



Aotearoa New Zealand

IFSW Co-ordinating Body



BACKGROUND PAPER – IFSW INDIGENOUS COMMITTEE

It is a wonderful privilege to update you and provide you with information on the journey that we, as the indigenous social workers of Aotearoa/NZ, have undertaken in order to get an indigenous voice to Calgary in 2019.

Firstly, our apologies on using English as the language of communication. It is the language that the British colonisers of New Zealand in the 1800's determined should be primary language of our country.

Secondly, although initiated by indigenous social workers, the presentation of this information by the two Associations comprising the Co-ordinating Body of Aotearoa New Zealand, the Tangata Whenua Social Workers Association and the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers.

TIMELINE

The journey to Calgary 2019 began in **2004** at the IFSW General Meeting in Adelaide, Australia where the IFSW endorsed their Policy on Indigenous People¹.

At the IFSW conference that followed that General meeting, an informal gathering of Indigenous peoples attending the conference determined that a conference specifically for Indigenous social workers to acknowledge and share their indigenous knowledges should be held to also discuss indigenous-specific issues. Consequently, the 1st Indigenous Voice in Social Work conference was held in Makaha, Oahu, Hawaii in June **2007**, hosted by the University of Hawaii.

Subsequently, the notion that an indigenous voice at an IFSW Executive level should be considered was raised by the Tangata Whenua Social Workers Association (TWSWA), the indigenous Association of Social Workers in Aotearoa NZ.

They developed, then took a Resolution to the 2nd Indigenous Voices in Social Work conference in Winnipeg, Canada in July **2013** where it was endorsed by a strong majority (**Appendix A**).

In recognition of the Resolution and to progress the tenets of the IFSW Policy on Indigenous People, the establishment of an Indigenous Committee (IC) to address the issues of indigenous representation within IFSW and assist with Policy statements of IFSW, UN and elsewhere, was motioned at the IFSW General

¹ IFSW Policy on Indigenous People

Assembly in Melbourne, Australia in **2014**, and passed by the attendant member representatives (**Appendix B**)

The progress on indigenous representation was taken to the 3rd International Indigenous voices in Social Work conference in Darwin, Australia in **2015** for endorsement. It was proposed there that firstly, the IFSW Constitution be changed to allow for indigenous representation, and secondly, that the Terms of Reference for an Indigenous Committee be developed. This was agreed to unanimously.

In **2016**, the Terms of Reference for an Indigenous Committee were presented to the IFSW General Assembly in Korea (**Appendix C**). These were adopted by the member countries present. Constitutional changes were left for the Indigenous Committee to consider once established.

In December **2018**, to progress the implementation of both the establishment of the Indigenous Committee and the Terms of Reference, a proposal was presented to the IFSW (**Appendix D**) which was accepted and approved by the IFSW Executive.

The outcome of these documents is the meeting in Calgary in September/October to progress this project.