**[Member Name]**
**[Address / Email]**
**[Date]**

Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith
Minister for Health

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Finance

Minister for the Public Service

Email: stephen-smith@act.gov.au

**Subject:** Government must act now to register social workers with Aphra and protect the public

Dear Minister Stephen-Smith,

I am writing as a social worker in the Australian Capital Territory to demand action on an urgent matter of public safety: **the inclusion of social work in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS)**.

**Social work registration through NRAS is needed** to:

1. Better protect the public from harm from misconduct and poor standards of practice.
2. Uphold professional standards
3. Ensure only those who hold a social work qualification can use the title ‘social worker’.

### **The facts are clear:**

* Unregulated social work poses a **significant risk** to public health and safety.
* Social workers operate in **high-risk environments** with vulnerable people: in health and mental health services, family violence, aged care, disability, justice and child protection.
* Social work is one of the **largest nationally unregulated health and social care professions** in the country.
* There are **approximately 49,500 social workers** in Australia, growing at a rate of 3,600 social workers every year.
* **Anyone can call themselves a “social worker”**, regardless of qualifications or disciplinary history.
* There is **strong and widespread support among social workers** for national registration through NRAS.

### **A pathway to registration of social work through NRAS already exists:**

The [**Independent Review of Complexity in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (2025)**](https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/2025-09/transforming-health-professionals-regulation-in-australia-independent-review-final-report.pdf) confirms the government has both the mandate and mechanism to act:

* **Action 2.4**: recommends that where there is evidence of *current and significant risk to public health and safety*, professions should be considered for **immediate inclusion** in NRAS.
* The Review also makes clear that the **existing Guidelines allow for the inclusion of professions in social care settings**, where consistent with the Scheme’s purpose.

Social work meets these tests. The risks are current, significant, and well-documented. This is clear in the comprehensive submission provided to you by the AASW.

### **What must happen now**

I call on you to:

1. Table the AASW’s submission on social work registration at the **next Health Ministers’ Meeting**.
2. Commit to progressing social work registration via the NRAS process under **Action 2.4**.
3. Publicly affirm the government’s commitment to address existing regulatory failures that are putting people at risk across Australia.

**Minister, the evidence is clear, the mechanism exists, and the responsibility rests with you. Protect the public. Register social work now.**

Yours sincerely,
 [Name]
 [Qualifications – BSW, MSWQ, AMHSW]
 [Contact details]