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Leading with Integrity ~ Working Collaboratively

Nomination for National President, AASW



Professional Integrity

Throughout my career, across health and social and community services, I have sought to demonstrate the highest standards of personal and professional integrity, trust and accountability.

Integrity often requires courage and independence, especially when faced with competing demands or difficult decisions. I have been willing to speak honestly, even when it is uncomfortable, and to stand by decisions that uphold the values and ethics of the social work profession. In doing so, firstly as a Director and in the past 12 months, as the National President, I have consistently placed the needs of the AASW above personal views or interests.

Promoting accountability has been central to my leadership. I have worked to ensure that our governance practices are ethical, culturally appropriate and transparent, that decisions are explained openly, and that the Association operates in ways that reflect both our ethical responsibilities and our commitment to members. This approach strengthens trust, not only between members and leadership but also between the profession and the wider community.

In fulfilling this attribute, I believe that professional integrity means embodying the values of honesty, fairness, and responsibility. As National President, I remain committed to ensuring that integrity underpins every decision, every policy, and every action of the Board and the Association.

Cultural Awareness and Humility

As a social worker and as National President of the AASW, I recognise that cultural awareness and humility are essential qualities for leadership within our professional and throughout the Association. Cultivating safe cultural relationships requires not only knowledge, but also genuine respect, openness, and a willingness to listen and learn.

In my leadership, I have been committed to creating opportunities where diverse voices feel welcomed, valued, and safe. This means recognising the strengths and wisdom that come from different cultural perspectives, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, whose knowledges and histories are integral to the profession of social work in Australia. It also means ensuring that our decision-making processes and communications are respectful, inclusive, and mindful of diverse cultural contexts.

Humility is central to this work. I approach cultural relationships with an openness to being taught, a readiness to acknowledge my own failings and limitations, and a deep respect for the lived experiences of others. I believe that true leadership involves listening more than speaking, and being guided by those whose perspectives and histories may differ from my own.

As National President, I will continue to advocate for cultural safety within our Association, ensuring that members feel included and respected, and that our structures and practices reflect the principles of equity and inclusion. By promoting cultural awareness and humility, we strengthen not only the AASW, but also the integrity and impact of the social work profession across Australia.

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking and reflective practice are central to my approach as both a social worker and a leader. As National President, I have consistently drawn on these skills to navigate complex issues, analyse competing perspectives, and ensure that the decisions made on behalf of the Association are thoughtful, well-informed, and accountable.

In practice, this means engaging in ongoing critical reflection—examining my own assumptions, questioning established processes, and remaining open to diverse viewpoints. I believe that robust analysis comes from considering multiple options, weighing their risks and benefits, and carefully aligning decisions with the ethics and values and long-term priorities and strategic direction of the AASW.

I have also placed great importance on fostering an environment where collective critical thinking can flourish. Encouraging open discussion, inviting diverse contributions, and valuing respectful debate strengthens the quality of decision-making. This collaborative process not only leads to better outcomes, it also builds trust among members that decisions are fair, transparent, and grounded in evidence.

As a leader, I understand that complex issues rarely have simple solutions. By combining reflective practice with structured decision making and analysis, I strive to ensure that decisions balance immediate needs with the broader vision and strategic direction of the Association. In this way, critical thinking supports stability, integrity, and confidence in the governance of the AASW.

Communicates Constructively

I believe constructive communication is at the heart of effective leadership. As National President, I have sought to communicate with clarity, respect, and openness, ensuring that members, colleagues, and stakeholders feel both informed and engaged in the work of the Association.

I bring to this role the ability to be articulate, persuasive, and diplomatic. I understand that the way we communicate shapes trust and collaboration, and I am mindful of the responsibility to speak on behalf of the Association with honesty and integrity.

I also place great importance on self-awareness—reflecting on how my words and actions may be received, and adjusting my approach to ensure communication remains constructive and inclusive.

Equally important is listening. Throughout my current term as President, I have prioritised listening carefully to the contributions of members and responding in ways that acknowledge their perspectives, even when views differ. I see communication as a two-way process: one that balances expressing a vision for the profession while genuinely hearing the voices of others.

By combining clear articulation with respectful listening and reflection, I strive to foster dialogue that is transparent, inclusive, and effective. Constructive communication builds understanding, resolves differences, and strengthens our Association's capacity to act with unity and purpose.

Focuses Strategically

As National President, I have been committed to taking a broad and forward-looking perspective, ensuring that the decisions of the Association are guided by a clear strategic direction and vision. I believe that strong leadership requires not only attention to immediate priorities, but also the ability to see the bigger picture and anticipate long-term impacts. The future of the profession matters : how we align our strategic direction to the challenges and cultural and political shifts in our society matters. How we think and act as a membership Association matters. Being the National President matters.

My governance and leadership experience, both within the AASW and in broader professional contexts, has equipped me to guide the Association through systemic change while remaining grounded in its purpose and values. Over the past twelve months, as your National President, and the previous years as a committed and engaged Director, I have worked with the Board to refine strategic priorities that balance sustainability with growth, are ethical and values orientated, and to ensure that our resources and structures are aligned to support members effectively into the future.

Strategic focus also means recognising the external environment in which we operate—social, political, and professional—and positioning the AASW to lead confidently in these spaces. I have sought to elevate the voice of social work nationally, ensuring that the Association is not only responsive to current challenges but also prepared to influence the future direction of policy, practice, and education.

By combining long-term vision with sound governance and practical leadership, I aim to ensure that the AASW remains a strong, relevant, and future-focused professional body.

Collaborates in the Best Interests of the Association

Collaboration is at the core of my leadership style. I believe that the strength of the AASW lies in the collective wisdom, diversity and commitment of its members, and I have sought to foster a culture of cooperation, collaboration, respect, and partnership in every aspect of my role as National President.

Being a team player means valuing the contributions of others, recognising the expertise and passion they bring, and working together to achieve shared goals. I have consistently approached my leadership with flexibility and openness, understanding that collaboration often requires compassion, compromise, adaptability, and the ability to find common ground.

I have also worked to build and strengthen partnerships—within the Board, across our branches and committees, and with external stakeholders. These relationships are essential to ensuring that the AASW remains a strong and respected voice in the profession and in the broader community. By cultivating trust and encouraging dialogue, I have been able to support the Association in moving forward in ways that reflect both the diversity of our membership and the unity of our purpose.

Ultimately, collaboration is about placing the best interests of the Association above personal or sectional priorities. I am committed to continuing to lead in this way—cooperatively, flexibly, and always with a focus on building partnerships that advance the goals of the AASW.

Exercises Sound Judgement

Sound judgement is a cornerstone of effective governance and leadership. In my role as National President, I have consistently drawn on both experience and evidence to guide decisions that balance immediate needs with long-term sustainability for and the strategic direction of the Association.

Exercising sound judgement often requires navigating complexity, weighing competing priorities, and making decisions under pressure.

I approach this by carefully considering the available evidence, seeking diverse perspectives, and reflecting on the potential risks and benefits of each course of action. Where appropriate, I have sought external advice to strengthen decision-making and ensure that outcomes are robust, transparent, and in the best interests of the Association.

I also recognise that sound judgement involves more than analysis—it requires reflection, self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and the ability to remain calm and principled in challenging circumstances. I have been deliberate in modelling these qualities, ensuring that my leadership reflects the values of honesty, compassion, integrity, fairness, and accountability.

By exercising sound judgement, I aim to provide stability and confidence to members, support the Board in its governance responsibilities, and ensure that the AASW continues to act as a respected, values orientated and credible professional body.

