

Submission to Job- ready Graduates Package draft legislation

The Department of Education,
Skills and Employment

AUGUST 2020



AASW

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Australian Association
of Social Workers

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The Australian Association of Social Workers

The Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) is the professional body representing more than 12,000 social workers throughout Australia. We set the benchmark for professional education and practice in social work, and advocate on matters of human rights, discrimination, and matters that influence people's quality of life.

The Social Work Profession

Every day, all around Australia social workers are working with people to improve their wellbeing and support them in meeting their full potential. Social workers are driven by a belief that in order to improve the situations that someone may be experiencing we need to adopt a whole of person approach. Social workers are distinct from many other professional groups as they appreciate the diverse and complex set of factors that contribute to someone's wellbeing. Most of all social workers work in partnership and are driven by a collaborative approach to practice. This is an explicit recognition that people are experts of their own lives and it is through partnership that we can address the challenges that they face.

Social work is a highly regulated university qualified profession that has been in existence globally for over 100 years. Social workers have supported Australians through every major crisis, from world wars, bushfires, floods, droughts, economic recessions to global pandemics. Social workers work in a wide range of government, non-government and private practice settings providing social, emotional and practical supports. Major fields of practice include, but are not limited to:

- Age care
- Crisis recover and response services
- Child protection and abuse
- Disability
- Drug and alcohol
- Family supports

- Family violence
- Health
- Housing and homelessness
- Mental health
- Refugees and people seeking asylum
- Social support services

Social workers provide a wide range of supports from targeted evidence-based individual counselling therapies, group work to large scale community development work. This can be in relation to **mental health, trauma, abuse, grief and loss, social isolation, and a wide range of issues that may impact wellbeing**. Social workers practice in **hospitals, schools, community health services, disability supports, child protection and family supports, crisis interventions, housing, drug and alcohol services and mental health services** to name a few. Social workers are also present in policy, research, and academia.

Social workers understand that there isn't a single determining factor that contributes to someone's wellbeing, and they are trained to develop a holistic appreciation of someone's current situation, and the structural and systemic inequalities people face. This includes focusing on how health, mental health, family history, culture, ethnicity, disability, age, abuse, trauma, socio economic context, gender identity and expression intersect. As a result, social workers provide supports and services that recognise the unique set of circumstances that a person is experiencing. Furthermore, in line with our commitment to human rights, we adopt a strengths and solution focus approach recognising the inherent dignity, worth and capacity for action of every human being. A strengths focus also challenges the deficit and blame model that dominates a lot of services by recognising the abilities of people, whilst also recognising the barriers that may limit people's capacity for action.

Regardless of context or approach, social workers prioritise relationship building as a core practice principle. In order to provide meaningful and targeted services and supports, relationship building seeks to foster collaborative decision-making. This is to ensure that people are active participants and not passive in the process. We believe this is a foundational pillar for sustainable change.

With a focus on partnership, self-determination and a holistic appreciation of people, social workers are key partners in working towards improving the wellbeing of all Australians.

AASW Submission: Key points

- The Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) does not support the Federal Government’s proposed changes to higher education funding through the “Job-ready Graduates Package” announced by Minister Dan Tehan on 19 June 2020.
- The proposed changes would have significant workforce impacts on essential social work services and therefore negatively affect the supports provided to individuals, groups, and communities across Australia, including regional, rural and remote areas.
- Australia is recovering from a catastrophic bushfire season and a once in a generation pandemic event that will have major long-term impacts on the health and wellbeing of all Australians. We need to assure we have the social work workforce to support people in crisis and recovery. These measures as they stand will have the opposite effect.
- Fundamentally, the reform represents a clear contradiction between what the policy aims to do, and what it will actually achieve. The aim of the reform is to support “job ready” degrees in areas where there is expected to be significant need. The changes have applied to nursing, clinical psychologists and some allied health but excludes key professions, including social work.
- Social work is an essential workforce, providing vital supports across every major social issue, including health, mental health, disability, family violence, child protection and aged care, and has been identified as such throughout the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.
- Social work is a “job ready” degree (with Bachelors or qualifying Masters having 1000 hours of field education which is a distinctive pedagogy for social work education) and according to the government’s own data there is expected to be significant growth in the workforce over the next 5 years¹. The reforms place social work in the highest student contribution band and the lowest Commonwealth contribution cluster. This result in a 113% student contribution increase in the cost of a social work degree.
- The AASW understands that, while the changes are at a unit level and not a course level, a social work degree is made up almost exclusively of compulsory subjects. Social work degrees are highly regulated in Australia and must meet the AASW Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards to assure that people are receiving highly skilled support when they need it the most. This is why social workers are recognised by Medicare and other schemes. A social work

¹ <https://www.joboutlook.gov.au/Occupation?search=Career&code=2725>

degree has a minimal number of electives (**often none for the qualifying Masters, 3 or less for Bachelors**) therefore the notion of choosing cheaper subjects to bring the overall cost of a social work degree down is not feasible and the financial burden will significantly impact workforce quality.

- The significant student contribution increase will impact a predominantly female workforce (84%), particularly women with children, as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and people with lived experience. Not only will they now begin their professional career with a major HELP debt, but it will, in fact be a deterrent in pursuing these degrees, and as studies show will have major long-term ramifications.

Recommendations

- **We call on the Government to align social work with other allied health professions in relation to Higher Education funding.**
- **Social work is an allied health profession according to the Department of Health's own workforce planning ² and this needs to align with the Department of Education, Skills and Employment's classifications.**

² <https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/work-review-australian-government-health-workforce-programs-toc~chapter-8-developing-dental-allied-health-workforce~chapter-8-allied-health-workforce>

Our submission

We welcome the opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry and would like to highlight the following points.

1. **Job-ready Graduates Package and negative workforce Impact**
2. **Social Work is an Essential Workforce**
3. **Social Work Employment Growth**
4. **Social work is a Job Ready qualification**
5. **Job-ready Graduates Package: Social work Units and Electives**
6. **Job-ready Graduates Package Impacts on Women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people with lived experience**
7. **Social work is allied health**
8. **Recommendations**

1. Job-ready Graduates Package and Workforce Impact

The proposed higher education changes announced by Minister for Education Dan Tehan to reform Australia's higher education system will have significant workforce impacts on essential social services, including social work, and therefore negatively affect the supports provided to individuals, groups and communities.

As stated by Government, the intent of these changes was to “**incentivize** students to make more job-relevant choices, that lead to more job-ready graduates”³, by reducing the student contribution in areas of expected employment growth and demand. As Mr Tehan stated “To power our post-COVID economic recovery, Australia will need more educators, more health professionals and more engineers, and that is why we are sending a price signal to encourage people to study in areas of expected employment growth” The aim is for universities to have greater alignment with industry needs and play a key role as we look to the future and work to recover from the significant national and international impacts of the coronavirus. While the proposed changes presuppose that prospective students make career choices based on the cost of the degree, it does highlight the significant growth in key areas and the need for essential workers into the future. Therefore, **the policy is contradictory to its own aims by including social work (and other mental health and support courses) in the list of units that will see a significant increase in the cost of study.**

The reforms place social work in the lowest funding categories resulting in a 113% increase in the cost of a social work degree. From our calculations a 4-year Bachelor of Social Work degree will go from \$27,000 to \$58,000 (student contribution) and a 2 year qualifying Master of Social Work, which requires an undergraduate degree (3 year), will go from \$34,000 to \$72,500 (student contribution) in some cases. It is pivotal to appreciate that social work degrees are highly regulated and while the changes are at a unit level and

³ <https://ministers.dese.gov.au/tehan/job-ready-graduates-power-economic-recovery#:~:text=The%20Government%20will%20incentivise%20students,clinical%20psychology%2C%20English%20and%20languages>

not a course level, a social work degree is made up almost exclusively of compulsory subjects (we will explore this in greater depth in later sections of this submission).

Therefore, by the government's own logic this will serve as a **dis-incentive** for students to study social work, a profession that has been deemed an essential workforce and there is clear need, employment growth and industry demand, as we will demonstrate below.

2. Social Work as an Essential Workforce

Bushfires

Social work is an essential workforce, providing vital supports across every major social issue, including health, mental health, disability, family violence, child protection and aged care, and has been identified as such throughout the bushfires and COVID-19 pandemic crisis. 2020 has been an incredibly challenging year for Australians and throughout it all social workers across every major field of practice have been working with individuals, groups and communities in dealing with the devastating impacts.

During the Black Summer bushfires social workers were a vital part of the workforce supporting Australians deal with the tragedy and slowly rebuilding their lives. Social workers were part of Services Australia initial response and Mobile Service Centre providing much needed emotional and practical supports. This is incredibly complex work that requires highly trained and knowledgeable practitioners to work at an individual and broader community level, especially in regional areas. This has and continues to be a major contribution of the social work profession in our ability to work with grief and trauma from a whole of person perspective. With projections of increased bushfire risk ⁴, social workers will be needed in greater numbers to support prevention and recovery efforts.



Social workers from Services Australia work as part of a team to provide invaluable mobile services in bushfire affected towns in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. They can help people access up to 10 free counselling sessions through local mental health services, announced as part of the Government's long-term Mental Health package. They provide distress support, social support, counselling and family based psychological interventions to help people through the immediate trauma and crisis- Social workers support bushfire victims ⁵

⁴ <https://emergencyleadersforclimateaction.org.au/national-summit-examine-worsening-bushfire-conditions-climate-change/>

⁵ <http://mediahub.servicesaustralia.gov.au/news/social-workers-support-bushfire-victims/>

Family Violence

Numerous Royal Commissions have identified the need for greater number of social workers, including the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence⁶ which called for the introduction of mandatory qualifications for specialist family violence practitioners:

Recommendation 209: The Victorian Government include in the 10-year industry plan for family violence prevention and response a staged process for the introduction of mandatory qualifications for specialist family violence practitioners, so that no later than 31 December 2020 all funded services must require family violence practitioners to hold a social work or equivalent degree.

This recommendation states that family violence practitioners be required to hold a social work or equivalent degree no later than 31st December 2020.

Regional, Rural and Remote Australia

Social workers play a vital role in regional, rural and remote areas in providing much needed mental health and other supports. According to our own research, approximately 40% of Accredited Mental Health Social Workers provide supports in regional areas and are recognised for their ability to work with individuals and families within their communities.⁷ In June this year the Federal Government released a report from the National Rural Health Commissioner with the title [Report for the Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communications and Local Government on the Improvement of Access, Quality and Distribution of Allied Health Services in Regional, Rural and Remote Australia](#). There are 17 references to social work in this report, including the identification of social workers in the Introduction as allied health professionals who “facilitate community access to the services and resources needed at times of hardship” (p.1). It notes, among other things, the recognition of social work by Allied Health Professions Australia and role social work plays in improving health and wellbeing outcomes for people living in regionally areas.

Social workers in mental health, DVA and Disability

Social workers form part of numerous national and state based schemes providing key supports. They practice in specialist mental health and generalist settings, including primary, secondary and tertiary services across Australia. Accredited Mental Health Social Workers⁸ are registered providers with Medicare Australia Better Access Scheme and through a number of Commonwealth funded supports and other schemes, including:

- **Medicare Better Access to Mental Health Care**
 - Providing a range of evidence-based strategies has been approved for use by allied mental health professionals, including:
 - ▷ psycho-education (including motivational interviewing)
 - ▷ cognitive behavioural therapy

⁶ <https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-recommendations?page=6>

⁷ <https://www.aasw.asn.au/document/item/11704>

⁸ <https://www.aasw.asn.au/document/item/11704>

- ▷ relaxation strategies
 - ▷ skills training
 - ▷ interpersonal therapy (especially for depression).
 - Focused psychological strategies can be delivered for individuals and groups
 - Telehealth mental health treatment services for people in rural, remote and very remote locations.
- **Department of Veteran Affairs**
Working with veterans and serving Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel, and their families, and providing psychosocial interventions.
 - **National Disability Insurance Scheme**
Social workers can provide a range of supports through the NDIS, including:
 - ▷ therapeutic and counselling supports (individual and group),
 - ▷ behaviour support (assessment and development of support plans),
 - ▷ assistance in coordinating or managing life stages, transitions and supports,
 - ▷ assistance to access and maintain employment or higher education,
 - ▷ assistance with obtaining or retaining accommodation and tenancy.
 - **Chronic Disease Management (Enhanced Primary Care)**
Counselling, coordination and support services delivered for the management of chronic disease. Accredited Mental Health Social Workers are eligible to provide these services under the category 'mental health worker'.
 - **Non-directive Pregnancy Counselling**
The Non directive Pregnancy Support Counselling services are can be provided by AMHSWs to assist women who are concerned about a pregnancy.
 - **Psychological Strategies** (formerly known as ATAPS)
Through Primary Health Networks, AMHSWs can deliver Focused Psychological Strategies through the Psychological Strategies program (formerly known as ATAPS).

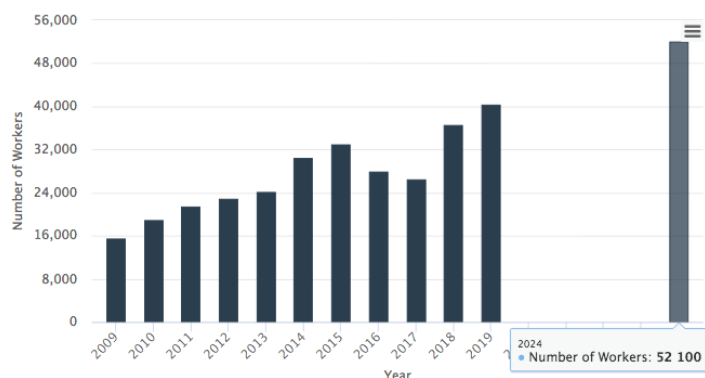
3. Social Work Employment Growth

The Australian government's own Job-outlook website⁹ identifies a significant growth in employment outlook continuing from **30,400 in 2014 to 40,300 in 2019 to 52,100 in 2024**. Also important to note that the while the 2019 employment projections do not take account of any impact caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and are therefore no longer reflective of current labour market conditions, the widely documented impact on key social work issues

⁹ <https://joboutlook.gov.au/Occupation?code=2725>

such as mental health¹⁰, family violence¹¹ and unemployment¹² are only increasing the need for social workers into the near future, most likely significantly beyond predictions.

Employment Outlook



Show Data Table ▼

Caution: The 2019 employment projections do not take account of any impact caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and are therefore no longer reflective of current labour market conditions. As such, they should be used, and interpreted, with extreme caution. Source: ABS Labour Force Survey, National Skills Commission trend data to May 2019 and projections to 2024.

The Australian Government's [2019 Employment Projections - for the five years to May 2024](#) show a need for 29.3 percent more social workers between 2019 and 2024.¹³

Occupation Level	Skill Level ANZSCO v1.2	Occupation Code	Occupation	Employment level May 2019 ('000)	Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business Projections		
					Projected employment level May 2024 ('000)	Projected employment growth five years to May 2024	
						('000)	(%)
4	1	2725	Social Workers	40.3	52.1	11.8	29.3

This growth comes on top of growth of 41.2 percent over the previous five years as reported in [Australian Jobs 2019](#) published by Australian Government Department of Jobs and Small Business.¹⁴ A shortage of social workers is also acknowledged by the Department of Home Affairs listing Social Work on the [Skilled Occupation List](#).¹⁵

In 2018, the NSW Health Social Work Workforce: Horizon Scanning and Scenario Generation Final Report¹⁶ identified several key factors as contributing to this increasing

¹⁰ <https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/fears-for-people-on-mental-health-plans-as-lockdown-drags-on-and-on-20200801-p55hku.html>

¹¹ <https://7news.com.au/the-morning-show/one-in-10-australian-women-are-experiencing-domestic-violence-during-covid--c-1234809>

¹² <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-08-13/unemployment-jobs-coronavirus-abs-july-2020/12553936>

¹³ <https://lmip.gov.au/default.aspx?LMIP/GainInsights/EmploymentProjections>

¹⁴ <https://docs.employment.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/australianjobs2019.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/working-in-australia/skill-occupation-list>

¹⁶ <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/workforce/alliedhealth/Documents/social-work-workforce-horizons-scanning-report.pdf>

demand for social workers including increasingly complex health and social needs of the population. The 2018 Victorian Allied Health Workforce Research Program Social Work Workforce Report¹⁷ also described both current and future demands across the sector, noting:

“Nationally, very strong employment growth is forecast for social workers to 2020”

4. Social work as a Job Ready qualification

If the policy aims to support “job ready” qualifications, then it must include social work as it is a “job ready” degree (with qualifying bachelors or masters having 1000 hours of field experience). In order to become a social worker, a person needs to complete an AASW Accredited social work degree, either a 4-year qualifying Bachelors, or 2 years qualifying Masters with a relevant undergraduate degree. That there are over 32,000 social workers across Australia, and they have all completed an AASW Accredited university degree. Social work is a self-regulating profession and maintains very high standards of regulation, equal and in some cases above the requirements for similar NRAS registered professions.



Social work is a tertiary-qualified profession recognised nationally and internationally. Social work undergraduate and postgraduate education provides graduates with a focus on holistic, whole-of person and life-course approach, and as such social workers are skilled at providing assessments and interventions for people with complex presentations.

Given the complexity and severity of the issues that social workers deal with, it is incredibly important that they are provided significant training and practice experience. The Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS) are applied by the AASW in reviewing and accrediting higher education programs. The AASW is an Accrediting Authority recognised by the Federal Government.

As outlined in the [Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards \(ASWEAS\)](#), the AASW seeks to ensure that the next generation of social workers is equipped for new and diverse roles in a changing workplace. The AASW recognises its ongoing responsibility to ensure that graduates are equipped for this challenging

¹⁷ [Victorian Allied Health Workforce Research Program Social Work Workforce Report](#)

environment. The Graduate Attributes and learning outcomes specified in the ASWEAS are intended to ensure that entry-level social workers have the foundational knowledge, skills and professional attitudes necessary for safe and ethical practice across all settings.

Universities are required to show that assessment of student's professional knowledge and skills accords with the ASWEAS. They demonstrate that graduates have achieved:

- The generic academic Graduate Attributes specified at AQF Level 7, 8 (Bachelor of Social Work/Bachelor of Social Work (Honours) – 4 years of duration or Level 9 (Master of Social Work Qualifying – 2 years of duration)
- The profession specific Graduate Attributes relating to the AASW Practice Standards that address entry-level fitness for practice.

To graduate from an [AASW Accredited Social work program](#) (BSW/BSW(H) or MSW(Q)) which is offered by 29 Universities and 1 Higher Education Provider, students must complete the required number of credit point which is made up of primarily of core courses/subject/units.

These prerequisite units include but are not limited to Field Education 1 + 2 (1000 hours in at least 2 discrete, differently structured practice settings); Social Work with Children, Youth and Families; Mental Health and Social Work; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Social Work Practice; Group work in Social work practice; Social Work theory and practice; Social Policy; Case management; cross cultural perspective; Family Violence and Social Work practice;

5. Social work Units and Electives

In order to cover the significant amount of knowledge and practice skills that are required to engage in such complex work, there is very limited scope for electives in social work degrees, and in the case of most Masters, none. Opening up social work degrees to more electives is not feasible, directly conflicts with current regulatory processes and will place people who use social work services at risk by creating highly inconsistent levels of knowledge and training within the workforce.

Below are some examples and we can provide a full list of all the degree and the number of electives they have, if required:

- **Deakin University**
<https://www.deakin.edu.au/course/bachelor-social-work>
Bachelor of Social Work: 29 compulsory core units; 3 elective units
Bachelor of Social work (Honours) 30 compulsory core units; 3 elective units
Master of Social Work (Qualifying) 16 compulsory core units
- **Flinders University:**
<https://students.flinders.edu.au/my-course/course-rules/undergrad/bswv3#program-of-study>
BSW: 144 Units (36 units per year) including: 130.5 points of core subjects
MSW: 72 Units: 14 topics including 1 elective.
<https://students.flinders.edu.au/my-course/course-rules/postgrad/msw/msw-ge>

- James Cook University.**
 BSW program: <https://www.jcu.edu.au/courses/bachelor-of-social-work>
 96 credit points: 75 credit point of core subjects; 21 credit points options.
 MSW program: <https://www.jcu.edu.au/courses/master-of-social-work-professional-qualifying>
 48 credit point program – all core Units
- University of New England**
<https://my.une.edu.au/courses/2020/courses/BSOCWK>
 BSW: 192 credit points: 168-180 cps core units (including 1000 hours of field placement experience; 0-12 cps listed units (electives)
<https://my.une.edu.au/courses/2020/courses/MSW>
 MSW(Q) 96 credit points: 90 cps core units; 6cps listed units
- University of Western Australia:**
 MSW: <https://www.uwa.edu.au/study/courses/master-of-social-work>
 90 points program including 66 points core units and 24 points elective from a small number of choices.
- Charles Sturt University**
 BSW program: <https://study.csu.edu.au/courses/humanities-social-sciences/bachelor-social-work>
 The pass degree consists of 30 subjects (256 points):24 core subjects (Foundation, Social Work Theory and Practice, Social Policy/Politics/Economics) , 1 compulsory subject, 2 field work subjects and 3 restricted elective subjects
 MSW program <https://study.csu.edu.au/courses/humanities-social-sciences/master-social-work-professional-qualifying>
 The course consists of 11 core subjects, two compulsory field education subject and a restricted elective
- Monash University**
 MSW program: 96 points: 12 points elective and 84 core subjects
<https://handbook.monash.edu/current/courses/M6012>
- Charles Darwin University**
 BSW: 320 points including 290 core units; 20 common units; 10 cp electives
<https://www.cdu.edu.au/study/bachelor-social-work-wscwk1-2020#!course-structure>
- RMIT**
 BSW: 392 points including 2 electives (24 points)
<https://www.rmit.edu.au/study-with-us/levels-of-study/undergraduate-study/honours-degrees/bachelor-of-social-work-honours-bh105/bh105auscy>
 MSW program: 196 points. Electives fall under justice, humanities or society
<https://www.rmit.edu.au/study-with-us/levels-of-study/postgraduate-study/masters-by-coursework/master-of-social-work-mc150/mc150p15auscy>

6. Job-ready Graduates Package Impacts on Women

If the reforms are implemented this is a significant increase in cost for a predominantly female workforce (84%) who will now begin their professional career with a major debt and will have long standing impacts post-graduation or worse still will be a deterrent in pursuing these degrees, which is counter to the Government's policy intent.

There are numerous studies that have demonstrated the long term impacts of significant student debt and we would like to highlight the following:

“...previous literature has found a relationship between debt and having children. Females with high debt are more likely to postpone childbearing than females with low debt (Sieg and Wang 2017). Nau, Dwyer, and Hodson (2015), using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Youth-1997, found that having student loan debt delayed fertility, the effect was stronger for higher amounts borrowed, and the effects were stronger for women than for men. The authors noted that student loan debt combined with costs of raising a child could also limit additional educational attainment.”¹⁸

The consequences of this policy will be felt for generations and may have impacts on other key areas of government policy and priorities.

7. Social work is Allied Health

Job-ready Graduates Package aims to support allied health professions but due to inconsistencies in federal classifications this does not include social work, despite being one of the oldest allied health professions. Despite social work being recognised as an allied health profession according to the Department of Health's own workforce planning, the Department of Education, Skills and Employment's classifications place social work within Society and Culture.

Social work is a major member of Allied Health Professions Australia¹⁹, where we make up the third largest professional group. Being a key member of this group is a recognition that as a profession we form part of the larger group of allied health professions provide crucial support for people experiencing disability, chronic illness and a wide range of other health issues. Allied health professionals represent almost a third of the country's health care workforce and deliver over 200 million health services annually. Social work is recognised as an allied health profession by State and Territory governments²⁰ and forms part of most major allied health teams across hospitals and other health centres.

Most importantly, social work is an allied health profession according to the Department of Health as stated in its own workforce planning and reporting:

“...allied health professions that are not included under NRAS, but are considered in the Commonwealth's health workforce policy planning, include:

¹⁸ <https://www.tandfonline-com.ezproxy.lib.rmit.edu.au/doi/full/10.1080/09645292.2018.1541167>

¹⁹ <https://ahpa.com.au/allied-health-professions/social-work/>

²⁰ Victorian Allied Health Workforce Research Program Social Work Workforce Report March 2018
<https://www.thermh.org.au/health-professionals/clinical-services/social-work>

- Audiologists
- Counsellors
- Dietitians
- Exercise physiologists
- Music therapists
- Nutritionists
- Pathologists
- **Social workers**
- Sonographers
- Speech pathologists²¹

The Department of Education, Skills and Employment's Job-ready Graduates Package measures will directly impact the workforce for the Department of Health Covid-19 initiative and priorities.

8. Recommended action

This inconsistency between policy intent and actual outcomes can be easily amended by assuring all job ready qualifications are covered by the changes.

We call on the Government to align social work with other allied health professions in relation to Higher Education funding. By moving social work out of Social Studies, Political Science & Behavioural Science Cluster and Band and into Allied Health, it would assure that this policy meets its intended outcome and create greater consistency across Federal portfolios.

Conclusion

Fundamentally, for the Social Work profession, the reform represents a clear contradiction between what the policy aims to do, and what it will achieve. By reclassifying social work as allied health, Government will be able to achieve its workforce aims and expected growth areas. In doing so also assuring Australians have the supports and services they need during these very challenging times. We welcome the opportunity to further discuss any of the points raised in this submission.

²¹ <https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/work-review-australian-government-health-workforce-programs-toc~chapter-8-developing-dental-allied-health-workforce~chapter-8-allied-health-workforce>



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