



**Domestic Violence Resource Service
Mackay & Region**

**Submission to the Queensland government on the
Queensland Women's Strategy from**

Jude Marshall, service manager, DVRS (Mackay & region);
secretary of QDVSN, management committee member of EVAWQ,
member of ANROWS Practitioner Engagement Group, and
member of the advisory group to AWAVA.

We submit the following to the Queensland government for their consideration.

1. Gender Equality

Structural inequality is seen as the main driver of violence against women, with the intersection of gender, race, cultural and economic disadvantage as factors to consider alongside discrimination and gendered norms that contribute to violence against women. The normalisation of male violence, and its glorification, is seen to reinforce hierarchies of power and dominance over women, taking social and economic power away from women, and leading to lack of respect for women and girls.

Gender equality means that people are respected by each other, have equal relationships without power and control, and that those relationships do not limit either partner to gender specific roles. We endorse and recommend the Prevention Framework created by ANROWS, Our Watch and VicHealth.

2. Safety:

Women's Safety is paramount to their ability to lead autonomous lives and achieve their goals. We endorse the work being done as a result of the Not Now, Not Ever report.

The Women's Strategy needs to be considered alongside the DV Prevention Strategy and the VAW Prevention Plan. As the statistics show, a third of women will be impacted by violence during their lifetime. This will cause disruption to their lives, including impacting on their health, careers, homes, children and wider families. A strategy for women must contain significant initiatives to ensure women's autonomy and ability to live the lives they want, free from violence at all levels.

3. Health and Wellbeing:

The health of women should be based on primary health objectives; the right to reproductive choices, advocacy around healthy lifestyle choices, and the ability to select their health goals without gender stereotyping.

Women's wellbeing needs to be facilitated by the right for them to make choices in line with their cultural, social and personal values. It also needs to enable women to consider moving beyond these expectations when she sees opportunities beyond those she expected to be able to consider.

Women should be enabled to take part in non traditional activities in sport, commerce, industry and academia.

Discriminatory messages within advertising and some media need to be discontinued, with positive images of strong, intelligent and capable women dominating the news and the business world.



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We are concerned that women are stereotyped in films and advertising, that body image and type is displayed within a narrow set of norms. We submit that standards in public displays of all kinds should be imposed to show positive images of strong, intelligent and capable women.

4. Leadership:

Women should have equal opportunities to advance to leadership roles. While we do not endorse quotas, we expect that boards, statutory organisations and businesses will actively seek out opportunities to promote women to roles appropriate to their abilities and experience, which will involve a strategy for equity rather than equality. We are mindful that women have not often had similar opportunities for advancement to men, and would like this imbalance addressed with extra advocacy for women to be in leadership roles.

We are particularly concerned that leadership encompasses opportunities to lead within women's cultural, faith and other particular communities. We urge that a Women's Strategy include specific initiatives for indigenous women to be empowered to take leadership roles within their communities, reinforcing positive cultural values and encouraging young people into lifestyle choices that honour their heritage. Likewise immigrant, lesbian, and disability based communities should be encouraged to take pride in their difference and be honoured for the diverse and positive attributes they bring to society as a whole.

5. Employment and Economic Security.

Employment choices for women should be broad, and lead to economic security. It should be acknowledged that women's lives are impacted by roles other than paid employment. The factor of retirement incomes, of pay inequity and of lack of advancement to leadership roles, should be addressed and genuine fairness for women in public life be seriously considered.

The statistics for abuse and assault mean that women are often denied the opportunities for advancing their chosen careers. This is a major driver for employment and economic inequity and lack of security. The financial impacts of domestic abuse and violence against women are significant, and issues such as homelessness and the loss of chattels should be addressed with women positive strategies for support and justice.

6. Diversity

Strategies to advance women's wellbeing and equity within Queensland society need to include the concept of equity. Equity is shown when groups which are acknowledged to have been subjected to discrimination around racism, colonisation and is consequential violence, and strategies implemented to address the intersectional effects of these factors. Women from Aboriginal and Torres Strait backgrounds are particularly impacted by these factors, and strong strategies need to be implemented to overcome barriers to equal participation and self determination.

Statistics around family violence show that Aboriginal and Torres Strait women are impacted far more than the general population. Rural and remote communities offer fewer opportunities for advanced learning and well paid employment. To address the discrimination shown in our history, women from these cultural backgrounds need additional resources for their access to employment, safety and healthy lives. They also need more recognition of their standing within, and ability to influence their communities.

Women from overseas and differing cultural backgrounds should have their specific needs considered, and should be consulted on how those needs can be addressed. As in all diverse groups, a baseline of



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empowering women to maximise their potential while maintaining their diversity and supporting their community to manage their own futures.

Lesbian women's specific needs around empowerment and acceptance need to be recognised as a factor within some institutions that are still able to practice discrimination, mostly within faith communities.

Likewise, women with impairments as the result of disabilities, are disproportionately the victims of violence against women. Their specific needs, including redress for discriminatory practices, should be addressed in consultation with them as the best advisors of their own needs.

We applaud the gender positive strategies this government is implementing already. We hope the impetus continues. However, we would like to endorse actions rather than consultation, as we are aware that frontline services are struggling to meet the needs of women in distress.

Jude Marshall

jude@domesticviolenceservice.com.au

P. O. Box 519, Mackay 4740

0418 708 619