

## BANYULE CITY COUNCIL - working towards a community free of violence against women

### WHITE RIBBON AT BANYULE - OUR HISTORY

Banyule City Council first engaged in working towards preventing violence against women when family violence was identified as a priority community safety issue in the 2005 - 2007 Safer Banyule Plan.

In 2007 a commitment was made to support and promote the White Ribbon Campaign to Council staff and the broader community. In our first year activities included the sale of ribbons at customer service counters and hosting a White Ribbon stall at a local festival. White Ribbon Day was acknowledged by holding a staff BBQ in partnership with Berry Street and Victoria Police. At this event local police presented information about the impact of family violence in Banyule. Staff described the event as an eye opener acknowledging that they were unaware of the prevalence of family violence as a human rights issue.

With strong support from the CEO and Directors a small working group formed to plan activities for the 2008 campaign. The group chose to direct activities towards sections of the workplace that had a high percentage of male staff by hosting a 'Blokes BBQ', at the Parks and Gardens Depot with guest speakers including anti-violence advocate, Phil Cleary. It was after this activity that men identified their role in being part of the solution by enabling conversations challenging attitudes about gender inequality.

Parallel to this was a spirit of collaboration between neighbouring and regional Councils to work together to address violence against Women. Banyule participated in two Northern Region White Ribbon Day Breakfasts with over 140 staff and community leaders from Banyule in attendance. In 2009 a White Ribbon Action Team was formed to pursue the goals of the White Ribbon Campaign. Action team members came together from a range of council areas and continue to work together to develop a whole of council approach towards Preventing Violence against Women in Banyule. One of the first activities of the White Ribbon Action Team was to survey staff about their feelings and commitment to the campaign. Survey results revealed that:-

- 70 % felt that it is important that Banyule participates in the campaign
- 76 % indicated that it is critical to challenge attitudes that accept violence against women
- 60% of staff indicated that they now have a general to high awareness of the campaign

### OUR CURRENT WORK - SHIFTING FROM AWARENESS RAISING TO PRIMARY PREVENTION

From March 2010 Banyule has worked in partnership with VicHealth and Darebin City Council as part of the Local Government Networking and Capacity Building Project. This partnership has assisted us to recognise and acknowledge the pivotal role we have in creating environments for communities to prosper and enjoy improved health and wellbeing through primary prevention, setting based actions.



Photo taken from an article printed in the Heidelberg Leader of White Ribbon Action Team members in November 2009 marking White Ribbon Day at Banyule City Council

This whole of council approach sees Council officers talking with other Council officers about how they can make a difference in their core role to preventing violence against women. This has been achieved through consultations being held across all business units that seek to ask staff:-

- Within your day to day or teams work what is it that you are already doing to prevent violence against women?
- What are some of the new ideas that you have that aim to support primary prevention
- What resources are required for this to happen?
- What actions do you see that could make a difference across Banyule?

These 4 key questions have resulted in Council staff continuing to:-

- recognise the leadership and advocacy role we play around preventing violence before it occurs
- explore ways in which primary prevention is embedded in our core business
- challenge attitudes through greater understanding of the prevalence and impacts of family violence
- take opportunities to raise questions throughout the planning and consultation stages

As this consultation process continues to unfold and gather momentum one message that has been conveyed by a number of teams is that, "At Banyule White Ribbon Day is everyday". As teams embrace the concepts of primary prevention they are considering the role that they play through awareness raising and increasing community capacity. All of the information gathered will be used to shape both the Safer Banyule - Community Safety Strategy and the White Ribbon Action Plan.

### We're off and running...

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