

CHAPTER SIX

ACCREDITATION IN AN ENVIRONMENT OF CHANGE:

1964-1969

Two Developments

To speak of rites of institution is to suggest that all rites of institution tend to consecrate or legitimate an *arbitrary boundary*, by fostering a misrecognition of the arbitrary nature of the limit and encouraging a recognition of it as legitimate; or, what amounts to the same thing, they tend to involve a solemn transgression, i.e. one conducted in a lawful and extra-ordinary way, of the limits which constitute the social and mental order which rites are designed to safeguard at all costs - like the division of the sexes with regard to the rituals of marriage. By solemnly marking the passage over a line which establishes a fundamental division in the social order, rites draw the attention of the observer to the passage (whence the expression 'rites of passage'), whereas the important thing is the line. What, in effect, does this line separate?

Bourdieu, 1991:118

From 1964, there were two intersecting and interacting developments. First, the AASW branches were negotiating with educational institutions about new courses before they had established a system and process of course accreditation. Second, the face of tertiary education in Australia was changing in response to new Federal directions and the recommendations of the Martin Report on Tertiary Education. What comes next is a series of examples of how the AASW went about negotiating these new courses in new institutions and the arguments and influences they used. The internal debates of the Association are highlighted, as it struggles to maintain national standards of education in the context of state differences, changing ideas about educational institutions, access to education and social justice. Further, key members in state and federal governments interacted directly with the AASW, to encourage a shift away from their position that professional social work education had to be in a university. The Association formulated their course accreditation standards and process, with a result that was not always positive for institutions, their students, the AASW's own state branches or the states.

In 1964, Sir Leslie Martin was commissioned by the federal Menzies government to recommend a different model of tertiary education in Australia. It was to be 'away from the traditional nineteenth-century model on which it is now based, it may not be practicable for Australian governments to meet all the needs for university education' (Menzies in Davies, 1989:23). The economic downturn, increased school retention rates, increased educational level of entrants,

lower employment, demand for increased credentials, increase in merit based selection and people's need to have their prior learning recognized contributed to the political forces behind this committee (Davies, 1989:23). The Commonwealth's policies on economics and industry relied on an advancement of technical and vocational education in Australia. The provision of further post-secondary educational institutions was beyond the financial capability of the state governments (Spaull, 1987:136-7).

Martin recommended the establishment of Colleges of Advanced Education that would be separated by their function, not their quality, from universities. The colleges would be oriented toward vocations and teaching while the universities were academic and research oriented (Meek 1991:466). These new institutions 'should resist the temptation to copy the educational processes and curriculum of universities and that the responsibility of these colleges to the community are of a different kind from those of a university.' (Senator Gorton, Hansard Parliamentary Debates Vol. 28:70). They were to be 'equal but different'.

The United Kingdom had restructured its tertiary education system, developing colleges of advanced technology, polytechnics and new universities. The new colleges of advanced technology, it would transpire after 1966, became universities.

Almost certainly Menzies did not believe the sophistry at the heart of the binary policy, namely the separation of pure from applied study and research. He had no illusions about what would happen to the colleges given adequate government support: they (some of them at any rate) would develop into universities.

Davies, 1989: 170

The AASW did not agree that courses in colleges would be equal to but different from courses in universities. They wanted college courses to emulate university curricula, processes and conditions. In terms of status, the AASW wanted to cement its alliance with the older professions. The new institutions were for the new and semi-professions. Social work, predominantly female, wanted to maintain and reinforce its status as a full profession.

As stated earlier, Lawrence's view of the Australian social work training movement was that it had as its intent, the training of people to administer programs. By the 1960s, therefore, the AASW was not interested in training senior or junior technical personnel but committed to training leaders and service administrators. The professional association had significant difficulties, therefore, in resolving their concept and view of the profession and what constituted

adequate education and training, with the proposed college courses. There were two different cohorts of students being discussed and two different career pathways being considered, neither of which was reflected in graduate employment. People from the college courses did become managers of agencies and developers of policy. Many graduates of social work stayed as practitioners and not as leaders or service administrators. The trajectories of the students would be more similar than different.

Two case examples of the Association's internal struggle with these changes in educational delivery are presented below. First is the transfer of the social work course from Adelaide University (Bedford Park) to the South Australian Institute of Technology (SAIT). Second is the proposal to develop a social work course within the Department of Technical Education Western Australia, eventually to be located in the West Australian Institute of Technology (WAIT). Both show the AASW's attempts to influence change in tertiary education.

Before discussing these examples, it is important to examine the Association's position on the levels of educational provision for an adequate social work course in Australia. A brief diversion to the internal debates of the Association at the time is valuable.

The Guide to Equivalence to Australian Qualifications 1961

The AASW constructed a Guide to Equivalence to Australian Qualifications in Social Work (1961)⁹⁵. This guide enabled applicants for membership, who were qualified overseas, to formulate their documentary evidence: it acted too, as a benchmark for tertiary institutions in Australia. Australian graduates with this qualification would be able to practice social work anywhere in the world.

Applicants must have completed a course in a university or institute of tertiary studies that covered three areas: social sciences; human growth and development; and social work method. Six subjects of one year each, was preferred. Three social sciences subjects in the area of psychology; sociology or anthropology; philosophy, history, economics, education; political studies and institutions; and one course in human growth and development dealing with physiology, mental health, personality development and psychopathology were required.

⁹⁵ NLA MS6202/15/41/Guide to Equivalence to Australian Qualification in Social Work/ 5 July 1961

Further, two subjects in social work method were required, both could be generic (case, group and community work) or one generic and one specific field of practice. All subjects were to have a minimum of 80 hours of lectures. The applicant also had to complete 130 days fieldwork under the supervision of a qualified social worker. Three-quarters of this was to be spent in direct work with clientele, both individuals and groups and one quarter as an observer.⁹⁶

The AASW also constructed a document setting down the basic educational standards for professional courses in Social Work at Australian Universities⁹⁷. These were similar to the overseas requirements but with more detail to cover the Australian situation. In October 1963, the statement on Educational Standards for Professional Social Work Courses in Australian Universities was presented at the Federal Council Meeting.⁹⁸

Accreditation of a New Course - The UNSW Experience

Over a year before the AASW had finalized their basic educational standards, Professor Morven Brown and Audrey Rennison, both sociologists at the University of New South Wales (UNSW)⁹⁹, made contact. The UNSW had begun a Social Work Course, an extension of the Diploma in Sociology. Ms Ogilvie, from Sydney University, reported¹⁰⁰ that she and Morven Brown had been asked by the Commonwealth Public Service Board to prepare a statement of 'what went into the education of a social worker'. These events were related through the involvement of Professor Morven Brown who was seen by the Commonwealth Public Service Board as having sufficient knowledge about social work and social work education to be consulted. The AASW seemed to take a different view as, at that time, he was not involved in

⁹⁶NLA MS6202/15/41/Guide to Equivalence to Australian Qualification in Social Work/ 5 July 1961

⁹⁷NLA MS6202/12 /Minutes Federal Council/27-28 April 1963/95

⁹⁸NLA MS6202/15/Minutes Federal Council/October 1963. See also NLA MS6202/15/40 Educational Standards for professional Courses in Social Work in Australian Universities/ October 1963. The standards required that entrance to courses be based on a University entrance examination. Mature-age students were required to either matriculate or complete a specific entrance examination set by the university. The academic content of the course was to include 3 subjects in studies of individual growth and development; 3 subjects in studies of society: social history, sociology, philosophy, social administration and 2 subjects in social work method. Each subject was 60-90 hours over an academic year. In addition, it was quoted 'Social Workers can only be effectively trained through courses which are based on an integration of theory and practice' (UN Seminar Munich 1956). Hence a minimum of 180 days field education was required. The field education was to cover varied situations and problems to allow for the selection of work experience according to the educational needs of student. For successful field education there needed to be adequate supervision time, suitable accommodation and supportive administration. Important to the success of placements, were colleagues in other professions who valued the contribution of social work in the agencies. A diploma course three years, a degree of four years or a degree in arts plus a diploma in social work were all taken as acceptable qualifications.

⁹⁹NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/15-16 September 1962/

¹⁰⁰ NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council 15-16 September, 1962/93

the delivery of an accredited social work course. The subsequent events serve to highlight the processes and mechanisms of the AASW at this time.

At the Federal Council Meeting, 28-29 September 1963¹⁰¹, the minutes reported concern that little was known about the development of the social work course at UNSW. This concern appears shallow since the Association recorded no contact or outreach made following the approach of Brown and Rennison. It seems that the universities were expected to court the Association. The AASW decided to supply each university in Australia with the statement on professional training. The UNSW course was not yet part of a School of Social Work and, therefore, was not consulted about this document. Audrey Rennison was sent a copy with an invitation to discuss its contents. Twelve months had elapsed since the first contact from UNSW.

At the 1964 Federal Council, it was agreed that, when deciding on the eligibility for membership of overseas candidates, their whole educational experience and not just what was done specifically in a school of social work needed to be considered. Second, the AASW had no power to dictate curriculum content or have a curriculum policy; that was seen to be the job of an educational Association. The AASW could only produce a statement of minimal educational requirements.¹⁰² By 1964, four universities had courses all conferring eligibility to AASW. Some of the original members of the AASW had university qualifications less than that required for membership in 1964

The Federal Council meeting of 2-3 May 1964¹⁰³, acknowledged receiving a letter from a UNSW student about membership to the Association. The student was informed that she was not eligible for membership. A copy of the reply was sent to Professor Morven Brown, the NSW Branch President of the AASW and staff of the University. The NSW Branch was asked to consider establishment of an accreditation committee and whether applicants for memberships can be given provision 'under certain conditions... to make up deficiencies in academic areas.' In the case of UNSW, the AASW knew that a course was being developed and did not liaise with the university, nor explain why close contact with the Association was in everyone's best interest. To blame the university when the student's application was denied, as the AASW did,

¹⁰¹NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/28-29 September 1963/109

¹⁰²NLA MS6202/15/38/Statement on Eligibility for Membership/

¹⁰³NLA MS6202/Minutes Federal Council/2-3 May 1964/123

was one of many strategies that could have been employed. The AASW's reason for not implementing a more collegial strategy is not available from the record.

UNSW indicated a willingness to¹⁰⁴ meet with AASW. A new degree course was to begin in 1965. After further discussion, the AASW resolved that a Federal committee based in NSW should contact UNSW.¹⁰⁵

Adelaide University Sheds the Sub-Graduate Social Work Course

Mr. Glastonbury from South Australia, at this instant,¹⁰⁶ raised an unconfirmed report that the social work course at Adelaide University was to be changed and that there would be only a post-graduate Diploma in Social Work. 'When the University raises its standards and sheds the sub-graduate course, then an alternative course at the lower [sic] level is offered by other institutions.' The South Australian Branch reported that the South Australian Institute of Technology was considering setting up an alternative course. He stated that, if these short-term courses were acceptable to Government Departments, then the Branch would be faced with a difficult problem.

SAIT was not deemed to be equivalent to a university and did not have the capacity to confer degrees. The dilemma for the Branch was that the course being transferred from the university was not being altered substantially: the Government might recognize this and employ those awarded diplomas in social work positions. As these people were not eligible for membership of the Association, they would not be eligible to apply for designated social work positions. Meanwhile, where the state had been producing a cohort of professional social workers (qualified at the university) each year at the diploma level, it would now only produce a hand full of qualified people with post-graduate diplomas. The exact nature of the dilemma and debate for South Australia deserves closer examination.

The Association believed that Institutes of Technology had standards far below that of a university. The minimum educational requirements and standards for social work courses in Australia were, it appears, 'writ in stone', rather than flexible, dynamic and meeting the

¹⁰⁴NLA MS6202/15/Minutes Federal Council/27 September 1964/139

¹⁰⁵NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/27 September 1964/140

¹⁰⁶ibid

changing face of tertiary education. It was not until 31 August 1965, that the Federal Office Bearers heard that the South Australian Branch had made contact with SAIT and the University of Adelaide (Bedford Park).

Accreditation Committee

Dr R.J. (John) Lawrence successfully moved at this meeting, on 27 September 1964¹⁰⁷, what was to be an historic decision:

that an Accreditation Committee be appointed as a Standing Committee of Federal Council; that its members consist of a Convenor and two members in the state where Federal headquarters is located and one member from each of the Branches.

This standing committee¹⁰⁸ was responsible for determining qualifications of overseas social workers wishing to migrate and work in Australia and to assess and accredit all social work courses in Australia.

South Australia

The South Australian Institute of Technology had its origins in the South Australian School of Mines and Industries, established in 1889, under its own act of parliament with autonomy. It is governed by a Council appointed by Minister of Education which exercises complete sovereignty within the limits of the finance placed at its disposal, it is accountable to Parliament annually (Evans, 1965). The Institute has a close association with the University Adelaide, sharing staff and facilities, pursuing interlocking policies with University professors as active members of council. Institute and the University were in the same grounds, with no boundary between them. It was renamed SAIT in 1960. In May 1956, there was agreement that certain courses of study at the institute would lead to the degree of Bachelor of Technology at the University. SAIT, although not a university, emulated one in terms of autonomy, governance and course status. It provided degrees which were considered the equivalent of a university qualification and conferred by the University of Adelaide.

On 1 October 1964, the University of Adelaide formally advised the South Australian branch of the AASW of its intention to terminate the existing two year Social Studies Diploma course and convert the course to a post-graduate one. A new course for training professional social workers outside the university was proposed to begin in 1966. On 30 October, members of the

¹⁰⁷NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/27 September 1964/141

SA Branch of the AASW met with Sir Mark Mitchell, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor P H Karmel, Principal and Ms Norton of the University of Adelaide. The university members explained that four schools had been amalgamated into one, Social Sciences. The Professor of Social Administration, appointed to take up position in March, 1965, was R.G. Brown. Students entering the course would have graduate qualifications in Arts, Economics, etc. The professional content would be covered in one year's academic-professional input and 6 months field practice. Professor Karmel guaranteed that the post-graduate diploma met the minimum standards for the AASW. It would probably become a degree within the next 3-4 years. He stated that the university had not set their face against establishing a degree course in social work.

Sir Mark Mitchell is reported to have said 'there must be many people doing welfare work in Church and philanthropic agencies for whom training was desirable but who could not cope with University training.' This comment is one that indicates to the AASW that people do not see social work as a profession¹⁰⁹. No comment from the members of the Association is recorded. When people lack an understanding of the field and the issues seen by the AASW to be essential, it becomes easy to move the courses out of universities.

The AASW members were informed that there were very real difficulties for students to escalate from the Institute of Technology course to the University of Adelaide course. The student would have to do this after the first year of training, in line with the model used by Bachelor of Engineering (University) and Bachelor of Technology (SAIT) course transfers. This meant that the qualification from the Institute of Technology no longer granted graduates access to higher academic and professional education within the university. It was, therefore, not only an inferior qualification but it also failed to meet the requirements for accreditation. This reduced the pool of available qualified social workers in the state.

On 2 November 1964¹¹⁰, Ms Jeffries (SA Branch) reported a discussion she had with Mr. Mason, Registrar of SAIT. She was informed that entry to a diploma course was based on matriculation but able to be restricted on non-educational grounds, e.g., personality. All courses could be done part-time, fees were lower and Commonwealth Scholarships were available on approved courses. Ms Jeffries believed that part-time candidature might pose a difficulty for

¹⁰⁸It would later be called, PEAC - Professional Education and Accreditation Committee

¹⁰⁹To use Bourdieu's analogy of soccer, it is akin to saying to the International Soccer Federation that children in the back streets of Naples play soccer so why should it be an Olympic sport?

¹¹⁰NLA MS6202/15/18/Report by Ms Jeffries

field education. In terms of the specific process of consultation, she said that the University had discussions with the Institute to transfer the course and the Institute understood that Treasury would approve the money if a diploma course were to be established. Once advice had been received from the University, the Council of the Institute would set up an advisory committee to which the professional association would definitely be asked to send a representative. This advisory committee would report to Council and then disband or reform. If the Association opposed the establishment of the course but another interested body wanted it, the course may be established. The Association would be consulted but its voice would be one of many. He clarified that the course would not, on completion, give access to post-graduate or research programs.

The SA Branch created an Educational Sub-Committee on 2 November 1964¹¹¹ to establish the need for facilities for training in Social Welfare [sic] and to assess the nature, purpose and value of existing courses. In this action, the AASW independently engaged themselves in deciding the future path for Social Welfare training in the state. They did not involve the South Australian Council of Social Services (SACOSS) which comprised all the non-government welfare agencies who were employers.

In the Minutes of the Federal Office Bearers of the AASW on 1 March 1965¹¹², Glastonbury from South Australia was listed as a member of the Accreditation Committee. He was, therefore, well informed about the standards and courses across the country and, as an active member of the South Australian Branch, would be a valuable resource during the course changes in the state. At the same meeting, the ACT Social Workers Group (not yet a branch) complained of the misuse of the term 'professional social workers' by the Commonwealth Public Service Board. The President investigated this and the meeting of the 8 April heard that a reclassification of Social Workers as Medical Technologists within the Commonwealth Public Service meant Social Work was not now seen as a profession. Social workers were viewed as *technical officers* and not *professional officers*.¹¹³ This background is important in considering

¹¹¹NLA MS6202/15/18/Minority Report by E.G. Good 20 July 1965

¹¹²NLA MS6202/12 Minutes Federal Office Bearers/1 March 1965

¹¹³Events like this served to reinforce for the social workers who had been educated in universities, who saw them selves as professionals and wished to have opportunities for promotion within their work-place and maintain their salary base, that their professional status was at risk. It spurred them on to requiring the highest standards of education and training and to ensure that, by all current definitions of a profession, they could ensure, by objective measures, that they fulfilled these criteria and forcefully argue for continued professional recognition. This event begs the question, why and how could this happen, when it would never have happened to law, or medicine.

the following developments in South Australia, Western Australia and the response of the Federal Executive of the AASW.

In April 1965¹¹⁴, Elery Hamilton-Smith, the Federal President returned to Victoria from visiting New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia. In a circular to members of the Accreditation Committee that would shortly prove prophetic, he wrote

It appears, in view of the rapidly increasing interest in Social work training in Australian Universities, that there is an urgent need for our own Association to clarify its expectations of Social work training in this country. The statement of October 1963 which we have before us is purely descriptive and has not been adopted by the Association as a prescriptive statement.

He goes on to say that there was a need to decide whether presently planned courses at the University of New South Wales, the University of Adelaide - Bedford Park Campus and the University of Western Australia would be considered adequate.

We must also remember that this decision cannot be delayed until students have graduated. If we feel a planned course will not meet our requirements, then we have a responsibility to consult with the University concerned and to see that students are not given false impressions.

He proposed the changing of the description of social work courses into a set of minimum standards. He commented that the length of field work and the academic requirements needed to be specified. He also alerted people to the assumption that social work courses were single courses. As some universities have post-graduate courses, he suggested that the whole course be considered.

On 20 April 1965, after five months examination, the SA Branch Educational Sub-Committee found that there was a need for a second course in social work at the tertiary level in the state but there was no evidence for a course at the tertiary level with provision for part-time study.¹¹⁵ A vote put to the Branch failed to support the provision of a part-time course.

The Branch took until 13 July 1965 to agree on a motion which was to support the proposal for a Social Work course at SAIT, preferably at degree level, at least meeting the minimum

Social Workers were able to eventually argue Professional Officer status, while Technical Officers were a separate category. People with non-social work qualifications who worked in welfare positions were categories and Administrative Services Officers of various grades and were ineligible to apply for Professional Officer Positions.

¹¹⁴NLA MS6202/15/37/Circular to Members of the Accreditation Committee April 1965/1

¹¹⁵NLA MS6202/15/18/Minority Report by E.G. Good 20 July 1965

requirements for AASW membership.¹¹⁶ The Minister of Social Welfare and the Director of SAIT were to be contacted and informed. This motion passed 21:15. Ms E.G. Good, Vice-President of the AASW SA Branch, wrote a report to Federal Council outlining four factors that she believed influenced SA members in casting their votes. First, a report by Professor Brown, the new Head of School of Social Sciences for the University of Adelaide on 25 May. Second was a report of the Director of SAIT's address to the Graduates' Association on 29 June. Third was a report on the content of Professor Karmel's impressions of the Martin Report on 5 July. Finally, there was a comprehensive document circulated by three committee members, on the current education and training for social welfare in South Australia, 13 July, immediately before the vote was taken.

In summary, Professor Brown¹¹⁷ clarified that the new post-graduate diploma which was to be offered from the University of Adelaide, Bedford Park, aimed to train caseworkers. The change, in effect, took the social work qualification to four years full time, plus six months field education. It was to begin early 1966. People currently in the university diploma course would have to complete an additional two years of study if they wanted the new up-graded qualification.

Second, Ms Sullivan recorded a speech by Dr Evans, Director of SAIT.¹¹⁸ The Institute, he said, would offer from 1966 a Bachelor of Technology -3 years full time, a Bachelor of Applied Science - 4 years full time and a Bachelor of Pharmacy 3 years full time. Part of the degrees may be taken concurrently with employment and the degrees rank with other ordinary degrees of the university. Students will matriculate into these courses.

One can appreciate the concerns of the Association when it became clear that the social work course, while being up-graded at the university (post-graduate diploma), was actively down-graded (a diploma which did not transfer to higher academic study) in the transfer to SAIT and no middle position (degree) was developed.

Third, Good wrote that the comments made by Professor Karmel (5 July 1965) about the Martin report included that, if a course provided generic education, the appropriate place for it was in the Institute of Technology. Social work education was about the provision of a basic general

¹¹⁶ibid

¹¹⁷ibid

and professional education. Good took Karmel to mean that the Institute of Technology was where such a course belongs.

Fourth, the summary document provided to members by the education sub-committee included statements and a table of the numbers of people seeking tertiary education in Australia; a brief description of SAIT and its course offerings; and a listing of where professional social workers are employed in the state. The SA Government was the greatest employer.¹¹⁹ The Commonwealth government employed all qualified social workers in the Departments of Social Security, Repatriation and Migrant Services and experienced no problems with recruiting qualified personnel. The voluntary agencies reported no problems in recruiting and needed 'lower echelons of workers.'

Therefore, the restricted accessibility of training was the problem of the South Australian Government as the largest employer and the one with the greatest need for trained personnel. It would appear that it was in the state government's interest to have the course proceed at SAIT.

This document also contained as set of twelve alternative actions the AASW SA could take about the course at SAIT: some were not mutually exclusive. The alternatives spanned from direct opposition or non-involvement, through pressuring for a degree only course, to accepting a need for other level courses and being actively and directly involved in course planning. The final statement on this paper is that the 'Branch may see the whole exercise as one to cooperate with the new Minister in his plans to improve Welfare in South Australia.'

In March 1965, there had been a change in State Government in South Australia and the structure of ministerial responsibility. There was one Minister to cover Attorney-General's and Social Welfare, Adult Probation, Aboriginal Affairs and Child Welfare. Good noted that it was true that the nature of the courses to be offered by the Institute may be insecure. The key factors were the shifting of responsibility for tertiary education back to the states, the centring of all traditional statutory welfare services in the one portfolio and the government's commitment to training and low usage of professionally qualified staff. The change in government did not

¹¹⁸Speech to the SAIT Graduates' Association on 29 June 1965.

¹¹⁹All general hospital and health services social workers were fully qualified. Mental Health had twenty mental health visitors supervised by six qualified social workers. The Department of Welfare and Probation represented the largest group in the largest employer with less than half their staff qualified. Education employed only qualified social workers.

precipitate the change in educational policy but it may indeed have changed the content, structure and delivery of the courses.

The social work two-year diploma at the University was to transfer to a social work, two-year diploma at SAIT. In other courses, three-year diploma courses at the Institute were to become degrees.¹²⁰ Moreover, Pharmacy and Physiotherapy, transferred from the University to the Institute, were able to change from diploma courses to degrees. The issue for Good was not that of need for tertiary education for the broad field of social welfare, nor access and equity, nor social justice but professionalization. Good exhorted the AASW to think about 'whether they consider that Social Work as a profession is the equivalent of Pharmacy and Physiotherapy in its responsibility to those people it serves.'

The first assumption in Good's report is that one's level of qualification bears resemblance to one's level of responsibility. The second is that professional social work is all that is being discussed and that social welfare education in a broader sense is irrelevant. The third is that there are no political or social components to this debate and that these decisions can be made in a logical rational framework, without regard to context. The fourth is that *need*, as a criterion for decision-making, has now disappeared and status and equivalence are more important. She viewed the consideration of status and equivalence as primary and the logical and rational route; and, above all that the University is better than the Institute of Technology.

The fire in Good's document demonstrates the level to which some members of the AASW believed the issue of the location of the social work courses to be essential to the integrity of the profession in Australia.

Professional education is the life blood of a profession. It is the only means which enables a profession to perpetuate itself and develop. As members of a Federal association we accept that our profession is not limited to state boundaries but that we have a common bond with all professional Social workers throughout Australia and beyond e.g. I.F.S.W. [International Federation of Social Workers]. In an issue as basic and fundamental to the standards of community service offered by the profession, it is difficult to see how we can justify entering into the stage of negotiation with the Institute before discussing our intention with the profession [sic] as a whole and without making some effort to avail ourselves of the experience of interstate colleagues who have been confronted with related issues. It is difficult to see how these negotiations can proceed successfully and to the advantage of the profession as a whole if we do not avail ourselves of the combined strength of the national association. Consultation with the National body offers, too, as they are removed from other issues on the local scene, an opportunity for

¹²⁰This was an internal matter in South Australia. It occurred in 1965 and was reported through Good to the September Federal Council meeting of the AASW, two years before the first Wark Report of 20 April 1967. Wark would in 1967, require Colleges and Institutes of Technology change these new degrees back into Diplomas, if it was to be recognised as a College of Advanced Education.

greater objectivity in deciding the basic issue. Traditionally a fundamental task of the national professional body is to find a way to help us act together and through combined strength sustain a common goal. ¹²¹

Good's document shows that she saw the issue of the SAIT course as a crucial one for the profession and one where the whole association should stand up and fight. She believed full consultation should have occurred, preferably using the venue of the national conference. She maintained that the motion was precipitate, should have been delayed until the outcomes of SA legislative changes were clear and that a power-base should have been developed in a careful and strategic manner, rather than responding to the sense of urgency. She challenged the members to 'not too easily be satisfied with Diploma level' and criticized what she saw as the weak language of the motion ('supports', 'preferably' and 'proposal' which 'surely offers the Institute all of the trumps in negotiations, with the Branch initiating negotiations 'cap in hand').

Good invoked Lawrence, by referring to a passage in his book, *Professional Social Work in Australia* (1965:131), where he stated that high salaries of social workers in the 1950s were due to their high level of basic training. She also reiterated the report of a meeting with the Registrar of SAIT that the professional association was always invited to be involved in the development of a course and, if the AASW chose not to act, some other organization would be approached. Good incited members to push to strengthen and bolster the Association's current position, saying that it is 'not too late to make a firmer more definitive statement' on the level of education. She used quotes, again from Lawrence, to not be complacent - to recognize that, until all courses are degrees, the profession is vulnerable and that public service authorities give more weight to degrees.¹²²

Her parting words in the document are

The Branch would appear to be 'out on a limb' isolated from the main trunk and strength of the National Body through lack of consultation and further weakened by its lack of firm resolution to seek the highest level of education possible within the Institute. ¹²³

This detail is included for two reasons. First, it demonstrates that the debate was polarized. On one hand, the South Australian Branch could do something to improve the quality of provision of welfare services and training in the state, by cooperating with the educational changes and assisting a new minister. At the same time, they could set the foundations for a range of

¹²¹ NLA MS6202/15/18/Minority Report by E.G. Good 20 July 1965

¹²² Lawrence, 1965:200 and 204

¹²³ NLA MS6202/15/18/Minority Report by E.G. Good 20 July 1965

accredited courses in the future. On the other hand, they could uphold high standards and demand professional education, even if that meant being off-side with educational providers and the new state government. It was a debate between pragmatics (short-term discomfort and work for a longer-term benefit) and principle (acting in accord with the professional association's ethos). Second, it provides an excellent example of an argument for analysis, to unpack the concepts and strategies mobilized by all of those writing reports and giving speeches and, especially of Good's attempt to influence the course of events.

An Altered Pattern of Qualifications

Glastonbury (Chair AASW SA Branch) met with Dr EW Mills Acting Director of SAIT and Dr Armstrong on 6 August 1965. Dr Armstrong stated that the time to start the new course was now when the institute was interested. By 1967 they would be thinking of other courses. Dr Mills softened the blow by saying that he 'recognized the problem of needing experts to deal with the situation therefore called the AASW.'¹²⁴ Dr Mills undertook to recommend to Council of the Institute that a social work department be established and able to start in 1966. By making this decision, the Institute demonstrated an intention to meet the AASW's accreditation requirements over time.

After this meeting, AA Glastonbury wrote to Dr E.W. Mills¹²⁵, stating that the SA Branch hesitated to proceed to assist the Institute's desire for a first year course in 1966 because of a letter from the Federal President. 'We shall be happy, however, to co-operate along the lines which will be laid down by our Federal Council by the end of September.' He goes on to explain the structure of the AASW and where responsibility for accreditation rests. As far as Australia is concerned, the AASW has admitted to membership only those people who have qualified through Australian Universities. The AASW's minimum requirements have, therefore, been based on academic adequacy and amount of fieldwork under supervision.

As there is to be a change over in educational institution in this state which does not seem likely to occur in other states, it may well be that our Federal Executive will be very concerned with the proposed course. It is therefore difficult to be involved at this time until we have talked with our Federal Executive.

¹²⁴NLA MS6202/15/18/Report of Meeting 6 August 1965/1

¹²⁵NLA MS6202/15/18/Letter to Dr EW Mills Ass. Director SAIT/12 August 1965

Glastonbury made the following positive statement. 'We are very pleased to know that your approach to establishing this course is such a flexible one. We hope that ultimately we can come to some decision which is mutually agreeable.'

The Accreditation Committee was due to meet in Adelaide on 25 August. Arrangements were made for the Federal President to meet with Dr Mills on 27 August.

The South Australian Branch had a positive view of the SAIT course: it could be responsive to local needs and social justice issues. However, in the short term, it would not offer a degree course. Indeed the Institute would be forced, following the Wark report (1967), to not offer degrees at all if it were to remain a College of Advanced Education. The AASW had little way of knowing in 1965 that SAIT would eventually become a university in its own right (University of South Australia). The AASW had bureaucratic systems of functioning. It had high levels of accountability of the states to the Federal Executive and low levels of power and discretion vested in the states. This centralized structure and the ethos attached to the definition of what constituted professional social work education, limited a flexible, responsive, needs based system of educational delivery.

The Australian federal and state governments were not decided on which way to go and the Association's federal structure mitigated against states having different arrangements of education for the profession. South Australia's fate was to be put on hold.

Western Australia

Returning briefly to the 2-3 May 1964 meeting of the Federal Council,¹²⁶ the meeting was informed that the School of Social Work in Western Australia had undergone a restructure and was moved to a different Faculty under a Senior Social Worker. The WA Branch delegate reported that the University was having trouble recruiting academic staff for the social work course. In this case, the University was struggling to maintain standards and adequate numbers of qualified staff but no action is recorded. There was no threat that accreditation might be removed if the University could not resolve its staffing problems and if academic standards were lowered.

On 8 December 1965, Dr H S Williams Director of Technical Education, Western Australia, held a meeting at the Technical Education Division Head Office in Perth to discuss training in the field of social work. Dr H.S. Williams was a psychologist, with experience in the British Civil service selection board and psychological and counselling services in technical education. Others present included Dr Colin Anderson, President of the Australian College of General Practitioners and President of the Western Australian Branch of the Australian Medical Association, who had a distinguished career in rehabilitation; Dr Alan King, Senior Medical Officer in the Department of Social Services and former Commonwealth Director of Tuberculosis; Mr J McCall, Director of Child Welfare; Mr L.J. Hollis, Principal, Perth Technical College; two AASW WA members, Mrs Stockbridge and Mr J Williams and five others (Drs Marshall and Lefroy, Ms Page, Mr Atknison and Mr Webster).

Very detailed notes were taken of the discussion of this meeting. They serve as an example of the issues facing services, the support the AASW had in Western Australia, the challenges and the degree of difficulty the members of the WA Branch had in being able to effectively engage in the process of course development. The detail again serves to provide the evidence of the way in which the AASW and personnel from academic institutions, invoked certain concepts and strategies.

Dr H.S. Williams gave background details and indicated that an assessment of need for a course was the first step in course development for Technical Education. He noted varying levels and types of work undertaken by social workers and that their training in Great Britain was done in a variety of courses in universities and technological institutions. He asked those present about the need for additional training for social workers in WA. The replies were all supportive, pragmatic and clearly aimed at getting qualified personnel into positions and also expanding and upgrading those qualifications. These people saw a need for which an urgent response was necessary.

Mr McCall, Director of Child Welfare, for example, had 45 welfare probation and district officers on staff, all of whom performed work appropriate to social workers and none of whom were trained. There was a need for training new staff, as well as training for existing staff who were not generally eligible for entry into university. The Department could absorb all the current

¹²⁶NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/135

university output. He emphasized that the Department needed university-trained people and estimated that it would be 30 years before all his staff were university trained.¹²⁷

Mr. Webster, who also needed properly qualified social workers, added that 'All states were extemporizing and until the University could produce sufficient qualified social workers we would need a technical college course possibly part-time.' Even though 60 students took the Diploma course in social work at Melbourne University in 1965, he was unable to attract any to his service. The current caseload was 200 per officer, instead of 50.

Dr H.S. Williams pursued whether these problems were a temporary thing until the University can grow, to which the response was, 'No, the demand would also continue to grow'.

Mr Atkinson said that Technical Division could provide professional training at the undergraduate level, in contrast with current post-graduate training in Social Work (at UWA). Dr H.S. Williams said there was no question of competition, as the two courses would complement one another and form a team.

Mrs Stockbridge (AASW WA) began by challenging Dr Williams' use of the UK training scene as a comparator. She said that the training of social workers in the UK was confused and piecemeal, there being several [seventeen in 1965] professional associations. In Australia, there was one professional body which had set and was maintaining, high standards. The trend was towards lengthening training and all courses except Melbourne's were now at graduate level. She added that the site of training was not the issue. The question was one of level and the association, in its interim report, had laid down a graduate level. She added, 'The shortage of social workers in Perth was serious, mainly because of low salaries, low status and poor prospects for promotion.'

In 1969, the site of social work courses would become *the central issue* precipitating Elery Hamilton-Smith (AASW National President 1965 and 1968) to offer to resign. Ms Stockbridge, in effect, misled these people. Her statement about salaries raised industrial issues which only served to antagonize those present who were being supportive, to confuse industrial and educational issues and pull the meeting from its purpose.

¹²⁷The WA Department of Community Services achieved full professionalisation of social welfare staff in 1995. By then UWA, Murdoch and Curtin had degree courses in social work and social welfare.

Ms Stockbridge enumerated the three points she thought had been raised: full-time training for three years in the Institute of Technology, part-time training for graduates and inservice training were identified as the major training needs. She noted that it would not be easy for the institution to implement a satisfactory professional training program, as a minimum of 6 months practical work, under a qualified social worker, was prescribed and there were only 24 qualified workers employed in Perth. Her choice of issues and words sought neither to find creative solutions, nor be either cooperative or conciliatory. The problem of shortage of qualified social workers to supervise field education has existed in social work training from its beginning and has many solutions. Ms Stockbridge's comments could be assessed as obstructive.

Mr. J. Williams and Ms Stockbridge together swayed the room into a consideration of there being two levels of training required, professional and sub-professional. Mr Hollis indicated that the need for both levels of training was obvious. Dr Lefroy asked what would these people do. This allowed those present to articulate the roles, tasks and functions of people working in social welfare in WA.

The organizations required people who could prepare social histories, assess offending behaviours and plan rehabilitation. They must be able to counsel, discuss social histories and assessments with senior colleagues, psychologists and other specialists including psychiatrists. They were needed to formulate and follow-up plans to help individuals manage their own lives more effectively. They were to influence individuals to change. Parole officers were needed to investigate the background of the prisoner, to find the cause for the behaviour and work with a psychologist, psychiatrist or qualified social worker and prepare a pre-sentence report advisory to a magistrate or judge. Mr. Atkinson indicated that he needed people with diplomas in psychology as well as social work. Ms Stockbridge's response to these work descriptions was to say that they all called for full professional training, not sub-professional.

Mr. Hollis (Principal Perth Technical College) said that the Technical Division could not supply a course for a full professional qualification. They could provide a three-year full-time post matriculation course but the question of salary and professional recognition would have to be settled. He suggested a sub-committee be formed to prepare a course proposal, if those people present considered there was a training need to be met. Technical Division will only move if consumers agree there is a need. This was his first call for cooperation and assistance.

Mrs Stockbridge then said that there is a need for case aides and welfare assistants or those who could be trained in the service by professional staff. Much welfare work can be delegated under supervision. In this statement, Ms Stockbridge denied case aides and welfare assistants access to formal education and training at lower levels. By saying that they can be trained on the job by qualified social workers, she undermined the argument of a specific body of knowledge, principle and skill required for providing even basic social welfare services.

Mr. Hollis agreed that training needed to be close to the professional level and that Technical Division could provide a program similar to the three year Melbourne University program. If 'the Public Service Commission can't get the people needed; we have to decide to do nothing or to do something to meet the problem.' This is Mr. Hollis's second request for cooperation. Mr. Webster expressed his view that Technical Division could set up a course acceptable to the AASW and Dr Lefroy reinforced that, whatever course is provided, it should be close to the current professional level.

Mr. J Williams, from the AASW, made the statement that, 'even if the number of fully trained people is doubled or trebled there would still not be enough to do all the work required. Other professional groups like nurses had not been able to recruit top-level workers.' This prompted Mr. Hollis to reassure participants that student numbers increase as courses are provided.

Not to allow a positive view on the issue, Ms Stockbridge repeated, 'there are not enough qualified people available to supervise pracs'. Mr. Hollis was pushed to say that this was a problem for which there may or may not, be a solution and that Technical Division would look into this, with the cooperation of those present. Mr. Hollis, for the third time, requested the people at the meeting to be prepared to be cooperative. Since the only negative comments throughout the meeting record come from the AASW, it is clear that he was asking for the Association to join in, to develop an effective response to an obvious education and service need for Western Australia.

The people present at the meeting formed the core of an influential power base within the government and non-government sectors in WA. It was a power-base not available to AASW SA and one the likes of which the social work had not had since the early negotiations with Sydney University. It is true that the majority present were males and medical practitioners. It

could be argued that, to engage in this process, enabled men to wrest the control from a female profession. It could be said that Ms Stockbridge was right to stand her ground and not allow herself or the profession, to be returned to hand-maiden status. It could also be said that there are times when old enmities must be laid aside in order to achieve a higher benefit. Or to acknowledge that this was the condition of the social realm in the 1960s in Australia and to ignore what was deemed by the population, as legitimate authority (appropriately qualified and appointed through legitimate bureaucratic processes) would have been folly. Ensuring that there are more qualified social workers in the state and a pool of qualified assistants who can, over time, gain access to further training to allow promotion, would (eventually) build the profession's presence, carve out the territory and form a power-base of qualified professionals. The behaviours of Stockbridge and Williams from the AASW WA did not demonstrate high levels of analysis or political nous possessed by professional social workers.

The meeting ended with an agreement to form a sub-committee. Subsequently, the Western Australian Institute of Technology developed a three year and 3 months Associateship in Social Work in the Department of General Studies.¹²⁸ The course was to be appropriate to an Institute of Technology with developed resources in psychology and the social sciences. It was to be in step with world trends and also geared to local practice, integrating social and psychological theories in social work practice.

It takes cognizance of the new approach suggested by Norma Parker,¹²⁹ that social workers are likely to be involved in working simultaneously with individuals, groups and communities and should be trained accordingly. It stresses practice in a range of interventive techniques, guided by scientific knowledge.¹³⁰

The new Western Australian course had a more substantial base for its establishment, although it did not have as much support from the AASW branch as South Australia experienced. The processes and problems of establishing new social work courses in either a university or one of the new institutes of technology, differ from the pressures that affect success in accreditation. In the next section, the focus is on moving from establishment to successful accreditation.

The first step which had not been completed, was the finalization of a policy and set of procedures for course accreditation.

¹²⁸NLA MS6202/15/19/Course Proposal WAIT/undated

¹²⁹NLA MS6202/15/19/Parker, N., 1966 Developments in Professional Education, *Australian Journal of Social Work*, vol.19, May, no.2, 2

¹³⁰NLA MS6202/ Notes of Meeting 8 December 1965

On Accreditation and the Basic Educational Requirements

During the Federal Council Meeting on 19 January 1966, correspondence about the SAIT and WAIT courses prompted Council to say that there was no formal policy on the South Australian course and there had only been informal communications with the President. At the same meeting, a request for information on the AASW was received from the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Advanced Education.¹³¹ This indicates that the CACAE were aware of some of the involvement of the AASW in course development.

In February 1966, the Accreditation Committee circulated to all branches the 4th draft of the Basic Educational Requirements with a request that comments be returned by 31 March 1966. Attached to this was an article by Ewald B Nyquist, 1964, 'The wing wherewith we fly to heaven or the real function of accreditation.' Nyquist was at that time Deputy Commissioner of Education, The University of the State of New York, Albany (See Appendix 5). The article was forwarded to the branches without comment and there appears to be no comments back from the branches about its content or influence on the development of the Basic Educational Requirements or the role of the Accreditation Committee. It is therefore difficult to assess how far the paper was distributed, read or considered and if it had any effect on the membership and decision-making in relation to accreditation in Australia.

In the paper, Nyquist argued that accrediting in social work has passed through a first long phase of development, concerned largely with the maintenance of minimal standards and the establishment of an accredited list. He asserted the second stage of accreditation now consisted of a deliberate, aggressive program to work primarily for institutional improvement and the development of professional education in social work. He outlined why he thought accreditation was important. These ideas included a commitment by educational institutions to self-government and internal control rather than outside restraints and imposed directives.

Nyquist tied the issue of the accreditation of courses to criteria for a profession to be identified as such. These are that it must have its own self-government and it must possess control over its own education. He stated that a true profession should demand liberty to govern itself, since no one else knows enough to govern it as well. He held that it was mature, experienced,

disinterested academic colleagues and not practitioners who should be involved in the accrediting process.

The purposes of accreditation were: to help schools of social work to achieve maximum educational effectiveness and to identify institutions whose competence in the particular education programs warranted public and professional confidence. It was about moving towards excellence, not meeting minimum standards. He states that, if standards are used for anything other than educational improvement and the expansion of educational opportunity, they are useless. His comment of the site of courses was apt:

The concept embedded in using 'criteria of excellence' rather than 'standards' ordinarily forces a re-writing of standards, where those are in use and usually results in throwing out all quantitative criteria and I mean, all. I am reminded for instance of one standard which states that a school of social work, to be a viable proposition has to be university - connected. I am not convinced. There are examples of schools which were born and flourished independently. If they were or still are university - connected, the umbilical cord was so tenuous as to be both bloodless and lifeless. At any rate, in the modern world with its calculated interdependence, the immediate availability of rich, intellectual resources and where it is impossible to conduct the educational process in splendid isolation, is it really necessary that always and everywhere, a school of social work be university - connected? Desirable yes, absolutely necessary? No.

Nyquist, 1964

Therefore, at least the Committee members of AASW Branches in every state and at the Federal level, had access to this paper and were encouraged formally by the Accreditation Committee to read it before commenting on the Basic Educational Requirements (4th Draft). Also with the draft was a statement on the particular conditions in Australia, for example, the potential such a document may have to aid or hamper negotiations with public service bodies, 'in which we will plead for recognition of full professional status.' While these standards only concern Australian qualifications, there is an obvious link to overseas qualifications, as it would be 'difficult to continue to accept members from overseas with educational qualifications lower than those current in this country and still uphold publicly the standards of the profession as a whole.' Similarly, people who had qualified earlier in Australia but had never taken up membership, could find themselves ineligible.¹³²

¹³¹NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Office Bearers/19 January 1966/2

¹³²The members were asked to 'give thought to keeping a door open to those social workers whose educational qualifications are not acceptable after a statement becomes policy but who have been constantly active since qualifying in social work and professional education.' Members were reminded of a resolution of Federal Council Sept 1965 that an 'applicant for membership holding previously established qualifications is accepted provided that qualification is obtained on or before June 1974.'

The supporting documentation on standards argued that it was a vital responsibility of the professional Association to maintain standards in the practice of the profession. The basic method for this is the control of eligibility for membership. The document stated that *it is not the function of the Association to dictate curriculum content to educational institutions* (my emphasis) but it should set basic requirements of education for professional practice. As the standards specify course content and hours in particular activities, for example, supervised field practice, they do limit and control courses. They make it difficult for them to engage in innovation. As such, it can be argued that the AASW's standards in fact dictated curriculum, teaching method and processes. The requirement, for example, that courses must allow for personal development, that is, 'the academic programs should not be overloaded or condensed', attempts to put the AASW in the position of defining and policing, overloading or condensing in a tertiary course.

The requirements made comments about the resources and mission of the educational institution in which courses were located. It stated that a social work course should be planned and controlled by a permanent body specifically established for that purpose; it should include in its structure a nucleus, at least of permanent teaching staff and facilities for research. This last sentence attempted to lock the courses into universities in the 1960s. It would not prove to be effective long-term, as colleges at the technical level developed more flexible articulation arrangements with universities and institutes of technology and began to apply for research grants.

The statement of basic requirements locked out non-university-based courses immediately, by the requirement of a university entrance examination or equivalent. It meant that mature age students must have also matriculated and took no account of maturity of the applicants for the course or experience and competence in the field.¹³³

The second standard required that the professional qualification be at university degree level and would provide for entry to further study. The push to have the diplomas recognized as degrees enabled CAEs and ITs to be fully recognized as tertiary institutions in the binary system. This caused great difficulty to the AASW who were afraid that their professional status would be compromised.

The rest of the standards specify length of course and its content, ensuring social work courses in Australia had an emphasis on working with individuals and a focus on individual pathology. There was less emphasis in the course on social structures, education, religion, law, employment, income security, etc. This, then, produced a generation of individual-focused workers, with limited socially critical skills and ability to actively commit to social change or reform. This outline reflected, too, the influence of the hospital almoners and the growing field of psychology. The Association also prescribed educational delivery. The course was to be taught using traditional lectures, seminars and tutorials. These standards now, with the advent of distance education, open universities and flexible delivery, can be seen to have been limiting and controlling.

The field education component was most rigid. It specified hours and required that all supervisors be qualified social workers. There was no ability to have a student in an agency being supervised by an experienced and recognized expert in the field of welfare and social work who did not have a formal university based qualification. This, in itself, limited students' educational opportunities. Few Aboriginal communities in remote areas had qualified social workers. Migrant services may have had overseas-qualified social workers, who were not eligible for membership to the AASW and were therefore not permitted to supervise students.

The process of setting basic requirements of education for professional practice in this way ensured that the Association effectively dictated curriculum content to every institution interested in establishing a social work course or other course which might in future articulate with a social work course. Furthermore, it did so using standards that, if not met, were responded to with sanctions - non-accreditation of the course.

Interim Developments

On 7 July 1966, the AASW received a letter from the Tasmanian Branch which reported on discussions with the Tasmanian College of Further Education about establishing social work training, course accreditation and asked for a nominee from Federal Council to meet with the

¹³³Now that mature age entry is available for universities and courses at the technical education level in welfare require either maturity or a Tertiary Entrance Rank (TER) or equivalent it would appear that this requirement now has little power.

College. At the Federal Office Bearers meeting on 11 Aug 1966¹³⁴, the meeting advised the Tasmanian Educational Authority to contact senior members of a long established school of social work, for advice on the content of proposed course. A representative of Federal Council would be available for any discussion between the Tasmanian Branch of the AASW and the Department. Members of the Tasmanian Branch¹³⁵ reported that they had approached the University of Tasmania and the Tasmanian College of Further Education about establishing courses in Social Work. The University said they had no immediate plans, whereas the College arranged a meeting with Branch representatives.

On 5 Sept 1966, at the Federal Office Bearers' meeting¹³⁶, the Accreditation Committee submitted a draft statement on minimum educational requirements for membership of AASW. This was for use when people who were from overseas or non-university Australian courses made an attempt to apply for membership to the Association.

By 10 November 1966, the Federal Office Bearers were concerned about graduates from the WAIT courses who were being offered higher salaries by the WA Government than the graduates of the University of WA Social Work Course. There was concern about whether these new graduates were supervised by professional social workers. The main issue was an industrial one. The AASW had been trying to link status to salary provisions. They were seeing it eroded by virtue of workers who they believed had less training and came from a less prestigious academic institution. The Federal Office Bearers (6 December) offered to write another letter to the Technical Education Division of the Department of Education in WA 'in more definite terms so that on the information we have, we can indicate where the course does not measure up to professional course.' The AASW had an underpinning assumption that those who ran this course, whose graduates were being employed and who were performing better economically in the workplace, would be concerned that they did not have the AASW's certification of professional status. Conversely, it could be argued that the Department of Education would be happy that graduates tested in the workplace were seen to be performing better than their University counterparts, thus demonstrating that the educational experience provided at WAIT was better than equal to that provided by the University and cheaper.

¹³⁴NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Office Bearers/11 August 1966/2

¹³⁵ibid

¹³⁶NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Office Bearers/5 September 1966/2

The Chairperson of the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Advanced Education, Ian Wark, produced a report on the findings of the Committee (The Wark Report). On 20 April, 1967, the Federal Office Bearers minutes recorded concern that social work had been placed in the paramedical section of the Wark Report. At their meeting on 26 May 1967¹³⁷, the meeting was informed that an *ad hoc* committee of Federal Council had been established to discuss the matter of social work courses and would be talking with Wark Committee in an endeavour to clarify the whole question of social work education. The AASW had also had correspondence with¹³⁸ the Commonwealth Public Service Board and the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Advanced Education. The Public Service Commission of WA also forwarded a summary of a discussion held with the President of the AASW (Elery Hamilton-Smith 1967-68). The AASW were trying to limit the expansion of courses into the colleges and institutes and to maintain the primacy of the university courses. Their argument is more fully explicated in correspondence with the Hon. J.M. Fraser in 1969 (below).

SAIT's Failure

By May 1967, the question of recognition of the SAIT and WAIT courses by the Association, for the purposes of eligibility for membership, had arisen.¹³⁹ Council agreed that new courses could only be recognized if they are shown to be of a standard expected of all Australian courses and that recognition will be withheld if any course cannot establish its equivalence to present Australian courses. These standards had been written only for universities. The Accreditation Committee had no principles or procedures to handle formal assessment of these courses.¹⁴⁰ From the records, Hamilton-Smith's words (see above April 1965) were inadequately heeded by the AASW. As he predicted, it led to a perilous course.

By 7 November 1968, the assessment team for SAIT had been chosen (Norma Parker or Mary McLelland, Alma Hartshorn and Elery Hamilton-Smith). By 3 March 1969, the Federal Executive Committee had been informed that the SAIT course had failed its accreditation assessment. The executive committee issued a statement on the release of the report.

¹³⁷NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Office Bearers/26 May 1967/1

¹³⁸NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Office Bearers/26 May 1967/2

¹³⁹NLA MS6202/19/AASW Federal Newsletter/No3/May 1967/11

¹⁴⁰*ibid*

The Executive, recognising that the documents relating to the Accreditation of any specific course, must, of necessity, be regarded as of the highest confidentiality and further, recognising that such confidentiality is essential to the gathering of further information relating to any decision of this significance, resolved unanimously that it is not possible for the Executive to breach such confidentiality by authorising circulation of such documents beyond those directly concerned.¹⁴¹

The report was only available for Federal Accreditation Committee, Federal Council and Federal Executive Committee. Documents were not available for perusal by members of Branches, other than those who held office as members of Federal Council or of the Committees named above. This protection of the assessors, the University and its graduating students is two-edged: it created an inner cell and opaque rather than transparent decision-making. The denial of access to this information extended over time to the fathers of the students, the South Australian AASW Branch, the Minister of the Department of Immigration and the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Advanced Education. Legal advice was taken and, although the Federal Executive promised a report in the newsletter to members, none was provided. The membership, those people ultimately responsible for the development and maintenance of these educational standards on which assessments for accreditation were based, received no information on the worth of the existing requirements and their interpretation.

The assessment of the SAIT course showed¹⁴² that the machinery of accreditation had made the process difficult. The committee reiterated their terms of reference and clarified that they were accrediting *individuals*, not the courses, because the AASW is not directly involved with the training body. The process of accrediting the SAIT course was significantly different from accrediting individual applicants, usually from overseas.

The committee then opened for debate whether the professional association *should* seek to accredit courses instead of individuals. It was stated that it was the community's interest in standards that lead to the development of regulations, accrediting bodies and boards of registration. The interests of the Association with respect to membership could militate against a satisfactory approach to accreditation – industrial arguments may prevail. There was also a fear of rival associations setting up. Local pressures, expediency or personal loyalties, lack of resources and deadlines could influence the members of the Association. This could lead to ill-considered or hasty judgements. Finally, it was stated *that it is doubtful if a professional*

¹⁴¹One could argue that the parents of the students, who had made significant financial investment in the courses and have an abiding concern for the well being of the students and their career prospects, were 'directly concerned'.

¹⁴²NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/19-20 April 1969/Accreditation Committee Report

association can exert enough influence against employer pressures and powerful education institutions (my emphasis). These issues were raised, not formally addressed and resulted only in the recommendation that the committee change its name to Professional Education and Accreditation Committee (PEAC), as it was clear that the role of the committee far exceeded that of accrediting people for membership.

The Commonwealth Public Service Board (19 May 1969) advised the AASW that graduates from the Diploma in Social Work from SAIT would be accepted for employment as Grade 1 Social Workers. They informed the Association that Cadetships would be advertised for the SAIT course and that these decisions had no bearing on the WAIT course. The AASW reply drew attention to the current review of the Association's membership policies and hoped that the CPSB also would keep this most recent decision under review. Eligibility for membership to the AASW was an essential selection criterion for a position as a social worker in the State and the Commonwealth Public Service. It was one of the central mechanisms to lock out less-qualified workers or those deemed not to have a 'professional social work qualification'. The decision by the CPSB showed loyalty to the educational policies of the government and was clearly supportive of the Institute of Technology which had, by all accounts, been cooperative and compliant in their dealings with the AASW. Of more significance is that this decision of the CPSB appears to have been kept quiet by members of the Federal Executive and not communicated to the membership or those in Western Australia in particular.

At the Federal Executive Meeting on 22 July 1969, a letter, signed by the fathers of the SAIT students was received. The fathers took exception to the non-accreditation of the SAIT course by the AASW and copies of the letter had been circulated to the Federal Minister, State Ministers and others including the Acting Convenor of AASW Accreditation Committee, SA Accreditation Committee Member and SA Branch Secretary. These community members, who represented course consumers (the students), were protesting and calling for a public account of the AASW's decision to not accredit the SAIT course. The content of the letter was not reported in the minutes. Nor was the distress of the parents and their children over what amounted to false and misleading advertising. It had wasted their time and money and now the students were required to do a 'make-up course'. The course was called 'social work'. The accredited course at the University of Adelaide - Bedford Park (which would become Flinders University) would be called 'Social Administration'. They were, as a result of the AASW's

decision, unable to apply for social work positions for which they believed they were training until after they complete this 'make-up'. It had the hallmarks of financial discrimination.

The omission from the minutes of these issues is relevant. Equally the inclusion of the circulation list was made to encourage the members to see that they were now engaged in a risky business. It had become 'political' and open to public scrutiny, instead of being a neat, confidential, highly rational, internal professional body decision. There were none of the hallmarks of early consultation and enabling of the course to meet the criteria, as proposed by Hamilton-Smith in 1965. It is indeed fortunate for the AASW that South Australia in 1969 was not a litigious society.

The letter was acknowledged and referred to the Council meeting in September (two months hence). This was a bureaucratic response. This small organization could not or would not get a message around Australia and have members of Council, who were the only ones with access to the accreditation report, respond to this significant and urgent matter in an immediate way. From research into the socio-economic status of students families of origin before 1980 (Pavlin, 1970), we can confidently say that in excess of 80% of these students came from families where the father was in a profession. Politically, the AASW's decision to not accredit the SAIT course was either naïve and ill-advised or the Association's deliberate exercise of power, in order to use SAIT as an example to others that the force behind the AASW was real and would be used.

A letter arrived from the Director of SAIT, who also took exception this time to the Assessment Panel report. His letter, too, was referred to Federal Council in September. The South Australia Branch of the AASW wrote to the Federal Executive, requesting a statement of minimum course requirements and a rationale for the assessors' report.¹⁴³ In the Branch resolution, it was stated that they were prepared to run the risk of being in an embarrassing position and would find this less invidious and untenable than the current position. An additional motion from the South Australian Branch Committee of Management¹⁴⁴ was sent later stating, 'Because under the present situation it was impossible to counter rumours circulating about the alleged defects, as well as for the reasons already noted in the minutes of the June meeting, it was carried unanimously that this Committee urge Federal Council to make the document available to any interested parties.' The South Australian Branch had reached desperation point.

¹⁴³NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Executive Committee/1 July 1969/1

¹⁴⁴NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Office Bearers/19 September 1969/Letter/2

The Federal Executive's response, again, was to make no comment and to refer the items to Council, instructing the SA Branch to have its delegate to Federal Council raise this issue. There was neither a statement of sympathy for the position of the SA Branch, nor any hint of support in this difficult time. It was as if they were happy to let the Branch and the profession's reputation and the reputation of the SAIT course, become muddled.

In the November issue of the AASW Federal Newsletter¹⁴⁵, new developments on SAIT were announced. These included that make up provisions 'will not apply to those diplomates who are employed in an agency where work is supported by a qualified social worker approved by the Professional Education Accreditation Committee.' Council allowed SAIT students completing their studies no later than 1970 to undertake the making up program and the SAIT course was given a consultant. This would be Alma Hartshorn from Queensland.¹⁴⁶

The Director of SAIT wrote¹⁴⁷ requesting 'assurance of accreditation if SAIT accept [sic] arrangements for consultation and agreement is reached on future course programme.' The letter was referred to PEAC and the Federal Office Bearers, for a draft reply. As a result, Len Tierney, the Chair of PEAC, arranged a visit to South Australia for discussions with South Australian PEAC members, the Director of SAIT, SAIT staff and others. 'Others' was not specified.¹⁴⁸

In the AASW Federal Newsletter¹⁴⁹, it was reported that a copy of the rationale statement had been completed but sent only to Dr Evans (Director, SAIT) and Ms Alma Hartshorn (AASW Consultant to SAIT, Brisbane). Legal opinion indicated that even the rationale statement constituted a 'privilege document'. Hartshorn and Evans were to arrange a date to meet and the SAIT making-up program had already begun on 24 June. The South Australian Branch of the AASW approached students doing the make-up with an offer of financial assistance which was implemented once students accepted.

¹⁴⁵NLA MS6202/19/AASW Federal Newsletter/No13 November 1969/8

¹⁴⁶NLA MS6202/12/MinutesAdministrative Committee/6 November 1969/2

¹⁴⁷NLA MS6202/12/MinutesAdministrative Committee/1 December 1979

¹⁴⁸NLA MS6202/12/MinutesAdministrative Committee/15 December 1969/3

¹⁴⁹NLA MS6202/19/AASW Federal Newsletter/No 16 July 1970/15

Consistently throughout the development and subsequent failure of the SAIT course, the AASW South Australian Branch appeared to have done as much as they could to support the interests of the students, the state and the profession. The role of the Federal Association is less clear.

WAIT Versus UWA

The AASW's Western Australian Branch decided, before the first cohort had graduated, that the WAIT course could only be seen as sub-professional.¹⁵⁰ In the AASW Federal Council Newsletter No3, May, 1967¹⁵¹, the report on Western Australia states that the WAIT course 'as it stands will not be acceptable to this Association. WA members will give preference for pracs (sic) to UWA students. Students of WAIT should only be supervised as being of a 'sub-professional' course.' This decision formed a loophole, with serious implications for the graduates from the WAIT course. If the course met the AASW standards, the student could still be denied eligibility for membership, because their field education component was not supervised by a professional social worker, overseen by a professional social worker or supervised at a 'professional level'.

The Federal Newsletter¹⁵² states that, at the April meeting of Council, WA delegates reported difficulties being experienced with the advent of a course in social work under the auspices of the Education Department. WAIT did not have SAIT's level of autonomy. The profession needed assurance of the independence of the educational institution. The AASW WA Branch feared that the course would become a vehicle for the transmission of state government policy and procedure without critique, thus losing that edge in developing future social work practitioners whose role was to change systems.

Marion Urquhart (1967), as President, decided to chose a holding pattern, rather than encourage people to engage with the new form of education.¹⁵³

Our present statement of minimum requirements for membership certainly does not automatically preclude non-university courses but it does specify conditions which appear very difficult to meet outside of a university. At this point, the extent to which the new technical institutes will be able to meet these requirements is by no means clear. However, as a nation Australian has a dual system of Tertiary

¹⁵⁰NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Office Bearers/13 December 1965/2 and NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Office Bearers/11 January 1966/2

¹⁵¹NLA MS6202/19/AASW Federal Newsletter/No3 May 1967/12

¹⁵²NLA MS6202/19/AASW Federal Newsletter/No 4 July 1967/7

¹⁵³NLA MS6202/19/AASW Federal Newsletter/July 1967/No 4/3-4

Education and we must not rush into any decisions which ignore the overall patterns of educational development.

Perhaps it is not generally realised that our most acute shortage of personnel is in the senior level supervisory, teaching, research or consultative posts. This shortage is due in part to the fact that earlier education for social work in Australia provided only a qualification for practice which did not give entry or opportunity for higher study and qualification. Long-term development of social work depends essentially upon provisional support for higher study and we cannot accept an educational plan which ignores this need; it would serve only to perpetuate our present problems.

The suggestion that a small number only need to be trained at an academic level, while most are trained only at a practice level appears to me as ridiculous. It is parallel to suggesting that doctors be trained at a university for specialist practice but that the majority be trained at a non-university level for work as hospital residents and general practitioners. The entry to basic tertiary education is not the point at which an educational system can effectively select for higher education.

Urquhart's argument is unclear. She could be arguing for university courses only or for high quality courses in the Institutes which had the capacity to articulate with relevant post-graduate qualifications, especially within the profession.

By January 1969 the Presidency had changed and Professor R.J. (John) Lawrence had the opportunity of making the President's comments in the Newsletter.¹⁵⁴

Coping with the social problems of contemporary Australian society is obviously neither the exclusive duty nor prerogative of any one professional group, especially when it numbers as yet little more than 1,300 members. But the social work profession does have a central responsibility in this, even if it is shared with countless other community groups. It is the task for which we have received a professional education, for which we are receiving our livelihood and which we are expected to do effectively.

Too often in our society is professionalism associated with highly individualistic, independent attitudes or with monopolistic collective power used to preserve the status and privileges of 'members of the profession'. Australian social welfare cannot afford to have a social work profession guilty of adopting these positions. Our Association has an important role in stressing the positive aspects of professionalism in Australian social work. We need hard-headed, clear-thinking organised and socially-responsible approaches to the social problems of our time - and the social work profession should be expected to give some leadership in these matters. If it doesn't, many of our social welfare services, both government and voluntary, will remain inadequate. They will continue to reflect not a well informed, sensitive concern for people living in a complex modern society but rather narrowly focussed attitudes, concerned with maintaining the status quo or with the needs of the service providers, rather than of the public who are supposedly 'served'.

These comments from presidents (separated only by eighteen months), full of positive rhetoric, focused on the good of the community, can equally be used to argue for increased elitism. Lawrence's real position is hard to gauge, given that his behaviour within the Association, especially in relation to the plebiscite and the split (see below), seem to reflect exactly those feature of professionalization which this presidential comment derides.

1969 - A Busy Year

In January,¹⁵⁵ Western Australia reported that the University (UWA) had announced that a quota would be set, limiting entry to the Diploma in Social Work and that continuation of the course was not assured beyond the 1970 intake. The Association uncovered that the course might be dropped as a consequence of the WAIT course. The matter of social work education in WA was to be referred to the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) of WA, a 'six-man' (sic) Commission, appointed following the recommendations of the Jackson Committee. The WA TEC had the task of maintaining an overview of tertiary education in the state and achieving effective integration between the planning of the University and the institute or any additional tertiary institutions that may be established. Both the Federal Council and WA Branch proposed to send an immediate statement of the profession's viewpoint to UWA and the Commission. 'It is seen as being vital to the development of WA welfare services that the University should remain in the social work education field.'

1969 was a busy year. On 5 March 1969, Malcolm Fraser, then Federal Minister for Education, made a statement to the House of Representatives about UWA's social work course, to which the AASW took exception. In April, there was a meeting about a plebiscite of the members of the Association, on whether graduates from non-university courses should be allowed to be members of the Association. Fraser's statement had a wave (not a ripple) effect in Western Australia which pushed the members there to be strongly against the location of courses in institutions other than universities.

Fraser's Statement

Mr. Fraser responded to a question, outlined below, from Mr. Chaney in relation to the Government's policy of reducing duplication and rationalizing all services, including education in the country. The text from Hansard follows, as it was reproduced in the AASW Federal Newsletter July 1969.

MR CHANEY - The Minister for Science and Education will be aware that the University of Western Australia offers a post-graduate diploma course in social work which is accredited by the Australian

¹⁵⁴NLA MS6202/19/AASW Federal Newsletter/January 1969/No10/3

¹⁵⁵NLA MS6202/19/AASW Federal Newsletter/January 1969/No10/4

Association of Social Workers while a sub-degree standard course offered by the Institute of Technology is not accepted by the relevant professional body and holders of the associateship of the Institute are not eligible for membership of the Australian Association of Social Workers. As Commonwealth funds are involved in both University and Institute expenditures, can the Minister say whether it is the policy of the Government to support the training of professional social workers at the University in preference to the Institute of Technology?

MR MALCOLM FRASER - The honourable member is correct when he says that a small number of graduate or post-graduate students study social work of various kinds in universities such as the University of Western Australia. Having said that, I must point out that sub-graduate courses are available at the Western Australian Institute of Technology, the South Australian Institute of Technology and possibly some other institutes. I know of these two at the moment. The courses offered in the colleges or institutes are very important for practicing social workers. The qualities demanded are high but they are not necessarily related to academic attainment. If only those with degrees or post-graduate degrees were able to undertake social work, the opportunity to practice in this field might well be denied to a great number of people who are highly qualified and well suited because of their own characteristics to undertake this kind of work.

It is true that the Australian Association of Social Workers does not accord membership to those who have taken the course at the Western Australian Institute of Technology and I think also the South Australian Institute of Technology. The Association, of course, has this right. But it should be noted that membership of the Association is not a requirement of the Western Australian Government, for example, in appointing social workers to various activities in which the Government is concerned. I am advised that the matter of recognition of institute and college course has not been finally determined, that negotiations are likely to take place and that the institute would be pleased to discuss these matters with the Association. It might also be worth noting that the recently appointed tertiary education commission in Western Australia is likely to keep under close examination the question of co-ordination of courses offered at the Western Australian Institute of Technology and the University of Western Australia so that possible duplication might be reduced to a minimum.

The Plebiscite Debate

As President in 1968, Elery Hamilton-Smith wrote in the AASW Newsletter¹⁵⁶, 'Perhaps one of the most controversial items of business to come before the Federal Council of the Association has been the much-discussed matter of eligibility for Association membership. He commented that the issue was really about the total pattern of social welfare education in Australia and that the AASW was the only organization looking at this from a national perspective. 'Our policies obviously have a wide influence on such matters as the definition of professional vis-a-vis 'technological' education in the welfare field.'

He entreated the Association to take the initiative to develop machinery for the thoughtful and integrated planning of social welfare education. This was to include talking to all people concerned, identifying tasks in social welfare, developing training programs to prepare people for these tasks, making explicit the different types of training needed and defining 'professional' education so that it was no longer dependent purely on membership requirements. Hamilton-Smith identified that some members would find these suggestions fearful, as they implied loss of

control for the Association. 'Surely 'control' is an irrelevant word and in fact suggests a considerable degree of insecurity or even irresponsibility.' He drew members' attention to an address by Dr M.S. Rabinovitch (1965) at the Second Canadian Conference on Children. In the address, Rabinovitch reinforces the self-serving nature of professional bodies: 'With the expansion of professions has been an attitude of professionalism 'to thine own profession be true' without regard to the needs of the children.'

The debate and argument surrounding a plebiscite on whether the AASW should support any move for training of social workers in non-university institutions, demonstrates all of these features. It covers controversy, parochial versus national view, technological education versus professional education, consultation, planning, fear of loss of control and the protection of the profession.

On 20 February 1969, an Extraordinary Meeting of the Victorian branch, without dissent, carried the motion that Federal Council stay all decisions on the matter of assessment of Institute courses, until a full account of all the issues of admitting graduates from Institute courses to membership have been fully studied. It also recommended that a plebiscite of membership be carried out. On 27 March 1969, the Victorian Branch further resolved, without dissent:

That before a decision is made to accredit or not accredit any non-university course, a well documented report of all the factors and implications of such action be widely circulated to the membership of the AASW, this report to include among other things: an account of the roles of universities and other tertiary educational institutions; the expected impact of a decision by the AASW on the expansion of university courses in social work; the effect of such a decision on the status of the profession in the eyes of government, other professions, students and clients and, the value or otherwise of more than one category of membership.'

This is almost the same statement as a report from the Accreditation Committee to Federal Council, dated 14 April 1969 and implies that the Branch was well informed.¹⁵⁷ A Delegation was appointed to meet with the Federal Office bearers on the day before the April Federal Council Meeting.

Independently, the West Australian Branch on 17 March voted in favour of the AASW holding a referendum. The motion passed was that: 'Assessment of non-university courses not be made

¹⁵⁶NLA MS6202/19/AASW Federal Newsletter/ January 1969/No 7/April 1968/3

until the Australian Association of Social Workers has decided whether or not they will accept for membership, those persons having received a qualification from a non-University course.'

At what appeared to be the last minute, the motions from WA and Victoria were sent to a lawyer, who advised the Federal President that the requests for a plebiscite did not conform to the AASW's constitution. When the delegates arrived at the meeting on the 19th April, they heard that the motions submitted by WA and Victoria did not constitute a clear or legal request for a plebiscite, because they did not specify the question to be put to the association members and the wording of the question was not identical. John Lawrence, who was in the chair at the Federal Council, is quoted in the official minutes as follows:

The president commented that if the wording of the request had met minimal standards of clarity and it was clear that it was identical with the request from WA branch, the Federal Council would be bound constitutionally not to be discussing whether or not to discuss the plebiscite but when the plebiscite would be held. He added 'It may be that the people have not pursued this clearly enough. It is not a matter of consulting legal opinion but of clearly stating in writing what the formal position you want to raise with the Federal body is. This is a matter of logical construction of English... it is an incompetent request quite apart from the legal question.

From the beginning of the meeting the atmosphere was tense and difficult.¹⁵⁷ Lawrence's comments constituted a strategy of fragmentation. In the *melée*, Elery Hamilton-Smith tendered his resignation and left the meeting. A motion to accept the resignation was lost: Elery Hamilton-Smith returned and joined in the debate.

Marie Coleman, from Victoria, read a document forwarded by the Federal Secretary on 16 April 1969, just three days before. Mrs Coleman stated that the document appeared to concede the legality of the request prior to the reception of the written request and before legal opinion was sought and, in view of this moved that the chairman's ruling be dissented from. The battle of words began, revealing that Elery Hamilton-Smith had unintentionally misled the Victorian Branch. Lawrence diverted the meeting's attention by referring to the precise wording of the constitution. This shifted the focus, away from Hamilton-Smith and back to the 'concrete-rational' which, in effect, shone the spot-light back on the inadequacies of the Branches and away from the inadequacies of the Federal Executive and Office in its advice and support to Branches.

¹⁵⁷ Subsequently, a meeting of the Victorian Branch on 10 April put a motion to rescind the 20 February resolution. It was defeated 21 to 37.

¹⁵⁸ Lawrence's report in the next AASW Federal Newsletter NLA MS6202/19/AASW Federal Newsletter/April 1969/No11/3

Ms Coleman, quoted directly in the minutes, said that the motions represented 'more than a simple request for a plebiscite: they included the idea that a decision on assessment of courses should be held over until the plebiscite has been held.'¹⁵⁹ Never-the-less, the motion that the President's view be dissented from was lost 4:13.

Elery Hamilton-Smith offered two possibilities of words for an alternative motion. These were:

That the Association shall conduct a plebiscite of the members on the motion 'That the Association shall admit to membership, subject to assessment and approval of the courses concerned according to criteria determined by the association from time to time, persons who have completed courses in Social Work Education conducted other than in universities.'¹⁶⁰

or

That the Association shall conduct a plebiscite of members on the motion 'That the Association shall not admit to membership under any circumstances, persons who have completed only Australian Courses of Social Work conducted other than within universities.'¹⁶¹

Wooler (WA) said he had a clear mandate from WA to move in favour of the second wording. The circumstances in WA had changed so much that members disagreed with Federal Council's policy of negotiating with Institutes. He explained that, on 17 December 1968, the Western Australian press had reported that the University social work course was under threat. Despite protests, a press statement from the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Western Australia, on February 13, 'pointed out that the University and Institute courses could be constructed as duplicating and that some rationalization was necessary. Shortly after, the Federal Minister for Education (Fraser) reiterated in Parliament the principle of duplication and rationalization. The implication was that, without intervention, the University course could be lost and, with it, professional status. The AASW WA informed him that the Institute course had not been assessed or accredited and, on March 27, the Vice-Chancellor stated that, in the light of the information, no further action would be taken. Because the matter related to Federal Government education policy, it was a federal issue. The events in WA could reflect government attitudes to all similar situations. For AASW WA accreditation of the WAIT course would mean the end of the UWA course.'¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/19-20 April 1969/15

¹⁶⁰NLA MS6202/Minutes Federal Council/19-20 April 1969/16

¹⁶¹ibid

¹⁶²NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/19-20 April 1969/17

Elery Hamilton-Smith responded by saying that a plebiscite was not the answer. He agreed that association policy should be reviewed and that the issues requiring review were far wider than the location of social work courses. He stated that the Minister's (Fraser) statement was incompetent and one of the Association should take it up strongly, adding that it did not even reflect the view of the Minister's Department. He went on to say that the issues are far too complex to submit to a plebiscite, especially given the constantly changing situation in Australian tertiary education and that the Association needed to direct attention, too, to universities who have not caught up with developments in university education. He said that the plebiscite was untimely, because it put the association in a position where it could not approach the Minister, because policy was unclear and finally

professional education for social workers in Colleges of Advanced Education is inevitable, irrespective of what the Association does. It would be necessary for the Association to maintain tight control and high standards, yet a plebiscite implies turning away from control.¹⁶³

Ms Brown from Tasmania, commented that accreditation had been under active consideration for two and a half years and a report had been issued, to which Tasmania had responded. The timing of the plebiscite was wrong because graduates were exiting SAIT and Tasmania had a joint Institute-University course, based on federal decisions. The standing of the profession would be questioned if they were to ask this now, when it should have been asked years ago!

The Association has professional standing. Tasmanian Branch has a dominating position in their negotiations - this will be destroyed if the Association now questioned normal democratic procedures.¹⁶⁴

In this comment, Brown shows that the Association could have been involved in a commanding position in social welfare education far earlier than 1969. Tasmania, because it was in a sense behind in developing welfare courses, was able to do this in an integrated way. It was something that the mainland states had neglected and, as a consequence, were struggling with the changes in education. Tasmania could not risk losing its impetus for development and change or risk losing the strong position the Association had in the state.

Mrs Coleman pulled the meeting back by saying that she had some concerns about the wording of the motion and moved that the plebiscite be conducted after the report of the Joint

¹⁶³NLA MS6202/Minutes Federal Council/19-20 April 1969/17-18

¹⁶⁴NLA MS6202/Minutes Federal Council/19-20 April 1969/18

Committee on Social Welfare Education in Australia (JCSWEA) has been made available to the membership as a whole. This was carried.

In addition, it was agreed that a special report was needed which would include: an account of the roles of universities and other tertiary institutions; the expected impact of a decision by the AASW on the expansion of university courses in social work; the effect of such a decision on the status of the profession in the eyes of government, other professions, students and clients and, the value or otherwise of more than one category of membership. A committee of five from NSW would develop this statement.¹⁶⁵

Lawrence's Response To Fraser

Professor R.J. Lawrence wrote to the Hon J.M. Fraser on 26 May stating that his statement in answer to Mr. Chaney had given rise to intense criticism and asked for his comment on the necessity for a high standard of academic preparation for competent professional practice. Lawrence informed the Minister that the Commonwealth Public Service accepted neither the WAIT nor SAIT¹⁶⁶ course for entry into a social work position and that eligibility for membership of the AASW was recognized by the CPSB and a number of state public service authorities. He added the AASW had been in regular discussion with the two Colleges of Advanced Education, in order to assist these institutions to establish adequate minimum standards of professional education. Lawrence told him of the Joint Committee on Social Welfare Education in Australia Study and, finally, that the SAIT course, at its present stage of development, did not meet 'our criteria for admission to membership.'

There are two immediate comments on Lawrence's reply. The 'colleges' were both institutes of technology and there is little evidence of regular contact with the AASW occurring if one uses the AASW minutes and correspondence as an accurate record. Second, the Commonwealth Public Service (CPSB) negotiations were done before there were any courses in social work at ITs or CAEs. Therefore, the CPSB decision could be seen to need review in the light of new course developments. Before SAIT and WAIT, many of the university courses were only at

¹⁶⁵NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Federal Council/19-20 April 1969/22

¹⁶⁶This statement of Lawrence's does not accurately reflect the correspondence received by the AASW from the CPSB on 19 May 1969, where they state that graduates from SAIT will be eligible for Grade 1 social work positions - and this is why the eligibility for membership criteria was omitted from the job advertisements in July 1969- and, that the CPSB would be advertising cadetships for the SAIT course.

diploma level and diploma level was acceptable to the CPSB. With the movement of diploma courses out of the universities and into the second tier of the binary system, Lawrence used the fact that previous acceptable courses had *only* been in universities. The language used sounded conciliatory, it sounds like SAIT could, if they wanted to, earn membership to the AASW but they are not doing it. The trouble was SAIT could not, unless it became a degree conferring body and that the diploma became a four-year degree or a post-graduate degree.

Mr. Fraser's reply dated 18 July ¹⁶⁷stated:

The specific question directed to me concerned the provision of tertiary courses in social work in Western Australia and whether Commonwealth funds were for one category of institution rather than another. It can be said that Commonwealth funds would be available for social work courses in colleges or universities provided that appropriate Commonwealth advisory body supported the course, that the government concurred and that there was no unnecessary duplication. In line with the enunciated Commonwealth position social work courses in colleges of advanced education can be fully tertiary but should have a different emphasis to similarly titled courses in the universities. While only two colleges provide courses in social work at present others may well do so in the future. If this happens, then we will see an increasing proportion of social work students in colleges.

The colleges are being assisted to provide more vocationally oriented courses than those provided by universities. Hence the reference in my reply to Mr. Chaney to practicing social workers. The college courses should be designed for people who will undertake social work. While the universities will produce the same type of person they would expected also to produce the teachers of social work and researchers into social welfare. I should hope that this difference in scope of tertiary courses would be of future benefit to the community.

I am appreciative of the problem of the acceptance of graduates from new institutions and courses, as time alone tells whether they are as competent as graduates from established institutions and courses. Social work graduates from the Western Australian Institute of Technology will be accepted by the State government and, provided it can be shown that a college course is tertiary and a demand exists for its graduates, the Commonwealth can provide financial support under the advanced education arrangements. You will be aware that recently the Commonwealth Public Service Board gave limited recognition to the South Australian Institute of Technology diploma course in social work in accordance with its Determination [sic] relating to social work positions. I understand that, while the Determination makes no reference to membership of your Association as a condition of employment the advice of your Association was sought by the Public Service Board in its consideration of the South Australian Institute of Technology diploma as it is interested in the views of the Association on question relating to the employment of social workers as a professional grading.

I agree that the establishment of the Joint Committee to examine the whole field of social work education was an important move taken by your Association and I await its report with interest. I welcome any moves which improve the nature and quality of tertiary education in colleges and universities and reports such as that by the Joint Committee can be of considerable assistance to governments in their efforts to assist with the ordered development of tertiary education.

¹⁶⁷NLA MS6202/19/AASW Federal Newsletter/July 1969/No12/16

Internal ‘Secrets’

The WA Branch had cause to feel some threat about the location of courses and the future of the profession in that state. On 1 July, 1969, two months after the CPSB had informed the AASW that it would accept SAIT graduates to fill Grade 1 social work positions, members of the WA Branch noticed and commented on CPSB advertisements for social workers in the AASW newsletter. The advertisements did not have the eligibility for membership statement (‘applicants must be eligible to join the AASW’). No action was taken until after the Federal President met with the Head of the CPSB. There was no reply to the letter from AASW WA on file. The Federal Executive was aware of the CPSB decision with regard to SAIT. The Federal Executive would appear to have kept secret something that was in fact public knowledge, by omitting to transfer this information on to the state. The strategy of implying that the Federal President would raise this issue directly with the CPSB cloaked executive’s lack of desire for any of the Western Australians to know that a Diploma course in an Institute of Technology *had* been given external validity before it had won accreditation. The Association bought time because the WAIT/UWA dispute was politically sensitive. It is no surprise that the Branches felt some alienation from the machinery of the Federal Executive, following what could be described as a ‘monopolistic collective power used to preserve the status and privileges of ‘members of the profession’ (Lawrence ¹⁶⁸).

WAIT’s Success

On 6 November, 1969, the Administrative Committee¹⁶⁹ instructed the Accreditation Committee to draft a letter to WAIT, inviting them to present a *prima facie* case for accreditation. WAIT passed its accreditation on the first round.

Summary

The AASW entered into the accreditation process using quantitative minimum standards. Urquhart and Hamilton-Smith both saw the necessity for the Association to become pro-active in the development of a fully articulated and integrated system of education for social welfare personnel in Australia. However, neither consumer representation from the fathers of SAIT

¹⁶⁸NLA MS6202/19/AASW Federal Newsletter/January 1969/No10/3

students nor direct contact from the Minister for Education could dissuade the AASW from constructing itself in the most limited way. Fraser's words reflect a tendency towards social justice by suggesting that there were people who could engage in excellent social work with adequate training from an Institute of Technology course, even if it was seen to be less academic than a university.

Lawrence was caught in a web of dissimulation and knew, too, that change was inevitable - he reacted. He did not actively encourage the membership to change. One could say that the use of legal advice on the plebiscite had the opposite outcome. In retrospect, one is forced to ponder the role of R. J. (John) Lawrence, the structure of the Association and its decision-making processes. Were the regular members too busy or burnt-out by burgeoning case-loads; were they too sheltered from knowledge, reports and debates and thus kept in a position where consent could only be ill-informed or inadequately informed? And, why was it necessary for this small organization to operate in formal bureaucratic mode, taking months to reply to urgent matters, so that they are presented at Federal Council meetings? There is evident a veneer of democratic process covering another system of decision-making less visible to the general membership.

The range of concepts used by those engaged in debates and the passion with which they deliver these statements, the construction of their arguments and the outcomes of their deliberations are rich. The direction is pointed towards status, establishing a position and ensuring that any past gains are not lost through changes in the political, economic and social environment.

Hence, in this chapter, we see more clearly the interplay between the use of concepts and the decision-making (or non-decision-making) processes within the AASW itself. This is clearly located within a changing political and economic environment where educational institutions themselves are having their roles and functions re-defined. The AASW is seen to be an active participant in this environment, for greater or less effect.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE SPLIT IN THE AASW: 1970-1974

Competing Pressures

Pareto used to say that élites are destined to 'waste away' when they cease to believe in themselves, when they lose their morale and their morality and begin to cross the line in the wrong direction. This is also one of the functions of the act of institution: to discourage permanently any attempt to cross the line, to transgress, desert or *quit*.

Bourdieu, 1991:122

1970 heralded an era of challenge and change for the Association. It embarked on a mass reaccreditation of the 13 schools of social work. Further, it was confronted by the Arbitration Commission's request for advice on the assignment of an 'industry of social work' and thereby forced to reexamine its membership eligibility criteria, if it was to continue as a union. The discussion on this issue absorbed the major part of the decade with lasting effects on the Association and the profession as a whole. The questions included: should the Association open its membership to allow anyone in the industry of welfare to be a member? Should there be levels of membership? What were the core functions of the Association? And, if the Association remained a union, was there a need for other bodies to attend to course accreditation, standards of education and the accreditation of people with overseas qualifications?

During the reaccreditation process, two schools were found to have deficiencies. One, relatively new, was offered a consultant and given some leeway. The other, an established course, resulted in a clash between the Association and the Head of School. This provides the opportunity for a closer examination of the relationship between academics, universities and their autonomy and professional associations. This clash, combined with the reevaluation of the Association's core functions, resulted in the dissolution of the Professional Educational Accreditation Committee.

This chapter will focus on the issues and debate following the communication from Sir Richard Kirby, of the Arbitration Commission. The following chapter examines the internal debates and discussions surrounding re-accreditation of courses, especially the Sydney University Social Work course.

An Association in Flux

The Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) news bulletin reported on activities of a notorious armed robber Darcy Dugan who was allegedly rehabilitated. The ABC labelled Dugan a social worker. Social workers were enraged by the misuse of the title and wrote to the ABC. The title 'social worker' was, however, not registered. There were no grounds to ensure that journalists would not continue to take this licence. Further, unqualified people were being appointed to designated social work positions. Until there was registration of the title 'social worker', no action could be taken.¹⁷⁰

In October, Edna Chamberlain (then President) exhorted the Association to acknowledge that the world was changing, that social work practice had to change and that there would be a consequent need for change in the Association:

Perhaps the major challenge to the social work profession is to maintain relevance to the society in which it operates. In the accelerating process of social change new problems emerge and old one take on new perspectives. People who have long been victims of social circumstances are spot-lighted and changing circumstances create new victims. At the same time change processes foster new characteristics in the people victimized. Clients are more articulate than those of the past, more aware of their potential power. In discharging its responsibility to such people the profession has to consider not only whether its traditional modes of intervention are appropriate but what its stance is in relation to the people it aims to help. Historically social work has moved by a process of progressive approximation, from the concept of passing something across to people separated off by barriers of class, education and wealth, toward the concept of working together with clients, supplementing their efforts with the knowledge and skills derived from the profession.

The first objectives of our association listed in the constitution are to promote and develop social work in Australia and to promote, maintain and improve standards of professional education and practice. If further objectives are concerned with the interests of its members this can be justified only in so far as such interests are essential to the core concern of the profession of social work: the optimum welfare of the individual and the community. All members need to be alert to the inherent evils of professionalization and any distancing of our stance *viz a viz* our clients must be challenged. A professional organisation may *per se* be a factor in alienation. Too often organisational structure means that the solutions of the problem of one decade emerge ready for application when the conditions of the next decade render them already obsolete. Our minimum standards of eligibility for the profession are an example of a model which, at the point of acceptance, was recognised as needing re-examination in the light of changing needs in practice and, therefore in educational patterns. It is difficult to see how shared objectives can be sought without organisational structure but it is central to ensure that the use of such structure is facilitating not impeding goal-achievement.¹⁷¹

It is her last point, the organization of the Association and the mechanisms it will employ to achieve its objectives, that are the focus of most debates in this period. Standardization of educational programs and processes come second.

¹⁷⁰NLA MS6202/12/Minutes Administration Committee/15 January 1970/7

¹⁷¹NLA MS6202/19/AASW Federal Newsletter/No 17/October 1970/3

On 27 May, 1970, Professor R. John Lawrence (then Federal President) and Len Tierney (then convenor of PEAC) had informal discussions with Mr. McCusker (Secretary of CACAE) and Mr. Ponsford (Commonwealth Department of Education and Science.) Mr. McCusker invited Professor Lawrence to submit a discussion document on planning professional social work education for consideration by CACAE. The following quote is from this document.¹⁷²

Social work education in Australia was barely planned at all. Today, although it is clear that Government is becoming more interested in social work education, increased demand for social workers has, particularly in outlying states, led to innovations in social work education which do not reflect good planning. These recent pressures have led to the formation of a number of committees concerned with coordination and preservation of standards in social work education. The experience of other countries teaches us that generations of confusion occur if this is not done.

Lawrence and Tierney outlined the various committees formed by and with the AASW on a proposed Council on Social Work Education, the Joint Committee on Social Welfare Education and the Professional Educational and Accreditation Committee. Together these committees covered the terrain of investigating ways and means of promoting standards of Social Work Education, making recommendations to major welfare agencies in Australia on the possibility of establishing a national body on social welfare education and testing and guaranteeing professional education in Australia. The focus was on two areas: the definition of minimum standards of social work education and negotiating reciprocity agreements with professional and accrediting bodies in other countries.

The Joint Committee of Social Welfare Education in Australia was supported by a grant of \$9,000 and had surveyed all levels of social welfare education, including professional social work. Its final report¹⁷³ would recommend a comprehensive national consultative and advisory body on social welfare education. (See Appendix 6)

Present indications are that unless some assertive and responsible action is taken, education in the social welfare field will become as confused in Australia as it has been in England, where it has proved necessary to take heroic action to curb a proliferation of weak educational programmes. Federal and state agencies are becoming uneasy about the lack of order and it is increasingly difficult for the A.A.S.W. to influence what is happening.

Lawrence and Tierney wanted to influence the government to regulate the process of educating people for work in social welfare in Australia. They pushed four major points.

¹⁷²ibid

¹⁷³ACOSS 1973 *Social Welfare Education in Australia : A report of the Joint Committee on Social Welfare Education in Australia*, Sydney, Australian Council of Social Services

- 1) Social Welfare is a field of activity embracing many kinds of personnel and many disciplines.
- 2) Social Work is a profession with international standards and a distinctive educational base
- 3) There is an alarming shortage of social work educators and fieldwork facilities are still inadequate.
- 4) Social Work and Social Welfare education need to be related to the realities of recruitment, staffing and the nature of tasks to be performed. This might seem a trivial observation but too often these realities are ignored.

They said lack of demand for social workers does not mean that there was no shortage. There might have been causes, including agency policy to not employ social workers. These policies were reported to be disappearing as agencies begin to professionalize. For many agencies, the funding was too low to employ social workers and, particularly,

The salaries may be too low to attract men into the profession. This is important in terms of ensuring stability. With women there is much 'wastage' through marriage.

They also claimed that some agencies were chronically understaffed and were known not to be good to work for if you wanted to do effective work. 'Many agencies lack career range and professional stimulation', they added. They identified that the overwhelming shortage in the field was of experienced social workers, reflecting the low level of output in the 1950s. Lawrence and Tierney also claimed that there were less than 20 social workers in the country who had recent post-basic education. By this, he meant people who had completed their first qualification in social work (sometimes as a post-graduate qualification) and had gone on to do higher degrees. 'These are the social workers who can undertake key administrative, social work research and teaching positions' they stated.

They go on to add that there was a serious shortfall in education funding for social workers in comparison to other fields. They stressed that the problem was not only about training more social workers or getting cheaper social workers but also state and federal government inability to make a commitment to welfare. They added that the 'concept of 'shortage' is also clouded by conflicting professional rivalries and by ideologies concerning the nature of social welfare.'

Decisions about social work education rested with the federal policy of leaving the decisions about professional education to the states. There were, they claimed, varying degrees to which professional leadership had emerged in the states. As a society, Australia was in danger, at that stage, of institutionalizing inadequate definitions of social work education which would severely retard future development.

Putting together the statements by Chamberlain, Lawrence and Tierney demonstrates The Association in flux. Chamberlain is requiring critical analysis and review of the relevance of the profession; a recognition that the scene in practice has changed; and that clients have moved towards being partners, rather than patients, in the change process. She encourages members to ensure that nothing the Association does increases client alienation, including the Minimal Educational Requirements. Chamberlain was supporting improvement of standards through being relevant and responsive to a changing world and changing views. Lawrence and Tierney, on the other hand, not only contradict Chamberlain, they are internally inconsistent. They talk about increased demand for social workers and later identify that there is no demand for and in one state insufficient demand to employ the graduates of the university based social work course.

The Association made three responses in this period, all were the development of committees, although one did engage in research. The range of activities was primarily limited to discussion with academics and practitioners, not with clients, agencies or government. They warn of dire strife, akin to troubles in the United Kingdom but do not specify what occurred or how it was managed. They imply that education programs in social work and welfare not under the influence of the AASW are weak and may need 'assertive', 'responsible' or, indeed, 'heroic action'. They assert that to allow courses to develop where there is need, interest and demand is irresponsible, non-assertive and lacks a valued sense of vigour, energy and leadership. This sets up the Association to look strong and effective if it moves against lower level courses, rather than being seen as attempting to exercise power outside its legitimate authority.

Their discussion on the shortage of social workers makes the assumption that social workers are always better than welfare workers, even in organizations like Aboriginal Welfare Departments which had a policy of not employing social workers. They did not recognize that professionals were often trusted less than non-professionals by minority and disadvantaged groups. Nor did they accept that, in order to establish working and cooperative relationships with client groups, it was better not to employ 'a professional.'

Their choice of words in relation to low salaries and the profession being primarily female is partially indicative of the times. It was not phrased in terms of equal wage or work-value arguments. These two men did not challenge the notion that having more men in an occupation

appears to raise the status of that occupation, nor were they able, in this document, to support the contribution and value of their female colleagues as workers requiring a wage that reflects that expertise.¹⁷⁴ The other thing to note in their choice of words is the implication that, while women dominate social work, it will be 'unstable'. It was perhaps unintentional but, in a profession that was just easing out of a close alliance with traditional psychoanalytic models, such usage can be seen as diminishing the worth of women in the profession.

Women have been discriminated against in every profession open to them at all, receiving less pay for the same work (or for more skilled and conscientious service). They have either to struggle to the top by exceptional ability or to be content in the role of assistant to men who were often less qualified than they.

Bertha Reynolds 1942

Finally, their comment on 'conflicting professional rivalries and ideologies' was a strategically poor move, if the Association wanted to display a united front to the government. It indicated dissension within the Association and profession and was an attempt to minimize the impact of others who may have held views which conflicted with Lawrence and Tierney.

If, within the highest levels of the Association, that is, the outgoing and incoming Presidents, there are differences in approach and attitude so clearly marked, the circumstances within the membership can be assumed to be equally polarized and perhaps more so. This, then, is the context in which the Association found itself, as it began to grapple with the 1970s and the move to the social reform agenda of the Federal Whitlam government (1972-75).

From Psychoanalysis to Radical Practice

In the 1970s, critical analysis of the profession and its practice became *de rigueur* for those people who promoted community work (community development, community organization and community action) as distinct from case work and group work methodology. Critical theory encompasses a threefold task: to criticize existing exploitative and repressive social practices; to identify immanent trends; and to point the way for emancipatory social action (Schroyer, 1973: 27,34).

¹⁷⁴Lawrence campaigned for more men in social work to raise the professions status. This issue is taken up in Helen Marchant and Betsy Wearing's book, *Gender Reclaimed*.

Casework had moved out of a psychoanalytic, through a behaviourist, to a systems theory base in the 1960s. Technical ability in casework was held to be apolitical. To the critics, social work had forgotten its early lessons in sociology and slum clearance and joined the conservatives. Casework *per se* was seen, by the radicals, to be part of the system which promoted inequity and structural disadvantage. By the mid 1970s, there were critical social work texts, Marxist social work texts and 'radical social work' was the buzz word for a generation of community workers who had social work qualifications (Galper, 1975; Bailey and Brake, 1975; Corrigan and Leonard, 1978).¹⁷⁵

These people were the products of university based social work education. It is unlikely that they would switch off their critical faculties when it came to an analysis of the profession and when, for some, their lecturers had been Boreham, Daniels, Locke or Throssell (See Chapter 3).

The Industry of 'Professional Social Work'?

On 7 June, 1971, the AASW Federal Industrial Committee (FIC)¹⁷⁶ received a request from Sir Richard Kirby (Arbitration Commission) for the views of the AASW FIC on the assignment of the industry 'Professional Social Work'. There was general agreement that it was an interesting development. The Committee resolved¹⁷⁷ to ask Federal Council to 'determine whether member eligibility be rendered to include all persons employed in the Welfare industry as part of the definition of 'industry of professional social work.'

There had already been debate, in 1970, about the need to identify which parts of the workload were primarily professional which were not and to allocate those lesser tasks to appropriate support or technical assistants. Les Irwin, from the Federal Industrial Committee, argued that filling out aged pension forms and calling nursing homes in order to find a bed were not suitably professional tasks and would cause harm to the profession in any work-value case. In the 1970s, there was a general view that these tasks were almost clerical, partly because of the greater availability of institutional aged care services.

¹⁷⁵See also Leonard, P., 1973. Leonard was a member of the Seebom Committee on Local Authority and Allied Personal Social Services in the UK 1968. He had direct experience of the clash between traditional casework, community action and government policy changes and their effect on the social work profession in the UK.

¹⁷⁶NLA MS6202/50/7/Minutes Federal Industrial Committee/7 June 1971

¹⁷⁷ibid

...organisation and classification systems should be continually monitored by every level of practicing social worker. Every social worker, no matter where he [sic] operates, should constantly be contemplating appropriate professional standards and delineating or programming tasks so that non-professional work is allocated to subordinate staff.

Irwin goes on to quote from the *Commonwealth Professional*, a journal of the Commonwealth Professional Officers Association, with respect to similar problems in Engineering.

We must now ask our Institution of Engineers to draft an acceptable standard of sub-professions to safeguard our own professional standards and professional status, since there is no union of sub-professionals here to set the standard.¹⁷⁸

Les Irwin prepared a discussion paper for Federal Council on the industry of social work (27 July 1971)¹⁷⁹. He pointed out that, in 1955, the Association registered as an industrial organization which obviated the need for members to join other industrial organizations. This was not so in practice. Commonwealth social workers joined the Professional Officers Association (POA), state social workers joined the Public Service Association (PSA) or the POA and municipal social workers joined the Municipal Officers Association (MOA). Therefore, unions covered all, except some hospital and voluntary organization, social workers. The AASW needed an industrial officer and could not afford it. Cooperation between the unions through the AASW could enable members to be informed of state government plans in other states and be able to organize coordinated industrial claims for members, for example, work value.

The Federal Council meeting, on 9 December, 1971, decided that AASW would remain registered with the Arbitration Commission¹⁸⁰ and therefore continue to be a union. Second, that a suggested organizational structure be drawn up which would include all persons employed in the welfare industry, whilst maintaining adequate professional security and avenues for professional development.¹⁸¹

In order that their position as a union representing all persons in the industry of professional social work was sustained, the following resolution was presented:

¹⁷⁸NLA Ms6202/19/AASW Federal Newsletter / October 1970/8

¹⁷⁹NLA MS6202/50/7/Memo to Federal Industrial Committee from Federal Secretary L Irwin/27 July 1971

¹⁸⁰NLA MS6202/50/7/Minutes Federal Industrial Committee/22 March 1972/Resolution 112/71

¹⁸¹NLA MS6202/50/7/Minutes Federal Industrial Committee/22 March 1972/Resolution 113/71

That a classification of 'occupational associate' of the Association be created to encompass persons not holding qualifications from a school of social work approved by Federal Council who are engaged in a salaried capacity in a position designated by their employing authority as equivalent in duties, responsibility and status to a position occupied by a member of the Association.¹⁸²

The motion failed.

Undeterred, Colin Benjamin presented to FIC a discussion paper on the category of occupational associate¹⁸³ (See Appendix 7). The constitution of the AASW makes it clear that there is only one kind of member - a full member. This new category would constitute a form of full membership and not an associate membership.¹⁸⁴ Benjamin clarified the position of the AASW, in terms of its requirements under the industrial laws and regulations and challenged the Association to respond in a manner consistent with the ethic of maximizing human potential and promoting social justice. He compared the separation of social workers from social welfare workers as akin to race based discrimination - 'whites' as opposed to 'non-whites'.

It was an attempt to build bridges and enable the Association to continue to operate as a union, without compromising its constitution and original purpose as a professional body. At the same time, it tried to address social justice and equity provisions and reduce criticism that the Association was elitist. There was no avoiding the confrontation of rights, justice and the protection of the profession.¹⁸⁵

The main point in this section is not occupational closure or the rights or wrongs of this decision. More important is the way in which power is perceived; how people argue for and against change to the *status quo*; and the final outcome of the decisions made. That process, is central to the analysis of what is occurring within the AASW at this juncture.

¹⁸²NLA MS6202/50/7/Minutes Federal Industrial Committee/22 March 1972/Resolution 117/71

¹⁸³NLA MS6202/50/7/Minutes Federal Industrial Committee/22 March 1972

¹⁸⁴ibid

¹⁸⁵The construction of the new category meant that a person with a TAFE Welfare Certificate, who had been working in Accident and Emergency of a major hospital for 10 years and had a salary higher than a new graduate social worker, who worked in a neighbouring hospital in the same position, became an occupational associate. The new graduate became eligible for full-membership. Previously, the former had no access to membership at all and no representation industrially through AASW. Unpaid workers like volunteers and directors of welfare services, especially in the religious, non-government end of welfare, too, might be doing exactly the same work as senior social work practitioners and managers. If they were not included in membership, this, too, would be occupational closure. It might, on today's standards, constitute restrictive trade practice and the construction of a monopoly.

The Western Australian Branch of the AASW was frustrated with Federal Council's first rejection of the category of occupational associate.¹⁸⁶ They were concerned that, unless the membership was broadened, the Association would have to withdraw its registration with the Arbitration Commission and the WA members needed industrial protection. They proposed that the full implications of registration with the Commonwealth Council and Arbitration Commission be published and circulated to the members. They formally expressed concern over Federal Council's failure to debate the Union issue, as moved at the previous Federal Council Meeting.

In 1973, the debate took two directions. The first acknowledged that the Association was an organization for the welfare industry and would have two levels of membership: one for professional social workers and one for others. This reinforced the category of occupational associate as a type of full member. The second direction was to say that there was a welfare industry and a professional social work industry which have distinct differences. In this view the definition of a professional social worker ¹⁸⁷was

that the person uses one or more methods of professional social work and teaches people to do this in accordance with the aims of social work profession. The person is employed in a position the aims of which are not inconsistent with the profession which involves use of one or more of its methods.

Using this definition, the eligibility for membership of the Association could remain unchanged and the Association could, subject to confirmation by the Arbitration Commission, remain registered as a union but only for professional social workers.¹⁸⁸

This was not to be the end of the debate. The AASW's position, from the view of Federal Council, differed from views being formulated in some state branches. In the meantime, the investigation of registration of the title social worker was in progress and continued throughout the year.

¹⁸⁶NLA MS6202/50/7/Notice of Motion from WA Branch for April 1972 Federal Council/11 April 1972/8

¹⁸⁷This was taken from Rule 3 of the Constitution

¹⁸⁸NLA MS6202/50/7/Minutes Federal Industrial Committee/11 June 1973/Resolution 47/73

Meeting with the Minister: Senator Kim Beazley (Snr)

The context of the AASW in 1973 is best outlined in the report of a meeting between the President (Mrs Thomas), Vice-President (Mrs Benn) and Federal Secretary (Mr. Belcher) of the Association with Senator Kim Beazley, then Federal Minister of Education, on 9 April.¹⁸⁹

The Association began by explaining their interests in three main areas: the differential shortage of social workers; the proliferation of social welfare courses; and the use of unqualified or less qualified personnel.¹⁹⁰ They specifically asked for funding to thoroughly investigate making-up for persons with overseas qualifications and the development of a one-year course for this. They presented the Minister with a document prepared by PEAC on recommended measures to increase the quantity and quality of social work services available to the Australian community.

The Minister is reported to have agreed with the Association that social work and social welfare education is for the benefit of the community. He referred to the forthcoming university grants bill and asked what was the AASW's attitude to the social work course being developed by WAIT. The Minister demonstrated that he was clearly familiar with the School. The Association's expressed concern that there would not be sufficient funding made available to WAIT to support the course and they had equal concerns about other such courses.

¹⁸⁹Also present at the meeting were Mr Kaye (Secretary of the Australian Universities Commission) and Mr Fricker (Secretary of the Australian Committee on Advanced Education), both of whom had also been present at a previous meeting of the Executive with the Minister for Social Security. Mr Hayden had referred the executive to Mr Beazley for discussion on specific educational aspects of social welfare manpower in Australia. NLA MS6202 51/1/Minutes of Meeting with Mr K Beazley (sic) 9 April 1973

¹⁹⁰The Association stated that the differential shortage of social workers across states was a result of the dependence of each state on the local production of social workers and the difficulties of getting people to work outside main centres. They highlighted that high level of females in the profession and shortage of male social workers, further contributed to the difficulties in non-metropolitan areas. The Association argued the shortage of social workers, with middle level experience, research workers, teaching social workers, those with administration qualifications and/or experience and social workers trained in community organisation.

They acknowledged a proliferation of courses which they said were created in an unplanned and uncoordinated way leading to inefficient use of limited resources. They added that there was an assumption in the development of these courses that there was merely a shortage of base grade social workers. They identified the need for diverse generic courses, so different schools can have different emphases and for post-graduate work in existing schools related to differential shortages. This, they said, was a prerequisite to enlargement of existing schools and establishment of new schools. Further, the location of schools should be relative to the need for social workers; availability of resources for field work and teaching and based on the capacity of the institution to provide professional courses.

State governments and the non-government sector were using unqualified, or less qualified personnel, in positions where a social worker was needed. These people, it was argued, needed opportunities to transfer to a higher level qualification, where social workers were doing the teaching. Similarly, some migrants require make-up courses to be able to qualify for practice in Australia.

Senator Beazley indicated that he was sympathetic to planning but that he must not delay urgently needed reforms and shortages of personnel in the wider fields of education and welfare. At the same time he noted that the government would not support any moves to obtain more social workers by the lowering of standards.

He expressed interest in the welfare and education of Aboriginal and other minority groups and found value in welfare courses for persons from these groups who might be ineligible for university social work courses. He stated that some Aboriginal and minority communities were distrustful of professionals and that he had an interest in the means to train social workers in the Northern Territory. He stated, moreover, that, in education, teachers should have increased cultural sensitivity and was interested in the role social workers might be able to have in this development.

Senator Beazley inquired after the Association's involvement in the Northern Territory and Papua New Guinea, especially in the education of social workers in PNG. He explained that education was not only the producer of social workers but also a consumer and saw a role for social workers in assisting with disadvantaged children in schools. He asked for advice on this from the Association.

There was discussion on the need for refresher courses for social workers returning after an absence and that universities or colleges did not currently provide this, though the demand was there. The issue of the expense of field education to welfare agencies, both government and non-government, was raised and the Minister was asked to allocate money for the establishment of student units. Finally, the idea of a National Council of Social Work Education was raised and the Minister requested a copy of the Report of the Joint Council on Social Work Education in Australia.

The meeting with the Minister highlights the breadth of changes in focus and the priorities that were seen to be more important by the Federal Government. The focus was more on responding to disadvantage; getting good basic services on the ground where they were needed; and training those people most likely to be of immediate and direct use. Senator Beazley made it clear that it was no assumption that more base grade workers were needed: it was a fact and base grade workers were needed in a broader array of roles than hitherto conceived by the AASW. He acknowledged the need for senior and expert personnel and, at the same time,

maintained his focus on issues of training for adequate direct service delivery to those most in need in the Australian and Papua New Guinean populations.¹⁹¹

National Registration of Social Workers

On 28 March, 1973¹⁹², the Federal Secretary sent a document on national registration of the association to all federal office bearers, delegates and branches. It gave notice of a motion for the agenda of the next Federal Council meeting scheduled for April 1973 which read:

That the Federal Council of the AASW proceeds immediately with action towards the establishment of a Federal Registration Board for Professional Social Workers under the auspices of the Minister for Social Security

The main focus was that there be a form of national registration to promote consistency and the ability of people to relocate across state boundaries. The authorities who register are State Registration Boards. The Commonwealth has no constitutional power to set up registration authorities. Nevertheless the Association raised it directly with the then Minister for Social Security, Bill Hayden, in relation to a discussion on social welfare manpower.¹⁹³

For over two years, a sub-committee of the Victoria Branch had been engaged in research and action to establish a Victoria Registration Board for Professional Social Workers, by means of an Act of State Parliament. However, the draft was never completed, due to changes in membership and lack of involvement by appropriate members already heavily committed. It would seem that the extent of work and time required by the project were the main reasons for this delay. The Victoria Branch Council was convinced that a Federal Board for Professional Social Workers was the ideal and only practicable, solution. They argued that a federal board for professional social workers would guard against different models being used in individual states – which, in some cases, due to local conditions, may not be in the interests of the profession.

In April, 1973, the Federal Council resolved that the Association seek the establishment of a National Registration Board for Social Workers. In July, 1973, Federal Executive Council

¹⁹¹There is no record of a reply to the Minister especially on Aboriginal and Papua New Guinean needs.

¹⁹²NLA MS6202/50/3/Notice of Motion for Federal Council Meeting April 1973/7

¹⁹³NLA MS6202/50/8/Registration Interim Report/January 1973. Federal Executive Committee proposed national registration with then Minister for Social Security Mr Bill Hayden.

¹⁹⁴stated that Federal Industrial Committee be authorized to proceed with investigation of implications for the Association of National Registration. It was stated in the report that the Federal Secretary interpreted 'implications' as meaning 'means of achievement'.

The disadvantages of registration were identified as being that the title only is registered. An employer or unqualified person may call himself or herself something else. There may be dangers in ascribing a rigid definition to a professional practice which traditionally identifies a problem, changes its practice and opens new ground. The definition of practice unnecessarily complicates the recognition of competent migrant practitioners and the definition would not suit everyone.

The disadvantages in not registering were identified as enabling shoddy practice to occur; that some people would abuse the title of the profession; and not use it as the Association would like it understood. Registration is costly both financially and in terms of time to organize Acts of Parliament. The Labor Party's Policy on national registration (Health) had highlighted constitutional problems. An alternative way around the issue was to encourage members of the Association to use MAASW after their names, to identify themselves as qualified professional social workers. Moving towards registration was therefore not going to be a solution to the problem of the Association being able to discriminate between qualified professional social workers and less qualified or unqualified, people working in the industry.

Membership for 'Ineligible' Academics

PEAC received a letter from R Moffat (Western Australia) at their meeting on 8 May, 1974¹⁹⁵, suggesting that teachers in accredited schools be accepted to full-membership of the Association. This was debated and a resolution carried that Federal Council create a special category of full membership through which Heads of School, who do not qualify by reason of educational qualifications, may be admitted at the discretion of Federal Executive Committee. In this way, people of the highest status were granted membership although they may not have been members of the profession nor practised even one social work method.

¹⁹⁴NLA MS6202/50/8/Registration Interim Report/July 1973

¹⁹⁵NLA MS6202/50/6/Minutes Professional Education and Accreditation Committee/8 May 1974/57

This was a very different response from that received by Les Irwin, Convenor of FIC, who wrote to Ms Elizabeth (Beth) Ward, then Convenor of PEAC, on 8 May, 1974.¹⁹⁶ He sought information on the Minimum Educational Requirements and asked whether people who do not have four-year degrees would be able to join the Association. While he agreed, in principle, with the desirability for them to make-up their qualifications, he was aware of the Association's falling membership, to the extent that it was in serious financial trouble and asked whether this degree of perfectionism was 'appropriate in the circumstances?' He added that the difficulties experienced by applicants in making-up further decreased the flow of new members in a time when there was a great demand for social work manpower. He added that such people have no trouble getting jobs without Association membership and that they will 'undermine the Association's influence in the workplace.' He concluded with:

in view of falling membership figures, FIC, believes that any person formerly eligible to be members of AASW should remain eligible after the new MER comes into operation.

Beth Ward's reply was sent on 16 July, 1974¹⁹⁷. Two months had passed before a response was sent from one internal committee to another. Ward replied, stating that there were sound reasons for insisting on educational requirements and enumerated the following: the ensuring of effective standards of service to the Australian community; and fairness to those with overseas qualifications. 'I take it we would still be requiring of them qualification meeting the new MER' and, industrially, 'would it not be a real weakness in any argument put forward for better conditions and/or salaries to have to admit that a 2 year diploma (Aust) is enough to allow eligibility for membership of the Association?' She said that it was PEAC's intention to widely advertise the proposed implementation of the new statement of Minimum Educational Qualifications and offered that the time before full implementation could be extended to accommodate people who were formerly eligible for membership.

The 19 June, 1974 meeting, brought a letter to PEAC from Federal Executive¹⁹⁸, asking them to prepare guidelines and objective criteria for assessment of 'experience', as a means of testing the feasibility of the proposal, using the educational component of professional experience, in order to meet the minimum educational requirements. This was particularly in light of applicants for

¹⁹⁶NLA MS6202/50/8/Les Irwin letter to E Ward Convenor of Professional Education and Accreditation Committee/8 May 1974/8

¹⁹⁷NLA MS6202/50/8/E Ward letter to Les Irwin/16 July 1974/8

¹⁹⁸NLA MS6202/50/6/Minutes Professional Education and Accreditation Committee/19 June 1974/61, Letter from Federal Executive Committee dated 3 May 1974

membership, who were eligible before 30 June, 1974 but, due to the change in MER, were no longer.

PEAC's response was that it did not consider guidelines of this type either necessary or desirable, as the onus should be placed on the applicant to establish a case for consideration. The AASW will use its discretion to consider and decide. They quoted 3.4 of the MER

Using the educational component of professional experience in order to meet the minimum requirements. In exceptional circumstances applicants educational progress falls short, 'if the Association is satisfied that the amount and quality of his subsequent experience has been such to compensate for these educational deficits.'

The processing of these three matters demonstrates that the activities of PEAC were not transparent to the general membership. In the last issue, PEAC appeared to refuse a direct request from Federal Executive. The question of the powers and accountability of PEAC arises.

Open Membership

The 1974 September Federal Council Meeting¹⁹⁹ was preceded by Victoria consolidating the arguments related to the category of occupational associate, to open up discussion about the Association's obligations as a union and its commitment to professionalism. The Victoria branch of the AASW reported that there were an estimated 553 Social Workers presently employed in Melbourne metropolitan area and in government regional offices. Of those, 334 were AASW members and 219 non-members. At their Annual General meeting, it was recommended that the Association establish itself as a union and open membership to approved persons in the welfare industry.²⁰⁰ The establishment of the Joint Federal-Victoria Committee on Welfare Education and Employment Issues (CWEEI) was due, in part, to this motion.

¹⁹⁹NLA MS6202/50/5/Minutes AASW Federal Council/20 September 1974/7

²⁰⁰This was seen as an extension of two of the 1973 conference recommendations, one of which urged close liaison with all persons employed in the welfare field, while the other sought the establishment of a committee to study the feasibility of creating membership of the Association for persons with a tertiary qualification in social welfare and who are working in an area of social welfare or in a social welfare agency.

The 1974 Victoria Branch Conference also recommended the amendment of the Minimum Educational Requirements (MER) for membership of the Association, making possible the membership of a wider range of people than catered for in the current MER.²⁰¹

The Victoria Branch of the AASW passed nine resolutions at its annual general meeting to be sent to Federal Council. These were that the

- 1) Association should be open to all persons engaged in and in connection with the industry of professional social work;
- 2) Current statement for minimal requirements for educational programs for establishing eligibility for membership should be adapted for each educational group engaged in or in connection with the industry of professional social work.
- 3) The current AASW Minimum Educational requirements for membership be recognised as covering those persons who hold an academic qualification which is in the field of social work as defined by those requirements.
- 4) Bodies such as AIWO, SAANZ, APS etc be invited to provide Minimum educational requirements for other professional groups who could join the Association under the current registration with the Arbitration Commission as being employed in connection with the industry of professional social work.
- 5) The AASW should provide resources for establishment of an Australian Academy of Social Workers which would inter alia provide future current minimal educational requirements for academically professional social workers which could seek registration of the profession under legislation.
- 6) AASW should take industrial action for all financial members in connection with the industry
- 7) AASW can only take effective industrial action in association with other related industrial unions such as ACTU, ACSPA and Public Service Unions
- 8) AASW (Vic Branch) may register as a member of the Victorian Trades Hall Council
- 9) The AASW (Vic Branch) seek individual coverage under State Wages Board for other occupational groups engaged in connection with the industry of professional social work by extending the terms of reference of the Wages Board.

The members in Victoria clearly supported the notion of the AASW fulfilling its union role, in suggesting methods by which other occupational groups could gain full membership, without compromising the Association's commitment to educational and quality practice.

A Union and an Australian Academy

At the Biennial Federal Council Meeting, 20 September, 1974²⁰², Colin Benjamin presented a report from the Arbitration Commission in which he made the following observations. First, the experience of Federal Executive Council, in the period 1973-4, had shown that the primary function of AASW, at federal level, was the maintenance of standards for professional education

²⁰¹An exploratory meeting to discuss this possibility was held on 4 September 1974 and attended by 25 social workers. An Interim Steering Committee for an Australian Academy of Social Worker was set up by the meeting.

²⁰²NLA MS6202/50/5/Minutes AASW Federal Council/20 September 1974

and practice in social work. He proposed, therefore, that Federal Council withdraw from all other functions. He however, recommended that:

this Federal Council recognize that the constitution of the AASW was that of a union which is registered with the Arbitration Commission and thus the delegates and members of this Federal Council should constitute an Australian Academy of Social Workers which shall through its Professional Education and Accreditation Committee, approve qualifications of appropriate applicants who desire to be accredited as 'academically qualified professional social workers'.

In this way, he proposed not to dissolve the Association's union functions or compromise the standard setting and educational responsibilities of the professional association:

That an Academy of Professional Social Workers be formed to seek the following objectives (and then disband)

- (a) establish a National Council of Social Welfare Education
- (b) seek Registration of Professional Social Workers currently eligible for membership of the A.A.S.W.
- (c) maintain and develop the Minimum Educational requirement (M.E.R.s)

Benjamin presented three other motions. There is no detailed description of the discussion or debate but the results were, first, that the meeting unanimously resolved that the AASW adopts the following principles for future development (Motion 51):²⁰³

1. That the present standard setting function performed by the AASW be re-located as an independent but related body or bodies
2. That the AASW re-examine being registered with the Arbitration Authorities
3. That the AASW move towards formal organisational relationships with other welfare manpower groups
4. That there remains a formal grouping of professional social workers in Association with any future organisational structures.

This motion formally recognizes that the AASW's constitution was that of a union. The next motion (Motion 52), also passed unanimously, was that resolution 10/73, i.e., 'That the AASW continues a distinct body of professional social workers only' be rescinded (Res. 27/74). On the surface, this motion appears to be an open door but it was not. The Association would act in industrial matters for people who were not eligible for membership of the AASW but it did not open up membership to people who did not meet the Minimum Educational Requirements. The passing of these motions enabled the Association additional time to debate and to consider restructuring options, before opening the membership to non-professional social workers.

The third (Res. 30/74) required the Federal Executive and Office Bearers to explore the possibility of registering with the ACTU and/or ACSPA. Further that subject to prior

consultation with the Branches, the Federal Executive Committee was empowered to proceed to such necessary steps as might be required for affiliation and report to the next Federal Council Meeting.

A motion to reconstitute the Educational and Professional Functions of the AASW as an Academy of Social Workers which should, through its Professional Education and Accreditation Committee, approve qualification of applicants was lost. But one for the provision of resources and support for an 'Interim Steering Committee for an Australian Academy of Social Workers', was passed. The Interim Steering Committee was already established in Victoria. It was charged to work in conjunction with the FEC to consider the establishment of an Australian Academy of Social Workers. It was to assess the need for and the role of, such an Academy, seeking the opinion of social workers, both individually and as organized through the Australian Association of Social Workers and report its findings to members of the social work profession in Australia. In the event that these findings supported the establishment of an Academy, the Federal Council should take the necessary steps to bring such an Academy into being. The interim steering committee was asked to consider the establishment of a National Council of Social Welfare Education, registration of Professional Social Workers currently eligible for membership of the AASW and maintenance and development of the minimum educational requirements.

Candidacy Status and Student Associate Membership

At this Biennial Federal Council meeting, the schools of social work who were not fully accredited were granted 'candidacy status', provided they had submitted an educational program which conformed to the Association's Minimum Educational Requirements.²⁰⁴ Students could be student associates of the AASW, if the course had candidacy status (Res. 80/74). Students had been pro-active and written to PEAC requesting membership but were denied. PEAC's policy was that people were welcome to attend and observe, not participate but only on issues directly relevant to themselves. Students, at the time, maintained that any discussion of educational programs and course accreditation was directly relevant to them. There is no available record of a student observer at any PEAC meeting.²⁰⁵

²⁰³NLA MS6202/50/5/Minutes AASW Federal Council/20 September 1974/Resolution 26/74/1

²⁰⁴NLA MS6202/50/5/Minutes AASW Federal Council/20 September 1974/Resolution 78/74/3

²⁰⁵NLA MS6202/50/ Minutes Professional Education and Accreditation Committee/2 February and 17 April 1974

Following a direct report from PEAC Federal Council²⁰⁶, it was confirmed that all students enrolled in 1975, in the courses under review for reaccreditation, would be eligible for membership of the Association on completion. These courses included the Diploma in Social Administration (Flinders University), Master of Social Work (University of Western Australia), Diploma of Social Studies (Melbourne University), Bachelor of Social Work (Western Australia Institute of Technology), Bachelor of Social Work (University of NSW), Bachelor of Social Work (University of Queensland) and Bachelor of Social Studies (University of Sydney). There was no recorded debate on this.

Committee on Welfare Education and Employment Issues

The newest development at the meeting²⁰⁷ was the establishment of a national *ad hoc* Committee on Welfare Education and Employment Issues (CWEEI). Its terms of reference were to advise association councils and committees on the developments of Association policy in respect to the education, employment and deployment of other kinds of welfare personnel. Second, to make information available to the general membership on these issues. Third, to act as a resource group which might be called upon by any members to represent the association on any bodies concerned with planning education or employment of other welfare personnel. And, finally, to advise the Federal Council, Federal Executive Committee or the management of any branch, on matters within its area of competence which might be referred to it.²⁰⁸ The committee was given the power (Res. 87/74) to co-opt any member or members, recommended by the management of any branch, because of their actual involvement in planning of education or employment or other welfare personnel. In this way, the Association opened up one of its committees to people who were non-social workers.

National Council of Social Welfare Education

The Meeting between the AASW and the Heads of Schools of Social Work was reported back to the Federal Council, with the note that the AASW continued to hold the view that there should be established a National Council of Social Welfare Education and they emphasized,

²⁰⁶NLA MS6202/50/5/Minutes AASW Federal Council/20 September 1974/Resolution 120/74/4

²⁰⁷NLA MS6202/50/5/Minutes AASW Federal Council/20 September 1974/Resolution 85/74/3

²⁰⁸Resolution 86/74 placed Elery Hamilton-Smith (past President) as convener of CWEEI (Committee on Welfare Education and Employment) and that membership of the committee including interstate representatives be confirmed by the Executive Committee in discussion with the branches.

Social Welfare. Connie Benn tabled a report, documenting the history of the AASW initiatives in relation to a National Council of Social Welfare Education. Following receipt of this report, the Association resolved (124/74) that a National Council on Social Welfare [original emphasis] be established and that any subsidiary councils or conferences on social work education should not be established prior to the establishment of the National Council on Social Welfare Education. Resolution 128/74 was that the Committee on Welfare Employment and Education Issues be requested to prepare a statement on desirable standards for and suitable auspices for, programs of Welfare Education. By these resolutions, the AASW engaged formally in influencing the provision of Social Welfare Education. It sought to establish the structure which would plan, control and accredit welfare courses throughout the country. It set up systems of discussion and negotiation with the body representing welfare personnel who were not eligible to join the AASW and had one of their national *ad hoc* committees (CWEEI) comment on standards and type of educational institution suitable for the training of social welfare personnel in Australia. Until this point, the engagement of the AASW in the provision of social welfare education was more by informal influence rather than by developing a structure through which the AASW was engaged in the full range of activities involved in the establishment of social welfare courses in the nation.

Significant Changes

The Federal Council also by resolution²⁰⁹ welcomed contact which had been made with Australian Institute of Welfare Officers (AIWO) and required that the Association approach AIWO again to negotiate a formal relationship.

It was, it appears from reading the minutes of this Federal Council, a heady time. Resolution 138/74 was a statement of belief of the Association on poverty which would have to be incorporated in formal documentation from then on.

Part of the solution of poverty lies in the distribution of wealth, power and resources.

One of the final acts of the Biennial meeting was the election of a new President and members of the Executive. In the two contested positions, the candidates' position statements shed light on the main concerns of the Association. First was the necessity for a close relationship between

social work and the total welfare scene. Second was the maintenance of standards by machinery, either within or outside the professional association. Third was the development of national approach in the structure of the AASW in order to rationalize and conserve resources in the light of impending bankruptcy. Fourth was the membership question in relation to welfare industry occupational groups. Fifth was the channelling of AASW expertise in the maintenance of standards to other welfare groups. Sixth was the establishment of a common industrial organization. Seventh was actively asserting the Association's view, especially on injustice and social policy. Eighth was the marriage of social action and industrial action strategies with regionalization and flexible 'open' government of the Association. Finally was the regionalization of the AASW, to revitalize member participation in the Association and support and protect them.

Colin Benjamin's successful claim to the presidency was based on his position on the Association's continued solvency; the need to become clearly a welfare industry union which covers a range of professional groups not covered at the time; the need to increase attention to social action and making representations on social welfare manpower issues. He stated that

the Association must work out ways to bridge the gaps its professional identity has created with other disciplines and interest groups in the community. [original emphasis]... Following upon consideration and negotiation it might then be possible to promote the AASW as an effective face for the promotion of social welfare in Australia. This will require resources and a willingness to seek new ways and means in order to promote the longstanding desires of the Association.

The change in the view and the language of the Association is a marked contrast to that expressed in 1970 by Edna Chamberlain and John Lawrence and indicated major changes in position and attitudes in the Association on a number of central issues.

The Final Incision

Benjamin tried to secure, and then secured, the state directorship of VCOSS. He had not finished with the AASW. He gave it a chance to broaden its base - to become a more equitable organization, to recognize the range of welfare courses, expand its power-base and work for decent wages and conditions for workers outside the public sector. His methods, from here, focused on removing the industrial arm all-together and rending the AASW in two: the AASW

²⁰⁹NLA MS6202/50/5/Minutes AASW Federal Council/20 September 1974/Resolution 127/74/6

and the ASWU. This was a painful rift. Many who were caught in it were unwilling to join or re-join the AASW and there were some of these, who also did not need the ASWU because they were covered by other industrial associations. So the membership split four ways: staying with the AASW and not joining the ASWU; being a member of both the AASW and ASWU; leaving the AASW and joining the ASWU; leaving the AASW and not joining the ASWU.

Edna Chamberlain was right when she said ‘too often organisational structure means the that the solutions of the problem of one decade emerge ready for application when the conditions of the next decade render them already obsolete.’ The world had changed precipitately fast for the AASW. Its structure and underpinning assumptions seemed to many people to be obsolete. Some members crossed the line, transgressed, deserted or quit.