

## MARIBYRNONG RESPECT AND EQUITY: Preventing Violence Against Women

### MARIBYRNONG RESPECT AND EQUITY PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The 'Maribyrnong Respect and Equity: Preventing Violence Against Women Project' aims to prevent violence against women before it occurs in the first place. The ultimate goal of this project is to create a community in Maribyrnong in which women can live free from violence and the fear of violence.

This project used the unique role of local government to facilitate an integrated approach, working across all departments at council to address the causes of violence against women in policy, planning, strategy, programs and action plan development. Through this project, council works with the community to raise awareness and influence attitudes and behaviour towards women by promoting positive and healthy relationships.

The project objectives are:

- To consolidate and strengthen the activities undertaken within the Maribyrnong Preventing Violence Against Women Action Plan 2007-2008
- To embed and drive cultural change by incorporating the determinants of violence into local government policy, planning, strategy, programs and action plan development
- To increase awareness and understanding of violence against women issues across settings within the broader community
- To document and disseminate the learning and challenges of the primary prevention activities implemented across a local government area

The project is funded for three years (2008-2011) by VicHealth through their Respect and Responsibility and Equality: Preventing Violence Against women grants. More information on this project, or any of the initiatives listed below, is available from [emma.wilkinson@maribyrnong.vic.gov.au](mailto:emma.wilkinson@maribyrnong.vic.gov.au).

### LEADERSHIP, MENTORING AND ADVOCACY

- Advocacy to the state government on the role of local government in addressing violence against women through the development of *A Right to Respect: State Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women*
- Embedding the causes of violence across a number of objectives in the Maribyrnong Council Plan 2009 - 2013
- The development of a violence prevention booklet, *Everybody can...make a difference in preventing violence against women*, containing the personal stories of everyday people who have taken up the challenge of violence prevention
- Staff survey undertaken every two years to test staff attitudes, knowledge and awareness around violence against women and gender equity (available at [www.lgpvaw.net.au](http://www.lgpvaw.net.au))

### BUILDING CAPACITY TO GENERATING CULTURAL CHANGE ACROSS COUNCIL AND WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

- White Ribbon Day Male Staff Working Group (WRDWG) established in 2008 with representation across all levels and branches of Council to challenge attitudes and increase awareness of violence against women across Council and in the community
- The development and implementation of an organisational Family Violence Policy, embedding and creating ownership of violence prevention efforts across Council (available at [www.lgpvaw.net.au](http://www.lgpvaw.net.au))
- Annual community and partner forum on preventing violence against women
- Council and community awareness raising activities built around the White Ribbon Day Campaign driven through the WRDWG- strategies have included, annual events acknowledging White Ribbon Day, bookmarks disseminated with every library book borrowed in November/December, large banner hanging from the town hall, 'not violent, not silence' stencil outside every Council owned facility, large magnets on garbage trucks, bumper sticker on every Council vehicle, 'Maribyrnong says no to violence' t-shirts printed each year with differing slogans, Freeza event for young people
- Funding of community groups and organisations via Council Community Grants to undertake violence prevention activities in the community (in 2007 and 2008)
- Forum organised in 2009 in partnership with Recreation Services to engage local sporting clubs to explore opportunities of working together to prevent violence against women using sport as a key setting
- Youth Services used existing relationships with local secondary schools to undertake an education project which resulted in the production of large banners exploring messages about healthy and respectful relationships.

### BUILDING ON RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- Key leader in the development of *Preventing Violence Together: The Western Region Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women* led by Women's Health West in partnership with the HealthWest Primary Care Partnership
- Support of a local government working group to explore the role of local government in addressing gender inequality
- Convener of the Western Region Local Government Preventing Violence Against Women Network. During 2010, the Network has developed a partnership with Western Region Football League to promote awareness of PVAW through distribution of materials to each club and the production and distribution of men's and women's help cards (based on the northern region), which outlines the Family Violence services available in the Western Region.



### ENABLING THE FULL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN PUBLIC LIFE

- Audit of local Council owned community facilities, such as sporting grounds, works centre, maternal and child health centres and community centres to ensure that they are safe and welcoming for women and model respect for gender relations and non-violent means of communication and conflict resolution. The audit tool examined the physical and built environment from a gendered perspective and was developed to assess the extent to which the physical and social environments can prevent violence against women (available at [www.lgpvaw.net.au](http://www.lgpvaw.net.au))
- Community attitudes, knowledge and awareness around violence against women tested and measured through the inclusion of questions in Council Annual Community Attitudes Survey (available at [www.lgpvaw.net.au](http://www.lgpvaw.net.au))
- Incorporating violence prevention messages and activities into existing promotions such as Youth Week, Freeza Events, Refugee Week, White Ribbon Day, Week without Violence and International Women's Day

**Maribyrnong respect and equity: preventing violence against women project is about advocating for and driving systemic change by working across a range of local community settings.**

**We're well on the way**

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 **Respect & Equity**  
Preventing Violence against Women

