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Social Workers Day: Invisible heroes celebrated

Today is the day for the often invisible people, who work in hospitals, social service agencies and community-based organisations around the country to step up and take a huge bow.

New Zealand's 4000 plus social workers should be proud of their profession and their professionalism and collectively celebrate on Social Workers Day," says Lucy Sandford-Reed, Executive Director of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW).

"While Wednesday may be just another day for those working at the coal-face delivering social work services to our most vulnerable citizens, it is our role to highlight the work of these frontline professionals, who often admit to feeling isolated, under pressure and undervalued."

A survey completed by 1472 members in August 2009 revealed social workers chose ANZASW membership to strengthen both professional identity and connectedness with other social workers.

They also saw the Association's role in promoting ethical and professional standards for the Social Work profession and as a primary source of Social Work Continuous Professional Development information as top priorities.

89% of respondents cite local branches and Roopu as ways for ANZASW members to network with their local colleagues and discuss local issues, along with Interest Groups focusing on Child Protection, Mental Health, and Youth Justice.

"We are sometimes in danger of losing sight of the specialist contribution that social workers make to the wellbeing of the people they work with every day," says Lucy Sandford-Reed. "It should be recognised that social workers are professionals with a unique set of skills, who abide by a Code of Ethics and Professional Competency Standards."

'Making Human Rights Real - the Social Work Agenda' is the theme for Social Workers Day 2010. New Zealanders are encouraged to celebrate these invisible heroes who work at the intersection of 'private troubles and public issues' and represent many voices, many communities and social justice for all.

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