



# **CHARTER**

**Addressing domestic and family violence**

*August 2016*

# Women in Super:

## Addressing domestic and family violence

In 2015 at the Conference of Major Super Funds, Women in Super resolved to make a contribution to addressing family violence as part of their commitment to improving the retirement outcomes of women. Domestic violence impacts women in many ways including their financial, health and mental wellbeing. Women in Super, has advocated for over 20 years for better retirement prospects for women, and as organiser's of the Mother's Day Classic, are committed to investing in the future health of Australian women and their families so they can have a happy and healthy retirement. Reducing family violence is part of this broader commitment to improving retirement prospects for women. It is not acceptable that women retire with half the superannuation savings of men, and women who are victims of, or who have experienced family violence, are further disadvantaged by the structural inequities of the superannuation system.

The annual Women in Super Road Show has served as a platform for a high profile female speaker to deliver a key message across all Australian capital cities to the superannuation and broader financial services sectors. In hosting Rosie Batty in 2016, Women in Super has undertaken the initiative of encouraging employers in the superannuation industry to take a stand against family violence by committing to a number of measures, and outlining this commitment in a workplace family violence policy.

The impacts of family violence on females in our society are wide ranging and include decreased workforce participation, inability to access financial resources and housing, social disengagement, and increased health and mental illness issues. These impacts can be lifelong. Available research shows one in six Australian women and one in nineteen Australian men have experienced physical or sexual violence from a current or former partner since the age of 15.<sup>1</sup> Research also shows that the costs and impacts of family violence on our industry include decreased staff performance and productivity, increased staff turnover, absenteeism and the associated OHS risk.

This Charter reflects the response of Women in Super and the not for profit superannuation industry to address this issue and to take a stand against family violence.

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<sup>1</sup> ABS Personal Safety Survey 2012  
[www.apf.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/pubs/rp/rp1415/Quick\\_Guides/DVinAust](http://www.apf.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1415/Quick_Guides/DVinAust)

# Family violence employer charter

## (organisation name)

### ***We acknowledge that:***

1. Family violence is a widespread issue in Australia, found across all genders, cultures, ages and socio-economic groups.
2. Historical and persistent gender inequality is a key determinant of the fact that unfortunately family violence is more likely to be perpetrated by men against women.<sup>2</sup>
3. It is a whole-of-community responsibility to address family violence and the cultural and community attitudes that underpin it.
4. Increasingly this is very much a workplace issue due to the OHS impacts this serious issue can and does have on workers.

### ***We commit to:***

Do what we can as employers to reduce family violence and to assist those who have experienced or are experiencing family violence. This includes:

- Clearly communicating our stance on this issue to our employees
- Countering cultural attitudes that support gender inequity in all its forms
- Supporting employees who are experiencing domestic violence by:
  - Creating a workplace family violence policy
  - Including a family violence leave provision in employment conditions
  - Assisting affected employees to stay in employment
  - Providing a safe workplace
  - Ensuring affected employees have access to appropriate resources and support
- Considering ways to assist fund members or others who are experiencing or have experienced family violence
- Considering ways to provide employment opportunities to those who have been impacted by family or domestic violence

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Chief Executive Officer

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Date

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<sup>2</sup> [www3.aifs.gov.au/acssa/pubs/researchsummary/ressum7/ressum7.pdf](http://www3.aifs.gov.au/acssa/pubs/researchsummary/ressum7/ressum7.pdf)

# **Thank you for taking a stand against family violence.**

Here is some information to assist you to implement the commitments in the charter.

## **1. Workplace family violence policy outline**

A workplace family violence policy should make clear the organisation's stance on family violence and commitment to providing support, as well as outlining the policies, procedures and employment conditions that are in place to assist affected employees. The policy should outline employees' access to:

- Paid family violence leave, (preferably in addition to existing paid leave entitlements) to support those who are facing a situation of family and domestic violence. The employer may request that the employee provide evidence that would satisfy a reasonable person that the leave is for the purpose of attending medical appointments, legal proceedings, legal assistance, court appearances, counseling, relocation, the making of safety arrangements or other activities associated with the experience of family and domestic violence.
- Safety planning and flexible work arrangements or temporary changes to work schedules
- Dedicated workplace contacts such as appropriately trained managers or HR representatives
- Confidentiality and freedom from discrimination on the basis of disclosure
- Counseling and support services

## **2. Workplace Gender Equality Policy**

A broader gender equality or inclusion policy can assist in promoting gender equality in the workplace and should address the following issues:

- A statement of the organisation's philosophy on valuing a diverse workforce and articulation of the benefits arising from gender equality.
- A statement that the organisation is committed to promoting a culture that embraces gender equality at all stages of the employment cycle, particularly in the selection and assessment processes.
- An outline of the programs and/or initiatives that support employees with family and caring responsibilities including while employees are on parental leave.
- An outline of the process for correcting inequities when discovered.
- An explicit statement on where accountability for gender equality lies, this should include roles and responsibilities of the executive team, people managers, human resources officers and relevant employees, and whether there is a gender diversity review committee.

- An explanation of how the organisation will provide transparency regarding their progress against their workplace gender equality policy.

### **3. Information and referral information for fund members facing domestic and family violence**

Profit for members super funds provide general information and advice to members to support their capacity to make informed decisions about their superannuation and financial circumstances.

As part of their commitment to this Charter, funds will consider ways to assist fund members or others who are experiencing or have experienced family violence, particularly through the provision of online information and referrals to specialist financial support services.

### **4. Resources**

- UNSW resources related to gendered violence and work - <https://www.dvandwork.unsw.edu.au/>
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency 'Employer of Choice for Gender Equality' reporting - [https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/Indicative\\_format\\_WP\\_and\\_RQ-14-15.pdf](https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/Indicative_format_WP_and_RQ-14-15.pdf)
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency – 'Guidelines on a Workplace Gender Equality Policy- <https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/Characteristics-of-a-Gender-Equality-policy.pdf>
- ACTU submission to the Royal Commission into family violence, Victoria - <http://www.actu.org.au/media/801401/submission-to-the-royal-commission-into-family-violence-victoria-may-2015.pdf>
- 1800 respect list of family violence training providers - <https://www.1800respect.org.au/workers/fact-sheets/training-and-further-professional-development/#link0>
- Human rights commission <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/family-and-domestic-violence/publications/fact-sheet-domestic-and-family-violence-workplace>