



# **NSW WOMEN'S REFUGE MOVEMENT**

**Joining  
Criteria**



# NSW WOMEN'S REFUGE MOVEMENT

## Background

The NSW Women's Refuge Movement is a state-wide representative body of women's refuges with a specific focus on domestic violence. The first women's refuge, Elsie's Refuge was funded in 1974 and was the precursor of the 55 women's refuges currently operating in NSW. As the number of refuges grew, it became obvious that a unified approach was needed to promote domestic violence onto the political agenda. In February 1979, refuges gathered in Bathurst for the first state-wide conference.

## Who we are

The NSW Women's Refuge Movement is made up of a diverse group of women who work in refuges and who share a belief that domestic violence is a crime against women and children. Most refuges are managed and deliver a service that is informed by feminist principles. We are committed to challenging systems that support and condone domestic violence, including legal, political, social and economic institutions. We recognise the significance of gender and power in contributing to the information and discussion of issues which need to be brought p bat the Conference. A delegate, endorsed by their region, is a representative on the NSW Women's Refuge Working Party which meets monthly. They present their region's view on issues/ and proposals, and provide feedback to the regional members on any decisions made by the Working Party.

Working Party meets monthly and implements decisions made at Conference. Working Party is made up of regional representatives, as well as members of Koori, Lesbian, Child Support, Young Women and NESB support groups.

# Criteria for Joining NSW Women's Refuge Movement

## Who is eligible to join?

You could be a newly funded service, a service that has not been a member of the Women's Refuge Movement, or a restructured service. The service must be SAAP funded.

A restructured service could be one:

- Ⓢ With an entirely new management committee
- Ⓢ A newly appointed auspicing body
- Ⓢ Which has been closed down
- Ⓢ Which has significantly changed its structure, work practices, conditions, policies or staffing positions
- Ⓢ Which is under review by the funding body

Any refuge or management committee has the right to approach Working Party to auspice the organisation in the case of a restructure. The Working Party delegate will confirm information regarding changes to a service structure. This information will be presented at the next Working Party meeting. Working Party will send out a letter seeking to clarify the situation and to determine whether the refuge is interested in applying for Women's Refuge Movement membership.

# How to Join

1. The refuge wanting to join the movement will need to contact the delegate of Working Party in their region. The delegate for their region will approach Working Party to sponsor the refuge to State Conference in the interim
2. They will receive written information about the NSW Women's Refuge Movement, its guiding principles, and copies of its Access and Equity Manual. They will also receive a list of key service policies that they will need to make available as a way of ensuring all members of the Movement are operating within overarching principles and legislative requirements. These will include:
  - 📍 Aims, Mission Statement, Objects or Philosophy
  - 📍 Intake criteria and target group
  - 📍 Access and Equity policy
  - 📍 Child support policies (if relevant)
  - 📍 Client fees and clients with no income policy
3. These policies will be presented to a small working group of representatives from other refuges in their region, including the working party delegate, for verification.
4. Based on this information and general discussion, a recommendation will be made by the group that the refuge be approved for membership. Working Party will be informed of this recommendation.
5. If the working group is not satisfied with the refuge policies, they will encourage them to make changes and another review date will be set.

6. In the interim, the delegate can request that Working Party sponsor the relevant service to attend conference. Sponsorship entitles a refuge to attend Conference; however they are not eligible to vote.
  
7. If they chose not to continue with the process of if the policies are not in line with the Women's Refuge Movement Guidelines, Working Party will inform them that membership is denied.