



**MEDIA RELEASE / Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers**  
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## **Themes for World Social Work Day a recognition of “turbulent times”**

The need for collaborative responses to current global crises is a rallying theme for social workers around the world as they mark the third official World Social Work Day **this coming Tuesday (17<sup>th</sup> March)**.

As an active member of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), New Zealand's professional body for social workers, the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW), joins with more than 80 other professional associations around the world who celebrate World Social Work Day.

“Each year World Social Work Day is gaining more momentum and more support,” says Rose Henderson, ANZASW President. “There is a recognition internationally that Social Workers have increasingly important roles to play in assisting people to cope with crisis situations that go far beyond headlines about the woes of the stockmarket”.

“ANZASW commends IFSW for showing real leadership in these times by setting a theme for World Social Work Day this year, and ahead to 2010, that makes the case for linking social work to a robust social development agenda. IFSW is supporting its theme with three hope-filled messages: Together we build the agenda, Together we face the challenges, Together we thrive”.

“On World Social Work Day it is inspiring for members of ANZASW to consider that all Social Workers must confront similar challenges if we want to continue to protect basic human rights and social justice, be that a fundamental issue such as pay and gender equity, or the legal frameworks we live and work under, or the impacts of poverty on our children and future generations. It is a feature of our profession to act collaboratively and to act on behalf of people who are too easily forgotten or marginalised. The diverse nature of our profession means that events like World Social Work Day help to shine a light on multiple issues, from serious food shortages in many parts of the developing world through to the growing pressures on people in developed countries who are most vulnerable to social breakdown in the current climate of recession”.

“2009 is shaping up as a significant year for putting social work issues more firmly on the map in New Zealand,” says Rose Henderson. “In addition to the ANZASW Congress in Wellington next month, Te Ahi Kaa in July and our own Social Workers Day in September, we are hosting our first IFSW conference in 13 years, the Asia Pacific Social Work Conference which will take place in Auckland from 11-13 November. Appropriately our theme for the Asia Pacific Social Work Conference is: Many voices, many communities, social justice for all”.

“In the words of IFSW President, David N Jones (who will be a keynote speaker at our conference in Auckland in November), good social work is an investment in the current and future welfare and social cohesion of our communities.”

“There is an equally strong argument that the economic and social changes we are all facing need to be met with the flexible and creative approaches that social work is known for,” says Rose Henderson.

“That message was delivered last month, when Massey University Vice-Chancellor Steve Maharey made a public call for front-line workers in social agencies to be given the flexibility to find innovative ways to deal with current social policy issues. The vital work of Social Workers was also reinforced in February by the release of a comprehensive report about successful social work called ‘Grassroots Voices’. This timely report, published by the NZ Council of Christian Social Services, highlighted the importance of effective social work practice to the provision of essential social services in New Zealand, and we urge our politicians and decision-makers to carefully consider its contents”.

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