



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Service delivery issues

Several very concerning issues have arisen recently in relation to social work services in Western Australia. As you will see by the letters that follow the WA Branch is quite concerned about how the current State Government budget management process is impacting on service delivery.

As indicated in the letter to Premier Geoff Gallop, the AASW/WA is quite concerned that child protection is not seen as a priority in this Government. Not only has the State's statutory child protection agency not received any increase in its funding in a climate where the demands for such services seems to be at an all time high, the Department has not been exempted from budget restrictions or been provided any "top up" funding. The AASW/WA has urged the Government to rethink its priorities and ensure that The Department for Community Development, Family and Children's Services is given adequate funding to provide both child protection and family support/prevention services.

In conjunction with the letter to Dr. Gallop, the AASW/WA has also written to the Minister for Community Development, Sheila McHale, raising our concerns about how her Department is managing the budget restriction process and how that is impacting on service delivery. As indicated in that correspondence it is the AASW/WA's understanding that contracts of a significant number of field staff have been terminated, resulting in higher case loads, the frequency of contact between children and their parents impaired and a range of preventative services rescinded. The AASW/WA believes this is an unacceptable way to manage.

Also appearing in this newsletter are copies of correspondence sent to the Most Rev Barry Hickey, Archbishop of Perth and a Letter to the Editor of *The West Australian*. The AASW/WA is quite concerned about the lack of transparency of the process embarked upon by the Church in relation to investigating allegations of sexual abuse against members of the clergy and others in the Catholic Church. The Church is urged by the AASW/WA to engage in a more open and transparent process that will ensure justice for victims as well as transparent due process for those against whom allegations are raised.

A quick note to say thanks to Kathy Blitz-Cokis, the Branch's social policy officer, Chris Coopes, Vice President for Social Policy and Carolyn Johnson for assisting me in addressing these issues.

State Conference

In the last few weeks you would have received a range of materials telling you about upcoming events. First of all you would have received in the mail, the Call for Papers for the joint

AASW/AASWWE conference. This year the Branch will hold its 22nd annual State Conference (22 years - what a record!) in conjunction with the National Conference of the Australian Association of Social Work and Welfare Educators. The themes, *Working Across Borders, Stretch Your Mind: Strengthen Your Practice* coupled with the AASWWE's *The Nexus Between Practice and Education* should bring participants a wealth of skills, knowledge and information papers and workshops.

If you have a paper or a workshop you'd like to present, please send us your idea. This year, advice and assistance is available to help you finalise your ideas for a presentation.

Don't forget, mark the date in your diary now - September 30 - October 2, 2002 so you won't miss attending!!

Another piece of good news is that the Conference Committee will be supported this year by Cindy Gorton, project officer. Cindy, who is a Branch member and who has both chaired the Branch's CPE Committee in the past and has been a on going member of the Committee for many years, has had a wealth of experience in organising conferences for the non government sector and will, I know, bring lots of new ideas and support to the Conference. Welcome Cindy! I'm sure that Cindy along with Sarah Kemp, Conference Co-Convenor and Anne Pickard, Vice President for Education and the Conference planning committee will make sure you have a great conference this year.

Social Work Awards For Excellence

You also would have received in the mail materials for this year's Social Work Awards for Excellence. As I have mentioned

Continued on page 3

IN THIS ISSUE

President's Report	1
Contact details & office bearers (WA Branch).....	2
Letters	4
Reports	
Social policy activities	7
Industrial Subcommittee	8
Notices	
Publication deadlines	8
Subcommittee meetings	8
Speakers corner	8

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

THE WEST AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL WORKER

Editor: Greg Swensen ☎ 9370 0357 (W)

Email: gswensen@central.murdoch.edu.au

WA BRANCH HOME PAGE

<http://westausaasw.highway1.com.au/>

Printing by On Printing

Advertising rates (GST included)

Full page	\$195
Half page	\$110
Quarter page	\$66
Eighth page	\$50
Pre printed A4 insert	\$88

WA BRANCH OFFICE

PO Box 198, West Perth

Western Australia 6872

☎ 9420 7240

Fax: 9310 3936

Email: aaswwa@highway1.com.au

Executive Officer: Meredith Doyle

The West Australian Social Worker is published monthly by the WA Branch of the Australian Association of Social Workers (ACN 008 576 010). Articles, letters, opinions, enclosures or any other materials published in or included with the newsletter do not represent AASW policy. The Branch does not endorse or favour any service or organisation appearing in or included with this publication. Contributions are accepted on the understanding they may be subject to editorial revision.

NATIONAL OFFICE

PO Box 4956, Kingston ACT 2604

☎ 02 6273 0199 Fax: 02 6273 5020

Membership inquiries only (Freecall): ☎ 1800 630 124

<http://www.aasw.asn.au/>

AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS - WESTERN AUSTRALIAN BRANCH

President

Barbara Meddin ☎ 9350 7221 (W)

Secretary

Richard Wilkins ☎ 9347 6495 (W)

Vice President (Ethics & Professional Practice)

Brian Dodds ☎ 9301 3648 (W)

Vice President (Finance)

Norma Welsh ☎ 9881 0123 (W)

Vice President (Social Policy)

Chris Coopes ☎ 9301 3898 (W)

Vice President (Education)

Anne Pickard ☎ 9464 7062 (W)

Committee Members

Pattie Benjamin ☎ 9381 9496 (H)

John de Jongh ☎ 9431 8800 (W)

Jennifer Hannan ☎ 9263 2050 (W)

Mary Joyce ☎ 9346 4671 (W)

Sarah Kemp ☎ 0408 944 188 (W)

Francis Lynch ☎ 9442 3444 (W)

Dawn Mielins ☎ 9022 0714 (W)

Rosina Pruiti ☎ 9274 9411 (W)

Michele Speed ☎ 9432 3333 (W)

Representatives on External Bodies

Combined Health Professions Association

Representative: Mary Joyce ☎ 9346 4666 (W)

WA Council of Social Services

Representative: Chris Coopes ☎ 9301 3898 (W)

Student Representatives

UWA: Shared Curtin: Kat Etherington ECU: Vacancy

Convenors of Subcommittees

Administrators in Health Care

Co-Convenors: Amanda Humphreys & Jill Hawkins
☎ 9346 4666 (W)

Aged Care

Co-Convenors: Penelope Mogridge ☎ 9346 6000 (W)
Ivy Vukovich ☎ 9272 5983 (H)

Childrens' Interests

Co-Convenors: Jenny Terry ☎ 9450 2031 (W)
Pippin Margaria ☎ 9481 2203

Continuing Professional Education

Convenor: Anne Pickard ☎ 9464 7062 (W)

Ethics

Convenor: John de Jongh ☎ 9431 8800 (W)

Goldfields Regional

Convenor: Dawn Mielens ☎ 9022 0714 (W)

Kimberley/Pilbara Regional

Convenor: Tracey Nicholson ☎ 9185 0200 (W)

Mental Health

Co-Convenors: Anthony Collier ☎ 9531 8080 (W)
Michele Speed ☎ 9431 3400 (W)

Murchison Regional

Convenor: Liz Blayney ☎ 9921 4855 (W)

Professional Practice

Convenor: Mike Clare ☎ 9380 2998 (W)

South West Regional

Contact: Tracey Turner ☎ 9727 2330

State Conference

Project Officer: Cindy Gorton ☎ 9420 7240 (W)

Seeing Is Believing! Social Workers WORK IN THE UK

Come and meet Katrina Marchant to discuss your options

Monday 25 March 2002

Kings Perth Hotel, 517 Hay Street, Perth

6.30 pm - 8.30 pm

So many positions to choose from all levels of experience

Great pay and bonuses

Training in UK legislation

Climb to the top with career support

Interview before you arrive

Help with accommodation, visa, work permits

For further information

Tel 03 9296 2041

australia@amicusrecruit.com

Continued from page 1

previously, we are the only Branch in the Association to present these awards, although I understand National is looking into the idea.

Now is the time to send in your intention to nominate colleagues in any one (or all) of the 7 award categories. There is no doubt that social workers do "make a difference" and now it the time to recognise them. I would urge you to consider nominations now. As with the papers for the State Conference, assistance is available for developing your nomination, so don't wait, send in your intention to nominate form now!

Grace Vaughan Lecture

As you probably recall, each year the Branch along with the Government of Western Australia, Women's Policy Development Office and the University of Western Australia hosts the annual Grace Vaughan lecture. This year we are fortunate to have Lowitja O'Donoghue as the Grace Vaughan Orator. The lecture which will be held on Tuesday, April 30th at the UWA Octagon Theatre promises to be an outstanding event. The Grace Vaughan award for advancing social justice and social action will be awarded to Carolyn Johnson, Senior Case Work Supervisor with the Department for Community Development for her master's research on familicide. It's an evening you just can't miss, so be sure and put the 30th of April in your diary now. Thanks to Francis Lynch and Pattie Benjamin, who along with myself are a part of the tripartite Grace Vaughan Lecture planning committee.

Leadership training

In order to enhance the skills of members of the Committee of Management and as part of COM members' CPE endeavours, the Branch's Professional Practice Committee will commence the first of a series of leadership training workshops at the March Committee of Management Meeting. It is anticipated that the workshops will both enhance individual member's leadership skills

but also develop new and better ways to serve the membership of the Branch. Thanks to Brian Dodds, Vice President for Ethics and Professional Practice and the Professional Practice Sub Committee for developing the workshops.

Regional subcommittees

The Pilbara Regional Sub Committee has been having a series of informal meetings for members in the Karratha area of the Pilbara. I am planning to be in the Pilbara in April and will be part of a Sub Committee get-together at that time. Thanks to Tracey Nicholson for her work in chairing the sub committee

The Goldfields Sub Committee under the leadership of Dawn Mielens continues to meet in Kalgoorlie. Congratulations Dawn for all your efforts.

At the moment the South West Rural Subcommittee appears to be in hiatus. Hopefully, they'll be up and running again soon. The Murchison Regional Sub Committee is also struggling at the moment, but hopefully with some support they too will re-energize.

Branch budget

All vice presidents and sub committee convenors have been asked to submit their budget estimates for the 2002/2003 financial year. Each year the Branch supports a range of services to members such as the newsletter, outstanding CPE activities, the State Conference, Social Work Awards for Excellence, the Grace Vaughan Lecture and funds the activities of a dozen sub committees, just to mention some. There are also two new sub-committees on the horizon - the Social Action Sub Committee and the Forensic Social Work Sub Committee. This requires a substantial amount of \$'s.

Unfortunately this year has seen both a significant reduction

in funds raised by the State Conference and CPE activities as well as less dollars coming from the Branch's portion (capitation) of your membership fees. You would recall that the National Board of the AASW decided to change the amount of monies available to Branches by changing how capitation was calculated.

There is no formal notification from National as to whether the same will occur this year, but it is my opinion that this is likely. Given all of these factors, it is likely to be a difficult year for the Branch. Hopefully we will not have to cut services to Branch members, but at this point there is no guarantee that it won't be the case. Francis Lynch, Branch A/Vice President for Finance and I will keep you posted.

In closing, thanks to all Committee of Management members, sub committee chairs and members and all Branch members who put so much time and energy into the Association and the profession. There is no doubt that it really makes a difference!!

BARBARA MEDDIN
BRANCH PRESIDENT

LETTERS

*Hon. Dr G I Gallop
Premier; Minister for Public Sector
Management; Federal Affairs, Science,
Citizenship and Multicultural Interests*

Dear Premier,

The Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) (WA Branch) congratulates the State Government on the "Drug Summit" initiative. We note that the Summit generated many strategies in the battle against illicit drugs.

As you would no doubt be aware the community and people affected by illicit drugs eagerly awaited the Government's response. With this in mind, the AASW was extremely pleased with the Government's decision to adopt the majority of the Summit recommendations.

The AASW aspires to the implementation of as many Government supported recommendations as possible to achieve outcomes. A critical necessity in this endeavour is an increase in resourcing to relevant agencies that would be required to deliver the endorsed services. Without adequate resources, the desired outcomes will not realistically be achieved.

As the professional association representing key service providers, the AASW hopes that the Government will ensure that social workers are part of the service delivery team for the fruition of the Summit initiatives. The AASW would welcome the opportunity to discuss the contribution our profession can make in the strategies so developed.

Thank you again for providing an opportunity to hear and discuss a broad range of opinions on how to tackle the drug issue.

Dr Barbara Meddin
President, WA Branch
28 November 2001

Social Work and Buddhism A Developing Framework

Hi! My name is Sally O'Connor and I am a PhD student at James Cook university. My research involves the exploration of Buddhist philosophy, ethics and helping practices and their potential to contribute to an alternative social work practice in the West.

I am hoping to contact a number of social work practitioners who either identify as Buddhist or who have a strong interest and knowledge in this area. Participation would include contact by phone, email or face to face, dependent on location, at a time or times convenient to those being interviewed.

If you think you might like to contribute and/or would like some additional information, please contact me at

School of Social Work and Community Welfare
James Cook University
Townsville Queensland 4811
email: middleway@bigpond.com

Thank you

Please share this request with others where possible

*Hon. Dr G I Gallop
Premier; Minister for Public Sector
Management; Federal Affairs, Science,
Citizenship and Multicultural Interests*

Dear Premier

It is with great dismay that the Australian Association of Social Workers, Western Australian Branch (AASW/WA) writes you in regard to the current situation in the Department for Community Development, Family and Children's Services which has resulted in the Department having a diminished capacity to carry out its mandate regarding abused children and their families.

As you may be aware the AASW is the professional social work body in Australia representing 6000 members Australia wide, with more than 800 members in Western Australia. Part of the Association's role is to advocate for adequate resourcing of services to Australia's most vulnerable citizens.

The AASW/WA is extremely concerned regarding the actions of your Government. These actions clearly indicate that child protection is not a priority. While I understand you have exempted a range of agencies such as Health, Education and Police from budget restrictions, this has not been the case for Western Australia's statutory child and family welfare agency, the Department for Community Development.

That decision is clearly increasing the risk to children and families of Western Australia where abuse or neglect has occurred, where there is a likelihood that maltreatment may occur or where preventative services could prevent these issues from arising.

It is my understanding that the Department for Community

Development, Family and Children's Services is having to make significant cuts in order to work within its current budget allocation.

Members of the WA Branch both from within the Department and from government and non government agencies external to DCD have indicated that this has resulted in both a reduction of staff and a cut back of critical services to protect children and support families.

The AASW/WA believes that this is unacceptable and urges you to both exempt DCD from the current budget management process and to ensure that this vital service delivery agency actually receives an increase in funding for both staff and client support. Only by doing so will the Department be able to carry out its statutory responsibilities to protect the children of Western Australia from maltreatment and support families in order to prevent maltreatment.

Dr Barbara Meddin
President, WA Branch
15 February 2002

Hon. Alan J Carpenter
Minister for Education; Sport & Recreation;
Indigenous Affairs

Dear Mr Carpenter,

I am writing on behalf of the Western Australian Branch of the Australian Association of Social Workers seeking the opportunity to meeting with you.

The AASW nationally has more than 7,000 members. In WA, the Branch is comprised of 800 professional social workers, a number of whom are school social workers both in the Government and non government sector.

The WA Branch believes that these are critical times for social work clients such as children and young people and their families in the West Australian education system. The WA Branch is especially interested in discussing with you the role that social workers can play in enhancing educational opportunities for children and young people in Western Australia.

In light of this, I would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you with a few key members of the Branch's executive to discuss these critical issues and how the Branch might work in partnership with your portfolio on these matters. Additionally, we would also like to speak with you concerning the issues of registration for social workers, given our understanding that registration for teachers and allied health professionals is a current Government agenda.

You would be aware that the Branch had contacted you previously, seeking to meet with you but you indicated that you needed time to settle into government first. I am hoping that now is a more convenient time for you.

I have asked Meredith Doyle, Branch Executive Officer, to contact your appointment's secretary with a view to setting up a mutually convenient time to meet.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Dr Barbara Meddin
President, WA Branch
30 January 2002

Hon. Sheila McHale
Minister for Community Development;
Disability Services; Culture and the Arts

Dear Minister

Enclosed please find a copy of a letter the AASW/WA has sent to the Premier of Western Australia. The AASW/WA is dismayed at the way the Government is prioritising child protection services and the resultant impact on the Department for Community Development especially in relation to Family and Children's Services.

The AASW/WA sees that by writing to the Premier it is advocating for the Department and encouraging the Premier to exempt the Department from the current budget restrictions. The AASW/WA has also called for an increase in funding to the Department.

In addition, however, the AASW/WA is very disappointed in the manner in which you, as Minister and the Department have chosen to manage the current restrictions.

Members both within the Department, from government and non-government agencies external to it, and others concerned about what is occurring, have indicated to the AASW/WA that the process has been responsible for a reduction of contract field staff and a restriction of expenditure for a range of client support services.

The result, as reported, has been an increase to already unacceptably high case load numbers, the shutting down or drastically reducing the staff in some metropolitan Lifeskills teams, a real reduction of contact between children and their parents and the elimination or reduction of vital preventative, outreach and advocacy services to parents such as Parent Information Centres and the programs of the Parent Help Centre. These reductions are particularly worrying in country areas where there is already a scarcity of professionally qualified staff and an absence of alternative services to the Department.

A range of outcomes is happening as a result. Whilst there is no doubt that the Department is prioritising emergency responses, it appears that the Department is primarily able to carry out tasks and short term interventions rather than provide the in-depth assessment or intensive services that are required.

It also appears that even with the introduction of a range of contact strategies, this is having minimal impact. Moreover, it is also reported that workers are hesitant to make realistic service plans that they believe are necessary particularly in terms of contact because they have received the message that there will be no funding available to implement them.

Furthermore the increase in case load size increases the pressure on staff, increases risk in service assessment and delivery and places more pressure on supervisory staff who already have difficulty in providing adequate supervision, again due to inadequate resourcing of these positions.

The AASW/WA believes that outcomes such as these are unacceptable. They are unacceptable as they affect the lives and welfare of children and their families, and could, in the worse case scenario, result in the death of a child.

While initiatives such as policy development, non core training, and filling of non field positions are important, in this high risk climate, engaging in such activities at the expense of field services is inappropriate.

The AASW/WA would like to hear from you and your Department urgently as to how a more appropriate budget management plan can be implemented such that children are not placed at risk

nor their families left unsupported.

Christopher Coopes
Vice President for Social Policy
15 February 2002

**Mark Sullivan, National Secretary
Commonwealth Department of Family and
Community Services**

Dear Mr. Sullivan,

The Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW - WA Branch) congratulates the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services on the "Abuse and Neglect Hotline" initiative. The "Hotline" provides an avenue of protection for some of the most vulnerable members in our community. In particular, it provides another forum to protect children with disabilities.

The AASW is heartened to witness the Department's public promotion of affirming people's right to be safe from harm. Congratulations again and the best of success with the "Hotline".

Dr Barbara Meddin
President, WA Branch
14 January 2002

**Most Rev B J Hickey
Archbishop of Perth**

Dear Archbishop Hickey

It is with great concern that the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW), West Australian Branch learnt of the Catholic Church's internal committee to deal with allegations of sexual misconduct by priests and other members of the Church. The AASW as a professional association represents 6,000 qualified social workers nationally. In Western Australia the AASW/WA comprises more than 800 members.

While it is laudable that the Church is showing a preparedness to respond to the allegations made against it, there are serious questions about the advisability of any such response or investigation being conducted by the institution whose members are the subject of the allegations.

The issue of children being abused while in the Church's institutional care or when in contact with the Church is a critical one. Community concerns in recent years regarding such harm to children has been far reaching and has encompassed a broad range of formal institutions amongst which the Church is only one. The Community's concerns have been further heightened by autobiographical accounts portrayed in the news, media, books and in films.

As a result, the community finds itself quite well informed and, as you would be aware, emotions run high concerning these matters. For this reason, it is not sufficient only for justice to be done, it is important that justice also be seen to be done.

History has shown that in-house investigations of other formal institutions such as the military or the police have done nothing to quiet community concerns when allegations have been raised against them. Such investigations have been subjected to continued ongoing concern and innuendo about the validity of the process.

The only way these concerns can be satisfactorily addressed is through an external independent investigation, which can offer a level of transparency not afforded by an internal investigation. No other solution will provide the community or the children with

assurance of a just process.

The AASW therefore urges that the Church engage in a process that affords greater transparency and accountability than that proposed by an internal committee in its response to the allegations raised against it. There is no doubt that it would be in the Church's best interest to engage in a process that has credibility with the community so that the allegations may be laid to rest once the investigation is completed.

Dr Barbara Meddin
President, WA Branch
5 February 2002

**Letters to the Editor
The West Australian**

Dear Editor

It is with great concern that the Australian Association of Social Workers, West Australian Branch learned of the Catholic Church's internal committee to deal with allegations of sexual misconduct by priests and other members of the Church.

The AASW as a professional association represents 6,000 qualified social workers nationally. In Western Australia the AASW/WA comprises more than 800 members.

While it is laudable that the Church is showing a preparedness to respond to the allegations made against it, there are serious questions about the advisability of any such response or investigation being conducted by the institution whose members are the subject of the allegations.

The issue of children being abused while in the Church's institutional care or when in contact with the Church is a critical one. Community concerns in recent years regarding such harm to children has been far reaching and has encompassed a broad range of formal institutions amongst which the Church is only one. The Community's concerns have been further heightened by autobiographical accounts portrayed in the news, media, books and in films.

As a result, the community finds itself quite well informed and emotions run high concerning these matters. For this reason, it is not sufficient only for justice to be done, it is important also that justice be seen to be done.

History has shown that in-house investigations of other formal institutions such as the military or the police have done nothing to quiet community concerns when allegations have been raised against them. Such investigations have been subjected to continued ongoing concern and innuendo about the validity of the process.

The only way these concerns can be satisfactorily addressed is through an external independent investigation, which can offer a level of transparency not afforded by an internal investigation. No other solution will provide the community or the children with assurance of a just process.

The AASW therefore urges that the Catholic Church engage in a process that affords greater transparency and accountability than that proposed by an internal committee in its response to the allegations raised against it.

There is no doubt that it would be in the Church's best interest to engage in a process that has credibility with the community so that the allegations may be laid to rest once the investigation is completed.

Dr Barbara Meddin
President, WA Branch
5 February 2002

Ian Rentsch
CEO, Australian Association of Social Workers

Dear Ian

I am writing on behalf of the WA Branch Committee of Management to say how pleased the Branch is with the progress that is being made at the National level concerning Medicare rebates for clinical social work practitioners. While we are all aware that there is a lot more to be done before achieving such will become a reality, we are pleased that progress is occurring.

Progressing this matter will not only provide social workers the recognition as professionals that is warranted but more importantly it will ensure equity and access for clients whose preference (or circumstances) are such that they prefer to seek clinical social work services. Please keep us posted as to further progress.

Dr Barbara Meddin
President, WA Branch

Dr Barbara Meddin
President, WA Branch

Dear Barbara,

Thank you for the encouragement regarding the efforts to gain private health rebates for social workers. You are right. It is only the beginning. We will keep everyone informed of progress.

Ian Rentsch

High Profile Staff Member for KinWay Relationship Services Anglicare WA

Ms Jennifer Hannan, BSW (Hons), Cert. Fam. Ther. (Syd), MAASW, AIMM., has more than 20 years practice experience in both government and non-government agencies across Australia, providing clinical counselling services to individuals, couples and families.

Her more recent practice experience has been in the area of working therapeutically with children who have been witnesses to violence and in the management of counselling and education training services. Her last position was as Director of Services for Relationships Australia WA.

Ms Hannan is currently Clinical Manager of Anglicare WA's Relationship Services and is able to offer professional clinical and management supervision to colleagues in social work or other related counselling/health professions.

Supervision is not always accessible in organisations where you work and KinWay, through Jennifer's expertise, can provide a highly professional service at a reasonable cost, at a time that is suitable to you.

Rural and remote area social workers can be accessed via a 1800 telephone number.

**For further information
Phone KinWay on (08) 9263 2050**

What the Branch Has Been Doing On Your Behalf In Social Policy

There have been a range of issues raised, researched and commented on this month. Apart from liaising with some of the sub-committees and individuals, considerable time has been spent addressing formal government submissions. The following points reflect some of the work undertaken;

The Health Department review of the *Acts Amendment (Abortion) Act 1998*. The review explored the operational effectiveness of the changes to the *Health Act* and the *Criminal Code* in relation to termination of pregnancy.

Research and information collection has begun on the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission inquiry into refugee children in detention. This inquiry is open until mid-March and we hope to have completed a submission paper with information from several agencies and sources.

Allied Health Taskforce on Workforce Issues is an area being investigated by the State Government. The consultation is looking at shortages in the allied health professions, including social work and how this can be addressed.

The Catholic Church's investigation into alleged sexual misconduct by various church members was clarified. There were several stories and letters to the editor in *The West Australian*

which raised concern about the Church's internal investigation processes. As a result of subsequent follow ups with relevant Church staff a letter was written to Archbishop Hickey and the West Australian paper highlighting the need for a more transparent assessment method.

WACOSS "Housing and Sustainable Communities Indicator Project" - The AASW is intending to be part of the consultation process which is looking at social sustainability, amongst other things. (For more information see <http://www.wacoss.org.au>)

"Inquiry into response by government agencies to complaints of family violence and child abuse in Aboriginal communities" Chaired by Magistrate Sue Gordon- is seeking submissions. The Branch has obtained the terms of reference and Coroner's report that led to the establishment of the inquiry and is now assisting in coordinating a response from the AASW. If you want to be involved please contact me.

Members please feel free to contact me with information on issues I have mentioned or if you would like to comment on a particular area. My email is blitz-cokis@iinet.net.au.

KATHY BLITZ-COKIS
PROJECT OFFICER SOCIAL POLICY

SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

Children's Interest Group

last Thursday of the month at 5.30 pm
 State Child Development Centre
 Building No. 12 Rheola St West Perth
 Contact: Jenny Terry Tel: 9450 2031
 email: jterry@cyllene.uwa.edu.au

Administrators in Health

First Wed of the month at 4 pm
 Social Work Dept, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital
 Contact: Amanda Humphreys & Jill Hawkins Tel: 9346 4666
 Feb 6th

Aged Care

Third Wednesday of the month at 4.30 pm
 City West Lotteries House
 2 Delhi St, West Perth
 Contact: Penelope Mogridge Tel: 9346 6000
 Ivy Vukovich Tel: 9272 5983

Mental Health

Third Wednesday of the month at 4.30pm
 UWA House, Hackett Drive
 University of Western Australia, Crawley
 Contact: Anthony Collier Tel: 9621 0999

Continuing Professional Education

Third Thursday of the month at 5.30 pm
 City West Lotteries House
 2 Delhi St, West Perth
 Contact: Convenor Anne Pickard Tel: 9464 7062
 or CPE Project Officer Meredith Doyle Tel: 9332 0019

PUBLICATION AND DEADLINE DATES FOR THE WEST AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL WORKER

Issue	Deadline	Posted
April 2002	15 March	1 April
May 2002	19 April	6 May
June 2002	17 May	3 June
July 2002	14 June	1 July
August 2002	19 July	5 August
September 2002	16 August	2 September
October 2002	20 September	7 October
November 2002	18 October	4 November
December 2002	15 November	2 December

Are You Interested In volunteering On Our Support Programs?

- CanTeen works with young people aged 12 - 24 years
- Our members are patients, siblings of patients and offspring (young people who have a parent/primary carer living with cancer).
- We are in search for volunteers (psychosocial, medical and general) for our fantastic programs that enhance the peer support offered in CanTeen. Our programs include patients, sibling and offspring weekenders, State and National camps and 'Health Living'.

If you are interested please contact Natalie Long (Member liaison officer)

CanTeen WA, AH Crawford Lodge

55 Monash Ave, Nedlands

Tel: 6380 1884 or 0413 431 073

Industrial Sub Committee

Members of the WA Branch may not be aware that the Branch has an Industrial Subcommittee. This subcommittee, made up of senior members of the Branch, one of whom is a registered industrial advocate, is available to assist members with industrial matters by providing initial advice on problems or issues that members may have with their employment or entitlements.

Also subcommittee members are available to provide strategic support to members. Please note that such support and advice does not replace getting formal representation by a paid industrial advocate or from union membership.

Members of the committee are Brian Wooller, Pattie Benjamin, Maria Harries, Virginia Scott and Barbara Meddin.

If you wish to contact the Industrial Subcommittee, please contact Meredith Doyle, Branch Executive Officer, on 9420 7240 or via email aaswwa@highway1.com.au.

CLASS REUNION

A five year reunion for all who completed their social work degree at the University of WA will take place on 20 April 2002

Venue and format to be finalised

Contact Joe Grogan

9272 6614 or mjgrogan@inet.net.au