

HOW TO GUIDE

CREATE AN ACTION TEAM TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

FIRST THINGS FIRST: an acronym warning! PVAW (p-vore) = preventing violence against women

This document aims to assist you to develop your own Council Preventing Violence Against Women (PVAW) Action Team. The common purpose of an Action Team is to generate a holistic approach to PVAW.

Local Governments across Victoria are increasingly creating 'Action Teams' as an effective way to progress their PVAW efforts across Council and into the community. Most are using the White Ribbon Campaign as an impetus for engaging people, particularly men, from across the breadth of the organisation, and some Action Teams also include community partners. The White Ribbon Campaign has proven a highly successful vehicle for broadening engagement around the prevention of violence against women beyond a 'health and safety' and/or a 'women's issue'. You can find out more about the Campaign at www.whiteribbon.org.au

Action Team structures vary from informal and voluntary membership, to mandated participation by Council. Whatever form the Action Team takes, it's important to reflect on why people should get involved, and why men are part of the solution.

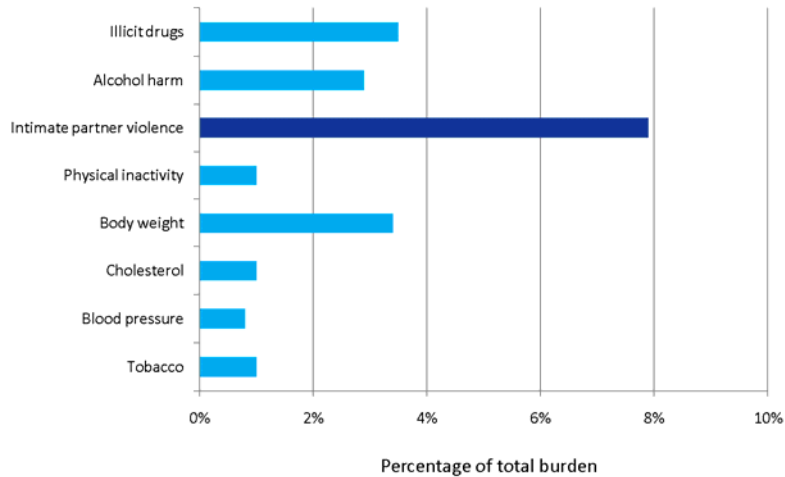
Why get involved?

- one in three Australian women will experience physical or sexual violence in her lifetime
- the biggest contributor to illness, injury or premature death for women between 15 and 45 is not smoking or obesity... it's violence, perpetrated by a husband, boyfriend or ex-partner
- more than one Australian woman every week is killed by her partner or ex-partner
- reported incidents of violence against women and their children is estimated to have cost the Australian economy \$13.6 billion in 2009 in terms of health, work absenteeism, police and court costs.



**Men of
quality
are not
threatened by
women's
equality**

Top eight risk factors contributing to the disease burden in women
aged 15-44 years, Victoria, Australia, 2001



VicHealth, *The Health Costs of Violence* (2004)

Key Determinants:

The key determinants and contributing factors to the perpetration of violence against women are:

- unequal power relations between women and men
- adherence to rigid gender stereotypes
- broader cultures of violence.

VicHealth, *Preventing Violence before it occurs: A Framework and Background Paper to Guide the Primary Prevention of Violence Against Women in Victoria* (2007)

Why Men?

A White Ribbon Foundation Report, 'Where Men Stand: Men's role in ending violence against women' (Flood 2010) argues that:

"without men's involvement, efforts to reduce and prevent violence against women will fail"

The report states that *"Violence against women is a men's issue. This violence harms the women and girls men love, gives all men a bad name, is perpetrated by men we know, and will only stop when the majority of men step up to help create a culture in which it is unthinkable"*. It further suggests:

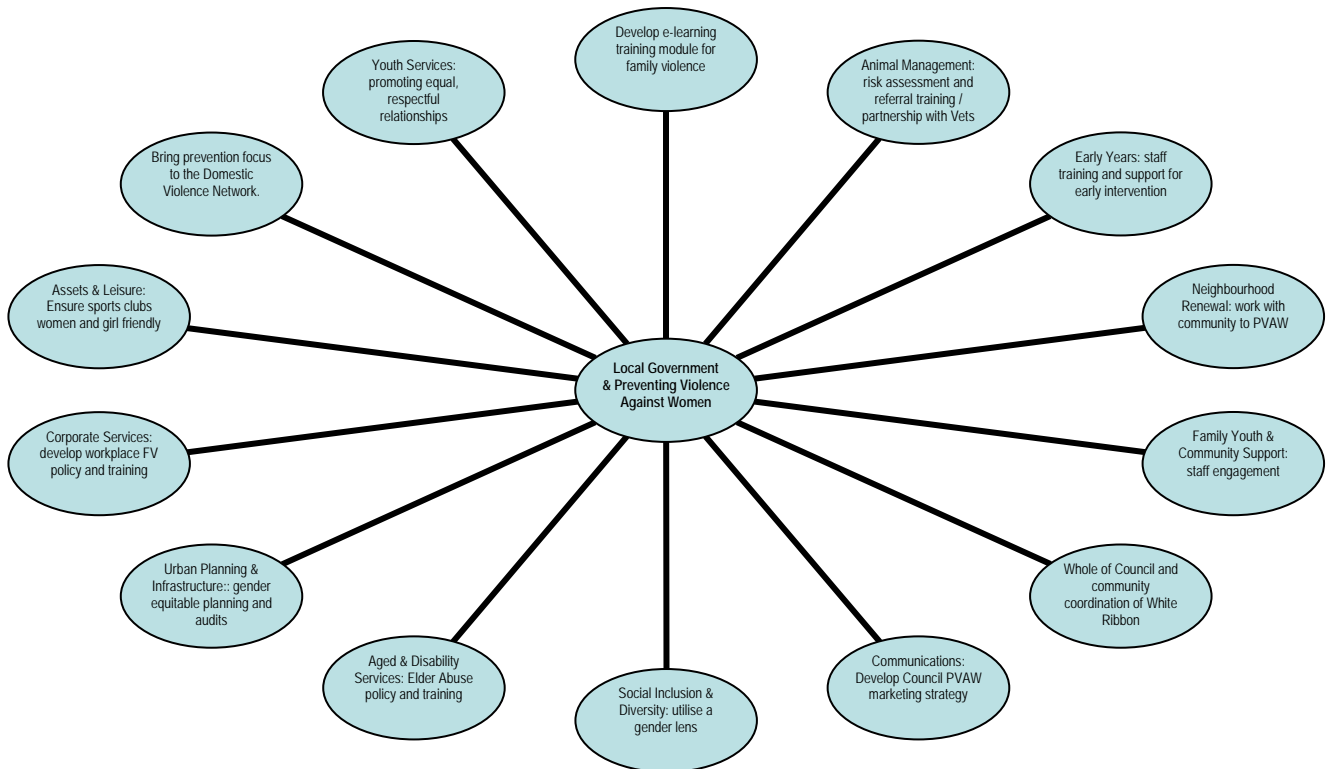
- *Men can change men.*
- *Men can use institutional power to promote change.*
- *Involving men means that women do not have to make change alone.*
- *Senior male leaders can be effective 'champions' for violence prevention in their organisations.*

*“Men can play a vital role in helping to reduce and prevent men’s violence against women. The majority of men do not commit violence against women. Yet few of these non-violent men are actively involved in violence prevention. **To stop violence against women, men of goodwill must do more than merely refrain from violence themselves”.*** (C.T. Allen 2010: 66-67)

From ‘Where Men Stand’ White Ribbon Prevention Research Series, Flood, 2010: 39).

What is it?

The idea of an Action Team is essentially to broaden the reach and build capacity across Council to engage in PVAW. There is no area of Council business that doesn’t relate in some way to PVAW and gender equity.



Why do it?

Violence against women and the reality of male privilege are largely unspoken issues, for men and for women. These conversations can be challenging and confronting. They require all of us to reflect on our own attitudes and behaviour and examine whether we are complicit either through silence or denial. An Action Team provides a space for these conversations to occur and start to build capacity at an individual level, and with this insight, can be applied through our daily lives and work to create a ripple effect through the organisation and into the community. The depth of these conversations will develop over time as people’s confidence and understanding builds.

Keep it simple to start with – both men and women can feel quite defensive talking about these issues and may argue it is a ‘man-bagging’ exercise and ‘women are violent too’. Stick to the simple facts as to why we need to address violence against women – because it is prevalent, serious and preventable.

Getting started:

It’s ok to start small - remember from little things big things grow!

Think of what’s achievable in your current context. Even if you are small in number, call a meeting and discuss what your strategy might be to build engagement and participation. Use the White Ribbon campaign messages to engage men in this conversation if they don’t already recognise PVAW as part of their role.

- are any of your Councillors or Executive interested in supporting an Action Team approach?
- who are the PVAW champions in your workplace?
- can you identify someone from each Department that is supportive of the idea of an Action Team?
- is there a Director / Councillor who is prepared to Chair an Action Team?
- are your local police interested in being part of an Action Team?
- are there any respected community PVAW champions who could partner with you?
- is there a neighbouring Council already with an Action Team who can assist you?

The Darebin journey described in the following pages certainly started small with selling ribbon at Customer Service Centres since 2005, and a small staff White Ribbon Breakfast organised in 2007. Darebin’s work and achievements have grown over the years to be quite a sophisticated and mutually reinforcing PVAW agenda across Council.

Darebin City Council - Darebin White Ribbon Action Team (DWRAT)

The Darebin White Ribbon Action Team formed in May 2008 to guide Council’s involvement in the White Ribbon Campaign. It was essentially born through the vision of one man – Nick Mazzarella, the Manager of Major Projects, Engineering and Transportation - who attended a small staff breakfast to acknowledge White Ribbon Day in November 2007. Prior to this breakfast Council had only sold white ribbons at customer service centres since 2005. Whilst 40 men from across Council were invited to the breakfast, only 14 attended. However Nick came away from the event determined and inspired to gather some of his colleagues together and discuss ways Council might participate more actively in the campaign in the future.

He literally went around Council and invited some of his colleagues to attend a lunch-time meeting to discuss the issue of violence against women and how everyone can engage in the white ribbon campaign.

The first meeting was held in May 2008 and 7 people (4 men and 3 women) attended. From this meeting, it was agreed that we needed representation of all Departments, so 2 further people were identified and approached. The minutes of this meeting for your information can be [viewed here](#).

At the second meeting in June 2008, the idea developed to have a 'Departmental Challenge' for the White Ribbon Campaign in 2008. The idea was for each Department across Council to organise something that contributed to the campaign – this is what resulted!

DAREBIN WHITE RIBBON CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES 2008

<u>COMMUNITY ASSETS & LEISURE</u>	<u>CITY DEVELOPMENT</u>	<u>ENVIRONMENT & AMENITY</u>	<u>CITY SERVICES</u>	<u>CORPORATE SERVICES</u>	<u>COMMUNITIES & CULTURE</u>
Activity: White Ribbon staff and community march through Preston Market with placards and handing out information to shoppers, finishing at Preston City Oval for morning tea.	Activity: Staff White Ribbon Morning Tea.	Activity: White Ribbon.... (sorry is top secret and requires element of surprise to be successful!). Hopefully will get media coverage...	Activity: White Ribbon 'Not Violent, Not Silent' Magnets for truck fleet (50 vehicles)	Activity: CEO email to all staff to raise awareness of the suite activities across Council for the White Ribbon Campaign	Activity: Produce White Ribbon Bookmarks to go out with all library books throughout 16 days of Campaign (special thanks to Yarra for their help!)
When: Friday 21 st November 10-11am.	When: Tuesday 25 th November 10.30am	When: Tuesday 25 th November	When: Tuesday 25 th November to Wednesday 10 th December	When: Wednesday 19 th November and Tuesday 25 th November	When: November 25 th to December 10 th
		<i>This activity was to be 'white ribbon' parking tickets, where people were asked to donate to white ribbon in lieu of being fined. It did not go ahead due to political climate of elections being held 29 Nov.</i>	Activity: White Ribbon BBQ at Depot	Activity: Raising community awareness of White Ribbon Campaign through local paper ads, bumper stickers, website, 'on hold' message, sale of ribbons	Activity: All units to develop and include activity relating to family violence / preventing violence against women / promoting respectful relationships in future Service Plans
			When: Tuesday 25 th November 10.30am – 12noon	When: November 2008 - ongoing	When: November 2008 - ongoing

Since 2008 DWRAT has met monthly at lunch-time throughout the year. Lunch is provided and the cost (around \$80 per month) is rotated across Departments. These meetings are advertised on Council's intranet page.

In 2009, the DWRAT undertook a strategic planning session to develop a strategic plan to drive the White Ribbon Campaign and initiate PVAW projects to embed activity across council.

The group's vision statement is *A community free of violence against women.*

The group's aims are:

- *To strengthen Darebin City Council's capacity to end violence against women and embed prevention work in everything we do*
- *To develop partnerships and strengthen the community's capacity to end violence against women*
- *To build our own individual capacity to end violence against women*

The Darebin White Ribbon Action Team Strategic Plan can be viewed here:

<http://www.lgpvaw.net.au/Detailed-Information.aspx?id=71>

New Council staff are invited to join the DWRAT as part of the corporate induction process, which compliments the presentation on the staff family violence policy during the new staff induction forum.

DWRAT's activities have evolved to become far broader than the White Ribbon campaign. Just a few examples include:

- successful new initiative bid for a PVAW Officer funded by Council 2009-12
- development of staff family violence policy and associated training package
- gender equity articulated in a number of Council's strategic plans
- working bee held at a local women's refuge and ongoing partnership established

For more details you can access Council's PVAW Achievements Report 2006-11 via the website:

http://www.darebin.vic.gov.au/Page/page.asp?Page_Id=7065

As of August 2011 DWRAT's membership consists of 16 people, 11 men and 5 women, with 11 members being very active, and 3 of whom are White Ribbon Ambassadors. The group includes a Director and a

Senior Manager and the membership represent diverse work areas of Council, including bushland management, hall-keepers, arts and culture, organisational development, business improvement, communications and city works.

It should also be noted that Nick, whose idea it was to create the Action Team back in 2008, went on to be awarded National White Ribbon Ambassador of the Year 2010.

Darebin Kite Festival February 2011

Activity of making paper flowers and attaching to large 'white ribbon': 2 white and 1 black, to represent 1 in 3 women affected by violence



Several Councils have consulted with Darebin around the establishment of their Action Teams, all of whom now have a very committed group working to progress their own Council's PVAW work. Below is a snapshot of the Action Teams from Hume City Council, Banyule City Council, City of Greater Dandenong and Maribyrnong City Council.

Hume City Council – Hume White Ribbon Action Team

The Hume White Ribbon Action Team was established in November 2010, and has steadily grown to 23 members as of September 2011.

Hume City Council consulted with Darebin in establishing their group and also undertook a similar strategic planning process. The Hume White Ribbon Action Team Strategy 2011-14 was launched in July 2011 and aims to provide strategic direction to Council, promote the vision and principles of the White Ribbon Campaign and to be the public face of the campaign locally.

Action Team members have recently undertaken training with Berry Street (Northern Region Family Violence Service) around appropriate responses to disclosures of family violence, following a number of disclosures upon the launch of the Strategy. They will soon be doing some further training with the Broadmeadows Magistrate's Court.

In the lead-up to White Ribbon 2011, the Team have partnered with Ferguson Plarre Bakehouse to host a white ribbon 'cupcake day' in October to raise awareness of the upcoming November campaign. This partnership arose through a member of the Team, a Health Inspector, having a relationship with the business and their 3 stores in the municipality.



Mayor, Cr Helen Patsikatheodorou, flanked by Michael Plarre (L) and Chris Ferguson (R), and members of the Hume White Ribbon Action Team (Michael and Chris are grandsons of the business founders).

You can access the Hume White Ribbon Action Team Strategy 2011-14 here:

<http://www.lgpvaw.net.au/Detailed-Information.aspx?id=359>

For more information on the Hume journey, contact Elizabeth Young: ElizabethY@hume.vic.gov.au

Banyule City Council – Banyule White Ribbon Action Team

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 the 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 (Northern Region Family Violence Service) 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.



Banyule, Darebin, Moreland and Yarra Councils hosted Not Violent, Not Silent breakfasts in August and October 2008

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 in 2008 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.



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

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

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 the consultation process continued and gathered momentum one message that was conveyed by a number of teams is that “at Banyule White Ribbon Day is everyday”.

The information obtained through these staff consultations has helped shape the PVAW priority area of the Safer Banyule Plan 2011-15 currently being developed, and will be incorporated as priorities in the associated Action Plan.

For more information contact Sarah Gillett: sarah.gillett@banyule.vic.gov.au

City of Greater Dandenong - Family Violence Action Team

The City of Greater Dandenong does not have a specific White Ribbon Action Team. Instead, they have a Family Violence Action Team with an annual Action Plan, which includes participation in the White Ribbon Campaign, along with International Women’s Day and the Week without Violence.

Membership of the Family Violence Action Team come together and organise activities and programs to reduce and prevent family violence throughout the year. Members include representatives from Early Years, Community Services and Cultural Diversity.

You can view the 2011 (draft) Action Plan to address Family Violence here:

<http://www.lgpvaw.net.au/Detailed-Information.aspx?id=362>

For more information on the Greater Dandenong approach, contact Hayden Brown hbrown@cgd.vic.gov.au



In the photo are Councillors, members of the Action Team and colleagues at Council's white ribbon day event.

Maribyrnong City Council – White Ribbon Working Group (WRWG)

(the following is an extract from the evaluation report written by Emma Wilkinson for the Maribyrnong Respect & Equity Project, September 2011)

In 2008 growing interest from staff across the organisation led to an initial cross-branch working group to organise White Ribbon Day 2008. Ten male staff from across all management levels, branches and sites voluntarily offered to be a part of the working group. After the event, the group decided to continue to meet and so WRWG was formed. Darebin City Council already had a group established and our group modelled themselves on this.

In 2009 the group met monthly to plan activities and develop collateral in the lead up to WRD. In 2010 the internal and external profile and commitment of the group swelled beyond our expectation.



The campaign has become a vehicle for discussing PVAW with men initially resistant, unaware or uninterested. It has provided the legitimate or normal platform for men from the WRWG to talk with others not involved in PVAW.

The WRWG men are able to connect the outcome (violence against women) with the cause (gender inequality) and articulate areas of action eg: increasing women's representation and status in society.

The men act as public White Ribbon Ambassadors, PVAW champions and advocates across the organisation and in the community. They raise awareness through activities, generate interest through commitment and inspire others with their passion. The WRWG have been the centrepiece to the R&E project and generated significant impact.

The 2010 terms of reference articulated the broad aims and scope of the group to be in line with The White Ribbon Foundation of Australia:

- Focus on preventing violence against women before it occurs in the first instance – that is primary prevention
- Promote culture change to support gender-equitable, safe and inclusive communities and organisations
- Promote equal and respectful relationships between women and men
- Work together across all levels of Council and within the community to prevent violence against women
- Promote the vision and principles of the White Ribbon Campaign
- Lead and promote the White Ribbon Campaign for Maribyrnong City Council
- Provide feedback, guidance and support when appropriate to the Maribyrnong R&E project.

During 2010 the group attended a range of PVAW events to hear inspirational speakers, meet people outside of Council working on PVAW and champion the role of Council and men:

- In June they went to Darebin City Council for a lunchtime presentation by Dr Melanie Heenan from VicHealth who spoke about the causes of violence against women and how we can work to prevent it
- In August they returned to Darebin City Council to hear Prof Bob Pease from Deakin University speak about the role of men in PVAW
- In November a table of 10 (including a Councillor) went to the Melbourne Town Hall White Ribbon Luncheon to hear Michael Flood and Michael Kaufman present. The CEO paid for this table.

At the beginning of 2011 the group identified a desire to hear from someone working with women who have experienced violence. To make the connections between the work at Council and real experiences of women, I invited Abbey, who has worked in a range of community health, legal and women's organisations as a case manager, counsellor, trainer and social justice crusader. At the suggestion of the group we opened the invitation to other staff across MCC. The room filled beyond 20 people and we had to get more chairs as more and more people arrived.

In 2008 the group developed the Maribyrnong White Ribbon t-shirt. These t-shirt slogans have been updated by the group each year and are worn around MCC on specific days and at the numerous external events the group attend. The slogans are personal and specific to Maribyrnong and the team. They generate a lot of conversation wherever someone is wearing it. In 2010 we incorporated the Council's organisational values of respect, courage and integrity. This was another way of highlighting the whole of Council approach and bringing the Council culture to life.



The shirts have significantly contributed to raising the profile of the R&E project, MCC's leadership and presenting a unified upfront stand against violence. The shirts have engendered a sense of pride within those wearing them and generated lots of interest and media attention. Other Councils across Victoria are printing shirts now. In 2010 I referred six Councils to the shirt printer and spoke to them about the process we have used in developing the slogans.

Each year we have increased the print order. In 2010 the shirts were available for sale to all Council staff. The EMT approved the Executive Assistants to coordinate gathering orders. This meant we were able to sell over 100 shirts to Council staff.

A large community music event and barbeque was held in Maddern Square to mark WRD in 2010. Over 200 people attended the event, which was hosted by the deputy Mayor (now Mayor). To organise this event, the WRWG drew on their relationships across the organisation. Logistically the group organised road blocks, notice to traders in the area, the use of electricity off the main line, transporting the BBQ's, setting up the stage, purchase and preparation of the food from local vendors, requisitioning a food permit, hiring the marquees and pack up of the event. We worked with staff from areas that don't traditionally see their role in PVAW such as the Senior Transport Engineer, Occupational Health and Safety Officer, Coordinator Roads and the Cleansing team.



Left: 2010 White Ribbon stencil in Maddern Square



Above: Young people performing at WRD 2010

Leading up to the event Western Region Health Centre (WRHC) staff attended a WRWG meeting to discuss ways to work together. We shared our WRD activities and resources and invited WRHC to march to the

community event from their workplace and join us at Maddern Square. We included the WRHC logo on the 2010 t-shirts and staff from WRHC ordered and wore these shirts as well.

Between 2008 and 2011 the activities leading up to WRD have increased, began earlier in the year and involved more and more people. Each year the WRWG begin planning ideas on how to raise the profile of the White Ribbon and challenge attitudes and behaviours that support or excuse violence against women.

For more information on the Maribyrnong White Ribbon Working Group contact Echo Jimenez-Sarta:

Echo.Jimenez-Sarta@maribyrnong.vic.gov.au

For more information on the Maribyrnong Respect & Equity PVAW Project visit:

http://www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/Page/page.asp?Page_Id=4199&h=0