

Chair

Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee

DESIGNATING THE SOCIAL WORKERS REGISTRATION BOARD AS THE LEAD AGENCY FOR WORKFORCE PLANNING FOR ALL SOCIAL WORKERS

Proposal

- 1 This paper seeks your agreement to the Social Workers Registration Board being designated as the lead agency for workforce planning for all social workers. Agreement is also sought to reprioritise funding within baseline for its implementation and the creation of a new appropriation.

Relation to government priorities

- 2 This proposal will contribute to ensuring the sustainability of health and social services, which are necessary to improving the wellbeing of New Zealanders. Social workers are an essential workforce who support individuals, families, whānau, and communities in a wide range of circumstances, by preventing harm and helping them access appropriate services and assistance. Workforce planning for all social workers will provide a mechanism to support the increases in funding for health and social services in response to COVID-19 and contribute to the recovery. It will also benefit the many social workers employed in the NGO sector and their employers, where there is no mechanism or funding to provide workforce planning.

Executive Summary

- 3 Social workers are essential frontline professionals who work with some of New Zealand's most vulnerable individuals, families, whānau, and communities. The impact of COVID-19 has increased the demand on social workers and is putting strain on an already pressured workforce. There is a risk to the sustainability of health and social services from the absence of strategic oversight on social worker supply and demand.
- 4 Workforce planning uses data and evidence about environmental forces affecting a workforce to inform actions that bring about change. A sustainable workforce requires an ongoing supply of workers, who have the right skills and are deployed in the right places to meet demand. Professional workforces need to keep up with developments in practice, respond to changes in population needs, and adapt to public policy reforms.
- 5 Currently, there is no mechanism to provide workforce planning for all social workers. Instead, social workers are fragmented across the community in silos defined by their employer, funding stream, and/or the sector they work within. There are around 600 NGOs and around 80 public sector agencies

that employ social workers. There are also around 200 registered social workers who are self-employed.

- 6 I recommend that Cabinet designate the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB), a Crown agent, as the lead agency to fill the gap in workforce planning for all social workers. In this role, the SWRB will:
 - provide strategic, cross-sectoral leadership through working together, and in consultation, with employers, funders, education and training providers, other sector organisations and workforces, and social workers to identify actions and monitor progress impacting on the supply and demand of social workers
 - build capability and capacity in workforce planning to complement individual state sector agencies' workforce initiatives
 - collect information and sector intelligence to establish evidence on the scale and nature of challenges facing the social worker workforce
 - develop, promote, and monitor a workforce strategy and action plan, and report on progress.
- 7 The SWRB will require funding to build its capability and capacity for workforce planning and establish a minimal workforce planning function, with an emphasis on building evidence on workforce pressures and relationships across the sector. This will also help inform any future funding requirements through the Budget process.
- 8 It is proposed that existing funding for the NGO Study Awards, which was closed to new recipients in 2016, be reprioritised within Vote Social Development to enable the SWRB to establish a minimal workforce planning function. Its delivery will be consistent with the scope and expectations set out in Appendix 1. This statement will provide clarity and certainty to the sector, and inform accountability arrangements for the SWRB.
- 9 The introduction of workforce planning for all social workers complements the recent increases in funding for health and social services as part of the COVID-19 response and recovery. Many of these services are provided by NGOs. It is likely that increased service demand will continue for some years.

Background

- 10 Social workers are essential frontline professionals who work with some of New Zealand's most vulnerable individuals, families, and whānau. They are a key workforce involved in improving the wellbeing of New Zealanders and supporting our communities.
- 11 Social workers in New Zealand have been on a long journey towards increasing their professionalism and accountability. In 2003, a milestone was achieved with the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 that introduced a voluntary system of registration. The voluntary registration system was intended as a transitional measure to help social workers work towards becoming eligible for registration.

- 12 The legislation also established the Social Workers Registration Board, a Crown agent, which is responsible for maintaining the registration system and the complaints and disciplinary mechanism, setting education standards for social work programmes, and recognising social work programmes offered by education providers.
- 13 In 2012 and 2015, the SWRB recommended in its statutory review of implementation of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 that it was time to move to a mandatory system of social worker registration. The Social Services Select Committee undertook an inquiry in 2016 into the issues raised by the SWRB and concluded that legislative reform was needed.
- 14 In August 2017, a bill was introduced that proposed mandatory registration and a range of amendments to increase public safety and to ensure greater competence in the practice of social work. After consideration by the Select Committee, in August 2018 the Government agreed to further policy changes to be progressed in a Supplementary Order Paper (CAB-18-MIN-0370.01). The Social Workers Registration Legislation Act 2019 was later enacted in February 2019. By then, a large majority of social workers had chosen to register, and the shift to mandatory registration was strongly supported throughout the sector.

Feedback from the sector identified the need for workforce planning

- 15 In 2018, many submissions to the Select Committee examining the Social Workers Registration Legislation Bill cited a need for workforce planning. Cabinet later noted that this was one issue needing further work following the passing of the legislation [CAB-18-MIN-0370.01].
- 16 The need for workforce planning was also a recommendation arising from work undertaken by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). In January 2019, NZQA and TEC, in response to a request from the Associate Minister of Education (Hon Tracey Martin), provided advice on possible improvements to social work education. They reported to the Associate Minister that their stakeholder engagement had identified a need for a central agency to steward the workforce. The stewardship proposed included workforce planning, ensuring graduate competency, preparing for generic and specialist practice, and the transition of graduates to practice.
- 17 Through 2019 and 2020, the Ministry of Social Development explored the implications and options for delivery of workforce planning for all social workers. This included consultation with the SWRB, Social Work Alliance,¹ and key impacted state sector agencies (Oranga Tamariki, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, NZQA, and TEC).

¹ The Social Work Alliance is a collective of organisations representing a range of perspectives in relation to social workers comprising: Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers, Tangata Whenua Social Workers Association, Careerforce, Council for Social Work Education Aotearoa New Zealand, Social Service Providers Aotearoa, New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services, District Health Boards' Health Social Work Leaders' Councils, Oranga Tamariki, Social Workers Registration Board, and the New Zealand Public Service Association.

- 18 Generally, workforce planning is designed to ensure that the right number of employees with the right skills are working where and when they are needed. In addition, state sector workforce planning is meant to ensure that the Government's intended outcomes for a sector are achieved by:
- enabling effective strategic and operational decision making by government and sector agencies, including education, career guidance, training and service delivery at central and local levels
 - planning for the future to keep up with demand and changing type of demand from people needing support, changes in machinery of government, legislation and policy shifts, and new service models
 - analysing the workforce to monitor changing demographics (including cultural competencies), the changing nature of workforce expectations, and distribution of supply around the country
 - matching funding for education and training with capacity of providers.
- 19 A fundamental goal of workforce planning for all social workers will be to improve data and knowledge. The commencement on 27 February 2021 of mandatory registration for everyone who is practising as a social worker will be a critical enabler. This change will create an opportunity to identify trends and interrogate data on a fully registered social worker workforce and their employers through information held by the SWRB. Currently, the only information available is about those social workers who have chosen to voluntarily register.
- 20 There are around 8,500 registered social workers working in a range of sectors and with diverse employers.² In addition, the SWRB estimates there may be around 2,500 to 3,000 people practising as a social worker that should be registered, many of whom are assumed to be employed by NGOs. There is an active information and marketing campaign underway by the SWRB to support those social workers who have not yet registered to do so before 27 February 2021.

There are risks and challenges to social worker supply and demand

- 21 The lack of workforce planning for all social workers risks failures in service delivery, because there is no strategic overview and coordination to respond to mismatches in supply and demand. It also means emerging issues may be missed or the impact not understood, for example the issue of pay equity and pay parity for social workers.
- 22 COVID-19 has put extra demand on health and social services that were already pressured. The sector has advised the Ministry of Social Development that the impact of COVID-19 has caused an increase in the number of individuals and whānau needing assistance, often with complex needs. This

² The SWRB's 2019 survey of registered social workers identified the following people and situations that involved social workers: drug or alcohol addictions; mental health services; family violence; corrections; youth justice; adoptions; international; children in care or needing protection; youth; older people; disabled people; Pacific people; Māori; social work students; other social workers; and other services, for example defence, government agencies, education services.

has meant the capacity and at times capability of many community providers, iwi, and NGOs have been adversely affected due to the increase in demand.

- 23 In recent Budget announcements, including COVID-19 responses, the Government has made large funding investments in health and social services, mostly provided by NGOs. Funding to meet cost pressures experienced by Ministry of Social Development-funded social services, such as with family violence and sexual violence, have been predominately targeted at services that have a high proportion of social workers as well as those impacted by significant underinvestment over time.
- 24 Social workers will continue to play an important role in the ongoing recovery. Longer term economic impacts and higher levels of unemployment will increase the demand for social workers as increased stress in the community contributes further to mental health problems, family violence, and aggravates health-related conditions. There will be an increase in the number of people accessing these services for the first time due to the pressures of unemployment and lost income.
- 25 In addition to the impact of COVID-19, the sustainability of the social worker workforce into the future is expected to face several challenges, for example:
- responding to new and emerging demand for social work services, including changes in the type of people needing support
 - the need to be more responsive to Māori, including social worker services that are 'by Māori for Māori'
 - the need to reflect the increasing ethnic diversity of communities so that support is provided that is culturally responsive and situated in an individual/family's community, which is particularly relevant to Pacific people
 - competition from other professions for people with a social work qualification
 - the differential in remuneration and conditions for social workers in the NGO sector compared to government agencies
 - changing models of care and support, including the emergence of transdisciplinary approaches
 - an ageing social worker workforce
 - the ability to recruit from overseas
 - the impact of communities adversely affected by emergency situations
 - limited career development pathways for experienced social workers
 - pressures on other workforces providing health and social services.
- 26 Employers of social workers have been reporting challenges with recruitment and retention. There has been consistent feedback from across the sector, both government and NGO employers, on the increasing difficulty in recruiting qualified and experienced social workers. Increases in cost pressure funding

through recent Budgets have helped but have not resolved the problem.³ Further work is also underway through the Future of Social Sector Commissioning work programme to address funding pressures, over time, to ensure that providers funded across government agencies have sufficient funding to hire and retain the right workforce, including social workers, they need to deliver quality services.

- 27 Work is needed to gain a more strategic oversight of the public investment in the education and training of social workers. There are concerns raised by the sector that social work education has not kept up with the increasing professionalism of social work, such as with the organisation and funding of student placements or better supporting newly qualified social workers in their first year of work. Ongoing challenges in practice, such as those shown in media stories, may also influence the supply of students.
- 28 RoVE will help to strengthen the education and training system, particularly the former polytechnics (now subsidiaries of the New Zealand Institute of Technology (NZIST)). Learners should experience greater consistency of social work education and better mobility through the system.
- 29 A lead agency for workforce planning for all social workers will be a critical partner for the NZQA and TEC in maintaining and monitoring quality across social worker education, including acting in response to findings from the *Enhancing the Readiness to Practise of Newly Qualified Social Workers in Aotearoa New Zealand* research⁴ published in 2019.

State sector agencies employ or fund almost all social workers

- 30 As the major employer and funder of social workers, government has a vital interest in ensuring there is a sustainable workforce of social workers, who have the right skills and experience to contribute to effective health and social services. Around half of social workers are directly employed by state sector agencies (particularly by Oranga Tamariki and District Health Boards). Around another third of social workers are employed by NGOs,⁵ but they are mostly funded through contracts with government agencies.
- 31 NGO peak bodies have raised the importance of cross-sector workforce planning, including but not limited to the issues arising from the wages differential that makes recruitment and retention challenging. Any workforce planning mechanism will need to recognise the vital role that the NGO sector plays in developing and employing social workers.

³ Feedback has included: the low numbers of suitable applicants; some positions not being filled; having to consider other skills in recruiting for the advertised position, although social work is preferred; and a continued movement of social workers out of the NGO sector.

⁴ The research reports are available at: <https://ako.ac.nz/knowledge-centre/enhancing-the-readiness-to-practise-of-newly-qualified-social-workers/>

⁵ Based on the SWRB's registration data at 22 April 2020, there were 599 NGO employers (including iwi organisations), which employed around 28% of registered social workers. Most NGOs only employed a few social workers each. In comparison, a small number of state sector organisations (82) employed the majority of social workers. Most were employed by Oranga Tamariki (around 21%) and District Health Boards (around 18%).

Four government agencies were considered as options for a lead agency to provide workforce planning for all social workers

- 32 Four government agencies were identified as options for a lead agency, because of their close relationship with social workers and/or having some responsibility for social workers. They were the: Ministry of Social Development; Ministry of Health; Oranga Tamariki; and the SWRB.
- 33 The feasibility of each option was assessed against five criteria:
- impact, such as resourcing
 - compatibility, such as with other agency activities
 - engagement, such as existing connections within the social worker sector and across the wider social sector
 - priorities, such as potential competition from other agency activities
 - uniqueness, such as respecting the New Zealand approach to social work.

The SWRB is recommended to be the lead agency

- 34 The SWRB was assessed as the first preferred option. However, it will need additional funding to boost its capability and capacity to deliver workforce planning.
- 35 Some advantages to choosing the SWRB include that:
- there is strong alignment with its statutory mandate to enhance the professionalism of social workers, which complements its responsibilities and commitment as a modern regulator of social workers
 - it is able to leverage its statutory role in social work education and existing relationships with the education and training sector, particularly in working together with NZQA and TEC
 - it will provide a single focus on social workers, which reduces the risk that workforce planning for social workers will be diminished or marginalised over time due to institutional pressures reinforcing business-as-usual
 - it would be regarded as a more neutral provider of workforce planning, with closer ties to the workforce and having fewer potential conflicts of interest than government agencies might have
 - it holds the statutory register of social workers, which is the primary source of data on social workers, employers, and educators
 - it will find it easier to take a cross-sectoral view, due to its focus on the whole workforce rather than any one area of practice or sector.
- 36 In addition, the SWRB's governance board has a majority of social work practitioners, which will help it retain fidelity with social workers' practice and how the profession sees itself (rather than how others see it). There is also representation from employers to help it maintain a sector-wide perspective.
- 37 There are risks to designating the SWRB to lead workforce planning, but on balance these are manageable. One risk in establishing a dedicated

workforce planning function in the SWRB is its small scale and relatively high costs compared to the economies of scale for a larger workforce function that covers a wider range of workforces. A small function is also more vulnerable to professional isolation compared to its larger peers. A mitigation is that the SWRB has developed good relationships across the sector. The SWRB will be expected to maintain its relationships and grow connections with other workforces. For example, it has existing relationships with health practitioner regulators and with social service education and training agencies.

- 38 Another risk is that workforce planning is an entirely new area of work for the SWRB. It has limited capability and no capacity to implement it, particularly around data analytics for reporting and scenarios monitoring. Mitigating this risk is in part achieved by recognising that new Crown funding is required to setup the necessary capability and capacity in the SWRB.
- 39 There is also the ability for the SWRB to leverage off Budget 2019 funding for a new computer database to improve its efficiency in managing the registration system. The new database can be enhanced to accommodate workforce planning requirements. The SWRB will be able to seek assistance from existing workforce planning expertise in some government agencies (such as the Ministry of Health) to ensure consistency of its implementation with state sector approaches.

A Cabinet mandate will support the SWRB to provide effective strategic, cross-sectoral leadership

- 40 Cabinet agreement is sought to designate the SWRB as the lead agency to provide and support workforce planning for all social workers. This decision will send a clear signal of the Government's intention and reinforce the mandate for the SWRB in carrying out its new function. There will be many relationships that will need to be built and others deepened to ensure the potential of this cross-sectoral leadership mechanism can be maximised.
- 41 It is also proposed that Cabinet note the statement of scope and expectations set out in Appendix 1. This statement is intended to provide additional clarity and certainty on the extent of the SWRB's role and what the sector can expect of the SWRB. Recognising and giving practical effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi will be key to the effectiveness of this work. The statement will inform accountability arrangements of the SWRB, as monitored by the Ministry of Social Development.
- 42 The statement aligns with the Future of Social Sector Commissioning's proposed draft principles, which are relevant given the significant involvement of NGOs. There is strong alignment with four of the draft principles:
- The sector works together locally, regionally, and nationally
 - The sector is sustainable
 - Decisions are taken transparently
 - The sector is always learning and improving.

- 43 I am confident that the SWRB has a sound organisational structure, record of performance, and readiness to take on an additional function of workforce planning for all social workers. In recent years, it has matured its relationships with sector organisations, as well as connecting with employers. It has solid governance to match an enhanced leadership role. As Minister for Social Development, I meet regularly with the SWRB to review its performance and engage on emerging issues affecting social worker regulation.

Financial Implications

Additional Crown funding is required to boost the SWRB's capability and capacity to implement the lead agency function

- 44 The Ministry of Social Development has explored with the SWRB what an optimal level of capability and capacity might be so that it could effectively implement workforce planning. This includes recruiting specialist staff, database upgrades to collect a wider range of data to support analysis, supporting sector engagement, and providing advice on issues and pressures affecting social workers.
- 45 While a budget bid may likely be required in future, with the all the changes and pressures being experienced by the sector now I consider that getting a minimal workforce planning function established is a priority.
- 46 Therefore, I propose that Cabinet agree to reprioritise an ongoing underspend in a social worker-related Benefit or Related Expense appropriation in Vote Social Development, Family Start/NGO Awards, to provide funding for the SWRB.
- 47 The Family Start/NGO Awards appropriation provided funding for the NGO Study Awards, an initiative that targeted NGO-employed social workers. It provided capped funding to help them get a social work qualification and become eligible for registration. This initiative was closed to new recipients from 2016, but a commitment was made to grandparent existing recipients so they could complete their study. Oranga Tamariki manages the remaining recipients, and the Ministry of Social Development make payments to education providers for course costs.
- 48 The draw on the funding has been naturally diminishing, and now only six recipients remain. Oranga Tamariki forecast that these people's entitlement will finish in 2021/22. The NGO Study Awards appropriation has a projected underspend of \$605,000 in 2020/21 and 2021/22. This will grow to \$705,000 per year from 2022/23 as the course costs entitlement is used up.
- 49 Reprioritising the funding to the SWRB maintains consistency with the former NGO Study Awards' objective of building the capability of NGO-employed social workers. It also contributes to increasing the professionalism of social workers as a workforce with shared professional interests and practice.
- 50 A new Non-Departmental Output expense appropriation within Vote Social Development will be required. The existing Non-Departmental Output expense appropriation in Vote Social Development, Implementation and

Operation of the Mandatory Registration of Social Workers, will be disestablished and its funding transferred to the new appropriation.

Most of the SWRB's funding comes from fees and a levy on social workers, which cannot be used to support workforce planning

- 51 The SWRB's primary source of funding comes from fees and a disciplinary levy paid by registered social workers. The registration fee, annual practising fee, and disciplinary levy are set on a cost recovery basis. Reprioritisation of, or accommodation within, the SWRB's current revenue cannot support the additional costs to provide workforce planning.
- 52 Treasury and Office of the Auditor-General guidelines advise that fees should not be used for activities that apply generally across (in this case) the whole social worker workforce, and nor should it apply where the benefit from the activities will be for future social workers. Implementation of workforce planning for all social workers is a Government policy objective to ensure the supply of social work services and contribute to the sustainability of health and social services into the future.
- 53 I do not recommend that additional funding for the SWRB be raised through increases in fees paid by social workers or the creation of a new levy. There is existing tension in relation to the level of pay and other support available to social workers, particularly those employed by NGOs, which does not reflect their critical role as an essential service. The recovery from the impact of COVID-19 is placing increased pressure on social services, including those involving social workers and provided by NGOs.
- 54 It is also a reality that any increase in fees will end up being mostly paid by the Crown, either directly for staff or through contracted services. Most government agencies' employers pay their social worker employees' professional fees.

Legislative Implications

- 55 As a Crown agent, the SWRB is expected to carry out Government policy. If Cabinet agrees to designate the SWRB as the lead agency for workforce planning for all social workers, then that decision will provide sufficient mandate. Also, workforce planning is a function that is strongly aligned and consistent with existing provisions relating to the SWRB in the Social Workers Registration Act 2003. No legislation change is considered necessary.

Population Implications

- 56 A key goal of implementing workforce planning is to establish and grow data and evidence in relation to social workers, which will better inform decision making about the workforce and health and social services. Workforce planning will also help reinforce and support the need for the social worker workforce to become more culturally responsive and match the demand in the community, including through increasing the proportion of social workers who are Māori, Pacific, and of other ethnicities.

Māori and Pacific

- 57 Māori and Pacific people make up a significant proportion of the social worker workforce. The 2019 SWRB workforce survey of registered social workers says that 18 percent identified their ethnicity as Māori and 7 percent identified as Pacific. That survey also reported that Māori social workers were more likely to work for an NGO employer than the average social worker.
- 58 A large number of social work students study with Te Wānanga o Aotearoa and Te Wānanga o Raukawa. In 2019, those providers made up 16 percent of social work students enrolled in recognised social work programmes. The wānanga have a bicultural focus and embed their programmes in a Māori worldview.
- 59 The SWRB has been strengthening its capability through the appointment of a Chief Māori Advisor. In addition, the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 requires the SWRB to recognise the aspirations of Māori and provides that the SWRB have engagement mechanisms with Māori and Pacific peoples.

Women

- 60 Women will directly benefit from workforce planning, because most social workers are female. The SWRB reports that 83 percent of registered social workers identify as female and 17 percent identify as male.⁶
- 61 The SWRB also reports that there is a difference in gender representation by ethnicity: for Māori registered social workers, 86 percent identify as female and 14 percent identify as male; and for Pacific registered social workers, 74 percent identify as female and 26 percent identify as male.

Disabled people

- 62 There is currently no data collected on the number of social workers who identify as a disabled person. Improved data collection on social workers will provide an opportunity to report on the number of disabled social workers. Many people accessing support provided by a social worker are likely to have an impairment and/or chronic health condition.
- 63 Improving the capability of social workers working with disabled people and improving the diversity of the social worker workforce, including through the employment of disabled people, will directly benefit disabled people being supported by social workers.

Older people

- 64 A factor in the changing nature of demand for social workers will come from the ageing of New Zealand's population, with the proportion of the population over 65 projected to reach 21 percent by 2034. Also, within the next 10 years there will be more people over 65 than children aged 0-14 years. Social worker support for older people may become more prevalent in training and practice than compared with children at present.

⁶ Information provided by the SWRB to the Ministry of Social Development generated on 7 July 2020.

Human Rights

- 65 This paper is not inconsistent with the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993.

Consultation

- 66 Oranga Tamariki, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, New Zealand Qualifications Authority, Tertiary Education Commission, State Services Commission, and the Social Work Alliance were involved in the development of the lead agency proposal in this paper and support it progressing.
- 67 The following government agencies were consulted on this paper: Oranga Tamariki, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, New Zealand Qualifications Authority, Tertiary Education Commission, State Services Commission, Department of Corrections, Ministry of Justice, New Zealand Defence Force, Te Puni Kōkiri, Ministry for Women, Ministry for Pacific People, Office for Disability Issues, Office for Seniors, Treasury, and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. As well, the SWRB and the Social Work Alliance.

Communications

- 68 I intend to make an announcement on designating the SWRB as the lead agency for workforce planning for all social workers.

Proactive Release

- 69 I intend to proactively release this paper following Cabinet consideration.

Recommendations

The Minister for Social Development recommends that the Committee:

- 1 **note** that social workers are an essential, professional workforce that makes a critical contribution to the effectiveness of health and social services
- 2 **note** that the sustainability of health and social services is at risk due to an absence of strategic oversight on social worker supply and demand
- 3 **note** that a lead agency is proposed to fill the gap in providing and supporting workforce planning across all social workers, and overcome the fragmentation in leadership across over 600 employers most of which are NGO providers
- 4 **agree** that the Social Workers Registration Board be designated as the lead agency to provide and support workforce planning for all social workers
- 5 **note** that funding is required so that the Social Workers Registration Board can increase its capability and capacity to implement recommendation 4, above

IN CONFIDENCE

- 6 **note** that the Social Workers Registration Board will use funding to deliver workforce planning for all social workers consistent with the scope and expectations statement in Appendix 1
- 7 **agree** to reprioritise the existing funding in Family Start/NGO Awards, a Benefit or Related Expense in Vote Social Development, towards the funding required by the Social Workers Registration Board
- 8 **agree** to establish a new Non-Departmental Output expense appropriation as set out below:

Vote	Social Development
Minister	Minister for Social Development
Title	Social Workers Registration Board
Type	Non-Departmental Output Expense
Scope	This appropriation is limited to supporting the Social Workers Registration Board deliver mandatory registration and workforce planning for all social workers.

- 9 **approve** the following fiscally neutral changes to appropriations to give effect to the policy decisions under recommendations 4 and 7 above, with no impact on the operating balance:

Vote Social Development Minister for Social Development	\$m - increase/(decrease)			
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24 & outyears
Benefits or Related Expenses:				
Family Start/NGO Awards	(0.605)	(0.605)	(0.705)	(0.705)
Non-Departmental Output Expenses:				
Social Workers Registration Board	1.393	0.718	0.819	0.819
Implementation and Operation of the Mandatory Registration of Social Workers	(0.788)	(0.113)	(0.114)	(0.114)
Total Operating	-	-	-	-

- 10 **agree** that the proposed changes to appropriations for 2020/21 above be included in the 2020/21 Supplementary Estimates and that, in the interim, the increases be met from Imprest supply

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Carmel Sepuloni
Minister for Social Development

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Appendix 1: Scope and expectations of the Social Workers Registration Board as the lead agency to provide and support workforce planning for all social workers

Scope

The Government has agreed that the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB), a Crown agent, will be the lead agency to provide and support workforce planning for all social workers.

The SWRB will take a strategic, cross-sectoral approach to coordinate and promote action to ensure that the supply of social workers can meet demand. It will provide the capability and capacity to lead workforce planning across the sector and support the activities of individual employers and other organisations to enhance the professionalism of social workers, particularly in relation to quality and diversity.

The SWRB will act as a focal point of expertise and knowledge in relation to the social worker workforce, wherever social workers are employed or deployed. It will contribute to ensuring that health and social services are of high quality, where social workers involved can be held accountable for their practice. This work aligns with the vision of the SWRB that *'social workers enable the Mauri Ora of our communities, family, whānau and individuals.'*

This additional function for the SWRB is consistent with its existing statutory mandate in the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 and the Crown Entities Act 2004. The SWRB will implement workforce planning for all social workers using Crown funding, because:

- it is an activity required by the Government to strengthen the sustainable provision of health and social services
- it will provide future benefits to employers, education and training providers, and social workers.

The SWRB will follow relevant guidance from the State Services Commission.

Social workers operate in a dynamic environment of changing pressures and influences that affects them and other workforces, and the people they work with. As a modern regulator, the SWRB will take an active learning approach so that workforce planning maintains its relevance in supporting social work practice to evolve and shape the future workforce.

Engagement with a diverse range of stakeholders across the sector will be critical. The SWRB will build on its experiences involving and consulting with the Social Work Alliance, including directly with professional associations.

The SWRB will be responsible to the Minister for Social Development for the performance of this additional function. As with its other functions, the SWRB will be monitored by the Ministry of Social Development.

Responsibility will continue to lie with individual employers relating to their employees who are social workers.

Expectation

The Government expects that the SWRB will provide and support workforce planning for all social workers, within its existing statutory mandate and resources available, by:

1. taking a cross-sectoral, strategic and collaborative approach, which balances national consistency with being responsive to regional and local situations
2. recognising the Treaty of Waitangi and partnering with Māori
3. working together and in consultation with employers, sector organisations, government agencies, funders, education and training providers, and social workers
4. reflecting the diversity of New Zealand's population, so that the social worker workforce is responsive to Māori, Pacific people, and other minority populations and evolves to reflect the changing needs of the people it supports
5. reflecting the changing demographic of New Zealand's population, particularly the increase in proportion of older people
6. ensuring connections and relationships with health and social sector workforces, particularly where workforce planning exists for allied professionals and other workers
7. using evidence and sector intelligence to inform:
 - a. developing a workforce strategy that describes the outcomes to be achieved to ensure sustainability in meeting supply and demand for social workers and that promotes social workers' wellbeing and ethical practice, which is refreshed from time to time
 - b. developing, promoting, and refreshing at least every five years a cross-sectoral action plan to implement the workforce strategy
 - c. developing, monitoring, and reporting on indicators and measures of progress to implement the workforce strategy
8. making publicly accessible the workforce strategy, action plan, monitoring reports, and other workforce planning information
9. providing advice on implementation of the workforce strategy
10. reporting through its existing accountability relationship with the Minister for Social Development and the Ministry of Social Development.