

Harmony Week in Australia coincided with important dates this week, including the International Day of the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, World Social Work Day and the aftermath of the devastating terrorist attack in Christchurch. AASW National President Christine Craik said, “These events remind us that ‘harmony’ within our communities and across society rests on recognising the dignity of every person, while welcoming diversity. “That is how we promote the human rights of everyone. “This year’s Harmony Week shows us how important it is that we all promote inclusion and end discrimination based on differences in heritage, culture or belief.” This year’s AASW World Social Work Day events took time to reflect on the tragedy in Christchurch and how important social work values are in countering racism. Ms Craik said, “Social workers are passionate advocates for justice and helping families, communities and societies to build relationships based on solidarity and mutual respect. “This is how we will eliminate racial discrimination in our country. We need to reflect on the culture that can make politicians believe that there are votes to be gained by blaming refugees, immigrants or Indigenous people for issues that are not related to them, such as pressure on health care, crowded cities or welfare spending. It’s the same culture that led to the terrible act of violence last Friday.” “Social workers are dedicated to creating a society which is just and inclusive in which it is possible for everyone to flourish and thrive. Eliminating racial discrimination is fundamental to our vision. “Now is the time when we look to our leaders to set an example and we call on politicians, business and community groups to commit to join us in eliminating all forms of discrimination.” Christine Craik is available for interview.

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