the community and to other agencies. This raised the profile and interest of the AASW to other community groups who showed some interest from our involvement.

Promoting Social Work

Events

This year the Branch Manager attended both of the James Cook University O-Week Market Stall days and held a stall. Information on the association was provided to students and merchandise was handed out to promote the AASW. The day proved to be quite successful with more than 6 students registering on the day and garnering more interest from others with a view of registering in the near future. A significant event which largely increases awareness of the Association and Branch in the student community.

This year, Ross Murray (Branch Vice President) and Sharyn (Branch Manager) organised a sausage sizzle down by the Strand in Townsville to celebrate World Social Work Day. This event had a decent turn out with lots of positive feedback from the members who attended, even though the weather was quite miserable!

The celebration of the AASW's 70th Anniversary was an exciting night that was presented by the Branch with a lot of hard work and organisation by Sharyn our Branch Manager. It was well attended and held at the Mercure Inn, Townsville. We had a great spread of social workers including retired social workers, currently working in the field across a range of areas, university educators, students and a national board member. Our wonderful guest

speaker of the night, life member Bob Hinds provided us all with an amazing historic journey through the life of the branch. We also had the pleasure of National Board member Anita Phillips attending and providing the group with the current information around registration. A fabulous night was had by all.

'Queensland Social Work' Journal Collaboration

This year has seen the opportunity for North Queensland Branch to combine with the Queensland Branch and contribute to the *Queensland Social Work* publication that has a summer and winter edition. This is another opportunity for our members to have access to a quality publication that showcases social work across the state and to also have their own work published and celebrated.

Relationship with James Cook University

Our continuing support in providing the AASW North Queensland (Townsville, Mackay and Cairns) Prize to the most outstanding student completing year three of the BSW degree is always a very worthwhile cause. Every year a representative from the Branch (Branch Office Manager, President, Vice-President or BMC Members) is asked to attend ceremony to present the prize in person. Always a privilege and a great opportunity in further developing our positive relationship with the university.

We have been invited on a regular basis to speak to students at different year levels of their BSW studies at JCU about the AASW, and the benefits of being an AASW member. The Branch Manager, President and other BMC members have attended classes throughout the university several times over the year to speak with students. This has fostered a healthy and encouraging relationship with the students and the university and has increased our student and new graduate memberships significantly.

Northern Territory Branch

Prepared by Vikki Ann Martin-Moller, Branch President

2015-16 has been a challenging year for the NT branch with having to find alternative accommodation for our branch and losing our Branch Office Manager to new adventures. We have now secured accommodation and have a new office manager in place. We also had a change of President with Jeanne Lorraine retiring to South Australia end of 2015 and Vikki Martin Moller who was the Vice-President taking over. We have a conference being planned for March 2017 to be held in Alice Springs; which is exciting for our branch as this is the first time the branch has held a conference there.

Unfortunately our branch lost its accommodation that was secured with NAPCAN and we were without accommodation for several months. During some of this time Branch Office Manager Cindy Fullerton operated from her own residence, however in December 2015 she resigned to move on to full-time employment. We were without a branch office manager for some time. In May we secured long-term accommodation and then recruited a new Branch Office Manager, Lisa Williams, to commence in June. Lisa is employed for two days per week, one of which is to assist with the conference planning committee and other Continuing Professional Development (CPD) events.

Branch Management Committee

We have a small Branch Management Committee in Darwin and have representatives from our regional areas in Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs who phone in for our monthly meetings. We work very closely with Charles Darwin University and have a representative on the BMC from the university, Professor Elaine Nuske. We were pleased to hear that the university has after much work within their facility been successful in their accreditation via AASW for a further five years.

Membership

The Branch had a total of 151 members as at September 2016. This is broken down into the membership types:

- Full fee: – 100 (66%)
- Full fee: No insurance – 3 (2%)
- Fully retired: – 2 (1%)
- New graduate: – 16 (11%)
- Reduced fee: – 20 (13%)
- Student: Already eligible – 2 (1%)
- Student: Qualifying – 8 (6%)

Continuing Professional Development

Recently one of our BMC members Meryl Gee produced a webinar session on sexual abuse, which had good response and is now available for on line training. Sadly she is moving onto a new career in Queensland so has had to resign from our BMC; we will miss her valuable contribution. We have a member Pamela Trotman who will be presenting to the branch a session and discussion around a recent paper that was produced by the Larrakia Nation on issues for Indigenous persons living in Darwin. This presentation will be in conjunction with our annual members meeting on 5 November. Pamela was on the national RAP committee and is passionate about Indigenous issues.

Promoting Social Work

Events

This year for International Social Work Day in March there were events held in Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs and Darwin where cakes were cut and it was great opportunity for networking among agencies and workers.

We have a very active conference planning committee in Alice Springs working hard on our next biannual conference. The conference 'Dust, Diversity & Dedication' will be held 20–22 March 2017. The main emphasis will be on social work in remote areas and Indigenous social work practices.

Another activity we have planned is the Mary Moylan Social Worker of the Year award in November. This award recognises a social worker in the NT that has contributed in some way towards better services for the Northern Territory and made a significant difference. The branch will also be holding its annual members meeting on 5 November where the AASW CEO will be in attendance and it is hoped to have this video-conferenced to sites in Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs.

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Queensland Branch

Prepared by Fotina Hardy, President

The 2015-16 financial year has been yet another intense year as the Branch has worked hard to deliver on our commitment to meeting the needs of our members and those we serve. Core to our work is our commitment to social advocacy and human rights as we strive to name and address structural inequality and support our members who every day do the extraordinary. We thank you all for your support. In particular I would like to thank the Branch Management Committee for their passion and commitment and the dedicated staff, Mere Vitale and Rachel Austin.

This has been an incredibly tumultuous time in our world, both in south-east Queensland and the world generally. It has been a stark reminder that social workers with our unique focus on social justice, human rights and advocacy is so essential.

The Queensland South East Branch has continued to be focused on supporting our members and the people we all serve through the following key areas:

- Social policy and advocacy
- Delivering local professional development
- Promoting the role and work of social workers through annual events
- Supporting and growing our practice groups
- Supporting our emerging student practitioners.

We have reviewed the work of the branch over the last five years and the findings highlight the commitment of our members and branch staff and voluntary committee:

- The Branch has grown from 993 members in July 2011 to 1962 in July 2016 – a 98% increase
- We have increased the annual number of social policy or advocacy actions by 367%
- Delivery of CPD has increased by 258%
- Active Practice Groups have increased from 1 to 10, a wonderful achievement. These vary from area specific, for example Disability Practice Group to location specific, for example the Toowoomba Practice Group.

Social Policy and Advocacy

Over the last 12 months the Branch has delivered the following:

- AASW (Qld) submission to the Sexual Assault Counselling Privilege Consultation, Queensland Government
- AASW (Qld) submission to the Domestic and Family Violence Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016
- Inquiry into Abortion Law Reform Bill and laws governing termination of pregnancy in Queensland
- AASW (Qld) submission to the Inquiry on a Human Rights Act for Queensland
- AASW (Qld) submission on the Mental Health Bill 2015
- AASW (Qld) submission on the Multicultural Recognition Bill 2015
- AASW (Qld) submission on the ASWEAS review
- Media release on the return of children to Nauru and Manus Islands
- Media release on the Queensland Government's decision to remove 17 year olds from adult prisons
- Providing Letters of Support for the funding of Sisters Inside Inc. and WWILD Sexual Violence Prevention Association.

The Branch was invited to provide evidence to two Parliamentary Inquiries: the Human Rights Bill and Abortion Law Reform Bill, further demonstrating the role that we play as a key stakeholder in policy formation.

In February 2016 the Branch was invited to speak at a rally in support of Baby Asha and to oppose the government decision to return her to Nauru. It was an excellent opportunity to support our Queensland Health colleagues and, as President, I was honoured and privileged to represent social work and the Association.

The Branch also marched at the March 2016 Palm Sunday Rally in support of refugees and asylum seekers, yet again ensuring social work

was represented in advocating for more just policies regarding refugees and asylum seekers.

Promoting Social Work

The Branch hosted Genevieve Burnett, a social work student from Central Queensland University, in the first semester this year. Genevieve was instrumental in our history of social work project and spent much time going through the rich archives we hold in the office, finding some gems that demonstrate the passion that social workers in our branch have for social policy and advocacy.

As part of our 70th Anniversary celebrations, the Queensland Branch is undertaking a photographic showcase titled '70 Faces/70 Stories', which will feature 70 social workers from across the Queensland Branch, capturing the reality and diversity of social workers in our communities. We are actively encouraging members to participate in this project to capture the faces and stories of our amazing colleagues who everyday do the extraordinary in their work.

The Branch launched our Facebook page in August 2016, which has proven to be an effective way to connect with members in the moment and in particular to share important information about media alerts and policy issues.

Student University Awards

The Branch has historically recognised and celebrated student achievements through their university-specific award programs. In 2015-16 we were delighted to present awards to students from Griffith University, Australian Catholic University, Brisbane and Queensland University of Technology. The award category is decided on by the university and it has been our pleasure to be present at these important events.

Universities are key stakeholders in for our branch as the educators of future social work practitioners. As such we are committed to developing our relationships with the Schools of Social Work and representatives from the Student and New Graduate Network. Over the last year the Branch has attempted to present at each of the universities and participate in invited activities. In November 2015 prior to our Annual Meeting we hosted a roundtable of Discipline Heads from the universities to discuss key issues, concerns and ways forward.

Our Student and New Graduate Network (SNGN) has been a key strategy to link in with the student body. The committee consists of membership from each of the universities. The SNGN has been really successful in hosting cross institutional education seminars for students over the last year, showing their passion, creativity and commitment.

Events

A most successful World Social Work Day in March was hosted by Griffith University. This was the launch of our 70 Faces/70 Stories project. The event consisted of a panel discussion where five social workers shared their experiences and key messages to an audience of 95. This was a stimulating evening where we heard about social work in the early days of the profession through the wonderful Roslyn Hughes, working towards the current experiences of student Ellen Beaumont. The Branch thanks all our speakers, which also included Salam El Merebi and Fadekemi Banji-Oke.

On 19 November 2015 the Branch hosted our annual meeting, following the meeting with university stakeholders. A highlight of the meeting was our collective commitment to campaign for a Human Rights Bill in Queensland, with our guest speaker Amy McVeigh.

Planning is well underway for the Queensland Conference, to be held 25 November 2016, with a dedicated working group consisting of representatives from both branches and national office. Rachel and Mere in the office have been the key event organisers and we are excited at our program.

South Australia Branch

Prepared by Mary Hood, Branch President

We have had a busy and productive year in SA Branch. The SA Social Worker of the Year awards was a successful new initiative and highlight. We continue to develop good links with high-level decision makers in government and other agencies and have been pleased with our increased media presence on issues for social workers and their clients.

It has been a busy and successful year for the South Australian Branch. I thank our staff, students on placement and all the volunteers on projects and committees for their terrific efforts in all areas. Our Committees (Branch Management, Continuing Professional Development, Social Justice, and Ethics) continue to plan and enable the bedrock services of the Branch to be successfully delivered.

Miriam and Carolyn our Branch Office staff provide a wonderfully knowledgeable, effective and professional underpinning for all we have accomplished and we thank them heartily.

Membership

From a total of 794 members in June 2015 we have seen an increase of more than 150 during the 2015-16 year. We have now reached a milestone of 1,000 members, a first for the Branch.

Continuing Professional Development

Throughout the year we offered 15 CPD events providing development opportunities to close to 250 participants across a range of topics. In June, we made a regional visit to Mount Gambier, with three successful half-day CPD workshops offered and a networking dinner in which our newest AASW Life Member, Viv Maher, was celebrated. Our intention is to circulate to other regions in turn.

Social Policy and Advocacy

The Nyland Royal Commission on Child Protection Systems in South Australia this year has focused attention on child protection and also on social workers. The Branch made submissions and commented in the media on points as they were raised. We have had a few members trained in media presentations, and achieved a number of radio interviews and quick comments in TV news programs. The feedback is that members appreciate knowing we are out there and involved. We have developed good

links with Families SA (the child protection agency in SA) and have regular meetings in which we discuss CPD support, credentialing, etc.

We also have good links into SA Health, which is the largest employer of social workers in the state, attending a number of regular meetings around allied health and social work. Funding for provision of support services is changing and we are endeavoring to keep connected with the three developing Primary Health Networks in SA (Adelaide PHN being the largest) the NDIS and Aged Care. We have an active group of private practitioners who alert us to the emerging issues for contractors and clients in this new space.

Links are also well established with the two SA universities with social work programs. We are part of a planning group with them for a symposium on 'Social Work Futures' in 2017. We endeavor to link with the student bodies by offering career information nights and campus visits.

As President I have linked with other Branch Presidents and Board members through phone meetings and a face-to-face meeting in May. I have also worked with national committees on health social work and Allied Health, advocacy for registration of the profession and on membership.

We have been able to offer four student placements in the Branch Office over the past year. Projects have included; links with international students, private practice social work issues, the social work awards, and history of SA social work. This has been enjoyable and productive for us and student feedback has been good.

Promoting Social Work

Events

This year for the first time we held the SA Social Worker of the Year awards with 5 categories; Inspiring Leader, Practitioner, Rural and The

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Remote, Change Agent, Rising Star, culminating in a dinner with presentations. The key result was promotion of the profession and our connection with so many non-members who saw the AASW in a different light.

We are marking the 70th anniversary of the Association with a history gathering program on social workers in SA. Two students on placement have interviewed social workers on their careers, and we are gathering short video snapshots of what is important to social workers. Celebrations culminate with a birthday party at the Annual SA Members Meeting.

Tasmania Branch

Prepared by Allyson Smith, Branch President

In 2015-16 the Tasmanian Branch has welcomed a significant number of new members. The Branch offered opportunities for members to attend quality Continuing Professional Development events, regional networking group meetings, peer support groups, consultative forums and to have input into social policy advocacy. Committee members represented the Branch on national and state committees and contributed to AASW and external policy forums and consultations.

Branch Membership Committee

In November 2015 long-serving committee member and former Vice-President Anthea Vreugdenhil retired from the committee along with general members Hui-Yu Yao and Leonie Hannam. Branch Vice-President David Gould was elected to the National Board and 2015 Student Liaison and Committee Member Tahlia White resigned in May 2016. The Branch thanks all these members for their commitment and voluntary service to the Branch. New committee members for 2015-16 were Ella Little, Jocelyn Walter-Jones, Torna Pitman and Claire Bryant. Russell McCashney was elected as Branch Vice-President.

Membership

Membership of the Branch has continued to grow from 291 financial members in June 2015 to 348 financial members at 30 June 2016. This is the largest number of members for the Tasmanian Branch since its formation. The Committee is particularly pleased to note the growth in our retention of previous student members who transitioned in 2015 to new graduate membership. Some 40% of the Branch's members in 2015-16 were students and new graduates.

Continuing Professional Development

Two major events were held during the year. In September 2015 our statewide event in Campbell Town delivered a fascinating day of learning to 110 social workers on Family Violence. In May 2016 the Branch partnered with the Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner to provide free seminars on digital youth culture, cyberbullying, and strategies for working with young people in Hobart, Launceston and Devonport.

The Branch President and Vice-President continued the popular annual Roadshow to the regional networking groups to meet members, discuss strategic directions and canvas social work issues around the state. Some of the other speakers and topics this year have been:

- John Lennox – Restorative Practices
- Glenys Wilkinson AASW CEO and Barbara Moerd National Director – registration, trademark, national issues and strategies
- Thích Thông Pháp (Thay) – Mindfulness and Self-Care for social workers
- Christine Hiltner – Mindfulness; application to critical reflection and supervision
- Fiona Girkin – Beyond the Numbers: Measuring Outcomes in Social Work Practice
- Trista Cocker – NAPCAN presentation
- Norman Reed – Supporting Children and Families of Prisoners
- Michelle Nicholson – Celebrating and Owning the Science of Social Work.

Practice Groups

The Regional Networking Groups have continued to flourish in 2015-16. The Launceston dinner meetings continued to be popular attracting new members to the guest speaker series. The North West group showed a significant growth in attendance with lunchtime meetings of up to 25 people, while the Southern group continued to meet monthly for guest presentations but occasionally struggled for numbers. The groups have been facilitated by Karen Ritchie in the north-west, Russell McCashney, Anna Lovitt and Stewart Millar in the north, and Jacqui Russell and Sebrina Brennan in the south.

Social Policy and Advocacy

Tasmanian Branch community involvement:

- TasCOSS Regional Stakeholder meetings – Karen Ritchie and Russell McCashney
- Medicare Benefits Schedule Review: Health professionals group consultation with Professor Bruce Robinson, Chair of the MBS Taskforce – Russell McCashney
- Primary Health Tasmania (PHT) Allied Health Steering Committee – Russell McCashney. Networking advice and consultation with PHT; review of services following transition from direct service provision to contracted private services by tender process; and development of state allied health network
- Tasmanian Health Service Public Health Forum with State Minister Michael Ferguson and CEO David Alcorn – Russell McCashney.

The Tasmanian Branch continued to build relationships with government and was involved in submitting several major responses to consultations:

- Submission on the Draft Commissioner for Children and Young People Bill 2015. Invited to submit by DHHS following the branch's 2013 submission Response to the Legislative Amendment Review Reference Committee Discussion Paper: Advocacy for Children in Tasmania.
- Submission to the Premier on Family Violence Screening in Emergency Departments
- Consultation with The Premier's Office and the Tasmanian Government's Family Violence Cross-agency Working Group, responsible for the work behind Safe Homes, Safe Families: Tasmanian's Family Violence Action Plan 2015–2020.
- Tasmanian Government's Supporting Families and Keeping Children Safe Forum December 2015 industry consultation with The Child Protection Redesign Reference Group.

Russell McCashney is the AASW national representative on the Department of Veterans' Affairs Review of Dental and Allied Health Arrangements; Mental Health Working Group. The group reviews fees and processes of provision of mental health services by medical and allied health professionals to eligible veterans.

Promoting Social Work

Events

Tasmanian social workers celebrated World Social Work Day 2016 around the state with breakfasts in Ulverstone and Hobart. The northern networking group partnered with the Launceston General Hospital Social Work Department to host an all-comers BBQ and display at the hospital.

The 2015 Annual Dinner was held at The Northern Club in Launceston in October. Members enjoyed canapés and drinks followed by brief presentations by Committee members showcasing the Branch's achievements of the year. Guest presenter Professor Karen Healy spoke on social work practice in child protection. Her overview of the history of this area of practice in Australia gave attendees important context to a contemporary issue.

Student Engagement Strategy

The Branch continued its student engagement strategy with a focus on establishing student representatives at the three University of Tasmania campuses. The Branch thanks Tahlia White, Sebrina Brennan and Tina Walker for their assistance in organising student events, providing membership information and promoting branch events and opportunities. Successful coffee meetings, and pre-placement and end-of-year celebrations were hosted by the AASW with the support of our student representatives.

The Branch attended the Open Day at the UTAS Cradle Coast campus.

An increased attendance of students at branch networking and CPD events was observed during the year.

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Karen Ritchie and Laine Willis introduced a pilot peer support program in the north-west of the state with new graduate students that proved very successful.

The AASW UTAS Social Work Student of the Year Award was awarded to Matthew Williamson. 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. Matthew was presented with his award certificate, prize of \$200 and one year's membership of AASW at the World Social Work Day breakfast in Ulverstone.

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Victoria Branch

Prepared by Olga Goutras, Branch Vice-President and Rosanna Di Grazia, Administration Officer

The past year has been a busy one. Membership numbers have continued to increase significantly and our CPD program has grown and remains a vital component of our Branch. We are delighted to now have both a Branch Office Administrator and Professional Officer as this enables us to continue to improve our work and offer valued events and services to our members. We have continued to build on our work, strengthening the connections with members through our Practice Groups. Our student and new graduate programs continue to grow and develop and are integral to our connection with students and universities.

Membership

We are delighted with our increase in membership numbers again this year. There was a total of 2771 members at the end of the financial year, representing 28% of all AASW members nationally. We have consistently maintained our membership at well over 2200 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.

Continuing Professional Development

Our continuing professional development program for 2015-16, developed by our dedicated CPD Committee, was based on our CPD Survey and other member feedback. This information enabled us to offer relevant CPD throughout the year to best meet the learning needs of our members. The program included training and information sessions in:

- Cultural competency
- Supervision skills
- Privacy & confidentiality
- Student & new graduate seminars
- Mindfulness
- Collaborative partnerships in schools
- Mental health
- NDIS

Feedback from the CPD sessions was generally very positive and is used to assist with future program planning.

Practice Groups

We currently have 12 active AASW Practice Groups that work closely with us to provide specific CPD events and support the Branch in our advocacy endeavours.

- Health Social Work Director's Group
- School Social Work Practice Group
- Rural Social Work Action Group
- Social Work Education Practice Group
- Victorian Mental Health Social Workers
- Social Work Aged Services Practice Group
- Women's Health Practice Group
- Green Social Work Network
- Barwon Region Practice Group (New)
- OSWA VIC Practice Group (New)
- Family Violence Practice Group (New)
- Individual Funding Practice Group (New).

These practice groups are supported by the Branch to enable them to offer CPD events for members. This year these events included workshops, conferences, and symposiums by all AASW practice groups with the exception of the Social Work Education Practice Group and Women's Health Practice Group.

During 2015-16:

- 4 practice groups were approved
- 2 became inactive: South West Victorian Social Work Network Practice Group and the Cancer Social Work Practice Group
- 8 expressions of interest were received from practice groups interested in affiliating with the Branch. These include: Regional Private, Child Protection, Yoga and Social Work, Neonatal, Western Region, International Social Workers, Dispute Resolution and Greater Murray Region & Shepparton.

Social Policy and Advocacy

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:

- Media Release (28 April 2016) Victorian Budget: a Landmark Investment in Addressing Family Violence: AASW
- Submission to the Review of the Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework in Victoria (May 2016)
- VCOSS Consultation on Housing for People with a Disability (February 2016)
- VCOSS Consultation on the National Disability Advocacy Program (May 2016).

Promoting Social Work

Events

The 2015 AGM was held on the 29 October 2015 in conjunction with two pre-AGM concurrent workshops: 1) *Criminalising Family Violence: Development of a New Statute* and 2) *Silenced and Invisible: Giving Children a Voice in the Court System*. Sixty people attended and were rewarded with an engaging presentation from guest speaker, the Hon. Marsha Thomson MP.

The Branch held its annual World Social Work Day Breakfast at the Studley Park Boathouse again in March this year. The breakfast event was attended by 70 social workers, a 21% increase on the previous year. The guest speaker was Professor Cathy Humphreys, who presented on the intersections between social justice, social work and domestic violence. This was very well received with many questions raised and much discussion among the audience.

The 12th Biennial Rural Social Work Conference was held on 31 July 2015 (90 registrations) and the AMHSW Conference on 4 June 2016 (124 registrations).

Student and New Graduate Program

The Branch organised and planned for a three-part student and new graduates seminar series. This was highly successful with more than 100

students participating, resulting in new memberships and profit for the Branch.

Publications

The Victorian Branch produces a general e-newsletter which is sent to members at the end of each month and also a quarterly CPD-specific e-news. *Social Work Connect* is produced three times per year and is distributed to members throughout Victoria. Hard copies ceased and copies are now available electronically. We continue to provide hard copies to members who request this or do not have computer access (approx 20 members).

The Lyra Taylor Fund

The Lyra Taylor Fund was established by the Victorian Branch and is administered to:

1. Advance education in relation to social work by:
 - Promoting, improving and maintaining standards of professional practice, education and research
 - Establishing and maintaining continuing professional education opportunities for members
 - Educating and informing the public and community institutions as to the aims and objectives of professional social work
2. Encourage and financially support special projects that will benefit the community.

The Committee considered a number of proposals and were impressed with the quality of the applications received. Inez Chambers received funding for her project: *70th Anniversary – Web-based Biographies of the Victorian Life Members of the AASW*.

Aims for 2016-17

The Victorian Branch Management Committee has committed to:

- Continue to develop opportunities for social workers in rural and remote areas through rural CPD events and improving IT connections for access to CPD
- Continue to enhance and improve our CPD program
- Improve our connections with university schools of social work

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- Continue our work with students and new graduate social workers
- Piloting an Early Career Social Worker Mentoring Program
- Increase commitment to advocacy and social policy
- Develop a plan to support the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)
- Create and host a Rewards and Recognitions event.

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, Life Members, Branch Administration Officer and Professional Officer. We look forward to ongoing growth and success in 2017.

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Western Australia Branch

Prepared by Sabina Leitmann, Branch President

The past year has been one of consolidation and growth for the Western Australian Branch. Investing in our future has been central to many Branch activities to meet the needs of a growing membership. We sought to promote the profession widely through the Social Worker of the Year Awards; to advocate for social workers and the people they serve and to tailor professional development for a changing practice landscape. Working locally with Indigenous social workers, progress was made operationalising the AASW Reconciliation Action Plan. The Branch office has been restructured with the appointment of a professional officer as Branch Manager and an administrative assistant to enhance the Branch's capacity.

Branch Administration

The WA Branch Management Committee (BMC) meets monthly to respond to local issues, review existing activities and develop new initiatives. The Branch is supported by the equivalent of one fulltime staff – a Branch Manager three days and Administrative Assistant two days per week. We farewelled Branch Manager Sophie Mason who resigned in November after more than 7 years of dedicated service, and welcomed Charmaine Lobo into a reconfigured Branch Manager position. Charmaine is a social worker also experienced in business management and will be supported by an administrative assistant in the coming year.

Membership

Increased resources to support Branch operation have been achieved through sustained membership growth over the previous six years. Encouragingly this year saw a 10% membership increase to over 900 Branch members. This was achieved through national and local efforts to reach out to prospective as well existing members. The challenge will be to maintain and to continue to grow the membership.

Continuing Professional Development

The CPD program is overseen by the Branch Manager with the goal of sponsoring an event per month. Thirteen CPD events were delivered ranging from policy related issues such as the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse and Innovations in Human Service Delivery to practice-focused issues such as Victim Awareness Training and Meet the Employer for new graduates.

Regrettably some CPD events were cancelled due to low registrations. We are aware the present work context makes it more difficult for

social workers to attend CPD and the CPD marketplace is more competitive. The question remains how to meet this challenge? Another conundrum is how to deliver more CPD to rural and remote areas of the state. New technologies need to be tapped to address this.

The Branch also works collaboratively to support events outside the auspices of the AASW. Each year we co-host the Grace Vaughan Memorial Lecture with the University of Western Australia and the WA Department of Local Government and Communities. The 2016 speaker Dorinda Cox, a Noongar (Aboriginal) woman spoke eloquently on alternate routes to responding to Indigenous domestic violence.

Practice Groups

The Branch accepts invitations from social workers across a diversity of organisations to speak on matters pertinent to the profession. We have provided support and advocacy to social workers experiencing the consequences of organisational change, in particular in the hospital setting such as Bentley and Fiona Stanley hospitals.

Practice Groups are a focal point for social workers to come together around shared professional interests. There are seven practice groups:

Eco-social Work Practice Group – Convener Susan Bailey

Field Education Practice Group – Convener Kate Duncanson

Great Southern Social Work Practice Group – Convener Sheree Bootes

Midwest AASW Practice Group – Convener May Doncon

New Graduates Practice Group – Convener Sarah Mitchell

Private Practitioners Practice Group – Convener Rosemarie Robertson

Schools and Social Work Practice Group – Convener Susan Young

Over the year some practice groups have been more active than others. Groups rely on volunteer availability and commitment, which varies over time. Some groups are regional such as the Great Southern and Mid West focusing on local CPD issues. Others such as Eco Social Work and Schools and Social Work focus on specific areas of practice and this year both have undertaken research to advance social work practice in their field. Schools and Social Work group has also engaged in a grass roots strategies to successfully expand the role of social workers in state schools. Practice groups such as Field Education, New Graduates and Private Practice meet the needs of particular social work roles or demographics.

A thank you goes to Mary O'Brien, convener of the Private Practice Group, and Sarah Mitchell, the inaugural convener of the New Graduates Practice Group, both of whom have stepped down as conveners.

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 has been less active this year. Group members participated in the WACOSS Industry Leaders Forum and WACOSS Pre State Budget Consultation Forum. Members also participated in the WA Partnerships Forum hosted by the State Government and the Community Sector to showcase and explore the challenges of working in partnership across the sector. The Group will come together again prior to the March 2017 State election to plan lobbying strategies on key matters impacting on social work and their clients.

Reconciliation Action Plan

The Branch has made progress implementing the AASW Reconciliation Action Plan. Working with Noongar social worker Dr Michael Wright and Department for Child Protection and Family Support we have developed a training workshop

for social work leaders that challenges taken for granted 'colonialist practices' and works with Noongar elders to effectively rethink practice to deliver the best outcomes for Aboriginal families and children. The workshop will be delivered in August 2016.

Promoting Social Work

Over the past year we have strengthened relationships with the Department of Child Protection and Family Support and the Social Work Managers in Health Group. The Branch continues to maintain close connections with the universities as a member of their advisory boards and meets regularly with social work students.

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 seventh year. The Awards ceremony in May 2016 was an inspirational night celebrating what is best about the profession. The Hon. Andrea Mitchell, Minister for Mental Health and Child Protection, gave the opening address and Stephan Lund from Wansela Family Services was announced the 2016 Social Worker of the Year.

Communicating and Engaging with Members

The monthly Branch e-Newsletter is the primary communication method with members and based on feedback is much appreciated.

Acknowledgements

Over my six years as Branch President I have seen the Branch grow in members, capacity and vision. These achievements are the result of the dedicated work of the BMC, AASW staff, Practice Groups, the Board of Directors and members who supported the Branch. I would like to particularly acknowledge Nic Hastings-James who retires after having served on the BMC for 12 years as Branch President and ordinary member. The time has come for me to retire as Branch President and hand the baton to a new leadership group to take the Branch to new horizons. May they be worthy 'disrupters'.

National Ethics Panel

Prepared by Bruce Hart, Senior Manager Professional Standards

The National Ethics Panel (NEP) is the Board-appointed panel responsible for overseeing the Ethics Complaints Management Process.

The Ethics Complaints Management Process (ECMP) 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 (ECMP) 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 ECMP is managed by the Senior Manager Professional Standards and complaints are 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.

Unfortunately examples of harm caused by social workers strengthen the case for registration of social work. Just under half of enquiries received regarding a potential complaint were unable to proceed to become a complaint 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 2015-2016

20 complaints received:

- 12 inquiries about complaint were received, information sent about the complaints process and with no formal complaint being submitted
- 4 complaints were received and sent to respective member for a response

- 3 complaints were waiting for finalisation of information 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
- 3 complaints or enquiries received and waiting for clearance from family court
- 1 complaint received waiting for coroners court proceedings to be finalized.

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 Registration Taskforce

Prepared by Anita Phillips, Chair

The Registration Task Force continued to meet over the past 12 months, often in response to information as to what was happening within National Registration and Accreditation Scheme and possible opportunities for the AASW to pursue inclusion in the national scheme. Particular thanks are extended to this valiant group, which has continued with dogged determination to achieve statutory registration for social workers.

Inclusion of social workers in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS) again was placed on the agenda when on 4 April this year, the COAG Health Council (CHC) Ministers voted to refer the inclusion of social workers to the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council (AHMAC) for further work and advice. The vote was in response to a motion put by the South Australian Minister for Health, Jack Snelling. This was not the first time our profession has been referred, however there is renewed optimism that this referral may receive serious consideration.

The NRAS scheme was subjected to an extensive review 3 years after instigation, which was released in August 2015. In that the health ministers decided 'to defer consideration with regard to admitting any other professions into NRAS, at least until administrative and financial/resource issues of the scheme were addressed'. However, at their next meeting in November 2015, the health ministers discussed options for registering paramedics, a proposal that had also been in discussion prior to the review. On a majority vote, 'the meeting agreed to move towards a national registration of paramedics to be included in the NRAS, with work [in relation to this] to come back to AHMAC for consideration'. So the fact that they were open to accepting new professions into NRAS gave the AASW renewed hope, and the AASW kept up its persistent lobbying.

Following on from a tragic situation, the death of little Chloe Valentine, the South Australian coroner included a recommendation, among others, that 'a measure be introduced that provides for registration of social workers'. The AASW successfully lobbied Minister Snelling to take the motion for registration to the CHC when it met in April 2016. The result was a good outcome in that the majority of Health Ministers voted 'to refer the inclusion of social workers to

the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council (AHMAC), for further work and advice back to ministers at a future meeting'. The wording is very similar to the referral of paramedics and so, optimistically, we might conclude that we are to be considered similarly.

The AASW then set about developing a strategic campaign for action to support the inclusion of AASW.

- The first was to work with the agency charged with producing the submission to go to AHMAC. SA Health was requested to prepare the submission and the AASW worked closely with them
- The submission was presented to the Health Workforce Principal Committee of AHMAC. This would probably be referred with a recommendation from that committee directly to AHMAC, which would in turn present their recommendation to the Health Minister (CHC). However, the federal election intervened and we have not been able to find out where the submission is currently at
- Nonetheless, the campaign went into action commencing with lobbying health ministers to get them to support the inclusion in NRAS when the submission came to them to decide. Our plan was to ask AASW members to write to their local (State or Territory) member in the electorate where they lived, informing them of the campaign for inclusion and asking their member to forward a letter to the relevant State or Territory minister asking them to support social work registration when the issue came up at their meeting
- We are also planning to contact Heads of Health Departments (AHMAC Members) and Health Department Allied

Health Directors. All AASW members will be encouraged to be strategically involved in lobbying. The AASW will produce a one-page information sheet that includes a brief history, why social workers must be registered and a 'call to arms'. Many are employed in the health sector where they can be particularly active by having conversations with other staff, including senior managers. This can be done informally as well as formally, for example, bringing the issue up at staff meetings and sharing opinions over a coffee, so that all health sites become aware of the issue.

Reconciliation Action Plan Taskforce

Prepared by Cindy Smith, Deputy CEO

This year the AASW began work on developing our 2016-2018 Reconciliation Action Plan. The task group in charge of its development was formed in March 2016 and met periodically for three to four months. The development and implementation of the RAP will be overseen by a RAP Taskforce, a sub-committee of the AASW Board. Our RAP is a great opportunity to move forward together in the spirit of reconciliation and solidarity.

The three year Reconciliation Action Plan concluded last 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 has continued to take a public and open stand on many significant matters throughout the year, including condemning unjust Government policies. Furthermore, we have continued to significantly raise the profile of Indigenous issues across all our media: website, eBulletin, Facebook and National Bulletins.

This year the AASW began work on developing our Reconciliation Action Plan for the 2016-2018 period. The new AASW RAP continues to recognise the special place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians. It also intends to demonstrate respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing through incorporation into social work theory and practice. The RAP sets out to facilitate social workers becoming better informed about working with First Australians to achieve the provision of culturally competent, safe and sensitive practice. Our first Reconciliation Action Plan was produced in line with the goals of Reconciliation Australia and launched in November 2013. Since then we have led and supported reconciliation within our sphere of influence to increase the Australian social work profession's understanding of the histories and culture of the First Australians, celebrate their achievements and resilience and to develop meaningful relationships founded on respect. We see our RAP as a great opportunity to move forward together in the spirit of reconciliation and solidarity, for a more just Australia.

The RAP Taskforce was formed in March 2016 and began meeting to develop the new plan. Members of the group included AJ Williams-Tchen, David Michie, Donna Broadhurst, Jennie

Charlton, Pamela Trotman and representatives from the AASW. The group consulted with AASW members asking them to share their experiences and thoughts on the previous plan, including identifying possible future actions. The Taskforce met regularly during the second half of the year with the aim of reviewing the work done so far, and proposing a set of objectives and strategies to be included in the new version. In response to member feedback, the taskforce has also sought to make the new RAP more visual and accessible. The Taskforce is continuing to work on the plan with the final version presented to the Board in the first half of the next financial year.

Australian College of Social Work Steering Committee

Prepared by Sharon McCallum, Chair

The Steering Committee has continued to work with the AASW Board and staff to further develop the ACSW and this has resulted in marked growth in membership over the year. This year our work has focused on key areas of membership growth, developing the Clinical Division and the Leadership and Governance Community of Practice, further reviewing membership levels and entry requirements, and governance and strategic direction. We have held monthly teleconferences with a high level of telephone calls and email traffic between meetings. Increased support from the National Office has been forthcoming as the College continues to grow.

The annual face-to-face meeting of the Steering Committee was held in February. At that meeting Lesley Chenoweth and Carmel Flaskas stepped down; and Sharon McCallum was appointed Chair and Kerry Pennell as Co-Chair.

The Clinical Division of the College was launched at the Symposium last year and Wendy Bunston was announced as the Convenor. Wendy resigned in February and Geraldene Mackay was appointed Convenor in February. The position of Convenor is vacant and an EOI is scheduled for release in the week of 3 October.

A one-off opportunity was made available to AMHSWs to join the College and have their application fee waived. This resulted in nearly 200 applications and the Clinical Division membership now stands at approximately 280 members. Prior to her resignation, Geraldene has begun a blog and was formulating an Advisory Group. This work will be continued by the next Convenor.

The rapid growth of the Clinical Division resulted in an unprecedented workload for the Committee and the National Office. The workload will continue to be high and in August the Board made a decision to allocate more resources, through the National Office, to support the administrative work of the Committee. This is gratefully received by the Committee.

A Leadership and Governance Community of Practice was begun in February and it is convened by Sharon McCallum. There are currently nine members. The group has quarterly teleconferences to discuss issues in relation to leadership and governance. The group uses "Conversation Starters" which are written by members and discussed via email and at teleconferences. Contact details have been exchanged between members with an open offer

of support by telephone or email between members; and a definition of social work leadership is being developed.

Membership in the College has continued to grow, albeit slowly apart from the Clinical Division. We hope to increase the profile and membership of the College by communicating more often and perhaps having an appearance at the next Symposium. Current membership is 281. In the past year 233 of members have come through Pathway A; and only 1 through Pathway B. It has recently been decided that perhaps the process for Pathway B is too onerous and the questions in the application template too repetitive and this is currently being reviewed.

There are currently two vacancies on the Steering Committee and it is possible that the membership of the Board could increase, leading to more people on the Committee and a further spread of workload. An Expression of Interest for the two current vacancies, and possibly one or two more members will go out sometime in October.

Other matters attended to since the last report are:

- Updating of the website;
- The approval of the Board of the membership category "Fellow";
- A decision to not have any more webcasts or podcasts due to the low take-up rate by College members;
- Ongoing work on Pathway B into the College;
- The release of two College Communiqués as a way to keep College members informed; and
- Development of a draft Work Plan to guide the Committee.

Australian Social Work Editorial Board

Prepared by Rosalie Pockett, A/Chair Editorial Board, Reviews Editor *Australian Social Work*

This year the Editorial Board was deeply saddened by the sudden and unexpected death of the Chair, Dr Bruce Lord in April. Contingency planning to ensure the ongoing smooth operation of the work of the Editorial Board and the Journal has included the Editor, Professor Mark Hughes extending his editorship to June 2017 and Rosalie Pockett stepping into the A/Chair role. A second Assoc. Editor position has been established and filled by Dr Mary Whiteside. Five new members have joined the Editorial Board reinvigorating the intellectual scholarship required for the continuing advancement of the Journal. The Journal has continued to improve its position as a leading national and international social work journal and looks forward to recruiting and transitioning a new Editor and Editorial Board Chair in 2017.

Submissions, acceptance rates and publications

The journal metrics are analysed on a calendar year basis and reviewed at the major annual meeting of the Editorial Board in January each year. In 2015 a total of 231 manuscripts were managed including new and revised papers. New manuscripts received totaled 126 compared with 117 in 2014. This continues the overall trend in recent years of a steady increase in new submissions.

In 2015 the Journal published a total of 30 original articles, 4 Practice, Policy & Perspectives papers, 15 Book Reviews, 4 Editorials and 2 Letters to the Editor. Statistics for final decisions made during the year were 45% accepted; 37.6% rejected and 17.4% rejected with the option of resubmission. The Journal would be unable to fulfill its mission without the support of a large number of reviewers. In 2015 303 people were invited to review manuscripts and 186 (61.4%) agreed to review. 257 reviews were completed with an average turnaround of 21 days.

Impact Factor and ranking

Australian Social Work received an ISI Impact Factor for 2015 of .667, which ranks the Journal 28 out of 41 Social Work journals listed by Thomson Reuters. Over a five year period the Impact Factor is expressed slightly differently and in 2014 was .733 and in 2015 was 1.018 ranking *Australian Social Work* 25 out of the 41 journals. Whilst this is very pleasing, it is important to note that year-to-year fluctuations in the Impact Factor are common. The outcome for 2015 indicates that the Journal has maintained a solid reputation as a source of scholarly publication in Social Work.

Publisher Liaison and Governance of the Journal

At the January meeting of the Editorial Board, Taylor & Francis tabled the annual Confidential Publishing Report for the Editorial Board and the AASW. The Report illustrated continuing growth of the Journal and highlighted growing trends in the relationships between publishing and social media that is an area of future consideration for the Editorial Board. *Australian Social Work* has now fully moved to the new Taylor & Francis format from the July 2016 issue and also has a new online appearance all of which are considered more aesthetically pleasing for a contemporary readership.

The Governance of the Journal has been supported by the contingency planning put into place by the Editorial Board after the death of Bruce Lord. The goodwill demonstrated by all Editorial Board members and in particular the continuation of Editorship by Mark Hughes and the taking on of the A/Chair role by Rosalie Pockett has meant that the Editorial Board has been able to develop a transition plan for the coming year. The urgency of recruitment to the Editor position and the Editorial Board Chair role has become the most pressing priority.

Professional development activities have included attendance by Rosalie Pockett at the Taylor & Francis Editorial Roundtable in Sydney and Mark Hughes and Liz Morrison in Melbourne in February and the presentation by legal representatives on defamation and risk management in publishing to the Editorial Board in January.

Editorial Board Changes

The resignations and retirements noted in the previous Annual Report have resulted in five

new appointments to the Editorial Board in 2016. Mary Whiteside has filled the second Assoc. Editor position. Rosalie Pockett stepped into the Acting Chair role in July and the AASW Board of Directors has approved this until 31 October. Rosalie has continued to undertake the role of Reviews Editor during this period.

The list of Australian Advisors to the Journal has been reviewed and a list of members for appointment to October 2018 has been submitted to the AASW Board of Directors for endorsement.

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. Their efforts to ensure a smooth transition of the Journal to the new Taylor & Francis format has been greatly appreciated.

Editorial policy and publication cycle

The Instructions to Authors and the Book Review guidelines were reviewed and updated during the year. These are periodically reviewed to ensure they reflect editorial policy. Both are available on the Journal page of the AASW website.

Special Issues

The Special Issue *Mental Health Social Work: Perspectives on Risk, Regulation, and Therapeutic Interventions* was published in the April issue. Guest editors were Anne-Maree Sawyer, Sonya Stanford and Jim Campbell. The *Norma Parker Online* Special Issue to mark the 70th Anniversary of the AASW is now in the Editorial stage nearing completion.

Norma Parker Award

Steven Roche 'The Salvaging of Identities among Homeless Men: Reflections for Social Work.' *Australian Social Work*, 68, Issue 2, April 2015.

Norm Smith Award

Melissa Reed & Katherine Harding 'Do Family Meetings Improve Measurable Outcomes for Patients, Carers, or Health Systems? A Systematic Review'. *Australian Social Work*, 68, Issue 2, April 2015.

National Research Committee

Prepared by Grahame Simpson, National Research Committee Convenor

The National Research Committee (NRC) 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.

Advertising and promoting research to members

The NRC continually assesses applications from researchers throughout the year. In 2015-16, **16 applications** to advertise research to AASW members were approved by the committee, a similar number of applications to 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 members (for further information go to <http://www.aasw.asn.au/practitioner-resources/research>). 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 CPD hours, particularly in relation to CPD category 3, 'Professional Identity'.

Researchers consistently advise how much they value the AASWs support and role in research promotion. One researcher reported that they could tell from their website statistics that the AASW was 'by far the best referrer' to their research.

Providing consultation to the AASW

A/Prof Fielding took the lead on providing a submission from the NRC to the ASWEAS review, supporting research as an element within student fieldwork placements.

A/Prof Grahame Simpson participated in the AASW committee that organised the survey of AASW members as part of the ASWEAS process.

Practitioner research grant scheme

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

In 2015-16, the Practitioner Research Grant was awarded to Dr Annerley Bates, Senior Social Worker at the Brain Injury Rehabilitation Service, Princess Alexandra Hospital, Queensland Health for the research project The AaBI (Assault and Brain Injuries) Project: Exploring the psychosocial needs of families and caregivers who experience a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) as the result of an assault or an alleged assault. This research is proceeding and its findings will be reported as available.

Work has also been undertaken to finalise the administration procedures for the Maurice Blackburn practitioner research grant (in Trauma) for relaunching in 2017.

National Symposium: November 2015

The Committee was successful in having two abstracts accepted for the AASW National Symposium held in Sydney in November 2015. The first symposium showcased "Pathways into research" for practitioners interested in getting more involved in research and was well attended. The material was presented by members of the NRC and has formed an initial trial of educational material which will be uploaded onto SWOT (see next section). The second symposium, coordinated by A/Prof Fielding, showcased research being conducted by social work Higher Degree Research students from across the country. Almost 30 HDR students applied and nine were able to be accommodated into the available timeslot, providing an invaluable experience and networking opportunity.

Development of "Pathways into research" resources for members

The NRC is currently finalising a series of training modules based on the material initially presented

at the National Symposium 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.

Committee Matters

The NRC held a successful face to face planning meeting on the day prior to the National Research Symposium in November.

It was with regret that Fotina's resignation from the Committee was accepted. She played an important role in the early development of the NRC, established and coordinated the successful Practitioner Research Grant scheme, and was NRC Convenor from 2010 to 2013.

We also welcomed three new members to the NRC, Dr Helen Hickson, Michele Jarldorn and Rosemarie Tweedie.

On a personal note, I would like to acknowledge the generous contribution of NRC members for their time, support, dedication and expertise.

Thanks also to the staff at National Office who provided such effective and willing assistance to the NRC.

Membership Committee

Prepared by Maria Merle, Convenor

The Membership committee is a committee of the National Board of Directors that is delegated to provide leadership and strategic focus for the development of membership, recruitment and retention policies on behalf of the Association.

The AASW Membership Committee is comprised of 6 members. Maria Merle (*Convenor and Director*), Christine Craik (*National Vice President*), Mary Hood (*Branch President Representative*), Cindy Smith (*Deputy CEO, Senior Manager Social Policy and Communication*), Emma Pegrum (*Media and Communications Manager*) and Lisa McCarron (*Membership Officer*).

Achievements

It was very exciting for everybody, particularly this committee, to realise our goal of reaching 10,000 members by 30 June. Strategies included targeted communications to:

- Employers of social workers in a health setting
- New graduates and students
- Heads of School
- Expired and resigned people
- Current and pending members

We also emailed those members who indicated they worked in:

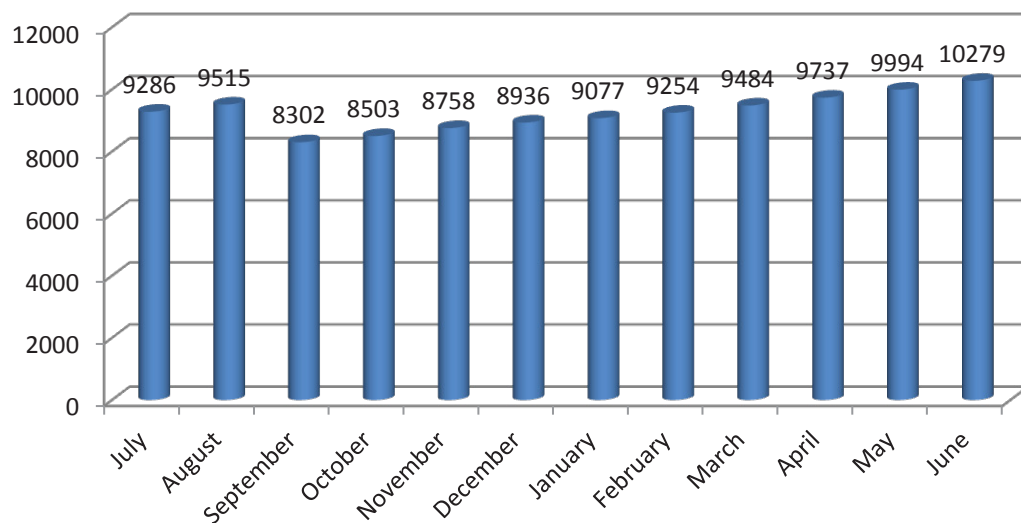
- Child Protection
- Disability
- Mental health
- Health
- Aged care

We introduced incentives such as:

- 'Refer a Friend'
- New graduate 'Join for \$10'
- Two months' membership for free and one free Social Work Online Training* (SWOT) if joining the AASW for 12 months between 1 May and 30 June
- SMS message to all members: Have you signed up a new AASW member so we can enter you in the draw to win one of three prizes valued at \$500?

National Program and Committee Reports

Membership growth 2015/2016



Fee Type	Super Bird Discount 1-31 May	Early Bird Discount 1-30 June	Total Fee for 2016-2017
Full fee <i>Income over a threshold of \$46,000.00 pa</i>	\$585.00	\$595.00	\$670.00
Reduced fee <i>Income below a threshold of \$46,000.00 pa</i>	\$390.00	\$395.00	\$445.00
New Graduate fee <i>Available for 2 years after completion of your first qualifying Social Work degree</i>	\$180.00	\$180.00	\$180.00
Fully Retired fee <i>Fully retired from paid employment</i>	\$190.00	\$195.00	\$240.00
Student (qualifying) fee <i>Students enrolled in an AASW accredited BSW or MSW (qualifying).</i>	\$49.00	\$49.00	\$49.00
Student (already eligible) fee <i>Those already eligible for AASW membership and undertaking full time Masters or Doctoral social work studies.</i>	\$49.00	\$49.00	\$49.00
Accredited Mental Health Social Worker <i>*in addition to general membership fees</i>			\$200.00
Australian College of Social Work <i>*in addition to general membership fees</i>			\$160.00

Note: * No discount offered for early bird payment of AMHSW or ACSW fees

Points to note

- There was no increase in membership fees again this year
- New graduate membership rates reduced significantly from \$330 to \$180
- Merchandise ordered and distributed to all branches, including new posters and flyers;
 - Pens
 - Drink bottles
 - USBs
 - Lanyard – 2 colour polyester (without USB)
 - Lanyard – detachable (with USB)
 - Conference/tote bags
 - Lapel pins (70th anniversary and general AASW pins)
 - Lens wipes
 - Notepads A4
- Scope of Practice documents sent out to relevant parties
- Major member survey completed. There were 1168 responses in total
- USB for graduating students produced and provided to all branches and distributed through their universities and other channels
- The decision was made this year not to print and post to all members this year as the cost of postage was prohibitive. However those members with no email address and whose emails had bounced received a hard copy
- 70th anniversary lapel pin produced and distributed to all branches

Social Policy & Advocacy Portfolio

Prepared by Cindy Smith, Deputy CEO

The AASW has continued to provide the public voice on advocacy for social issues that members expect from their professional association. The aim this year has been to have greater influence on key areas of social policy through regular policy submissions, development of position statements, media engagement and other advocacy strategies.

The Social Policy and Advocacy portfolio has had a very active year. In line with the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan the main 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 key objective has been to initiate and be part of social policy change in Australian society in line with the human rights and social justice values of the social work profession, as detailed in the AASW's Code of Ethics. To achieve this, the AASW has provided a powerful voice on key social issues and in so doing has contributed to the broader community voice for change in society.

This year the AASW has continued to engage in a wide range of activities to achieve our strategic objectives. The Association has lodged 16 submissions to Senate and Parliamentary inquiries and Royal Commissions (state and federal), with a large majority being cited in the final reports. We have also presented oral evidence to parliamentary inquiries on 5 occasions in relation to our submissions. There have been 14 position statements, papers and government briefings, including our work during the 2016 federal election. There have been numerous letters to ministers, the opposition or government departments advocating for social and professional issues. The AASW has been published in newspapers or news sites with letters, opinion pieces and interviews with our President or board representatives on at least 28 occasions. The AASW has been advocating across a number of areas including asylum seekers and refugees; children in detention; immigration and border protection; aged care and elder abuse; family violence; the National Disability Insurance Scheme; institutional sexual abuse of children; child protection; out-of-home

care; veterans affairs; income support for students and young people; cutbacks to health and welfare programs; Medicare rebate freeze; mental health; disadvantage and discrimination in Indigenous communities; homelessness; marriage equality and the effects of inequality in Australia.

During the federal election the AASW advocated in relation to significant reform around key social and policy issues including: children in immigration detention, aged care, family violence, mental health, and temporary protection visas. The AASW also provided members with the resources to actively engage in the election process. This included developing briefing papers on key messages and providing guides on how to engage and meet with Members of Parliament.

As the representative body for professional social workers in Australia, the AASW is responsible for advocating for the profession itself at many levels, including government, private and in the not-for-profit sector. It is in this capacity that this year the social policy and advocacy portfolio launched the Scope of Social Work Practice series and corresponding national strategy. In consultation with hundreds of members we developed a series of documents, each focusing on a particular field, which clearly articulates the role and significant contribution of professional social workers. The series is being used as a platform for a national campaign to raise the profile of the profession by engaging with key stakeholders and decision makers. We plan to publish new titles in the coming year and continue to highlight to the broader community the contribution of social work.

This year the AASW has significantly increased its social media presence, with more than 9000 followers on Facebook, with an average monthly

reach of 120,000 people. We continue to use social media in our advocacy efforts raising awareness about key issues and the AASW's position. We have also used Facebook to promote social workers who appear in the media and have continued to increase our 'Twitter' presence to use this strategic advocacy tool by targeting politicians and journalists.

The 45th parliament brings new challenges and opportunities and the AASW will continue to advocate for the rights of individuals, groups and communities, and the profession itself.

Professional Standards Portfolio

Prepared by Bruce Hart, Senior Manager, Professional Standards

In 2015-16, 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 2015-16

- Development of a dedicated web pages for
 - (1) social workers and accredited members providing services for the Department of Veterans Affairs and
 - (2) for members in private practice, with private practice resources
- Development of a new information sheet for members on Industrial and Workplace issues
- 17 Ethics and Practice Guidelines were reviewed by the Professional Standards team, to ensure members have access to relevant and up to date information
- Review and update of the Schedule of Recommended Fees for Accredited members in private practice
- The Private Practice Advisory Group provided expertise and guidance on reviewing current resources available to members in private practice, and on additional resources which may support members

The AASW Practice Standards for School Social Workers (2008) was updated and aligned these with the format of the AASW Practice Standards (2013).

Throughout 2015-16, the work of the Professional Standards team was managed by Kym Daly Senior Manager Professional Standards in communication with Kerryn Pennell, Chair of the Ethics Panel.

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.

Following a review in July 2016 of the Department of Immigration's Skilled Occupation List (SOL) and Consolidated Sponsored Occupations List (CSOL), the professional occupation of Social Work remains as a nominated occupation for overseas qualified social workers seeking permanent and temporary skilled migration to Australia. This has resulted in the IQA program continuing to grow.

New applications

465 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 28% increase in the number of applications received in the previous year.

Of the above applications, 410 were completed

Skilled Employment Assessment applications with 71 applications received. Demand for this service continued to grow significantly (65% increase) from the previous year.

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 Australian Government Department of Immigration and Border Protection. 1 application was received for this assessment type in 2015-16.

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. This was revised in May 2016 and renegotiated to continue to June 2018 and for further revision.

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 2015-16, **21** New Zealand qualified social workers were assessed under the MRA.

Applicants

The majority of applicants through the IQA program in 2015/156 were from:

Australia: International students graduating from AASW accredited courses: 190

UK and Ireland: 114

New Zealand: 29 (of which 21 were assessed as a MRA)

North America: 26

Asia: 24 (of which 17 were from India)

Europe: 13

Africa: 17 (of which 13 were from South Africa)

English language policy

The AASW launched a revised and strengthened English language policy in April 2015. Heads of Social Work Schools were advised of the changes and the transition arrangements for international students completing their AASW accredited courses at the end of 2015. As of January 2016, the new policy was formally integrated into the IQA program. It is anticipated that a further review of the policy will need to occur in the forthcoming year.

Mental Health

The Mental Health team provide a number of services to members, including:

On behalf of the Federal Government and Medicare Australia, assessing applications for Accreditation of Mental Health Social Worker (AMHSW) status

Promoting Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and support members to meet requirements facilitating the annual Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Audit, and working with members to ensure requirements are met

Promoting the Collective Trade Mark and credentialing frameworks

Disseminating a quarterly Mental Health e-news, which shares news, activities, opportunities and issues relating to social work, mental health, Medicare, Primary Health Networks, Department of Veteran Affairs, CPD and more.

Accredited Mental Health Social Worker (AMHSW) program

The AASW continued its role as the national assessing authority on behalf of the Federal Government and Medicare Australia for the Accreditation of Mental Health Social Worker (AMHSW) status.

In 2015-16, the AASW received and assessed **192** new applications for AMHSW status, an average of 16 per month. At 30 June 2016 there were **1,923** Accredited Mental Health Social Workers, which represents a 9% **increase** from last financial year.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is the process through which qualified AASW members maintain, improve and broaden their skills, knowledge and expertise, and develop the qualities required for professional practice. CPD is an ongoing process throughout a career informed by the changing practice environment, professional domains, new information and community need. In line with requirements for maintaining AMHSW status, the AASW undertakes an annual audit of members CPD. The Mental Health team are currently facilitating this audit, and working with members to ensure requirements are met.

Collective Trade Marks

As part of the AASW's goal to strengthen the regulation of the social work profession in Australia, a legally protected Collective Trade Mark is available for use by eligible Accredited AASW members. The Collective Trade Mark helps to improve public safety and protection and offers a new approach to credentialing professional social workers as well as a form of title protection for Accredited Social Workers.

Trade Mark registrations as at the end of the 2015-16 financial year:

At the end of June 2016 1778 members were registered for a trade mark, this is an increase of 196 people from the same time the previous year.

AMHSW = 812; ASW = 677; SW = 289

Committees and Advisory Groups

The AASW 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 input from members into the direction and work of the association.

Private Practice Advisory Group

In March 2016 expressions of interest (EOIs) were sought from AASW members to join a short-term advisory group that represents states and territories, regional, remote and urban areas, and a range of practice settings. The group was established to:

- review existing AASW resources for members in private practice and advise on their suitability, and
- advise the AASW on any additional resources, services, processes and/or advocacy required to support members in private practice.

The AASW acknowledges the important work and contributions of the members of this advisory group.

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 2015-16, the service provided **628 consultations** to members and relevant others, which is approximately **52 consultations** per month.

Practice Standards

In 2015, the Professional Standards team, as well as AASW members working in and with schools, identified a need to update the *Practice Standards for School Social Workers* (2008) to bring them in line with the new AASW standards framework, as well as to ensure the standards are nationally relevant, contemporary and reflect the current context in this area of practice. A review of literature was conducted to inform the update of the *Practice Standards for School Social Workers* (2008).

The significant work and guidance of the expert advisory group on the update of these Standards is acknowledged and appreciated.

Credentialing

Kym Daly presented a proposal to the Board for Credentialing of Advance Social Work Practice skills for approval which was accepted. This will define the capabilities needed for advance social work practice to accredit social worker in a range of specialist area of practice. The work in developing this will continue in 2016-17.

Education & Knowledge Development Portfolio

Prepared by Melissa Robertson, Senior Manager Education and Knowledge Development

In the 2015-16 year the Education and Knowledge Development portfolio continued to fulfill our professional accreditation function of entry level social work programs against the Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS) and the delivery of National Continuing Professional Development opportunities. National professional development has included the 2015 National Symposium, endorsement of external professional development and further development of content for our on-line platform, SWOT (Social Workers Online Training). These areas will continue to be of focus in the 2016-2017 year.

In the 2015-16 year the 30th provider of entry level social work education in Australia was accredited by the AASW. Seventeen of the higher education providers deliver social work at both a Bachelor of Social Work and Master of Social Work (Qualifying) with the remainder offering one program. The AASW continues to engage with, and strengthen opportunities for dialogue with the Council of Heads of Schools of Social Work in relation to the challenges, trends and opportunities in education for social workers.

Our accreditation work of entry level social work programs operates against the Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS) and is delivered by a panel of academics and senior practitioners. We acknowledge their commitment to the profession and the education process of social work students in undertaking this work.

The commencement of the formal review process for the ASWEAS has been a significant focus in the portfolio this year. One of the key objectives in bringing the 2017 scheduled review forward was to articulate more clearly the minimum standards higher education providers needed to achieve in delivery of their social work program. The review has invested heavily in the completion of scoping activity which has included: a review of international social work education standards, review of other Australian allied health discipline standards, literature work around teaching and learning modes, a survey about work preparedness of recent social work graduates and consultation/engagement with stakeholders through written submissions to a discussion paper. The review will conclude during the 2016-17 year following an invited stakeholder RoundTable in October 2016 to further inform the drafting of revised standards to be taken before the AASW Board of Directors in November 2016.

The 2015 National Symposium held at the University of Sydney 27-28 November considered the theme, Social Workers as Leaders and Change Agents. The National Symposium delivered over sixty concurrent sessions across four sub theme areas of organisational leadership, education and research leadership, leadership in practice and policy and leadership in the area of social justice and reconciliation. Over three hundred and sixty delegates attended across the 2 days and in addition to the concurrent sessions heard keynote address from Dr Jackie Huggins AM and Rev Graham Long AM, "Leadership Reflections" by Professor Lesley Chenoweth AO and Jane Miller AM, "Leadership for Change" involving Dr Peter Munn & Associate Professor Anthony Schembri and a plenary "Preventing Violence, Promoting Healing, Creating Hope" delivered by Professor Cathy Humphreys, Dr Noritta Morseu Diop & Professor Robert Bland.

The AASW's Social Work Online Training (SWOT) platform provides social workers with access to knowledge and skill development through its varied content. In 2015-2016 interested persons assisted in informing the curriculum content of SWOT through participation in the SWOT Advisory Group. Additional content has been added to SWOT across the financial year in several areas and we have also considered areas of priority through member feedback, our work considering credentialing and partnering opportunities. Access to professional development is one of the factors we know that people register as members of the association and we are committed to further development of the SWOT platform and in 2016-17 will hopefully see some of the partnering discussions come to fruition with focused, quality, field specific offerings to our members.

In 2015-16 we have also seen an increase in demand for our professional endorsement of externally delivered professional development by individuals/organisations as session or conference offerings. This endorsement provides our members with information that the offering meets a certain standard and is of professional relevance.

Branch Management Committee (BMC) Members

as at 30 June 2016

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

President: Chandalala Mambwe

Vice President: Alison McDonald

Committee Members:

Noonee Doronila, Cassandra Hanbridge, Patricia Mackey, Wendy Rollins, Kate Haughey, Nurgul Sawut, Michel Hansen, Belinda Gault (resigned), Catherine Murnane (resigned), David Asbury (resigned), Cephas Griswold (resigned)

NEW SOUTH WALES

President: Jenny Rose

Vice President: Suzanne Noisen

Committee Members:

Biljana Milosevic, Naomi Spencer, David Briggs, Mark Brown, Vittorio Cintio, Kamal Jain, Deborah McEvoy-Herbert, Pamela Seraskeris, Siraj Sarguroh (resigned), Nina Trad Azam (resigned), Babu Charles (resigned)

NORTH QUEENSLAND

President: Amanda Kruger

Vice President: Ross Murray

Committee Members:

Janet King, Paula Christian, Sandy McCristal, Rikki-Lee Curran, Eunice Donovan (resigned), Eleanor Gatto (resigned), Bec Richards (resigned), Julie Prideaux (resigned), Mark Dunstan (resigned)

NORTHERN TERRITORY

President: Vikki Martin-Moller

Vice President:

Committee Members:

Suhaila Rizquallah, Kylie Stothers, Angus Stead, Susan Cooper, Merryll Gee, Elaine Nuske, Susan Moore (resigned), Preeti Kotwal (resigned), Jenny Scott (resigned), Juana Katzer (resigned), Francine Koh (resigned), Paul Gibbs (resigned), Janice Tresize (resigned), Rachel Oliver (resigned)

QUEENSLAND

President: Fotina Hardy

Vice-President: Jacklyn Whybrow

Committee Members:

Ellen Beaumont, Tracey Harris, Gerard Jefferies, Jatinder Kaur, Ben McKenzie, Caitlyn Maddison,

Marcela Moreno, Lauren Taddeo, Janis Parrish, Mark Cleaver, Jessica Morrissey (resigned), Barbara Ryland (resigned)

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

President: Mary Hood

Vice President: Jennie Charlton

Committee Members:

Cathryn Obst, Mark Wilson, Julie O'Leary, Maria Scicchitano, Nevena Simic, Paula McCubbin, Jack O'Connor, Patricia Muncey, Ann Raith (resigned)

TASMANIA

President: Allyson Smith

Vice-President: Russell McCashney

Committee Members:

Anna Lovitt, Stewart Millar, Karen Ritchie, Jacqui Russell, Ella Little, Torna Pitman, Jocelyn Walter-Jones, Leonie Hannam (resigned), Anthea Vreugdenhil (resigned), Tahlia White (resigned)

VICTORIA

President: Glenda Kerridge

Vice-President: Olga Gountras

Committee Members:

Ilia Vurtel, Laurenza Buglisi, Scott Williams, Peter Quin, Virginia Mansel Lees, Alex Bhathal, Johnson Mathew, Christine Barca, Despina Filippaki, Bernie Chatley (resigned), Ravi Lulla (resigned)

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

President: Sabina Leitmann

Vice-President: Michael Berry

Committee Members:

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