



## AFFILIATION OF AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S ACTION ALLIANCES (AAWAA)

Women's Action Alliance Canberra (WAAC)  
Women's Action Alliance Tasmania (WAAT)  
Queensland Women's Action Alliance (QWAA)  
South Australian Women's Action Alliance (SAWAA)  
Western Australian Women's Action Alliance (WAWAA)  
Women's Action Alliance Victoria (WAAV)



## Affiliation of Australian Women's Action Alliances (AAWAA) Affiliate group information & guidelines

### Affiliation group description

Women's Action Alliance (WAA) affiliate groups are women's liberation groups committed to the protection and advancement of women and girls on the understanding that sex is a biological fact with material consequences for females living under patriarchy.

We fight against patriarchy and how it is expressed through anti-woman, oppressive structures and ideologies such as

- Gender identity
- (Hyper-) sexualised advertising
- Pornography
- Prostitution and sex trafficking
- Reproductive exploitation
- Control over reproductive rights/sovereignty

Each group aims to be seen as a serious, sensible organisation with good standing that uses fact and evidence, reason and rationality, courtesy and compassion to make our case. We act based on these qualities to point out where current and established frameworks and obligations designed to protect women and girls are being eroded, undermined, ignored, and/or disregarded. We engage with those who have legislative authority, political accountability, and social responsibility for the safeguarding, protection, and advancement of women and girls.

We are not aligned with the left, right, a particular religious perspective, or a particular belief system. We are, however, an alliance of individual women, each with her own individual standpoints and views, working together on issues that affect women and girls. We recognise and respect each woman's autonomy, boundaries, and comfort levels. Each chooses for herself what she wants to be involved with, how, and to what degree.

Affiliate groups do not work in competition with other groups; rather, AAWAA welcomes opportunities to work collaboratively with others on matters of joint significance. AAWAA members are encouraged to sign the [WDI Declaration on Women's Sex-Based Rights](#).

More info

- [Manifesto](#) (WAAC)
- [FAQs](#) (WAAC)

## Organisation status

AAWAA consists of an incorporated body, the Women's Action Alliance Canberra (WAAC, the founding group of AAWAA) and non-incorporated groups. WAAC Inc. provides AAWAA with an avenue to pursue formal complaints within the legal and regulatory systems, should we wish to. Our other organisations are not incorporated, are not not-for-profits, are not associations, and do not have charity status. We have chosen this for our other groups because it

- Allows us to be flexible
- Allows for anonymity of Sisters
- Eschews formal organisational structures with president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary, media officer, etc.
- Avoids fees or need for insurance
- Means we don't have to have a constitution (but see general principles and guidelines, below)
- Bypasses tax implications and financial reporting obligations
- Avoids extra admin
- Means we do not have to raise money
- Does not limit our political and campaigning activities, as charities, for example, have to

## Affiliation

Some of the benefits of affiliation are

- Horizontal structure, with no one group 'in charge', but we are at least all on the same page and working with the same ethos
- Allows for independence in what we focus on locally, but also to combine where it would give us more power as a group nationally
- Ability to co-sign under one, national banner – gives more weight to national submissions, etc.
- Sharing, co-ordination of resources
- Sharing of some workload
- Similar branding, plus we will build you a website :)
- Advice, support, connection, networking
- Sisterhood

To become affiliated, we would need agreement on what is laid out in this document, paying particular attention to

- Agreement on the main points in the manifesto (about prostitution, pornography, reproductive exploitation, genderism, reproductive rights, advertising, etc.)
- Agreement on general approach (i.e., we are serious, sensible organisations of good standing that engage with those in authority in a good-faith way)
- General agreement on what we do and do not target (e.g., we target those with duty of care for and accountability to women and children, but we do not waste our time on trying to either convert the converted or capture the already captured)
- Agreement on acceptable behaviour when representing the organisation or when interacting with the organisation as an individual

## General principles for behaviour

In our communications and in our relations with those seeking engagement with a Women's Action Alliance affiliate group, group members endeavour to

- Act in good faith
- Act with good will
- Behave well
- Work on the principle of charity
- Exercise compassion

## Consensus

What counts for, and what is needed for, consensus will vary from group to group and will depend on participation and 'activeness' levels amongst group members and so consensus is an internal matter.

At the AAWAA level, however, where a matter or item is to be endorsed or supported by all affiliate groups, agreement is needed from all groups at the representative level and where the representative has conferred with their WAA. If the representative has not been able to elicit responses from their group's members, then the representative can act on behalf of the group. If the group does not respond to a request for endorsement or support, then the matter or item will be considered endorsed by majority. If one group does not want to provide endorsement, then the option remains for a matter or item to be endorsed only by the remaining groups and those groups must be listed. This said, consensus is our goal.

Individual WAAs are at liberty to support or sign off on matters or items on their own behalf on the understanding that those matters or items embody the spirit, principles, and guidelines set out in the current document.

If there is any doubt as to whether something is a bit iffy at the local level, a representative of the local group is encouraged to seek advice and input from other AAWAA representatives. As always, common sense and flexibility should guide groups in such matters.

## Recruitment and vetting processes

Members need to be vetted at some level, for obvious reasons. The following levels of vetting should apply:

1. *Personal relationship*. If there is already a personal relationship established between members, then that should serve as a suitable vet
2. *Checkable profile or history*. If someone has an established and active social media profile or similar, then the AAWAA affiliate group can consider approaching the person to see if they would be interested in learning more about the group. If the person is interested in establishing contact, then they can be asked to share their phone number and a representative of the affiliate group can call them (making sure the representative's phone number is not identifiable when making the call), suss them out, and then suggest a face-to-face meeting. A face-to-face meeting should then be had in order to finalise the vetting of the person's credentials.
3. *Unsolicited contact*. If the affiliate group receives an unsolicited contact via DM or email or similar, then the group should ask the contactor to share their phone number so that a representative of the affiliate group can call them (making sure the representative's phone number is not identifiable when making the call) and suss them out. If a contactor is unwilling to share a phone number, then it may be an indication that they are not genuine and/or are phishing. If they do share a contact

number, then a face-to-face meeting should be suggested. A face-to-face meeting should then be held in order to finalise the vetting of the person's credentials.

### **Guidelines for sending something from an AAWAA affiliate group**

If sending from an AAWAA affiliate group, it needs to

- Be focussed around the liberation, protection, and/or advancement of women and girls
- Be based in your state, city, or region (although groups may choose to write submissions for other jurisdictions, but such submissions and the general approach and argument should be discussed first with the affiliate in the affected jurisdiction)
- Be fact- and evidence-based
- Be reasoned and rational
- Adopt a charitable tone and be courteous

Things to avoid

- Statements that can't be backed up
- Statements based on emotion
- Sarcasm
- Hyperbole

Needless to say, if it comes from or represents an AAWAA affiliate group it needs to be legal.

### **AAWAA social media guidelines (when representing an AAWAA affiliate group)**

Preference should be given to engagement with groups and organisations with good standing over engagement with individuals, and with Australian groups and orgs before overseas groups and orgs.

1. Play a fairly straight bat.
2. Push, don't pull, i.e., only tweet outwards. Once it's sent, move on, nothing to see here.
3. Don't bait, don't troll.
4. Don't respond to comments unless it's a direct question – and even then consider whether a) it needs to be answered at all, or b) it would be better to answer the question via DM.
5. Never respond to a troll or engage in any kind of inflammatory conversation or a conversation that has escalated in any way.
6. No personal attacks.

### **Guidelines for actions**

Public actions take time to plan and organise and so need to be effective in terms of profile- and issue-raising and, where appropriate, visible. Actions should present photo opportunities so that images and video can be posted on social media and should provide material for sharing and comment. Actions conducted by an AAWAA affiliate group must be:

- Legal
- Safe
- Properly planned, scoped, and risk-managed
- Recce'd, where necessary
- Profile- and issue-raising
- Clearly messaged
- High-visibility, where possible and appropriate (i.e., must capture a good number amount of onlookers)

## Internal collaboration and communication

How this is run will depend on each group; however, the security and privacy of the group and of individual members must be a priority. Here is how WAAC works, as an example:

1. WhatsApp is used for a 'community' with three groups:
  - WAACchat. General chit-chat, sharing, observations, outrages
  - WAACmin. Collabs, business, meetings, admin, docs we are working on
  - WAACtions. Planning for public actions such as banner drops, protests
2. Google is used for for
  - Email
  - Document sharing and hosting
  - Collaborative writing, e.g., submissions and letters

## Grievances

Grievances need to be promptly dealt with within the AAWAA and must not be aired publicly. Direct and internal lines of communication exist at different levels and must be used over indirect or external expressions of protest or opposition.

- *Individual grievances.* Grievances between individuals should be dealt with privately between the parties involved. Such matters should not be allowed to affect any other parties.
- *Group-level grievances.* Grievances internal to each, individual WAA should be handled internally. Members who feel that they can't support the AAWAA model or guidelines should remove themselves from participation in the group; if a member does not excuse themselves, they can be asked to leave before their access to group-level documents and communications is rescinded.
- *Intra-group grievances.* Grievances that arise between groups or between an individual and another WAA group should be handled at the representative level.

If a current AAWAA member group feels they can no longer support the guidelines and principles laid out herein, the matter should be discussed and any changes to the guidelines made. If no changes are agreed upon, the member group should leave of their own accord.