

ANNUAL REPORT 2024/2025

PREPARED BY:
SWRB SA, 14 October 2025



**Social Workers
Registration Board**
South Australia



Government
of South Australia

The Social Workers Registration Board of South Australia (SWRB SA) acknowledges that the land we work on is the traditional lands of the Kurna 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 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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Carmela Bastian

Presiding Member

It is with great pride and enthusiasm that I present this year's Annual Report for the Social Work Registration Board South Australia (SWRB SA). Over the past year, we have made significant strides in laying a strong foundation for our organisation and the future of social work regulation in our state.

Our achievements are detailed in the report which reflect our unwavering commitment to enhance confidence in the community, uplift the social work profession, and improve the quality of social services across South Australia. I extend my sincere thanks to our Board members, stakeholders, and the entire social work community for their invaluable contributions and collaboration throughout this foundational year.

Together, we are shaping a stronger, more accountable future for social work regulation, and I look forward to the progress ahead.



**Social Workers
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Sarah Wendt

Director

What an exciting year it has been. The Social Workers Registration Board, supported by the Office has made significant progress working towards the commencement date to register the first social worker in South Australia, and Australia.

The Social Workers Registration Act 2021 has guided the work that needed to be completed for commencement including defining a scope of practice, social work services, practice experience, fit and proper, conduct and competence and establishing an investigations' framework. It was a pleasure to publish the website and materials ready for commencement.

The SWRB has consulted significantly across government, non-government, peaks, unions and higher education providers as well as spoken directly to over 1000 social workers. The engagement, collaboration, and good will to work through complexities to ensure a robust and sustainable regulatory framework has been amazing. The amendment of the commencement date has allowed for rich, deep and specific conversations about the regulatory framework, and many organisations are well underway to ensure they are ready.

A highlight was the establishment of the first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee to work alongside and in partnership with the SWRB. The SWRB thanks for the State Government for their continued support to ensure we get registration of social workers right and set a good foundation for national registration in the future.

SWRB SA'S ACHIEVEMENTS AT A GLANCE 2024-25

- Successfully designed and delivered the bespoke SWRB Portal for social workers to apply and renew registration, log their CPD and supervision. This interfaces with the internal CRM designed for efficient processing of applications, managing concerns, and for collecting data to report on the composition of the workforce.
- Developed a dedicated website to support visibility, engagement, and accessibility
- Defined parameters for the Practice Experience Pathway and established criteria for a 'fit and proper person'
- Determined qualification requirements for registration
- Established three registration pathways to minimise disruption for existing social services workers
- Drafted a comprehensive Quality Practice Framework covering conduct, competency, supervision, and CPD requirements
- Sought and incorporated expert legal consultation to ensure regulatory compliance
- Developed organisational structure and financial model to support sustainable operations
- Created a full suite of policy frameworks to guide all processes of the SWRB SA
- Established a Finance Committee
- Established Disciplinary Advisory Board
- Analysed over 100 position descriptions at the request of the sector to gain understanding of categories of registration and compliance
- Met with 132 people in key stakeholder agencies in SA
- Reached 1,317 individuals in the sector through our information sessions and webinars.



**Social Workers
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OUR BOARD MEMBERS

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.



Carmela Bastian
Presiding Member

Member with extensive experience in social work



Jodie Stevens
Deputy Presiding Member

Member representing the general community



Jane Mussared
Board Member

Member with extensive experience in social work



Simone Mather
Board Member

Member with extensive experience in social work



Nicole Lancaster
Board Member

Member who is legal practitioner



Ruka Taite
Board Member

Member with extensive experience in social work



Tracey Greaves
Board Member

Member with extensive experience in social work

Work of The Board

The Social Workers Registration Board of SA has held 12 meetings over the 2024-25 period, and welcomed two new Board Members; Simone Mather and Tracey Greaves who both have extensive experience in social work.

The Board has spent the majority of the past year busily preparing to take registrations. This involved key policy and operational decision-making, and the set-up of key committees such as the Finance, Audit, and Risk Committee, and the Disciplinary Advisory Panel that must be ready to operate from commencement.

The amendment to the commencement date in late June has given the Board additional time to turn their mind to strategising on how best to engage with the sector to share the details of the SWRB SA Regulatory Model and work alongside to support the transition to new requirements for social workers.

The Board has made submissions to the Domestic and Family Violence & Sexual Violence Royal Commission, and the NRAS Complexity Review to share how social worker registration can be leveraged to promote better outcomes for public safety.

The Board has also contributed to the conversation around the new Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS) and how the new social worker registration requirements and functions of the Board can work together with the AASW Accreditation Council.

Members of the Board have also appreciated the privilege to attend several events celebrating social workers in SA, including the World Social Work Day Breakfast 2025.



ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMITTEE



April Lawrie

First and former Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People. Mirning/Kokatha woman. Qualified Social Worker.



Tracy Rigney

Descendant of Narungga and Ngarrindjeri Nations. Strong in Culture and resilient advocate in social justice for Aboriginal People but predominantly Children, with extensive experience in the public sector. Returned to university to achieve a social work degree after years of practice.



Chrissy McKenzie

Social Worker at WSSSA and managing director of self-owned consultancy practice. Adnyamathanha, Dieri, and Kuyani woman. Qualified Social Worker.



Jody Satala

30 years' experience working in child protection. Barunggam and Bundjalung woman. Pursuing social work qualifications.



ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES COMMITTEE

The four inaugural members of the SWRB SA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee were appointed in September 2025 after a very competitive period of recruitment.

SWRB SA was incredibly pleased to receive a high volume of applications from a diverse group of candidates across the social work, human services, and legal sectors in South Australia.

Committee Members; April Lawrie, Tracy Rigney, Chrissie McKenzie, and Jody Satala, will now begin the work required to establish the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee, including a Terms of Reference, processes and procedures, and their relationship with the Social Workers Registration Board of SA.

Looking towards 2026, the Committee will be tasked with the important work providing advice about the current exclusion for 'cultural advisors' within the definition of social work services and exploring the relationship between cultural knowledge and social work in the context of social worker registration and the SWRB SA Regulatory Framework.

Board Member, Ruka Taite, will also be joining the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee representing the Social Workers Registration Board of SA.



COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Consultation (August 2024 - February 2025)

SWRB published a [comprehensive consultation report](#) detailing the findings from the sector-wide YourSay consultation on the Scope of Practice for social work and definition of Social Work Services. The 467 individual responses, 19 organisation submissions, and Lived Experience Network focus group feedback were integral to the development of the final iterations.

Before making this final determination, SWRB SA follow up with two rounds of extensive stakeholder consultation for the Scope of Practice for social work and definition of Social Work Services. This involved 39 agencies from government and non-government organisations, peak bodies, universities, unions, and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

Education (July 2025 - October 2025)

Once the decision had been made to amend the *Social Workers Registration Act 2021* to change the commencement date to a day by proclamation, SWRB SA embarked on a phase of education and information sharing with the sector to discuss and build understanding the SWRB SA Regulatory Framework.

In this period, SWRB SA met with 38 organisations, held three information sessions and three live webinars.

SWRB SA participated in three sector specific forums to build understanding within each sector about what work will become regulated and how social worker registration will affect their workforce. There were 34 organisations represented across three sectors:

- Toward Home Alliance homelessness sector forum
- Domestic and Family Violence sector forum in partnership with Embolden
- Out of Home Care sector forum in partnership with Child and Family Focus SA

ICT

Over the past year, the ICT team's primary focus was to deliver a fully functional online portal to support the Board's regulatory operations. An external vendor was engaged to design, build, integrate, test and deploy the SWRB portal. The result is a comprehensive system providing end-to-end digital services for all user groups. Key portal features include:

Public	Registrants	Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Report concerns ✓ Search Record of Registration ✓ Search Record of Deregistration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Apply for registration ✓ Maintain Registration including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ uploading CPD & supervision records ✓ Registration certificate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Maintain registration applications and renewals ✓ CPD & Supervision audits ✓ Investigations case management

During the build of the portal, a major emphasis was placed on automation and integration to streamline processes, reduce manual work, and improve accuracy. These design choices ensure the portal remains scalable and adaptable as demand increases.

SWRB has executed rigorous testing to ensure the portal's reliability and user-friendliness. After internal testing, SWRB conducted extensive User Acceptance Testing (UAT) with external social workers (prospective registrants) to gather feedback. These external user testing sessions were very successful; participants found the portal straightforward and easy to use, noting that instructions and on-screen explanations were clear enough that they "didn't need the support material at all". Another tester commented that the online process felt familiar and intuitive, comparable to other modern digital services. Suggestions from this testing phase were incorporated to further improve the user experience, such as minor interface tweaks and clarifications in guidance text.

System security and reliability remained a core focus throughout the year. ICT implemented maintenance and support processes, including continuous system improvements, secure backups and continuous monitoring. Internal systems were actively maintained, and staff received timely technical support, ensuring minimal disruption to operations. These measures have ensured the digital infrastructure remains stable, secure, and responsive.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Delivered the SWRB Portal, encompassing:
 - Discovery, design, build, and deployment
 - Integration with external systems
 - Internal and external (UAT) testing
- Established secure & monitored infrastructure
- Developed and delivered staff training
- Implemented continuous improvement processes
- Initiated records management policies and processes and implemented an internal intranet

THE NATIONAL CONVERSATION

The Independent review of complexity in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme has been undertaken, and the final Report; *Transforming Health Professions Regulation in Australia*, was published on 12 September 2025.

On 19 September 2025, Sue Dawson, Independent Reviewer of the complexity review sent the SWRB SA the Independent Review Final Report. Ms Dawson thanked SWRB SA for their contribution and indicated that our engagement played a key role in shaping the final report.

The Report sets out four overarching directions, supported by 26 actions. None of the directions or actions include the adoption of social work under AHPRA. The Report is clear that it sees social work as a 'social care profession' with social workers practising in more diverse settings than just health and questions whether Health Ministers are the appropriate body to regulate social work's professional standards.

The question of whether the scope of the National Scheme ought to be expanded to explicitly enable inclusion of any professions that work in the broader social care sector as well as partially in health settings, was referred to as a "difficult one". Ms Dawson acknowledged that there has been powerful ongoing advocacy for this, particularly from the social work profession through the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW).

The report provided the following guidance:

- Some professions provide services across a range of portfolios for example, education, justice and community services. Where services cross a range of portfolios, the need for registration standards regarding services other than health should be considered. If the profession mainly provides services outside of the health portfolio, Health Ministers may not be the most appropriate body to approve registration standards. Another form of regulation, other than health professional regulation under the NRAS, may be more appropriate.
- When assessing the appropriateness of a profession for inclusion in the National Scheme, it is both relevant and necessary to pose the questions of whether a profession primarily delivers services in a health setting, the nature of those services, and whether regulation is best conducted through the health portfolio.

It was concluded that blanket expansion of the National Scheme – to enable any social care profession to be included, irrespective of the setting within which they work and notwithstanding the nature of the services provided – would not be consistent with the purpose of the Scheme. It would introduce even more complexity across the standard setting, accreditation, complaints and prosecution functions.

The SWRB SA has publicly acknowledged the NRAS outcome and the advocacy of key stakeholders in social work, particularly the AASW, for the inclusion of social work to be registered under the NRAS. The SWRB SA also recommended a focus on professional social work registration be established in all jurisdictions in good time and pointed out the model established in South Australia is a sound base for any other jurisdiction to adopt.

NEXT STEPS

We look forward to closing 2025 with consultations regarding regulations and working with the State Government into 2026 to prepare the announcement of the commencement date. The sector will have plenty of time to register once the announcement is made, and the SWRB will hold specific information sessions to support registrations. The SWRB is committed to a steady transition into registration and are here to support organisations and individuals in this journey.



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