



In the Loop Autumn 2018

Editorial

As I am currently re-experiencing the pleasure of supervising a social work student, the nature of social work education is much in my mind. With so much changing in human services, I have found myself wondering what it is that would be useful to teach people graduating into the profession at this time. There surely must be many things that they will need to be equipped with in the new world which is outside of my experience and so how am I to usefully fulfil my supervisory role? I have come to the conclusion that if new graduates come out with solid core social work values they will be in the best position to develop their own roles into the future.

In some agencies attachment to these values is undoubtedly more difficult than others and yet the basic tenet of respect for all human beings remains essential to our profession, irrespective of the person's behaviour. That brings me to that oft quoted line of Shakespeare, "what's in a name?" Whilst I am usually disinclined to disagree with the bard, the answer, I think, is in fact, quite a lot. My student recently asked my opinion about her colleagues currently on placement working with offenders who have rapidly been enculturated into the practice of calling their clients by their surname alone. This practice was something that I always found very jarring when I worked for that same agency and which, as I informed my student, I never fell into.

If we are in the business of assisting people to change then firstly we must enter into the belief that change is possible. Having made that step, we need to develop a respectful relationship with the person who we are hoping to assist. It is not possible to do that if we do not call that person by his or her name, either by title and surname in formal documents or by their first name in conversation. It may be that this is not the common practice of the agency but it is our business to provide good role models for our colleagues.

This is a simple example of the importance of the maintenance of our core social work values if we are to sustain the profession in an age in which disciplines are becoming merged and generically titled. I can only hope that by holding fast to our social work values and passing them on intact to the new generation that we can continue not only survive but to prosper as a profession with a defined purpose into the future.
Editor

Elder Abuse Report

Encouraging both state and federal governments to implement policies and legislation to prevent elder abuse has been an ongoing project for the SPSW. The Western Australian Labour Government has recently released a policy entitled *STOPPING FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE* in which they outline their plan to reduce Elder abuse which appears below.

A practical response to reduce Elder Abuse

The issue of elder abuse forms part of family violence since many abusers are, although not exclusively, family members or relatives.

The dynamics around elder abuse are complex and require a multi-faceted approach. But a multi-faceted approach does not mean a fragmented response.

Elder abuse is substantially under reported yet despite this, the prevalence of elder abuse is alarmingly high. In the case of elder abuse, investigation and/ or prosecution after the event, after injuries have been sustained or after assets have been misappropriated never restores the elderly person either emotionally or financially. The victim may lack the capacity to give evidence or be ashamed because the perpetrator is a close family member.

For this reason every effort must be put into prevention.

WA Labor wants to ensure that senior Western Australians have the ability to make a positive contribution to the community without being at risk of becoming victims of abuse.

A McGowan Labor Government will expedite the enactment of amendments set out in the recommendations of the Statutory Review of the Guardianship and Administration Act 1990 into the law surrounding enduring powers of attorney and guardianship.

Further to this, A McGowan Labor Government will identify a lead agency for overall responsibility for the coordination of the response to elder abuse to:

- Establish a register of enduring powers of attorney and guardianship.
- Conduct an educational program for professionals who frequently come into contact with the elderly such as GPs, lawyers, police and banking staff, so they can better identify possible abuse.

- Implement measures to assist isolated elderly persons' connection to the broader community.

Such a lead agency would also take a key role in negotiations with State and federal governments to develop a national strategy and a funding model to enable services to be delivered equitably

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- Identify a lead agency for overall responsibility for the coordination of the response to elder abuse.

Society of Professional Social Workers

Continuing Professional Education Workshops and Forums Planned for 2018 – 2019

Unless otherwise noted, workshop are here in Perth

Working Therapeutically with Children – April 10th

Men's Behaviour Change – May 11th

Working with Personality Disordered Clients – June Date TBA – in Busselton

Naidoc Week Event – July Date TBA

Supervising Staff: Skills for Practice – July 17th and 18th – Tentative Date

Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder – August 10th

Domestic Violence Forum – Sept Date TBA

When Families Divide – OCT/NOV Date TBA

Acquired Brain Injury – November Date TBA

Challenge for Change – December 4th

Domestic Violence Forum – Date to be announced

Dangerous Liaisons – Friend or Friendly - Date TBA - Bunbury

Vale

Emeritus Professor Laksiri Jayasuriya

Sadly, Professor Jayasuriya, previously head of the UWA Department of Social Work and Social Policy died on Friday the 20th of April. His services to Social Work will be greatly missed.

SPSW Prepares for NAIDOC

The 2018 National NAIDOC Theme is:

Because of her, we can!

The following information is taken from the NAIDOC Website, <http://www.naidoc.org.au/2018-national-naidoc-theme>

NAIDOC Week 2018 will celebrate the invaluable contributions that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have made – and continue to make – to our communities, our families, our rich history and to our nation. Under the theme – Because of her, we can! - NAIDOC Week 2018 will be held nationally from Sunday 8 July and continue through to Sunday 15 July.

As pillars of our society, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have played – and continue to play – active and significant roles at the community, local, state and national levels.

As leaders, trailblazers, politicians, activists and social change advocates, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women fought and continue to fight, for justice, equal rights, our rights to country, for law and justice, access to education, employment and to maintain and celebrate our culture, language, music and art. They continue to influence as doctors, lawyers, teachers, electricians, chefs, nurses, architects, rangers, emergency and defence personnel, writers, volunteers, chief executive officers, actors, academics, sporting icons and Olympians, the list goes on.

They are our mothers, our elders, our grandmothers, our aunties, our sisters and our daughters. Sadly, Indigenous women's role in our cultural, social and political survival has often been invisible, unsung or diminished.

For at least 65,000 years, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have carried our dreaming stories, songlines, languages and knowledge that have kept our cultures strong and enriched us as the oldest continuing culture on the planet.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have been there at first contact. They were there at the Torres Strait Pearlers strike in 1936, the Day of Mourning in 1938, the 1939 Cummeragunja Walk – Off, at the 1946 Pilbara pastoral workers strike, the 1965 Freedom Rides, the Wave Hill walk off in 1966, on the front line of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in 1972 and at the drafting of the Uluru Statement.

They have marched, protested and spoken at demonstrations and national gatherings for the proper recognition of our rights and calling for national reform and justice. Our women were heavily involved in the campaign for the 1967 Referendum and also put up their hands to represent their people at the establishment of national advocacy and representative bodies from the National Aboriginal Congress (NAC) to ATSIC to Land Councils and on to the National Congress for Australia's First Peoples.

They often did so while caring for our families, maintaining our homes and breaking down cultural and institutionalised barriers and gender stereotypes. Our women did so because they demanded a better life, greater opportunities and – in many cases equal rights – for our children, our families and our people.

For WA information re this, the local contact is c/o Noongar Radio, 207 Beaufort Street Perth. Phone 6363 5346 e-mail: [naidocPerth @Gmail.com](mailto:naidocPerth@Gmail.com)

Chris Coopes, Vice President, SPSW

Board Member Profile

Victoria (Tori) Cooke is our newest Director elected to the Board at the last AGM. Tori is the Manager for Justice and Family Services at Ruah Community Services. Tori commenced her Social Work journey as a mature age single mum. She had come into contact with Richard Hugman, who was then the Head of the Social Work School at Curtin University, via a community group with which they were both involved. He recognised Tori as a natural social worker and suggested that she go along to the Curtin orientation day to find out more. Tori knew nothing about social work but was intrigued with the invitation. However, on attending the orientation day she immediately knew that social work was for her and made a successful application to join the course.

During her studies Tori worked part time as a counsellor in the AOD and family violence sectors. On graduation in 2005 her first full time position at the Department of the Attorney General assisted to establish the Family Violence Service at Armadale Court as a result of the successful metro rollout of the family violence court pilot in Joondalup. This role involved working with stakeholders across various sectors. After four and a half years in this position she moved to the Department for Child Protection to take up a role in social policy, providing training for the Family and Domestic Violence Unit.

Tori's next career step led her to AnglicareWA where she took on two part-time roles as the Domestic Violence Consultant and Suicide Bereavement Counsellor. These were undoubtedly extremely challenging roles that assisted to further develop her skills as a trainer, advocate, and by now, seasoned social worker!

Now as Ruah's Manager of Domestic Violence Services Tori continues to work closely with police and child protection workers about perpetrator accountability and also provides consultancy in men's behaviour change work. Tori also has her own consultancy 'Pandora Enterprise Projects' providing advice about best practice and continuing to train organisations, including the great training that she provides via SPSW workshops. She is passionate about the need for sustainable workforce development and is a highly valued trainer in her field.

Tori sees the contemporary role for the social work profession as unique among the professions as social work sees individual pathology within the ecology of their environment. This is a rarely acknowledged specialism. She sees that we have much to offer in the areas of prevention and linkages between professions and sectors in developing practice guidelines and resources in our work with men using violence and abuse.

While Tori does not personally see the registration of the profession as essential for herself she acknowledges that it is necessary for others. She sees social work as a vibrant and worthy profession which

she loves. What has sustained her in remaining passionate is Social Work's focus on social justice. Her view is that it is social work values that has contributed to the community talking about things that we could not discuss back in the 1980's such as marriage equality and institutional child sexual abuse.

Tori admits that she was harangued by Barbara Meddin, now SPSW President, to join the Society when she was her supervisor during her five years at AnglicareWA. Tori had been a member of the AASW but did not feel very engaged with the organisation and did not feel that she was receiving a lot out of it and so had followed Barbara's recommendation to join the SPSW. Tori feels that there was a drought in Western Australia of workforce development and that staff were lacking the foundations for good practice. Tori loves the Society's focus on training for good practice and believes that the SPSW understands the fundamentals of what workers need and is providing it. In the future Tori would love to see a social work conference again in WA, something that would celebrate social work as a profession, even if it requires collaboration between both professional associations.

In the future Tori would like to spend more time working in her consultancy Pandora Enterprise Projects. The name speaks to her passion for science fiction which allows her to imagine what a society based on real social justice might look like. For the uninitiated, the Starship in the Star Trek series is called the Enterprise which of course *goes boldly where no one has gone before*. Pandora refers to the Greek myth in which Pandora, the first woman created, opened a jar releasing all the evils of humanity, leaving only Hope inside once she had closed it again. Tori recognises that to create change you need to open the door to let the bad stuff out and to let the good stuff.

SPSW Locum and Employment Register

Don't forget that the SPSW Locum and Employment Register keeps you up to date with employment opportunities for social workers and is a great way to find the best staff.

Contact Barbara Meddin at waybob@iinet.net.au to join or advertise positions.

President's Report Autumn 2018

It is with pleasure that I welcome you to SPSW's April edition of SPSW's newsletter. A lot has been happening.

As many of you would have seen the SPSW website is now up and running, thanks to the hard work of Cindy Gorton. If you haven't seen it take a look. The website is www.spsw.net.au

There have been a few happenings in respect to Board membership. Kirsty Google has returned from a leave of absence. Welcome back Kirsty. Chris Coopes now is having to take a leave of absence but hopes to be telelinked into the board meetings as possible.

Thanks to Cindy Gorton, SPSW now has a brochure to use in recruiting more members for SPSW. See brochure attached. Thanks to Chris Coopes who is membership chair. I am sure Chris and his committee will make good use of the brochures.

This year has been a busy one for SPSW's Continuing Professional Education (CPE) committee. We welcome a new member both to SPSW and the CPE committee, Jo Willox – welcome Jo. You will find elsewhere in this edition of the newsletter an updated list of the 2018 CPE events.

One issue that has been problematic for SPSW and for you as members is the fact that the NDIS requires that social workers who work in the disability field to join the AASW in order to claim payment for services provided under the NDIS. I have written a letter with assistance from members of the Disability Practice Group to the NDIA director for Western Australia challenging this requirement and demonstrating that SPSW has the same membership requirements and standards that the AASW has and that to exclude SPSW members is discriminatory and robbing clients of choice of provider. Again, see a copy of the letter attached.

SPSW also made a submission to the Review of the Children and Community Services Act 2014. A copy of that submission is also attached. Thanks to Anette Bohm and other board members for their contributions as part of the team with me in making the submission.

Another important SPSW project as part of our Professional Practice Subcommittee is to develop a process for accrediting social work supervisors. Joining me as part of the accrediting project are Tori Cooke, and new member, Troy Peverall, If there is anyone else who would be interested in working on this important project please contact me on waybob@inet.net.au We will keep you posted on our progress.

As you will see elsewhere in the newsletter, the Elder Protection working group with SPSW vice president, Chris as chair and Roslyn Budd is making great progress in developing a submission for SPSW to government in respect to elder abuse and elder protection. Many thanks to both Chris and Roslyn for all their hard work. Once it is submitted we will keep you up to date with the response from government.

While I am focusing on activities in progress, I just want to mention that SPSW hosted a new social work graduates welcome last November. The turnout was low but we hope to build on that for next year.

Speaking of social work students, we are fortunate to have 3 winners of the Chris Coopes award, Merida Cooke, Lisa O'Shaughnessy, and Madelaine Mazza attend our last board meeting. They and Kirsty Gogol have volunteered to develop a face book page for SPSW. We will let you know when it goes 'live'.

Anette and I are working on getting a quote for covering all members for public liability insurance in addition to our already existing professional indemnity insurance. Again, we will keep you posted on the progress of that.

SPSW is also planning on developing a Reconciliation Action plan as well as looking to make a submission in respect to the Adoption Act Review. We would welcome interested SPSW members to assist. Please let me know if you can help.

The Board is also seeking to recruit an Aboriginal Social Worker to join the SPSW Board. Again, we will keep you posted on this very important initiative.

All in all, SPSW has been very busy and productive. Thanks to the Board and to members of SPSW's working groups who have assisted and as always, a special thanks to our executive officer, Amanda Wallace.

Dr. Barbara Meddin, A.A., B.A., M.S.W., Ph.D., LM SPSW
President

SPSW Disability Practice Group Celebrates World Social Work Day

A special meeting of members of the Disability Practice Group was held on the 20th of March to celebrate World Social Work Day. A sumptuous bring a plate morning tea and guest speakers resulted in a record turnout for the group. The theme of this year's World Social Work Day was *Promoting Community and Environmental Sustainability*. The first guest speaker, a social work student currently on placement with Disability Services gave a presentation on recreational opportunities for people with disability to access the community and environment. The second guest speaker was also a social work student, on placement with Palmerston Drug and Alcohol Services who spoke about a current project at Palmerston that aims to make substance use counselling more accessible for people with disabilities. The Social Work Disability Practice Group meets bi-monthly at Key Assets, Level 1/1 Puccini Ct, Stirling. Our next meeting will be on:

If you are a social worker in the disability field you would be most welcome to join us to discuss practice issues in a collegiate environment.

For more information regarding the group please contact Amanda on 0403331590.