

BRIMBANK CITY COUNCIL:

Preventing Violence Against Women and in Families

BRIMBANK CITY COUNCIL POLICY CONTEXT

The Brimbank Community Plan 2009-2030 describes the community's vision and priorities for the next twenty years and establishes a shared basis for joint planning, service delivery and advocacy. The Brimbank Community Plan is unique in that it integrates Council's requirement for Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Planning across all strategic directions identified.

One of the strategic directions identified in the Brimbank Community Plan is to create healthy, safe communities, with the community identifying a wish to achieve increased physical and mental health and shared feelings of safety at all times. Developing and implementing a Family Violence Prevention Strategy is part of Brimbank City Council's planning and policy development commitments within this strategic direction.

Similarly, creating healthy, safe communities and increasing our community's physical and mental health and developing a shared feeling of safety at all times is also a strategic objective identified in the Council Plan 2009-2013.

The Brimbank Social Justice Charter also underpins the Brimbank Community Plan and identifies promotion of civic engagement, strengthening community wellbeing and reducing causes of disadvantage as key priorities for action.

On 20 July 2010, at the Brimbank City Council Ordinary Meeting the Victorian Local Government Women's Charter was adopted by Council.

THE BRIMBANK FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION NETWORK

The focus of the Brimbank Family Violence Prevention Network is on the prevention of violence against women and children in the City of Brimbank through the development of a whole of population public health response in partnership with key stakeholders. This Network has been operating for a number of years and its aims are to:

1. advocate in relation to service provision and funding opportunities;
2. raise awareness of the prevalence of violence against women and violence prevention initiatives;
3. act as a local coordinating body for White Ribbon Day and Week Without Violence; and
4. link to other local, regional and state strategic planning, projects and networks regarding family violence.

Members of the Network include community health, social support agencies, women's health, law enforcement, education, community organisations, service providers and local government.

Achievements of the Network include conducting a number of awareness raising activities in 2007 and 2008 for White Ribbon Day and Week Without Violence. This included organising stalls at local shopping centres along with other agencies and distributing information to agencies. The Network has also acted as a reference group for the draft Brimbank Family Violence Prevention Action Plan 2010-2013.

THE DRAFT BRIMBANK FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION ACTION PLAN 2010-2013: PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND IN FAMILIES

The goal of the draft Family Violence Prevention Action Plan is to create a respectful, gender equitable and violence free community in the City of Brimbank. While it has been intentionally drafted to reflect a broader family violence prevention focus, recognising that Council also has a responsibility in all areas of service planning to prevent violence in the family setting, it has a particular focus on preventing violence against women before it occurs in the first instance.

The draft Family Violence Prevention Action Plan addresses the determinants of violence against women and takes an integrated approach to violence prevention by strengthening activity within Council and raising awareness of the issue within the community. This includes integrating violence prevention into the core business of local government by capitalising on opportunities arising in policy, programs and planning. The draft Family Violence Prevention Action Plan will also work with the Brimbank community to raise awareness and influence attitudes and behaviour by promoting positive and healthy relationships through a range of settings.

Some opportunities of the draft Family Violence Prevention Action Plan include:

1. exploring the development of an organisational Family Violence Policy;
2. piloting the use of a Preventing Violence Against Women Assessment Tool on ten Council facilities to determine how safe they are for women and everyone;
3. capacity building of Council staff and the community in preventing family violence; and
4. developing a male Council staff White Ribbon Day Working Group.

The draft Family Violence Prevention Action Plan has been presented to Brimbank City Council and is currently awaiting final adoption.

THE WESTERN REGION LOCAL GOVERNMENT PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND FAMILY VIOLENCE NETWORK & THE HEALTHWEST PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN WORKING GROUP

Brimbank City Council has also been an active member in a number of violence prevention networks including the Western Region Local Government Preventing Violence Against Women and Family Violence Network and the HealthWest Preventing Violence Against Women Working Group (to develop a Western Region Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women 2011-2013).

Key achievements of the Western Region Local Government Preventing Violence Against Women and Family Violence Network include partnering with the Women's Football Foundation of the Western Region Football League to deliver a social marketing campaign focused on promoting preventing violence against women within the Western Region Football League clubs. The Network has also developed family violence support service cards (based on the model developed by the northern local governments) for women and men in the western region.



WHITE RIBBON LEADERS LUNCH

On Wednesday 14 July 2010, fourteen Brimbank City Council staff members attended

the White Ribbon Leaders Lunch at Moonee Valley Racing Club. Brimbank staff present represented areas as diverse as Arts & Culture, Community Strengthening, Social & Health Policy, Libraries, Leisure and Building Services along with key partners from Centrelink and Community West. The event gave all of those present the opportunity to explore what each of us can do to create a community free of violence. According to one Council staff member, "I left the event feeling inspired to act. I picked up some great ideas for library activities for White Ribbon Day..." The event was organised through the 'Local Government Networking and Capacity Building Project to Prevent Violence Against Women', a partnership project between VicHealth and Darebin City Council.

We're off and running...

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