

DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL

Preventing Violence Against Women Officer
- Council funded position

BACKGROUND

In 2007 Darebin City Council was successful in securing a grant from the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust to undertake a two-year project "Local Government Leading the Way - Partnerships to Reduce Family Violence". The grant acknowledged local governments are in a unique position to both lead partnerships and initiate activities at the local level to prevent violence against women, and recognised Darebin having championed this work since 2002. The culmination of work undertaken through this project, led to Darebin City Council funding the Preventing Violence Against Women Officer 0.4EFT (2 days/week) position for three years, 2009-2012.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

The current funding enables the officer to work in select settings within Council to embed policies and projects that contribute to preventing violence against women. The officer also coordinates the Darebin White Ribbon Action Team and the White Ribbon Community Group. (see Darebin City Council - White Ribbon Campaign for further information) An important step for Darebin City Council is Gender Equity being articulated in Darebin's Council Plan 2009-2013. It states "We will work to support the right of women to fully and equally engage and participate in the life of the community."

Another strategic milestone is that preventing violence against women was set as a priority in Darebin's Community Health and Wellbeing Plan 2009-2013. Strategy 13 states: "Integrate violence prevention activity across our organisation and in partnership with the community to reduce violence against women and children."

The officer has also provided input into other strategic plans- including the Darebin Leisure Strategy, and continues to consult with other key managers within Darebin on the formulation of upcoming strategies.

WORK ACROSS COUNCIL TO EMBED PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

In 2010 the officer has continued to work across Council to embed prevention activities into council activities and functions.

Selected settings include:

- Organisational Development
- Early Years and Children Services;
- Youth Services;
- Aged and Disability;
- Arts and Culture;
- Libraries;
- Leisure and
- Social Inclusion.

Via the Organisational Development unit a Gender Equity and Diversity Training Program has been piloted and will now feature in our ongoing corporate training calendar. A family violence policy and family violence training is also in its preliminary stages of development. Various staff from different departments at Darebin have also completed the McHealth Short course to Prevent Violence Against Women, in order to build their capacity to undertake work in this area.

The officer has conducted consultations with different managers and officers in order to develop strategies and activities that both address the needs of that department, and aim to prevent violence against women. One example is that the officer is working with the Coordinator of Maternal and Child Health Surveys to develop social marketing material that may be displayed at different maternal health service sessions. A survey is also being developed for this unit to ascertain the training needs of maternal health nurses on this issue.

In the Youth Services area the officer has presented at Youth Services Network meetings on the topic, screened DVD resources for youth workers to use, organised for guest speakers working within the youth sector to present on their programs, linked workers with youth specific networks and has also briefed the manager of Youth Services on the extent of this issue.

We're well on the way

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