



## Boronia's Guiding Philosophy

Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women adopts a forward-looking model of imprisonment that recognises the diverse needs of women in prison. This model is based on the principle that, while imprisonment serves as a punishment for crime, it also provides an opportunity to maximise each woman's potential to positively, confidently and safely reintegrate with their families and communities following release.

The innovative design and daily activities of Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women mirror the responsibilities faced by women in everyday life and they support a strong community and family focus. The women contribute to society through voluntary work that builds positive relationships with the community. These relationships can be key to their successful integration on release.

Together with improved health, work and education skills, the women take responsibility for their choices while at Boronia – reducing the risk of reoffending after release from custody.

Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women is guided by four values and principles:

### Personal responsibility and empowerment

Personal responsibility increases the potential to be law-abiding and achieve a positive role in the community. Empowerment means developing a sense of value and self-worth, and confidence in the ability to create a positive future.

In society, women need to make decisions and choices for themselves, their children and family on health, financial, lifestyle and other matters. Empowerment is vital to positive self-esteem, as disempowerment reduces the capacity to make responsible decisions.

In Boronia, women live in Homeswest-style accommodation that mirrors residential community living. They have the opportunity to make choices and use everyday skills that are relevant to their return to the community.

Personal responsibility and empowerment is achieved by:

- Having choices about education, training and employment.
- Taking the opportunity for meaningful health and lifestyle choices.
- Contributing to the development and implementation of individual management plans.
- Participating in personal growth and skills development.
- Participating in decision-making that builds confidence.
- Being listened to and having legitimate choices accepted.
- Supporting and encouraging each other.
- Living within an environment that emphasises cooperation over compliance.

### Family responsibilities

The importance of family relationships for women in custody is supported and encouraged for the benefit of the prisoners, their families and the community.

The restoration, maintenance and support of family relationships – with an emphasis on mothers and caregivers, their children and dependants – is essential to the well-being of women. In particular, it is recognised that for many Aboriginal women in prison, they, their mothers and their children have suffered a loss of maternal roles, through past government policies of separation.

Relationships and family responsibilities are enhanced by:

- Being confident that children are safe and comfortable within the centre's environment.
- Having maximum opportunities to contact families, in particular children, and significant others.
- Participating in positive socialisation activities that promote mother-child relationships.
- Improving care-giving and relationship skills by accessing relevant programs and support.
- Living in an environment that is welcoming to children and families.

Community responsibility

A successful partnership is built by actively encouraging community participation and shared responsibility.

The successful transition of women from prison to the community depends on positive social networks and involvement with the community. Working in the community – and with the community – helps prepare women for reintegration following release. The local community benefits from the work done by the women and the women make reparation for their crimes.

Connections with the community are built by:

- Participating in positive social networks with members of the general community.
- Interacting with community members both within the facility and in the local community.
- Working with and for the community.
- Having the opportunity to learn new skills, develop self-esteem, gain motivation and benefit from positive role models.
- Having guidance, assistance and support for reintegration into the community.

Respect and integrity

In all circumstances, the inherent dignity of all people is respected, and the unique characteristics, diverse backgrounds and needs and views of women are valued. Actions are guided by equity, fairness and the specific needs of individuals.

Respect for individuals and their differences, such as individual religious and cultural beliefs, is the basis for positive interpersonal relationships and self-respect, which creates a healthy environment where individuals can live and work cooperatively.

Through services based on the particular needs of women, diverse backgrounds and cultures are also recognised.

Mutual respect is developed by:

- Living in an environment with a feeling of safety and security and confidence in the services provided.
- Receiving cultural and gender-appropriate services.
- Respecting the dignity of individuals, personal differences and the views of others.
- Being respected and respecting cultural identity, beliefs and practices.

Integrity is promoted by:

- Behaving and speaking in ways that model fairness, respect and equity.
- Being honest with one's self and others.

These values and principles achieve a healthy community environment and supportive culture that promotes physical, psychological and spiritual well-being for all women, taking into account their diverse needs and risks.

Boronia's success is measured by the reduced rate of reoffending and the improved education, training, work and health of the women.