

**BSW SINGAPORE
NEWSLETTER
SEMESTER 2, 2007**

We welcome you to semester 2, 2007. For some of you this will be the 'last leg' of your course and you will soon be entering professional social work practice. This is an exciting step in what we hope will be a long career. For those BSW Singapore students eligible to graduate the offshore ceremony will be held at the Ritz Carlton Hotel on Wednesday 12 September 2007 at 7.00pm. All details are available on the Monash website.

The most exciting news that we have to convey is that the BSW Singapore has been fully accredited by the Australian Association of Social Workers. New courses typically receive provisional accreditation and then submit for full accreditation once the first cohort of graduates enters the field. The accreditation panel visited Singapore in November 2006 and undertook an extensive review of the programme. SSTI put a great deal of effort into the site visit and many students, tutors, fieldwork supervisors and others generously gave their time to meet with the review panel. The hard work has resulted in full accreditation being achieved the first time any Australian Social Work programme has achieved this. We (both Monash and SSTI) are proud of this achievement and delighted that it was such a collaborative effort.

There have been a couple of significant events in the Department of Social Work in recent months. Two long standing staff members have left the Department. The first of these is Professor Thea Brown who has moved into 'retirement', although she will be keeping busy with various research activities as well as the supervision of some higher degree students. Professor Brown will be known to many of you as she has been actively involved in the development of the BSW Singapore, particularly since 2004. Professor Brown's vision and expertise have been important in the development of the BSW Singapore.

The other departure is that of Professor Chris Goddard. Professor Goddard has moved to a full time research position as Director of the National Research Centre for the Prevention of Child Abuse. Some of you may recall that this Centre was officially launched in May 2006 and has since developed a vigorous research agenda. We would anticipate that in the future there will be research findings available to our students.

These departures clearly leave some gaps in the Department of Social Work. In the interim Associate Professor Max Liddell is acting as Head of Department. Arrangements are being made to select a new Head of Department but it is likely this will take some time. We will ensure that you are kept up to date with developments.

While commiserating these changes, we also had some good news with Max Liddell and Rosemary Sheehan both being appointed as Associate Professors in late 2006. These appointments help to strengthen the Department and we congratulate them both.

Within the University there are also some changes. The current Chancellor Mr Jerry Ellis will retire at the end of this year, having served in the position since 1999. The incoming Chancellor is Dr Alan Finkel, a neuroscientist, entrepreneur and philanthropist. Dr Finkel is a Monash Graduate (B. Electrical Engineering 1976 and PhD 1981) and this is the first time that a Monash Graduate has been appointed to this position.

As well, we are facing change within the SSTI structure. Ng Ling Ling moved to take a well earned break in late 2006. She had been involved in the BSW Singapore since its inception and her expertise are missed. However, Susan Han has taken over this role and is putting her experience as (former) programme coordinator to good use. Karen Poh has now settled into the coordinators role. Woo Peiyi, who has capably managed Fieldwork since 2004 is also moving to a direct service position. Peiyi has been instrumental in establishing the Fieldwork Programme and will be missed. We are working out the arrangements for fieldwork but note that the Fieldwork Programme will continue to be fully operational.

Although it sounds like a lot of changes, in many ways this is consistent with the experience of the field. It is important to realize that things do change and people do move on. What is important is that we remember their important contributions.

The Honours Programme formally commenced in February 2007 and there are six students in the Programme for 2007. May Foo is the Honours coordinator and is doing a sterling job in ensuring that everything runs smoothly as new programmes typically face 'hiccups' as new issues emerge and need a response. It is the intention to establish Honours as a long term programme as part of the BSW Singapore.

The Department of Social Work makes offers to students, who may be interested in Honours, based on the overall marks achieved in the first year of study (all subjects other than fieldwork). Students generally need at least a D average to be considered for Honours. The programme is offered in addition to other final year study; that is the Honours students take some extra subjects. Students undertaking Honours are expected to develop and implement a small research project that culminates in the presentation of a 10,000 word Honours theses or dissertation due by 1st December in the Honours year. It is an exciting programme that enables students to pursue particular research interests. It is however also a quite demanding year as the workload is heavy.

In terms of other events:

- In early April 2007 there was the launch of Thea Brown's new book (written with Renata Alexander) entitled *Child Abuse and Family Law*, published by Allen and Unwin. The book was launched by the former Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia Alistair Nicholson. A copy of the book has been provided to the SSTI library and is a helpful text for those interested in the topic of child abuse in the context of family breakdown and Family Court proceedings.
- Our Australian based graduation was held on 26 April 2007 at the Robert Blackwood Hall on our Clayton Campus in Melbourne. As an exciting 'addition', both Lynette Chan and Jessica Chan graduated, Jessica collecting her BSW (Honours degree). Jessica is now back in Singapore and working in the field of mental health. Lynette remains in Australia where she is doing some part time work with Juvenile Justice in the (Victorian) Department of Human Services while also undertaking her MSW studies. Lynette and Jessica were part of the 2005 BSW Singapore intake, completing bridging subjects in 2004-05. They both braved the move to Australia for the final year of their course in 2006.
- Philip Mendes continues his ongoing research and advocacy concerning young people leaving state care. On 26 April 2007 he was interviewed by the ABC Radio National's 'Life Matters' programme and on 3 May he presented a paper to the National Youth Affairs Conference held in Melbourne.

- In September 2007 a Conference about Working with Women Prisoners will be held at the University Centre in Prato, Italy. The inaugural conference on this topic was held in 2004. If any of you have holiday plans for around that time, it might be of interests to think about attending the Conference (or you can alert your colleagues). Full details are available from Associate Professor Rosemary Sheehan (rosemary.sheehan@med.monash.edu.au).
- Plans are well underway to begin offering postgraduate programmes from 2008. We are developing a Postgraduate Certificate in Clinical Supervision and plan to introduce the Master of Social Work (coursework) from 2009. It is also possible to undertake the Master of Social Work by Research at any time – the key contact person for this is Associate Professor Rosemary Sheehan.
- A Structural Review is being undertaken by the Australian Association of Social Workers and it is intended that this process will be finalised by the end of 2007. One purpose of the review is to consider matters about eligibility for membership of the AASW and to review a range of matters about social work and social work education. For any of you who are interested, key discussion papers can be accessed from the AASW website www.aasw.asn.au.

We have experienced some difficulties in sorting out enrolments of students. It is therefore timely to remind you that it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that they are correctly enrolled in the subjects they are undertaking. If there are difficulties you should contact Karen Poh (at SSTI) and/or Pat Sykes (at Monash). These are important matters as failure to ensure correct enrolment may lead to there being no option but to record a fail grade on your transcript.

As well, the University operates according to census dates for changes in enrolment. This recognises that students do sometimes face circumstances that require changes in enrolment. The census date for semester 1 is 31st March each year and, for semester 2, 31st August each year. The bridging subjects carry a census date of 31st October each year. If you have any queries about your enrolment it is important to check these out rather than to take a chance that matters can be fixed up later.

A reminder that the July workshops are scheduled for 13 – 15 July 2007, Honours workshops being held in the evenings of 11 – 12 July 2007. A reminder that attendance at workshops is a requirement of the BSW Singapore and any student facing difficulty with any aspect of this **MUST** discuss the matter with Kerry Brydon (kerry.brydon@med.monash.edu.au) in advance of the workshops. Students need to attend all sessions for subjects in which they are enrolled.

We wish you well with your studies for the remainder of 2007 and look forward to meeting with you during visits to Singapore.