

I am standing for the National Board as I believe strongly in a place-based approach to organisational management, strong governance and strategic thinking.

I bring strong governance skills and experience in developing and implementing strategic plans and monitoring execution. As well as my MSW(PQ), I have an MBA and deep experience in financial and sustainability analysis. Many of you will have seen my analysis of the AASW's then perilous financial situation in 2024.

I am convinced that our association should advance our interests as a profession itself through advocacy not just on our own issues, but more importantly on behalf of those affecting the people we work with.

I also have a deep personal commitment to decolonising our practices. That goes beyond words to real personal and strategic action. I have a foot in both worlds, as I have Aboriginal heritage but grew up in a white world, including with substantial class privilege. I have been honoured to mobilise that privilege on behalf of my clients and colleagues in various roles but am also acutely aware of the boundaries of my own knowledge and experience.

I am particularly motivated to run for National office due to the controversy around registration of the profession. I believe passionately that it is time to draw a line under professional registration – we've spent at least 30 years flogging this dead horse and we're further away from it than we have ever been.

Enough is Enough.

We've got better things to do with our time and money, and it risks continuing to be a huge distraction for the profession. Here's some of my reasons for thinking this.

- Perhaps most importantly, regulation is the ultimate colonisation of practice. It literally means that you can't practice unless the Crown thinks you can, and that you must only practice in the way that the Crown says is appropriate.
- Under the Constitution, there is no federal power to regulate professions. AHPRA only operates because the States referred their health regulatory powers to the Commonwealth by legislation, and so can only ever cover 'Health' professions. Many of us don't work in health so can't be covered by AHPRA ever. This is an incredibly important constraint which makes national registration of the whole profession totally unachievable.
- Regulation depends on a case that there needs to be public protection that outweighs the cost of regulation. Arguing that we need it to be seen as worthy by the health professions isn't that. And the public protection case hasn't been convincing – it relies on an argument that says we're so dangerous to the public that it's worth spending public money to protect our clients from us.
- No federal minister will ever want to get involved in child protection matters – it's a policy domain that never has any good news stories.
- We are already regulated in various forms – most States have Health Ombudsmen who regulate private practice regardless of AHPRA registration.

And there are a wide variety of other Acts that cover us as well – privacy, consumer affairs, mental health, NDIS just to name a few.

- Scope of practice is almost impossible to define narrowly enough to make registration workable – especially when considering the impact on people who work in our field but who don't have social work degrees. Let alone the overlaps with other professions. (There might be merit in title protection, but that also seems more about protecting ourselves than about protecting the public, so it's not going to be an easy argument to win)

The failure of the South Australian scheme demonstrates the challenges and makes it incredibly unlikely that any other State will attempt to repeat the same experiment. The Dawson Review into AHPRA also further tips the scales against social work being drawn into the AHPRA scheme. So we need to find better ways of making our work valued across the health sector.

A professional and effective Association is the best way to achieve this. To me, that looks like:

- Strong advocacy
- Clear communications
- Engaged membership
- Competent governance

I consider I'm well positioned to help guide the Association in that direction