Editorial

Mary Nash

A common feature of articles in this issue is the posing of questions challenging the reader to review their own practice and to consider where they stand on important issues. For example, five practitioners, Beets, Bidois, Broom, Moore, & Swan provide a reflective case study of a new social work peer review group, which begins by asking the reader two challenging questions: 'When did you last have the opportunity to share your practice with peers?' and 'Does your work environment provide a formal regular opportunity to discuss Social Work practice issues?' They then introduce their organisational environment and its influence on their supervision processes. The result is an innovative and inviting model for peer review imbued with the values of whakawhanaungatanga and manaakitanga, kaitia-kitanga. The authors note that 'Trust, respect, professionalism and commitment have been strong features of our group'.

Gibbs, in her article exploring student social workers and their understanding of research, confronts us with the next question: 'What kind of a researcher might I be?' The focus of this article is to consider what social work students think social work research is and whether they think social work research should be part of normal, everyday practice or not. Gibbs looks at the values students considered should be part of the social work process. Among other things, these aimed at bringing positive benefits for service users. Peer mentoring was another feature students found important, and it resonates well with the values expressed by the peer review group. Gibbs concludes that: 'It is important that once qualified, practitioners are supported to use their knowledge and skills to enhance effectiveness in practice. By continuing to evaluate their everyday work they can support their desire to make a positive difference to the lives of service users.'

Fagan, Simmons and Nash present a research-based article, in which focus groups explored young adults' perceptions of the concept of 'confidence', and the 'building of confidence', both in themselves and in others. The student voice is eloquently expressed throughout this article, which offers many insights into what young adults said when asked to reflect on how they became confident members of their schools. They offer good advice to those seeking to enhance confidence in young people, and mention the importance of affirmation and opportunity

Staniforth and Nash have researched the life story of June Kendrick, a life member of the ANZASW, who has, and continues to have, a passion for social justice, social work education and social work with older people. The research method combined oral history processes with a collaborative approach which involved June Kendrick herself. This resulted in a project in which several significant members of the ANZASW recall working together during their long years of social work practice and they illustrate the myriad of gifts a social work practitioner has made throughout a lifetime of service.

Finally, there are two articles which raise questions about the place and visibility of social work in health settings. Foster and Beddoe ask the reader to consider where social workers

should concentrate their efforts in order to have the most effective outcomes when working with older adults in primary health. This thoughtful and challenging article reminds us of the contribution made by social work to the health care of older people over the last 60 years (as illustrated in the previous article on June Kendrick). They remind the reader that 'social work is traditionally the discipline that links the medical world to the patient's world in the community.' They argue that 'a move into primary care would result in a more effective use of our skill base which is after all centred in family work.'

Mary James asks 'Where is the voice of social work in the multi disciplinary palliative care team?' Using the results of a snapshot survey to audit social work performance in this field, she has developed a practical and reflective approach to placing social work in the hospice setting on a much firmer and more visible foundation.

This issue of *Social Work Review* questions and explores aspects of social work practice, history and values. Broadly speaking, it covers health, research and history. At the time of publication, I am aware that the very significant question of child poverty is on our minds. We are challenged by the Child Poverty Forum to look at poverty in our increasingly divided society, to understand it and to take action against it. As social workers this is, of course, what we want to do. The question is, how? Some of the answers are implicit in the material covered by authors in this issue of the journal. The values which infuse the peer review group, the importance of social work research, the myriad of gifts given through years of practice, the exploration of how to encourage confidence in young adults all provide clues as to how to act to reduce child poverty. An issue focusing on childrens' issues including child povery would make an even more helpful contribution to the campaign to reduce it. Watch this space.