

# Social work sector – improving professionalism through managing mandatory registration

As part of the Wellbeing Budget we want to ensure the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) can operate in a modern way and deal with increased numbers of registered social workers.

## Budget 2019

### Working towards ensuring that all social workers are registered, thereby providing greater protection to the vulnerable people who receive their support.

- The funding of \$2.1m will boost the capacity and capability of the SWRB to manage the implementation of legislative changes making registration mandatory for all social workers from 27 February 2021 and enhance workforce planning and reporting.
  - This change will require the SWRB to review and update most of its policies and processes developed over the past 14 years. This includes operational and other changes to the professional framework, registration processes, complaints procedures, the quasi-judicial disciplinary tribunal procedures, and accrediting and standards setting for social work education and training. This will also require information on the changes to be communicated across the community.
  - There are around 8,000 registered social workers. It is expected that mandatory registration will result in a further 4,000 social workers seeking registration over the next two years. Processing these additional applications, combined with policy changes outlined above, will place significant additional costs on the SWRB, not all of which can be covered through increased application fees.
  - To ensure a smooth transition without unnecessary disruption to services, the SWRB will engage with social work education providers, New Zealand Qualifications Authority, Tertiary Education Commission, employers of social workers, professional associations, and the funders of services provided by social workers.
- The benefits of this funding include:
- Improved processes so the SWRB can operate in a modern way and deal with increased registration numbers.
  - Better information to enable social workers to improve their professionalism, employers to understand their obligations and the public to understand their rights, and access to an independent complaints and disciplinary process.
  - Improved data and information to target compliance interventions to best effect, and to assist with workforce planning.
  - By February 2021:
    - All practising social workers are registered.