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**MEDIA RELEASE / Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers**

## **Social workers: celebrating our profession**

“On this day, Social Workers Day 2009, the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers encourages all Social Workers to take pride in the valued mahi/ work we all do, and the kaupapa/ purpose we all share” says Rose Henderson, ANZASW President.

Social Workers can be found working in diverse areas such as Child, Youth and Family, District Health Boards and not-for-profit social service agencies amongst many others. The often invisible, but invaluable contribution they make to the vulnerable sections of society should not be under-estimated.

“There has been a lot of talk in recent times about social work and Social Workers as a ‘frontline profession’, with all of the pressures and responsibilities that the word ‘frontline’ implies. Yet many tell us they feel isolated, under pressure and undervalued as a profession. Because social work practice is sometimes described as ‘generic’ we are in danger of losing sight of the specialist contribution that Social Workers make to the wellbeing of the people they work with every day – it should be recognized that social workers are professionals with a unique set of skills.”

“The issue of our profession’s lack of visibility – particularly in the Health and NGO sectors - is a very real issue for Social Workers. Just last week a group of Social Workers who specialise in the oncology/cancer field held a special meeting in Masterton, supported by ANZASW, to debate this issue and to explore ways to reinforce the standing of social work as the profession that works at the intersection of ‘private troubles and public issues’ – representing many voices, many communities and social justice for all (the theme for this year’s Social Workers Day)”.

It is one of ANZASW’s roles to raise the profile of social work and Social Workers. “We have recently undertaken a national survey of our members and I look forward to considering the analysis of their views to assist us in shaping the future of our professional body. ANZASW will continue to advocate for further change both from within the profession and from our politicians and policy makers,” says Rose Henderson.

Social workers should rightly be proud of their profession and of their professionalism and celebrate today.

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