



**Social Workers  
Registration Board**  
Kāhui Whakamana Tauwhiro

Aotearoa New Zealand's social worker regulator

STATEMENT OF INTENT  
2022–2026

New Zealand Government



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# STATEMENT OF INTENT

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**In signing this statement, we acknowledge that we are responsible for the information contained in this Social Workers Registration Board Statement of Intent 2021/22–2025/26.**

## STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

This information has been prepared in accordance with sections 138–148 of the Crown Entities Act 2004 and to give effect to the Minister for Social Development and Employment’s expectations of the Social Workers Registration Board.



**Shannon Pakura, RSW**  
Chair, SWRB



**Paula Rose**  
Board Member, SWRB

# FOREWORD

The Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) is Aotearoa New Zealand's social worker regulator. We are a Crown entity under the Crown Entities Act 2004 and governed by a seven-member Board appointed by the Minister for Social Development and Employment under the Social Workers Registration Act 2003. We are monitored by the Ministry of Social Development and accountable to the Minister. SWRB is the only Crown entity regulator in the social services sector.

Our role is to protect the **SAFETY** of members of the public by ensuring social workers are **PROFESSIONAL** and **ACCOUNTABLE** for their practice. We also provide **INSIGHT** into where and when social workers are needed most through our appointment by the Minister as the Lead Agency for social worker workforce planning.

We contribute to Government's broader Wellbeing priorities by supporting social workers to improve client physical and mental health outcomes, improve child, youth, and whānau wellbeing, and increase access to culturally responsive support services.

The four years since the last Statement of Intent (SOI) have seen the largest change for SWRB and the sector since 2003. The 2019 amendments to the Act, which included making registration and certification mandatory from February 2021 has led to:

- An increase from 7,500 to over 10,000 registered social workers
- New requirements for the profession
- Higher expectations for how we operate.

Ensuring the organisation is fit for purpose to meet the 2019 changes has required that we build organisational structure and regulatory capability. This has included creating He Arapiki (our Māori Strategy) to work with the sector. This SOI models He Arapiki by looking back on our journey, examining our current state, and looking to the future. We continue to evolve for the new normal and this is reflected in SWRB priorities and areas of focus, including:

- Being an active Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Treaty of Waitangi partner
- Moving from a traditional to a modern regulator, while redefining the concept of modern regulation to reflect a Te Tiriti o Waitangi based indigenous approach for Aotearoa
- Workforce planning
- Ensuring financial sustainability, including undertaking regular funding reviews
- Embedding our organisational structure.

We acknowledge the significant external factors affecting our trajectory over the next four years. These factors include:

- Reports into social work practice at Oranga Tamariki (such as the Ministerial Advisory Board report *Hipokingia ki te Kahu Aroha*),
- Reform of Vocational Education
- Reform of the Health system
- How the country adjusts to the ongoing impacts of COVID-19.

As a small and nimble organisation, SWRB is confident in our ability to continue to adapt to these changes, playing an increasingly influential role for promoting social work professionalism in Aotearoa.



**Shannon Pakura, RSW**  
Chair, SWRB



**Sarah Clark**  
Chief Executive, SWRB

# GLOSSARY OF TE REO TERMS

Aotearoa	New Zealand
Ngā uara	Our values
Whānau	Family, extended family members
Tamariki	Children
Tauwhiro	Social worker
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	Treaty of Waitangi. The founding document of Aotearoa, that confirms the partnership between the Crown and Māori.

## ABOUT SWRB

The Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) is the regulator for social workers in Aotearoa. We protect the **SAFETY** of members of the public by ensuring social workers are **COMPETENT** and **SAFE TO PRACTISE**, and are **ACCOUNTABLE** for the way in which they practise. We also enhance the professionalism of social workers and provide **INSIGHT** into the social worker workforce.

We were established in 2003 and are governed by a seven-member Board appointed by the Minister for Social Development and Employment under the Social Workers Registration Act 2003. We have three core roles:

<b>Regulation</b>	Registration, certification, scope of practice, conduct & competence standards, education programme recognition, complaints & notifications, and policy advice to Government that supports <b>PROFESSIONAL</b> and <b>ACCOUNTABLE</b> social work
<b>Compliance</b>	Support, encourage, require compliance, and support Professional Conduct Committees and the Disciplinary Tribunal to ensure the <b>SAFETY</b> of members of the public
<b>Workforce planning</b>	Collect and analyse social worker workforce data and information, and develop <b>INSIGHT</b> for others to use in workforce planning

Our mandate is similar to other regulatory authorities under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003. However, there are important differences in that SWRB is a Crown entity under the Crown Entities Act 2004, with additional accountability responsibilities. These include enhancing social worker professionalism, and our mandate requires promotional and stakeholder engagement activities with the sector, employers, education providers and the public.

As a fees and levy funded organisation, we operate largely on a cost recovery basis, with some Crown funding for specific activities (such as Workforce Planning).

# NGĀ UARA – OUR VALUES

We are increasingly operating by taking an intelligence-led and evidence-based approach. Ngā uara, our values, of Matatika, Manaaki, Mahitahi and Māia are the foundations of everything we do.

<b>Matatika</b>	To do what is right and just, ethical, fair, equitable, honest, unbiased, impartial, moral, trustworthy
<b>Manaaki</b>	To look after the dignity of others, to support, to tend to, take care of, protect, look out for, show respect, generosity, and kindness towards others
<b>Mahitahi</b>	To work together as one, collaborate, cooperate, co-design, connect, interact, reciprocate, discuss, debate, work in unity with teamwork and synergy
<b>Māia</b>	To be bold, brave, capable, confident, courageous, and have endurance, strength, resilience

Within an ever-changing environment (including the COVID-19 pandemic), we continue to evolve, learn, and shape ourselves to the current social and cultural landscape of Aotearoa.

As a regulator, we continue to adapt as circumstances and society require, developing how we will look and be as a Te Tiriti o Waitangi-led, uara-based organisation. This has provided an opportunity for us to revisit our uara in a way that recognises the work of those who laid the path, our current journey to the mandatory regime and our goal of becoming a modern regulator.

Ngā uara have been shared with Māori experts within the regulatory space. The feedback was positive, although they emphasised the challenge of embedding the accountability of these uara into the organisation with staff, teams and collectively as SWRB. Over the next four years we will embed ngā uara in a way that inspires staff, is inclusive of all, and influences our regulatory functions.

## The value social workers bring to Aotearoa

It is important to highlight the key role Tauwhiro/social workers have in Aotearoa and the value they bring to our communities through their mahi. Social workers are experts in supporting and advocating for others. They work closely with and alongside tamariki, whānau and communities, supporting them to be successful in a way that is meaningful to them.

Social workers are courageous, resilient, and committed individuals. Regardless of location, social workers are on the frontline every day, responding to the needs of communities, answering calls for assistance, as well as being a key part of the COVID-19 response and recovery.

SWRB's role now and in the future is to protect the safety of members of the public, ensure that social workers are competent, safe to practise and accountable for the way in which they practise, and to enhance professionalism of social workers – being a registered social worker is essential in making that happen.

# HE ARA PŪKENGA

## THE MANY PATHWAYS OF KNOWLEDGE

### WHERE WE HAVE COME FROM

**The four years since the last Statement of Intent (SOI), which was written in 2017, have seen the largest change for SWRB and the sector since 2003...**

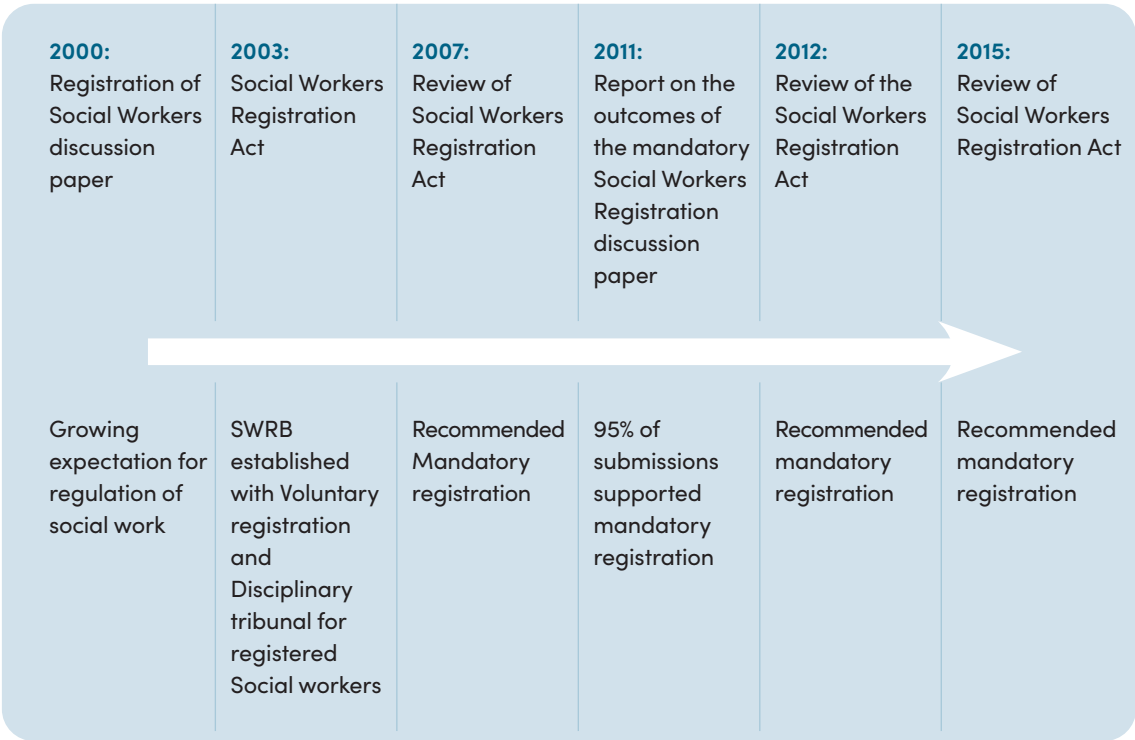
The 2019 amendments to the Social Workers Registration Act, which came into force in February 2021, made registration mandatory for the first time. While the SOI is a forward-looking document, it is important to summarise the large changes this SOI builds upon. This section looks at:

- Voluntary registration
- Voluntary to mandatory registration
- Financial picture
- Organisational change
- Refresh of strategic documents and systems.

#### From unregulated to voluntary registration

**A summary of the regulatory changes applying to social workers since the turn of the century...**

Prior to 2003, social work was a mixture of self-regulation (through the profession's body the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers) and non-regulated social work. With the passing of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003, SWRB was established to make voluntary registration available to social workers.



Subsequently, there were ongoing reviews and calls from Government and the sector to make registration mandatory. This culminated in 2015 with a further Review of the Act, which recommended a mandatory regime.



From voluntary to mandatory registration

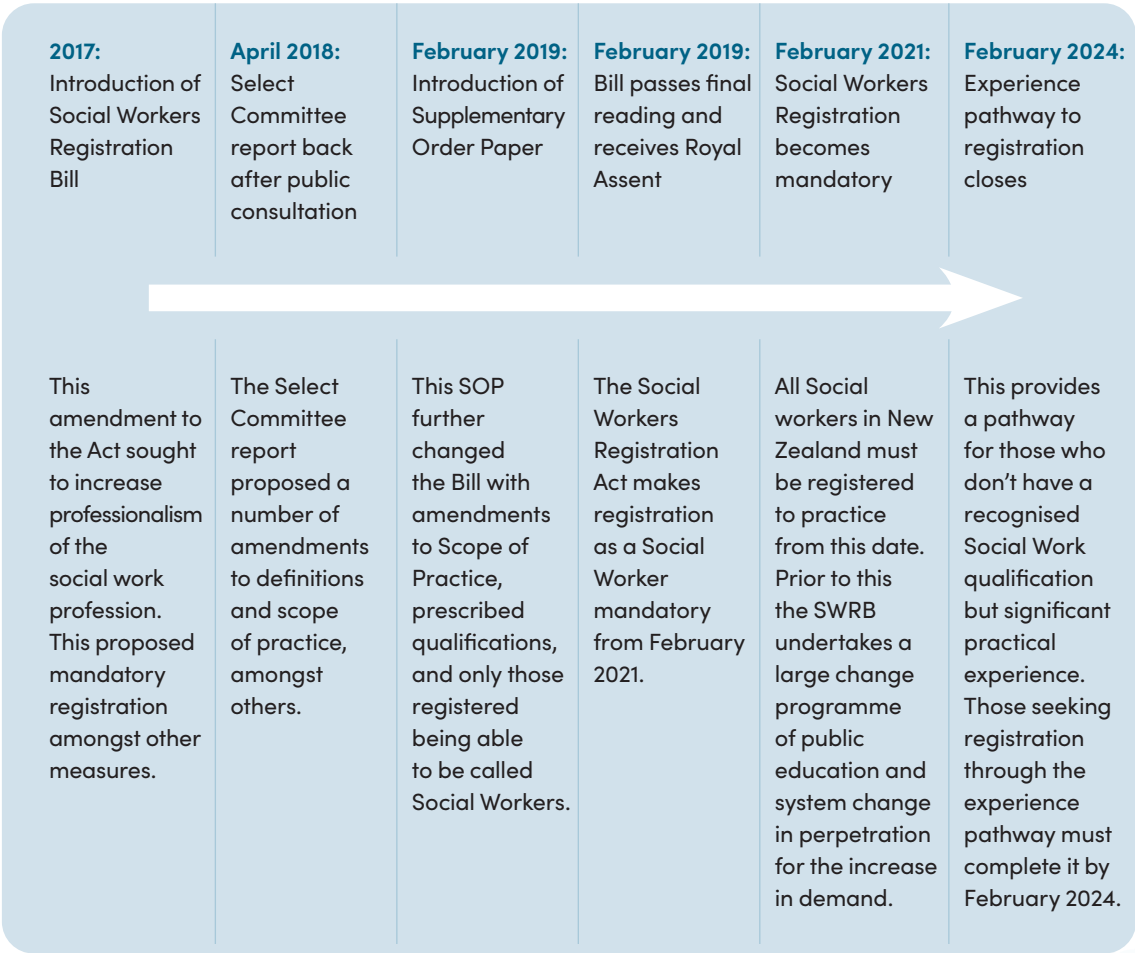
In 2017, Government introduced a Bill to Parliament that set out amendments to the Act, including moving from voluntary to mandatory registration for social workers...

Further changes were made in the Bill’s passage through the Select Committee and a Supplementary Order Paper prior to its passing in February 2019. Registration formally recognised social work as a valued profession by ensuring social workers are competent, safe to practice, and accountable.

Mandatory registration helps to better protect the safety of members of the public by...

- Ensuring social workers are appropriately qualified to carry out their work
- Requiring continuing professional development and specific competencies
- Addressing concerns about a social worker’s practice with complaints and disciplinary processes
- Ensuring social workers who have had their registration cancelled are not able to practise social work again in Aotearoa.

After Royal Assent in February 2019, unregistered social workers had two years to register. SWRB carried out an extensive information campaign over the two-year transition period to ensure that social workers and social worker employers were aware registration was mandatory from that date.



## Financial picture

**From 2003 to February 2021, we operated under a voluntary regime where social workers who wanted to be registered and hold a practising certificate did so...**

We concentrated on being a 'registration shop', with some education programme vetting, few complaints and notifications from employers about social worker convictions, and limited numbers of disciplinary proceedings. By 2018 we were a narrowly focused organisation with limited resource to deliver all our regulatory functions. Our systems and processes were out-of-date and largely paper based.

Through much of this time we also had limited resource to undertake all the regulatory functions under the Social Workers Registration Act 2003, such as enhancing social worker professionalism and actively partnering with Māori.

**Our fees have remained static since 2005...**

Our costs have increased since 2005, as they have for other organisations, but our fees have not. They have not kept pace with inflation (Consumer Price Index (CPI)), so over time the funding has covered less and less. For example, the Disciplinary Levy was only reinstated at \$50 in 2019 (having been removed in 2010 when it was \$90) yet disciplinary proceedings have increased significantly. The levy recovers the cost of complaints and notifications, administrative support for Professional Conduct Committees (PCC) and the Disciplinary Tribunal, PCC and Tribunal member fees, and advice from independent expert social workers and lawyers. Even with the levy increasing to \$100 in May 2021, costs are not being recovered. For example, last year we projected 12 PCC cases and 8 Tribunal hearings, but there were 33 PCC cases with 10 set for Disciplinary Tribunal hearings.

Over the term of this Statement of Intent we will need to explore options for addressing funding adequacy, including undertaking funding reviews as required.

**The mandatory regime requires more of us as a regulator, and we are not able to risk regulatory failure by only delivering some of our statutory obligations...**

Being a modern regulator under a mandatory regime means we increasingly have to look outwards to support social workers to practice in a safe and ethical manner. The past trade-offs made to avoid fee and levy increases are not sustainable without risking regulatory failure in a mandatory environment. For the future we will be looking at how we can be more financially sustainable in a mandatory registration environment.

## Organisational change

**SWRB has undergone significant change since 2017...**

In 2017 we started to operationalise changes and develop strategy crucial to us being able to:

- Progress from a traditional to a modern regulator to deliver our amended legislative mandate, and better meet the needs of an ever-changing regulatory environment
- Align our processes with government accountability, planning, and reporting requirements under the Crown Entities Act 2004
- Update business processes and systems to adapt to mandatory registration.

SWRB has undertaken external organisational reviews which have informed our forward progress and operational shape. These included:

- *2017 Review of Operational Readiness*: Identified that SWRB required significant change in core organisational systems and processes, capacity, capability, and core resources to meet its obligations as a regulator.
- *2020 Review of Operational Readiness*: Reported on progress since the 2017 review. This presented a picture of rapid change and organisational growth that had occurred since 2017 – a clearly articulated future vision, an outcomes framework, organisational uara, business planning and annual reporting had all been developed. The report stated *“these documents demonstrate a clear lift in quality of content and presentation that is easily apparent to an external observer. It is not unreasonable to surmise from this that SWRB now has stronger corporate awareness and capability than existed in 2017. This lift should not be under-stated.”*<sup>1</sup>
- *2020 SWRB Future Stable State Vision*: Set out operational change options made in late 2020 (these changes are explained in more detail further in the document).

**Refresh of strategic documents and systems**

Since 2017, SWRB has refreshed or developed several key strategic and operational systems to better support the mandatory registration environment...

Our key strategic documents	Our operational capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2017 Vision, Purpose, and Principles</li><li>• 2018 Ngā Uara, updated in 2019</li><li>• Outcomes Framework in 2019</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Operational and technical systems</li><li>• Capacity and capability of our people</li></ul>

1    Review of Operational Readiness Report, 31 March 2020

# HE ARA TAUWHIRO THE MANY PATHWAYS OF SOCIAL WORK WHERE WE ARE

SWRB has transformed significantly since the SOL in 2017, both in terms of size and reach. This has supported SWRB to meet the requirements of the 2019 legislative changes and operate in the modern regulatory environment. SWRB now manages the registrations for over 10,000 social workers in Aotearoa, an increase of over a third since 2017. Getting to this point has included changes in the way we work, the systems we use, and how we are organised.

This section reflects on this change and where the organisation currently sits in relation to:

- Māori development
- Our people
- Ensuring financial sustainability, including undertaking regular funding reviews
- Our mahi
- Reviewing programme recognition standards
- Becoming the workforce planning lead for social workers.

## Māori development

SWRB has actively moved to being a more active partner with Māori. In 2021 we developed a Māori Responsiveness Strategy *He Arapaki*, enabling SWRB to be an organisation known for being culturally competent, aware, inclusive, and responsive. Steps we have taken have included:

- Established a Te Kāhui Māori to advise the Board
- Recruited a Chief Advisor Māori for in-house expertise to build and improve the strength and quality of our connections with Māori stakeholders
- Designed an action plan to deliver activities alongside a finalised Māori Responsiveness Strategy
- Established a Senior Advisor Social Work, Māori role to our Advisory Team
- Increased engagement with Kaupapa Māori social services and Māori social workers
- Engaged with Māori employers of social workers through Aotearoa
- Undertook competency assessments utilising Kaupapa Māori processes and engaged Māori assessors
- Staff completed Te Reo courses, staff performance appraisal measures reflecting Te Ao Māori, team meetings underpinned and facilitated by Te Ao Māori uara
- Developed our Te Tiriti O Waitangi Policy Statement as the formal expression of the high-level direction for how we will work to honour our obligations as a Te Tiriti o Waitangi partner and understand our Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations and aspirations
- Developed a whakataukī for SWRB.

## Our mahi

### Over the past two years we have been focusing on...

... the move from manual to digital processing, developing policy and processes for mandatory registration, and informing the sector of the legislative changes. We have also met the challenge of managing our operational change programme, including building the base infrastructure to support the organisation to become more efficient and effective.

### **We ran a successful information campaign on mandatory registration...**

In the lead up to mandatory registration in February 2021, SWRB ran a multi-year information campaign to support social workers through the registration process.

The campaign took a multi-pronged approach, including refreshing our branding, restructuring and updating the website, creating new collateral such as flyers and banners, increasing the frequency of newsletters, reflecting Māori and Pasifika in photoshoots and collateral, increasing use of Te Reo, undertaking roadshows to different parts of the country, shifting to a digital approach, introducing Vlogs, and commissioning a digital advertising campaign to increase reach and audiences.

The information campaign led the way for SWRB to be able to increase its audience and reach, so social workers and employers knew who needed to become registered, and that this could be done via the SWRB website.

The campaign was agile and responded to sector feedback and a changing environment. It initiated new relationships, strengthened existing ones, and made SWRB more responsive and visible.

As SWRB aims to be a modern regulator, there needs to be continued commitment to communicating and engaging with the sector in a meaningful way. This campaign was focused on registration but in future greater focus will be on compliance and enhancing professionalism.

### **A significant number of registrations occurred leading up to mandatory registration...**

The graph below illustrates a 48 percent increase in the number of registered social workers since our last SOI, most of which occurred between 2020 and February 2021. A significant amount of work has occurred to register social workers, the largest increase being the year prior to mandatory registration in February 2021.



### **The number of disciplinary matters increased significantly in 2020/21...**

There were 33 disciplinary cases heard by PCCs in 2020/21, with 10 cases to be set for hearing by the Disciplinary Tribunal. Our 2020/21 budget forecast was 12 PCC cases and 8 Tribunal hearings. Even with the levy increasing in 2021, these costs are not being recovered.

We will need to explore options for how this can be resolved, especially if the number of complaints continue to grow.

### Our new database is improving how we operate...

Our new database went live in October 2020 and has improved our systems and processes, providing real-time information for our operations management. This is already allowing a level of transparency and insight we have not had access to previously and given us confidence in our volume and workflow assessment, while also providing process efficiencies.

### Our people

#### Our organisational structure has gone through significant change...

Being in a mandatory environment requires SWRB to think and act differently. In the build up to mandatory registration, the organisation placed an emphasis on bringing social workers onto the register and this was reflected in the structure of the organisation at the time. Planning for a post-mandatory environment led to a recalibration and an organisational restructure in September 2020.

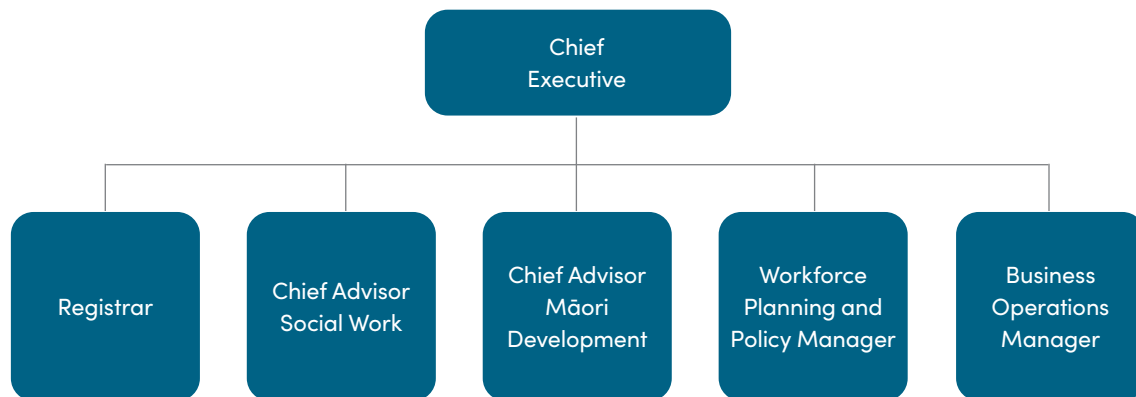
We reviewed our functional areas to ensure we are fit for purpose and able to deliver our core regulatory functions and priorities effectively. Our current organisational structure allows us to shift resources as demand requires, as reflected in the chart below:



A large part of the ongoing change programme related to dealing with the expanded scope of SWRB's regulatory functions, which has required the organisation to grow and establish more specialised positions, including a Senior Leadership Team comprising a:

- Chief Advisor Māori
- Workforce Planning and Policy manager
- Chief Advisor Social Work
- Registrar (separate from the Chief Executive)
- Business Operations Manager.

#### SWRB Senior Leadership Team structure



Alongside these, we have established several supporting roles in Communications, Policy, Social Work Advice, Legal Advice, Complaints, Registrations, Finance, and Administration support.

#### **Like others, we have found new ways of working due to the COVID-19 pandemic...**

Our staff can now work from home. We have also sped up our move from paper to digital and online interactions. As our staff were already stretched due to the change programme for mandatory registration, the COVID-19 disruption brought additional challenges. We surveyed our staff to check wellbeing after the first lockdown in 2020, and if they felt supported by our leadership and business processes. While areas important to the organisation need to be improved, our staff continue to do their best in uncertain times.

#### **Workforce planning lead for social work**

In 2021, Government announced SWRB as lead agency for social worker workforce planning, which is a new function for both SWRB and the sector. Workforce planning will inform the development of a wider workforce strategy for the social services sector. Establishment of the function recognises social workers are essential to supporting our communities and improving wellbeing. Workforce planning involves employer, sector organisation, education and training institutions and social worker engagement to:

- Identify issues
- Analyse and develop insights
- Report on supply and demand scenarios
- Collect and monitor workforce data.



# HEI WHAKAMANA MĀTĀ WAKA UPHOLDING THE DIGNITY OF ALL WHERE WE ARE GOING

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SWRB will continue to transform as we adapt to the new normal of mandatory registration. This section looks at SWRB priorities and goals for the next four years, which include:

- Being an active Te Tiriti o Waitangi partner
- Continuing our progression from the traditional to modern regulator approach to strengthen the social work profession
- Embedding our role as workforce planning lead for social workers
- Ensuring financial sustainability, including undertaking a series of funding reviews
- Embedding our organisational structure
- Considering external influences and factors.

## **Being an active Te Tiriti o Waitangi partner**

We will continue to build on the mahi undertaken to date by modelling and being an active Te Tiriti o Waitangi partner. This will help our goal of being able to genuinely meet our obligations under section 100 of the Act to:

*Ensure the aims and aspirations of Māori as tangata whenua and appropriate involvement of Māori as tangata whenua are integral and ongoing priorities and maintain mechanisms to ensure the views of Māori as tangata whenua are readily accessible to us at all times.*

Engagement with Māori will continue to be integral to our priorities in the next four years. Initiatives planned include :

- Implementing He Arapaki Māori Development Strategy and action plan so that we can become an organisation that is known for being culturally competent and aware, inclusive, and understanding of tangata whenua needs
- Strengthening our relationship with our newly established Te Kāhui Māori advisor group, to enable the Board to be more responsive to Māori
- Growing our internal capability
- Building on our engagement with Kaupapa Māori social services, educators, and Māori social workers to achieve greater understanding and insights for Māori
- Focusing on tikanga within the organisation, including staff performance appraisal measures reflecting Te Ao Māori and team meetings being facilitated from Te Ao Māori uara
- Create baselines for measuring the success of the work we undertake with Māori
- Looking at how we can better support Māori who are applying to become registered social workers, in particular those who are using the experience pathway to registration
- Showcasing social work research and evidence-based practice with a focus on indigenous practise (including a joint symposium)
- Launching a speaker series on the intersection between Te Ao Māori and the regulatory space.

## **Continuing our progression from a traditional to a modern regulator to strengthen the social work profession**

The introduction of mandatory registration is a significant step forward in the professionalisation of social work in Aotearoa, where we support and encourage high standards of practice and



professional conduct among social workers and the employers of social workers. This aligns with our progression to being a modern regulator.

Through this progression we will build our capacity to undertake research, and data analysis (including on complaints and notifications received) to identify trends. This will inform our activities directed at social worker professionalism, including:

- Our aspiration to contribute to indigenising the regulatory environment. This begins with SWRB leading by example as an active Te Tiriti o Waitangi partner
- Undertake a review of the Social Workers Registration Act, as specified in section 104 of the Act
- Undertaking regular reviews of social work practice, education and training standards including:
  - Complaints processes
  - Competence standards
  - Education and training framework staged development, including reviewing social work Programme Recognition Standards to improve consistency and quality of degrees
  - Updating the Code of Conduct and professional standards
- Becoming a responsive regulator by building strong strategic relationships to better understand the needs of social workers, and the people they work with
- Strengthening our ongoing communications with social workers to support and enhance their practice
- Continuing to develop ongoing information and compliance marketing campaigns for social workers, social work students, employers, education providers and the public, and to attract people into the social work profession or to return to practise
- Audits/reviews of social workers' continuing professional development logs targeted to parts of the sector showing the highest harm, rather than randomly
- Providing learnings for the sector from Disciplinary Tribunal determinations
- Improving our digital services, including MySWRB online
- Advocating for social work professionalism in government as a critical profession to support the wellbeing of people in Aotearoa
- Committing to consulting with the sector on future fee or levy proposals
- Moving towards a more professionalised social workforce
- Establishing a proactive approach to best practice and complaints ie. Better understanding trends in the sector and how we can respond proactively
- Becoming more data driven and evidence based
- Looking at other key professional groups for commonalities and sharing regulatory approaches, particularly those that are currently unregulated or do not have mandatory registration for their profession.

### **Embedding our role as workforce planning lead for social workers**

As the lead agency for social workforce planning, our intent is to support a strategic, cross-sectoral approach to coordinate and promote action, ensuring the supply of social workers can meet demand.

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 can be held accountable for their practice. Activities will include:

- Establishing our role as a lead in the sector for workforce planning, including establishing baseline measures for measuring our effectiveness
- Conducting our annual social worker workforce survey through our new database (iMIS)
- Further developing workforce reporting capability through iMIS and later in the year capturing workforce data from employers of social workers, social work educators and potentially through the social workers' Continuing Professional Development process

- Building our links with other agencies that have a workforce planning function including the Ministries of Health, Education, Oranga Tamariki and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. Based on their advice and our suite of workforce data, we are exploring the possible development of a demand and supply tool. In addition, we are also exploring research opportunities with social researchers, and social work providers and agencies into unmet need
- Providing more tailored information for employers to inform professional practice
- Undertaking analysis, forecasts, and trends to support the development of the profession
- Looking at other related workforces for commonalities.

### **Ensuring financial sustainability, including the undertaking of a series of funding reviews**

Under the new mandatory regime more capability is needed to deliver what is required of us under the Act as a modern outcomes-driven anticipatory regulator focused on system risk activities – looking outwards to support social workers get as many things right as possible. The growing expectations on us as a regulator can no longer be traded-off. We can't risk regulatory failure by limiting activities to simply holding a list of social workers.

For the future, we propose inflation adjusting fees and the levy more regularly. The costs for our activities and functions have increased since 2005, as they have for other organisations, but our fees and the levy have not. We propose annual CPI inflation adjustments to reduce the need for large increases all at once. We will consult with the sector if these changes are significant for new projects or additional work, and on our funding review in 2021/22.

Alongside this, we will continue to review our business processes and look for efficiencies in the way we work. We will also look to build appropriate financial reserves to allow reinvestment in infrastructure and cover future unforeseen shifts in funding.

### **Treatment of depreciation for our Database**

At the time of writing this SOI we are in discussions with our auditors regarding the implications of a new interpretation statement of the International Financial Reporting Standards, in relation to the depreciation fee for service database. This relates directly to the depreciation fee treatment of our new database (iMIS). The management of this may require the Board to consider options for any potential shortfall. We will work with Audit NZ and our monitoring agency to find a path forward once the parameters are fully understood.

### **Embedding our organisation structure**

Over the past four years SWRB has been through a significant organisational change process to adapt to the mandatory registration environment, an expanded mandate (e.g. Workforce planning), and better meeting the requirements of the Act (in particular section 100 with Māori). In the next four years we will be embedding this as business as usual, maintaining a continuous improvement approach as we learn from the practical implications of mandatory registration.

SWRB will adapt to future changes to demand and our environment, taking a continuous improvement approach to our work and identifying efficiencies in the way we work. This will include, if required, further organisational reviews to ensure our structure is fit for purpose in the mandatory environment.

The SWRB is committed to supporting all employees and building a workforce that reflects the diverse communities we live in. Diversity in our workforce will help us service our customers by supporting equal opportunities, social justice and equity. The SWRB recruitment process asks managers to think about diversity, organisational fit and staff who are prepared to live our values. Staff diversity and demographics information is provided in the Annual Report.

Organisational health and wellbeing is a focus for ensuring that staff are heard and supported. Twice a year SWRB will undertake a pulse survey with an action plan developed from each survey. The SWRB Board are provided with an organisational health statement at each Finance, Audit and Risk Subcommittee meetings (6 times a year) that include staff turnover, actions and progress from the staff pulse survey, Health and Safety reports and general staff wellbeing.

## External influences and factors to consider

This is a time of rapid change and reform both for the social work sector and other sectors that employ or educate social workers. There are several government reviews and major reforms that will directly impact the way SWRB operates and social workers' practice. These include reports into the form and function of Oranga Tamariki, Reform of Vocational Education (RoVE), reform of the health system, and how the country adapts to the ongoing COVID-19 response and recovery.

### Ministerial Advisory Board Oranga Tamariki report

There have been several recent reviews undertaken of Oranga Tamariki, including the recently released Ministerial Advisory Board (MAB) report, *Hipokingia ki te Kahu Aroha*, released in September 2021.

SWRB acknowledges the report from the MAB into Oranga Tamariki and supports its social work workforce recommendations, which offer a way forward for social workers within the organisation.

We are pleased to see the recommendation that the social work voice within Oranga Tamariki needs strengthening as the report found that 'professional practice views, opinions, and experience were missing at many levels within the organisation, including at its leadership group, and we believe this needs to change'. The ability of social workers to have their judgement and advice treated with respect and be able to abide by their professional obligations within organisations is a challenge. The SWRB is clear that social workers need to be supported just as doctors, nurses, and lawyers are when providing their opinions.

Having all social workers part of a workforce which adheres to the SWRB Code of Conduct, a Code of Ethics, and undertakes quality supervision will improve professionalism and enhance public safety.

### Public Health reforms and Ministry for Disabled People

In April 2021 the government announced the reform of the health sector. A significant number of social workers are employed by District Health Boards (as the largest Allied Health group) and will be directly affected by the reforms, essentially bringing 20 DHB employers down to two (Health NZ and the Māori Health Authority).

SWRB will aim to work with the Transition Unit, as well as Health NZ and the Māori Health Authority as the employers of social workers in the public health setting.

SWRB will also engage with the new Ministry for Disabled People, once fully established, to help better understand the role of social work with disabled people in Aotearoa.

### RoVE and Te Pūkenga

SWRB works closely with education providers across the tertiary sector, which is also experiencing a period of significant change. The establishment of Te Pūkenga has amalgamated all Polytechnics and Vocational Education in Aotearoa, many of which currently provide social work qualifications. These reforms provide an opportunity for a more focussed and streamlined approach to educational standards for providers.

The SWRB will work closely with Te Pūkenga as changes to the sector are embedded to ensure sound educational standards for our prospective social workers.

The programme recognition standards and education framework review will also give SWRB an opportunity to engage with providers in this new environment.

### The ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic will provide ongoing and lasting changes to how we work at SWRB, and for the environment that social workers operate in. SWRB has adapted successfully to a remote working environment, but we will continue to learn and adapt to help future proof the organisation for future lockdowns or new pandemics.

Given the continuous changes within the COVID-19 environment, social workers have also adapted to this new world, including those who have been at the forefront as essential workers. We will see ongoing impacts across the communities, iwi and individuals that social workers work with. At this stage what this looks like is unknown, however there could be further demands for social work services over the medium and long term. SWRB will work to understand this better as we move into the future.

### **Meeting the opportunities and challenges of the unknown**

These shifts will present significant changes to how SWRB and social workers operate. However, what this specifically means for the sector at this stage is largely unknown. What we do know is that there will be opportunities and challenges for SWRB and how it operates. SWRB will continue to adapt and change its operations, in order to appropriately monitor and support the social work profession in Aotearoa.

# OUTCOMES AND HOW WE MEASURE OUR SUCCESS

Our Outcomes Framework below shows how SWRB plans to measure the impact of our work in the next four years. All measures for this SOI cycle are new, reflecting the significant changes which have occurred for the organisation over the past four years. We will work over the next four years to establish sound baseline measures as our understanding and insights develop in a mandatory registration environment.

## SWRB Vision

Social workers in Aotearoa are accountable, recognised, and valued

## SWRB outcomes

Active partner with Māori

We are responsive to the diverse communities of Aotearoa

Social workers demonstrate strong professional practice

There is public trust and confidence in the social work profession

## SWRB impacts

### SAFE

Fitness to practise, character/reputation, health convictions

### PROFESSIONAL

Qualified, experienced, knowledgeable, skilled, maintain CPD and supervision

### ACCOUNTABLE

Held to account if not meeting conduct, competence, or health standards

### INSIGHT

Data, information, and insights on where social workers are needed most

## SWRB interventions

Registration

Practising certification

Code of Conduct and professional standards setting

Competence standards development

Regulatory and practice advice

Qualifications recognition

Continuing professional development audits

Complaints and notifications investigations

Professional Conduct Committee support

Disciplinary Tribunal support

Information and compliance marketing campaigns

Policy development and consultation

Sector leadership and engagement

Workforce planning

## The Government's priorities for Aotearoa

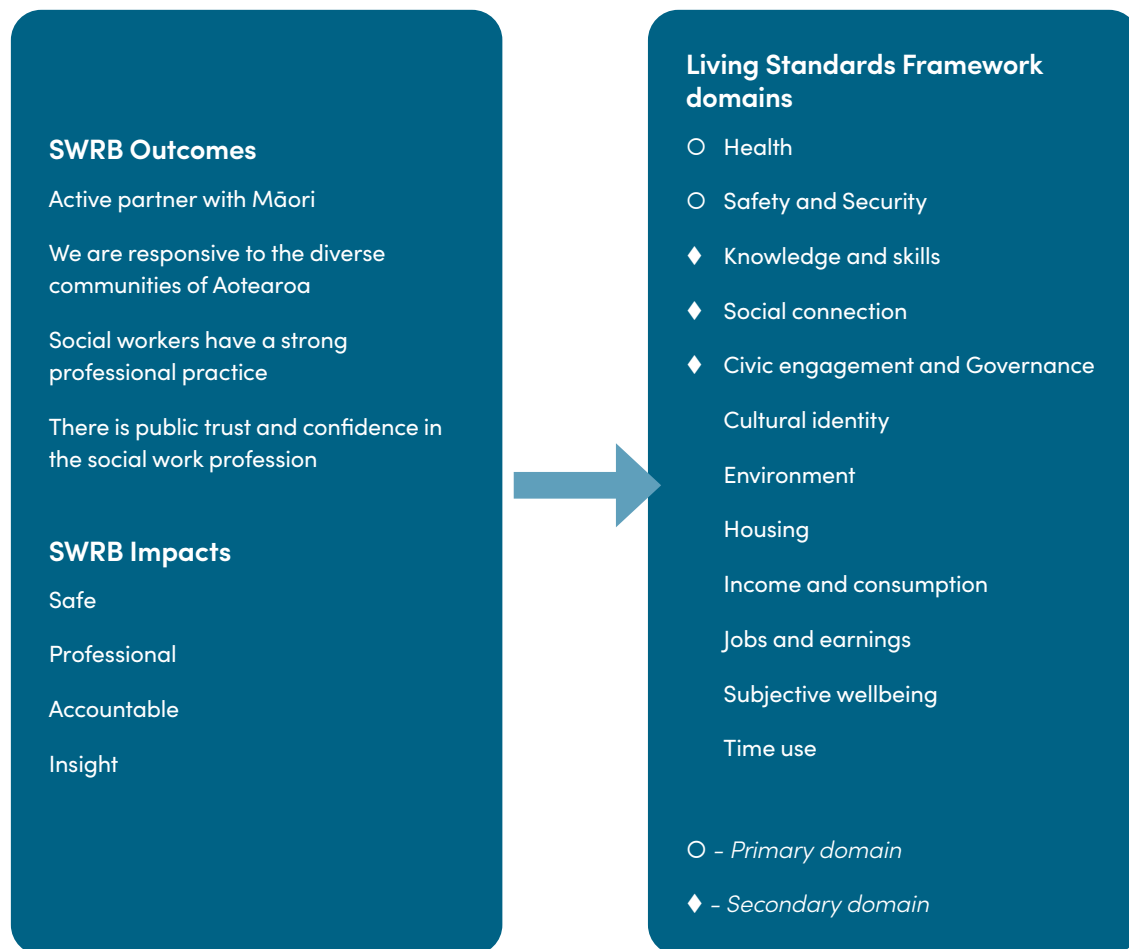
The Government has three overarching priorities for Aotearoa.

- To keep New Zealanders safe from COVID-19
- To accelerate our recovery and rebuild
- To tackle our foundational challenges, in particular housing affordability, climate change and child wellbeing.

SWRB's vision that *social workers in Aotearoa are accountable, recognised, and valued* supports the Government's priorities. The Minister for Social Development and Employment also provides SWRB with expectations through a Memorandum of Understanding.

## The Living Standards Framework

Treasury's Living Standards Framework is a model for measuring the wellbeing of Aotearoa and the people living in it. We contribute primarily through two domains: Health and Safety and Security, with secondary contributions to Knowledge and Skills, Social Connection, and Civic Engagement and Governance.



### **Outcome: We are an active partner with Māori**

Māori development is a significant area of focus for SWRB, as we work to strengthen our responsibilities as a Te Tiriti o Waitangi partner. We will do this by:

- Implementing a Māori Development Strategy (He Arapaki) and action plan
- Strengthening our relationship with our newly established Te Kāhui Māori advisor group
- Continuing to grow our internal capability
- Building on our engagement with Kaupapa Māori social services, educators, and Māori social workers to establish great understanding and insights for Māori
- Focusing on tikanga within the organisation
- Creating baselines for measuring the success of the work we undertake with Māori
- Looking at how we can better support Māori who are applying to become registered social workers, in particular those who are using the experience pathway to registration
- Launching a speaker series on the intersection between te ao Māori and the regulatory space with other regulators and interested parties.

*Note: We will work over the next four years to develop sound measures of our success and establish baselines in this area.*

### **Outcome: We are responsive to the diverse communities of Aotearoa**

As a small organisation, SWRB needs to work closely with partner organisations both inside and outside of government to better understand the diverse communities in Aotearoa. This will be especially important as significant reforms are enacted across the social, education, and health sectors.

We will work over the next four years to develop sound measures of our success and establish baselines in this area. We will do this by:

- Becoming a more responsive regulator by building stronger strategic relationships to better understand the needs of social workers, and the people they work with
- Seeking ways to influence and inform on the role of social work within key reform areas such as health and vocational education
- Looking at other related and linked professions for commonalities and sharing regulatory approaches, particularly those that are currently unregulated or do not have mandatory registration for their profession
- Create baselines for measuring the success of the work we undertake with our diverse communities
- Building our links with other agencies that have a workforce function, including the Ministries of Health, Education, Oranga Tamariki and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. Based on their advice and our suite of workforce data, we are exploring the possible development of a demand and supply tool.

*Note: We will work over the next four years to develop sound measures of our success and establish baselines in this area.*



## Outcome: Social workers demonstrate strong professional practice – informed by competence standards, Codes of Conduct and Ethics

As SWRB continues to adapt to a mandatory registration environment, we will continue to support and promote strong professional practice for social workers. We will do this by:

- Continuing to develop ongoing information and compliance marketing campaigns for social workers, social work students, employers, education providers and the public, and to attract people into the social work profession or to return to practise
- Acting as a supporter in government of the social work profession's critical role to the wellbeing of people in Aotearoa, including reports on social work in Aotearoa (such as reports from the Ministerial Advisory Board report: *Hipokingia ki te Kahu Aroha*, and the Office of the Ombudsman) which have placed SWRB in a key role to support the professionalism of social workers
- Establishing our role as a lead in the sector for workforce planning, including:
  - establishing baseline measures for measuring our effectiveness
  - increasing our understanding and insights into the social workforce
  - making sure these insights are shared and promoted with employers and the sector
- Making a commitment to consulting with the sector on future fee or levy proposals
- Transitioning and improving our digital services including MySWRB online
- Providing learnings for the sector from PCC and Disciplinary Tribunal determinations
- Conducting our annual social worker workforce survey through our new database (iMIS)
- Developing, based on the workforce survey, further workforce reporting capability through iMIS and later in the year capturing workforce data from employers of social workers, social work educators, and potentially through the Continuing Professional Development process
- Providing more tailored information for employers to inform professional practice
- Exploring research opportunities with social researchers, and social work providers and agencies into unmet need, and developing a baseline measure for social work need in Aotearoa
- Undertaking analysis, forecasts, and trends to support the development of the profession.

### Measures of success

Outcome: Social workers have a strong professional practice		
What we measure	2021/22 SOI Baseline	Target 2025/26
<b>Impact(s): Professional, accountable</b> More people are practising social work	New measure  Currently 25% of registered social workers are non-practising	< 25% of registered social workers identify as non-practising and the proportion decreases over time
<b>Impact(s): Professional, accountable</b> More people are registered as social workers	New measure	Increase in numbers on the register
<b>Impact(s): Professional, Safe</b> Supporting professional practice for social workers through better information on best practice	New measure  At least one campaign per year	Undertake targeted annual compliance marketing campaigns to social workers and employers

*Note: We will work over the next four years to develop further measures of our success and establish baselines in this area.*



**Outcome: There is public trust and confidence in the social worker profession**

Building public trust and confidence in social workers is an important outcome for SWRB. We will do this by:

- Reviewing the Social Workers Registration Act, as specified in section 104 of the Act
- Undertaking regular reviews of social work practice, education and training standards including:
  - complaints processes
  - competence standards
  - education framework staged development including reviewing the social work Programme Recognition Standards to improve consistency and quality of social work degrees
  - updating the Code of Conduct and professional standards
- Targeting audits/reviews of social workers’ continuing professional development logs to parts of the sector showing the highest harm, rather than randomly as currently
- Undertaking work to better understand the confidence and trust the public in Aotearoa have for social workers.

*Measures of success*

<b>Outcome: There is public trust and confidence in the social worker profession</b>		
<b>What we measure</b>	<b>2021/22 SOI Baseline</b>	<b>Target 2024/25</b>
<b>Impact(s): Safe, Professional</b>  SRWB contributes system leadership and stewardship as the social work regulator for Aotearoa	New measure - Establishing baseline measures	Satisfaction with advice and guidance provided to relevant Minister(s) and government agencies
<b>Impact – Professional, Accountable</b>  SWRB promotes the benefits of social work professionalism to government agencies	New measure - Establishing baseline measures	Minimum number of papers, meetings, submissions made on relevant policy and legislation

*Note: We will work over the next four years to develop further measures of our success and establish baselines in this area.*

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