

## *Australian Social Work* celebrates its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary

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The 60 volumes of the Journal have been a “means of communicating the standing and progress of Australian social work positively, proudly and openly” (Horsburgh, 1978) and providing a catalyst to debate its role and mandate in Australian society. The journal’s volumes give an important perspective on the history of social work in Australia, and Australian social conditions as well as glimpses of the workings of the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW). The Journal began as the *Forum* the newsletter of the Victorian Branch of the AASW, produced in December 1947 with a typewriter and roneo machine, complete with handwritten corrections. It became a national journal from 1951, with two issues a year published jointly by the AASW and the Australian Association of Almoners until the latter was dissolved in 1958. In 1962 the journal was renamed the *Journal of Australian Social Work*, and in 1966 became known as *Australian Social Work*.

Editorship remained in Victoria, closely connected with the Department of Social Work at Melbourne University until 1966, when it moved to New South Wales where it stayed until 1999. Since then editors have been based in Queensland and Victoria and currently the joint editors, Associate Professor Christine Bigby and Professor Mel Gray, are based in Melbourne and Newcastle respectively. Throughout most of its history variously named and constituted committees of AASW members from around Australia have controlled the Journal. In 1995 Michael Horsburgh claimed that it was a professional rather than an academic journal and, as such, had sought to bridge the worlds of academe and practice, to avoid the development of two cultures within the profession. These connections are illustrated by the breadth of contributors who have continued to be drawn from all facets of the profession in Australia. Today *Australian Social Work* is the scholarly journal of the social work profession in Australia providing perspectives from national and international contributors.

Over the last sixty years, the journal has reflected the changing times and the impact of historical developments on the profession of social work: the differential rates of pay for male and female social workers in the job advertisements throughout the 1950s; the remarks by John Lawrence in 1962 as to the importance of raising the profile of the profession by attracting more men; the end of the era of “great amateurs” when Jane Fishburn resigned in 1984 (Bray, 1984) and a professional editor, Elizabeth Rabbitts was appointed for 15 years; the globalization and commercialization of journals with the publishing partnerships with Blackwells from 2002 to 2005 and Taylor and Francis since 2006. In 2007 the Journal is facing new challenges as the reforms to funding and measuring research quality increase the competition with national and international journals to publish the best writing and thinking of social work practitioners and academics. In 2007, as the journal celebrates its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary it is the beginning of a new era for *Australian Social Work*. It will see the implementation of the landmark decision to form an editorial board and the appointment of an international advisory group as it becomes an international rather a national journal that attracts high quality papers about social work from around the world. Its primary role remains the same however, to further discussion and debate about social work theory, education and practice, and changing social conditions as a contribution towards the achievement of social justice for all members of society.

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Horsburgh, M. (1978). Editorial. *Australian Social Work* . 31, 2, 1.

Horsburgh, M. (1995). Editorial. *Australian Social Work* . 48, 4, 1.

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