

A diverse offering of social work scholarship

This final issue for 2019 illustrates the growing diversity of our social work practice environments. Within multiple indigenous realities and global influences, social workers are daily developing and re-defining their practice. This issue offers a selection of research reports and commentary from various sectors, with observations and analysis of how we are doing, and ideas about what more we could be doing to respond to our everchanging world.

First in this issue, David McNabb reports on interviews with social work educators in schools of social work in Aotearoa New Zealand that explored how their commitment to a Treaty-based approach was being enacted in the real world of education practice. McNabb found a range of perspectives from Māori and non-Māori participants. Key points include the importance of understanding the history of the Treaty but also how it is being realised (or not) in practice. Non-Māori have an important role in demonstrating Treaty partnership and challenging White privilege. A Kaupapa Māori approach is a foundation for Treaty commitment. Challenges include ensuring programmes have sufficient Māori staff and the depth of learning of non-Māori.

Based on his findings, McNabb proposes a Treaty-based teaching and learning framework to support educators as they work towards decolonising practices and the indigenisation of social work education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Emily Keddell's article uses Official Information Act requested and publicly available data to examine recent trends of children in contact with the Aotearoa New Zealand child protection system. Keddell discusses trends with reference to child protection policy reforms, and an

inequalities perspective. Her analysis finds that there has been an increase of children in care in Aotearoa New Zealand despite steady reductions in hospitalisations for physical abuse and possibly child deaths, accepted reports of concern, abuse substantiations and entries to care. The increase is caused by fewer children exiting care, particularly for children under 10 years old. Particularly relevant to the widely discussed matter of taking babies into care she noted a 33% increase in babies removed. This practice is "regionalised" and involves more use of legal orders on unborn, as opposed to older babies. Keddell also notes that disproportionate removal of Māori babies is increasing, while other groups' rates remain stable or reduce.

In this important article, Keddell argues that these changes reflect complex interactions in the child protection system and the impact of social inequalities, the direction of policy and practice logics. More research is needed to fully understand these patterns.

Deb Stanfield's article reports findings from a survey which provided a first snapshot of how Aotearoa New Zealand social workers operate in the social media landscape, and an account of their opinions and attitudes about the professional social work use of social media. The study reported here included a self-administered internet survey of 342 Aotearoa New Zealand social workers. Using Likert-type scales and multiple-choice questions, information was sought about the social work experience (behaviour, opinions/attitudes) of using social media for professional reasons, including motivations, limitations and challenges.

Stanfield found that fewer than half of the respondents reported using social media for professional reasons, and participants expressed concerns about privacy, security

and ethical issues. These concerns were presented as significant limitations to the professional use of social media by both users and non-users. Stanfield's analysis of findings from this survey offers insight into areas of potential development, leadership and research regarding social worker use of social media in this Aotearoa New Zealand.

Maree Goh challenges our profession about its readiness to respond to the needs of an increasingly diverse ethnic population in Aotearoa. Goh identifies the significant cultural and linguistic barriers faced by refugees and migrants in Aotearoa and, although she specifically focuses on the delivery of health services, her study has relevance to multiple practice settings. She outlines various strategies currently place to advance cultural competency of practitioners, including educational programmes; however, she acknowledges the shortage of such support, and the role of social work education in this regard. Her article focuses on the growing place of cultural support workers in health care settings who are increasingly members of interprofessional health care teams. Goh summarises the key challenges apparent in this new professional relationship including the need to understand and negotiate overlapping roles and responsibilities.

Goh highlights the responsibility of the social work profession to improve its cultural competence, to recognise refugees and migrants as disadvantaged and oppressed populations and to critically understand their experience of health care inequality in Aotearoa. This article provides valuable information about the role of cultural support workers in health settings and how they can support social workers to gain knowledge and support. Goh calls for the profession to redefine its role in a health setting that has become significantly more culturally diverse.

Bridget Leary and Kathryn Hay also challenge the profession to consider more deeply its role in a changing practice

environment. This research focuses on the role of social workers responding to sexual violence, describing a sophisticated scope of practice that goes beyond the "traditional" or commonly perceived social work role of support to one that involves a complex therapeutic and holistic relationship. The authors report on a study that explored best practice with social workers currently practising in this field. Via interviews, the participants shared details of their practice, including their provision of complex emotional support, the unique boundaries they observed (including those with other professionals), their self-care needs and the specific knowledge required to work in this field. The findings, like those of Goh, identified the challenges of working in interprofessional environments, the need to develop cultural competence, and the lack of training available to social workers in this field.

Susan Wason explores the socio-political genesis of food bank and food rescue projects in Aotearoa New Zealand, and internationally, as a community response to the politics of neoliberal state austerity. She notes that food banks, emerging ad hoc as a charitable response to a crisis in Aotearoa New Zealand in the 1980s, have become institutionalised. Food Rescue organisations, a later creation, are more planned to address the needs of those experiencing food poverty by increasing the quantity, and the amount of perishable food available to distribute.

There is a particular focus on the experience of Dunedin/Ōtepoti through analysis of newsprint media representations. Through critically reconnecting the charitable impulse to the socio-economic drivers of food insecurity, Wason questions the normalisation of such organisational initiatives and develops a rationale for social justice centred social action.

Neil Ballantyne's article is based on a commentary published by the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW) on the occasion of International

Human Rights Day, 10 December 2019. Ballantyne explores the connections between human rights and social work. He makes the links explicit in describing his various social work roles as an educator, a practitioner and an activist. Ballantyne notes that an international perspective is crucial to international solidarity because, in Aotearoa New Zealand, practitioners are free to write, discuss and campaign on issues of concern. We are able to bring attention to matters of social justice and human rights and undertake collective actions—petitions, protests, and direct action. Ballantyne discusses social work in Palestine as an example of where social workers' commitment to human rights activism is inherently dangerous.

Finally, a research brief presented by Gary Lim offers insight into social work practice in the field of disability, and although this brief intrinsically/incidentally highlights the unique knowledge and skill required in this field, his article focuses on the practice value of evaluation research. The project shared in this article evaluated the effectiveness of day services in the disability sector in the Waikato, addressing a challenge presented by evidence that cessation of a day programme for disabled adults led to short-term savings for the agency. This study found that day programmes had long-term value for participants in their overall journey to independence. Reduction or cessation of such programmes led to increased distress for service users who experienced more isolation and less meaningful social engagement—in turn leading to the need for more long-term funding. Lim's work highlights the role of social workers in providing meaningful data to support long-term change in a practice environment where short-term measures are increasingly employed for funding purposes.

Taken together, these eight original articles and three book reviews complete the 31st issue of the journal. We take this opportunity to thank all of our contributors in 2019 and the numerous peer reviewers who work

behind the scene to provide constructive feedback to our authors. The editorial collective is pleased to report that the journal for 2020 is shaping up well as we have many exciting offerings in the peer review pipeline. There are calls for papers for the 2020 Te Komako and Tu Mau editions on the journal website and we will also run a special issue of papers from the Sociology Association Aotearoa New Zealand (SAANZ) conference where the theme of the social work stream was "Holding social work accountable: Resistance, challenge and change". This stream was very successful with 36 papers presented. We will organise a stream again at SAANZ in Christchurch.

If you are thinking about submitting an article for a future issue, do feel free to approach Liz Beddoe or any other member of the editorial collective. We are proud of our open-access, zero-fees journal. Published quarterly, we particularly welcome work offering research and critical perspectives on contemporary policy developments, indigenous social work, post-colonialism, anti-racism, feminism, and progressive social work theory, policy and practice in all fields.

The journal also publishes book reviews and encourages short topical pieces offering readers' critical commentaries, review essays, analyses of policy or practice developments, and reports on research-informed practice innovations.

Liz Beddoe