



The UWA Social Worker

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First of all, I want to congratulate Pip White for her skilled work in producing the second edition of *The UWA Social Worker*; we know it is an international publication! It is so important that we continue to recognise and reflect on the achievements of the network of academic staff, supervisors and students of the Discipline.

There is a rhythm to our work in Social Work education. Teaching finished in early November last year; marking for the Examiners' Meeting in late November. Another cohort of new graduates left UWA to enter the workforce. We wish the Year of 2002 every success in their chosen careers – and I am reminded at this time of previous cohorts. I echo Pip's wish to receive the news from previous groups of BSW students. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to the 2003 cohort of UWA student social workers.

I want to use this opportunity to thank Rob Browton for his excellent work in developing and installing the new Discipline Website. We shall include a further set of Web entries by early February. I hope you have found the site and will think of offering material for inclusion in February.

On a much larger scale, I would like to use the end of year opportunity to thank my academic colleagues, the numerous casual teacher and visiting speaker colleagues, the field supervisors and the cohorts of students who worked so hard and so successfully throughout 2002. The details of some of this work are presented in this second edition.

At the end of year party held in Currie Hall recently, I was delighted to recognise the significant contribution of eight social workers who have provided at least seven placements to UWA students; to recognise the commitment to fieldwork education of Kate Camins, Judy Collins, John de Jongh, Sylvia Hunter, Eric Imani, Jennifer Marshall, Elaine Olley and Jan Snook.

Finally, I am about to finish my period as Discipline Chair. I shall be going on Study Leave for the first half of 2003. I would like to thank my colleagues for their very hard work over the last three years. We have achieved significant things in the areas of teaching, research, publications and community service. I am handing over to Dr Tom Barrett and I wish him well.

Mike Clare

Social Work UWA Hosts Community Forum

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PICTURED FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Ms Susan Diamond, UWA doctoral candidate; Associate Professor Dorothy Scott, Acting Executive Director Ian Potter Foundation; Dr Garth Alperstein, Area Paediatrician, Central Sydney Health Service; Professor Allan Robson, Acting Vice-Chancellor, UWA; Dr Maria Harries, Project Co-leader; Hon. Sheila McHale, MLA, Minister for Community Development and Ms Jane Brazier, Director General, Department of Community Development

Social Work UWA Hosts Community Forum

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In the wake of their recently conducted review: *Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse*, the UWA Discipline of Social Work and Social Policy hosted a November 2002 public forum designed to further the debate on child protection strategies.

The Way Forward: Community, family and child safety, health and wellbeing, held at St Catherine's College Nedlands, was attended by program, policy and practice experts from a range of disciplines and by concerned members of the community. The conference was opened by the Hon Sheila McHale, Minister for Community Development, Women's Interests, Seniors and Youth. Minister McHale previously contracted the UWA Discipline of Social Work and Social Policy to conduct the original mandatory reporting review (full report on page 3).

The interactive forum generated a lively exchange of ideas and participants were given the chance to hear some of the latest evidence about services that promote the safety and wellbeing of children and families within our communities. Speakers included: Associate Professor Dorothy Scott, Ms Carol Peltola, Dr Garth Alperstein, Associate Professor Pauline

Meemeduma, Mr Glen Pearson, Adjunct Professor Ian Carter, Associate Professor Mike Clare, Dr Maria Harries, Ms Brenda Clare and Ms Susan Diamond.

The conference presentations provided a forum for participants to hear about new research, explore and challenge current boundaries of policy, research and practice, and to review the evidence for and against the mandatory reporting of child abuse. The main outcomes of the interactive proceedings were a commitment to continue to generate broader community understanding of child protection and to continue to develop best practice models that support families and communities as well as protecting children from harm. A significant concern that was high-

lighted is that children's needs continue to be at the forefront of practice, policy, planning and research.

To some extent, future policy directions will be influenced by outcomes of the decisions following recommendations of the Gordon Inquiry Report. Meanwhile, a follow up forum with available participants is planned for early 2003 and we look forward to reporting on some exciting initiatives.

LEFT: Associate Professor Dorothy Scott and the Hon Sheila McHale



New Social Settlement Consultation held at UWA

UWA's Social Work and Social Policy Discipline and the Institute of Advanced Studies recently co-hosted the interactive seminar series: *Towards A New Social Settlement: Rethinking Social Policy Across the Life Course Project 2001-2003*. The project is designed to develop a framework and policy matrix for rethinking the future of social policy in Australia, with an emphasis on responding to labour market and household change. It addresses challenges to Australian social protection systems that have resulted from the loss of full employment and the onset of increasingly precarious labour markets in combination with a more diverse range of family structures.

The November 1st and 2nd UWA seminars, convened in the Old Senate Room, were attended by experts from Australian universities, business, commerce, politics, unions and the community. As part of a National Consultation Program, the



Professor Laksiri Jayasuriya and Professor David Plowman

participants met to generate social policy in areas such as income support for work-aged people, work transitions for youth and aged, and the development of family-friendly work policy. The Consultation Program combines the strength of critical analysis and the development of practical agendas for change which build political momentum and inform political decision making and community activism at various levels.

The New Social Settlement research and development program is co-ordinated by Professor Brian Howe (University of Melbourne) and Dr Linda Hancock (Deakin University) with a group of

researchers based at the University of Melbourne's Centre for Public Policy. To date, policy ideas arising from the program suggest an innovative contemporary social policy paradigm. While economic policy in Australia has embraced greater transparency, global competition, microeconomic reform, privatisa-

tion and structural adjustment, a new model of social policy is yet to emerge.

Dr Sue Young, Professor Laki Jayasuriya and Chair of Discipline Associate Professor Mike Clare represented the UWA Social Work and Social Policy Discipline at the New Social Settlement National Consultation seminars, which were chaired by Professor David Plowman and Professor Jayasuria.



LEFT: Associate Professor Mike Clare, Dr Sue Young, Mr Shawn Boyle, Ms Mala Dharmananda.

The discussions of the colloquia were included the need to construct policies which address the taken-for-granted notion that market driven social policy is the only appropriate policy direction. In asking for whom policies are intended, and what problems those policies will address, we need to consider the role community can play in the design of redistributive policies. The whole community needs to be involved in discussions about the diversity of needs experienced in families and the work force.

Community input into matters such as family leave, portability of entitlements and the correct balance of light regulation and an institutionalised rights system is to be

valued. In providing a summary of the papers, Associate Professor Trish Harris advocated for policies that enhance equity, diversity and mutuality and which are 'beyond the politics of the possible'.

Major outcomes of UWA seminar were the determination of the group to continue to provide input to the policy development process through activities such as the Consultations, and the development of discussion papers.

To assist the formulation of a social policy response that will shape a new social settlement, working papers have been developed to address specific areas:

- Youth to Work Transitions
- Work/Family and Industrial Relations Frameworks
- Income Support and Capital Investment
- Work to Retirement Transitions

Papers from the project are available from CEDA or at <http://www.ceda.com.au/ResearchNewsF.htm>

Social Work UWA Conducts Mandatory Reporting Review

In mid-2002, Community Development Minister Sheila McHale announced the State government's intention to commission an independent review into the effectiveness of mandatory reporting of child abuse. The UWA Discipline of Social Work and Social Policy tendered successfully for the contract to produce a report on child protection outcomes in Australian and international jurisdictions with mandatory reporting requirements. In May 2002, the WA Child Protection Council engaged project coordinators Dr Maria Harries and Associate Professor Mike Clare to undertake the review, which was conducted simultaneously with the Gordon Inquiry's investigation

Mandatory reporting of child abuse is a contentious issue worldwide. WA is currently the only Australian State in which identified professional groups are not legislated to report child abuse to State government authorities. At present the Western Australian model of child protection most closely resembles the UK model, which is in turn more closely allied to the 'family-service' oriented models. This is in contrast with the legislative models in all American and most Australian jurisdictions.

Project leaders Dr Maria Harries and Associate Professor Mike Clare worked with research associates Ms Sue Bailey, Ms Tania Bell, Mr Wayne Brush, Ms Brenda Clare, Ms Susan Diamond, Ms Nicola Farray, Dr Ranjit Kumar and Ms Pip White to produce a report for Minister McHale. The research team reviewed Australian and international data; conducted focus groups and one-to-one interviews; and

canvassed widely for submissions from interested parties. A large number of individuals and organisations Australia-wide contributed material to the data collection process.

The final report, submitted in mid-July, summarised the mandatory reporting debate; identified the models in operation; outlined arguments for and against legislation; and provided an appraisal of options.

The UWA review team found a fundamental lack of evidence that the forensic reporting system model used in mandatory reporting regimes provides anything other than that – a system for reporting. It is not a model of service provision, and often has little connection with provision of services. Most jurisdictions with mandatory reporting as their legislative framework do not compel statutory or other systems to provide, let alone evaluate, services to the children who are reported as being at risk.

The team surmised that the rationale underpinning mandatory reporting laws could be identified as twofold. Legislation attempts to convey the vitally important message that children should be protected, that governments recognise this fact, and that it is the duty of certain individuals to be vigilant about protecting children. Secondly, such systems attempt to compel people to report, record, investigate and remove children if they are at risk.

The review uncovered considerable evidence that mandatory reporting increases reporting rates: indeed this is inevitable when one legislates for data collection. There is

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also evidence that the combination of subjectivity and contextual variability for reporting results in an inordinate amount of time and money being spent in attempts to understand what statistics mean, rather than in looking after children and families. The UWA review was unequivocal in its summary of findings: "There is no evidence that mandatory reporting increases the quality, quantity or benefits to children who are 'at risk of harm', or to families who are vulnerable. Indeed there is some evidence that it does the reverse."

The UWA review team wishes to thank the many individuals, community groups and organisations who generously participated in the data-gathering process and who contributed to the successful completion of the project.



Sue Bailey

Margaret Stockbridge Prize Winner 2001

SUE BAILEY, a 2001 UWA social work graduate and current PhD researcher, was the winner of last year's Margaret Stockbridge Memorial Prize.

Sue accepted the award at the Social Work Awards for Excellence cocktail party in July this year. She writes about her reactions to the experience of being awarded the prize:

I felt very privileged and overwhelmed to be awarded the Margaret Stockbridge Prize. I have to admit I did not know who Margaret Stockbridge was until I won the award. Conversations with Teddy's (as Margaret was affectionately known) colleagues and students revealed her to be a widely respected social worker who taught at UWA during the 70's. As one of her colleagues pointed out to me, she is one of the forgotten heroines of social work who pioneered the teaching and practice of social work in Western Australia. She also drove a very fast sports car, which appeals to me. She sounds like she would have been a good person to know. I felt honoured to receive an award named for her.

When I was informed that I was required to speak for four to five minutes to accept the award, my initial reaction was paralysis. What on earth could I say to a gathering of esteemed social workers? As my paralysis gathered force I began to pay attention to the physical discomfort I was feeling and tried to work out where it was coming from. I identified several possibilities (which I am sure all of you could list). I finally identified the discomfort as reminiscent of my reaction to a graduation 'award' I received from my peers.

I was fortunate enough to go through the social work course with the most remarkable group of people. After our final exam about 15 of us booked a chalet at Rottneest where we joined the 'schoolies' for a weekend of laughter, laughter and more laughter. During this weekend our social secretary organised for 'peer' awards to be presented. I can remember

feeling very anxious as I was ushered away from the chalet whilst they decided on my award.

When it was announced that I had received my award for a 'LOW THRESHOLD OF COMFORT' I smiled bravely as I wondered how on earth my peers had perceived me during the two years we had been together. *Low threshold of comfort* I muttered to myself. I had imagined many things but it had never crossed my mind that THIS would be my award. As I sat down I thought dark thoughts and tried to look happy that my peers considered me to be a whinger.

The impetus for this award had originated over the course of my undergraduate degree, when I was renowned for speaking up during lectures and guest speakers – primarily about gender issues. Apparently I prefaced most of my comments with "I am feeling uncomfortable about....". And then I would go on and 'say my piece'. I didn't realise I had said it so much.

We left Rottneest and I stuck my award away where I didn't have to look at it. But the words worked away inside me as I tried to work it out (incidentally these awards were not meant to be serious). My friends tell me I am neurotic . . . I think we all are. Anyway I eventually came to the realisation as I reframed the words, that it is GOOD to have a low threshold of comfort, particularly in this profession. As I worked in my first real social work job I paid attention to my discomfort and used it to learn. I learned about myself and I learned about others. The discomfort highlighted inequities and signalled social justice issues and has become a valuable warning system for me.

As I reflect back on that Rottneest weekend and those awards I have a sense of wonderment and am thankful to my peers for the truth and insight they gave me that day. I hope I will always have a *low threshold of comfort* and that I have the courage and the opportunity to speak out about it. In conclusion I would like to thank the staff at UWA for their wonderful support as well as my fantastic peers for their friendship, honesty and laughter.

AASW Event: Social Work Research Presented

In the second of a series of AASW seminars by social work researchers, MARK SACHMANN presented his research at City West Lotteries House in October 2002. Mark achieved his PhD through the UWA Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Sciences and the Discipline of Social Work and Social Policy earlier this year. His thesis is entitled "The Aetiological Significance of Early Childhood Trauma and Temperament in the Pathogenesis of Borderline Personality Disorder". The Discipline congratulates Mark, who is in high demand to talk about his PhD research project.

Mark's research identifies and examines early childhood abuse risk factors in the development of borderline personality disorder. His work also examines the role of temperamental attribution in risk profiles. Previous research in this area has concluded that childhood sexual abuse is likely to be the exclusive factor in determining the development of border-

line personality disorder. Mark's findings, however, indicate that the formation of the disorder is determined by a unique combination of adverse childhood experiences and temperamental factors that are at least partly biologically determined.

Forty-nine percent of the research participants with a borderline personality disorder diagnosis had experienced sexual abuse by someone in a caretaker role. Those participants who had been sexually abused also scored significantly higher on indicators of childhood trauma, and had experienced much more severe forms of emotional and physical abuse and neglect. The final four risk factors Mark found to be associated with a diagnosis of borderline personality disorder were sexual abuse, multiple perpetrators, volatile temperament and sensitive temperament. It is of interest that the two polar opposites of temperamental attribution – volatile and sensitive – are both among the most significant risk factors.

Mark concluded his presentation at City West Lotteries House with an observation regarding the development of resilience in children. His research and practice in this area has raised a pivotal question: Why do some children who experience severe childhood trauma grow to adulthood relatively unscathed, while others develop personality disorders? Mark proposes that a significant factor is the presence of a stable relationship in the child's life. Children who have one such relationship – either with one person or a sequence of people – fare better than those who do not experience a stable interpersonal connection.

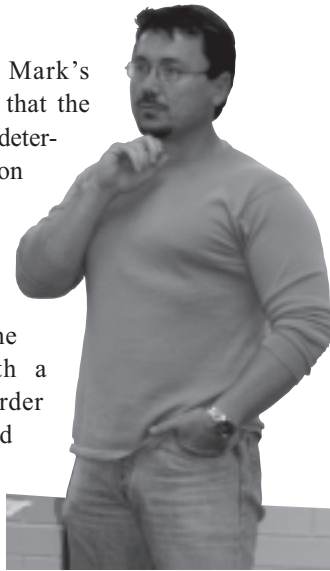
Mark's observation sparked particular interest from the seminar audience members employed in the child protection area. Discussion focussed on the obvious implications for children who navigate the foster care/out-of-home care journey and for those social workers whose practice decisions must prioritise 'the best interests of the child'.

Employment Prospects in the UK

Thinking of working overseas? 2001 social work graduate WENDY INGER took the plunge in June this year and travelled to the UK to take up a one-year contract with East Sussex Social Services Department in the South of England. Wendy has kept in touch, and even managed to catch up with Mike Clare for morning tea when he visited England in September.

Wendy says she decided to apply for overseas work after learning about the shortage of qualified social workers in the UK – especially in the area of child protection. A few months of job-seeking in WA had not produced the desired result, so she emailed her resume directly to county borough child protection agency managers in rural Southern England.

After receiving several responses to her applications,



Wendy accepted a one-year contract with the East Sussex County Council in Hastings and St Leonard's. Her airfare was fully refunded after she passed an interview following her arrival. Since starting work, Wendy has secured a permanent position with the agency, and she and her partner intend to stay in England for at least four years. Wendy says the work is "amazing" and she is learning an enormous amount in her job. Her goal is to gain hands-on experience counselling young children, and would like to continue in this area when she eventually returns to Australia. Not bad for a social work student we seem to remember uttering those famous last words: "I will never work in child protection"!

Postgraduate Research News

■ Postgraduate research student ADAM PEATY commenced research in 2002 which explores issues related to the recruitment of family based foster carers.

For the past nine years Adam has worked in the area of Child Protection and in the last six years specifically in the area of children in care. During that time Adam became aware of the difficulties in trying to recruit suitably skilled foster carers who were able to meet the often extensive needs of children requiring foster placements. Adam's initial exploration has identified this is not a problem specific to Western Australia and is in fact an issue Australia-wide and in some overseas countries.

Adam said "Changes in society with regards to the role of women and family structures, combined with changing policy and the demands of foster care mean that the recruitment of foster carers is becoming more complex and difficult. There has been limited research on the subject of recruitment and it is hoped this initial exploration will generate some ideas for more in-depth research in the future.

"For me re-acclimatizing to scholarship and research whilst still working as a practitioner has posed some challenges, but they have been manageable and I've greatly enjoyed this year. Staff in the Discipline of Social Work and Social Policy have provided expertise, encouragement and support which I've much appreciated. So whilst it's been a challenge to fit in the research as well as work, it's been a great year and I would recommend other practitioners consider taking up research in their chosen area of endeavour".

■ Social Work decision-making and documentation was the Honours research topic chosen by DAPHNE MIDDLETON last year. As part of her professional development as a social worker in private practice, Daphne opted to combine work and further research study at UWA.

Daphne's diverse social work practice includes the documentation of research summaries for agencies and participation in the organization of analytical thinking and the articulation of outcomes as an end product in itself. She produces training manuals, research proposals and she creates a range of interview, teaching, training, group facilitation and agency planning frameworks.

Daphne's research project findings highlight the importance of the complex practice decisions made by social workers. General opinion, both from the literature and from

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practice experience, has confirmed that social workers come to the task of documenting their decisions with mixed feelings such as confusion and fear – at times even retreat and avoidance. The work provides a preliminary background for much-needed further research into social work recording.

Working Across Borders Conference – A Personal Reflection

SUE BAILEY is currently a PhD researcher within the Discipline of Social Work and Social Policy. Her research project examines the response to terrorism by two culturally diverse populations of social workers – those in Australia and in East Timor. Sue was awarded the 2003 Grace Vaughan Award, which will fund her data collection journey to East Timor this year. Sue attended the AASW/AASWWE Conference, held in October last year, and we invited her to share her impressions of the conference proceedings:

“The work of a PhD candidate can be fairly isolating, particularly during the first six months as you troll through literature and attempt to bring your brilliant thesis together as a proposal. I was therefore quite excited when I heard about the Working Across Borders Conference. The conference program held a wide variety of presenters and topics. Some were directly related to my thesis, Social Work and Terrorism, and provided me with the opportunity to extend my learning and to meet social workers practising in the trauma area.

The conference venue was the Novotel Hotel in Perth. The hotel was great, the atmosphere amazing and the food excellent. The hotel buzzed as social workers from all walks of life came together to share and to learn. I felt connected to a much larger group of professionals and relished the feeling of kinship. It was also good to place faces to names, Karen Healy, Imelda Dodds and Jo Gaha were just some of the faces I put to names.

I attended several seminars over two days. All were related to my PhD topic. The first was a presentation by two Curtin students, Michael Berry and Sharon Thompson, who did their second placement in a medical clinic in East Timor last year. Their presentation was extremely interesting as they described the difficulties and rewards of working in another country. Cultural difference in expectations of gender behaviour proved to be the most challenging for me. Sharon described having to be chaperoned wherever she went, whereas Michael could do pretty much what he wanted. Mmmmm???

On Wednesday, I attended a workshop on ‘Working with Refugees’ held by Lucy Fiske and Dr Jennifer Barnard. Lucy began with an exploration of some of the myths surrounding refugees. Jennifer, an art therapist, presented information on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). She then showed us some amazing pictures drawn by children who were refugees. These pictures touched my heart and I came away with an appreciation of the power of art therapy. We were then asked to form groups and draw...Jennifer made the comment that you can always tell the helping professions as they all sit back and wait for someone else to start first After our initial hesitation we produced a picture of how a “Nirvana” for refugees might look ... lots of money, support and love. It was a very powerful exercise.

Lunch was next and I was pleasantly surprised ... prawns and pavlova. I then attended a presentation by Phil Sparrow – a social worker who worked in Afghanistan just prior to September 11. His experiences were amazing and his observations about community development astute and very honest. It was also a great forum to hear about other social workers’ international experiences.

My conference experience ended with a presentation by Sarah Hordern who explored social work and popular culture. It was a very dynamic session with lots of interaction and the opportunity to make our own ‘bleeding heart’ brooch with Fimo.

And so I left the conference with a bleeding heart, a sense of belonging and lots of questions. My sincere gratitude to those who organised and put together such a wonderful conference. I was extremely impressed with the dedication and commitment of all the social workers I watched present, as well as those I met during the two days. My research continues and my aim now is to be a presenter at the next conference. I hope to see you there.”

Social Work in Mental Health Workshop

A ‘hands-on’, interactive workshop, *Social Work in the Mental Health Services* was jointly hosted by the UWA Discipline of Social Work and Social Policy and the WA AASW in October last year. The event was co-facilitated by UWA Senior Lecturer Dr Maria Harries, and recent UWA PhD graduate Dr Mark Sachmann.

The two-day workshop, held at Currie Hall, provided social workers and allied professionals with an opportunity to discuss issues and strategies for practice with colleagues and leading researchers. The event included presentations by experts in the field, a panel discussion and an interactive forum. Workshops were designed to encourage debate on knowledge and techniques for social work practitioners dealing with specific mental health diagnoses.

Keynote speaker Professor Robert Bland, Head of the Discipline of Social Work and Head of the School of Sociology at The University of Tasmania, provided an overview of the National Mental Health Plan and issues for social workers in the mental health area. Professor Bland addressed issues relating to the welfare of caregivers in coping with long-term mental illness, and the importance of hope in the experience of mental illness and the recovery process.

UWA’s AASW Student Representative Bridget Little attended the workshop along with fellow 4th year students Kate Coote and Anunda Mertz. Bridget says there was lively discussion regarding current research and policy issues, and the workshop sessions on national mental health policy, substance abuse, families, and suicide promoted much debate.

“A highlight of the workshop was listening to two people talk about their experience as consumers of the mental health system. Their stories provided a poignant reminder of the impact that we as social workers can have on people’s lives,” Bridget said. “As a social work student who is about to graduate, this workshop provided a fantastic opportunity to meet other social workers who are already practising in the mental health field, in both government and non-government settings. I learn a lot over the couple of days and would encourage other students to attend similar events in the future”.

Retrieval of Data About Out of Home Care

A 10-year database of information collected by Wanslea Family Services will provide a unique source of information about the movement of children through the WA out-of-home care system.

Currently, BRENDA CLARE and DAPHNE MIDDLETON are in the process of disaggregating Wanslea's placement data from January 1990 to December 1999, in order to compile a body of information about Western Australian children – some of whom are likely to be still in our care system.

This original research approach will provide longitudinal information about children's journey through out-of-home care, adding to existing databases, which focus solely on statistical information regarding placements. The work also provides Brenda with an opportunity to test a framework that identifies different patterns of admission and exit (care journeys) of children in care.

The project charts the early care experiences of over 4000 children placed by Wanslea during the 10-year period. Brenda says access to this valuable information resource will provide the basis for an important research partnership between the UWA Social Work Discipline and Wanslea Family Services, which is a key agency in the short term placement of Western Australian children.

Staff at Wanslea place approximately 500 children per year, a figure that has stayed consistent through ten years of significant change as the agency has responded to increasing pressures on families and accommodated new placement policies and funding arrangements. Wanslea's Director, Sue Ash, is committed to promoting research as a vital part of social work practice and is keen to use the data gathered during this time to assess how these changes are reflected in the placement patterns of the children and families using Wanslea's services.

Fieldwork Placement in Sri Lanka

A small number of student social workers occasionally opt to undertake a fieldwork placement overseas. In recent years, UWA social work undergraduates have completed international placements in Nepal, the UK and Canada. In 2001, ANUNDA MERTZ completed a placement at the Women's Development Centre in Sri Lanka. Anunda describes the experience as a unique opportunity for personal and professional growth. Exposure to the world view of another culture and the process of working within their paradigm provided her with valuable learning opportunities. Anunda says her placement in Sri Lanka has led to a greater sensitivity and respect for cultural diversity, and an enriched understanding of international social justice and human rights issues.

Anunda offers the following suggestions for fellow students considering an overseas fieldwork placement:

- Make contact with your international supervisor prior to departure; establish a relationship and get a sense of basic local knowledge. Communication about placement and living arrangements will help avoid inconvenient surprises on arrival.

- If you receive Austudy, organize a Centrelink contact person prior to departure. With \$40 in the bank, Anunda's Austudy was unnecessarily cut, and arranging reinstatement of payments was a very frustrating process.
- Arrange for weekly email contact with your UWA fieldwork supervisor, to replace fieldwork integration sessions.
- Investigate the distribution of the UWA-provided administration funding, particularly in Asian countries. Ideally, these fees should be paid directly to the placement agency. In non-English speaking locations, these funds may be required to employ an interpreter.

New Fieldwork Supervisors' Training Project

Social workers supervising UWA students will be offered an extended version of the current educational program, under a new Discipline initiative set to commence in February 2003. The project, *Enhancing Professional Education Through On-site Practice Teaching and Learning*, will develop a reflective teaching package for professional social workers who offer their services to the social work course as field supervisors. In addition, the project's research element will provide an opportunity for all inexperienced supervisors to participate in action research and to reflect on their own learning journey.

Project Leader BRENDA CLARE says the initiative is designed to develop partnerships with agencies in recognition of a reciprocal responsibility for best practice in social work field education. Brenda says her experience organizing field placements indicates that many social workers are willing to supervise students, but do not necessarily feel confident they are well-equipped for the job. "An integral part of the Discipline's responsibility to students is to share in their practice-based learning, and we are pleased to have the opportunity to provide enhanced training and support to fieldwork educators", Brenda said.

Funded by a Curriculum Planning and Development Scheme Grant, the *Enhancing Professional Education* project challenges the implicit assumption that being an expert practitioner is a sufficient prerequisite for being able to articulate practice knowledge. Brenda says fieldwork supervisors regularly indicate their lack of confidence about 'talking theoretically' with students. Increasingly, new supervisors state their desire for some preliminary training before committing themselves to what they perceive as a daunting task.

The project builds on an assessment framework developed in 1994 by Associate Professor Mike Clare. Mike's work involved the development of a curriculum for field placements that specified the academic and professional learning requirements for students. The assessment tool added to the existing educational program, which offers supervisors regular seminars, 'refresher' training for experienced supervisors and a *Back to Theory* workshop for those interested in updating their knowledge base.

Qualified social workers with at least two years' practice experience, who are interested in supervising a UWA student, can obtain further information from Brenda Clare at the Discipline of Social Work and Social Policy.

UWA Student Representation with the AASW

Most readers will be familiar with the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) as a professional organisation that represents and supports social workers. The AASW is a national body, with branches in every Australian State.

Each year, student social workers from UWA, Curtin and ECU are elected to represent student interests on the Committee of Management of the West Australian branch. UWA's 2002 representative was Fourth Year honours student, Bridget Little. Bridget provides some insight into her experience as an 'External Body Representative':

I was one of the student representatives for UWA at the AASW WA Branch Committee of Management for most of this year. It has been a fabulous opportunity to observe and participate in the meetings, which are held every month. From this experience I have learnt a great deal about how committees and organisations operate (very useful for Social Work 304!). It also provided me with an insight into the actual work done by the AASW. I discovered that the AASW not only provides indemnity insurance and produces a journal, but does other important things such as lobbying government about social issues, advocating for social workers' rights, providing continuing professional education and encouraging networking between social workers.

Students are encouraged to attend the activities organised by the AASW and tickets to AASW functions are always available at a discounted student price. AASW events are good places to meet social workers in your fields of interest, and they also provide great opportunities for

learning about the most recent developments in research and social work practice.

In 2003 Jenelle Bowen and Glenice Garvie will be sharing the role of UWA student representative. Good luck to you both and I hope you enjoy the role as much as I have.

Feedback from Canada

Faculty of Social Work,
University of Toronto,
246 Bloor Street West,
Toronto, Ontario
August 29, 2002

Dear Mike,

I was a visiting professor during the 1971-1972 year. The late Walter Tauss invited me and died prior to my arrival. Margaret Stockbridge was in charge, I had the task of starting a thesis requirement for the students, one of which was the 'best thesis' prize in social work.

Tom Barrett sent me your UWA Social Worker (Vol 1). I must congratulate all of your Faculty for this excellent production. We have come a long way from 30 years ago with a handful of students and a few faculty members. Laksiri arrived during my stay and I was glad to see him still active. I am now Professor Emeritus and still active at the Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto.

Please put me on your mailing list for future publications.

With best regards,
Ben Schlesinger, PhD, Professor Emeritus

The Last Word

Recent significant events and projects have provided a plethora of interesting material for the second issue of *The UWA Social Worker*. The review of mandatory reporting and the ensuing Harries/Clare Report has allowed our Discipline to play an important role in the future safety of children in Australia. Child protection in WA has been spotlighted as the only Australian system without legislated reporting of suspected child abuse. The UWA Discipline's world-wide review of evidence and appraisal of options provides the Child Protection Council and Minister Sheila McHale with optimal information regarding the effectiveness of reporting mechanisms. *The Way Forward Forum*, held in November, and a scheduled follow-up forum planned for early 2003 maintain the Discipline's ongoing commitment to this task.

We are also pleased to report in this issue on the very successful *New Social Settlement Consultation* hosted by the Discipline last November. The Consultation, hosted in the Old Senate Room, brought together experts from Australian universities, business commerce, politics, unions and the community. Participants worked together to address modern challenges to Australian social protection systems. The group has an ongoing commitment to continue providing input to the policy development process. We look forward to reporting on their progress.

And finally: Where are they all?

During the past months we have compiled a small collection of personal profiles detailing the current activities of past students. The profiles are intended for a proposed feature in *The UWA Social Worker* entitled: "Where are they now?". Unfortunately, many of our graduates seem reluctant to provide information for this project. Proposed hypotheses for this situation are: (a) they are too busy saving the world, or (b) they are publicity-shy. Whatever the true causality of this journalistic reticence, *The UWA Social Worker* appeals to all our graduates to strengthen the network and to let us know: "Where are you now?". Contributions will be accepted by the editor, Pip White, at pipwhite@cyllene.uwa.edu.au, or may be forwarded to admin staffers Judy Grimshaw (pictured left) or Rosa Catelano (right).

