



Welcome to the summer edition of *In the Loop*. As we approach yet another festive season it is hard to believe that 2013 is rapidly coming to an end. On a world scale it appears to have been a year of both man made and environmental disasters. Australia is once again ruled by men in blue ties and the Western Australian government appears determined to decimate the public services that are essential to the support of our ever increasing population.

Clearly whatever branch of the profession we work in we are going to be needed more but valued less. Under such circumstances it is essential that we are able to stand together and provide support not only to our clients but to our colleagues. It is at such times that belonging to a professional association becomes even more essential. We are fortunate in having a dedicated but very small group of Board Members who work tirelessly in their own time to provide an association dedicated to supporting members of the WA Social Work profession and continue to provide quality, affordable professional development activities. Our **Locum Register** and job advertisements that are sent regularly to members have become increasingly important to the growing numbers of colleagues who are facing redundancy. To advertise in or sign up for the register contact Tracey Nicolson.

At our last meeting we were pleased to welcome two new Directors to the SPSW Board. Chris Coopes who many of you will know and who brings with him a wealth of experience and Christina Guelfi who refreshes the Board with some new vitality. Welcome to both.

Editor

President's Report

ANNUAL REPORT 2013

This report contains a brief overview of the events of the past twelve months. There is a need for more volunteers to assist in a variety of capacities, if the work of the Society is to continue and grow.

I'd like to outline a number of activities over the past twelve months, as well as some matters the Board has been facing.

Continuing Professional Practice

Many well attended forums and seminars were held throughout 2012/13, organised by the Continuing Professional Education Committee, which is chaired by our Vice President, Dr Barbara Meddin. They continue to meet the demand for both quality and relevant professional development opportunities and I see no reason for this to diminish.

A great thank you to Barbara and the crew for their efforts.

Employment Register (Tracey Nicolson and Barbara Meddin)

This service has proven to be very popular and well used by employers and those seeking positions. Many thanks to Tracey and Barbara for their continuing efforts.

Booker Keeper

Three months ago, the Board agreed to contract a Book Keeper to assist the Treasurer with the financial administration of the Society. It has proven to be a valuable move, which the Board recently agreed should continue.

Special Board Meeting 9.10.13

A Special Board meeting was held to workshop and consider the future direction and work of the Society. We are limited by the number of members or persons available to undertake the work, so some rationalisation has to occur. In our endeavour to achieve this, the Board has agreed to develop the following;

Business and/or Strategic Plan

- This is likely to see the engagement of a Business Consultant to assist with the development of our plan and operational matters. More work is needed to progress this further, but it offers the prospect of the Society becoming much more focused on what we do, as well as being more strategic in how we do it.

Professional Indemnity Insurance

- This is a major cost to the Society, particularly when members don't renew their membership by the due date, or at all, and the Society is left with the invoice. Recent work on this issue has resulted in a reduction in the cost of premiums from \$242 to \$150 per annum per member, as well as looking at a clearer method of reminding and invoicing members for the membership renewals.
- The Board, through the Treasurer, has also commenced seeking information and quotes on cheaper professional indemnity insurance which would continue to provide the existing amount of coverage for members.
- Given the current deadlines for payment, the arrangements with Vero Insurances will continue for the 2013/14 financial year, with a reduced cost in the premiums.

Constitution

- Our constitution was last reviewed and amended in 2005.
- Sections of the constitution will require amendment to provide better clarity around procedural and legal

requirements. Such changes are yet to be considered by the Board, but once that has occurred, the amendments will need to be approved by a Special General Meeting of members.

Paid Position

Part of the strategy discussed at the Special Board meeting (on the 9th October) related to contracting someone to assist with the day-to-day management of the Society's work. The Board is of the opinion that it is financially possible, so the work on the duties (including a job description form) for the position has begun. Once this work has concluded, members will be advised of the position and details and given the opportunity to apply, before any external recruitment occurs.

New Website (Marion Palmer)

Marion Palmer has devoted an enormous number of hours to ensure that our new website meets our needs and is functional. I'm pleased to say that it is now operational. If you look at it, I'm sure you will agree that it is attractive, friendly and useful. Many thanks to Marion for carrying this project to fruition. www.spsw.net.au

Retiring Directors

The terms of office for the positions of President, Secretary, Treasurer and one Director (Marion Palmer) expired at this AGM. Each was subsequently re-elected at the meeting

In 2009, the Board increased the number of Directors to a total of eleven (including the four executives). **Currently, there are eight Board members, so there are three further casual vacancies** (Editor's note: two have since been filled.) ***If anyone would like to be considered for appointment as a Director, please let the Secretary or President know for consideration at the next Board meeting.***

Volunteers Needed

Several sub-committees exist to focus on particular aspects of our work, but we never have enough. ***More volunteers are***

needed, so if you would like to serve on a Sub-committee, please contact the Secretary Cindy Gorton (after February) or Amanda Perlinski.

Treasurer's Report

Board of Directors

The Board is the governing body of the Society, which is charged with professional development, financial and fiduciary responsibilities required by law or policy. Sub-committees are appointed by and are responsible to, the Board. Each Sub-committee has a specific focus, so that the various aspects of the Society's work are attended to.

Apart from myself, the current Board consists of Dr Barbara Meddin (Vice President), Ms Cindy Gorton (Secretary), Mr Paul Argile (Treasurer) and Directors, Ms Marion Palmer, Ms Tracey Nicolson, Ms Amanda Perlinski, Ms Leanne Aurisch, Ms Debbie Henderson. All provide their time, intellect and dedication willingly and voluntarily.

On your behalf, I would like to thank all Board members, including the retiring Board members, for their dedication and efforts to advance the profession of Social Work, as well as the Society's work. Without such volunteers, nothing could be done.

I would also like to thank one other person who gave an enormous amount of time and effort to establishing our accounting processes and financial reporting changes, our former Treasurer, Ms Sharon McAuliffe. Unfortunately, Sharon found it necessary to stand down and was replaced by Paul Argile. Sharon's efforts have produced some very positive results and on your behalf, I thank her most sincerely.

In conclusion, I would like to say that we are indeed lucky to have a number of talented leaders on the Board.

Brian J. Dodds

PRESIDENT

Financial Year 2012-13

I would like to begin this report for the financial year 2012-13 by formally acknowledging the excellent work and commitment from the previous Treasurer, Sharon McAuliffe. Sharon had to step aside during the course of the year and I assumed the role of Interim Treasurer in March 2013. Sharon was a great support to me during the period of transition, March and April of 2013, and I would like to thank her for this.

As recognition of the increasing complexity of managing the business of the society I am grateful to the Board for agreeing to the appointment of a part time book keeper to manage the day to day aspects of the accounts. The Society has appointed First Class Accounts for this role and they commenced working in August 2013. This is a new venture for The Society and will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure value for money is being achieved. First Class accounts already work with a number of other Not For Profit Organisations in Perth and they have an understanding of the aims and values of the sector.

Turning to the financial statements for 2012-13 for The Society of Professional Social Workers the Society recorded an income of \$28,193.09 for the year ending 30th June 2013 which is comprised of three revenue areas: Workshop Type 1, Workshop Type 2 and Membership. Two of these areas recorded a surplus and one recorded a loss. Workshop type 1 recorded a surplus of \$21,445.04, Membership recorded a surplus of \$13,673.05 and Workshop Type 2 recorded a loss of \$6,925.

The Society expenses for the year ending 30th June 2013 were \$27,562.08, the largest single expenditure was the Professional Indemnity Insurance of \$18,670.74 followed by Computer expenses of \$5,737.25. This latter cost included a once off expenditure for a new website for the Society. These two expenses totalling \$24,407.99 represent 89% of the total expenditure for the society in 2012-13.

The Society recorded a small surplus for 2012-13 of \$631.01. The Professional Indemnity Insurance will continue to represent the largest single expenditure and it is recommended that the Board prioritise a reduction in this cost going forward in 2013-14.

Turning to the Capital and fixed assets of The Society. As of 30th June 2013 The Society has a total equity ownership of \$69,885.74. This comprises of a brought forward equity from the previous year of \$63,894.80, retained earnings of \$5,359.93 and an income for 2012-13 of \$631.01.

Paul Argile (Interim Treasurer)

In Memorium

This issue I would like to shine a light on the immense work of Olive Stephenson who should be a great role model for all of us seeking to contribute to social change. Olive died recently and here we reprint her Obituary from The Independent (on line) 16th November 2013.

Professor Olive Stevenson: Academic whose work helped pave the way for effective provision of child protection services.

Olive Stevenson could not have foreseen the great consequences for her when, 40 years ago, she wrote a dissenting addendum to the report of the inquiry, of which she was a member, into the death of Maria Colwell, a child who had been killed by her stepfather. It gave her an unwanted celebrity status which unleashed invitations to lecture and speak and projected her on to the national stage.

However her dissent – she disagreed only with the analysis of the events in the first part of the child's life – could have been avoided had the inquiry chair, Thomas Field-Fisher QC, been more flexible and understood better the issues. She later wrote that his and her values were fundamentally different. But while she never wished what she wrote to be seen as a defence of social work, right or wrong, she felt compelled to explain the complexities of social work. But she also wrote the chapter on collaboration between services in child protection, a commonplace place today but the importance of which was then little realised.

Stevenson was born in 1930 in Croydon and grew up in Purley, the youngest child of John and Evelyn (née Dobbs), a civil servant and housewife. Her parents were Irish non-churchgoing Protestants who had come to England from Dublin fearing discrimination by the new Catholic Free State.

Their daughter, a youthful Congregationalist who became an agnostic, remained deeply distrustful of Catholicism. When at the local Whitgift Girls School she told the headmistress that she wanted to do psychology when she grew up, her mother was told that she should not read Freud. She did, and at 17 worked as an assistant house mother in a Croydon

children's home.

She went up to Oxford in 1949 to read English, spent two vacations volunteering at the Mulberry Bush School for emotionally damaged children and then trained on the two-year LSE child care course. From 1954-58 she was a child care officer in Devon and left to take the 10-month advanced social casework course at the Tavistock Clinic. She gained a taste for psychoanalytic social work. Later in life she defended and advocated psychodynamic social work when it came under attack from the Marxist-inclined "radical social work" school for its alleged "pathologising" of the poor. But she never ignored the economic and social influences on clients' lives and believed the polarisation of approaches only further disadvantaged children and families.

After "the Tavvie" she moved to Bristol University in 1959, working as social work researcher and tutor, and in 1962 she assumed a lectureship (and later readership) in applied social studies at Oxford, where she was later professorial fellow at St Anne's. While there she spent a year as adviser to the Supplementary Benefits Commission, from which came *Claimant or Client?* (1972), when she saw the issues as relevant to wider social policy as social security.

Her first book, published in 1964, had been a guide for foster parents and she was to write and edit eight more and co-edit and co-write others. She was also the founder and first editor of the *British Journal of Social Work*. In 1976 she went to Keele as its first female professor and in 1984 took the chair in social work at Nottingham. Her overseas work included visiting professorships in Israel and Australia and supervising PhD students in Hong Kong, while in China she was part of the development of Beijing University's growth of social-work training.

In retirement she became one of the first chairs of an area child protection committee (now local safeguarding boards). She also continued to teach and write and supervise research students and only left Nottingham properly in 2010. From the 1980s she started to write and lecture extensively about older people, being at one time chair of Age Concern England. Her work on child protection caused her to link that with the parallel but then far-less recognised subject of the abuse of older people. In her

recently published memoir, *Reflections on a Life in Social Work*, she wrote openly about her lesbianism, having lived for much of the time when it was surrounded by secrecy and stigma, which personally caused her unease. Her wit, practical wisdom, intelligence and an ability to weld an elegant and brilliant synthesis between social policy and social work practice were a hallmark of her work, which influenced generations of academics and practitioners. All this was underpinned by her quest for how both she and her students and readers could use mind and feelings ("heart and head") together.

Although Stevenson could appear forbidding, it is obvious from her memoir that beneath the carapace of the professional self-assurance and eminence lay anxieties and complexities with which she had to cope all her life, and the struggle to be "freed to be myself". She wrote of relationships (while not mentioning individuals) that were "fraught with tension and pain" and took her to undergo psychoanalysis.

She died guardedly optimistic that a positive change was coming to social work. Managerialism and central diktat had obscured its vision and ethical basis, which she wanted to it rediscover. They were qualities which her own work strove to engender.

Terry Philpot

Olive Stevenson, social worker and academic: born South Croydon 13 December 1930; CBE 1994; died Oxfordshire 30 September 2013.

Board Member Profile

This edition's Board Member in the spot light is our amazingly hard working Secretary, Cindy Gorton. Cindy's journey into Social Work started at high school when she read a book called *The Cross and the Switchblade*. This book written in 1962 by pastor David Wilkerson with John and Elizabeth Sherrill tells the true story of Wilkerson's first five years in New York City, where he ministered to disillusioned youth, encouraging them to turn away from the drugs and gang violence they were involved with. (Wikipedia). This ignited her interest in Social Work and with the help of the school's careers counsellor she tailored her subjects to enable her to follow this direction. Cindy gained entry

to UWA where she studied Psychology and Anthropology. In her second year she struggled to find meaning in the "rats and stats" focused psychology course but she had some good mentors who suggested that she persist and she completed a double major before being accepted into the Social Work course. During her student years Cindy worked part time at Mofflyn Children's Home where she gained valuable work experience and also completed her final placement. By the time she had completed her degree Cindy was married and embarking on motherhood. Consequently her initial forays into Social Work were limited but she stayed in touch by joining the professional association and selling the resource book, *Incomes and Outcomes*. Later she combined her parenting role with part time employment in the Family Support field at Herdsman Neighbourhood Centre where she ran parent support programmes and researched information from interstate and America on how to best support the parenting role. Since then Cindy has turned her hand to organizing conferences, particularly Social Work Conferences and other events which is a role that she really enjoys.

In terms of the future of the profession, Cindy held concerns that not a lot of young people seemed to be entering the profession but is now pleased to see that trend starting to reverse. She also sees that everything that Social workers seem to be involved in is becoming increasingly complex, not only the families and individuals that we work with but also the systems they are part of. She also sees that the lack of registration of the profession remains a key issue.

Cindy has been involved with the SPSW since its inception. She was disillusioned with the AASW particularly when the National Office suddenly called in all of the WA Branch's funds putting on hold any WA activities including a Social Work conference. She remembers the discussions and heart ache as the Committee of Management members finally decided to stand down stating loss of confidence in their National body. This later led to the establishment of the SPSW and saw a revival on her part in again being involved in a professional body.

Cindy says that what inspires her to continue in Social Work is the ability to make a difference for people in all sorts of ways, being along side

them, providing support, ensuring resources are available to families and communities and seeing people develop their potential.

Cindy has always enjoyed the ability to balance part time employment with her busy family life. She has three children and four grandchildren and lots of extended family that benefit from her capacity to support and care for the whole family. However, she wants to continue to be involved in the profession with a view to increasing its profile and respect with government and community employers. She continues to enjoy varied short-term projects, which make good use of her Social Work skills in interacting with communities. Cindy feels that she has been fortunate in being able to focus on community development and group work that allow her to be innovative and creative.

Cindy would like to see the SPSW grow its membership in the future so that it doesn't have to apologise for its existence. She sees room for both professional bodies to co-exist and would like to see the SPSW become more relevant to younger social workers so that they can contribute their energy and passion and would also like to see it grow large enough to be able to afford a permanent executive officer to do some of the administrative work that is involved.

Continuing Professional Education Committee Report

The Society of Professional Social Workers presented several well received and popular continuing education workshops and forums during 2012 -2013.

All were presented by well known professionals and were consistently over-subscribed. They provided low cost / top quality, on-going continuing professional education. Members attended at significantly reduced registration fees.

- Child Pornography and On Line Offenders:
How Do We Keep Children Safe?
- Parenting Children with Complex Trauma
- Worker Safety on Home Visits

- Coping with Children in Foster Care who have Experienced Trauma
- Trauma and Attachment
- Healing the Hurt Child
- Working with Clients with Personality Disorders: What Makes Them Tick?
- Engaging and Working with Indigenous Clients: Understanding the Impact of History and Culture
- Advanced Supervision Workshop: Supervising Staff with Performance Problems
- Bamboo Micro Credit: Engaging People in Indonesia to Help Themselves

Some of the forth - coming workshops and forums for the rest of 2013 and in 2014 will include:

- Elder Abuse
- Adolescent Self Harm
- Staff Supervision
- Current service delivery issues for justice services

But that's just the beginning – wait till you see the full 2014 line up!

SPSW ALSO PROVIDES CUSTOMIZED TRAINING – IF YOU WANT A PARTICULAR WORKSHOP FOR YOUR AGENCY EITHER LISTED ABOVE OR THAT YOU WOULD LIKE DEVELOPED FOR YOU, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO GET IN TOUCH WITH US

For more information please contact Dr. Barbara Meddin on waybob@bekkers.com.au and be sure to let us know if you'd like to be on our mailing list so you don't miss out.

Don't forget that your membership entitles you to great deals with SHOPRITE when doing your Christmas shopping!



Concerned about Registration for Social Workers?

Then you may be interested in the following project:

Unregistered Health Practitioners Project

This is the first in a series of bulletins to provide information on a project being undertaken on behalf of state, territory and commonwealth health ministers under the auspices of the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council (AHMAC).

In 2011 the Victorian Department of Health, on behalf of AHMAC, undertook a national consultation on options for the regulation of unregistered health practitioners. An 'unregistered health practitioner' is defined as someone who provides a health services and is not required to be registered under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme.

The results of the 2011 consultation showed that there was broad support for a nationally consistent 'Code of Conduct' for unregistered health practitioners and an enforcement system based on the system already operating in New South Wales. (South Australia has since introduced a similar system and code and Queensland and enacted supporting legislation.)

In response to the report of the 2011 consultation, state, territory and commonwealth health ministers agreed in principle on 14 June 2013 to strengthen state and territory health complaints mechanisms via:

- a single national Code of Conduct for unregistered health practitioners to be made by regulation in each state and territory, and statutory powers to enforce the code by investigating breaches and issuing prohibition orders
- a nationally accessible web-based register of prohibition orders
- mutual recognition of prohibition orders across all states and territories.

On behalf of AHMAC, the Victorian Department of Health is undertaking a public

consultation on the terms of the first national Code of Conduct and proposed parameters to underpin the nationally consistent implementation of the code.

The department's project team is currently preparing a consultation paper, which is expected to be released publicly in March 2014. Availability of the paper will be advertised nationally and interested parties will be invited to make written submissions during the consultation period, expected to be from early March to mid-April 2014.

Consultation forums will also be conducted in each state and territory in March 2014. Feedback from the forums and the written submissions will be incorporated into the final consultation report.

Further information, including the final report from the 2011 consultation, is available on the project website: www.ahmac.gov.au. Regular bulletins will also be issued during the project and posted online.

Contacts

For further information on this project, please contact:

Clare Hawthorne

Department of Health Victoria

Tel: 03 9096 0834

Email: Clare.Hawthorne@health.vic.gov.au

or

Anne-Louise Carlton

Department of Health Victoria

Tel: 03 9096 7610

Email: Anne-Louise.Carlton@health.vic.gov.au

Social Worker of the Year Awards

The Social Worker of the Year awards for 2014 are now open for Nominations. The opening event, hosted by the SPSW on the 12th of November at The Cabin was a great success attracting considerable interest. The Awards are a great opportunity to showcase the skills of Social Workers particularly in this era of deprofessionalisation and to acknowledge your peers for the great work that they do. For more information on the Awards and how to nominate a colleague please see the website at <http://socialworkeroftheyear.com.au>.