

HSU (NSW/ACT/QLD) AND AASW (NSW BRANCH) JOINT STATEMENT:

CALL FOR REGISTRATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

This Joint Statement calls for the registration of professional social workers through establishing a Social Work Registration Board in NSW.

There are already 15 professions, including psychology and Chinese medical practitioners, covered by the standards of practice, but social workers are still not included. This is despite several recommendations, including Coroner's reports, that this be corrected.

The primary goal of social work regulation is to protect the public from unprofessional practice. Regulation can also provide confidence for employers that the registrants are from accredited university courses and are undertaking on-going professional development.

Many countries have recognised the dangers to the public and regulate the social work profession. These include the USA, New Zealand, the UK, Ireland and Canada. Australia is now out of step with most comparable countries.

The NSW Branch of the AASW, the national professional Association of Social Workers, has long advocated that the only way to optimise quality, safe social work practice is through the national regulation of the profession, which will define competent scopes of practice and set and protect standards in relation to the education, practice and continuing professional development of social workers.

The HSU (NSW/ACT/QLD) is a specialist union that covers members working in public hospitals, ambulance, aged care, allied health, private hospitals, imaging, pathology and disability care. With over 45,000 members across NSW, ACT and QLD. We recognise many of our members are social workers and that social work registration will improve not only public safety, but their conditions as workers.

We the undersigned advocate for the registration of social workers, which would:

1. Define and protect professional educational and practice standards
2. Define safe and competent scopes of practice for social workers
3. Require mandatory hours of annual continuing professional development in order to ensure skills and knowledge remain up to date
4. Require social workers engage in regular professional supervision to debrief traumatic and complex situations.
5. Require social workers meet standards in relation to practice
6. Require that mandatory criminal/police and other checks are undertaken
7. Ensure that unqualified people cannot use the term 'social worker' to mislead the public and provide unqualified and/or unaccountable services, which have the significant potential to cause harm.
8. Providing a searchable online register of registered and deregistered social workers, which would provide the public and employers with instant information about a person's registration status.

Signed

AASW NSW Branch
President

HSU (NSW/ACT/QLD)
Secretary

AASW
National President