Annie North Inc.

ANNUAL REPORT 2025-2026



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Credits:
Professional photography: Alli Campbell. Other photography: Annie North staff.
Stock photographs and graphics: Canva and MS Copilot AI generation.
Reports, stories and commentary: Annie North staff and CoM.

We felt like we were in the right place. They were just very polite, very supporting … they made us feel at home. My kids knew we were so safe there.

Annie North client

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Annie North operates across the unceded lands of the Djaara people of the Dja Dja Wurrung Djandak (Country).

Annie North recognises the Dja Dja Wurrung Djandak and the Djaara people as the Traditional Owners of these lands, skies, and waterways we work upon.

It is with deep sadness and sorrow that we acknowledge the impact of Western ways and colonialism which has come at a spiritual and cultural cost to many First Nations people.

We commit to leading an organisational journey towards cultural humility, we pay our respects to Elders past and present, to the Aboriginal Community and the Children who bring hope for all future generations to allow healing.

The children remind us of the joy and gentleness of the Aboriginal people and will become the future Elders of this land. This is, was, and always will be traditional Aboriginal land and we acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

We support cisgendered and LGTBIQA+ women and those who identify as non-binary, from all ages, race, ethnicity and ability.

We support children with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

We acknowledge the courage and resilience of all victim-survivors of gender-based violence.

Annie North gratefully acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government and the following funders, philanthropic partners and donors:

- Active Mechanical Services
- Anti Domestic Violence in Australia (ADVIA)
- Alli Campbell Photography
- APCO Foundation
- Backpacks 4 Vic Kids
- Bendigo Health
- Bendigo Spirit
- Bunnings Warehouse Kangaroo Flat
- Department of Employment, Skills and Family Business
- Dr John Gault
- Fantastic Furniture
- Impact for Women
- Kennington Ladies Social Tennis Club
- Lions Club of Strathfieldsaye
- My Vet Strathfieldsaye
- The Nappy Collective
- Next Steps Australia
- PayPal Giving Fund Australia
- Rosalie Rogers Music
- Share the Dignity
- St Andrews Masters Calisthenics Group
- Street Smart Australia
- Sunshine Bendigo
- The Washateria
- Thread Together
- Zonta Club of Bendigo Inc.

Annie North also acknowledges the generosity of the many individuals and groups that have donated one off or recurring monetary donations, goods or services, over the year.

ABOUT ANNIE NORTH

Annie North is a values-driven organisation and a key player in a state-wide integrated service system. We provide services to women, children and young people experiencing domestic and family violence.

We are a feminist organisation working within an ethical, social justice and human rights framework. We are inclusive of the diversity of women and children and the intersectionality of their lives. We understand that individual women and children's experiences are created and experienced within systems. We lead transformational social change to address the four drivers of gender-based violence. We recognise, celebrate and value women.

We work towards all women, non-binary, intersex, young people 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.

Strategic Objectives

1. **Delivering High Quality Services**
   Women, children and young people are safe, supported and empowered.
   Services are high quality.
2. **Strengthening Collaboration**
   Collaboration is targeted, sustainable, mutually beneficial and well maintained.
3. **Influencing Systems Change**
   We demonstrate our impact.
   We have evidence and wisdom that we share.
4. **Building on our Strong Foundation**
   We have a strong culture and our values are practised.
   We are committed and effective in governance, leadership and service delivery.
   We have diversified income streams and make good use of our limited resources.

STRATEGIC PROGRESS

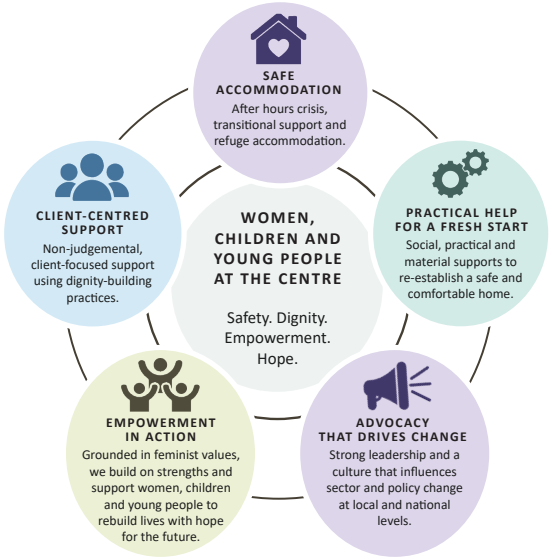
Strategic progress throughout 2025-2026 has been characterised by alignment, clarity and celebration. A myriad of change and growth throughout the organisation brings with it forward progress and a buzz of excitement as significant momentum is created, across all areas of our strategic plan. **Influencing systems change** relies on this momentum as we continue to understand our impact and develop systems to track and share this impact in meaningful ways.

The appointment of our new CEO is a significant part of **building on our strong foundation.** Other notable appointments include our People and Culture Lead, who commenced in June 2025, providing a dedicated focus on staff engagement and professional development. In April 2026, the Executive Assistant role was expanded to include communications responsibilities, strengthening organisational communication. The newly established inter-disciplinary Leadership Team brings additional structure and energy to our operations, while the Client Services Practice Lead role is now firmly embedded.

Stakeholder engagement remains a core focus as part of our ongoing commitment to **strengthening collaboration.** Through updates to our performance development processes we are empowering employees at all levels of the organisation who have interest or competency in external engagement, community events, or other knowledge sharing initiatives.

Collaborating with women and children who utilise our services remains a high priority. Collecting qualitative data from clients in ways that respect their lived experience, honour their dignity and promote healing is a huge part of **delivering high quality services** to women and children. We are fully committed to ensuring their voices are heard, providing them with meaningful opportunities to shape the services they receive. Our newly established Cultural Governance Sub-committee will also take a leading role in promoting cultural safety for all clients, guiding Annie North on our ongoing journey toward cultural humility.

WHAT WE DO



We provide after hours crisis, transitional support and refuge accommodation for women, children and young people escaping domestic and family violence. Guided by a feminist and empowerment-focused approach, we prioritise safety, dignity and wellbeing while supporting individuals to rebuild their lives, re-establish safe homes, and access practical and material supports. Through strong leadership and advocacy, we also work to influence positive change at both local and national levels.

OUR VISION

All women, children and young people live free from domestic and family violence and its consequences

OUR STRATEGIC VISION

We have built on our strong foundations to grow in wisdom and impact, realising high quality services for more women, children and young people.

CHAIR & CEO REPORT

A PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGE



Emma Fowler
Chair



Michelle Crawford
CEO

Over the past twelve months Annie North has gone through a period of significant change.

Having been elected as Chair of the Annie North Committee of Management, Emma counts it a privilege to have guided the organisation through the leadership transition with the appointment of a new Chief Executive Officer.

In February, we farewelled Julie Oberin AM after an extraordinary 33 years at Annie North. Julie's leadership, dedication and contribution as both a practitioner and CEO, shaped the organisation in profound ways. At an event in November 2025, the committee, staff, volunteers and broader community were able to celebrate Julie's contribution to Annie North, the feminist movement, and more broadly the Family Violence sector across Victoria, Nationally, and Internationally. We extend our sincere thanks to Julie for her enduring service and legacy.

Against the backdrop of change, we have focused on ensuring strong governance, continuity of high-quality service delivery and organisational renewal that sets us up for future success and impact.

A key priority has been the appointment of a new leader, and in February, after a rigorous recruitment process, we were delighted to welcome Michelle Crawford as Annie North's new CEO.

> *94% of staff confirmed that they would recommend Annie North as a good place to work.*

Michelle brings to the role thirty-five years' experience with a background that includes employment, education and training; microfinance; child protection, youth justice and youth homelessness; and neurodiversity. Over the past decade she has held the role of CEO in various settings, and we are already witnessing her ability to leverage her experience, knowledge and networks to the benefit of our work at Annie North.

Through regular monthly meetings, the Committee of Management have worked to ensure a shared understanding of strategic priorities, organisational opportunities and the support needed for effective leadership. This ongoing engagement has helped build a strong foundation for the year ahead. It has been encouraging to receive such positive feedback about Michelle, not only from staff, but also from government, sector colleagues, and partner organisations.

Our Committee of Management and Executive Management Team met in April to undertake a review of our Strategic Plan which ensured shared understandings, and renewed commitment toward our positive impact in the lives of women, children and young people escaping family, domestic, sexual and economic violence.

Annie North was honoured to host a visit from the Governor-General of Australia, Her Excellency the Honourable Sam Mostyn AC, an occasion that recognised the importance of our work and the commitment of our staff, volunteers, members and partners. A very special part of this visit was the way in which GG Sam welcomed the opportunity to connect with and hear the stories of the women, children and young people who were living on site at the time of the visit.

Our team enjoyed a Staff Away Day which allowed an opportunity to connect, have fun, and reaffirm a shared vision.

We were delighted that 94% of staff confirmed that they would recommend Annie North as a good place to work! We offer our heartfelt thanks to the staff at Annie North who are integral to the high-quality service we provide through the Secure Women's Refuge, the Loddon After Hours service and Outreach and Support provided to women, children and young people as they move from refuge toward recovery.

To everyone who has contributed to Annie North's progress over the past year - to donors, philanthropic partners, and sector colleagues - we say thanks and would take this opportunity to commit to leading the work of Annie North into the year ahead with purpose, collaboration and respect.

CELEBRATING 35+ YEARS

OF ANNIE NORTH

On Friday 28 November at Chateau Dore, a dinner was held for Annie North staff and supporters to celebrate over 35 years of support for women and children in our communities, including special guests then-Premier Jacinta Allan, as well as Marg O'Rourke OAM, Margot Spalding OAM, Ken Marchingo AM, and Merlyn Quaife AM.

The evening was also to honour outgoing CEO Julie Oberin AM, after 33 years of leadership before her retirement in February 2026.

Annie North was founded in 1989 after a small group of women in the local Bendigo and Castlemaine communities banded together to write a funding submission to the Victorian Government. Annie North was one of the earliest refuges to be set up, with the first in Victoria, Women's Liberation Halfway House, being established in 1974.

The Refuge movement was part of the women's liberation movement, where feminists were clear that violence against women would not stop until there was gender equality. While they did what they could to provide support and shelter for the women and children that came through their doors, they also advocated and lobbied to government. They were vocal about the need for structural change, such as affordable housing, no gender pay or wealth gap, leadership and decision making roles, protective legislation and better, safer and more empowering responses from other parts of the support sector including the judiciary, policing and child protection.

> *Sadly, while there has been so much improvement, there is still a long way to go.*

Julie Oberin noted "Sadly, while there has been so much improvement, there is still a long way to go."
"Too many women and children - and some men - continue to be harmed or murdered by those that were supposed to love and support them. Too many of these victim-survivors are from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, women with disabilities and those that identify as LGBTIQ+. Too many victims are children. In the refuge sector, most of those are under 4 years old. Just sit with that for a second."
The evening commenced with speeches, including an address by outgoing Chair, Claudia Meyer.

"The celebration was not about celebrating that the work is over. We all need to knuckle down and do what we can, how we can, and when we can. The evening is to celebrate Annie North's achievements and how it has always been at the fore of cutting-edge ideas, response and best practices. Annie North has led the sector in client-focused, empowerment-centred, trauma-informed practice in all that it does." said Ms Meyer.

Much of Annie North's achievements can be attributed to the leadership of CEO Julie Oberin AM. Julie joined the Annie North Collective in 1990, one year after Annie North began, and became part of the paid staff in 1992, 33 years ago. Julie Oberin is recognised as an advocate and changemaker throughout the state, national and even international sector.

Thank you Julie, for all you have done for Annie North and for women and children impacted by domestic and family violence.



Then-Premier Jacinta Allan and Julie Oberin AM.



Annie North staff gathered for a group photo

> *Thank you Julie, for all you have done for Annie North and for women and children impacted by domestic and family violence.*

OUR IMPACT

AT A GLANCE

2025-2026

231
People Supported

103
Women Supported

128
Children Supported

63
27%
First Nations People

48
21%
Culturally and Racially Marginalised (CARM)

31
12%
NDIS Packages on Entry

MATERIAL AID FUNDING DISTRIBUTED TO CLIENTS

$26,329
Flexible Support Packages

$34,284
Family Violence Crisis Brokerage

$41,683
Victim-survivors in refuge without income due to temporary visa status

$22,062
After Hours Family Violence Support Brokerage

OUR PROGRAMS

THREE WAYS WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

SECURE WOMEN'S REFUGE (including Annie's Place)

22
Women supported.

Includes:
- First Nations: 14%
- CARM: 50%
- NDIS: 9%

27
Children supported.

Includes:
- First Nations: 30%
- CARM: 48%
- NDIS: 7%

OUTREACH SUPPORT

20
Women supported.

Includes:
- First Nations: 35%
- CARM: 35%
- NDIS: 10%

30
Children supported.

Includes:
- First Nations: 47%
- CARM: 40%
- NDIS: 20%

AFTER HOURS RESPONSE

82
Women Supported.

77
Children Supported.

13%
First Nations.

50%
Culturally & Racially Marginalised (CARM).

OUR FOCUS FOR THE NEW FINANCIAL YEAR

Delivering High Quality Services

Highlight the voices of children and young people through creatively capturing the impact of therapeutic support.

Strengthening Collaboration

Continue to develop a Communications Strategy based on our refreshed organisational values and brand, which allows Annie North to expand collaboration in ways that benefit clients.

Influencing Systems Change

Participation in the innovative Safety Measures pilot project: a sector led data and evidence program across Victoria, Northern Territory and South Australia.

Building on our Strong Foundation

Continue to strengthen leadership across the organisation through our Cultural Governance and Committee of Management Governance projects.

OUR IMPACT
THROUGH SERVICE DELIVERY

CASE MANAGEMENT

Case plans follow the statewide Case Management Program Requirements (CMPR) and address six life domains:

- Justice and Legal
- Employment and Education
- Family, Social and Community Connections
- Financial, Material and Transport
- Health and Wellbeing
- Housing

Plans are co-created with clients to ensure their voice is central.

Our commitment to clients in refuge:

- You are the expert in your own journey. We will support you to make choices that lead to long-term safety and freedom from abuse.
- Your culture, dignity and privacy are respected.
- We work in a nonjudgemental, strengths-based way.
- Family violence risk management and safety planning are always at the heart of our work.
- Infants, children and young people are recognised as clients in their own right.

AFTER HOURS

The After Hours Team works collaboratively to manage the safety and security of clients at the Core and Cluster refuge, outside of standard business hours.

They also deliver the Loddon Family Violence After Hours Program, coordinating crisis responses across the Loddon-Campaspe region. This support for women and children typically includes risk management, safety planning, emotional support, family violence education, emergency accommodation and material aid.
Our coordinated response would not be possible without the invaluable contribution of our on-call workers. Over the past year, they have provided exceptional support and advocacy for victim-survivors at hospitals and police stations. They deliver material aid, offer emotional support, transport clients and assist with settling women and children into emergency accommodation.

The After Hours Team supports victim-survivors impacted by a range of co-occurring issues, including alcohol and other drugs, homelessness, mental health, and disability.

WOMEN ON TEMPORARY PROTECTION VISAS

Women on Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) continue to experience significant structural barriers that compound the impacts of family violence and create additional challenges in achieving safety and recovery.

During 2025-26, Annie North supported seven women on Temporary Protection Visas, including four women with accompanying children.

For women on temporary visas, pathways to independence are often restricted. Women on TPVs are generally ineligible for Centrelink income support payments, childcare subsidies, and community or public housing. These limitations can prevent women from leaving violent relationships, securing safe housing, undertaking study, or entering employment.

Even after being granted Permanent Residency, access to some income support remains restricted, with waiting periods and eligibility requirements continuing to create financial hardship for many women and families.

Despite these barriers, women demonstrated remarkable resilience and determination in pursuing safety, independence, and community connection. During the year:

- Four women obtained Permanent Residency, creating greater access to employment, education, housing, and support services.
- One woman obtained her driver's licence and contributed to the purchase of a family vehicle, increasing independence and access to employment, education, and community participation.
- Six women either continued or completed study, building skills and strengthening future employment opportunities.
- Several women engaged in volunteer work, fostering community connection, confidence, and pathways to workforce participation.
- Four children commenced preschool or childcare, supporting their development while creating opportunities for their mothers to pursue study, employment, and settlement goals.
- Three women secured long-term housing, providing greater stability and safety for themselves and their children.
- Two women successfully relocated to be closer to family and support networks, strengthening their social connections and reducing isolation.

> *"Having people to talk to, people who come and visit you, people who want to know how your day was... just that physical support, that you know someone is there.*
>
> Annie North client

Our practitioners provided intensive advocacy and case management to assist women in navigating complex legal, housing, migration, and support systems. This work included collaboration with legal and migration services, support with visa processes, and advocacy to access safe accommodation, financial assistance, education, and other essential resources.

These outcomes demonstrate that, while visa-related restrictions continue to create significant obstacles, targeted support and advocacy can assist women and children to achieve meaningful progress towards safety, stability, social inclusion, and long-term recovery. The experiences of women on temporary visas highlight both their incredible strengths and the ongoing need for systemic reform to ensure all victim survivors can access the resources necessary to live free from violence.

THERAPEUTIC SERVICES

Therapeutic support is available to all women, children and young people residing in refuge helping to reduce barriers to engagement and ensuring recovery can begin at the earliest safe opportunity.

Drawing on a range of therapeutic approaches, therapeutic support is offered individually, with siblings, as family sessions, or through parent-child therapeutic work. It includes body-based and sensory approaches that support emotional regulation, connection and healing.

Activities and interventions include:

- Counselling and therapeutic conversations
- Child-led play and attachment-focused activities
- Family violence education
- Parenting support and parent-child therapeutic work
- Art and expressive arts therapy
- Music therapy
- Clay Field Therapy®
- Gardening, outdoor experiences and supported excursions
- Journalling, creativity and reflective practice

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Children and young people are seen as victim-survivors of family violence in their own right and remain central to Annie North's therapeutic response.

Family violence can significantly affect emotional wellbeing, development, learning and relationships. Refuge provides not only physical safety but also an opportunity for children and young people to rebuild trust, strengthen connections and begin healing from trauma.

Every child and young person is welcomed into refuge in ways that are developmentally appropriate and sensitive to their experiences. Support is tailored to

their individual needs and may focus on emotional regulation, play, attachment, routine building, developmental wellbeing and strengthening parent-child relationships.

In 2026, we welcomed an Infants, Children and Young People Practitioner (ICYP) to our therapeutic team.

The ICYP is a qualified early childhood educator and art therapist. She provides direct therapeutic support while also assisting families to establish routines, navigate transitions such as new schools or childcare, and access resources that promote stability and recovery. This role bridges specialist therapeutic interventions with the everyday experiences that help children feel safe, connected and supported.

SAFE, THRIVING & CONNECTED

Annie North employs a Safe, Thriving and Connected (STC) practitioner. STC is a therapeutic family violence recovery program for victim-survivors of family violence in the Loddon Campaspe area, delivered by the Loddon Gender Equality and Violence Prevention Consortium.

2026 saw the inclusion of a Music Therapist to the Safe Thriving Connected position. Music therapy offers women, children and young people opportunities to engage in healing and self-expression in ways that do not rely solely on words. Through rhythm, movement, music-making, listening and creative exploration, participants are supported to strengthen emotional regulation, build confidence, foster connection and develop a greater sense of safety and wellbeing.

Our Music Therapist has worked collaboratively with our clients through individual sessions, family work and group activities. These sessions have created opportunities for participants to connect with themselves and others, develop coping strategies, and experience moments of joy, creativity and achievement during their recovery journey.



I can't explain what it did to my body, but I slept a full night for the first time since coming to refuge 12 months ago.

Woman, the day after her first music therapy session

WOMEN'S GROUP

Our Women's Group continues to provide a safe and welcoming space where women can come together to share experiences, build connections and support one another's recovery. Through a combination of psycho-education, creative activities and peer support, women are encouraged to strengthen confidence, develop new skills and explore pathways to healing.

Sessions throughout the year focused on themes including:

- Mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Understanding family violence and healthy relationships
- Mindfulness and self-care
- Creativity and self-expression
- Cultural connection and celebration
- Building resilience and recovery

The group provides opportunities for women to connect with others who have shared experiences, reduce isolation and foster a sense of belonging, empowerment and hope for the future.

For so long, we were just trying to get through each day. Now my children are happy, they have friends, and they feel safe. We finally have a place to call home and a future to look forward to. Thank you Annie North for walking beside us.

Annie North client

A STORY OF HOPE

When Sarah* and her two children, Mia* and Ethan*, arrived at Annie North, they were exhausted from years of uncertainty, fear and control.

For more than 15 years, Sarah's relationship had been shaped by escalating family violence including coercive control, financial, emotional and physical abuse.

The violence deeply affected the children. Mia, who was in primary school, carried the weight of worrying about what was happening at home. Ethan, who was preschool-aged, showed clear signs of trauma. He was almost non-verbal when he arrived at Annie North and often communicated his distress through challenging behaviours and emotional outbursts.

The family's journey towards safety began when Mia disclosed to a trusted teacher what was happening at home. For Sarah, sharing her experience with services was both frightening and overwhelming, but it became the first step towards a safer future.

For the first time in a long time, the family had a safe place to stop, breathe and begin to heal.

During their time at Annie North, Sarah and her children received therapeutic support and case management tailored to their individual needs. Through play, creative activities and therapeutic interventions, the children found new ways to express their feelings and make sense of their experiences. Sarah was supported to rebuild her confidence, navigate complex systems and focus on her hopes for the future rather than simply surviving each day.

Funding enabled the family to access specialist assessments and supports, helping them better understand and respond to Ethan's needs.

When the family moved into transitional housing, Annie North continued to walk alongside them, providing outreach support and practical assistance for the following 12 months.

Today, the family is thriving. They are settled in long-term social housing, connected to their community and looking to the future with hope. Sarah is studying and maintaining employment while creating a stable and secure home for her children.

Mia has joined a local sporting club, where she has developed confidence, friendships and a sense of belonging. For the first time, she feels safe inviting friends to visit her home. Ethan is now speaking confidently and has made remarkable progress in managing the behaviours that once reflected the trauma he experienced.

Their story is a reminder that recovery from family violence takes more than safety alone. With stable housing, therapeutic support and a community that believes in them, families can move beyond surviving and begin building the future they deserve.

"For so long, we were just trying to get through each day," Sarah says. "Now my children are happy, they have friends, and they feel safe. We finally have a place to call home and a future to look forward to. Thank you Annie North for walking beside us."

***Names and some events and details changed to preserve anonymity.**

OUR TEAM

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT (COM) & EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM (EMT)



Eboni Kerr (CoM 2026), Robyn Trainor (CoM Secretary 2026), Lisa Levis (CoM 2025-2026), Emma Fowler (CoM Chair 2025-2026), Deborah McCormick (CoM Treasurer 2025-2026), Solmaz Yavari (CoM 2026) Michelle Crawford (CEO), Lisa Thomas (Finance and Administration Manager), Lisa Elder (Systems and Development Manager), Madeleine Harvey (Client Services Manager), Narlinga Morgan (CoM Deputy Chair 2025-2026).

Not pictured:
Julie Oberin (outgoing CEO), Claudia Meyer (CoM Chair 2025) and Deanne Pointon (CoM Treasurer 2025).

EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATION

Bryley Savage (Executive Assistant to the CEO) and Helen Horgan (outgoing Executive Assistant to the CEO).

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION TEAM

Led by Lisa Thomas (Finance and Administration Manager):
Bree (Finance and Administration Officer), Bec (Finance and Administration Assistant), Steph (Administration and Property Assistant), Tamika (Reception and Property Assistant) and Emily (outgoing Administration and Property Assistant).

SYSTEMS & DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Led by Lisa Elder (Systems and Development Manager):
Kylie (Quality and Compliance Lead) and Emma (People and Culture Lead).

CLIENT SERVICES TEAM

Led by Madeleine Harvey (Client Services Manager):
Family Violence Lead: Nicole.
Family Violence Practitioners: Jess, Donna, Mikayla, Shaye, Salwa, Lauren, Zoe, Annie, Joni, Meg, Lisa (Senior Practitioner Therapeutic), Alida (Safe, Thriving and Connected) and Beckie (Infants, Children & Young People).
Family Violence Practitioners (Casual): Kathryn, Tessa, Kaitlin, Eliza, Avril, and Jessica.



PEOPLE AND CULTURE

EMMA SPINDLER - PEOPLE & CULTURE LEAD

The 2025-2026 financial year was a year of growth for People and Culture at Annie North. We farewelled our long-serving CEO, Julie Oberin, following 33 years of dedicated service, and Helen Horgan, who retired after 11 years as her Executive Assistant. Their departures marked the end of an era and led to a substantial recruitment focus across the organisation.

Overall, we welcomed nine new staff members, including our wonderful new CEO, Michelle, and hosted three student placements. We finished the financial year with 29 employees, the largest workforce in Annie North's history, reflecting both organisational growth and a reminder that family violence organisations remain invaluable to those that really need it.

Recognising the importance of reconnecting and recharging after a period of significant change, we were over the moon to receive grant funding from StreetSmart to support a 'Staff Away Day'.

We hired out a local spot where we participated in team-building activities, enjoyed good food, and got to know one another better. Annie North had not held a day like this for over five years, so this was a valuable opportunity to spend much needed quality time as a group. Our sincere thanks to StreetSmart for the opportunity to show our staff that their work is valued and we are dedicated to retaining staff and preventing burnout in the family violence sector.

Our annual Staff Wellbeing Survey again provided valuable insights into the employee experience across areas including leadership, professional development, resources and wellbeing. Results were overwhelmingly positive, with 94% of staff agreeing or strongly agreeing that Annie North is a good place to work. One staff member reflected that Annie North had supported them to achieve goals that once felt out of reach. We also welcomed feedback on areas for improvement and will continue to use staff insights to guide our decision-making.

While we looked back over the year, we also looked forward. We engaged all staff to consider what Annie North's core values were and came together as a group to propose a set of words that really showcased what Annie North stands for – watch this space for an update on our values in the future.

As we move towards 2027, we shift our focus from building our amazing workforce, to enhancing our team and equipping them with the tools and skills they need to deliver the best possible outcomes for women and children experiencing family violence; and we look forward to this journey ahead.

VOLUNTEERS

BENDIGO SOUTH ROTARY



Administration & Property Assistant, Steph, leading our Rotary South volunteer crew at our May 2026 working bee. Bernie, Tony, Gary, Steph, Trevor, Greg & Paul S.

Our gardens are a welcoming and important part of Annie North, providing beautiful outdoor spaces for the women and children we support. These spaces simply would not thrive without the dedication of our incredible volunteer gardening team from Bendigo South Rotary.

Every fortnight, our volunteers generously give their time to keep our grounds looking their best. Whether they are weeding, trimming, sweeping, pruning, or tackling the many other tasks that come with maintaining our extensive gardens, they do so with enthusiasm, commitment, and always a smile.

We would like to sincerely thank George, Paul G, Trevor, Heather, Greg, Jan, Gary, Tony, Merlyn and Paul S, for their ongoing support and hard work. Their contribution has a lasting impact on our environment and helps create a welcoming and therapeutic space for the families who call Annie North home.

Twice a year, in May and November, our volunteers lead our much-anticipated garden working bees. These days bring together volunteers, staff, and clients to work side by side caring for our outdoor spaces, before enjoying a well-earned BBQ together. These events not only improve our gardens but also foster connection, community, and a shared sense of pride in our surroundings.

We are incredibly grateful for the partnership we have built with Bendigo South Rotary and for the generosity of each volunteer who contributes their time and skills. Their commitment makes a real difference, and we look forward to continuing this valued relationship for many years to come.





DONORS

Annie North wishes to sincerely thank our generous donors for their support throughout the year.

From our anonymous donor, who contributed a further $60,000 this year and has now donated a remarkable $330,000 over the past six years, to our regular monthly supporters who give between $10 and $200 each month, every contribution is greatly appreciated. Your generosity enables us to continue providing vital services and support to women and children experiencing family violence.

We would also like to acknowledge the many local businesses, community groups, service clubs and organisations that regularly support us. Whether through financial contributions, donated goods, clothing, household items or essential supplies, your donations help us meet the diverse and often urgent needs of our clients.

Financial donations received this year have helped fund:

- Safe and welcoming crisis accommodation
- Client safety and wellbeing programs
- Technology and equipment that enhance service delivery
- Facility maintenance and operational costs that ensure our services remain accessible and effective
- Support programs for women and children
- Activities and resources that help children feel safe, valued and supported
- Improvements to our facilities and services so we can continue delivering high-quality care

Behind every donation is a person, business or group who has chosen to make a difference. Every donation, regardless of size, has a meaningful impact.

On behalf of our clients, staff, volunteers and Committee of Management, thank you for helping Annie North provide safety, support and hope to those who need it most. Your generosity changes lives, strengthens our community and helps ensure that women and children have access to the support they need when they need it most.



MAKE A DONATION

Your contribution helps us continue providing safety, support and hope to women, children and young people experiencing family violence. If you would like to contribute, every donation, no matter the size, makes a meaningful difference. All donations over $2 are fully tax deductible.

Scan the QR code or donate via EFT using the account details below.

OR

Account:
Annie North Donation

BSB:
633-000

Account Number:
134092816

GOVERNOR-GENERAL VISIT

In April, Annie North was honoured to welcome Her Excellency the Honourable Sam Mostyn AC, Governor-General of Australia, to our Secure Refuge in Bendigo.

The visit provided an opportunity to showcase the vital role specialist family violence services play in supporting women and children experiencing crisis. During her time at Annie North, the Governor-General met with staff, Committee members, and women and children supported by the service, learning more about our work providing safe refuge, crisis accommodation and trauma-informed support.

Discussions highlighted the importance of services that place safety, dignity and respect at the centre of every response.

The afternoon commenced with a Dja Dja Wurrung Welcome to Country by Aunty Sandra and offered an opportunity for meaningful conversations in a relaxed and welcoming environment.



Her Excellency the Honourable Sam Mostyn AC, Governor-General of Australia, pictured with members of Annie North staff and Committee of Management at Annie North's secure refuge.

A particularly special moment was the presentation of artwork created by children staying at the refuge. These paintings are now displayed at Government House, providing a lasting reminder of the strength, creativity and resilience of the children and families we support.

The visit was a privilege for everyone involved and an important opportunity to raise awareness of the ongoing impact of family violence in our communities.



Artwork created by children staying at the refuge, gifted to the Governor-General.

We are grateful for the Governor-General's advocacy and commitment to a future where all women and children can live free from violence and its consequences.

Her recognition of the dedication of Annie North staff reinforces the importance of specialist support services and the profound difference they make in the lives of women and children during times of crisis and rebuilding.



Family Violence Practitioners Zoe and Mikayla with The Governor-General.



Emma Fowler, Annie North CoM Chair, Sam Mostyn AC, Governor-General of Australia and Michelle Crawford, Annie North CEO.



The Governor-General receives gifts created by children staying in refuge.

FINANCIALS

2025-2026

TREASURER'S REPORT



Deborah McCormick
Treasurer

I am pleased to present the 2025-2026 Finance Report for Annie North Inc. to our members.

For the financial year ending 30 June 2026, Annie North Inc. recorded an operating deficit of $188,406. While this represents a deficit result, it was better than budget and reflects a deliberate decision by the organisation to invest a portion of its retained earnings to ensure we remained fully staffed, strengthened service delivery capacity, and enhanced our IT infrastructure and cyber security systems.

Importantly, the organisation remains in a strong financial position, with healthy reserves and a solid balance sheet. This investment in our workforce and organisational systems positions Annie North well to continue delivering high-quality services and responding to future challenges.

I am also pleased to advise that our auditors issued Annie North Inc. with a clear and unqualified audit opinion, confirming that the financial statements present a true and fair view of the organisation's financial position.

Key Highlights from the 2025-2026 Finance Report:

- Total revenue for 2025-2026 was $2,917,626, compared with $2,975,537 in 2024-2025.
- Total expenses for 2025-2026 were $3,106,032, compared with $2,674,170 in the previous year.
- The overall result for Annie North Inc. was a deficit of $188,406. As expected for a service-based organisation, employee and professional development costs represented the largest component of expenditure, accounting for 83% of total expenses.
- As at 30 June 2026, Annie North Inc. held total assets of $2,327,650 and total liabilities of $423,390, resulting in organisational equity of $1,904,260. This demonstrates the organisation's continued financial stability and capacity to meet its obligations and future contingencies.

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank the Chief Executive Officer, Finance and Administration Manager and staff for their commitment to responsible financial management throughout the year.

> *"As Finance and Administration Manager, I am incredibly proud of our team and all they have achieved this year. Strong foundations are built by exceptional people, and throughout a year of transition, the Finance and Administration team demonstrated dedication, collaboration and a willingness to embrace change while continuing to support Annie North every step of the way."*
>
> Lisa Thomas

FINANCE SUMMARY

Below is a summary of our audited financial statements.
A full copy of the 2025–2026 financial statements is available on request.
The audit of our financial records was completed in October 2026 by RSD Audit Pty. Ltd.

	2026 $	2025 $
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS		
Cash Flows From Operating Activities		
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year	713,845	717,346
Net cash provided by operating activities	(232,836)	319,445
Cash Flows From Investing Activities		
Net cash used in investing activities	(110,437)	(322,946)
Net increase in cash held	(343,273)	(3,501)
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of financial year	**370,572**	**713,845**
STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME		
Revenue	2,917,626	2,975,537
Expenses	(3,106,032)	(2,674,170)
Net current year surplus	**(188,406)**	**301,367**
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION		
Assets		
Current Assets	2,279,595	2,550,442
Non-Current Assets	48,055	62,790
Total Assets	**2,327,650**	**2,613,232**
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities	404,184	486,562
Non-current Liabilities	19,206	34,004
Total Liabilities	**423,390**	**520,566**
Net Assets	**1,904,260**	**2,092,666**
Total Equity	**1,904,260**	**2,092,666**

INCOME

93.8% Funding
$2,737,496

2.7% Donations
$78,190

3.5% Other
$101,940

EXPENDITURE

83.4% Staffing & Professional Development
$2,590,028

11.1% Administration Expenses
$346,172

5.5% Client Brokerage & Expenditure
$169,832

HIGHLIGHTS

STAFF NEWS & CELEBRATIONS

2025-2026



Staff and CoM farewell Julie Oberin AM and welcome new CEO Michelle Crawford



Donna - Footy Tipping Winner 2025

It has been a big year at Annie North, filled with opportunities to celebrate, connect and showcase the incredible work of our team.

In August we celebrated Wear It Purple Day, where staff embraced the theme Bold Voices, Bright Futures and went all out in support of LGBTQIA+ young people.

September was a busy month. Annie North was proudly represented at the 5th World Conference of Women's Shelters in Sydney. With CEO Julie Oberin AM chairing the conference and delivering the keynote address, and Madeleine Harvey and Lisa Elder presenting on our work, Annie North made a strong contribution to the global conversation on ending violence against women and children. Later that month, Donna emerged victorious in the fiercely contested Annie R U OK? Footy Tipping Competition, earning both bragging rights and the coveted trophy.

As the year drew to a close, staff gathered for a relaxed end-of-year lunch, enjoying good food, great company and a chance to recharge before the holiday season and the new year ahead.

February marked a significant milestone for Annie North, with long-serving CEO Julie Oberin AM retiring and passing the baton to Michelle Crawford. Staff and Committee of Management (CoM) members came together to celebrate Julie's remarkable contribution, share memories and warmly welcome Michelle to the role.

In March, Michelle, alongside staff and CoM representatives, attended La Trobe University's World Social Work Day event, where our own Family Violence Practitioner, Zoe, shared her insights as a panellist.



Selfie with the Governor-General



Staff end of year lunch



World Social Work Day



April brought the honour of welcoming Her Excellency the Honourable Sam Mostyn AC, Governor-General of Australia, to Annie North's Secure Refuge. Staff, CoM, and women and children in refuge had the opportunity to share their experiences, with the visit even including a few memorable selfies with the Governor-General.

In May, Lisa E, Lisa H and Beckie attended an information session on the Left Write Hook therapeutic program, meeting founder Donna Lyon and learning more about the innovative approach that combines boxing and writing to support survivors of childhood sexual abuse and gendered violence.

The financial year concluded with a Staff Away Day in June, where team-building and wellbeing activities gave everyone the chance to reconnect, strengthen relationships and celebrate another successful year of working together to support women, children and young people across our community.



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ABN 43 075 400 698
www.annienorth.org.au