

Everybody can... make a difference in preventing violence against women.



Different people, different places, different ways... Stories of everyday people who have taken up the challenge of preventing violence.



Respect & Equity
Preventing Violence Against Women



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Committed to making a difference: *Everybody can...*

Everybody can... make a difference in preventing violence against women briefly tells the stories of six everyday people who are making that difference in different ways: at work, in churches, on and off sports grounds, in organisations and as part of everyday life.

This project was initiated by Maribyrnong City Council and looks at the way these people are taking action to change attitudes and prevent violence.

We believe these stories are inspirational; they provide the evidence that all of us, as parents, friends, employers, employees and community members can make a difference to women's safety by promoting gender equity and respect for women in our communities.

There is already a growing and valuable body of material that documents effective prevention projects and it was not our intention to duplicate that work. Instead, we wanted to hear and tell the stories of the people who make those projects realities to acknowledge that we all, whoever we are, have a role to play.

Everybody can ... reflects Council's ongoing commitment to creating a community in which women live free from violence and the fear of violence. Like the people whose stories are told in this resource, Council has been on a journey. Our journey has involved exploring the unique role of local government, as an arm of government closest to the community, in preventing violence against women through coordinating, facilitating and planning across a number of settings within the community.

Through the Maribyrnong Respect and Equity: Preventing Violence Against Women Project we are continuing to take an integrated approach to violence prevention in public and private spaces by working across Council and in the community to increase capacity to prevent violence against women before it occurs.

I hope this resource encourages you to take action in your own life – join us on this journey to end violence in our community. We must stand together as a community and say we will not tolerate violence against women in any form.

The *Everybody Can...* Resources

The interviews have been used to create three resources:

- an *Everybody can...* postcard series
- this resource – brief version of the six interviews
- full interviews

The resources are available online at www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au or can be obtained by contacting the Project Coordinator, Maribyrnong Respect & Equity: Preventing Violence Against Women on 9688 0237.

Cr Michael Clarke
Mayor of the City of Maribyrnong

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Interviews by: Kathy Wilson
Photography by: Brendan Finn
Design and Illustration: Isis & Pluto
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Project Coordinator,
Maribyrnong Respect & Equity:
Preventing Violence Against Women,
Maribyrnong City Council
Phone: 9688 0237

www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au

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Maribyrnong City Council would like to thank the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) for funding the development of this resource.

Thank you to Andrew Day, Graeme Cann, Jenelle Kelly, Minh Bui, Nick Mazzarella and Ron Dumas for sharing your inspiring journeys in violence prevention in this resource.

Our thanks also to Kathy Wilson, Kathy Wilson Consulting, for capturing and writing these powerful stories, Brendan Finn, Folded Bird, for photography and Isabel Walsh and Peter Smith, Isis & Pluto, for the illustration and design of this resource.
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Andrew Day

“ Some of the answer has to be in equipping people to have the opportunistic conversation. You'll get converted people to the sessions and it's preparing them for when they come across these conversations, anywhere and everywhere. ”



Andrew Day is the manager of Organisational Development with Maribyrnong City Council He is married with two young children.

Soon after starting in this role he began working with the Community Planning and Advocacy Department on ways the Council could bring violence prevention strategies into the workforce. At this time he also became involved with the group organising the Council's White Ribbon Day activities.

Starting with the understanding that violence, and its affects on workers who perpetrate it and workers who are victims of it, can't be separated from the workplace, Andrew and his colleagues looked at how violence prevention could be addressed in Council policy. 'We needed a specific policy ... we could market and discuss rather than burying it away. We're doing that. We're working on something we can really use and build a good communication strategy around.'

Andrew's interest in the prevention of violence is both personal and professional. Personally he hopes to influence his son and his daughter to know that violence is not acceptable; professionally he believes that Council's role in service provision gives it an avenue to affect change in the way society views violence.

Andrew uses his understanding of diversity in the workforce to look at the most effective ways of changing people's perspectives. He believes in preparing people who are already committed to violence prevention to engage others in conversations as and when they arise, and taking the idea of violence prevention out of organised meetings and into every day life.

'Where's the best place to address that sort of stuff? You'll get the converted people to the sessions and it's preparing them for when they come across these conversations, anywhere and everywhere.'

Experience in how change happens within organisations is another of Andrew's interests. He believes that change happens incrementally, and that looking back and seeing the progress is important. 'Don't expect to run one session (on violence prevention) and effect change. You've got to persist and expect to hit blockers; you've got to look at those blockers as an opportunity to re-evaluate and say that's really interesting, what you've done has exposed something that has to be addressed.'

'Sometimes it's okay to look in the rear vision mirror at where we've come from as well, and celebrate the wins.'



Graeme Cann

“...we had to keep saying...somebody’s got to stand up... and say this is enough, you know, violence must end. We just happen to believe that the people to do that right now are the men in our community. ”



Graeme Cann has dedicated himself to promoting peace in families for the last three years, after a life in the ministry.

As a counsellor and a pastor, Graeme has seen hundreds of people who’ve experienced sexual or domestic violence, and he has seen many instances where the church, due to a lack of skills and understanding about domestic violence, has failed to support the victims.

When funding for a domestic violence program became available the Pastors’ Network – a group of pastors from various denominations in Casey – was chosen to be one of the groups who delivered the program, in partnership with Casey Council and Casey Cardinia Health.

Thirteen churches now have had people trained in Certificate IV in domestic violence. ‘The training was a real eye opener for many because they had never been involved in anything like that before.’

The program has extended to train survivors of domestic violence to become peer educators and supporters, further increasing the number of people in the community with an understanding of domestic violence and its consequences.

For Graeme, an important outcome of the program has been the process of learning to work towards a common goal with very different organisations. ‘The secular world is very concerned about domestic violence and we are very concerned about domestic violence, so here’s an opportunity for us to come together and do something about it.

‘I’ve just become totally convinced that as churches we must not just do things in the community, but we must partner with the community.

‘The programs we run ... the police interventions and the various other interventions will never work as well as they should until there is a strong volunteer base to provide support for people.’

Graeme brings enthusiasm and the ability to inspire others to this work, but is very aware that it takes many people of different abilities to create change. ‘People like me never get things done ... we always need people who can put structure in place.’

‘I celebrate my 50th year in ministry this year, and I have never been involved in a more satisfying program.’



Jenelle Kelly

“ Behaviour change is not something that you get with one training session. It’s something that gets handed down...Dream big, but you’ve got to have small steps. It’s intergenerational for women and for men and for the police. ”



Jenelle Kelly has been in the force for more than 20 years. She’s worked in the Melbourne metropolitan area, in the western suburbs, and in regional Victoria.

Over the years Jenelle has seen a huge change in the way the police respond to domestic violence.

When I was younger and going to “domestics” as we called them then, I didn’t understand how the woman could put up with it or why she just didn’t leave. You apply your own judgments; I’d think, “If it was me I would just leave.”

‘... I did some training through Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre – it changed my outlook. I’m able to direct women in the right way to get the help they need ... I try to get that message across to the troops as well.

‘Getting agencies and their workers to understand the police role and capacity is a challenge ... so I attend staff training sessions and meetings. Consistency and follow-through is also important.’

In 2007 Jenelle and others in Bendigo formed the Family Violence Prevention Network and held a forum, out of which grew the Bendigo Out of Bounds project. ‘Out of Bounds involved the players [from the Bendigo Football League], from the under 16s up, in a compulsory session on violence one night after training. They were all quite eager and we got a good response.’

The Out of Bounds project continues to grow, extending to basketball and a new football club.

Jenelle’s role involves her in organising and events, in networking, liaison and training, and in identifying and supporting change at the station. ‘Both the role and the context are complex with plenty of room for misunderstanding and communication failure ... there’s a lot of heat in situations involving family violence.

‘You’ve got to see everybody’s perspective, you’ve got to look to the future ... because otherwise you just get burnt out and think “It’s never going to make any difference”.

‘Behaviour change is a generational thing; it’s not something that you’re going to get from people with one training session. Education – long-term education – has got to be the key.

‘I’m always learning new and different things The biggest lesson from this particular role is that if we can harness the enthusiasm and all the different skills and talents from all these different agencies – that are, in effect, all there for the same thing – then we can really achieve something ... really, in some ways the jobs are one and the same. I have learnt a lot about where these other agencies are coming from.

‘I am proud myself of all the Network has achieved.’



Minh Bui

“ There are so many different ways to approach preventing violence, one would be heard by one audience, another way by another audience; sometimes you're whispering, sometimes you use a microphone but it's the same voice. ”



Minh Bui came to Australia when he was 16, after two years in a refugee camp. He is married with three young sons, and works for the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association (AVWA).

He says 'We should respect our wives and our wives should respect us. It is the issue of dignity, esteem and respect ... the way to achieve a happy family is not by dominating, but by sharing, by nurturing and bonding in the family, with consistent understanding.'

Minh helped organise White Ribbon Day events, integrating a mainstream program with his activities in the Vietnamese community.

He has worked in the Speak Out violence prevention program, which aimed to raise awareness of issues related to violence against women in the Vietnamese community. He also works with two men's groups where he uses discussion to open up the issue of domestic violence.

Domestic violence is a sensitive issue for the Vietnamese, and Minh believes it will be a gradual process of changing age old customs. As in all communities there are many different paths to changing people's views.

'Sometimes you're whispering, sometimes you use a microphone, but it's the same voice ... It's a long battle, we need many pathways to achieve our objective.'

Minh approaches men with respect and understanding, letting them know that he understands that some behaviours may have been acceptable in Vietnam, but encouraging them to think about other ways of relating to their families.

'For Vietnamese men, the role of the husband is leadership at home; we need to ask – what are the soft forms of that leadership at home? ... I question "What will happen if you keep on going like this?"

Minh believes strongly that many people are ill prepared for the challenges of marriage and family and that education for couples is the way to reduce domestic violence in the future.

'We could run education workshops on family life, including understanding the difference between the sexes, even budgeting.

'I hope the younger generation, Vietnamese younger generation will be better informed and well directed to their family life.

'There are many things we can do to make change, to prevent violence. I like ideas. I like putting things on the table to see what works.'



Nick Mazzarella

“ I’d been quite nervous about that (White Ribbon) march. I’d never done anything like it ... there I was helping to carry part of the wire ribbon. It affirmed to me that no matter how big or small the group, you can actually make a difference.”



Nick, a father of two young children, is the Manager of Major Projects and Transport for the City of Darebin.

Not long after he first took up his role at Darebin, over three years ago, he attended a White Ribbon breakfast out of interest and as a way of meeting people in his organisation. Now, he is part of the National White Ribbon Ambassadors Program. The speakers at that breakfast had a significant affect on him and their messages resonated with his personal sense of justice and fair play.

Along with a group of other men at Darebin Council, Nick formed the Darebin White Ribbon Action Team and working with the Family Violence Project Coordinator, Kellie Nagle they have taken on the work of opening up the conversations necessary to change attitudes and behaviours that will prevent violence against women. The Action Team has been involved in organising Council and community events aimed at making a difference.

One of these was an organisation challenge in which all Departments were invited to initiate a White Ribbon activity. Nick’s own Department, usually occupied with engineering and infrastructure, organised a march from the Town Hall to the market. Nick says of that day, ‘I’d been quite nervous about that march. I’d never done anything like it before in my life – and there I was helping to carry part of the wire ribbon. It affirmed to me that no matter how big or small the group, you can actually make a difference. For me, it was quite amazing.’

Nick knows prevention of violence against women won’t be achieved overnight and brings to his involvement in the White Ribbon campaign the same approach he takes to his work role. ‘I often work with long term vision while achieving some incremental change.’

He now wears a white ribbon on all his suits. The conversations these prompts are not always easy. ‘It gets a mixed reaction: it can be a taboo topic for a lot of people, they don’t want to talk about it, it’s about the home and the domestic environment, it’s about their privacy. It definitely can be a barbeque stopper... so you’ve got to be really understanding in how you bring the topic up.’

Being the father of two children, White Ribbon has a personal dimension for Nick. ‘I hope my little girl is treated with respect as she gets older; and that my son is respectful to everyone. I want to impart to them my positive thoughts and the values behind the White Ribbon program.’

I’m proud to be an ambassador and now have been nominated to the White Ribbon national leadership group by the White Ribbon Day campaign.



Ron Dumas

“ I’m proud of my story, the hard and the bad times as well as the good...You have to understand the past to make the future better; if I can bring some of that to my workplace and my workers that can only be a good thing. ”



Ron Dumas is the General Distributions Senior Manager at Linfox’s Altona site, one of their largest warehouses.

He is known to be an innovative manager and someone who cares about his workers; when he was asked if he would support the Linfox Program Harm in the Home being run at his site he agreed enthusiastically. ‘If I can help in any way to prevent violence in the workplace, violence at home, violence anywhere, then I’m all for it.’

The program involves the participants in looking at ways of managing conflict and confrontations without violence, as well as at ways of changing the attitudes that contribute to the perpetration of violence against women; it aims to develop participants’ skills in speaking out against violence.

Ron believes that giving the staff the opportunity to be involved and learn has positive effects in the workplace. ‘If people have knowledge then they can make better decisions. It makes them better employees ... and the managers appreciate it, because it makes their job easier to manage people who want to be a part of it.’

Ron’s life is proof that people who grow up seeing violence around them don’t have to perpetuate it. He grew up in a violent neighbourhood and saw his mother victimised. A big man, he has always lived a non-violent life, even when he worked as a bouncer.

‘It’s all about communication. You have to be able to communicate in a way in which you don’t get emotional, you don’t get hostile, you don’t get violent, you just got to just keep your cool and work out whatever issues that you have to deal with, rather than doing it in a violent way.’

Ron is also optimistic about the future, as he sees the younger members of his family also changing their lives for the better. ‘My brother never went to school, so now he’s six years younger than me and can hardly read or write his name, but still he’s got a son, who just graduated with an engineering degree from a major university in America.’

‘You have to understand the past to make the future better; if I can bring some of that to my workplace and my workers it can only be a good thing.’

