World Social Work Day is held each year on the third Tuesday of March to celebrate the profession of social work and the role of social workers in the community. This year’s theme is Promoting the Importance of Human Relationships. This year, it is held on 19 March. The Australian Association of Social Workers, as the professional body representing more than 11,000 social workers, is marking World Social Work Day with celebrations throughout Australia. AASW National President Christine Craik said human relationships are at the essence of what social workers do, in the diversity of settings in which they work. Ms Craik said, “The vital work of social workers can be seen in a wide variety of settings. Whether we work in health, mental health, schools, child protection, aged care, disability, family violence, academia or management, we bring the values of our profession to wherever we work.” In a world dominated by individualism and the changing nature of community, it is necessary to emphasise the importance of our relationships to one another and the role that this plays in creating an inclusive and supportive society. Ms Craik said, “This is at the heart of the work we do. Promoting the importance of human relationships means recognising the rights and dignity of fellow human beings and treating them and their ways of knowing, with respect and compassion. “Promoting the importance of human relationships for social workers means more than just that phrase. As social workers, we work to identify, name and change the systems and attitudes in our society that impact, diminish and work against healthy relationships. “For example, in promoting the importance of human relationships, we need to call out and advocate against the discriminatory and abusive policies and structures that continue to oppress some of the most vulnerable groups in society. “These include our welfare, housing, legal, medical, political and many of our religious systems – that often disregard the importance and crucial nature of ‘relationship’ in this work.” The large scope of social work practice can be seen in the diversity of the celebrations taking place across Australia. The Association is hosting celebrations in every state and territory through its branches. The complete list of events, resources, posters and social media frames are available on the AASW website. Ms Craik said, “I encourage everyone to engage with this year’s theme of Promoting the Importance of Human Relationships. On 19 March, join our Twitter campaign and tweet us using #WSWD19, with a photo depicting human relationships. “So join social workers all over the world in celebrating the amazing work that we do, and have a happy World Social Work Day.” Christine Craik is available for interview. You can view Ms Craik’s World Social Work Day video on Facebook.

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