



Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee

Minute of Decision

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Extending the Experience Pathway for Social Worker Registration

Portfolio **Social Development and Employment**

On 15 February 2023, the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee (SWC):

- 1 **noted** that section 13 of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 (SWR Act) currently enables people without a prescribed qualification to apply to register as a social worker on the basis of demonstrating (significant) practical experience and meeting the professional competency standards set by the Social Workers Registration Board;
- 2 **noted** that section 13 of the SWR Act is due to be repealed on 27 February 2024;
- 3 **noted** that in November 2022, SWC agreed to extend the benefits of the pay equity settlement for social work in the funded sector (the pay equity extension), including for employees doing substantially similar work to social work [SWC-22-MIN-0196];
- 4 **noted** that the pay equity extension provides a significant financial incentive for those doing work substantially similar to social work to register as social workers through the experience pathway, and will likely increase demand for the pathway;
- 5 **noted** that the experience pathway provides a key entry point to the social worker workforce for Māori particularly while longer-term work on entry pathways to social work are being considered;
- 6 **noted** that the Ministry of Social Development has consulted the social work sector about delaying section 13's repeal, and the Tangata Whenua Social Workers Association and Social Service Providers Aotearoa have written to the Minister for Social Development and Employment expressing their strong support for the proposal;
- 7 **noted** that the Social Workers Registration Board will complete its next review of the SWR Act by 2025 and this will consider more accessible pathways for social worker registration;
- 8 **agreed** to amend section 2(2) of the Social Workers Registration Legislation Act 2019 (SWRL Act), delaying the repeal of section 13 of the SWR Act to 27 February 2028, through a standalone bill;
- 9 **agreed** to add the Social Workers Registration Legislation Amendment Bill (the Bill) to the 2023 Legislative Programme with a category 3 priority (to be passed if possible before the 2023 general election);

- 10 **invited** the Minister for Social Development and Employment to issue drafting instructions to the Parliamentary Counsel Office to draft the Bill and any associated changes to the SWRL Act and/or SWR Act;
- 11 **authorised** the Minister for Social Development and Employment to make any necessary decisions on minor or technical matters that may arise during the drafting process that are consistent with policy decisions agreed above.

Rachel Clarke
Committee Secretary

Present:

Hon Carmel Sepuloni (Chair)
Hon Grant Robertson
Hon Dr Megan Woods
Hon Jan Tinetti
Hon Willie Jackson
Hon Peeni Henare
Hon Priyanca Radhakrishnan
Hon Ginny Andersen
Hon Barbara Edmonds
Hon Rino Tirikatene
Jo Luxton MP

Officials present from:

Office of the Prime Minister
Office of the Chair
Officials' Committee for SWC