

## **Tackling the Deficit in Mental Health Services and Community Support: AASW asks the community to contact social workers.**

### **For Immediate Release**

12 June 2024 - The Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) is proud to announce the launch of a new campaign for the Australian public to be aware of the essential work of social workers and get support.

AASW CEO Cindy Smith highlights the urgency and importance of this initiative: "Australia's support system including mental health care is facing unprecedented challenges, and the demand for community support has surged. Our 'Find a Social Worker' directory is a crucial tool to help connect individuals with professional support."

The campaign aims to broaden people's understanding of social work by addressing common misconceptions about the profession. "Many people still believe that social workers only assist specific communities or work solely for the government," Cindy Smith notes. "We're here to change that narrative and highlight social workers' diverse and impactful roles, including counselling, advocacy and in mental health support".

The 'Find a Social Worker' online directory allows both the public and health service providers, such as GPs, to search for social workers by name, location, and the services they offer. "This directory is not just a list of names; it's a gateway to the support that many Australians desperately need," Cindy Smith explains. It showcases social workers who are ready and equipped to make a difference."

"The campaign features members from diverse areas of social work, showcasing the variety of professional fields the community can connect with through our directory. These members illustrate the compassion and skills of the workforce. We're saying that for counselling, advocacy, therapy or support, we're here to help – don't wait" Cindy Smith said.

"It is well known that people who need support are often under duress, and it can be challenging for individuals to consider new ways to get help when traditional resources are full or have long waiting times. Our directory provides a crucial alternative, offering timely access to qualified social workers ready to assist." Cindy Smith said.

Cindy Smith emphasises the directory's significance in improving access to mental health services: "By providing an easily accessible resource, we help individuals and health providers to find the right support at the right time. This is a positive step towards addressing the critical gaps in our community support and mental health system."

For more information about the "Find a Social Worker" directory or the campaign, please visit [aasw.asn.au/dontwait](https://aasw.asn.au/dontwait) or contact Matt Loads, Communications Lead, on 0403 011 174.

### **About the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW)**

The Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) is the professional body representing social workers. Our mission is for wellbeing and social justice in Australia, by empowering the social work profession to make a difference.

### **For media enquiries, please contact**

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