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THE WEST AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL WORKER

President's Report

It is with excitement and privilege that I am writing this, my first president's report. Privilege in that it is an enormous privilege to be elected by one's peers to be the president of the WA Branch of the AASW. The AASW is one way in which we are able to actualise our commitment as social workers to ethical and accountable practice and to advocate for the individuals and families for whom our profession provides services. To be elected to provide leadership to these objectives is indeed a great honour and I thank you for your support in allowing me to do so.

The excitement I feel relates to my belief that the next few years will be a tremendously exciting time for us as social workers and as a profession. Make no mistake, I also imagine that the next few years will be tremendously challenging ones us, for our clients, and our profession! I suspect we can look forward to what the profession euphemistically calls "a valuable learning experience"!

Our profession is increasingly impacted upon by various models of economic rationalism and ideological conservatism that is likely to characterise the movement into the new millennium. We all seem to appear to be facing significant restrictions on our agency budgets and resources at a time when demand for services is increasing. These restrictions appear to be coupled with a trend towards providing a wider range of services.

While we applaud the provision of more and better quality services to clients, it does not appear that there is a concomitant increase in dollars or staff to provide these expanded and enhanced services, nor does it appear that such increase is likely to occur any time in the near future. The implications are significant. We must be ever vigilant in ensuring that services to clients are not solely determined by the dollar sign.

This is not to say that we as social workers should not seek to find the most cost effective way to deliver services. We must. However, in doing so, we must also be sure that service delivery decisions are driven by client needs. These needs should be ascertained in a partnership with the client and be based on sound professional assessment. The challenge for us is to ensure that we advocate for professionally sound decision making within the realities of the economic restraints we face.

On to a lighter subject, congratulations to Rosina Pruiti, Convenor of the Branch's 18th Annual State Conference, *The Making of the Millennium: Lessons from the past. Plans for the future*, and the members of her committee. Once again, the Branch was treated to a fantastically interesting and informative program characterised by high quality papers, presentations and workshops. As a Branch we should congratulate ourselves as we are one of the few Branches in the Association that hosts an annual state conference!

As I indicated at the State Conference, several areas have been identified as priorities for the coming year. The development of practice standards in conjunction with initiative at the national level is critical. Articulating clear standards of practice will move the profession further along in actualising ethical and accountable practice.

Social policy is also an area where I hope to see us place greater emphasis, both in terms of proactive development, but also in providing more timely responses to the government and agency policy proposals. In conjunction with this we anticipate identifying policy portfolio areas.

The Branch has always had a strong commitment to our CPE activities. Each year we have increased the emphasis placed in this area and I have no doubt that this year will to be no different. The AASW's Chief Executive Officer, Ian Rentsch, visited the Branch at the State Conference. In his meeting with the Branch Committee of Management, discussions ensued around how, in a partnership with National, the Association's CPE policy can be revitalised, especially in relation to the Accredited Social Worker credential. If you haven't already completed your log book and returned it to National office, can I encourage you to do so.

My congratulations to the incoming Committee of Management. I look forward to working together with them. A special welcome to the four new Committee of Management members, Anne Pickard, Chris Coopes, Sarah Kemp and Jennifer Hannan.

An online version of this newsletter can be found at
<http://westausaasw.highway1.com.au/>

If you are not already part of the Committee of Management or on one of the Branch's sub committees, I would encourage you to get involved. Working together gives the opportunity to not only further the goals of the profession and the Association, but will provide you the opportunity to network with friends and colleagues. Please join with us to make the move into the millennium an interesting and rewarding one.

BARBARA MEDDIN

NEW LIFE MEMBER BRIAN WOOLLER

Brian Wooller, outgoing president of the WA Branch was awarded life membership of the AASW to a standing ovation at the 18th Annual State Conference. Brian was awarded life membership for his long standing commitment to the AASW and the profession. He will officially be inducted as a life member of the Association at the AASW's National Conference in early September. Following below is the text of Brian's nomination that was prepared by the Branch.

It was with great pleasure that the Western Australian Branch of the AASW nominated Brian Wooller, Immediate Past President of the WA Branch of the AASW for life membership of the Australian Association of Social Workers.

Brian's contribution to the social work profession and to the AASW has been remarkably prolific and diversified. Brian has been a powerful advocate for the social work profession and the AASW at the state and national levels for over thirty years. His contribution reflects the depth and diversity of social work experience in action.

He has articulated, promoted and defended the ethics and practice of the profession, advocated in the industrial and political arenas for both clients and social workers; contributed to social work education and research as a practitioner and teacher and helped build the infrastructure which has strengthened the National AASW and which has enabled the WA Branch to excel in its work. His compassion and empathy combined with his sharp mind and managerial skill has helped many of his colleagues to retain their identity with the social work profession.

Contributions to the AASW

Brian has held many positions of leadership in the AASW. He has been president of the WA Branch for three separate terms. He was first president in 1971 – 72, followed by a term from 1982 – 1985. His third and current term commenced in 1994.

Brian's connection with the AASW began when he became a member of the Committee of Management of the WA Branch in 1968. He acknowledges that this early involvement was due in part, to the influence of the late Teddy Stockbridge who instilled in him a commitment to the profession and to the Association.

Brian has also held the position of secretary of the Branch from 1968 – 1970 and 1972 – 1980. He served as Branch Vice President between 1978 – 1979 and during 1987. From 1985 to 1987 he was Convenor of the Professional Practice and Ethics Committee. He also served as the National Treasurer of the AASW from 1985 to 1992, was National Vice President and was one of the chief architects of the status of the Association as a corporate body. In 1973 he was the convenor of the AASW's first national conference held in Perth.

During all his terms as Branch President, Brian has served as a member of the National Board. During this time, Brian actually put the concept of life long learning on the AASW's agenda as one mechanism for self regulation. That concept came to fruition nearly 20 years later as the AASW's Continuing Professional Education Policy.

During Brian's second term as Branch President, his leadership firmly established the Branch sponsoring state conferences, which today remains as one of the key continuing education activities of the Branch.

It was during his term as National Treasurer that Brian was integral in establishing the infrastructure at the national level that resulted in financial accountability and stability for the Association.

During his third term as Branch President Brian continued to demonstrate leadership at the branch level and in conjunction with the Vice President for Finance ensured that the WA Branch was not only financially sound, but achieved the financial security that has enabled the Branch to engage in much of the proactive projects and activities that are so richly appreciated by branch members and the professional community.

Brian has a reputation for being the WA Branch's public voice on controversial and sensitive issues impacting either on the profession, on individual social workers or on those who are clients of the social work profession. Brian can always be counted on to take the ethical and professional stands that are necessary to support workers, clients and the profession regardless of the personal cost to himself.

Brian's response to issues related to the social work profession always reflects clear leadership, a clear articulation of professional social work practice and are always consistent with the values and attitudes of the profession. For example he has consistently spoken out on the impact that removing social work positions from the local school district has had on service delivery in the Education Department and the students enrolled in WA public schools.

The WA Branch is aware of much of the behind the scenes work that Brian does in relation to the profession and in support of members of the profession. He is frequently called upon to support workers who are experiencing difficulty in their own agency or who may be under unwarranted public pressure. Numerous colleagues turn to Brian for support and advice on a whole range of issues, be they issues of ethics, practice or standards.

Routinely members of our profession turn to Brian for advice dealing with difficult professional situations or for advice regarding ethical dilemmas.

Another role where Brian contributes to the AASW is in relation to his colleagues where social workers may feel they are not being fairly treated by their employing organisation. Brian can always be counted on to provide sensitive and strategic advice in these matters. For example, recently, Brian has been involved in supporting a member involved in an unfair dismissal case and acted as a witness on the member's behalf.

Contribution to the Profession

Brian completed his social work degree in 1967. He began his professional career working with the Mental Health Services and was based at Havelock Clinic until 1970. It was during this time that he commenced his contribution to social work education when he started lecturing part time in the Kindergarten Teachers College Mental Health course. In 1971, Brian joined the Social Work Department at UWA initially as a Senior Tutor and later as a Lecturer.

In 1976 he took up the position of Deputy Superintendent at Bridgewater Childcare and Assessment Centre, a facility for children aged 3 – 18 years of age.

Brian also spent some time as Acting Superintendent at Riverbank, a facility for offending boys, before joining the Community Service Training Centre (CSTC) in 1978. At the Centre, he was called upon to lecture in the principles of residential care as well as develop external training in residential care and foster parent training, and to provide appropriate training to workers and volunteers in the human service industry.

Throughout his ten year period with CSTC, Brian also continued practice in individual counselling, family therapy and group work at the Family Service Centre. The Centre was a university based family services centre, the first of its kind in Australia.

In February 1980, Brian was appointed Social Work Supervisor/Assistant Manager, Mirrabooka Division, Department for Community Services (now Family and Children's Services) where he remained until 1993. His responsibilities included the management and direction of services and manpower resources within the division as well as chairing case conferences, the department's key decision making forum for wards. Later, as manager, his duties also included an increased responsibility for the coordination and the development of programs within the community, including the non-government sector.

Brian is currently Regional Manager, North East Region of the Ministry of Justice's Juvenile Justice Offender Management Division. His responsibilities lie with young people who are offenders or who are at risk of offending.

In his role as a social worker and as a manager in major government departments in Western Australia, Brian has supported his staff through some very difficult times in the profession and in their professional lives. For example, when there was an inquiry into a child death in the office of one of the agencies where

Brian was manager, he showed excellent leadership in supporting his staff during those very difficult times and insuring that their legal and industrial rights were protected.

When Brian was acting superintendent of a juvenile institution, he was unable to convince his employing agency that there was a need to upgrade the physical facilities for the juveniles housed there. When he couldn't work within the system as an advocate for his clients, he chose to involve an external agency responsible for physical standards in institutions in inspecting the facility. The report identified the need for significant changes to the institution, became public, and caused a furore in the news media. The result was an upgrade of the facilities in the institution.

Brian is also known for the role model he plays for members of the profession, be it mentoring new graduates or supporting social workers long standing in the profession.

In addition to the role Teddy Stockbridge played in Brian's career, Brian indicates that his grandfather, who was involved in the trade union movement, has been a major influence in his life. Brian says that he personally believes that being true to one's principles is the most important thing. Fortunately for the profession and for many individual members of our profession and for our clients, the principles for which Brian has been true to are those of the social work profession.

It is for these reasons that the WA Branch of the AASW nominated Brian for Life Membership of the Australian Association of Social Workers.

NEW MEMBERS

Sharon Barr (Fremantle Hospital)
Kaye Bell (Student Associate)
Gary Bowler (Family & Children's Services)
Louise Clarkson (Student Associate)
Susan Collier (Department of Defence)
Paula Edwards (Student Associate)
Jill Faulkner (Kinway, Albany)
John Fussell (Education Department of WA)
Karen Gaillard
Terri Godden (Student Associate)
Narelle Hall (Student Associate)
Dale Halliday
Helen Hemsley (Student Associate)
Susanne Jenner (Student Associate)
Rachel Kronberger (Communicare)
Anne MacQuarie (Student Associate)
Carmel Mousley (Student Associate)
Melanie Pearse (Rockingham Youth Service)
Lynne Ridgeway (Student Associate)
Sue-Ellen Simpson (Student Associate)
Peter Tulip (Family & Children's Services)
Caryn Witkin

CPE EVENTS

Case Management Reconstructed. Social work values in changing environments

This one day workshop designed by Deakin Human Services Australia, (Deakin University) for the AASW as part of the national Continuing Professional Education program will be held in Perth on 22nd October 1999 and Bunbury on 23rd October 1999.

The workshop is intended to promote informed and effective leadership in case management to achieve policy goals at both the macro and micro levels of social work.

Topics include:

- Health and community services policy at national, state and local levels
- Roles and responsibilities of social workers in the emerging purchaser/provider paradigm
- Service planning, including tendering and contract management
- Program design, development, delivery and evaluation
- Strategic partnering

Presenters:

- Professor Jan Carter Director, Deakin Human Services Australia
- Ms Virginia Fazio Consultant in health management education and training
- Dr Carmel Laragy Senior Research Fellow, Deakin Human Services Australia

Enquiries to Winsome Coutts (03) 9244 5290
email: wcoutts@deakin.edu.au

Cancer - Bad Luck or Warning Symbol?

10 September 1999, 9am - 1pm
City West Lotteries House, 2 Delhi Street, West Perth
Contact: Liz Retamal Ph:08 9443 2934, Fax: 9444 5410
Email: aaswwa@aasw.asn.au

Precarious Employment

13 September 1999, 7.00 - 8.30 pm
Social Sciences Building, Lecture Room 2, UWA
Contact: Dave Jones 9498 5138 (H), 9480 5500 (W)
Email: ruahkwin@upnaway.com

The GST - Politics, Power & the Poor

22 September 1999, 7 - 9 pm
City West Lotteries House, 2 Delhi Street, West Perth
Contact: Liz Retamal Ph:08 9443 2934, Fax: 9444 5410
Email: aaswwa@aasw.asn.au

Whose Dreams? Whose Realities? The Mental Health Services Conference

22-24 September 1999
Melbourne Convention Centre
Contact: Conference Secretary, PO Box 192, Balmain 2041
Ph: 02 9926 6057, Fax: 02 9926 7078
Email: enquiries@themhs.org

AASW, IFSW, APASWE, AASWWE Joint Conference Promoting Inclusion - Redressing Exclusion: The Social Work Challenge

26-29 September 1999, Brisbane
Ph: 07 3844 1138, Fax: 07 3844 0909
Email: social99@icms.com.au

Children, Youth and Anxiety Conference

11-13 October 1999
Adelaide
Ph: 08 8373 2258, Fax 08 83732090
Email: adf@senet.com.au

Australasian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect

27-29 October 1999
Perth Concert Hall and Duxton Hotel
Contact: 7th Aust. Conference on Child Abuse & Neglect
C/ Conference Secretariat 08 9332 2900, Fax: 08 9332 2911
Email: promaco@promaco.com.au

Share the Care. Carers 2000 Conference

29-31 March 2000
Brisbane
Contact: Conference Solutions, PO Box 238, Deakin West, ACT 2600
Ph: 02 6285 3000, Fax: 02 6285 3001

Precarious Employment A seminar on the changing face of employment and its effects on social workers and consumers

Presented by New Graduates &
Associate Members Subcommittee
13 September 1999, 7.00 pm - 8.30 pm
Lecture Room 2, Social Sciences Building,
UWA

Speakers include Dr Richard Hugman (Head, School of Social Work & Social Policy, Curtin University) and Dr Joan Eveline (Department of Organisation and Labour Studies, University of Western Australia)

Contact: Dave Jones (Convenor)
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