



COLIN SPARROW

Candidate for AASW National Director

MEMBER-CENTRED GOVERNANCE | BETTER VALUE FOR MEMBERS | ACCOUNTABILITY
& TRANSPARENCY | A STRONGER VOICE FOR SOCIAL WORK

Why I'm standing

I believe the Australian Association of Social Workers should be a strong, member-centred professional association: one that listens to its members, is accountable for the decisions it makes, provides value for membership and speaks with a strong and credible voice for social work.

I have served as a National Director since May 2026. Although that is a relatively short period, I have already had the opportunity to contribute to some important work, including the development of the current AASW Strategy, consideration of the Association's longer-term financial sustainability, and work to strengthen the By-Laws and governance arrangements.

That experience has reinforced my view that good governance matters. Board members have a responsibility to ask questions, exercise independent judgement and make decisions in the interests of the Association as a whole. We also need to be accountable to members for those decisions.

I do not believe being a Director means agreeing with every proposal put before the Board. Respectful disagreement and constructive challenge are part of good governance. I will support a position when I believe it is sound, raise concerns when I believe they need to be raised, and change my view when the evidence or a better argument warrants it.

Before joining the National Board, I served as President of the AASW South Australian Branch. That experience shaped my understanding of what a member-centred professional association can be. Members bring enormous knowledge, experience and commitment to the AASW. Our challenge is to create meaningful ways for that contribution to influence the Association rather than simply asking members for their views.

My professional career has included child protection, the non-government sector and public health. I currently hold a senior professional Social Work leadership role in the South Australian public health system. Across those settings I have seen both the contribution social workers make and the pressures facing the profession.

I want the AASW to be an organisation that members see value in belonging to. That includes useful professional support and services, but value for members is broader than a list of benefits. Members should be able to see that their fees are being used responsibly, that the organisation is financially sustainable, that its priorities reflect the profession, and that it is achieving things that individual social workers cannot achieve alone.

That requires transparency and accountability. The AASW should be open about what it is trying to achieve, how resources are being used, what progress is being made and where things have not gone as planned. Trust is strengthened when members can see both the decisions being made and the reasoning behind them.

I also want a stronger national voice for social work. Social workers contribute across health, mental health, child and family services, disability, aged care, justice, education and communities. Our professional association should be visible and influential in the national conversations that affect the people and communities we work with, as well as the future of our profession.

The current Strategy provides an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between the AASW and its members and to build a more sustainable and influential Association. I want to continue contributing to that work.

If elected, I will bring practical governance experience, professional leadership experience and a strong commitment to a member-centred Association. I will continue to ask questions, contribute constructively and hold myself accountable for the decisions I make as a Director.

I would value the opportunity to continue serving members as a National Director.

CURRENT NATIONAL DIRECTOR

AASW BOARD ELECTION 2026

STRONGER TOGETHER FOR SOCIAL
WORK