



Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers  
Te Rōpū Tauwhiro i Aotearoa

[www.anzasw.nz](http://www.anzasw.nz)

# CODE OF ETHICS

## 2019

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**Adopted 30 August 2019**



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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**We are grateful** for the New Zealand-based work being undertaken by Neil Ballantyne, Prof Liz Beddoe, Dr Kathryn Hay, Prof Jane Maidment and Shayne Walker, in the Ako Aotearoa funded research project: Enhance R2P: Social Work, including the statement of Values in Aotearoa in the Professional Capabilities Framework. This project developed the seven value statements for Social Work in Aotearoa and consulted widely among the New Zealand Social Work profession about them. The value statements are:

*Rangatiratanga;*

*Manaakitanga;*

*Whanaungatanga;*

*Aroha;*

*Kotahitanga;*

*Mātātoa; and*

*Wairuatanga.*

## FOREWORD

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**WE ARE PLEASED** to provide this new formulation of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics.

Our Code of Ethics represents our professional identity, our collective aspirations and is a key point of reference for informing our ethical decision making.

The introduction of mandatory registration of social workers means that, within a short time, most members of our Association will be registered and subject to the behavioural and practice standards established by the Social Workers' Registration Board, in its Code of Conduct.

The Association will no longer be involved in resolving complaints about Social Workers or in any disciplinary processes, other than those that relate to a Social Worker's membership of the Association, or those unregistered social services personnel who are Associate Members of the Association.

Our previous Code of Ethics, of necessity, combined an ethical framework and conduct standards as a means of assessing complaints about the practice or behaviour of a Member. We can now assert ethical aspirations alone. The Code of Ethics, in its entirety, is the way we envisage social work in Aotearoa New Zealand now and into the future.

Apart from mandatory registration, other drivers giving impetus to this work are:

- Maintaining an ethical framework is a primary function of any professional body.
- Our membership of the International Federation of Social Workers brings with it a requirement for the Association to align the Code of Ethics with the IFSW Statement of Ethical Principles;

A number of National Codes were examined in relation to how our Code of Ethics might be organised and presented. We have adopted the Canadian framework for the drafting of the new Code. We are attracted to a framework based around description of core values underpinning social work and the ethical principles that derive from these.

**President**



**Sally Dalhousie**

**Chief Executive**



**Lucy Sanford-Reed**

# WHAKATAŪKĪ

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## Te mana whakaratarata te iwi whānui hei hāpai ngā mahi whakaharatau<sup>1</sup>

The whakataukī was explained as:

Te mana whakaratarata:	Exploring, navigating and communicating about those powers, authority and prestige dynamics to understand and know what is happening for people
Te iwi whānui:	In the community
Hei hāpai:	To live
Ngā mahi whakaharatau:	It's up to you to strive for perfection in your practice

ANZASW is honoured that Dr Leland A. Ruwhiu and the whānau have gifted this whakataukī, acknowledging the rich heritage that exists and remains.

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<sup>1</sup> This whakataukī was gifted to Dr Leland A. Ruwhiu by his father, Pirihi Te Ohaki Ruwhiu in a personal communication, September 2008 to provide a Māori understanding to explain his model of practice, Te Mahi Whakamana - Mana enhancing practice.

## OUR ASSOCIATION'S COMMITMENT TO TE TIRITI O WAITANGI

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**AOTEAROA** is the tūrangawaewae of Tangata Whenua, the indigenous peoples of **AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND**. By means of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Tangata Whenua formed a governance relationship with the British Crown (representing all immigrant persons from a variety of cultures – Tauwiwi) in 1840.

Nonetheless, Aotearoa New Zealand is not governed according to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Our Association's Constitution recognises Te Tiriti o Waitangi as the basis of our governance. At the organisational level, the Constitution envisages a collaboration of Tangata Whenua and Tauwiwi in formulating the structures, policies, practices and procedures of the Association, and a sharing of power and decision making to fulfil the aspirations of both.

The commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi is not optional and permeates everything we do.

Our Constitution mandates a minimum (but no maximum) number of Tangata Whenua persons on the Association's Governance Board and requires the Governance Board to:

- ensure the Association is underpinned by Te Tiriti O Waitangi; and
- promote an indigenous identity for social work in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Members of the Association give practical expression of our commitment when:

- We educate ourselves about Te Tiriti o Waitangi and its aspirations, both on entry to social work and throughout our professional lives. This includes knowledge and understanding of our own ethnicity and the Tangata Whenua and Tauwiwi histories of Aotearoa New Zealand; and
- We give preference where we can to working in agencies and organisations where policies, procedures and practices reflect Te Tiriti o Waitangi; and
- Wherever we work, we actively and constructively promote change of mono-cultural perspectives, structures, policies, procedures and practices within our workplace; and
- We reject monocultural control over power and resources in favour of dialogue and collaborative decision-making between Tangata Whenua and Tauwiwi; and
- We actively promote the right of Tangata Whenua to use indigenous practice models and ensure the protection of the integrity of Tangata Whenua in a manner which is culturally appropriate; and
- We promote diversity and challenge racism in ourselves, our agencies, organisations, among our colleagues and in the community and country.

## ABOUT SOCIAL WORK

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**SOCIAL WORK** has grown out of humanitarian, philosophical and religious attempts to find solutions to poverty and injustice in various societies. The formal profession, titled “social work”, originated in Europe and North America and has spread worldwide, playing a significant role in the development of New Zealand society.

Social work has a dual focus:

- i. To enable and empower individuals, families, groups and communities to find their own solutions to the issues and problems they face;
- ii. To inform society at large about the injustices in its midst, and to engage in action to change the structures of society that create and perpetuate injustice.

Practice which concentrates on the first focus emphasises the specific, which can be at the expense of the general and can lead to imposing solutions, sometimes coercively.

Members have power and authority that derives from their status, role and professional skills and attributes. Some have additional powers that derive from legislation. Social workers work in a variety of private, voluntary and statutory agencies that have more or less explicit social control functions. This power, however derived, and the consequential ambiguity of client empowerment and social control, needs careful management and is a key reason why social work practice is always subject to professional supervision.

The Association recognises that it is neither just nor equitable to impose a set of values on all who live in Aotearoa New Zealand. The social work aspiration is to enable and empower people to take charge of their own lives in the context of their own values and aspirations where this causes no harm to others.

Social Workers also look outwards to the world community of social work. The Association is a member of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and is therefore bound by the IFSW Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles 2018.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ifsw.org/global-social-work-statement-of-principles/>

## DEFINITION OF SOCIAL WORK IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

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**THE ASSOCIATION** adopts the “Joint Global Definition of Social Work”<sup>3</sup> as its definition of social work in Aotearoa New Zealand:

“Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledges, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing”.

## JOINT AMPLIFICATION OF THE GLOBAL DEFINITION FOR ASIA PACIFIC REGION

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The Asia Pacific region represents many different communities and peoples. The region has been shaped by its migrations and indigenous and colonising histories. It contains some of the richest and some of the most economically deprived nations. It is a region where East meets West, and South meets North with differing religious, philosophic and political perspectives. It is a region that has been severely impacted by climate change, overuse of finite resources, natural, and human-made disasters, yet the strength and resilience of its peoples have been demonstrated over and over again.

Professional social work in the Asia Pacific Region has an emphasis on:

- Realising the care and compassion of our Profession in ensuring that all people are provided with adequate social protection so that their needs are met, and human rights and dignity safeguarded;
- Recognising the importance of faith, spirituality and/or religion in people’s lives and holding respect for varying belief systems;
- The celebration of diversity and peaceful negotiation of conflict;
- Affirming the region’s indigenous and local knowledges and practices alongside critical and research-based practice/practice-based research approaches to social work practice;
- Encouraging innovative, sustainable social work and social development practices in the preservation our environment.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> A definition agreed by IFSW, IASSW and ICSW in July 2014 – the THREE major international bodies in relation to social work. <https://www.ifsw.org/what-is-social-work/global-definition-of-social-work/>

<sup>4</sup> Endorsed by IFSWAP/APASWE 2016



# OUR PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

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## *PREAMBLE*<sup>5</sup>

**OUR PROFESSION** is dedicated to the welfare and self-realisation of all people; the development and disciplined use of knowledge; the development of resources and skills to meet individual, group, national and international changing needs and aspirations; and the achievement of social justice for all. We have a particular interest in the needs and empowerment of people who are marginalised, vulnerable, oppressed or living in poverty.

The social work profession in Aotearoa New Zealand is committed to respecting the dignity of every person as the foundation of its ethical principles, and to national and international codes of Human Rights.<sup>6</sup>

As professionals in a discipline that upholds respect for diversity, and in keeping with democratic rights and freedoms, we respect the distinct systems of beliefs and lifestyles of individuals, families, groups, communities and nations without prejudice. Specifically, we do not tolerate discrimination based on age, gender, abilities, ethnic background, race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, neurodiversity or socio-economic condition, while simultaneously promoting affirmative action, whereby people may be given preferential treatment to address inequities caused by discrimination, colonisation, economic policies, violence or exploitation.

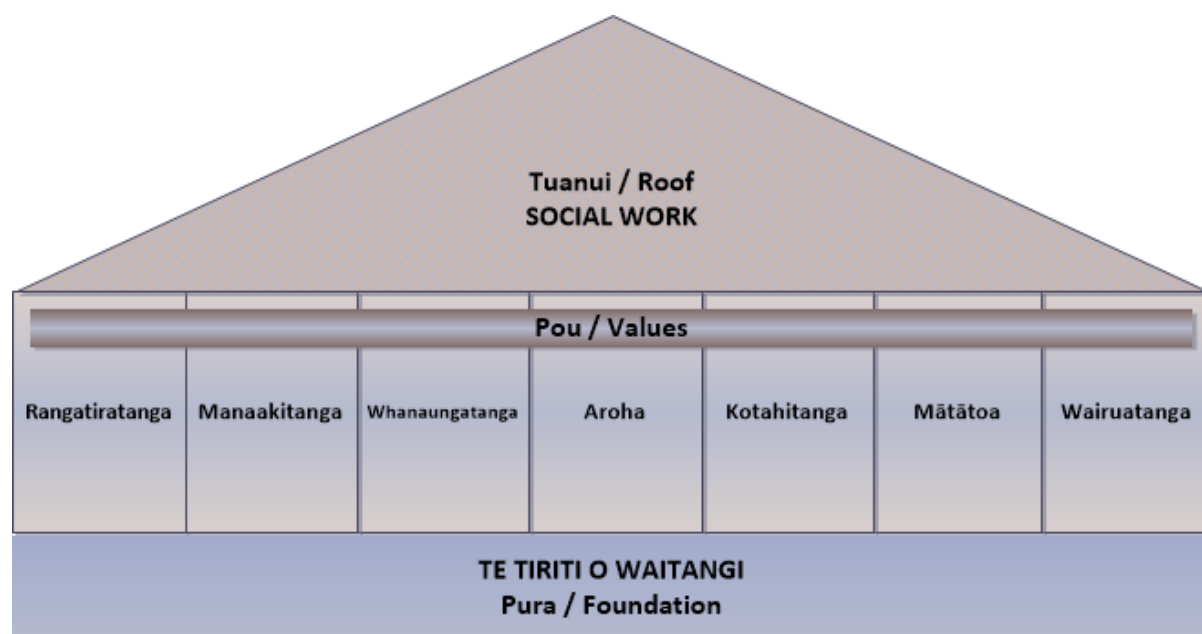
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<sup>5</sup> Adapted from Canadian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, 2005, p3.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

## VALUES AND ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

**WE UPHOLD** the core values that emanate from our National Foundation Document: Te Tiriti o Waitangi - Rangatiratanga, Manaakitanga, Whanaungatanga, Aroha, Kotahitanga, Mātātoa and Wairuatanga, and the ethical principles that derive from them.<sup>7</sup>



### RANGATIRATANGA

**SOCIAL WORKERS** value diversity and cultural identity. We use our practice to advocate for and support self-determination and empowerment of others.

#### *Ethical Principles*

- We promote socially just policies, legislation and improved social conditions;
- We promote the just allocation of community resources;
- We encourage public participation in the development of and decisions about social policies and structures;
- We respect diversity among individuals in Aotearoa New Zealand society and the right of individuals to their unique customs and beliefs, consistent with the rights of others;
- We support every person's right to assert their cultural and personal identity;
- We assert that every person is entitled to make their own decisions based on informed consent, consistent with their capacity and with the rights of others;
- We impose any limitation on a person's right to self-determination only where there is a demonstrable need to protect individuals from self-harm, from harming others, or from being harmed by others;

<sup>7</sup> Pictorial courtesy of the ANZASW Wellington Branch

- We inform the community about the services we offer, and the knowledge, skills, training, qualifications, experience and statutory authorities which underpin these.

## MANAAKITANGA

**SOCIAL WORKERS** recognise and support the mana of others. We act towards others with respect, kindness and compassion. We practice empathic solidarity, ensure safe space, acknowledge boundaries and meet obligations.

### *Ethical Principles*

- We assert that every person has unique worth and inherent dignity;
- We assert that every person is entitled to the protection of their rights and freedoms;
- Our power and authority deriving from our status, roles, competency and statutes, are used in disciplined ways for client and societal benefit;
- We exercise due care for the interests and safety of those for whom we have professional responsibility, by limiting professional practice to areas of demonstrated competence;
- We respect the importance of the trust and confidence placed in the professional relationship by persons with whom we work and by members of the public;
- We respect a person's right to confidentiality of information shared in a professional context, explaining early in relationships any limitations on confidentiality deriving from law, court order or this Code;
- We maintain accurate records and share these with persons with whom we work, subject to preserving the privacy of others in those records;
- We commit to obtaining the necessary knowledge and skills for the proper and respectful use of digital technology and social media, recognising that lack of understanding and careless use may pose threats to a range of our ethical obligations;
- We ensure any research we undertake and promulgate is governed by an appropriate Ethics Approval process.
- We recognise the sentience of animals and ensure that any animal engaged as part of our social work practice is protected;

## WHANAUNGATANGA

**SOCIAL WORKERS** work to strengthen reciprocal mana-enhancing relationships, connectedness and to foster a sense of belonging and inclusion.

### *Ethical Principles*

- We reflect on and critically evaluate our practice, to be aware of our impact on others;
- We inform persons fully about the services we offer and the nature of any proposed involvement;
- We acknowledge with persons seeking or needing services, any limits to the services we can provide;
- We facilitate people's access to other service providers, where what they seek or what they need is outside the scope of the services we can provide;

- We promote community, family, whanau, hapu, iwi, as the primary source of protection and support for family members;
- We support community, family, whanau, hapu, iwi to make their own decisions and ensure self-determination occurs when it is within our power to do so;
- We seek to broaden the community connectedness of persons we work with, helping them establish ongoing means of support and assistance beyond the professional relationship;
- We inform ourselves about established cultural practices important to the people with whom we work and engage with these in respectful ways.

## AROHA

**SOCIAL WORKERS** acknowledge our mutual responsibility for wellbeing. We recognise our common humanity with people who use our services and hold people to account, using professional judgement without being judgemental. We focus on people's strengths and finding solutions

### *Ethical Principles*

- We accept persons for who they are, with positive regard and without judgement or moral or religious stricture;
- We invest our time and skill to build supportive relationships with persons, in the context of which they are able to make life-changing decisions for themselves;
- We support Individuals and families to access resources to meet basic human needs;
- We respect persons with whom we work by maintaining appropriate professional boundaries that inform our involvement with them;
- We support others in their personal development and their pursuit of individual goals;
- We act with integrity at all times, in the knowledge that our competence and behaviour reflect on the Association, the profession of social work, and the effectiveness of our work with persons;
- We place the needs of others above self-interest when acting in our professional capacity.

## KOTAHITANGA

**SOCIAL WORKERS** work to build a sense of community, solidarity and collective action for social change. We challenge injustice and oppression in all its forms, including exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence

### *Ethical Principles*

- We are law-abiding citizens of Aotearoa New Zealand;
- We advocate fair and equitable treatment for all persons under the law and challenge injustice, especially injustice which affects the vulnerable and disadvantaged;
- We inform society at large about any social injustice we encounter;
- We uphold every person's right to be free from violence and the threat of violence;
- We reject the use of weapons against people;

- We reject any direct or indirect support of individuals, groups, political forces or power structures promoting or using violence, terrorism, torture, or cruel or unusual punishments or treatments;
- We will not allow our knowledge and skills to be used for any inhumane purpose;
- We promote peace and non-violence, and where there has been local, regional or international conflict, we ally ourselves with humanitarian efforts towards peace building and reconstruction;
- We use our knowledge and skills to bring about fair resolutions to conflict and assisting those affected by conflict;
- We act responsibly towards and within the agencies that employ us;
- We promote within our agencies, a respect for ethical practice and a collective approach to social care and social action;
- We actively pursue relationships with other community helping agencies and advocate cross-organisation collaborative approaches to social care and social action;
- We contribute to our profession and its ability to serve humanity, by participating in self-development, the development of our colleagues and the development of new professional knowledge.

## MĀTĀTOA

**SOCIAL WORKERS** act with moral courage in situations that are uncomfortable, challenging and uncertain. We use critical reflection and questioning to work through contradictions and complexity.

### *Ethical Principles*

- We commit to representing the profession of social work, our colleagues, our Association and our employers fairly, accurately and respectfully in all public and social media;
- We participate in robust, critical, and informed advocacy and debate in public and social media;
- We advocate for fair and equitable access to public services, benefits and distribution of resources and wealth;
- We engage in constructive action to change the structures of society that create and perpetuate injustice;
- We promote social development, environmental wellbeing, sustainability and justice, and care and protection of the natural world;
- We support colleagues, groups and communities when they are courageous and striving for change, believing in the power and protection of collective action;
- We take reasonable steps to hold employers accountable for client and worker safety and well-being in our workplaces;
- We challenge any workplace culture that supports bullying, or harassment, or intentional harm of others;
- We assert that we work in a safe and effective manner only when provision for the professional supervision of our practice is in place;

## WAIRUATANGA

**SOCIAL WORKERS** attend to the wellbeing – spiritual, emotional, psychological and physical – of self and others. We acknowledge the significance of whakapapa, self-awareness and self-care.

### *Ethical Principles*

- We strive for congruity in our private conduct and our professional responsibilities;
- We take responsibility for our own spiritual, emotional, mental and physical wellbeing;
- We acknowledge the importance of whakapapa and these wellbeing dimensions in the people with whom we work;
- We demonstrate and promote the qualities of honesty, reliability, transparency and diligence in our professional practice;
- We assess our own wellbeing and protection, and those of our clients, in accepting any tasks;
- We embrace continuous learning and an ongoing pursuit of knowledge;
- We commit to life-long learning in respect of social work values, ethics, knowledge and skills;
- We commit to professional supervision to ensure that our practice is both ethical and safe, to enhance our professional development and maintain personal well-being;
- We strive to be the best we can be at all times in our professional capacities;
- We relate to colleagues with integrity, respect, courtesy, openness and honesty, addressing any differences of opinion or practice in a responsible manner.

## GLOSSARY OF MĀORI TERMS<sup>8</sup>

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Aotearoa	New Zealand
Aroha	Love, concern, compassion, empathy
Koha	Gift, present, offering, donation, contribution - especially one maintaining social relationships, with connotations of reciprocity
Kotahitanga	Unity, solidarity, collectively
Manaakitanga	Respect, generosity and care for others
Mātātoa	Fearless, unafraid, courageous
Rangatiratanga	Chiefly autonomy, authority, ownership and leadership
Tangata Whenua	People of the Land
Tauīwi	All non-Māori People
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	The Treaty of Waitangi 1840
Turangawaewae	Place where one has a right to stand, where one has rights of residence
Whakapapa	Genealogy, lineage, descent
Whakatauaīkī	Guiding saying or proverb
Whanaungatanga	Kinship, relationship, a sense of belonging
Wairuatanga	Spirituality

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<sup>8</sup> <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/>