



**Social Workers  
Registration Board**  
South Australia

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2023/2024

**PREPARED BY :**  
SWRB SA, 30th September 2024

# Annual Report

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# Acknowledgement of Country

The Social Workers Registration Board of South Australia (SWRB SA) acknowledges that the land we work on is the traditional lands of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and we pay our respects to elders, past and present. The SWRB SA acknowledges and respects that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the First Nations people of this country and recognises them as traditional owners and occupants of South Australian land and waters. The SWRB SA acknowledges the violence of the colonial past and social work's part in this history and the impacts colonisation continues to have on First Nations people. The SWRB SA acknowledges the strong and enduring connection to land and culture for First Nations people.



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# 01

**PRESIDING MEMBER & DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD**



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# CARMELA BASTIAN

## *Presiding Member of the Board*

It is a wonderful privilege to be presenting this inaugural annual report for the Social Workers Registration Board. It is with great optimism that I reflect on the progress the Social Workers Registration Board has made since its establishment in March. Our primary task has been to ensure that we are fully prepared for the introduction of registration for social workers, set to commence from 1 July, 2025. This task has been met with a sense of responsibility, commitment, and dedication from the Board, which is evident in the great significant progress that has been made. After the formal recruitment of our Board, we immediately began the important work of governing, setting the vision, and laying the strategic foundation for our role as regulators. The breadth of experience within our Board has been instrumental in shaping our discussions and decision making, allowing us to focus on the key priorities: developing the regulatory framework, approving the registration policies, and ensuring that our work is aligned with the legislation that will soon come into force.

Over the past year, we have also engaged with a wide range of stakeholders, including government, sector leaders, people with lived experience, and members of the social work profession, to ensure that diverse perspectives and the needs of the sector are reflected in our work. These consultations have enriched our approach and provided invaluable insights as we shape a registration scheme that balances accountability with practical implementation.

In the coming year, we continue to remain focused as the SWRB SA ensures that it is ready to deliver on its mandate. This will involve the finalisation of processes for registration, continuing professional development, and complaints management, ensuring that these are efficient, fair, and transparent. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Board members for their time and unwavering dedication to this important task, the Director, and our dedicated staff for their hard work and collaboration. South Australia leads the way on social work registration and we are on the cusp of a major milestone. I am confident that the Board will meet the challenges ahead with professionalism and integrity, ensuring that social work upholds the highest standards under this new regulatory framework.



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# SARAH WENDT

## *Director*

This past year has been one of tremendous progress and achievement as we established the foundations of the social worker registration in South Australia. The journey has been both challenging and rewarding, with the ultimate goal of ensuring the social work profession is governed by a robust and effective regulatory body that will serve the public interest.

A key milestone in this journey was the recruitment of the seven-member Board in March. This group brings a wealth of experience, passion, and dedication, and I am proud of the depth of knowledge and diversity we have on our Board. Each member has played an integral role in shaping our policies and governance frameworks in preparation for the commencement of the new legislation.

In parallel, we have built the administrative and operational infrastructure necessary to support the work of the Board. From policy development to stakeholder engagement, I'm pleased to say that we have a strong and capable team ready to implement the registration processes and workflows that will come into effect on 1 July 2025. Our office will shortly be fully staffed, and we are finalising the systems that will underpin our operations, ensuring we are ready for a seamless launch.

As we look ahead, the priority is now to ensure that the profession and the public are well informed and prepared for registration. We will continue to engage with our stakeholders, provide education and guidance, and support social workers through the transition to this new regulatory framework.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Board members, staff, and stakeholders who have contributed their time, expertise, and commitment to this significant work. Together, we are on track to deliver a registration scheme that upholds the highest standards of professionalism and public safety.



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# 02

**HIGHLIGHTS 2023-2024**

# HIGHLIGHTS

## Director Appointed

- Initial strategic direction
- Key roles defined

Sept  
2023

Oct

## Governance

- Establish governance structure
- Recruitment activities

## Project Planning

- Work streams identified
- Strategic and operational plans developed

Nov

Dec

## Infrastructure

- Identify needs for office space and systems
- Engage stakeholders
- Initiate procurement activities

## Research

- Visit to SWRB New Zealand and other regulators
- Gather insights to inform planning

Jan

Feb

## Legislation Review

- Review and interpret legislation
- Align to project framework and planning

## Board Appointed

- Onboarding
- Initial meetings held
- Supporting systems and administrative functions established

Mar

Apr

## Policies

- Draft and implement internal policies and procedures

## Staffing

- Final staff planning for ongoing ops
- Recruitment and onboarding of team members

May

Jun

## Stakeholders

- Engage stakeholders through consultation, meetings and outreach

## Regulations

- Develop and draft regulations and guidelines

Jul

Aug

## Registration

- Finalise registration framework ready for build of online portal



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# 03

**BACKGROUND**



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## BACKGROUND

On the 28 September 2023, the State Government introduced into Parliament the Social Workers Registration (Commencement) Amendment Bill 2023, setting the commencement date, 1 July 2025, if not commenced earlier by Proclamation. When commenced, the legislation will require all social workers in South Australia to be registered in order to practice. South Australia will be the country's first social work registration board.

The introduction of the Social Workers Registration Board was supported by the South Australian Government on the basis that the registration of social workers will have a range of benefits including improved public safety, higher standards of conduct and accountability through the provision of accessible mechanisms for complaints and review and improved professional development opportunities for people within the profession.

It will develop professional standards in South Australia and help build momentum toward national registration for social workers.

The South Australian Government committed \$4.7 million to support the establishment and introduction of the scheme for social workers in South Australia.

## OUR MINISTER



The Hon Katrine Hildyard is Minister for Child Protection, Minister for Women and the Prevention of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing, and is responsible for the administration of the Social Workers Registration Act 2021.

She has been the Member for Reynell since 2014.

# TIMELINE

## History & Milestones

**2010**

National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for health professions, administered by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) introduced. Social work was not included.

**1**



**2** **2018**

Social Workers Registration Bill introduced into the Legislative Council. Joint Parliamentary Committee formed to enable consultation.

**2020**

Joint Parliamentary Committee submit their final report in December 2020.

**3**



**2021**

The Social Workers Registration Bill is reintroduced into the Upper House and passed in November 2021. This is called the Social Workers Registration Act.

**4**



**5** **2023**

Professor Sarah Wendt appointed Director for the Scheme in September 2023. The Social Workers Registration (Commencement) Amendment Act 2023 passed the South Australia Parliament, setting the commencement date – 1 July 2025 or earlier by proclamation.





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# APPOINTMENT OF THE DIRECTOR

In September 2023, Professor Sarah Wendt was appointed to establish and lead South Australia's Social Worker Registration Scheme.

The Director is responsible for the establishment, development and implementation of the scheme, including appointing the Board.

The Director works closely with the many different representations of social work across government and non-government agencies to implement the registration of social workers in a staged approach.

# APPOINTMENT OF THE BOARD

A major milestone in the implementation of Social Workers Registration Scheme was reached in March 2024, with the Board being appointed to work with the Director to build and oversee the establishment of social work registration.

The new Board's Presiding Member is Dr Carmela Bastian, who is joined by Deputy Presiding Member Kerry Beck, and members: Jane Mussared, Ruka Taite, Sarah Macdonald, Nicole Lancaster and Jodie Stevens.

The Board is the State Government authority responsible for regulating social workers. Members have been appointed for three-year terms.



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# 04

**SWRB SA BOARD & OFFICE**



# BOARD MEMBERS

## SOCIAL WORKERS REGISTRATION BOARD SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The diverse knowledge, experiences, and expertise of Board members make the SWRB SA a dynamic and effective team, working together to safeguard public interest, encourage high professional standards, and ensure the accountability of registered social workers.

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**Carmela Bastian**  
Presiding Member

Member with extensive  
experience in social work



**Kerry Beck**  
Deputy Presiding Member

Member with extensive  
experience in social work



**Jane Mussared**  
Board Member

Member with extensive  
experience in social work



**Ruka Taite**  
Board Member

Member with extensive  
experience in social work



**Sarah Macdonald**  
Board Member

Member with extensive  
experience in social work



**Nicole Lancaster**  
Board Member

Member Legal Practitioner



**Jodie Stevens**  
Board Member

Member General Community



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# ESTABLISHING THE OFFICE

*Supporting three key functions:*

REGISTRATION

ACCREDITATION

INVESTIGATION

In the process of setting up the office of the Board we have carefully considered the requirements of the Act and the three key functions: registration, accreditation, and investigation. Using insights gained from New Zealand, and other regulators based in South Australia, we have planned how future work will be triaged, allocated, and managed to ensure requirements are met responsibly and flexibly.

We have identified that each 'function' will have a regulatory lead, with registration and investigation also having a project officer. We have recruited regulatory leads for registration and accreditation, and we will recruit for the investigations lead in October. Each function will have core responsibilities and primary business however, at times of high demand such as bulk registration intakes, all the staff will work across teams to ensure work is completed in a timely manner. We have also recruited the Aboriginal Regulatory Practice Advisor who will work to strengthen communication between the Board and the Indigenous workforce sector, this person will also be an integral part of the regulatory work that will be performed across all functions.

As we work towards registering social workers and then the first year of working through our requirements, we are committed to reviewing our structure to ensure efficiency and regulatory effectiveness into the future.



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# EXECUTIVE TEAM

## **Sarah Wendt, Director**

The Director oversees the implementation of the Social Workers Registration Act 2021 and provides leadership and management for the office of the Board, including staff recruitment and resourcing. The Director leads the development and execution of the South Australian initiative, whilst advocating for social work registration in the national conversation. The Director raises awareness of public safety within the social services sector and supports the professionalisation of social work and plays a key role in promoting these efforts across the wider community.

## **Ruth James, Legal Services Manager**

The Legal Services Manager is responsible for providing expert legal counsel and overseeing the legal aspects of the establishment and ongoing activities of the Social Workers Registration Board and its office. The Legal Services Manager ensures legal compliance, provides guidance on regulatory matters, and supports the Director in the effective administration of the Board.

## **Louise Butler, Principal Policy Officer**

The Principal Policy Officer provides integral leadership by providing senior support to the Director and direction to the regulatory team to build regulatory performance. The Principal Policy Officer develops, implements, and evaluates policies, standards, and processes to ensure the quality functioning of regulatory functions, ensure fairness and effectiveness, and promote consistency, equity, and efficiency in regulatory and risk management practices to support organisational achievement of strategic goals.

## **Hayley Anderson, Principal Project Officer**

The Principal Project Officer oversees key operational areas, including finance, human resources, IT, communications and engagement, facilities management, and administration, ensuring the effective functioning of the office. The Principal Project Officer provides senior-level support to the Director, managing corporate services to ensure that resources and systems are effectively established to align with strategic priorities, enabling the leadership team to focus on broader regulatory objectives.



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# REGULATORY TEAM

The regulatory team play a crucial role in ensuring the effective regulation of social workers within the framework of the Social Workers Registration Act 2021 through three key areas - registration, accreditation, and investigation.

They are responsible for establishing and maintaining a robust registration system, safeguarding the public interest, maintaining high professional standards, and ensuring the accountability of registered social workers.

## Chris Reynolds, Regulatory Lead - Registration

The Registration Lead manages the registration process for social workers, including assessing applications and maintaining the register of social workers. In addition, the Registration Lead implements strategies to ensure the ongoing compliance of registered social workers and provides support and guidance on registration-related matters.

## Renae Summers, Regulatory Lead - Accreditation

The Accreditation Lead develops and implements accreditation standards and processes for social work education programs and evaluates social work education programs for accreditation. The Accreditation Lead also provides advice and support to educational institutions seeking accreditation for their social work programs.

## Regulatory Lead - Investigation

Once appointed, the Investigation Lead will conduct investigations into alleged breaches of the Act, including gathering evidence and interviewing relevant parties. The Investigation Lead will liaise with legal counsel and other stakeholders as necessary to prepare investigation reports and recommend actions based on findings.



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# REGULATORY TEAM

## **Luke Cantley, Aboriginal Regulatory Practice Advisor**

The Aboriginal Regulatory Practice Advisor ensures the effective regulation of social workers, providing specialist advice and support to enhance culturally responsive regulation and operational practices, with a focus on promoting cultural safety and diversity within the regulatory framework. The Aboriginal Regulatory Practice Advisor will establish and work alongside a First Nations Peoples and Communities Advisory Committee who will contribute to shaping strategy, engagement, and operational plans to embed diversity and inclusion within the regulatory authority.

## **Olivia Parkinson, Regulatory Project Officer**

The Regulatory Project Officers support the Regulatory Leads in the functions of registration, accreditation, and investigation,

The Project Officers provide multifaceted support, including project management, policy interpretation and development, process development, drafting correspondence for internal and external distribution, data entry, case co-ordination and administration, contributing to the successful implementation of social worker registration and ongoing regulatory activities.



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# CORPORATE SERVICES TEAM

Corporate Services ensures the efficient operation and administration of the Social Workers Registration Board. The functions of the team which supports the operations of the Board include information and communications technology (ICT) management and support, communications and engagement and project and administration support.

## **Ali Elder, Communications and Engagement Lead**

The Communications and Engagement Lead is responsible for overseeing and executing all aspects of communication and engagement strategies for the Social Workers Registration Board to enhance visibility, build a positive brand image, and ensure effective communication with stakeholders, including social workers, the public, government and non-government bodies.

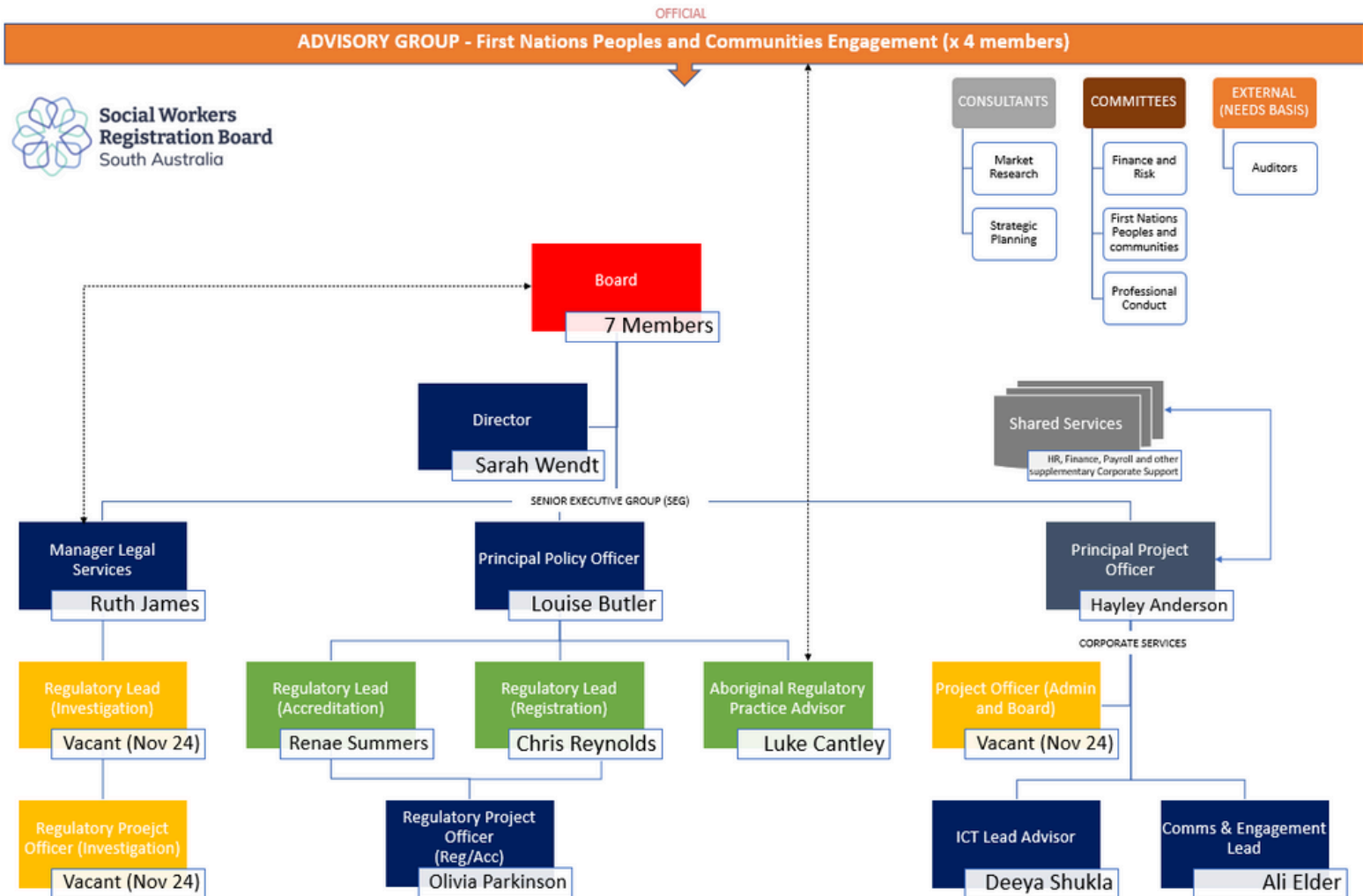
## **Deeya Shukla, ICT Lead Advisor**

The ICT Lead Advisor is responsible for overseeing and managing all aspects of information and communications technology for the Social Workers Registration Board to ensure the efficient and secure operation of ICT systems, including leading the development of a registration portal, specifically focusing on the functions of registration, accreditation, and investigation.

## **Cait Davies, Project Officer (Admin & Board)**

The Project Officer, Administration and Board facilitates the development and implementation of projects, programs, services and systems to support the establishment and ongoing functions of the Social Workers Registration Board to achieve its goals and strategic directions. The Project Officer provides multifaceted support across board support, policy development, stakeholder engagement, space and facilities, financial functions and general administrative tasks.

# OFFICE OF THE BOARD





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# 05

## STRATEGIC IDENTITY & GUIDING PRINCIPLES



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Government  
of South Australia

# STRATEGIC IDENTITY & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

As a newly establishing registration board, we have thoughtfully developed our vision, mission, and charter, which serve as the foundation for our regulatory work.

Alongside this, we have purposefully developed a brand that reflects the values of the Social Workers Registration Board and its commitment to the community.

Together, these elements are essential for guiding our work, ensuring consistency, and building trust with our stakeholders. They help us stay focused on our goals as we grow and establish our role within the sector.

Our guiding principles clearly define who we are, what we aim to achieve, and how we will operate.

They are crucial for ensuring that our efforts are aligned, focused, and driven by a shared purpose, helping us stay on course as we grow and work to fulfill our responsibilities to the community and the social work sector.



## OUR VALUES



### COLLABORATION

We believe in working together with social workers, stakeholders, and the community to achieve common goals

### DIVERSITY



We respect and support the dignity of every individual



### INTEGRITY

We uphold the highest standards of integrity, ethics, and fairness in all our actions

### ACCOUNTABILITY



We are transparent and accountable in our actions, ensuring fairness and accountability to all stakeholders



### EXCELLENCE

We are dedicated to professional excellence and continuous improvement in social work practice



## Vision & Mission

The purpose of the Social Workers Registration Board of South Australia is to ensure the safety and well-being of the public by upholding high standards of competence, accountability, and professionalism among social workers. We also strive to enhance the quality and effectiveness of social work practice.

### VISION

A Social Workers Registration Board that uplifts the profession, ensures accountability, and enhances public safety, fostering a culture of professionalism and excellence in social work practice.

### MISSION

To establish and maintain a robust registration system for social workers, safeguarding the public interest, promoting high professional standards, and ensuring the accountability of registered social workers.

We respond with regulatory action that is proportionate and tailored to the risks and harms being addressed, working collaboratively with stakeholders to protect the public and uphold professional standards.

## Service Charter

The Social Workers Registration Board of South Australia adopts the following statements as the primary reference points for the planning, delivery, and evaluation of all its services.

- ✓ The purpose of the SWRB SA is to establish and maintain a comprehensive registration and regulatory framework that ensures the competence, professionalism, and ethical conduct of social workers in South Australia.
- ✓ The SWRB SA will provide a service that is relevant and responsive to the needs of the community, as outlined in the legislation and regulatory framework.
- ✓ Professional links will be maintained with relevant stakeholders, such as social work associations, educational institutions, and government bodies, to ensure the service is current, informed, and positioned to respond to changing needs and trends in social work practice.
- ✓ The SWRB SA is committed to partnering and engaging with First Nations people and recognises and appreciates their rich experiences, skills and knowledges.
- ✓ The SWRB SA will ensure direct involvement of social workers, social work services and community representatives in its planning and decision-making processes.
- ✓ The SWRB SA will promote empowerment and education for social workers by providing accessible and approachable information and services in a timely manner, so they can make informed decisions and uphold professional standards.
- ✓ The SWRB SA will publicise its services to the social work community and the public, ensuring that its offices and online platforms are accessible and inclusive.
- ✓ Services will be provided in a flexible manner, allowing social workers, stakeholders and the public to contact the SWRB SA through various channels, including telephone, email, online and in-person consultations.
- ✓ All services will be provided in a manner that respects the rights and dignity of social workers, service users and the public, and does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, disability, socio-economic status, age, or sexual orientation. The SWRB SA is committed to upholding the principles of equality and diversity.
- ✓ The SWRB SA will adhere to all relevant privacy and confidentiality laws and regulations. The SWRB SA ensures that all personal information and confidential data collected, stored, or processed is handled in accordance with these laws and regulations.
- ✓ Social workers will be fully informed about the registration process and requirements, as well as potential outcomes of the registration and renewal processes.
- ✓ The SWRB SA welcomes and encourages feedback from social workers, stakeholders and the community.
- ✓ The SWRB SA will endeavour to provide the best possible services and will ensure that all services meet professional standards and are subject to appropriate evaluation and quality assurance procedures.
- ✓ All staff of the Board will be subject to evaluation and quality assurance procedures, with a supervisory structure that is appropriate to the knowledge and skills used in service provision.





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# 06

**WORK OF THE BOARD 2024**



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## Work of The Board 2024

The Board has held 6 meetings since establishment in March 2024, making significant progress across key milestones, shaping the foundation for the successful implementation of social worker registration in South Australia.

Date	Discussion Highlights
30 May 2024	Board induction, responsibilities, regulation overview
26 June 2024	Fit and proper, scopes of practice, Aboriginal Advisory Group, consultation, registration pathways
10 July 2024	Board timeline, legislative requirements of registration (who), further discussion fit and proper, scopes of practice
24 July 2024	Final draft fit and proper and scopes of practice, administrative law, fees
21 August	Regulations, finance and corporate services, practice experience pathway, establishing the Office, ASWEAS consultation
18 September	EICC update, fees, practice experience pathway, consultation - overview of results



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# 07

## FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES AND COMMUNITIES ADVISORY STRATEGY



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# **FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES & COMMUNITIES ADVISORY STRATEGY**

The Board intends to create an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Committee to ensure that the voices and knowledges of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Workers and service users of social work services are appropriately represented, particularly to decisions pertaining to Indigenous knowledges. This Committee will lead the following work with the Board, supported by the Aboriginal Regulatory Practice Lead, including assessment of education standards in teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content as part of accreditation of social work qualifications, and setting criteria for continual professional development guidelines that have Indigenous content. Furthermore, supporting complaints made through investigation processes.



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# 08

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



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# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

## *Social Workers Registration Board of New Zealand*

In January 2024 SWRB SA staff visited the Social Workers Registration Board of New Zealand, travelling to Wellington for a week of intensive learning from the SWRB NZ team.

The visit included knowledge sharing from SWRB NZ's Chief Executive, Registrar, Senior Leadership Team and corporate services staff. We engaged in discussions covering various aspects crucial to the establishment of a successful registration scheme.



### KEY ACTIVITIES:

- Introduction and Overview: detailed sessions with the CEO, Registrar, and Social Work Special Advisor providing insights into roles, challenges, and solutions for effective governance
- Focus on First Nations Perspectives: observing New Zealand's strong First Nations focus, incorporating Maori knowledge, traditions, and language
- Learning Sessions: in-depth exploration of staffing, policies, governance, website and portal workflows, infrastructure and technology, reporting, investigation processes, financial management, and accreditation processes
- Traditional Farewell: ending the week with a traditional farewell, reflecting the warmth and collaborative spirit of our engagement



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## Learnings from New Zealand visit

The visit to the SWRB NZ highlighted a critical need for strategic recruitment, a robust communication plan, an intuitive online platform, proactive education initiatives, and clear regulatory roles to establish social worker registration in a way that is both effective and well-received by the social work community and the members of the public for whom the legislation is designed to protect. These insights significantly shaped our approach as we moved forward to establish the board and office.

The New Zealand visit not only provided a guiding roadmap for establishing social worker registration but also initiated a meaningful cross-country collaboration that continues to contribute to the success of the establishment of the SWRB SA.

We express our gratitude to Chief Executive Sarah Clark and the SWRB NZ team for their generosity and we look forward to a continued strong partnership into the future.

## Other regulatory bodies

Throughout the past 12 months we have been fortunate to knowledge share with other South Australian regulators, including the Teachers Registration Board of South Australia and AHPRA.

These valuable connections have enabled us to learn from experience, receive guidance on best practice, build networks and partnerships, engage with peers to understand the regulatory landscape, understand successful methods and processes and to benchmark our progress for future success.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to these organisations for their essential knowledge and for allowing us to build a supportive network as we establish social work registration in South Australia.



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# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

We have connected with and actively involved those organisations and individuals who have a vested interest in social worker registration. Stakeholder engagement is critical to ensure the establishment of social worker registration aligns with the needs and expectations of those affected by it, fostering transparency, trust and collaboration.

When considering stakeholder engagement we identified key internal and external stakeholders as well as other sector and community groups who influence or are impacted by the introduction of social work registration.

We place emphasis open communication and feedback with regular updates and opportunities for stakeholders to provide input and insights and to voice concerns. We want our stakeholders to help shape our initiatives. Effective stakeholder engagement leads to clearer expectations and a more widely accepted outcome.



AASW Public Event , 24th Aug 2024

We have engaged with stakeholders via the following channels throughout 2023/24:

- 1:1 or group meetings
- Newsletter
- Website FAQs
- Resources
- Face to face presentations
- Recorded information sessions
- Events

Over the past year, 1255 people have attended information sessions or been involved in small group meetings. In addition, the SWRB has provided a recorded information session on the website which has had 784 views to date.



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# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The following stakeholders have been engaged throughout the establishment phase:

Sector	Organisations
<b>Government</b>	DHS, DCP, Dept of Ed, Dept for Corrections, SA Health, Office for the Guardianship for Children and Young People, Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People, AGD, SAPOL
<b>Union</b>	PSA, CPSU, ASU, NTEU
<b>Not for Profit/Non-Gov Sector</b>	CAFFSA, Centacare UCSA Junction, Lifestyle Solutions, Infinity Community, Minda, RASA, Life without Barriers, Benevolent Society, SACOSS, Embolden, Anglicare, Lutheran Care, Uniting Care Wesley Bowden, Centacare, Uniting Communities, KWY, Baptist Care, AFSS, DASSA, Flinders Medical Centre, Women's Safety Services SA
<b>Universities</b>	Flinders University, University of South Australia
<b>Other</b>	AASW, NDIS Private Practitioners, Services Australia, DHS Lived Experience Group, SA Health Consumer Partner Group, the Reily Foundation for a DCP lived experience group consultation.



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# CONSULTATION

## **A significant milestone for the Social Workers Registration Board was the consultation on the Scope of Practice and Social Work Services.**

This first phase of consultation was designed to gain understanding from the sector about what they understood to be a definition of Scope of Practice and Social Work Services.

As determined by the legislation, the SWRB has consulted with:

- a) persons who the Board considers are able to represent the views of social workers or of classes of social workers
- b) persons who the Board considers are able to represent the views of employers of social workers and,
- c) organisations— (i) that the Board considers will be affected by the proposal

The Scope of Practice and Social Work Services paper was developed drawing from key definitions and regard to the AASW Practice Standards (2023) and the AASW Code of Ethics (2020) as well as regard to the Social Workers Registration Act (2003) New Zealand, and the development of social work scopes of practice by the Social Workers Registration Board of New Zealand.



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# CONSULTATION

## Submissions and responses

The SWRB YourSAy sector campaign ran from August 8th – September 9th 2024. 2000 people were contacted via YourSAy resulting in 472 individual responses from the sector.

- 51.95% responses came from front line service delivery staff
- 17.72% responses were from managers of social workers and 16.02% supervisors of social workers
- 45% of the responses were from participants who have been working in the social services sector for more than 15 years and up to 30 years.
- 97% of the survey sample reported having social work qualification from Bachelor of Social Work, Masters, and PhD

19 consultation submissions were received from organisations, representing a cross section of the human services sector including:

- Peak Bodies
- Unions
- Non-Government
- Government



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# 09

**FINANCE & FUNDING**



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# FUNDING & FINANCE

## *Financial obligations of the Board*

### **Establishment 2024/25**

The funding committed by the South Australian Government for the establishment of the SWRB SA is allocated to DCP, as the nominated government agency responsible for working with the Director and the office to monitor the budget and allocate expenditure for the required set up activities in readiness for the commencement of the Act on 1 July 2025.

### **After 1 July 2025**

After the commencement of the Act on 1 July 2025, the SWRB SA will become an independent office, taking fees, and will be required to have annual statements of account prepared in respect of each financial year. The first financial statements, audited accounts, and annual report by the Board will be due in September 2025.



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# 10

**CORPORATE SERVICES**



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# CORPORATE SERVICES

## *Operational and Administrative Foundations*

Establishing a new regulatory body, requires building a solid operational foundation, ensuring the organisation runs smoothly across all corporate functions. We have worked tirelessly over our first 12 months to establish the core administrative, financial, and human resource systems critical to SWRB SA's operations.

We have implemented the necessary office infrastructure, including selecting and setting up an office location, procuring furniture, IT equipment, and essential office supplies. We have developed key administrative policies and procedures, covering areas such as record-keeping, document management, and office workflows to support day-to-day operations and ensured that systems like email, internal communication platforms, and data storage are fully functional and secure.

We have recruited and onboarded 10 staff over a 12 month period, building a team from the ground up, with 3 additional staff to join in the next 2 months to bring our team to its full complement. This has included drafting job descriptions, overseeing recruitment processes, and managing staff contracts. We have set up an employee onboarding program, including orientation, training, and development initiatives.

We have been working with the DCP finance and corporate services team to set up a financial system to manage budgeting, accounting, and reporting needs, ensuring compliance with financial regulations. In addition, a memorandum of administrative agreement is well underway for the shared services functions that will support the SWRB SA office from commencement.

Essential governance support has been provided to the Board, including onboarding, the establishment of terms of reference, organising board meetings, preparing meeting agendas, and maintaining formal records of decisions made.

We are building a collaborative and positive workplace culture by introducing initiatives to build team cohesion, promote staff well-being and encourage communication across our organisational areas. We have set up regular team meetings, planning days, and social events to ensure a strong sense of shared purpose within the organisation.

This strong foundation positions us for growth and success in our mission moving forward.



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# CORPORATE SERVICES

## *Operations and Administration Highlights 2023/24*

- Appointed 10 new staff members, with plans for the final 3 appointments to complete the full office team.
- Appointed a 7-member board to oversee governance and strategy.
- Set up key policies and administrative processes for board operations and decision-making.
- Relocated and established a new office site.
- Developed comprehensive operations and administrative processes (eg. email management, document storage protocols).
- Made significant progress on creating work instructions, policies, and procedures for staff.
- Formed working groups to evaluate options for ongoing office needs, including decisions on in-house vs shared services.
- Completed procurement evaluation for the ICT registration portal.
- Established infrastructure to support effective operations from commencement in July 2025.
- Conducted planning for finance management for long-term sustainability.



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# CORPORATE SERVICES

## *Information and Communications Technology (ICT)*

ICT plays a vital role in establishing the technological framework necessary for the operations of a regulatory body. Throughout the past year we have engaged with key stakeholders to understand the legal and business requirements of the SWRB SA. This includes mapping workflows for registration, logging CPD, renewals, and complaint management, while ensuring compliance with relevant legislation. Based on these needs, a comprehensive technology strategy is being developed, focusing on system design, platform selection, scalability, and flexibility to support future growth.

Our ICT Lead Advisor and evaluation team members have been overseeing the procurement process, identifying suitable vendors to implement a registration portal that meets the SWRB SA's functional and technical requirements. This is a key task for ICT as the registration portal will allow social workers to apply, renew, and manage registrations, as well as provide a public-facing interface for searches and complaints. Alongside this, we have been setting up a robust data management system, ensuring effective data storage, reporting, and integration with other relevant databases.

There has been extensive work completed setting up the necessary hardware, software, and communication tools for the office and establishing cyber security protocols to safeguard sensitive data. The significant progress of our ICT initiatives will ensure the smooth implementation of systems, enabling the SWRB SA to operate efficiently, through thorough trial and testing, which will be conducted in advance of commencement.

## *ICT Highlights 2023/24*

- Set up all necessary hardware, software, and communication tools for seamless operations.
- Established a secure and efficient data management system to support business functions.
- Completed procurement process for the ICT registration portal, ensuring it meets business requirements.
- Engaged with key ICT contacts for ongoing support and collaboration.
- Developed a detailed plan for the registration process to inform the build of the ICT portal.
- Set up collaboration tools to enhance team productivity and information sharing.
- Mapped out requirements and engaged with third parties for integration with operational systems.
- Provided technical onboarding and support for new staff.



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# CORPORATE SERVICES

## *Communications and Engagement*

Communications and Engagement plays a crucial role in establishing the SWRB SA's public presence and building strong relationships with stakeholders. We have made significant progress by developing a comprehensive communication strategy that aligns with the SWRB's goals, values, and regulatory framework. This involved identifying key audiences and other stakeholders and engaging them with consistent, clear, and transparent messaging to build trust and promote understanding of social worker registration.

The SWRB SA brand identity has been formed through the development of branding guidelines and setting up a website to ensure we have a visible and professional online presence.

We have created content, such as newsletters, and updates, to keep stakeholders informed about developments, key milestones, and opportunities for engagement. A key engagement initiative was the stakeholder consultation on the scopes of practice and social work services run through YourSAy, with the results detailed in the stakeholder consultation section of this report.

We have built relationships through meetings, events, and consultations throughout the past year, facilitating two-way communication between the SWRB SA and its stakeholders. We have gathered feedback from the sector to inform decision-making to ensure that the needs and concerns of the sector, other stakeholders and the public are addressed.

## *Comms and Engagement Highlights 2023/24*

- Engaged stakeholders through targeted meetings, events, and consultations.
- Successfully embedded consistent branding across all platforms and materials.
- Launched a one-page webpage with FAQs, with ongoing development in progress.
- Commenced the build of a comprehensive website.
- Developed and implemented a communications strategy to guide outreach efforts.
- Conducted a major consultation via YourSAy online consultation hub.
- Regularly distributed newsletters and updates to keep stakeholders informed.



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# 11

**THE NATIONAL CONVERSATION**

# THE NATIONAL CONVERSATION

The Board continues to work alongside the AASW and the Minister's Office to advocate for National Registration of social workers. The Review of Regulatory Complexity of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS), 'the Complexity Review', commenced in April 2024, with Ms Sue Dawson appointed as independent reviewer, aiming for completion in April 2025. The Complexity Review aims to maintain the alignment of NRAS with community expectations, improve decision-making and complaints processes, consider the expansion and growth of NRAS, and advise the strategy and direction for NRAS's future. The SWRB will be participating in the Review, advocating for inclusion of social work.



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# 12

**NEXT STEPS**

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# NEXT STEPS

*In the next 12 months we will have a strong focus on strengthening, refining, and expanding the foundation we have built.*

1

## Policy Refinement

Refine policies based on feedback from stakeholders.

2

## Process Review and Improvement

Conduct ongoing review of the administrative and operational processes established during the first year. Identify areas for improvement, streamline workflows, and implement strategies to enhance efficiency.

3

## Financial Sustainability

Focus on longer-term financial planning, including forecasting future expenses and revenue generation (e.g registration fees) for the established office, ensuring financial stability.

# NEXT STEPS

4

## System Optimisation

Continue improving IT systems to meet evolving organisational needs. Ensure that the registration platform, internal databases, and reporting tools are continually updated and optimised.

5

## Organisational Culture

Focus on embedding the SWRB SA's mission, vision, and values into the workplace culture. Promote an inclusive workplace culture, ensuring that employees feel valued and supported.

6

## Strengthen Governance

Enhance governance structures, including refining board support processes and ensuring effective oversight. Establish compliance frameworks to prepare for any audits or external evaluations. Develop a formal risk management strategy.

7

## Expand Stakeholder Engagement

Use insights from consultations to refine policy and service delivery. Expand outreach efforts by improving communication channels, launching awareness campaigns, and deepening engagement with stakeholders.

# NEXT STEPS

8

## Strategic Planning

Develop a long-term strategic plan to set clear goals for the next 3–5 years, including enhancing regulatory frameworks, and adapting to changes in the professional landscape. Involve stakeholders in the development to ensure our direction aligns with the needs of the sector and public expectations.

9

## Monitoring Organisational Impact

Establish KPIs and a framework for tracking and reporting on the SWRB's impact, internally (e.g. operational efficiency, staff satisfaction) and externally (e.g. stakeholder satisfaction, registration rates, complaint resolution).



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# THANK YOU

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all of our stakeholders — our staff, board members, and partners for your support and collaboration throughout the year. Your contributions have been essential in helping us achieve our goals and prepare for the implementation of professional registration for social workers. We look forward to continuing this important work together in the coming year.

## CONTACT US



[swrb@sa.gov.au](mailto:swrb@sa.gov.au)



[www.swrb.sa.gov.au](http://www.swrb.sa.gov.au)



Level 6, 115 Grenfell Street, Adelaide SA 5000