



# Organisational Statement of Values

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The aim of this document is to make explicit the values of Annie North Inc.

Annie North Inc. is a values-driven specialist family violence women’s organisation and a key player in a service system striving to provide a better-integrated and just system response to victim/survivors of domestic and/or family violence.

Domestic and/or family “...violence is predominately driven by gender-based oppression and inequality. The majority of perpetrators are men and victim-survivors are women and children. As such, gendered language and terminology is often used in specialist family violence services to acknowledge and communicate about this deeply entrenched social problem. At the same time, family violence impacts people across a diversity of gender identities, social and cultural contexts, and within various intimate, family and family-like relationships”<sup>1</sup>.

Citing UN Women:

*“Women’s right to live free from violence is upheld by international agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), especially through General Recommendations 12 and 19, and the 1993 UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women”<sup>2</sup>.*

Australia has committed to gender equality through the following:

- Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, signed by Australia on 17 August 1983);
- Beijing Platform for Action;
- 2030 Sustainable Development Goals;<sup>3</sup>

Our services are accessible to all adult people who identify as women, thereafter referred to in this document as women, and to their accompanying children from all sexual orientations and/or sexual identities. Our services are provided irrespective of women’s and children’s cultural backgrounds or abilities. This extends to institutional and support worker violence for women and children who identify as having disabilities, kinship violence for women and children who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders CALD women without visa or residency status, and where women and children have experienced sexual violence and require safe refuge. Access to services is determined by the organisation’s eligibility criteria, which includes the need for immediate safety.

<sup>1</sup> DVVic (2020) Code of Practice: Principles and Standards for Specialist Family Violence Services for Victim-Survivors, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Melbourne.

<sup>2</sup> Unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women (accessed on-line 06062020)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.vic.gov.au/benefits-gender-equality> (accessed on-line 06062020)

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*“Gender-based violence (GBV) is a global pandemic that affects 1 in 3 women worldwide in their lifetime. One characteristic of gender-based violence is that it knows no social or economic boundaries ...”<sup>4</sup>.*

Annie North is victim/survivor -centred and a ‘rights based’ service model that works within a human rights framework. We are client-focused and inclusive, and place the safety of women, their children and their recovery at the centre of their experience with our service. We aim to support women, children and young people experiencing domestic and/or family violence to be safe and have options that lead to sustainable long-term outcomes free from abuse. We respond in a timely manner and our work is grounded in evidence-based practice. We respect that clients are the experts in their own journeys, and support is based around them making decisions for themselves while helping to locate the experience of domestic and/or family violence in the wider context of women’s and children’s relative lack of social, economic and political power. We help identify and challenge the systems barriers and gaps that victim/survivors encounter, and we challenge victim-blaming narratives and stereotypes that are wide spread in the community.

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land, skies and waterways. We pay our respects to the Elders past and present, the Aboriginal Community and the Children who bring hope for all future generations. The Children remind us of the joy and gentleness of the Aboriginal people and will become the future Elders of this land. We remember that underneath this land, on which we so firmly stand, this is, was and always will be traditional Aboriginal land and we thank you for sharing it with us. Indigenous sovereignty has never been ceded in this land and the processes of colonisation, occupation, incarceration and genocide that began over two centuries ago continues to this day; and therefore, at Annie North Inc. we try to be mindful of this in everything we do.

## Annie North Sorry Statement

We, non-Indigenous people of this land, apologise for the human suffering and injustice that you have experienced as a result of colonisation and generations of discrimination and marginalisation that has resulted from that.

We share with you our feelings of shame and horror at the actions and atrocities that were perpetrated against your people.

We acknowledge that the removal of children devastated individuals, families and entire communities and that the intention of those policies was to assimilate Indigenous children. We recognise this as a policy of genocide.

We recognise you as a sovereign people who have never given up your sovereignty of this land.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialdevelopment/brief/violence-against-women-and-girls> (Accessed on-line 06/06/2020)

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We collectively share a sense of outrage, and feel a particular sense of responsibility around these racist policies of the past.

We acknowledge your human right to self-determination.

We commit to working in solidarity with you in ways that you choose and determine.

We work with many people who are affected by disadvantage, prejudice, poverty, violence, marginalisation, trauma and social circumstances out of their control. We understand the long-term damage to communities when these issues are unaddressed.

We recognise your leadership, we honor your visions and we join with you in your hopes for your future and for our futures together.

(Acknowledgement to the ACT Community Services for Women)

Violence against women is serious, prevalent and driven by gender inequality that then, in-turn, causes gender-based violence against women and further gender inequality. The broader aims of Annie North Inc. are to promote gender equality and challenge violence-supporting belief systems towards women and children. In this respect, Annie North Inc. is a social change organisation. The underpinning feminist principles in relation to family and/or domestic violence and the subjugation and oppression of women and children are in the context of patriarchal social, political, economic and personal power and control over women and children. Annie North Inc. recognises the people who have gone before us fighting for and winning our rights. We recognise the strength of women working together and in collective action amplifying our voices to achieve social change, and for others to support us in this as allies. We support the rights of women to unionise.

We promote messages about the key drivers of gender-based violence and the pillars of change which need to occur to prevent it.

There are four expressions of gender inequality that consistently predict higher rates of violence against women:

1. Condoning of violence against women.
2. Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public life and relationships.
3. Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity.
4. Disrespect towards women and male peer relations that emphasise aggression<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> <https://d2bb010tdzqag7.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/05/21025429/Change-the-story-framework-prevent-violence-women-children-AA-new.pdf> (Accessed on-line 06062020)

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Violence against women is preventable. There are five essential actions to address the gendered drivers of violence against women:

1. Challenge the condoning of violence against women.
2. Promote women's independence in decision-making in public life and relationships.
3. Foster positive personal identities and challenge gender stereotypes and roles.
4. Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relationships between and among women and men, girls and boys.
5. Promote and normalise gender equality in public and private life<sup>6</sup>.

We work towards all women and children living free from domestic, family and community violence with the aim of them achieving physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being after the abuse. We are a feminist, specialist women's service that works to support women and children to achieve improved well-being after violence or abuse. We consider the rights of children as paramount. We strive to contribute to the prevention of gender-based violence by improving understandings in our communities of the nature of domestic and/or family violence, other gender-based violence, its structural drivers, the actions for preventions, and its impact on communities, families and individuals, (especially children) and improve responses to those affected.

We recognise the links between domestic and/or family violence, sexual abuse and other violence and abuse against women such as early and forced marriage, female-genital mutilation/cutting, 'dowry brides', sexual harassment, trafficking and social media hate. Annie North Inc. is a secular organisation that supports women and children from all faiths, belief systems and backgrounds, but which does not promote any one faith system or its associated celebrations, either overtly or covertly.

We believe all women should have complete control over their reproductive and sexual health. We believe all women should have the autonomy to make decisions about their body and to do otherwise is reproductive coercion. Sexual and reproductive rights are basic human rights and women must have access to appropriate health care. Denying a woman access to contraception and abortion is a denial of basic rights to health care. It impacts on a woman achieving economic and sexual self-determination and having full access to education and employment. It is a woman's right to choose if and when she becomes pregnant. It is a woman's right to seek an abortion and we will support them as that is their choice. Criminalisation of abortion and restricted access to abortion and birth control (through high cost and limited availability) endanger women's physical and emotional health and well-being.

Across our organisation we work within an ethical, social justice and human rights framework. We are committed to creating an inclusive and safe workplace, service, and community that promotes and values diversity. We are aware of how lives are complex and intersectional, and that multiple forms of disadvantage and oppressions overlap. We work with our diverse communities that include but are not

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<sup>6</sup> Loc.cit.

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limited to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, culturally and linguistically diverse people, people who identify with diverse sexual orientation and/or gender identity, people with different abilities, and people from different class and age groups.

Annie North Inc. works to reduce harm to the planet so will continually improve its environmental footprint. Before corporate sponsorship is accepted, the company's conduct regarding its harm to people, animals or the planet will be considered.

## Child Safe Statement

Annie North is a child safe organisation committed to ensuring the safety of children and to providing and actively promoting a safe environment for children. At Annie North Inc. the voices of children and young people are paramount.

Annie North has zero tolerance towards child abuse, and is committed to protecting the physical, emotional, cultural and social wellbeing of all children. We want children to be safe, happy, healthy, thriving and empowered. We support and respect all children and are committed to their safety, wellbeing, community participation and empowerment.

As an organisation we are committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks. We ensure our robust human resources and recruitment practices support this commitment, along with providing access to regular training and education to our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks and indicators.

We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait children, the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability and for those who identify with diverse sexual orientation and/or gender identities.

Annie North has systems in place to protect children, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously. We strictly follow our legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety. We acknowledge that children's safety is a whole of organisation responsibility and we work to ensure that children especially are everyone's business.

We will respond to the concerns of children as paramount in the context of the domestic and/or family violence that they experience with their mother/carer, but recognise the importance of the mother/carer, child bond for the future well-being of the child/ren.

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