

# Social Work



## >>What is Social Work?

Social work is the profession committed to the pursuit of social justice, to the enhancement of the quality of life, and to the development of the full potential of each individual, group and community in society. Social workers pursue these goals by working to address the barriers, inequities and injustices that exist in society, and by active involvement in situations of personal distress and crisis. Social workers assist people to deal with personal and social problems directly, or by planning or implementing programs that benefit groups or communities. They are concerned with individual and social wellbeing and operate at the interface between people and their environments. They work with individuals, groups, communities, organisations and societies in seeking to understand the impact of social and cultural influences on people's wellbeing. Social workers are particularly concerned to ensure that people with particular needs, including children, aged persons, minority groups, homeless and economically disadvantaged people, are treated justly and have access to services appropriate to their needs.

Social workers offer a wide range of services, depending on their location. They may undertake counselling, provide information on community resources, guide small groups of people in sharing their experiences, supporting each other and learning social skills, assist community groups to plan and carry out programs, develop policy for government and community based services, evaluate programs, undertaking research, and lobby for changes which will ameliorate the disadvantage and vulnerability of people with special needs. They may specialise in family, youth and children's services, medical and health services, disability services, psychiatric and general mental health services, juvenile and family law courts, aged care and disabilities, income support and mediation.

Social work practice is based in professional education programs which promote knowledge and critical analysis of human development and behaviour and of social structures, policies and processes. Highly developed oral and written communication skills are utilised in all fields of practice.

## Where do these professionals work in Tasmania?

Social Workers are employed in State and Commonwealth agencies, including schools, hospitals, health centres, child protection services, Centrelink, defence, mental health services, aged care, justice. They also work in non government and community based organisations; private practice; and local government.

## Where do these professionals work in DHHS?

In DHHS, Social Workers can be found in RHH, LGH and NWRH; community health centres; Mental Health Services; Children and Family Services; Disability Services; and, Community Rehabilitation.

## What qualifications and regulations are required to practice?

AASW recognised qualification from a tertiary institution

AASW assesses overseas qualifications

AASW accredits training programs for continuing professional education

## Useful links

<http://www.aasw.asn.au/>