

Social Workers Registration Board

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Onboard – 3 December 2025

In this Onboard:

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Tēnā koutou,

With the year drawing to a close, I want to acknowledge what many of you are experiencing right now. The countdown to summer brings its own particular pressures – increased demand on services, colleagues heading on leave, clients facing heightened stress, and the challenge of balancing care for others with care for yourselves and your whānau.

This is also a time of transition and growth in the profession. We're welcoming new graduates into the workforce, supporting students as they complete their studies, and implementing the new Education Standards that will strengthen social work education for years to come. The approval of Bethlehem Tertiary Institute's 3-year degree programme represents an important milestone in this work – the result of collaboration and engagement between educators, practitioners, and the Board. Below you'll see we are inviting expressions of interest for education panellists under the new standards – an opportunity to contribute directly to the quality of social work education.

I'm pleased to introduce Scott McLew as our new Registrar. Scott brings considerable regulatory experience from the UK, including oversight of building control professionals. His commitment to being a kaitiaki for public protection aligns with what we all share – a dedication to safe, ethical, and effective social work practice.

At the SWRB, we're conscious of the demands on your time and energy, especially during busy periods. That's why we've strengthened our registration team and are working to make processes as straightforward as possible – whether that's prioritising applications for those with jobs lined up or making practising certificate renewals easier through our authorised employer programme. These aren't just operational improvements; they reflect our commitment to working alongside you, not adding to your load.

To our new graduates reading this: welcome. Amy Ross has shared some thoughtful advice about finding your first role. Remember that your choice of workplace matters not just for your career, but for your wellbeing and your capacity to do this demanding work sustainably.

To all of you in the thick of it right now: thank you. Your work matters, your wellbeing matters, and we're here to support safe, effective practice and positive outcomes for the people and communities you serve.

Look out for one more Onboard this year, where we'll share updates on the review of the Act, education fees, and seek your input on the social worker workforce strategy and action plan. We value your feedback and remain committed to improvement.

Until then, I hope you can enjoy some of the early summer weather.

Ngā manaakitanga,

Sarah Clark
Chief Executive

Bethlehem Tertiary Institute introduces a 3-year BSW degree

We are delighted to announce that the Bethlehem Tertiary Institute (BTI) 3-year degree programme has been approved by the SWRB Board. BTI will offer the new 3-year degree to students enrolling for the 2026 academic year.

The degree has been prescribed initially for one year, with a review before the end of 2026. If successful, prescription will be extended for four years (2027–2030).

This is a significant milestone under the new Education Standards 2025, following a robust period of engagement and collaboration that began in 2021.

[Questions and answers about BTI's 3-year Bachelor of Social Work](#)

Advice for new graduates on the job hunt

Amy Ross, our chief advisor social work, has shared a blog post covering things new graduates could consider when looking for their first job:

- Access to quality supervision
- Support for ongoing development
- Peer support, working with other social workers
- Connection with associations, TWSWA and/or ANZASW
- Ability to hone your skills, stretch, learn and grow

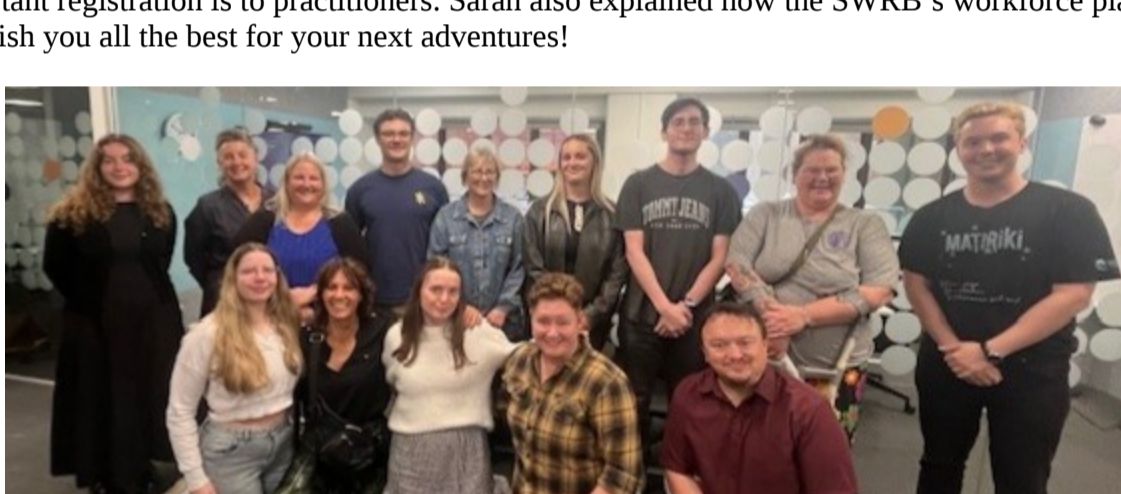
[Read Amy's blog post: Beyond 'Any Job Will Do'](#)

This is Amy's last Onboard with us. We've valued Amy's advice and expertise – she has made a significant contribution to the SWRB. We wish her well for her exciting new role as national secretary with the Tertiary Education Union.

NMIT graduating students visit the SWRB office

We enjoyed meeting the NMIT graduating ākonga during their recent trip to Wellington. It was a fabulous opportunity to talk about the registration process, how complaints and notifications are handled, continuing professional development obligations, and social worker workforce planning. Chief executive Sarah Clark joined in, congratulating the group for choosing a profession that works hard to make a difference. She shared some history about why registration matters – that the profession itself fought for it – and offered insights from the recent workforce survey showing how important registration is to practitioners. Sarah also explained how the SWRB's workforce planning work, which is government-funded rather than fees-funded, helps strengthen the whole sector.

We wish you all the best for your next adventures!

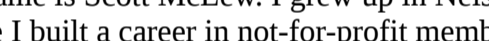


Back row: Bridie (SWRB), Lisa Gant (tutor), Rachel, Scott, Lynn Bruning (tutor), Tia, Sam (SWRB), Max, Jack (SWRB)
Front row: Lauren, Jo, Olivia, Micayla, Paul (NZSL interpreter)

Introducing Scott McLew, our new Registrar

Kia ora,

My name is Scott McLew. I grew up in Nelson and moved to Wellington in the late nineties to attend Victoria University where I graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce and Administration. After spending a couple years working for a charity in the creative arts space I moved to the UK in 2005 where I built a career in not-for-profit membership and advocacy organisations across a number of sectors including health, disability, international development and the built environment.



From 2013 to 2020 I held the roles of Chief Operating Officer and Registrar of the Construction Industry Council where I oversaw the statutory regulation of the building control profession across England and Wales, operating under separate legislation for the devolved administrations. I returned to Wellington in 2020 to take up a role as the Chief Operating Officer with the Property Institute of New Zealand. I am delighted to join the Social Workers Registration Board as Registrar. I respect the importance of social work to the fabric of our society and look forward to the opportunity to contribute my skills and experience to the sector. Having significant regulatory experience and a track record of operational excellence, strategic governance and stakeholder engagement, I take pride from being a kaitiaki for public protection and look forward to bringing this commitment to the social work.

Seasonal increase in registrations – working together for success

The end of the year always brings a fresh wave of registration applications from new graduates. Our registration team is committed to supporting you through this busy period and ensuring every application is processed as quickly as possible.

We've welcomed three new registration officers to the team this year, bringing the team to six. Everyone is working hard, including putting in extra hours to keep things moving smoothly.

To help us process your application efficiently:

- register early
- prepare your documentation upfront
- let us know if you have a job lined up – we will prioritise your application.

We're also keeping communication clear and timely by ensuring that:

- voicemails are replied to by the next working day
- emails are responded to within three working days.

For any queries on your application email us at applications@swrb.govt.nz

Applications open for education panellists

We're inviting applications to be a part of our education prescription and monitoring panels' pool of monitors.

From January 2026 the new Education Standards take effect. This requires that we assess each tertiary education organisation's (TEO) delivery of its social work education against those standards. This assessment will be done by a rotating pool of panellists. Being a panellist is a contract role that involves the assessment of social work programmes either currently being delivered by TEOs or in the planning stages. Some travel for site visits may be required.

We need panellists with experience in a variety of areas

On each panel we need people with experience in social work education, social work practice, te ao Māori, and regulation or quality assurance. We also want to hear from people with other experience, such as in non-social work tertiary education and in employing social workers. If you have experience in any these areas, we'd love to hear from you.

[Read about the panellist role on the SWRB website](#)

Applications close on Friday, 30 January 2026.

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Contact us

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