

Today is International Allied Health Professionals Day and on this day, the AASW renews its call for mandatory registration of social workers. International Allied Health Professionals Day is a day to celebrate the contribution of allied health professionals in the community. For the AASW, it is an opportunity to pay tribute to the tireless commitment of qualified social workers in their often challenging and complex work. "Social workers provide key supports to vulnerable individuals, families and communities," said AASW National President Christine Craik. "We work in a wide range of areas, including mental health, family violence, child protection, aged care, disability, housing, drug and alcohol to name a few. Working at the forefront of Australia's most pressing social issues makes us skilled, knowledgeable and passionate advocates. We see the impact of public policy on the lives of our clients every day, we know how it affects them, and we are aware of the toll this takes on social workers who advocate tirelessly in this space." Despite the vital role that social workers play, there are currently no mandatory registration requirements for social workers, leaving the most vulnerable people in our society potentially without protection. The AASW welcomes steps that are underway to formally register qualified social workers in South Australia, and calls for registration to be rolled out Australia-wide. "We have campaigned for years for the registration of social workers in Australia," said Ms Craik. "Regulation and registration can protect the public from unprofessional practice, ensure that those practising as 'social workers' are in fact qualified social workers, and ensure that social workers who breach the Code of Ethics can be held to account. Without a national system of statutory regulation for all social work practitioners, the Australian public is not offered the same level of protection as social work service users in other countries." Representatives from the AASW recently gave formal evidence on the Social Workers Registration Bill at Parliament House in South Australia.

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