



The West Australian Social Worker

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THE BEGINNING OF SOCIAL WORK IN AGED CARE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA: SOME PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS BY JENNIFER PAGE

By the 1940s neither aged care nor social work were particularly well developed in Western Australia. Apart from the important exception of the aged pension, the major form of help lay in the provision of institutional care. Then, as now, there was debate about the division of help between hospitals and establishments set up to care for the old people and the chronically ill. There was also anxiety that any form of help sapped the will towards independence. This was illustrated in the concern expressed in 1943 at the proposals to build what would become Mount Henry, until the 1990s the major State Government provision for women. A major requirement was that it not be too comfortable.

An opposite point of view was to be expressed as, after its establishment in the mid 1940s, the Social Services Department (eventually to become the Department of Social Work) at Royal Perth Hospital developed. Its staff expressed concern about standards at both Sunset Home (a government facility) and the Home of Peace (a charitable organisation). A parallel concern was also expressed later by the Commissioner of Health about boarding houses masquerading as hospitals. An Almoners' Report of the early 1950s pointed out that there was a need for more concern for elderly people and that this might reduce their use of hospital beds.

A remarkable woman became an almoner ('medical social worker' in more modern terms) and became head of the Royal Perth Hospital department. She was Miss JM Hill who combined an analytical mind with compassion and exceptional persistence. By 1954, in her Annual General Report, she was already defining and discussing the concept of geriatrics and in her tenacious way pursued the idea that this would improve the lot of elderly people. She also fostered the foundation of the Old People's Welfare Council (now the Council on Ageing). On her retirement she was to work with it first as a volunteer and later as a part time social worker in the early 1960s.

Meanwhile in Newcastle, NSW, a physician, Dick Gibson, and a social worker, Grace Parbery, had set up a home support service and a rehabilitation centre for older ill and disabled people. This was to become to some extent the model for the Geriatric Service set up by the Western Australian Department of Public Health. There was also influence from the United Kingdom, following a visit there by the then Commissioner of Health and the subsequent appointment of a geriatric physician and his study of the British system.

At that time, 1964, the major Western Australian Government provisions for older disabled people were ordinary hospitals, the optimistically entitled "benevolent homes" (where residents were known as inmates and in one had 'conduct sheets') and financial subsidy to a small number of organisations. Non-profit making agencies provided "homes," nursing homes (C class hospitals), convalescent homes, home nursing, home help and meals on wheels. Commercial nursing homes and "Rest Homes" existed and the numbers of the former had expanded rapidly with the institution of a Commonwealth subsidy. Needless to say, work with older people formed a large part of the duties of social workers in the Almoner Department.

The newly appointed geriatric physician had access to the two Perth Benevolent Homes, known as Mount Henry and Sunset, plus some out stations and a waiting list of over two thousand people. The forms for those concerned tended to deal more with what should happen to them after death than their needs during life. The physician took the most recent applications and discussed them with the applicants, their relatives and their GPs.

Where the application proved to be more than insurance, an attempt was made to assess physical, mental and social needs. This led to my appointment as the first social worker in the service. Miss Hill and I were at that time the only social workers specifically working with the aged and there was some feeling in the profession that this was a waste of our skills.

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The Geriatric Service by its adoption of a practice of assessment uncovered a wide range of unmet need that was to lead to involvement in policy, planning and administration as well as direct practice. Services in the country were even sparser than in the city and visits to rural areas for assessment uncovered many deficits. In particular an analysis of the circumstances of 500 people who had been assessed revealed many gaps in the services required after their discharge, and in particular the lack of a more domestic level of residential care than nursing homes could provide. As a result, Western Australia became the first state to define, foster and subsidise hostel care provided by non-profit making organisations. The social worker played an important role in defining the needs that could be met in such establishments, in setting up the parameters of appropriate architectural design, investigating the staffing methods and working with the organisations that were willing to join the experiment.

This strong participation was possible due to the acceptance by the physician of the contribution of social work, but also – and very importantly – because of the flat administrative structures of the Western Australian Public Health Department and in the Commonwealth Government Departments of Social Security and of Health. There was an ease of access by a level 1 social worker to the final decision-makers both informally at the tea trolley or formally at meetings that is impossible to imagine now with the deep tiers of middle management that exist everywhere. It also was the reason the inception of the hostel subsidy was possible.

At about this time, the Geriatric Service changed its name to the Extended Care Service. This was in recognition of the extension of help for as long as was useful to the person, its extension outside the hospital (although it was moving more and more to a hospital base) and outside the usual medical personnel to include handymen, home helps and so on. To the accompaniment of blunt and colourfully phrased criticism from the head of one of the schools of social work who thought this was not ‘real social work.’, a second social worker, Anne O’Ryan, joined what was the Extended Care Service.

It became possible to improve links with other services such as Silver Chain, residential care providers and other concerned organisations. Mary Sharkey was appointed to establish a Social Work Department at the then Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and was extremely supportive to the concepts and practice of extended care being established. Royal Perth Hospital, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and Fremantle Hospital gradually established Extended Care Departments that provided assessment, rehabilitation, help with accessing appropriate services and to a limited degree, help in the Government nursing homes in Perth. Social workers were considered vital to these services. These things had been achieved by the early 1970s.

The legislative framework that existed at that time included: the Aged and Disabled Persons’ Homes Act (a bringing up to date of the 1954 Aged Persons’ Homes Act) that subsidised non-profit making organisations to provide residential care mainly in the form of independent living units; the 1963 act which provided a daily subsidy for registered nursing homes; the Personal Care Subsidy Act (1969) which provided for subsidy for certain people in hostels; the States Grants Home Care Act (1969); the Delivered Meals Subsidy Act 1970 and the 1973 act that provided domiciliary care benefit to carers.

The last three represented the beginning of a shift in thinking from residential care to home care. This shift received impetus from a series of national inquiries that began under the Whitlam Government. A social worker in Canberra, Anne Brennan, was the secretary to the first of these and many social workers gave evidence. Funding for health and welfare projects increased. Consequently, as deficiencies were identified by the Extended Care team’s assessments in country areas and funding became available, it became possible to develop home care services

including nursing, home help, meals on wheels, day care and respite care based on hospitals. The first social workers (starting with Jenny Stevens at Geraldton) were appointed to country hospitals and were given special responsibility for Extended Care and hospital based home care services where they existed. As well they liaised with the Silver Chain Home Nursing Service and other organisations.

Social workers were going to other new areas. Helen Cattalini was appointed to Fremantle City Council under Commonwealth subsidy that required special concern with older people. David Buchanan, who had worked in Royal Perth Hospital’s Extended Care Service, went to Curtin University’s Department of Social Work where he set about giving greater emphasis to the needs of old people while Bob Mahar took responsibility for the subsidies section at the Commonwealth Department of Social Security. The emergence of psychogeriatrics meant that social workers in mental health began to work specifically with elderly people.

Meanwhile, in the late 1970s, the social workers in the State Government Health Department changed their focus as the hospital teams undertook metropolitan assessment. They expanded their teaching responsibilities to include nurses, enrolled nurses, hostel staff and students in tertiary education institutions. They also continued their work in the Government nursing homes that had changed over the years to give more recognition to people’s social needs including their autonomy. They undertook surveys in country areas, which led to new services which they helped to plan, implement and monitor.

Under the guidance of the senior social worker, the first social workers were appointed to peripheral hospitals, again with special responsibility for extended care patients. Geriatric physicians were either appointed to these hospitals or visited from the teaching hospitals so that assessment could take place. At this time, social worker and physician were the central members of the assessment teams, often with the extended care nurse, and with other disciplines being called in as necessary.

Social workers were involving themselves in other ways. Jan Carter undertook a study of the gradually expanding day care and published “Nothing to Spare,” the recollections of a group of women aged between 80 and a hundred years. She, together with Wendy Silver, wrote “States of Confusion” for the new Social Welfare Research Centre at the University of New South Wales. Social workers were gradually joining non government organisations and other local governments, an aged care residential facility was included in Pat Hanson’s research for the degree of Master of Social Work while Fred Robinson set up the Bureau for the Aged, later to become the Office of Seniors’ Interests.

This was all an indication of the growing involvement of social workers with the difficulties of elderly people, but it was also a sign that the community was becoming more aware of the needs of the rapidly growing older population. However while resources had improved in both quantity and range, the major funding still went to residential care in particular nursing homes. A further inquiry and its report “In a Home or at Home” in 1982 were at last to bring about a major change of direction.

Several interconnected changes occurred in the early 1980s. An industrial/business model began to be imposed on health and welfare services. There was an enormous growth in middle management and there was an expanding use of consultants. The State Health Department began to move away from providing clinical services thus severing to a large degree the direct link between practitioners and policy. Lastly there was an explosion of resources as a result of the new Home and Community Care funding. These all resulted in a major alteration in the way services were organised and provided. Just as this was about to happen, I left the service area and moved to research.

Looking back, there were advantages and disadvantages during my early experience. The advantages included:

- The flat management structure giving much more opportunity for direct advocacy.
- The State Government's direct involvement in the provision of care.
- The very direct communication with other organisations which were also relatively small.
- The ability of resources to be flexible making it possible to individualise care.
- Once they became involved, the regarding of social workers as major players nationally and at state level.
- The comparative ease of seeing the "whole picture" because the details were fewer.
- The real excitement that existed because of the possibility of reform.
- The relative ease of cooperation by formal and informal services in rural areas.

On the other hand, there were many disadvantages:

- Myths about ageing were abundant
- The range of resources was small and often non-existent in rural areas.
- It was easier to find someone a nursing home bed than something like transport.
- Even independent aged people were powerless and so the disabled elderly had no influence.
- Discrimination was rampant.
- There were few regulatory standards and these were very basic.
- Many decisions were made to avoid greater cost.
- There was considerable power broking in certain organisations often linked with organisational rigidity.

Despite the fact that many of these disadvantages have moderated, to someone who is now a bystander, there still seem to be some major issues of concern.

There is an enormous and apparently unresolved tension between accountability and prescription that seems to leave less room for creativity, innovation and flexibility. This inhibits change.

The core functions of social work no longer seem clear, perhaps in part due to "multiskilling" and the ill defined practice of "counselling." This may be the reason that social workers seem to have a less proactive role in policy determination. The fire that was around seems to have been quenched.

Basic social needs can still be accorded little attention, for example the meagre amount of uncommitted money left to people in residential care. While the independent elderly now have much more influence, the disabled elderly seem still relatively powerless.

There appears to be little questioning of the appropriateness of the industrial/business model now used.

Note: The names of the various Government Departments have changed many times over the years. The Public Health Department is subsumed within the Health Department of Western Australia. The Commonwealth Departments have changed structurally to the point that there is no true equivalent.

Inevitably there are social workers who made important contributions whose names do not appear here. My apologies to them.

AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

Category: Professional Practice

Recipient: Janet Rapkins

This member has been nominated because she has demonstrated a high level of skill in the areas of practice and teaching. Coupled with this has been a demonstrated sharing of knowledge, skill understanding, as well as expertise with clients and colleagues. The member is able to work very effectively with different clients as well as manage complex situations. Responses are given to clients in a quiet, focused and respectful manner, allowing both the social worker and client to work through the issues one at a time. The skill of diffusing a highly emotionally charged environment is regarded as one of the greatest strengths demonstrated by this member. Her approach to clients is always respectful. Clients quickly become engaged in the process because their personal knowledge and experiences are valued. The transfer of understanding to clients occurs at a fairly early stage of intervention, thus enhancing the client's feelings of empowerment and self-respect.

This member takes a reflective and intellectual approach to problem solving, while accounting for the feelings and fears of the client. In terms of sharing knowledge with colleagues and student social workers, this member leads and teaches by example in a way that improves the understanding and skills of student social workers, colleagues and clients. This has extended to conducting parenting courses, training for staff, foster carers, as well as other organisations. The member openly and generously shares

knowledge and experience with others, often demonstrating how it can be used. The member is a Senior Social Worker employed by the Department for Community Development in Busselton.

Category: Management

Recipient: John Berger

This member has been nominated because he has demonstrated being a 'hands on' type of coordinator, who has been directly involved in the support of foster carers and young people, while attending to his management and worker support duties. He has a collaborative approach to management and consults constantly with his staff on a wide variety of issues. He is always open to input into decisions, which impact on service delivery and he encourages other social workers to be involved in the management processes.

This member encourages innovation in practice and challenges workers to explore new and non-conventional ways of tackling difficult issues. He offers exceptional insight into problems and is able to support workers in making tough decisions and is a strong advocate for young people in care. He is committed to improving the structural processes both within the agency as well as within the wider sector for the benefit of young people. As a leader and manager, he is not afraid to confront and challenge people with influence and power in order to work towards this goal.

The member doesn't let traditional management processes constrain his creativity and innovative style. He is articulate and at ease with people from all levels, and in particular, with carers and young people. He inspires staff to 'go the extra mile' for clients while at the same time, allowing workers time for reflection. He has a commitment to providing learning opportunities for new practitioners and also encourages consultation in this process. He is always keen to pass on his knowledge and skills. This member not only supports his staff in this manner, but leads by example by challenging himself to develop as a supervisor and manager.

The member comes from a background of working in the areas of child protection and foster care in Victoria and is currently the coordinator of the Teenshare service provided by Anglicare for the Perth Metropolitan area.

Category: Innovation and Pioneering

Recipient: Leigh Sochacki

This member has been nominated because of her extensive work with the formation and continued development of the Interagency Collaboration for Children of Parents with Mental Illness. This has involved the coming together of many agencies, which have concerns for children whose parents are mentally ill. The programme has been pivotal in raising awareness of the various issues arising for children whose parents require re-occurring hospitalisation due to their mental illness. Several agencies have joined together with the common aim of improving the situation for what could be argued as one of the most marginalised groups in our society.

This member has worked diligently to facilitate and support the group over the past three years and has moved out of the traditional casework role with this work, but has used many of her casework skills to support her new role. She has helped to organise and facilitate a number of innovative events for mental health week and looked at creative solutions for the many issues that arise. Her commitment to the group is unflinching and she has encouraged and enabled other social workers and family care workers to participate and incorporate what they have learnt into their case practice.

The member continually works towards raising public awareness of the needs of children whose parents are mentally ill and has worked closely with the consumer representative to enhance her work. She continually seeks innovative ways of promoting and practicing her work. This has included various submissions to government departments and agencies as well as the sharing

of skills and ideas with a range of colleagues and representative groups. The member was nominated by Wanslea Family Services for her outstanding work.

Category: Ethics

Recipient: Lee Peters

This member has been nominated because of her outstanding commitment to ethical social work practice, as well as to social justice, which has been particularly illustrated by her contact with Aboriginal people. The member has a well-developed sense of community and problem solving in collaboration with major local stakeholders, which has effectively and appropriately enabled her to work with some highly contentious and complex situations.

The member has been very supportive of staff with whom she works especially those in remote and rural locations managing complicated cases. She has always aimed at ensuring staff moral is always at a high level. She adopts a mentoring style of supervision and has wide experience in professional practice. A consistent comment from people who have worked with her is her demonstrated empathy for the Aboriginal children and families she has worked with. She has often advocated on their behalf when such practice was not the norm. Her colleagues speak of her propensity for a respectful and culturally sensitive approach to working with Aboriginal families.

Colleagues working with this member consistently acknowledge her strong commitment to ethics and standards of practice in a range of critical situations. In 1990 she received a commendation from her Director General for her role in the development of the then new team leader structure. Later, around 1995/96, she also received a further commendation for her Director General for her contribution to youth justice.

At times when dealing with extremely difficult situations, the member did not sway from the appropriate response as prescribed by the AASW Code of Ethics. Her own personal integrity and respect for the values of confidentiality and privacy were enhanced and appreciated by those she worked with. As such, she has provided a very clear role model for others to emulate. Through her actions and practice, the member has consistently demonstrated a commitment to ethical and professional practice, especially in relation to services to Aboriginal children, their families and communities. She currently is on secondment to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in Kalgoorlie.

Award Recipients (L-R): John Berger, Jan Rapkins, Leigh Sochacki, Lee Peters

Letters

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

Dear Dr Gallop

Early Childhood Education Directorate

We were disappointed to hear that the Early Childhood Directorate within the Education Department has been devolved and that expertise in the area has been fragmented. Our understanding is that the Early Childhood Directorate was set up to give a whole of government focus to early childhood education, with a broader vision than just academic education alone.

We are very aware of the importance of the early years of childhood for predicting the outcomes for children in later life, in terms of their cognitive and social functioning, as well as their health. It is important that the early childhood years in education have this wider focus, as the earliest contact with the education system is likely to predict children's later experiences of learning and social interaction.

As social workers we are colleagues of early education workers and frequently work with people in the field on issues of importance to families with preschool children. The Early Childhood Directorate could have played an important part in developing new ways to bring the community together to meet the needs of young children.

Yours sincerely

Children's Interest Subcommittee
AASW WA Branch
2nd July 2002

A similar letter has also been sent to The Hon Alan Carpenter

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

Dear Premier

The West Australian Branch of the Australian Association of Social Workers is extremely concerned about the recent State Government's announcement to "identify savings" of at least \$50 million a year within the public sector (Media Statement P02/121).

The Government's role of financial decisions and balancing budgets is an onerous task and, understandably, is to be reviewed as needed.

Whilst the Association recognizes this responsibility, it is otherwise appalled at the current and prolonged lack of resourcing and funding in relation to child protection. To neither exempt the Department of Community Development from the announced process or the possibility that this funding will be further scrutinized under a "taxpayer" savings plan suggests that the protection of children is not of sufficient priority for your Government.

The Gordon Inquiry "Interim Report" has itself identified the "complexity for the difficult task of effective service delivery by Government to Aboriginal communities". Any further reduction to an already debilitated Department will undoubtedly increase

and cause the further suffering of families and children within the Aboriginal environment. One would have to assume this would impact on all communities in Western Australia be they Aboriginal or non Aboriginal.

You were also quoted in *The West Australian* on 27 June as saying that "the priorities were more nurses, teachers and police". The AASW (WA Branch) believes that nothing is more important than the protection of children and the support of vulnerable families. Furthermore, if the Government expects departments like DCD to embrace the intention of the Machinery of Government Report and to be able to implement the intended community development way of working, your Government must acknowledge that to do so requires significant resources as well.

The Association urges you to reconsider this "tax savings taskforce" and reframe the Government's stance to promoting prevention and increase the community's well being through long term funding strategies, not funding cuts. We would also urge you to exempt the Department for Community Development from any planned cuts in the same way police, health and education are so quarantined.

Yours sincerely

Mr. Christopher Coopes, MAASW, Acc
Vice President, Social Policy
2 July 2002

**The Hon. Larry Anthony MP
Minister for Children and Youth Affairs**

Dear Mr Anthony

United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children
8-10 May 2002

The members of the Children's Interest Subcommittee of the Australian Association of Social Workers, WA Branch, read with interest a letter by Dr Sev Ozdowski, published in *The West Australian* on 8 May 2002. The letter related to your and Dr Ozdowski's attendance at the UN Special Session on Children.

We support the comments made by Dr Ozdowski, that while Australia has a good record on caring for its children, there remain certain vulnerable groups for whom we could do more, and that there is a need to re evaluate some of our country's policies in regard to their effects on children.

We share Dr Ozdowski's concern for children being held in immigration detention centers and hope that the Inquiry which was recently undertaken will lead to a rapid improvement in Australia's treatment of this vulnerable and traumatized group of children. Australia must meet the standards set down by the UN on the rights of children in detention if we are considered to be a civil and humane society.

Our members would like to request that we receive information from the Special Session when it becomes available, and would be interested to hear of other initiatives in respect to the safeguarding of the rights of children. Thank you.

Yours sincerely

Children's Interest Sub committee
AASW WA Branch
2 July 2002

A similar letter was also sent to Dr Sev Ozdowski OAM, Human Rights and Equal Opportunites Commissioner.

It is difficult to reconcile this State Government's position on how to best serve the community of WA with the announcement of a taskforce to identify "savings of at least \$50 million a year" in the public sector.

On the one hand the Premier is publicly promoting his Government's track record in saving expenditure of about \$900 million since being elected. But on the other hand we have a State Government inquiry into the death of a young Aboriginal person and the issues concerning the "enormous challenges" for effective Government service delivery to Aboriginal communities.

West Australian people must question the Government's priorities and who they have been elected to serve because their "taxpayers savings plan" for the public sector will further cripple crucial Government agencies, as well as the people they are trying to assist. For example, the Australian Association of Social Workers, West Australian Branch is appalled at the current and prolonged lack of resourcing and funding in relation to child protection.

To not exempt the Department of Community Development from the announced process and the possibility that its funding will be further scrutinised under a "taxpayer" savings plan clearly indicates that the protection of children as well as the priority of community development is not of sufficient priority for the Gallop Government.

We thought the Labor Party promised to "work tirelessly and support and strengthen families wherever possible". The continual underfunding and lack of resources in the child and family welfare area is a time bomb waiting to go off. Can our community wait for it to happen or do we want something done now? I for one know what the Australian Association of Social Worker's answer would be. What is yours, Treasurer Ripper?

Yours sincerely

Mr. Christopher Coopes, MAASW, Acc.
Vice President, Social Policy
3 July 2002

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

The review period on mandatory reporting on suspected child abuse has now ended. The Branch completed a submission based on a focus group conducted in June with various WA Branch members. Please let me know if you would like an electronic version of the submission.

The WA Branch has invited an indigenous social workers group called "Koort Marr Kaart" to consider if they would like to become a special interest group of the Branch. Members of the Koort Marr Kaart group have expressed an interest in this idea which is greatly welcomed and much needed.

One of the areas that has been explored within the social policy agenda has been the WA Branch's relationship with the media in this state. To the Branch's credit and through a combined teamwork effort, the Branch has had letters published in The West Australian within a couple of months of each other. The last letter, published on the 16 July 2002, addressed the State Government's plan to cut

a further \$50 million from the public sector without exempting the Department of Community Development.

It is important that the Branch has a voice in the community which reflects the many and complex social issues members and our clients are experiencing. With this in mind, a media contact strategy is being developed which will aim to highlight issues and increase media coverage of the Branch's position.

On a national AASW level, the ALP is requesting feedback from the National Office on their proposal of a "National Commissioner for Children and Young People". If anyone would like an electronic copy of this document, please let me know.

If there are members who are interested in the paid maternity leave debate, please contact me because we can explore ideas that the Association may implement and link in with National office. Finally, important days in August are the 9th - International Day of the World's Indigenous People, 12th - International Youth Day and the 19th-23rd - Children's Book Week.

KATHY BLITZ-COKIS, SOCIAL POLICY OFFICER

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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

STATE CONFERENCE NEWS

The 2002 Conference for the Australian Association of Social Work & Welfare Educators (AASWWE) is to be held in conjunction with the AASW (WA Branch) State Conference

The joint conference aims at involving practitioners, academics & hybrids in a diverse range of interests, with a particular focus on the relationship between knowing and doing, theory and practice, research and policy.

Program details

After a welcoming launch at the Fremantle Arts Centre on Sunday 29 September, the first day of the conference, Monday 30 September, will be hosted by AASWWE, with a specific focus on educational issues.

The second day, Tuesday 1 October, will be jointly facilitated by AASWWE and the WA Branch. The final day of the Joint Conference will be coordinated by the Branch. This day will explore issues relating to four key practice areas:

- child protection;
- health and aged care;

- working with diverse cultures; and
- rural and remote practice.

Papers, presentations and creative works have been received for both conferences creating a diverse, dynamic and exciting program.

Key note speakers for the conferences are:

- Karen Healy, senior lecturer in the Department of Social Work at the University of Sydney;
- Jim Ife is Professor of Social Work and Social Policy at Curtin University;
- Greg Barns a columnist, company director and Chair of the Australian Republican Movement and a Trustee of the Coalition for the Reform of Refugee Policy; and
- Alison McClelland, Associate Professor of Social Work and Social Policy at Latrobe University.

We encourage all members of the social work community to register for what is going to be an essential three days of discussion, dialogue and action for social work in Australia.

For registration information contact: Cindy Gorton Tel: 9244 7797 Email: JonandCindy@bigpond.com