

# THE WEST AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL WORKER

## *President's Report*

The last Directors' Meeting of the National Association was held on 29-31 March in Canberra. This report will confine itself to the issues of greatest importance that were addressed at that meeting.

### **Membership fees**

It was decided at the outset that there would be no fee increase for 1996/97 and due to some inventive budgetary arrangements there will be an increased capitation return to Branches. In the short term however, that is for the first financial year of this increase, the money gained through the capitation increase will be used to provide information technology support to Branches. The new capitation calculation will be based on a percentage return without the deduction for insurance etc.

### **Continuing professional education**

Two important reports were tabled at this meeting. The first to do with continuing professional development, and it is pleasing to note that the Association is moving more quickly down this track. There will need to be however, considerable amendments to the Articles of Association to allow for the establishment of a mandatory system of continuing professional development. The decision taken at the last Directors' Meeting was to pilot the proposed program in the first instance, prior to moving into, (in 1997) a full mandatory scheme. The scheme will however, be dependent upon changes to the Articles of Association.

### **Entry requirements into the profession**

The second important report tabled was the report commissioned to examine alternative entry into the profession. This was an interim report, and in a sense presented to the Directors questions that were largely known but need to be addressed. It is hoped that the final report will offer some clear direction in terms of entry into the profession and allow for re-examination of what the requirements are. It was resolved at the meeting that admission to membership, given some base entry requirements, would be largely to do with broad social work educational attainments, rather than specified curriculum content.

### **Appointment of Chief Executive Officer**

The Association has also now appointed an Executive Director. It's also interesting to note that our new CEO, Ian Rentsch will visit Western Australia some time this year and members will

given the chance to meet with him. He has considerable experience in all the areas necessary for the future development of the Association.

The Association has also committed itself, through the CEO to undertake to purchase property in the ACT as an investment and as a way of reducing its recurrent expenditure through rental.

The Association is currently in an extremely healthy financial position at the national level, although some branches are continuing to experience cash flow and financial pressures. Because of this, motions were passed at the end of the meeting, in relation to the capitation return, which in effect, for small branches amounted to a loan for the purchase of IT, with the larger branches receiving a re-imbusement as money flows in. This decision at the end of the meeting caused a little dissension and when put to the vote was won by a very narrow margin.

### **Response to leading article in April newsletter**

I have decided to confine this President's Report to a brief summary of the Director's Meeting. The next edition of the newsletter will have a considerable amount of space devoted to issues and responses to the leading article in the April edition of this newsletter. There has been considerable reaction to that article, some decidedly in favour of the point of view expressed in it and some against. This is a healthy debate and demonstrates quite clearly that issues of a controversial nature need to be aired, debated and considered.

I have been criticised by some for the publication of the article. The President does not usually exercise a power of veto over publications in the newsletter. If there is concern about a particular contribution the Editor will seek another opinion before acceptance for publication. I do not intend at any time to censor material, as in a democratic and free society, such as I still believe ours is, freedom of speech is the paramount freedom, and one that I will continue to defend. Airing of differences in point of view are critical to our profession and fundamental to a democracy. The debate, while causing some angst, is healthy and needs to be had.

**BRIAN WOOLLER**

## ***Happenings in academia: a conference on qualitative research and social work practice***

In November last year the Schools of Social Work, Nursing and Occupational Therapy at Curtin University co-sponsored an interdisciplinary and international conference in Qualitative Research entitled *Beyond the Boundaries: Creating, Connecting and Confronting*. Over two days there were some eighty conference presentations in four streams of methodology, education, practice and stories from the field. Among the Keynote speakers, social work was represented by Malcolm McCouat of Queensland University who presented a paper *Drawing Together Traditions for Practice*, jointly authored with Colin Peile, also of Queensland University.

Overall the conference addressed the issue that ultimately all academic disciplines and practice professions are about serving human needs. But how do we understand and know such needs? This was seen to be the driving question in the recent emergence of qualitative research across a range of disciplines. The global communities of the Humanities and the Sciences are increasingly being called upon to reflect on:

- what do we know
- how do we know what we know, and
- how does this inform our practice in everyday life?

Traditionally research was seen as separate from every day practice and only to be called on to find solutions to pressing problems. Increasingly we are confronted with the realisation that this will never be enough. As the world keeps on changing it now becomes evident that we need to make as well as find answers in a manner that collapses distinctions between practice, research and policy. The field of practice research brings to the fore the notion of practitioner as researcher and meaning maker in every day actions. Human service workers need to work together in constructing a society that serves humanity. There are many answers, many truths and many ways of knowing these. The task is to creatively weave meaning from among these possibilities, so that our actions connect to make a world we can live in.

Going beyond disciplinary and traditional research boundaries as all participants were invited to do in this conference, provided a rich and timely opportunity to explore the potential of qualitative research approaches in this task. The proceedings published out of the conference have now been sold out but are available through library outlets.

What I found particularly interesting as a social work educator and one of the organising chairs of this conference, was how much commonality people coming together from diverse contexts of the human services shared. Crossing our normal boundaries allowed for reflection on the challenges confronting each of us in our diverse local areas and the patterns of connection between us. It was good to be part of social work, nursing and occupational therapy as practice disciplines, taking a leadership role in organising such a forum.

The Schools involved hope to continue their collaboration in mounting future qualitative practice research forums and on behalf of Social Work I would welcome input from the field as to topics and fields of interest for future such conferences.

**DR FRANCES CRAWFORD**  
**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK, CURTIN UNIVERSITY**

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## **HEALTH UPDATE**

In December 1995, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Con Sciacca, announced the introduction of the Repatriation Comprehensive Care Scheme (RCCS), which aims to improve health outcomes for those in the veteran community who have complex/chronic conditions through better coordination of the care provided for them.

Under RCCS, the LMO will have responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the patient's overall progress with individual health care professionals continuing to be responsible for the particular treatment they provide.

A key feature of the RCCS is the establishment of a working partnership between the LMOs and other care providers to produce the best possible health outcomes for veterans. Normal referral protocols require that, in the interests of the patient, there be open and adequate communication between the LMO and the providers to whom the LMO has referred patients. The Department expects that these protocols will be observed under the new arrangements.

Under the RCCS, the Department is conducting a trial of "Annual Health-Care Plans" for the most chronically ill patients. LMOs may need to talk to individual providers to reassess the current treatment arrangements for this small but vulnerable group of patients.

Allied health professionals should find that, where an LMO refers a veteran to them, the LMO will provide the information that is necessary to understand the veteran's relevant medical history and the desired health outcome for the veteran. As the care coordinator, the LMO will also need to be informed by providers on the progress and outcomes of the care being provided. This reciprocal sharing of information is an essential part of these new arrangements. Members who would like to know more about the RCCS should contact the State Office of the Department of Veteran's Affairs in their capital city.

*The Association acknowledges the strong support it has received from **Bandt Gatter and Associates** and **Family and Children's Services**, who have both agreed to be Principal Sponsors of the AASW's 1996 State Conference.*

## Stories from Yesterday

Are you the missing link? If so, there is a Branch out there that would love to hear from you. As part of the 50th Anniversary celebrations, all Branches are compiling early and/or oral histories of their membership. But problems are arising

Early members may have moved from their original Branches, sometimes names have changed and now these members cannot be located. They are the missing links. If you were an early member of another Branch please make contact with them - that Branch may wish to include your piece of history.

Perhaps you are in contact with social workers or retired people who no longer belong to the Association. If so, please pass on this message. The Branches will have even greater problems tracking down these people. Of course, if you have stories and recollections of your Branch or pioneered a new service and are not yet involved with the 50th Anniversary, please call your own Branch - they will welcome the contact.

And what about those old records, letters and memorabilia stored in boxes that haven't been opened for years!!! Now is the time to have a look at them, perhaps they could be used in a Branch display.

The 50th Anniversary Branch representatives and addresses are listed - we look forward to hearing from you.

### CONTACT

- ☒ ACT - Ethel McGuire, AASW Ltd GPO Box 754, Canberra ACT 2601
- ☒ NSW - Kerri Gardner, AASW Ltd, Room 5, 55 Albion Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010
- ☒ Hunter - Liane Flynn, AASW Ltd, PO Box 240 Newcastle NSW 2300
- ☒ Queensland - Helen Munck, Jenny Smith, AASW Ltd, PO Box 1015, Milton Qld 4064
- ☒ North Queensland - Bob Hinds, AASW Ltd, PO Box 1610, Townsville Qld 4810
- ☒ Victoria - Deb Absler, AASW Ltd, PO Box 367, Carlton Vic 3053
- ☒ South Australia - Lyn Monash, AASW Ltd, GPO Box 1549, Adelaide SA 5001
- ☒ WA - Mary Joyce, AASW Ltd, PO Box 198, West Perth WA 6872
- ☒ NT - Kylie Quinn, AASW Ltd, PO Box 43212, Casuarina NT 0811
- ☒ Tasmania - Valerie Baxter, AASW Ltd, PO Box 344, Moonah Tas 7009

## Chronic Spinal Pain Management Model for General Practitioners

The Health Sub-Committee, on behalf of the Branch, is currently compiling a list of social workers who work in the field of pain management in WA.

This list is to be given to GPs in the Fremantle area as part of an information package about allied health services for patients with chronic spinal pain. If this is successful the package may ultimately be distributed to all GPs in WA. The package is being developed by the Allied Health Sub-Committee of the Fremantle Regional Division of General Practice.

I have some information from the metropolitan hospitals about social work services but would like to hear from all social workers, including those in private practice and those in rural areas, who may be working in this field.

If you provide a social work service for people with chronic pain in general or spinal pain in particular, or know of someone who does but who may not be a member of the Association, can you phone me please on 382.7190 or write to me at the Social Work Department, Royal Perth Rehabilitation Hospital, Selby Street, Shenton Park 6008.

Thank you for giving this some thought.

**ROBYN KERR**  
CONVENOR, HEALTH SUB-COMMITTEE

## New Members

Maria Arends (Student Associate - Curtin)  
Dean Das (Osborne Clinic)  
Jill Hawkins (Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital)  
Siubhan Macdonald (Mofflyn)  
Norma Welsh (Student Associate - Curtin)

# Continuing Professional Education - Coming Events

## TUESDAY 14 MAY QUARTERLY MEETING

Research for social workers, presented by Pat Hansen (see enclosed flyer)

7 pm, Seminar Room 1, 189 Royal Street, East Perth

\$5 (includes refreshments)

## TUESDAY 21 MAY

**Women redefining child welfare (public seminar) - visit by Dr Marilyn Callahan**

9-11 am, Curtin Club, Curtin University (near Hayman Theatre)

Dr Callahan is visiting Australia on an Australian Government Commonwealth Fellowship. She is Associate Professor of Social Work at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. Dr Callahan has been a prodigious author of articles for journals, books, and monographs. Her areas of academic and professional interest are: feminist approaches to child welfare, child welfare history and policy in Canada, women in human services as consumers and practitioners, and distance education.

\$5 (includes morning tea), parking at visitors car park 11 (70¢ per hour)

Sponsored by AASW and Curtin University School of Social Work

RSVP 351 7030

## JUNE 1995 PUBLIC MEETING ON THE AASW REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

A document will be circulated to members by National Office giving the opportunity to comment on the requirements for continuing professional education and the proposed creation of Boards of Specialisation.

Members will be invited to comment in writing and/or at the meeting.

## JULY 1996 QUARTERLY MEETING

**Children who offend against other children- presented by Dr Tony Cavanagh Johnson**

Dr Cavanagh Johnson is a clinical psychologist from the USA with extensive experience working with children who offend against other children. This seminar will focus on working with children with sexualised behaviours who are either at risk of offending, or who have offended against other children.

## 24-26 SEPTEMBER 1996 AASW STATE CONFERENCE

**Building a civil society: responsibility, participation and choice**

Program coming out in May

### ATTENTION COUNTRY SOCIAL WORKERS

The *Education Subcommittee* would like to hear from social workers in country areas who would like social work educational programs presented in their area. Suggestions for topics and venues will be welcome. Contact: Anne Pickard (09) 273 0253 (W) or (09) 385 1960 (H).

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