Table of Contents

President’s Report ........................................................................................................................................ 2
Chief Executive’s Report ................................................................................................................................. 3
Kaipurongo ..................................................................................................................................................... 5
A Message from Janetta Whaley aka ‘Compman’ ....................................................................................... 6
Do you have what it takes? Interest Group Convenors Needed .................................................................. 7
Is the ANZASW Professional Indemnity Insurance Scheme worth it?...We think so ...................................... 8
50th Anniversary of ANZASW: Call for Papers ............................................................................................. 8
A Special Thank-You to our Assessors ............................................................................................................ 8
A New Social Work / Narrative Therapy and Community Work Collaboration ........................................... 9
Section 13 Registration – A Case-by-Case Basis ......................................................................................... 10
SWRB Annual Practising Certificates (APC) – a ‘must’ read ...................................................................... 11
We are looking for GREAT Social Worker Stories .................................................................................... 11
Social Media – Social Work: Thinking into the Issues ................................................................................ 12
Glimpses into my Life in India ....................................................................................................................... 13
Johnella Bird’s Auckland Workshops 2013 ................................................................................................... 16
Book Releases.................................................................................................................................................. 17
You Deserve Good Supervision! A Guide for Supervisees ........................................................................... 17
Understanding Violence: Context and Practice in the Human Services..................................................... 17
ANZASW Journals: now available on our website! ...................................................................................... 18
Advertising .................................................................................................................................................... 19
Social Workers Registration Board Conference 2013 ................................................................................. 19
Child Youth & Family: Social Workers .......................................................................................................... 20
Interactive Drawing Therapy ......................................................................................................................... 21
Ministry of Social Development: Senior Social Work Advisor .................................................................... 21
Master of Narrative Therapy & Community Work ........................................................................................ 22
Have you received your $10,000 ANZASW member benefit? ................................................................... 22
WITNEC: Post Graduate Options in Health & Social Practice .................................................................... 23
Massey University: Post Graduate Options in Social Work & Social Policy ............................................... 24
Dr Leah Giarratano: Treating Posttraumatic Stress Disorder 2013 Training Dates ....................................... 25
President’s Report

Aged Care: Ageist and Patriarchal?

‘The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members’
-Ghandi

I was reminded of this quotation while reading the paper this morning where it was reported that a prominent aged care provider had 3.5 billion share-market capitalisation. The Chief Executive of this company acknowledged employees in this industry were relatively lowly paid compared to other work sectors. Clearly company shareholders were receiving a goodly return on investment. Meanwhile the paid caregivers providing heavy physical and emotional labour receive less than adequate remuneration for the work they do. This example of making profit off the backs of New Zealand’s older people and a poorly paid predominately female workforce does not reflect a just society.

Last year John Key stated no budget increase would be paid to DHB’s to improve the wages of aged care staff, as the government had other priorities. At the same time Dr. Judy McGregor, then Equal Employment Opportunities Commissioner with the Human Rights Commission, went undercover in an older person’s facility. After just six shifts she noted she was mentally and physically exhausted, describing the work of carers in these facilities on $14 per hour as ‘modern day slavery’. This year brave Kristine Bartlett has taken action in the Employment Court over being paid the minimum wage as a caregiver after 21 years of service in this field. While forty years have passed since the Equal Pay Act, employment conditions are far from equal in the aged care industry, with a gendered division of labour between the caregivers and owners of facilities.

When the vital life giving care of New Zealand’s older population is left in the hands of business interests intent on making a profit for shareholders, inequality will prevail. This situation leaves the most vulnerable, the older people themselves and those that care for them in a ‘no win’ situation.

The White Paper on Vulnerable Children has highlighted the need for quality care and protection to be afforded to this group. The time and effort put into the development of vision and the strengthening of policy and practice for work with children in this country is commendable. Similar efforts are required to uncover the exploitation of older persons and their caregivers; improve the status of professional and caring work with older people; and establish a clear nationally consistent, enduring policy framework for work in the aged care sector. Social work must advocate
for and contribute to these efforts in a way that reflects the profession’s commitment to vulnerable populations and social justice.

Dr. Jane Maidment
President ANZASW

Chief Executive’s Report
Firstly, a welcome to Janetta Whaley who has joined the National Office Team as the Competency Co-ordinator. Janetta has been an Assessor for many years and brings a wealth of experience to the Team. Janetta will be based in Hawkes Bay.

We also say farewell to Colin Elliott who has been with National Office since February 2011. Colin has made a significant contribution to the competency service over the last 2 years. Many will have heard from Colin as he went about reminding members that they had overdue initial or recertification competency assessments. The number of members with overdue initial and recertification assessments is now minimal, a credit to the work of Colin.

There has been quite a lot of media activity over the last month with a series of interviews with National Radio in relation to pressure on Child Youth & Family as a result of the increase in notifications and also in relation to case-loads that staff are expected to work with.

Press releases have been produced in relation to the July Welfare reforms and in relation to the impact on Grandparents caring for Grandchildren. Both have been listed on Stuff and can be accessed on the ANZASW website.

Since November last year I have visited Manawatu, Whanganui, Canterbury and Waikato to discuss ANZASW membership in a mandatory registration environment. Over the coming months there are visits scheduled to Wellington, South Auckland, Southland, Otago and West Auckland. Once Branches and Roopu have been visited there is a follow-up questionnaire being distributed to the Branch and/or Roopu. You are encouraged to attend the Road Show meetings in your area and to participate in the questionnaire.

In scanning the text comments from the four Branch areas that have been visited then sent the questionnaire, it becomes clear that there is still a percentage of the membership that does not understand the respective functions of the ANZASW and the SWRB. After 10 years of registration, albeit voluntary, this is disappointing. The ANZASW, as the professional body for social workers, has three primary functions: advocacy for the profession, advocacy for social justice and provision of services for members. The function of the SWRB on the other hand, is to protect the safety of the public. As a Crown Agency, the SWRB is neither able to take an advocacy role nor provide services such as professional indemnity insurance.

For some there also seems to be confusion between being assessed as competent and registration. Holding a current certificate of competency is a requirement for both membership and for registration. In order to register, a holder of a certificate of competency must meet the requirements laid out in the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 for registration and make application to the SWRB for registration. Completing a competency assessment is about being assessed as having the skill and knowledge required of a social worker.
A point being made at Road Show presentations is that the ANZASW, since 1989, has issued certificates of competency to practice social work to members assessed as competent, including those who do not hold a qualification that would enable them to register with SWRB. The Board is recommending to the membership that this group of members be assessed as competent to practice ‘social service work’ for want of a better term. This is to make clear the difference between members who are social workers and members who are not.

The experience emerging from the Social Care Council in Scotland, which registers both social workers and a wider range of social services workers, is that the status of social workers has improved significantly as a consequence of emphasising the difference between social workers and a range of other social service / care workers.

Almost 4 months after the beginning of the 2013/2014 membership year there are 263 members on credit hold. This means that their membership fees have been outstanding for 90 days or more. These members do not receive services however considerable administrative time is spent following up and negotiating payment arrangements. Ultimately, if payment is not forthcoming membership is cancelled for this group of ‘members’. It is not something that National Office likes to do however it is not expected that paying members will subsidise those who choose not to pay their dues.

The ability of ANZASW to increase member services is directly correlated to membership numbers as this is the sole source of income for the Association. The advantage of this funding model is that it gives ANZASW the independence to be involved in advocacy for members and for social justice in Aotearoa New Zealand.

There is potential for ANZASW to replicate some of the work carried out by The College of Social Work in the UK, particularly issues such as developing the ‘Business Case for Social Work with Adults’ (http://www.tcsw.org.uk/uploadedFiles/TheCollege/_CollegeLibrary/Policy/BusinessCaseSocialWorkDiscussionPaper.pdf) and current consultation on ‘roles and tasks requiring social workers’. Developing position papers on a range of fields such as children, adults, mental health & health is a goal for ANZASW as well as developing advice notes to members on legislation affecting social workers. Another thought is developing a fully trained media team made up of members from a wide range of practice fields that are able to contribute media stories.

Being able to embark on work such as this requires either a growth in membership to provide the financial resources, partnering with a school of social work, sourcing external funding or refocusing core business activities currently being undertaken.

The resource available through my.ANZASW provides an opportunity for members to have secure discussions on a range of topics and issues that are of interest. Currently there are two Forums in the group ANZASW Members, ‘Member Expectations of ANZASW’ and ‘Draft International Definition of Social Work’. Neither of these forums has attracted attention from members. If you have topics you would like to discuss with members you are able to set up a Forum in the group ANZASW Members.

A final comment, on the 19th September 1893 the Electoral Act was signed into law, giving New Zealand women the right to vote in Parliamentary elections. This means that we are celebrating 120 years of women voting in Aotearoa New Zealand this year. This has to be a significant day for the ANZASW, with 83% of the members being women, alongside the emphasis on advocating for social justice, human rights & human dignity.
This proverb was spoken by Tinirau of Wanganui. It is a plead to hold fast to our culture, for without language, without mana (spirit), and without land, the essence of being a Maori would no longer exist, but be a skeleton which would not give justice to the full body of Maoritanga (maoridom). Kei te pehea koe e te mema Maori.

Kua tata nei te wa whanau. Time is drawing near whanau when we need to select, nominate, vote and tautoko our Board members for the pending ANZASW AGM in Oct-November. Also, in the same period are the local body elections, DHB Board elections, and Regional Board elections happening around the motu. We may be too busy to get onto any of these boards in the local area but it is important that we at least exercise our democratic duty to be aware, be very savvy, and vote. As SocialWorkers we are in a privileged position to encourage our respective whanau and populations to do their civic duty and vote. Go on line and check it all out.

Whanau are you actively participating in ensuring you are linked into a local or regional ANZASW roopu and how are you mixing and mingling with your local branch? Share with your fellow members on a monthly basis over a cuppa or kai. It is not just what your ANZASW can do for you. You will get more out of the ANZASW when you put in your effort. Have a korero on what Professional Development can be shared, via webinar for you or by you. Just contact our ANZASW office.

Next year, 2014, is our ANZASW C50 anniversary year and your contribution to support the celebrations and acknowledgement of an awesome membership driven organisation will be appreciated. Who is willing to be part of the C50 organisation? Feel free to contact Roopu Board member - Bella Wikaira via my ANZASW or our ANZASW office.

Wellington region members for roopu activity can contact me at jamesmako.consulting@gmail.com or mailto:james.makowharemahihi@gmail.com

So referring back to our whakatauaki whanau “toitu te kupu”, I want to encourage you not to be a skeleton but give full justice to your membership. Kia kaha whanau toitu te korero he kai o te rangatira. Na reira nga manaakitanga o te runga rawa kia koe me tou whanau – Piki te ora, kaha, marama me te aroha kia koutou. Tuturu whakamaua kia tina. Hui e. Taiki e.
A Message from Janetta Whaley aka ‘Compman’

Kia Ora Katoa
Ko Janetta Whaley taku ingoa, no Napier ahau.

I was recently appointed to the part time role of the ANZASW Competency Coordinator and will be working remotely from Napier. Last week, I spent 3 days in National Office, Christchurch, with a slight detour to Nelson due to fog! I received a very warm welcome from Lucy and the lovely admin staff.

I bring with me a background of Youth Justice, Care and Protection and Adoptions with CYF. I have been in private practice for about 8 years; my work here includes Professional Supervision, Mentoring and ANZASW Competency Assessment work.

I am faced with several developmental and competency service challenges as we embark on the Social Work 2013 scene. I am aware that our competency processes would benefit from attractive streamlining and becoming more user friendly. As an ex Assessor, I am fully cognisant with the various challenges of these processes, especially within the current climate of compulsory registration. We must therefore ensure that the ANZASW’s assessment programmes meet the SWRB requirements.

I look forward to the challenges of the future!

Nga mihi Janetta

Mount Sinai Department of Social Work Services International Enhancement of Social Work Leadership Program

By Marianne Pike

The Mount Sinai Medical Centre is based in the Upper East Side of Manhattan between some of the wealthiest and poorest neighbourhoods in the city. It treats a diverse consumer population that span across all services and the full life cycle from prenatal to geriatrics. The Department of Social Work was established in 1906 and currently has approximately 200 social workers.

The International Enhancement of Leadership Program is an annual 8-week program that takes place during the months of October, November and December. Coordinated and managed by the Department of Social Work Services at the Mount Sinai Medical Centre in New York City, the program is currently offered to six social workers each year, most recently from Israel, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Hong Kong. Marianne Pike, Professional Advisor, Taranaki DHB, was the 2012 New Zealand candidate. NZ has participated for the past four years and Auckland University selects the candidate every year.

The program began in 1989 with the goal of expanding professional leadership learning for social workers in Israel and shortly thereafter, Australia. Participants spend their time meeting with social workers in health settings: leadership, hospital managers, administrators, community health agencies, social work educators and mentors in research and writing publications. Since the program’s inception, there have been over 50 participants, many of whom have gone on to become practice leaders, conduct research and publish articles upon their return to their home countries.

Irwin Epstein, Professor of Applied Social Work Research in the School of Social Work at Hunter College provided the research class. He encouraged participants to use research to deepen understanding of what we do so that we can deliver evidence informed practice. It supports the challenges we face in the current health system where effective practice and productive use of resources are paramount.
Marianne attended the program during the Hurricane Sandy, cancellation of the New York Marathon, Presidential election, first snowstorm and social events such as American celebrations of Halloween, Thanksgiving and preparations for Christmas.

“Mt Sinai Medical Centre’s response to a citywide crisis facing Hurricane Sandy was a highlight of my experience here. Physicians, nurses, and other staff reported to duty and on the first night more than 300 volunteers - including many medical students - stayed on campus and at the hospital, sleeping in shifts to ensure full staffing in all areas. When NYU Medical and Bellevue Hospital lost power, Mt Sinai was ready with beds and staff to accept 200 of 800 patients that had to be evacuated, many of whom had serious and complex conditions and had arrived with sparse medical records. Many Registered Nurses, as well as other staff came to work the day before the storm, and planned to stay for the duration. Facility Services set up accommodation for 1200 staff and physicians that needed periods of rest, while a team of 140 food services employees kept patients and staff fed. IT developed extra precautions to safeguard patient records. Facility and Engineering personnel helped transform a former ambulatory cancer treatment centre, recovery rooms and outpatient areas into inpatient units (building 2 showers in an area in a day). Pharmacy and materials management staff ensured adequate supplies. Medical students assisted in making sure more than 200 Mt Sinai research labs were secure. They documented emergency contacts, checked digital thermometers holding experiments (e.g. cancer research) and were ready to transport dry ice in case of power failure. In addition they checked for flooding in the hospital and outpatient clinics, as Mt Sinai’s subfloor are below the water table and in close proximity to the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Reservoir in Central Park.

The weeks that followed Sandy provided many learning opportunities about the impact Sandy had on the whole community. The estimated cost to the US economy is US $45 billion. “The US is also facing huge changes in policies on the funding of healthcare and with Obama Care many inequalities will hopefully be addressed in the future.” Marianne emphasizes how fortunate we are to live in New Zealand with a single payer public health system. The challenge for the US is rising healthcare costs and a growing awareness in the population that good healthcare is in fact a human right for all people.

The “social” aspect of the social work leadership program was also a wonderful experience. Living comfortably in Manhattan in Mt Sinai Real Estate Apartments for US $30 a night was an amazing opportunity to explore New York in the evenings and weekends. Mt Sinai recreational office provided cheaper tickets for Broadway and art/movie/film pursuits. One can indulge in New York Sightseeing and shopping galore!

A highlight for Marianne is the manner in which volunteer programs are embedded in the hospital programs. Volunteer Therapy Dogs are integrated in the psycho-social programs in most of the areas where consumers/families experience high stress. Marianne was impressed with the purpose built/renovated Geriatric Emergency Department with simulated lighting that reflects day/night hours and a volunteer program that supports the prevention of delirium of elderly. Designated social work programs in ED to prevent admission/re-admissions in hospital and to refer repeat ED visitors to community services seem to be a program with great success.

Do you have what it takes? Interest Group Convenors Needed

ANZASW is looking for two convenors for the Supervisors’ Interest Group and the Private Practitioners’ Interest Group respectively. You will need to be motivated and well...interested ☺, with the energy to get some discussion going within these groups. Ideally this would be on my.anzasw which is not only designed to be a centralised repository for you to keep track of your career but also a way for like-minded members to get together and discuss topics of interest. These are called ‘Forums’ and ANZASW is keen and excited to see this functionality we have provided for our members being utilised.
Is the ANZASW Professional Indemnity Insurance Scheme worth it?...We think so

Through the ANZASW Insurance Broker, Iain McKenzie, Crombie Lockwood, ANZASW purchased professional indemnity insurance from Lumleys in August 2012.

The following is a summary of activity over the last 12 months:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of claims with a policy response and payment of defence costs</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of incidents re delivery of professional social work services managed by the member’s employer</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of EAP claims</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average value of claims for legal defence and penalties</td>
<td>$10,200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Largest claim for legal defence and penalties</td>
<td>$30,400.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above does not include calls to:

- the 0800 694 294 Legal Helpline
- Crombie Lockwood
- Lumleys

These calls form part and parcel of the professional indemnity insurance service provided by ANZASW.

If a member was to seek advice independently of the Legal Helpline, Crombie Lockwood or Lumley’s, they would incur a cost that is not covered by the ANZASW professional indemnity insurance service.

Decision of the Complaints Resolution Hearing Panel...

in the matter of Social Worker, Sharon Schwalger

The following documents are available on the ANZASW website:

- Determination of the Complaint Resolution Hearing Panel
- Appeal Decision of the Governance Board

[http://anzasw.org.nz/about/topics/show/65-complaint-outcomes](http://anzasw.org.nz/about/topics/show/65-complaint-outcomes)

50th Anniversary of ANZASW: Call for Papers

The editors call for papers to celebrate the Fiftieth Anniversary of the ANZASW in a special issue for 2014.

Papers should address aspects of our history, current challenges and future opportunities. Contributors should send Mary Nash and Kieran O’Donoghue an abstract outlining the topic, aims and content of the paper. To ensure there are a variety of topics to include, we ask for abstracts to be between 200 and 400 words and final article length to be between 3000 and 5000 words.

Abstracts to be sent to swreview@anzasw.org.nz and deadline for abstracts is October 15 2013.

A Special Thank-You to our Assessors....

National Office would like to thank the Assessors for the fabulous job of keeping up with some very urgent assessments, in particular, Sarah Alden and Michael O’Dempsey, who have both gone “above and beyond” the call of duty.
A New Social Work / Narrative Therapy and Community Work Collaboration

You know you’ve created a Post Graduate Degree with a difference when within one week of its announcement you have fielded enquiries from Singapore, Israel, Korea, Canada, Spain, South Africa, Uganda, Chile, New Zealand, Colombia, Iceland, New Zealand, Denmark, Mexico and China! This was the case recently for a new Master’s Degree being offered by the University of Melbourne. The Master of Narrative Therapy and Community Work is a partnership between the Department of Social Work and The Dulwich Centre. Based in Adelaide, The Dulwich Centre is known as one of the homes of narrative therapy, a way of working with individuals, families and communities that was developed in the late 1980s by Australian Social Worker, Michael White and New Zealand family therapist/anthropologist, David Epston. The approach came to global prominence in 1990, when the U.S. based W. W. Norton, published the ground-breaking book, Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends.

In Australia in the early 1990s, narrative approaches became embraced by Aboriginal health workers. Responding to one of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, a narrative gathering was held for all South Australian Aboriginal families who had lost a loved one in custody. This gathering, entitled ‘Reclaiming our stories, reclaiming our lives’, was a partnership between the Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia and The Dulwich Centre. Twenty years later, the partnerships initially formed in this project, and the leadership of Aboriginal Health Workers Barbara Wingard, Tim Agius, and others, have now resulted in narrative therapy being accepted by the Australian Government as one of the preferred ways of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Narrative approaches are also used in community projects responding to trauma and social hardship in Rwanda, Palestine, Israel, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Iraq and elsewhere.

Now, for the first time, this Master’s Program of Narrative Therapy and Community Work will provide post-graduate training for practitioners across Australia and internationally. The program will begin in 2014. It will be delivered through a combination of two face-to-face intensive two-week teaching blocks at The Dulwich Centre (Adelaide), and an on-line program of work which makes it accessible to New Zealand students. The teaching team will include members of The Dulwich Centre international faculty and leading Social Work educators from the University of Melbourne.

With flexible pedagogies, face-to-face and online delivery, and a collaboration between a university and therapy/community work practice centre, this Master’s program breaks new ground. What’s more, the program is designed for students to initiate new forms of narrative practice and research that are relevant to their particular cultural context. Thus, the program will not only teach, but also contribute to the generation of new forms of practice and innovative practice-research methodologies.

The team behind this venture is now considering how to build diverse pathways to this Master’s Program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers and Maori workers. Stay tuned for further developments.

If you are interested in learning more, contact the University of Melbourne (www.commercial.unimelb.edu.au/narrativetherapy) or The Dulwich Centre (www.dulwichcentre.com.au)
Section 13 was included in the Social Workers Registration Act (2003) so that those social workers, who at the time the legislation was enacted had extensive practical experience in social work but no social work qualification, were able to apply for registration.

The Board considers each application for Section 13 on a case-by-case basis. Applicants are required to establish that their practical experience in practising social work in New Zealand is enough to compensate for the lack of a qualification.

The Board has a two-part process for establishing whether an applicant meets the requirements for Section 13.

To determine the extent of the practical experience the Board will take into account the range, length, quality and nature of the Social Work practical experience in making a decision based on the following criteria:

- The extent to which the applicant practised social work before the introduction of the Act
- The extent to which the applicant has practised social work in New Zealand
- The extent to which the applicant has practised social work internationally
- The extent to which an applicant can demonstrate ongoing professional identity as a social worker
- The extent to which the applicant is able to demonstrate that their practical experience compensates for the lack of a social work qualification.
- The extent to which an applicant can demonstrate that their practice is based on social work theoretical knowledge
- The extent to which the applicant has participated in regular training and professional development relevant to social work in the course of their practice and that this training and professional development has developed their social work practice.

To determine whether the experience compensates for the lack of a recognised social work qualification the Board considers:

- Whether the applicant can demonstrate the knowledge that would be obtained if the applicant had completed a social work qualification; and
- Whether the applicant can demonstrate the application of that knowledge in examples of their practice.

The Board recommends that individuals who wish to apply for registration under Section 13 contact the Board secretariat in the first instance to discuss their social work background. The secretariat offers workshops for groups of individuals wishing to apply for registration under Section 13 and works with individuals on their applications.

For further information or to discuss your application please contact:

Dr Jan Duke, Deputy Registrar on 04 9312656 or email Jan.Duke@swrb.govt.nz
SWRB Annual Practising Certificates (APC) – a ‘must’ read

Changes to APC ID Cards and Certificates.

Annual Practising Certificates (APC) were due to be renewed for the period 1/07/2013 through to 30/06/2014 by 1 July 2013.

The Social Workers Registration Board has as one of its operational aims, to reduce the complexity of the Competence and APC renewal process.

Many Registered Social Workers have not left enough time to complete a competence recertification before their current competence certificate expires. This means that their APC becomes invalid at the time the competence certificate expires.

Previously the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 allowed for social workers to complete their recertification up to three months after it expired. This section of the Act is being removed as it is in direct opposition to other parts of the Act that state that a competence certificate is only valid for five years. The Board can no longer issue an extension after the five year period has elapsed as the Annual Practising Certificate is invalid at the time the Competence Certificate expires.

The new APC ID Cards that Registered Social Workers received when they renewed their APC this year have an expiry date in either RED or BLACK as per the following examples.

EXAMPLE ONE: If your Competence Assessment Certificate does not expire between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2014 the APC expiry date will be 30 June 2014 in BLACK.

EXAMPLE TWO: If your Competence Assessment Certificate is due to expire between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2014 this expiry date will become the expiry date for your Annual Practising Certificate and will be printed in RED. This will help remind you to recertify before then. We will issue a replacement APC ID Card with the new expiry date when we receive your recertification confirmation.

PLEASE NOTE: Your recertification should be submitted to the assessor of your choice (either the ANZASW or the SWRB) with enough time for it to be assessed before your competence certificate is due to expire.

The SWRB accepts the competence assessment certificates of the ANZASW so if you are a Registered Social Worker you only have to undertake one competence assessment or recertification with either the ANZASW or the SWRB – please do not do both.

We are looking for GREAT Social Worker Stories

Please assist us by sharing your stories about great social workers. We will be publishing stories on a special ANZASW page on our website, and in our NoticeBoard e-newsletter.

Contact: fionas@anzasw.org.nz

Back to Top
Social Media – Social Work: Thinking into the Issues

Social media is a new phenomenon in our societies and is significant for Social Work practice. This is the second in a series of articles inspired by a recent webinar exploring the relevance of social media for Social Work. In these articles, I use the term ‘social media’ as a catch-all to include social networking sites, apps, blogs, forums, chat applications, games and so on.

Part 2 – Virtual and Real

“How often have you heard or said it yourself about something that has happened online? A nasty Facebook comment or a viewpoint written on a topic that you care about deeply and you think is disturbingly wrong. Maybe your child is getting angry about losing something in a game or your teenager is in tears because a friend she only knows online shared something that was supposed to be private between them. But it’s online, on a screen, in a game – it’s not ‘real life.’ Many of us may have used this to reassure ourselves that we do not need to allow something to upset us.

Perceiving social media as a real place involving real people presents a major challenge. It makes us confront many of our assumptions about computers and the internet and our beliefs about social interactions. When we look at a screen, it is true that we do not get immediate ‘human’ feedback from looking at someone’s face. Most often we only see text on a ‘page’. Sometimes there may be a photo or an animated character in a game. Studies of computer mediated communication have suggested that without a ‘real person’s face attached, we find it difficult to hold on to a sense that there is another human being ‘at the other end’ and experience empathic responses. So we say, write, or do things that we might not if the other person were physically in front of us. Adults in particular are prone to trivialize and dehumanize social interactions online because we are not used to thinking of them in those terms.

Increasingly, even online games have social aspects and are online places where children interact with friends they know from school or make new friends from all over the world. The interactions and friendships are no less real because they are hosted in a virtual environment. As a result, the good things and bad things that can come of human relationships are also real experiences in the online setting. This is the ‘bad’ side of social media often presented to us in mainstream media. That lack of immediate feedback from a face means that people seem less inhibited in posting a cruel comment, making abusive remarks or harassing someone else where they would probably not do it in person. Anonymity is often seen as a part of this, however I think the crucial factor is that it is ‘faceless’. Seeing faces and connecting them with a real person prompts our empathic responses. It is entirely possible to do this online – it just takes more conscious thinking compared with the nearly-automatic responses we experience when we are face-to-face. This may be an inherent characteristic of online communication, but it may also be because we have not learned from childhood how to respond to people online.

A speaker at a recent conference on bullying issued a challenge to change our perceptions about online as a social context. “Online” is a real place where real people connect and communicate. The difference is how we think about them. Online communities are a crucial tool for many people isolated by circumstances in their lives, whether that be distance, ill health, fear or belonging to a minority where they live. Being able to reach out and connect with others online has become a vital part of many people’s worlds. As Social Workers we need to be aware and understand the significance of this and not dismiss it as trivial simply because the interaction is online.

While it isn’t a physical place, physicality is not the only factor that makes something real and valuable in people’s social worlds. People do experience online socialising as real, valid and important. For people separated by distance, social isolation or belonging to a minority, online communities are an important lifeline for their emotional...
wellbeing. Our Code of Ethics and Practice Standards places a requirement on us as Social Workers to meet people and work with them in the communities where they live. It is becoming increasingly apparent that social media is a real place inhabited by real people, and this presents Social Workers with the challenge to be alert to this and understand how social media works in people’s lives. It also presents ethical considerations for the ways that Social Workers may use social media in their personal and professional lives.

Justin Canty is a PhD Fellow at University of Otago Wellington and a Registered Social Worker. His research topic focuses on children’s experiences of social media. He has worked in a variety of settings, including most recently in child adolescent mental health.

Glimpses into my Life in India
by Janine Joyce

Janine Joyce: Sometimes Social Worker, Yoga Therapist, Counsellor, Researcher and Commonwealth scholar - India 2012-2013 (Photos on Facebook if you would like to see them. I am happy for any of you to view.)

This morning I have woken and my mind is on Raranga- the art and practice of weaving. After so many months living in India it seems an odd thought to be having. My last exposure to Raranga was with the wonderful teachings of Blondie and Ruka down south. Hmm- yes a South beyond Auckland and a South beyond Christchurch, and a South well beyond India.

India is such a vibrant and ancient culture that I can only share glimpses. Most of my time here and on every course that I have attended, I have been the only foreigner. My time has been a mixture of giving papers at conferences, sitting theoretical exams on yogic philosophy and science; or in practical deepening in the practices of all things yoga- meditation, ethics and poses. This has been within the context of a deeply communal society and I have spent much time in people’s homes and hearts.

Some beautiful glimpses occur when the local business people give me local prices and we laugh and share with the only universal language being the heart. I have been absolutely useless at learning languages so far. Those that speak English are curious about the course and there are many wonderful conversations and insights shared about the role of spirituality in our lives, history, human nature and the like. Yesterday I had some clothing that I no longer needed and did not want to waste them. Previously, the girls at the hostel were shocked when I introduced them to the ‘kiwi sister’ way of sharing and swapping clothes when they no longer fit or are needed! Later we had lots of fun working out who suited what. “Really Aunty you wear that? Hmm-yes.” Like being with my daughter really!
But anyway this time an Indian friend and I went to the local Mother Teresa School and Orphanage. As we drove up I had a few misgivings- like maybe I was giving things that weren't practical enough- you know. And the kids playing in the school grounds were so strong and clean and healthy looking. Anyway, we wandered through the back entrance until we found one of the nuns and the girls who had disabilities. These girls were so friendly, so happy and so clean-so loved also. Many had spent all their lives in this orphanage.

We shared just a small moment as we sat on the floor together and opened up the suitcase. And like all teenage girls they were so happy with the bangles and nail polishes and all the other frivolous girly things that were there. And we just laughed and smiled from a place of silence and calm. It was wonderful. The pretty shiny fabrics were appreciated and they began to work out who should wear what. The tailor will alter things to fit. And so just a few minutes- a quiet arrival and a quiet leaving. A moment of such joy between us all. Small and simple. We did not address anything of policy or politics. We just shared simply as human beings. Again it was like being with my daughter, enjoying the small things.

But perhaps back to Raranga. I recently had four weeks in a spiritual retreat with many many sisters from India. It was a retreat into inner and outer silence. Hmm- the brother at the end of my experience was gathering feedback and said “Sister what did you expect? I said: “umm... silence?” We laughed because as it turns out sisters find it really, really, really, really hard not to talk- a lot.

However over time we all settled into a fluid ease with each other and the silent language flowed between us and we all deepened within. It was beautiful because we were in the midst of forest and could hear the elephants. The sheer rock mountain walls, a backdrop very similar to Fjordland.

It turns out that global warming is warm. My time here has been in the midst of a two year drought. It was easier on me than on my friends because I didn’t know India when it was greener and more comfortable. So I have been at ease until summer. Oh yes, summer. Summer hit the mid-40’s and that was tough for us all. We had to move slower and most of my friends rest during the day. Next summer I might try that. The girls say “Amma- what’s happened- you’ve got old.” Yes- well that’s what happens when you push through nature rather than glide softly!!!

Anyway we have laughed our way through and been gentle with each other. And in Kerala on retreat it rained every day and I luxuriated in the cold 25 degree days.

Hmm- But I was talking about Raranga. But life is a weaving of many strands into a beautiful whole. It’s not usually glimpsed until near the end- perhaps it will be the same with these meanderings. So Raranga.

At the retreat centre one of the women who were looking after the cows decided to weave a banana frond. I think for rain shelter. I sat with her and it was wonderful. Exactly the way in which we weave kete. The banana fronds are about a meter long and really thick and so some of the leaves are pulled off the central stem and then the weaving can begin. In a matter of a few minutes a large strong mat is woven and is useful for shelter and roofing. So easy as it does not need lengthy preparation like harakeke.

Back at the traditional Sanskrit University where I have been living (for one year) the students are beginning to come for training in meditation. It is a wonderful sharing as they already have a deep understanding of spirituality. These are ordinary youth so we negotiate the cell phones and manage to get them turned off for long enough.

In this environment they are much protected from the usual distractions like alcohol etc and so it is really easy for them to go deep within. Although they are still amazed after the sittings: “Aunty I had no thoughts at all. What was that?” It is easy to explain to them because they have read much of the yogic science literature and are becoming experts in the Vedic literature where all human capability and experience has been recorded for our benefit from such a long time ago. The earliest archaeological evidence of things ‘yogic’ comes from the Indus basin civilisation about 8,000 BCE when there was a very sophisticated civilisation flourishing. Actually at one of the sights there is
evidence of dentistry (drilling); bitumen was used to line the large food storage containers and the art of copper metallurgy was practised routinely.

The girls were shocked when I first arrived. “Aunty how can you know about spirituality and all these things. We thought only Indians knew this?” India is a big modern industrial country and there is much of interest for them here. They have enjoyed hearing about New Zealand. I am lucky Shrevana speaks very good English and she and I connected immediately and developed a deep friendship. We actually forgot the formalities of introducing ourselves and immediately started talking about humanity and philosophy. It just happened.

I am not comfortable with ideas of expert and academia however I shared a very well received paper at the National Yoga Therapy Conference on Sankhya Philosophy and Maori Cosmology. It was a nice paper as I shared the stories of a global group of Raja yoga meditation practitioners and Maori women’s experiences of spiritual brother-sisterhood. It wove their understandings with the theoretical connections between Maori and Indian whanau. Nice to be allowed to share a universal perspective of connections. They unexpectedly asked me to address the closing ceremony of mainly middle aged Indian men.

Memo to self and anyone who might be interested. Never, ever ask a kiwi their opinion about something because they will really think that you want to know!!!

The Minister of Space was there and our speeches had much agreement about the possibility of exploring more of the connectedness between human-beings and developing research methodologies and topics well beyond the quantitative and physiological.

The Hindu National newspaper (local state edition) turned up one day when I was immersed in my PhD writing and asked all sorts of questions. It was great to be able to share my words of gratitude and joy for the kindness to the community. Since then I often have people in the local community stop and ask questions or talk. Even the local rickshaw drivers know and look after me well. It is very normal to be sitting and having people talk all around me in Telegu. I cannot speak the languages but my understanding is often very good now. The girls just laugh as I have gone from asking them to translate to just naturally continuing the conversation in English as if I have understood everything. “Aunty you rock.”

You know- it was such a blur of humanity when I first arrived and everyone was so curious. I met so many people and was given so many invitations and names. In the end I couldn’t remember anything. At the Ashram, where I am permitted to conduct group meditation with numbers anything from 300 to 1000, people were especially friendly.

So what to do so as not to offend- as everyone wanted to be remembered? In the end I just decided to treat everyone as a brother and sister as I often had no idea whether they were from the ashram, from my class, from the wider University or from the local township. I said yes to every lift on scooters from whomever and met so many people. As time went on I carried this attitude onto the trains and the buses- just everywhere. It just got a lot easier to be open and see everyone as my family rather than be frightened.

And you know- that is the most extraordinary attitude to make real. Because the fear has gone.

Indeed people have been a bit surprised as I have just started to treat everyone the same everywhere. If your baby needs a hug I find myself without thinking going and giving. I share my food. Somehow it’s become automatic and natural. If I stop and think then I’m a bit surprised as well! Usually when that realization comes we start to laugh. It doesn’t seem to matter whether it is at the train stations or bus stations or wherever. It just happens.
I think it started with the girls here at the hostel. They have embraced me so much that somehow I think it’s just normal to share everything. I remember a story when I first arrived. We were sharing a meal together and I opened my mouth to say: “thanks but no thanks.” At that stage fingers just started to feed me. I was so shocked. I just started to laugh.

You know- I think I have been laughing since.

And so these girls call me Amma, mother sometimes, and come and share stories, food and tears. They have taught me so much. They said “Amma we can't give you anything except our love.” And they have. They come from well resourced, modern influential Indian families. They are technologically savvy but what they have gifted me is something much more simple.

So everywhere we go we can be mother. It's not about blood line or culture or language. It is just a simple way. It just becomes a natural simple way of living. I am profoundly grateful to have been taught this. Every day I have learnt to feel grateful for what life gives. I never know what it will be. But I do know that I have done nothing to deserve the aliveness of this.

Somehow in a year without a common verbal language.
In a year with great parts of the day by myself- silent and contemplating.
In a year where I was the object of difference.
In a year in which I was away from my own children.

And in a year where I ceased to be wife I have discovered something -you know- not any more special than what many of you already know. It could have been the hardest, most isolated time of my life but somehow it has been the deepest, warmest and most beautiful. I discovered more family than could ever be imagined. My teenagers have come and spent time with these youth and have begun to also learn that family is more diverse, more creative, more encompassing than we can imagine. It is a wonder to glimpse and manifest it.

Love to all, Janine

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Understanding Violence: Context and Practice in the Human Services

CUP book aims to help those trying to reduce violence

The co-editors of a new book on violence, published by Canterbury University Press, hope it will provide a valuable resource for those providing prevention programmes and studying its impact.

The book, Understanding Violence: Context and Practice in the Human Services, is co-edited by University of Canterbury (UC) social work expert Dr Annabel Taylor and Professor Marie Connolly from the University of Melbourne.

Dr Taylor said the book aims to increase the understanding of violence, its origins and the practices that have developed in response to violence.

“This book reflects the work of UC’s Te Awatea Violence Research Centre researchers and includes a broad coverage of many types of violence and recent response initiatives.

“It will be an essential resource for family violence practitioners, police, shelter organisations and violence prevention programme providers, as well as students and academics,” she said.
“Gangs, elder abuse, sexual offending and social networking risks are some of the areas described. I hope this contribution to research and writing will help to inform the public about violence prevention and contribute to ongoing debate concerning effective responses to violence.”

Dr Taylor said the economic cost of family violence was estimated at $1.2 to $5.8 billion per year by economist Suzanne Snively in 1994. In today’s figures that would rise to $8 billion.

“We [New Zealand] have the fifth worst child abuse record out of 31 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries with, on average, one child killed every five weeks.”

Understanding Violence: Context and Practice in the Human Services was launched at the University Bookshop, University of Canterbury, on 27 June.


About the editors:
Dr Taylor is the Director of the Te Awatea Violence Research Centre at the University of Canterbury.
Professor Connolly is Chair and Head of Social Work at the University of Melbourne. Prior to this she was Chief Social Worker in the New Zealand Government.

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The Social Workers Registration Board is celebrating ten years since the introduction of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003.

Already a wide variety of members of the social work profession both here in New Zealand and from overseas have registered for this one off event.

The Honourable Paula Bennett, Minister for Social Development will open the conference and has also agreed to host a cocktail function at Parliament on the evening that the conference opens.

A select number of social work practitioners and academics will deliver a variety of workshops and presentations over the two days of the conference being held at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.

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Back to Top