



CHECK IT OUT! APASWE

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From Aotearoa New Zealand

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Aotearoa New Zealand is a small nation of 4.4 million people in the South Pacific. Its original settlers were the Maori who probably arrived about 1000 years ago. Settlement and colonisation by Europeans in the mid-19th century, and today the country is culturally diverse. The largest city, Auckland, although not the capital (that is Wellington) is considered the largest Polynesian city in the world. The inclusion of 'Aotearoa' in the country name is one way of acknowledging the partnership agreement that non-Maori have with Maori. This partnership has its roots in the Treaty of Waitangi, written in 1840. This Treaty forms the basis for the bicultural arrangements which are meant to be at the core of the relationship between the government ("The Crown") and Maori. Social work organisations in Aotearoa New Zealand takes this partnership very seriously, and understands that that the Treaty forms an integral part of social work in our nation. This is part of what gives social work in Aotearoa New Zealand its unique character. It is worth noting that about 25% of people resident in the country were born outside the country,

which also adds to the complex cultural environment.

Social work in Aotearoa New Zealand

Social work in Aotearoa New Zealand is regulated by the Social Worker Registration Board, which registers social workers and provides annual practicing certificates. Unlike other self-governing human service professions such as physicians or nurses, the SWRB is a Crown entity, which means that social workers are regulated by government. Although currently social work registration is voluntary, it is widely expected to be compulsory within the next 12 months. Compulsory registration will allow the title 'social worker' to be protected, which means that people will not be able to call themselves social workers unless they are registered. Social work educators who teach practice papers, including field education and interviewing skills are expected to be registered. Although registration has been hotly debated over the last 30 years, a recent survey by the SWRB found that well over 90% of social workers wanted compulsory registration.

*"All the members of CSWEANZ
are members of APASWE"*



In September 2010 and February 2011 severe earthquakes devastated the Christchurch region in NZ's South Island. Social workers from all over the country responded to the need.



The Council on Social Work in Aotearoa New Zealand (CSWEANZ)

The Council on Social Work in Aotearoa New Zealand (CSWEANZ) is a council of social work educators and programme leaders of tertiary social work providers—polytechnics, wananga (Maori education providers) and universities—throughout the

country. It meets three times a year to share information, concerns and resources. All the members of CSWEANZ are also members of APASWE, and take a great interest in the regional and international context. CSWEANZ held a workshop in November 2010 to determine New Zealand's contribution to the APASWE discussion on the international definition of social work, and strongly advocated for a layered definition of social work. This would allow Aotearoa New Zealand to take cognizance of our unique bicultural practice and education environment.



Nikki Evans is researching the impact of the earthquakes on people and their relationships with animals.

At a recent meeting of CSWEANZ, social work educators shared a number of issues. Firstly, the SWRB 'recognises', or accredits, social work programmes; only graduates of these accredited programmes are registered upon their graduation. These re-recognition visits occur every five years, which means that the compliance costs for social work programmes are high. The SWRB accreditation occurs in addition to other government accreditations, internal audits, assessments and so forth. One of the challenges we face is that most polytechnic programmes are three year BSW programmes, while all university BSW programmes are four year. This creates some uncertainty among education

providers and employers. There are probably too many social work education programmes around the country, which means that, despite growing numbers of students in all programmes, finding high-quality field placements is becoming an increasing challenge, particularly in urban areas with many programmes. Many social work programmes are instituting more rigorous entry requirements; most have police checks already in place, but personal references, interviews and other requirements are also coming into force. In consultation with CSWEANZ and other stakeholders, the SWRB is also reviewing its 'graduate profile', the standards that new graduates are expecting to meet. This will create challenges to existing programmes to revise their curricula to meet these new expectations, but is expected to lead to higher quality graduates.

Compliance costs

Additional compliance costs are experienced in university programmes and some polytechnics through New Zealand's six-yearly assessment of academics. Each academic is assessed on their 'output' (publications, peer esteem, contributions to the research environment). Each institution places a high priority on these assessments as part of government funding is allocated based on an institution's ranking, and institutions provide support to colleges, schools and programmes depending on how well their programmes did in their ranking. This system creates great tension between teaching and research among many academics, as there is little recognition of the demands of teaching in professional education, but a high level of

interest is paid to publications and research supervision.

Balancing admissions with jobs

An additional shared concern is the development of the social work workforce, and the availability of jobs. Although social work is currently listed on the Immigration Department's skills shortage list, there is some anecdotal evidence to suggest that social work jobs are not as available as once they were. This is an additional reason to begin controlling the number of students that are entering and graduating from programmes around the country.



These New Zealand students at Northland Polytechnic in Whangarei used different colours to represent different parts of learning: fear of learning, what we bring to learning, and what we have learn

The Global Agenda

Social work educators are taking the 'Global Agenda' document seriously in Aotearoa New Zealand. Whitireia Polytechnic, in the southern part of the North Island, for instance, cancelled classes for an entire day during International Social Work Week to take part in Global Agenda activities. Most

academics have made the document available to students, and other activities are planned around the country during the life of the document. Furthermore, for the celebration of Social Work Day, they held three concurrent workshops on Social Justice Political Advocacy and Working with Refugees. The workshops were inter-active and each looked at an international, regional and local example. The workshops traversed Rosa Parks, Ghandi, Whina Cooper and the Land March, past and recent African examples, receiving and support refugees in NZ to community action against liquor licences/ gambling machines.

Students were invited to critically analyse the examples presented and identify

personal, family/community and global actions that could be adopted to mitigate the issues presented in the workshops.



Social Work students at Whitireia Polytechnic in Wellington are hosted at the 'Beehive', Aotearoa New Zealand's Parliament building.

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