
Editorial – 50th anniversary issue

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This special issue of *Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work Review* is dedicated to celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Association. The articles and practice pieces in this issue provide a window into both personal and social reflections on social work across the past 50 years.

The first piece is an editorial commentary by Caz Thomson which challenges us to keep an eye to the past as we move forward into the future. The questions raised by Caz challenge all of us in regard to how we exercise our obligations as citizens and professionals. Such questions are particularly pertinent in an election year where social inequality, poverty, human rights and basic human needs are issues for a significant proportion of the people who access social and welfare services. Life member Mike O'Brien's article also makes links to the signs of the time and the profession's response to them, through an insightful and interesting contrast of the public issues in the media and the Association's journal at three significant points in time. Another life member, Liz Beddoe, explores the history of social work education, the impact of the current environment, professionalisation and social worker registration on social work education. This article concludes by emphasising the workforce development challenges ahead and the investment required to advance the profession beyond having a baseline professional entry degree.

In the next article, Sarah Fraser and Sophie Simpson focus our attention on the international definition of social work and our place in the global social work community. They challenge us to build international links and maintain a strong international voice within the global social work community, in order to share what we have learned as well as learn from others. In a much more personally focused piece, life member Mary Nash presents another 'Their stories our history' article. This article details the significant contribution and career of former President and life member John Fry. One of the reviewers commented that, 'The personal experiences shared by John, along with the description of a full and interesting career, make for an inspirational read.'

In the following article, Barbara Staniforth, Christa Fouché and Liz Beddoe, report a telephone survey on the public perceptions of social workers, which found that the members of the public surveyed were well informed and generally positive about social workers. Former Association President David McNabb then shares with us his reflections on 30 years as a member of the Association and connects these to the challenges faced by the profession both at present and in the future.

This issue concludes with three reflective pieces. The first of these is a personal account by Anne Aburn, who reflects on the beginnings of the Association in the early 1960s. The second is Pam Smith's reflection on her 30-year career in social work. Pam's reflection challenges us to take time and pause, and consider why you are in the profession. What led you to it? And where do you want to go? Our final reflection is by another life member, Jackie Sayers, who shares her reminiscences of anti-racism training in the 1980s. Jackie's reflections capture a watershed period in the profession's history.

This issue provides a diverse picture of social workers' views, reflections, thoughts and research about the profession in Aotearoa and its journey over the past 50 years. It highlights that there is much that the profession has achieved and that there is much work ahead of us as we strive to make a difference and enhance the well-being of individuals, families/whanau, communities and the wider societies.
