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Anaru Gray & Karen Shepherd named as Tumuaki & President of ANZASW

We are delighted to introduce ourselves to you, as your newly appointed President and Tumuaki of the ANZASW Governance Board. It is with humility and a sense of pride that we stand alongside each other to share in the leadership of the ANZASW Board. See more at:


We would like to also acknowledge the work of our predecessor, James Makowharemahihi, in the role of President. We acknowledge his commitment and passion and look forward to continuing to work with him on the Board. We acknowledge the rest of the board also as we move forward into 2016. We farewell Bella Wikaira after her 8 years of service however are excited to have Paora Moyle to join us and accept the role of Tangata Whenua Liaison. Also on the board for the next year are:


To hear more about the Board, what we are doing and what is going on around the country for the Association, go to http://anzasw.nz/blog and subscribe to our blog for regular updates.

Na Anaru and Karen

Back to Top
From the Chief Executive

It is with pleasure I welcome Luis Arevalo to the Team in the role as Campaign Coordinator.

In the 2014 Survey Matters feedback members made it very clear that they wanted ANZASW to lead in advocacy for social workers, the profession, and a wide range of social justice issues. These are key aspects of the role Luis has with the goal of creating an ANZASW brand that is widely-recognised and valued in the social service sector and by the general public.

Bella Wikaira stood down from the Board at the AGM after eight years as a Board member. Bella articulated the role of ANZASW as the kaitiaki of the Code of Ethics upholding the practice standards, supporting the membership to maintain safe social work practices, being the “voice against injustice”. As a competency Assessor from 2008 until 2011 Bella was committed to supporting competency practice. Bella was an active member, and Co-Chair of the C50 Working Party that delivered a spectacular C50 National Event in November 2014. Thank you Bella for your contribution to the Board.

Anaru Gray is welcomed back onto the Board for another two year term. Paora Moyle joins the Board for her first two year term. Welcome to you both.

On 14th October the Social Workers Registration (Mandatory Registration) Amendment Bill had its first reading and was voted down 61:60. In essence National was not willing to support the Bill to Select Committee because Minister Tolley had commissioned a review of the Social Workers Registration Act which is to be reported to her at the end of the year. There was an interesting reference to free trade agreements being the solution to social problems.

The 2013 census reported that 18,327 individuals identified as social workers. This was also identified as a barrier to progressing the Bill to Select Committee. SWRB analysis of this data identified that only 6,132 individuals would meet the minimum qualification criteria for registration. Currently there are 5,391 social workers on the SWRB Register. This suggests that the majority of social workers recognise the value of registration.

As many of the National Speakers in the Debate indicated that they supported the intent of the Bill, it is reasonable to anticipate a move in the direction of mandatory registration by National at some stage. Minister Tolley, in an interview 26 September in relation to the Bill stated, “It’s not that I don’t support it. I’ve said to her {Carmel} that her timing is wrong. So I have asked the Social Workers Registration Board to do a review of their Act and to match with the final report that I get from the Expert Panel….. So they are looking exactly at what do we mean by a social worker, what’s the career path? There’s lots of people who work in the social sector that call themselves social workers but what should a qualified social worker look like?”

The feedback from Survey Matters 2014 indicated that members wanted mandatory registration and wanted ANZASW to advocate for this. In the lead-up to the Bill being read Board members met with Jacinda Ardern, Darroch Ball, Jan Logie and Ria Bond to advocate supporting the Bill. A positive relationship was developed with Carmel Sepuloni. At the same there are some members who are expressing doubt about whether or not registration has improved the quality of social work practice.

Regardless of one’s point of view, the current arrangement of voluntary registration is not good for the profession. All too frequently we hear of people claiming to be social workers being reported in the media for inappropriate practice. In many instances these people are neither members of ANZASW nor registered with SWRB. A recent example can be read about here [http://www.radionz.co.nz/news/regional/287793/jury-acquits-social-worker-in-sex-case].

The campaign for mandatory registration will continue.
The ANZASW Forum site MY.ANZASW closed on 30 September with the new Forum website replacing it. This provides members the opportunity to have discussions in a secure member only setting. Branches Roopu and Special Interest Groups are encouraged to establish Forums as a way of connecting with their constituents. Members wanting to discuss issues are also encouraged to establish Forum Topics. For assistance contact Fiona Scott at National Office. The Forum has been established to enable members to connect with each other in an online environment.

I had the privilege of presenting at the SSWAG (The Student Social Workers Association) conference in Auckland at the beginning of September. The Group had put together an inspiring conference with high quality speakers. If SSWAG is anything to go by, the future of social work in Aotearoa New Zealand is in excellent hands.

Na mihi nui, Lucy Sandford-Reed

Competency Services Update
By Janetta Whaley Reg. Social Worker, ANZASW Competency Coordinator

Kia ora koutou katoa, Greetings to all members.

Where did the year go? It is already November and we are hurtling towards summer vacation time. At least you can start planning your breaks, spend quality time with family and attend to your own self-care. Meanwhile, the world of Competency Assessment continues to be both challenging and productive. Assessors have completed a total of 98 Competency assessments since last Notice Board and continue to be very busy. To this end we are recruiting more Assessors to meet future demands; these positions closed on 21st October.

Currently we have several incomplete portfolios On Hold at National Office. This is primarily due to insufficient CPD hours, lack of Critical Reflection and/or reflection on relevance to Practice Standards, lack of Supervisor feedback and sign-off, missing references and sometimes lack of affirmation by a Registered or Qualified Social Worker or ANZASW Full member. It continues to be an interesting transition from Panel to the Single Assessor model for Recertifications. There are still mixed feelings from some of you but on the whole others are finding the process to be affirming and enabling career-long learning. Our next Competency Assessment Webinars are on:

18th November – Combined SWRB/ANZASW presentation on the Recertification process
   Barbara Gilray SWRB and myself

25th November – Initial Competency Assessment process
   Sarah Alden, Senior ANZASW Assessor and myself

The latest Competency Power Points and Audio are available on our website along with an article on Questions to Guide Critical Reflections which you will find useful when completing your CPD Logs. Everyone, please keep your CPD Logs up to date with Supervisor feedback and sign off.

If you periodically address this during Supervision, it will save a lot of retrospective heart-ache when your Competency is due!

Assessor Team Staff Webinar Meetings continue on a monthly basis, in order to create a more connected and integrated Team. We also use Skype regularly which gives an element of Kanohi ki Kanohi Training. Information, updates and other agenda items are discussed. Assessors have provided feedback for a number of issues including new policies, processes and forms. Policy Reviews and updates are ongoing.
Given the current political climate, the CYF Review, the SWRB (Mandatory Registration) Amendment Bill, there are demanding and changing times ahead. I encourage you to continue to celebrate your own self-care, your passion for Social Work and all the wonderful qualities which you bring to your practice.

Nga mihi

Janetta

Kaipurongo-Hongongoi

Kia whaikororia Kia Ihoa O Nga Mano Te Kaihanga o nga mea katoa.

Ka mihi ki nga mate o te wa, o te motu, o nga rohe, kei nga takiwa hoki. Haere atu ra ki tua o te arae. Haere, haere, haere.

Ki nga mema katoa o te motu, tena koutou katoa.

Kia hiwa ra ! kia hiwa ra !! Kia hiwa ra !!!

This is the call from the parapets of the palisaded Paa sites. Be watchful, be wary, be alert.

Let us be alert to the erosion of Social Work by Government and the neo-Liberal agenda on the world stage. As the former president of ANZASW in the last term, I am now honoured to have served for the past year. Although my appointment to the ANZASW Board has been because of the general body of members vote I am still tangata whenua and a member of the Tangata Whenua caucus. The Tangata Whenua caucus is all tangata whenua members of ANZASW. So I encourage you all to be busy and active with your professional body, ANZASW.

Highlights for me in the former role of Tumuaki/President was chairing and leading a great bunch of elected and seconded Board members x 9 in total. Also the challenge of working with the CEO to ensure the differentiation between Governance and Operational matters. Putting together an ANZASW strategic plan and ultimately getting it ratified and see it begin to be actioned upon. Of course the role also enables the incumbent to represent NZ Social Workers, our professional body ANZASW, and the Presidential role in the international forum. I enjoyed the Asia Pacific IFSW conference in Bangkok, Thailand.

Many of the themes at the conference were relevant to tangata whenua. Migration of millions of people all around the world for both forced and choice decisions by people to move internally and externally of a nation. Our people have migrated originally from Hawaiki nui Hawaiki roa, Hawaiki paamamao te hono ki wairua... We were rural to urban migrants having to move by the lure of jobs in the big towns and cities throughout Aotearoa. We are migrants to Australia and the world for similar opportunities of work and prosperity and adventure abroad.

Another of the many themes is population, the peopling of the Asia Pacific region. This region now holds over half the world’s population and is growing in population size. Consider the social, economic and cultural implications. In NZ we are only 15% of our national population and hold only 10% of our land when once it was 100% however the conference main speaker, Australian Professor Jim Ikl, queried my view and quoted his North American Indigenous friends as viewing land as not a possession but as to be guarded and protected. I thought what a cheek when their own tangata whenua aboriginals are down trodden and forced off their own lands and when they are rejecting boat people and kiwis. Yes fellow Social Workers, we do need to be part of the solution for the social issues and plight of the dispossessed, down trodden, poor and defenceless and especially if they are the original inhabitants of the land.
I am always reminded of our Whanganui awa saying “Ko au te awa ko te awa ko au” – “I am the river and the river is me” similarly “Ko au te whenua ko te whenua ki au”. Yes we have a guardianship responsibility but teaching our dominant partners (population wise), pakeha and foreigners to our land our roles and the vital role of viewing mother earth differently from her being a commodity is ongoing. Kia hi wara!

From this speak of Kaipurongo, I am taking this opportunity to congratulate the Board on making a momentous decision to appoint and elect a Co-Leadership model: Tangata Whenua and Tauiwi in partnership and sharing the roles and responsibilities. There is new energy and vigour in the Board. Your governance board is keen to offer a new look governance and energy and a brighter future. It will come with some sacrifice to build our membership and benefits, build our strong voices as Tau iwi and Tangata Whenua for our profession and the people for whom we work. Awareness by the public our whanau and community of the value, positive role and impact of social work and the influences we need, for positive policy agenda, social services and campaigns are needed.

Kia whai te maunga teitei whanau, e nga mema...uti utilise and contribute to CPD – Continuing Professional Development. We need your expertise to contribute to a richer social work in Aotearoa to promote an equitable, socially just and sustainable society. Our mission in ANZASW is to promote and protect the practice of capable, ethical and culturally responsive social work in Aotearoa.

Awhi mai awhi atu whanau....

James Makowharemahihi

Campaign Co-ordinator Update
By Luis Arevalo

Kia ora everyone,

It’s been a very busy month since starting and I thought it timely to give you all a quick update as to what has been happening around the planning phase for the upcoming Campaign Strategy.

We have taken your ‘voice’ (your comments from the last two surveys) and created a Campaign Strategy with what matters to you most. You’ve asked for the promotion of our profession across all sectors, advocating for issues affecting us and our clients and the raising of the profession’s profile in the media - to name a few.

I am presenting to our board on the 18th of December at which time I can then outline in detail what is being planned, however what I can say today is it will be what you have asked for from us and will be tapping into every sector we (Social Workers) work in. Over the next 6 months you will all see and hear your ‘voices’ materialise through a campaign that will utilise all and every means possible and I am personally very excited to be part of that journey.

Nga mihi

Luis
### Membership Statistics for NoticeBoard

#### Membership by Member Category

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<thead>
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<th>Category</th>
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<td>Life &amp; Honorary members</td>
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**Total Tau Iwi** 2846  
**Total Tangata Whenua** 547  
**Applicants** 106

#### Membership by Employer Category

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**Total** 3393

#### Membership by Branch/Roopu

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<tr>
<td>CANTERBURY</td>
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<td>EAST COAST-RECESS</td>
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<td>HAWKES BAY</td>
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<tr>
<td>KAHU ORAKI WAIRARAPA(RECESS)</td>
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<td>SOUTH AUCKLAND -TE KAAHUI POUTOKO ORANGA</td>
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### Membership by Ethnicity

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<td>JAPANESE</td>
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<td>RUSSIAN</td>
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Public meeting: New Zealand’s UPR mid-term report


At the Wellington meeting, the Human Rights Commission staff presented their electronic platform of the National Plan of Action for the protection and promotion of Human Rights 2015-2019 (NPA). Along with Ministry of Justice staff, they gave some background to how they had gathered the information from government departments - who are answerable to each of the facets of the Plan relevant to their work.

A small group of other people attended the meeting, representing a range of groups from National Council of Women, Sensible Sentencing Trust,
Pacifist/Peace groups and Unions.

There were few opportunities during the meeting to comment on topics that were not already covered in the Plan. Nevertheless when issues around the right of older people were raised, it was acknowledged that there were some notable gaps!

It was fantastic that ANZASW was asked to participate and ensure that the social work voice can be heard in such human rights debates in Aotearoa as well as internationally. It is valuable for our social work professional body to be contributing in this arena and another great opportunity for member involvement.

Hanny Naus
Wellington Branch

Seeking Webinar Presenters
We would like to hear from members who:

- Have research outcomes they are willing to present
- Are working in an area of emerging practice
- Have worked on a project overseas or here in Aotearoa New Zealand
- Have an interest in aspects of supervision
- Wish to share an aspect of their field of practice
- Have an interest in presenting on one or more of the new practice standards

You can deliver a ‘stand alone’ session or a series of sessions on one topic.

Presenting a webinar counts for CPD hours and contributes to Standard 10 Membership of the ANZASW is used to promote and support the SW profession with integrity.

We look forward to being able to deliver an exciting range of webinars over 2015.

If you are interested in presenting, please contact Lucy Sandford-Reed, lucysandford-reed@anzasw.org.nz  ph 03 349 0190 extn 4.

Social Workers Registration (Mandatory Registration) Amendment Bill — First Reading

[Sitting date: 14 October 2015. Volume:709;Page:7234. Text is subject to correction.]

CARMEL SEPULONI (Labour—Kelston): I move, That the Social Workers Registration (Mandatory Registration) Amendment Bill be now read a first time. I nominate the Social Services Committee to consider the bill.

Firstly, let me start by acknowledging the incredibly hard work that social workers do. Social workers are professionals, and need to be recognised as being just that. The work is too important not to have the checks and balances in place to ensure that our most vulnerable people are being cared for by qualified, registered social workers who are equipped to deal with the ever-increasing complexity of issues that children and families are presenting with.
This bill implements recommendations made to the Minister for Social Development by the Social Workers Registration Board. “The recommendations are that the current voluntary system of registration for practising social workers become a mandatory system; registered social workers have practising certificates that must be renewed annually; the title ‘social worker’ be protected in order to prevent its use by people who are not registered as social workers and people who have been deregistered as social workers; the public be able to complain to the Complaints and Disciplinary Tribunal when they receive unsafe social work services from those who are unregistered or deregistered.”

Now that I have clarified what is in this bill I want to share a story that illustrates clearly why this Parliament must move quickly to implement the recommendations in legislation. This story is not a heart-warming one, but in the context of this bill it is one that needs to be told. Earlier this year a man who was working in the role of a social worker for a west Auckland social service was sentenced to intensive supervision after he walked into a public library, sat opposite a teenage girl, placed a small mirror between his legs, and pretended to read a book while positioning the mirror to look up that young woman’s skirt. That same person had been charged with a similar offence more than 30 years ago.

Although this story is rather alarming so far, the worst is yet to come. There is nothing in the current law preventing him from continuing to practise under the title of social worker and to continue working with vulnerable New Zealanders in that capacity. No one in this House would argue for this man to be allowed to continue in that role.

Under the existing framework the registration of social workers is completely voluntary. This means that those who do not want to be registered, or, worse, those who are unqualified or unsuitable to be registered, can still continue to practise as social workers. Unregistered social workers are not required to undertake ongoing professional development, receive supervision, or complete any performance reviews of any kind. This bill will work to amend that legislation and make it mandatory for all social workers to be both qualified and registered. It will professionalise the workforce, aiming to protect the status of social workers, hold social workers to account, protect the work they do, and protect the public at large.

We have a lot of great, hard-working, and dedicated people doing social work in this country. Some of them are currently unqualified and unregistered. The majority are doing a fair and reasonable job, but we cannot continue to leave this to chance. The Social Workers Registration Board has had to deregister social workers for theft, violence, drug and alcohol offences, indecent assault, rape, and even attempted murder, yet there is nothing stopping these people from continuing to practise.

As far as I am concerned, it is dangerous and unacceptable that social workers can operate in schools, in health, and in care and protection without qualifications or police clearance. Although 99 percent of the time the outcomes of social work are invaluable, for that 1 percent of the time where it goes wrong we must ensure that we have got appropriate mechanisms for accountability in place and that we do not allow completely inadequate behaviour to go unpunished.

I have no doubt that the general public would share my concern that approximately 500 Child, Youth and Family social workers remain unregistered, despite the fact that the Government committed to having all Child, Youth and Family social workers registered in 2015. The general public would also share my concern that the Ministry of Social Development keeps no record of how many of the Ministry of Social Development - contracted social workers in schools are actually registered social workers. In fact, after finding this out I asked the Ministry of Education whether it knew how many of the Ministry of Social Development - funded social workers in its schools were registered. Its response was: “Ask the Ministry of Social Development.” The fact that this crucial information is not being collected is as negligent as the fact that we have such an important workforce left unregulated, with only voluntary registration required.
Alongside the issues of conduct/misconduct and the insufficient data collection and monitoring by the Ministry of Social Development, there is also the very important issue of capacity. Both the White Paper for Vulnerable Children and the Children’s Commissioner’s recent report on Child, Youth and Family recognise that social workers need much better support than they currently receive. Many social workers have to deal with nigh-impossible workloads while working in situations so challenging that most of us could not even imagine them. It requires intensive training and regular supervision to work in the context of problems with mental health, addictions, and violence. Putting unqualified and inexperienced staff in such a position endangers both the people in need of support and the social workers themselves.

To return to the story that I told you right at the start, it is in no way an isolated case. A search through the media archives over the past 10 years showed up several cases of misconduct by social workers, the vast majority of whom were unregistered. Worryingly, the possibilities for this to go wrong are much larger still. In the 2013 census more than 18,000 people identified themselves as social workers, yet there are fewer than 5,000 social workers actually registered, making the scope of this issue frighteningly large.

Many prominent and well-respected New Zealanders are exasperated by the lethargy of the current legislation. In fact, one well-known New Zealander, a certain Anne Tolley, called it “outrageous and disappointing”. She was referring to the voluntary registration of social workers. It is clearly a common-sense and bipartisan view that we as a society owe it to the most vulnerable within our communities to ensure their well-being by requiring all social workers to be registered. In fact, when I met with the Minister Anne Tolley to discuss this matter, she confided in me that there was nothing at all in this bill that she disagreed with. The timing of the bill, on the other hand, seemed to be of concern to the Government, but tell me this: is delaying this conversation, only to reintroduce the exact same bill in the future, really worth the cost?

We have here in front of us the opportunity to prevent our children, victims of abuse, and other vulnerable members of society from being put at further risk. This is undoubtedly a tough conversation to have as a society, but it is one that we must have if we wish to address and prevent further suffering, and what better time to have it than now? My plea now is that parliamentary colleagues across the House support this bill to select committee.

Let me just reiterate: the recommendation for changing to a mandatory registration system did not start with me. It was recommended by the Social Workers Registration Board and the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers. It was recommended in the White Paper for Vulnerable Children, which went to Cabinet but was ignored, and the issues that this bill seeks to resolve were highlighted in the Children’s Commissioner’s State of Care 2015: What we learnt from monitoring Child, Youth and Family report on Child, Youth and Family, with recommendation 4 being all about addressing the “capacity and capability issues across the CYF workforce;”.

Before I end this speech, I just want to acknowledge all of the social workers and organisations across the country that have come out in support of this member’s bill. I particularly want to acknowledge the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers and the Tangata Whenua Social Workers Association. I want to acknowledge the fact that for the majority of organisations and social workers I have spoken to, despite the fact that they do support the bill, there are some issues that they do have that they want resolved, but that does not overshadow their support for this bill. They still want it to go to select committee, and they want the opportunity to have that discussion. So with all of that in mind, I commend this bill to the House.

**ALFRED NGARO (National):** I rise to take a call on this first reading of the Social Workers Registration (Mandatory Registration) Amendment Bill. First of all, I just want to acknowledge the member whose bill this is, Carmel Sepuloni. I think for those of us who are new to the House, in the sense of coming through, it is always an honour to be able to have your member’s bill drawn. In fact, it is sometimes not only an honour; sometimes it is the luck of the draw. I know members who have been in this House for quite some time who have never had a member’s bill drawn, so to have your bill drawn and then to have it read with the intent of being able to pursue that through the course and the institution of the House is an honour. So I do want to acknowledge the member for that.
I also want to acknowledge the fact that the intent of this bill is something that I would support in a number of different ways. Actually, this bill goes all the way back to 2003 when the Hon Steve Maharey was the Minister of Social Services and Employment. In fact, at that time—I want to declare a conflict of interest—I was actually part of an advisory committee that was putting together a blueprint, and part of that was informed by the Judge Mick Brown report, which talked about the state of current social services being delivered to our communities and the need for there to be some form of regulation and registration. Hence there was the bill that was put forward, which was the Social Workers Registration Bill, then Act, of 2003. This was put through the House as part of one of those recommendations from that report.

I just want to acknowledge that during that time—and I have actually pulled out the Hansard that talks about some of the speeches from the first and second readings, the Committee stage, and the third reading of that bill when it came through. There were 37 submissions that were put through on that bill in 2003; 30 of those were in support of the intent of the bill. As the Minister at that time, Steve Maharey was contending with some contentious issues, and one issue was the issue of voluntary to mandatory. In fact, what happened and what came out of that was that a number of the institutions of social work practice actually asked that the process be a mandatory process of registration rather than voluntary. I read from the Hansard where he spoke, in his speech on the second reading, and he said this: “Mandatory registration is not consistent with other forms of occupational regulation. Voluntary regulation regimes are the most common form of regulating other professions. For example, they are used for accountants. As a result of considering that issue, the select committee has recommended that as part of its regular review of the legislation, the Social Workers Registration Board should specifically consider the extent to which the system of voluntary registration is achieving the purposes of the legislation.”

So I think at that time the intent was to be able to consider the aspect of whether voluntary to mandatory was the appropriate process, but it was to take time with that, too. I think that also, too, inside of the bill that is currently before us in this House it talks about the time frame of a year. In fact, what the Minister actually initiated here in this Hansard was that he talked about a time limit for provisional registration of 6 to 8 years, and then also allowing for a qualifying period of 5 years. So the time frames are quite a lot longer. He realised that it takes time to be fully registered and for those to be accommodated for that as well. So the debate there was quite interesting, because it was a similar debate.

Su’a William Sio: Do you support it?

ALFRED NGARO: Well, if you listened, Mr Sio, you will hear this. That is what you do. You sit in debates and you listen to the speeches. Otherwise, your speeches would be quite short, I would imagine—“Yes” or “No”. But this is important because this is providing the basis for the context of what we are talking about—from voluntary to mandatory. He actually talked about the fact that the time frame—which your bill talks about as 1 year—is 6 to 8 years. That was what he was talking about. So that becomes really important.

So I think the fact is that what this is also telling us is of the important fact that the challenges that they faced then are also the challenges that we face now. The reason why I want to quote from those speeches—and Mr Sio will find this important—is the fact that when we talk about that time frame, Minister Tolley has actually said that she has already commissioned a review with the Social Workers Registration Board to actually look at these critical issues. So here are some of the critical issues to inform my colleague over there, Mr Sio. The Social Workers Registration Board is currently reviewing the Social Workers Registration Act, and will provide a draft report to the Minister by the end of the year. Here are the important factors: the definition of identification—

Su’a William Sio: I am going to go now.

ALFRED NGARO: Well, that is OK. Your contribution is not always valid. The factors are the definition of identification of social workers and social work practice for carers and the implications of moving to a mandatory registration system for the social worker, the social service workforce, and the public. So that tells us this: this Government does take the intent of the member and her bill to heart, but it also says that these things are already in place; these things are already in place.
The Minister is initiating this; there is already a review. Out of that review, again, we will be able to take one of the next steps to it. As part of this work we have requested that the board consider what a social worker looks like, and the specific training that needs to be requested as well. I think those things are really important. The Minister has asked the board to provide a clear explanation as to how many dedicated people there are who have been working in the sector as social workers for many years without social work degrees but with significant knowledge and experience. So those are factors. As the member has talked about, there are a number of those who are working as social workers. They may not be qualified, they may not be registered, but their practice may be valid and may be an important contribution as well. So with these things in mind the Minister has initiated this review as well, and we think that is important.

So we—and I myself—applaud the intent of this bill; however, we cannot support this bill as it is currently drafted. We believe that there is some work that has already been initiated and has already been reviewed so that this bill, OK, will not actually fulfil the purposes, but the review that has been taken with the Social Workers Registration Board is already in place, and we think that is important as well. There was some comment that was made about the current situation for social workers in practice and so what I do know is, and the facts are, that on 30 June 2015 the Child, Youth and Family Service had 1,377 registered social workers, although not all of these are front-line staff. We know that that is a commitment that has been made as well to ensure that we do have those who are qualified and those who are able to provide this important service for our most vulnerable, and those in need as well.

When we talk about the time frame—I want to just comment on that, because I think that is important. The member in her bill talks about a 1-year time period to move to mandatory registration, which we believe is not sufficient to implement the significant changes. As I said when I quoted from the Hansard of 2003, it was acknowledged even by the Hon Steve Maharey that a transition period of 6 to 8 years was absolutely needed in order to move people from a non-registration process to a registration process. We know that further work is needed to understand the supply of social workers. I was privileged to be able to hand out the graduation certificates to social workers for the Diploma in Whānau Ora at the Waipareira Trust in west Auckland. I know that the training that was needed there was quite significant. It was specific to those in the Māori community working with whānau, and so that is another good example of the fact that social work practice is not just what we expect it is. It actually has a variety of complex needs, and expertise that is needed, as well, to fulfil those roles.

So in summarising my comments on the first reading of this bill, I again want to acknowledge the member for her bill being drawn and the intent that she has, which is to work towards a form of mandatory registration. The fact is, however, that we do not support this bill because the intent of what has already been initiated—a review by the Minister to ensure that the Social Workers Registration Board comes back with other details—we believe fulfils the areas of need there. So we do not support the bill, but we support the work that is already taking place to meet these needs. I commend my speech but I do not support the bill.

Hon NANAIA MAHUTA (Labour—Hauraki-Waikato): As I make a contribution to this debate, it is not surprising—listening to the contribution of Alfred Ngaro—that the Government will not support this bill in its first reading and referral to the select committee. Heck, it does not support registered teachers in charter schools, so it is no surprise.

But here is the thing—and I hope that common sense does prevail, because there is every opportunity for this bill to go to a select committee and be heard concurrently with the review that is being undertaken by the Minister. That review will show what the state of care report has shown: more work needs to be done to ensure that in the space of social work there is a lifting of its professionalisation, and that registration can help.

I agree, in part, with the comment that was made by the previous speaker about the transition time, but it is 12 years since 2003 and a voluntary registration method, and there is some urgency to ensure that those most at risk in our communities and in our schools have the opportunity to have access to registered social workers who are able to participate in different response models in the community where it is needed most. We have all visited our community organisations and our social service providers, and they have all told us—whether they are social
workers in schools, or in faith-based organisations, or community providers—that now, more than ever before, there is a real need for social workers who are registered, who have best-practice approaches to some of the most challenging situations. In fact, more than anyone else, community providers will tell you that the benefit to the family, the whānau, and the children whom they are working with of having a registered social worker is a lift in the outcomes for those families who need it most.

Some of the challenges in 2003 remain as the challenge today, which is the cost of moving towards a registration programme and the cost to community organisations. All those issues can be considered at the select committee. I visited a number of Māori providers, and they will highlight and amplify just how important it is to have access to social workers, let alone registered social workers—and right now they will make do with whatever they have, but they do want access to registered social workers. Best practice matters, because the families that they work with have the most severe and urgent circumstances that require a different approach.

Social workers today working in our communities are working as part of multi-disciplinary teams. We have had social sector trials in the Waikato. We have got the Family Safety Network, we have got the child safety teams, and we have got Family Start. All of them have access to social workers, and all of them will say that they would benefit from registered social workers. The transition time, yes, is an issue, the cost is an issue, but they would never ever say that having a registered social worker would not make a difference. They would actually say that having a registered social worker across that profession would ensure that they are getting best-practice delivery in the services that are being provided.

I support the intent of the bill, and I recognise that urgency is really important when we think about our decision to send it to the select committee. There are outstanding issues that can be addressed—whether or not a 1-year transition time is sufficient—but we need to start now, because it is 12 years on since 2003, when a voluntary system was brought into place. We can do this concurrently with the review that is being undertaken by the Minister, and it is necessary. It is necessary because children, people suffering from mental health issues, refugee and migrant communities, women who have been victims of abuse, and men who have been the victims of sexual abuse all need access to qualified, registered social workers. There are not enough social workers there—and there are certainly not enough registered—to ensure that the professionalism and the best-practice approach that they should have access to are available. This bill will help that outcome.

MATT DOOCEY (National—Waimakariri): I am rising to speak to the Social Workers Registration (Mandatory Registration) Amendment Bill. I will not be speaking in support of this bill, but I do acknowledge the Labour MP Carmel Sepuloni, whose name this bill is under. The bill was drawn from the ballot, and I too have had a member’s bill drawn from the ballot recently. It is great to see your ideas being formulated, developed, discussed, and challenged.

There is an issue with this bill, with the Minister for Social Development, Anne Tolley, having already requested the Social Workers Registration Board to look into registration. So I think that it is very much a question of timing—timing of when that report will come back. But also in this bill is an issue with 1 year—1 year being set as a milestone that social workers need to be registered by. I do not think that that is enough time for this very diverse and complex workforce to be registered. When you look at social work, it is about timing. It is about getting to the social issues at the right time and providing the right interventions.

When we look at the question of regulation, or of not being regulated, I would challenge that a bit and say that it is about effectiveness. What we need to do is look at the whole of the social work workforce and understand what the blocks and the obstacles are for them to be achieving their aim of improving the social well-being of all New Zealanders. One programme currently in the United Kingdom, called Reclaiming Social Work, is giving social workers the ability to get back to face-to-face work, to engage with the people they are working with—not as a desktop exercise where they are filling out forms. We hear some very scary statistics through the Children’s Commissioner, with his interim report that some social workers are spending less than 25 percent of their time in face-to-face engagement with the people they are working with.
We need to ensure and understand that it is not just about how we regulate or register; it is about how we free up working practices so that social workers can go out there and provide effective interventions face to face. What we are talking about at the moment is social workers who are so fixated on writing down care plans, but what we need to do is upskill this workforce. They have expertise. It is all very well being passionate, but you need to have a skill set—a skill set that you then use to provide interventions. Maybe that might be around psychological therapies that make a real change to people’s lives. That is what I would support.

I think that it is fair to say that also what we need to do is address the problem—mitigate social problems—and even prevent them right from the start. When you look at some of the successes in the House this week, and as the state of the nation report by the Salvation Army said, if we want to address social problems, then we need to get right up front. What we do around social problems addressed by poverty is around providing better jobs and better incomes. In New Zealand, that means exporting more products offshore. By engaging in free-trade agreements, we provide more jobs and better incomes for people in New Zealand, which addresses social problems like poverty, which increases the social well-being of all New Zealanders. When you look at social policy, you can have all the aspirations in the world—this social policy or that one—but at the end of the day, you need to pay for it. This is about having a Government that can provide strong economic management and create surpluses that can then be reinvested in good public services, which go on and give people a good start in life.

Could I join people around this House in acknowledging the work of social workers throughout New Zealand. I know that in my electorate of Waimakariri we have been very hard hit post-earthquakes. It is great to see the social work teams getting into local schools—thanks to the Associate Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery, Nicky Wagner, with her psychosocial plan that allows social workers to go in and make a difference in the lives of young people in New Zealand. Thank you.

JAN LOGIE (Green): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak to the Social Workers Registration (Mandatory Registration) Amendment Bill, which has been put forward by Labour’s Carmel Sepuloni, and congratulations to that member on getting this drawn. It is a bill whose time is well and truly overdue, and the Green Party is very pleased to offer our support to this bill.

While I stand, though, I do feel compelled to address some of the arguments that I think I understood from the last speaker, Matt Doocey, although it was a little bit unclear to me exactly what the main point of that speech was. I was hearing, on the one hand, that skill sets are really important, and that if we are looking at ensuring safety and good social change in our communities, then we need our social workers to have the skill sets. Well, actually, that is part of what this bill is about. Social worker registration is the oversight and the assurance of skills and ethics within the social work system. But I also heard from that member, kind of contrary to that, that actually what we need to be doing to solve our social problems is not looking at social workers at all, but signing the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement, because that is going to solve all our social problems! Well, I have news for that member. We have signed quite a few free-trade agreements over the years, and somehow our social problems have not dissolved. It does not seem to be that simple. Actually, there is a place for registration.

Earlier we heard from the member Alfred Ngaro that the Government cannot support this bill because, although it agrees with significant amounts of the content of this bill, the Government is doing a review. So the Government does not want to hear from the public, to help inform that review, which actually sending this bill to a select committee would enable? I really do question the logic of that. If the Government is interested in this—and the Government says it is on its agenda—then support it to the select committee. Enable the public, enable unregistered social workers, and enable registered social workers to comment on this bill.

There was one specific point in the content that I heard challenged by the member Alfred Ngaro, and that was the transition time of 1 year. He pointed out that initially, back in 2003, when the Social Workers Registration Act—which did not bring in mandatory registration—was brought in, Steve Maharey said it needed 6 to 8 years’ transition. We are 12 years on, and surely that is not enough reason to block this bill. If that was your only point of difference,
let it go to the select committee and argue that point. Change the transition time. I personally do think that maybe it is somewhere in between—that there is a degree of urgency on this, but maybe 1 year to register the 3,000 unregistered people who are practising at the moment may be too short. We should have that public discussion.

Yes, there are issues to consider with this. We know that the funding of our community organisations has been deeply squeezed by our Government, while they are having to deal with more and more complex cases that Child, Youth and Family Services is referring to these community agencies. With that funding being squeezed, there is a real danger that they are increasingly going to start using unregistered social workers, because they may not feel they can afford registered social workers. The increased costs that would be associated with this bill in that locked funding environment may be detrimental to them.

But surely our priority is our children, it is the people who are using these services, and it is the importance of us making sure that they have a body that they can complain to if something goes wrong, that they can be sure that when they are dealing with a social worker, that person is a social worker who has been trained and who has a code of ethics that they are working to, which is what comes with being a registered social worker. There have been all too many stories of unregistered social workers who have not been able to be monitored and whose behaviour has been out of line. In 2003 my colleague Sue Bradford said that the underlying question of the original bill was whether we as a society want to begin the process of professionalising social work in a positive and empowering way. Twelve years on, to me the answer is still yes, and registration is the way.

TODD MULLER (National—Bay of Plenty): I rise to say a few words in respect of the Social Workers Registration (Mandatory Registration) Amendment Bill. It is not surprising that, along with my colleagues on this side of the House, I stand to oppose this bill. Essentially, at the core, the reason for our objection is summarised by the view that if you are going to do something, you do it properly. What we are looking at here is a bill that, unfortunately, is half-baked in execution. It is good in intent. We have all echoed the intent, but when you drill deeper into the specifics in respect of this bill, it does not work. With respect, I think it is reasonably naive. Even if we quote Nanaia Mahuta, who is a very considered and reflective contributor to debates in this House, as she said, and acknowledged, the transitional cost in respect of this particular bill is quite significant. And it is quite significant. Let us just dive into some of the detail here.

The report of the Social Workers Registration Board itself talks, of course, to the benefit of registration and the trend line of increasing numbers over the last few years from 3,500, 3 years ago, lifting at about 500 or 600 a year, to now over 5,000. But if we reference, of course, the census of 2001, 18,327 people listed their occupation as social work. Then if you apply the definition that is listed in this bill, “a person who practises social work”, this is not a matter of a handful of thousands, as the previous speaker suggested, who are unregistered and would need to be transitioned to a mandatory registration regime within a year. We are talking of thousands upon thousands who could be caught up in the definition in respect of social work and being required to be mandatorily registered.

So there is an effective question that the review that is currently under way needs to address. We all can talk with complementarity around the effectiveness of the registration of social workers. We now have over 5,000 who have been registered. But if there are potentially another 10,000 or more who could be caught up in this registration process, who have given many years of their life in professional service, doing fantastic work on the front line of what are some of the most difficult social challenges in this country, but are not registered now and have not necessarily got formal qualifications to support their years of support and commitment to families and individuals in this country, they need to be protected, to ensure that their life’s work is acknowledged and can somehow be captured and acknowledged as part of a new mandatory framework. These are the difficult sorts of policy questions that the Social Workers Registration Board, in its review, is grappling with in terms of transition times and getting that definition accurate and appropriate.

This review is getting close to its conclusion. It is not years away, as some have suggested. The draft report, as you have heard, is due for the Minister in November and the final report is due in December. From that basis I think we will be able to see movement in this area in a far more considered and measured way than what is being suggested in this particular bill. In respect of the definitions that I have touched on already, our view is that the definition as
listed here is far too broad, and when added to the, I think, pretty unsophisticated time line of 1 year, it makes this completely unworkable.

In conclusion, my view is that there is good intent, of course. The way this bill is written is not going to help the debate. Let us get that review finished. It is comprehensive. Let us reflect on that and then put a framework in place that delivers the right outcome and one that can sustain this very valuable profession into the future.

**RIA BOND (NZ First):** I am proud to rise on behalf of New Zealand First and speak to the Social Workers Registration (Mandatory Registration) Amendment Bill at its first reading in the House today.

When this bill was first drawn from the ballot, this quote from Nelson Mandela came to my mind: “A nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but its lowest ones.” This quote fits with how we, as a legislative body, bring bills into this House and pass them, particularly the bill we are reading and dealing with now, which involves our youngest citizens to our frail elderly. New Zealand First supports this bill. This bill makes common sense. I wish to thank the Labour member Carmel Sepuloni for bringing this bill before the House. This bill is needed in today’s environment of social services more than ever before.

Social worker services are crucial to this country in dealing with the multiple levels of delivering services to our most vulnerable and our elderly. I need to acknowledge that this bill is also endorsed by the Social Workers Registration Board. In fact, after reading the many in-depth reviews provided by the Social Workers Registration Board, I am stunned that 12 years later we are still yet to make a decision and take on the recommendation by the Social Workers Registration Board for the mandatory registration of social workers.

A survey from 2002 showed there is, in fact, wide support for this movement, both from the profession and from the public. This remains the case today. In 2003 the Social Workers Registration Board was established by the Government under the Social Workers Registration Act 2003. The purpose of this Act, back then, was to protect the safety of members of the public by prescribing or providing for mechanisms to ensure that social workers are competent to practise, and are accountable for the way in which they practise, and to enhance the professionalism of social workers.

Anyone can use the title “social worker”. They do not have to be qualified, competent, or experienced. The public expects that all social workers are actually registered. In fact, a survey undertaken showed that 80 percent of the public surveyed actually thought that social workers were registered. Currently, anyone can call themselves a social worker without having any qualifications or being registered with the Social Workers Registration Board. We are told that over 18,000 people class themselves as social workers, yet there are only 4,700 who are actually registered as social workers. Social workers—unlike other health professionals such as nurses, doctors, psychologists, occupational therapists, and teachers who, like social workers, also work with the public—are not currently required to be registered.

Clause 6 of this bill inserts a new section, section 5A. This requires any persons practising social work to be registered and to hold a current practising certificate. This bill will provide New Zealanders with the assurance that anyone working as a social worker inside our schools, hospitals, and communities and with families, our children, and our elderly will, in fact, have the necessary qualifications and experience to do so. I am also pleased to see that clause 8, with a new section, section 85A, will provide that the Social Workers Complaints and Disciplinary Tribunal will deal with unregistered and deregistered social workers. What this new section allows is for accountability for those individuals who have been replaced by their employers for serious complaints and misconduct so that these individuals cannot simply just carry on in the social services sector without first being held accountable. Since voluntary registration was introduced in 2003 there have been 17 cases of reported misconduct by people who worked as social workers or community workers—16 of whom were unregistered.

 Quickly, before I finish, I just want to share with this House that 37 years ago I was first placed in foster care. I got picked up by social workers, and the comment that has stuck with me for the rest of my life, and even today, was when I was told by the social worker: “Why didn’t your mother just abort you? Knitting needles are free.” How many more kids need to hear things like that? We support this bill.
JONO NAYLOR (National): I think, perhaps, I need to declare a potential conflict of interest. As far as I know, I am, perhaps, the only person speaking on this bill who has a qualification in social work. I may be corrected on that, but I have to say I have a social work degree.

Carmel Sepuloni: But are you registered?

JONO NAYLOR: I am not registered. I am not a registered social worker. I have practised social work, and although some may say that I am currently not practising social work, I think, actually, all of us as MPs, when we have constituents coming through our doors, at times find ourselves practising what would often be referred to as social work in terms of the way that we have to deal with some of those constituents.

The social work profession has for a long time been a very broad one. I took the liberty this afternoon of looking at the website of that fine institution, Massey University, to look at the kinds of careers that it says a degree in social work may offer you. It is a long list, but it can be read reasonably quickly: hospitals and primary health care, mental health and addictions, voluntary and community organisations and Government organisations, child protection, youth justice, housing, offenders, residential care, management and supervision, tertiary education, community work and community development, refugees and migrants, and schools.

The kinds of things that I have heard this afternoon may have made me think that social workers only practise with children and young people or that, perhaps, they only work for Child, Youth and Family, because much of the focus of the debate this afternoon has been in that area.

I would say that I absolutely endorse the idea that people who are working with particularly vulnerable people should have some level of professional accountability, and that they should, perhaps, be registered. If I thought that this bill was going to achieve what we want it to achieve, I would support it. But it is not going to achieve that. It is so universal, it is so all-encompassing, and it is so broad that, really, it is not necessarily going to achieve what seems to be the intent behind it.

Of course we want children and young people who are having social workers working with them, and older people and vulnerable people of any kind, to be cared for appropriately. Of course we do not want any children or young people to have the experience that the previous speaker, Ria Bond, referred to. This bill may or may not fix that because actually, as we know, from time to time, even with registered social workers, there still has been disciplinary action and people have been deregistered. We have doctors who have all sorts of professional boundaries that they have to adhere to, and that still does not stop people from practising badly. So this bill will not necessarily fix all of our problems.

At the moment, I am not sure how this would work. If I were to leave Parliament tomorrow and perhaps get a job with Alzheimer’s New Zealand and go and work running a day programme with Alzheimer’s patients, I think, given that I have got a social work degree, I can pretty confidently say I would be practising social work. If this law was to pass I would not be able to call myself a social worker because I am not registered, and I am not sure that that is necessarily the intent. Perhaps it is the intent, but we have got to look at this carefully.

This is a broad, broad way that things are operating. Yes, at some point we need to look at mandatory registration in certain areas of social work, perhaps. Let us face it: in other professions you do want to know there are professionals looking after you. I said to someone today that when I go into hospital I do not mind if the care assistant makes me a cup of tea or, perhaps, if I am incontinent, helps clean me up or otherwise, but I do want a registered nurse to administer my medication. There are times and places where, obviously, registration is going to be crucially important.

It is important that we do do this review. This is not about just putting something off. It will not be, as the sponsor of this bill, Carmel Sepuloni, has said, us bringing back the exact same bill. No, once this review has been completed and the Minister for Social Development has looked at it, when we bring back another proposal, perhaps for
mandatory social work, it will be comprehensive. There will be a definition, I believe, of what social work is. To simply say a social worker is someone who practises social work is far too broad and it is not going to achieve what we want.

At this point in time I cannot support this bill, although we do support the intent of keeping vulnerable New Zealanders safe when they are having social workers practising with them. Thank you.

KEVIN HAGUE (Green): When I began my working life in the 1980s I worked, for a time, as the research officer for the Auckland team of detached youth workers. Detached youth workers were social workers who worked with young people whom we, at that time, used to call street kids. The detached youth workers ranged from being highly competent, professional social workers through to people who were, actually, just people typically associated with churches, I have to say, who had no qualifications and no particular skills, just a particular motivation to work with those young people. The range of quality was extraordinary, from those who did good with the people whom they worked with to those who did harm.

I have spent most of my working life in hospitals and health care systems. So I want to pick up where Jono Naylor has just left off. In health care settings, most of our professions have mandatory registration and mandatory regulation. Social workers are one of the very few exceptions to that rule—an inappropriate exception.

If someone calls themselves a doctor, we have confidence that that person has appropriate training, and has the appropriate skills and knowledge to undertake the particular set of medical work that they are doing. We have confidence that they are experiencing ongoing medical training to keep their skills up to date—that could be a problem for Jono Naylor working for Alzheimer’s New Zealand. We have confidence that they work to a mandatory code of ethics. All of that we have confidence in, and that is important.

It is important because we need to trust the person who calls themselves a doctor. We need to trust that person, because of the capacity for harm if they do not perform their job adequately. In the medical setting it is obvious, is it not? We would be aghast if someone called themselves a doctor but actually was not really registered as a doctor or did not have those qualifications. It would be completely inappropriate.

But social workers are also so often in the setting where they actually have the possibility of causing harm to the people whom they work with, because those people are vulnerable. The reason why people are working with a social worker is that they have need, they are vulnerable, and therefore they need to be able to trust that the person calling themselves a social worker is in fact subject to all of that regulation, to assure the quality of the service that they provide. It is a no-brainer.

Mandatory registration of social workers is an absolute necessity. My partner is a social worker, and I know that the variability in the quality of work that I experienced back in the 1980s continues to this very day, even though we have voluntary registration. Voluntary registration has not proved to be enough. We need to go mandatory.

I want to finish by addressing the argument—if you could call it that—that has been presented tonight by members on the Government benches. Essentially, they say: “Well, we agree with mandatory registration. We agree with mandatory registration, but actually we want to have a review.” Well, what is the review going to address? The review is simply going to address the issues that are already canvassed here.

All of the words that we have heard from Government members will all be blown away, and in the tide of history what the good social workers will hear tonight is that this Government chose to vote against mandatory registration, chose to vote against professional standards for social workers, and voted against the issues of great social work.

ALASTAIR SCOTT (National—Wairarapa): I rise to oppose this bill. But I would also like to pick up where Mr Hague left off when he described the vast range of types of social workers who are out there today practising social work. We even heard Jono Naylor, the qualified, the graduated social worker. We know there are youth workers, as Mr Hague described. There are scout leaders. There are volunteers. There are people sitting on the end of phones, on citizens advice bureaus, on helplines—all doing social work, all calling themselves social workers. In some cases these
people will require to be police checked because of the work that they are doing and the people whom they are interacting with. In some cases a graduate degree is required, or perhaps even a postgraduate qualification is required for a particular role that they are doing in the community. But of course they are all doing social work.

The main reason that I oppose this bill is that the Minister for Social Development, Anne Tolley, is already putting in place a review of the whole system around the Social Workers Registration Act, and it is only sensible and practical that we wait for that review to be completed before we jump and make any ad hoc decisions that might be consistent or inconsistent with that review. Thank you.

CARMEL SEPULONI (Labour—Kelston): I commend this bill to the House.

A party vote was called for on the question, That the Social Workers Registration (Mandatory Registration) Amendment Bill be now read a first time.

Ayes 60 New Zealand Labour 32; Green Party 14; New Zealand First 12; Māori Party 2.

Noes 61 New Zealand National 59; ACT New Zealand 1; United Future 1.

Motion not agreed to.
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<td>12-13 November, Melbourne CBD</td>
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