

Sharing the evidence



Preventing violence
against women

Respect, Responsibility and Equality

Maribyrnong Respect and Equity: Preventing violence against women



Maribyrnong Respect and Equity: Preventing Violence Against Women



Evaluation Report

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Emma Wilkinson

Respect & Equity Project Coordinator



Photo 1 White Ribbon t-shirt

Abbreviations & acronyms

AFL	Australian Football League
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CDCP	Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSO	Community Service Organisation
DEECD	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
DGCHS	Doutta Galla Community Health Centre
DHS	Department of Human Services
EBA	Enterprise Bargaining Agreement
ECB	Evaluation Capacity Building
EMT	Executive Management Team, Maribyrnong City Council
GLOVE	Gender Local Governance and Violence Prevention
IWD	International Women's Day
LEAS	Leadership, Evaluation and Sustainability Network
MAC	Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre
MAV	Municipal Association Victoria
MCC	Maribyrnong City Council
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MPHP	Municipal Public Health Plan
MSS	Municipal Strategic Statement
MST	Maribyrnong Safety Taskforce
MVCC	Moonee Valley City Council
NCB	Network and Capacity Building
OWP	Office of Women's Policy
PCP	Primary Care Partnership
PIP	Partners in Prevention
PVAW	Preventing Violence Against Women
PVT	Preventing Violence Against Women; Western Region Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women
R&E plan	Respect and Equity: Preventing Violence Against Women Project plan
R&E project	Maribyrnong Respect and Equity: Preventing Violence Against Women project
Right to Respect	A Right to Respect Victoria's Plan to Prevent Violence against Women 2010-2020
RPL	Research Practice Leader
RRE Phase	Respect, Responsibility and Equality Phase
SCHP	Safer Communities and Health Promotion
The National	National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010-

Maribyrnong City Council

Plan	2022
UN	United Nations
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund For Women
VAW	Violence Against Women
VicHealth	Victorian Health Promotion Foundation
VLGA	Victorian Local Government Association
WFF	Women's Football Foundation, Western Region Football League
WHO	World Health Organisation
WHW	Women's Health West
WIFVC	Western Region Integrated Family Violence Committee
WRD	White Ribbon Day
WRFL	Western Region Football League
WRHC	Western Region Health Centre
WRWG	White Ribbon Working Group
WYPIN	Western Young Peoples Independent Network

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Mayor's message

We the people of Maribyrnong declare our commitment to a community where opportunities for success are equally available to women and men; where our mothers, daughters and sisters live free. Where their thoughts, ideas and opinions are heard and respected and their choices and goals in life celebrated and supported.

Maribyrnong is a vibrant community, rich in diversity and vast with opportunity. We are a community that values and respects gender equality and inclusion. We know that a culture, which supports and promotes equitable opportunities for women and men, creates a resilient, sustainable and healthy community.



Experience in Victoria is that local governments play an important part in coordinating violence prevention activities across municipalities. We have taken up this role with passion and commitment. Preventing violence against women is a key priority for Maribyrnong City Council.

To achieve this we work with range of agencies to achieve safe public environments. We develop community facilities and support women and girls access to sport, culture and employment. We provide health and community services for all of the community. These are places where women are free from violence and fear of violence. Strong networks are essential. Leaders, role models and champions are vital.

We are committed to further collaboration with our community, other local governments, workplaces, sports and recreation settings, community and women's health organisations, the media and schools. As the first Council to formally endorse the Western Region Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women, *Preventing Violence Together*, we prioritise working in partnership. Our action plan will continue to guide our work and provide further opportunities to engage in practical and strategic prevention initiatives.

As the Mayor of Maribyrnong City Council, on behalf of our community, I encourage you to become involved in preventing violence against women. The *Respect and Equity Evaluation Report* tells our story at Maribyrnong so far, however we still have some way to go. We look forward to working together on this important agenda.



Cr Sarah Carter
Mayor
Maribyrnong City Council

1. Executive summary

Violence against women is prevalent, serious and preventable



Background

Violence against women is widely recognised as a global problem and the most widespread violation of human rights. Violence against women takes many forms and affects all communities, irrespective of class, race or culture. Intimate partner violence is the leading contributor to death, disability and illness in Victorian women aged 15–44 (VicHealth 2006). Locally and internationally there is growing momentum to respond to and prevent violence against women. Local governments are increasingly recognising the key role they have to play.

Maribyrnong City Council (MCC) is leading the way through the innovative and unique Maribyrnong Respect and Equity: Preventing Violence Against Women project 2008-2011 (R&E project) funded by VicHealth. The project vision, framework and objectives respond to the internationally agreed key causes of violence against women:

- Unequal power relations between women and men
- Adherence to rigid gender stereotypes
- Broader cultures of violence.

Vision

A community in which women are able to live free from violence and fear of violence.

Framework for Maribyrnong action

The project is guided by the VicHealth Preventing Violence Against Women: A Framework For Action (VicHealth 2009). The framework recommends a range of mutually reinforcing strategies across societal, organisational and individual levels and in various community settings. Local government is recognised as having a profound ability to influence social and community change through leadership, coordination, service delivery, infrastructure, networks and partnerships and direct engagement with the community. The Victorian government ten year strategy to prevent violence against women also identifies the crucial role of local government and present the work of Maribyrnong City Council as a case study.

Respect & equity project objectives

- Consolidate and strengthen the activities undertaken within the Maribyrnong Preventing Violence Against Women (PVAW) Action Plan 2007-2008
- Embed and drive cultural change by incorporating the determinants of gender violence into local government policy, planning, strategy, programs and action plan development
- Increase awareness and understanding of violence against women issues across settings with the broader community
- Document and disseminate the learning and challenges of the primary prevention activities implemented across a local government area.

Themes for action

Preventing violence against women requires a coordinated, long-term approach, which recognises the gendered nature of violence, responds to and engages with the evidence and integrates a range of mutually reinforcing strategies across the Council and community. These strategies need to address the determinants of violence against women using an ecological approach to understanding and responding to violence. The key themes for action guide activities and provide the most potential for positive impact and change:

- Support and promote equal and respectful relationships between women and men
- Support and promote non-violent, gender equitable, inclusive norms within the organisation and community culture
- Improve structural supports to uphold this culture, enhance social connection and encourage women's full participation in life.

Research & evidence

The project has been informed by international research and current evidence, local capacity, skills, experience and genuine intent. Evaluation has occurred throughout the project guided by process and impact indicators and research questions established at the beginning of the project. We have used the principles of participatory and empowerment evaluation which prioritises individual stories and experiences as a way of constructing knowledge. This approach strengthens the evaluation narrative its value and the experience of those involved.

The respect and equity project is the first of its kind in local government. The findings from this evaluation will make a significant contribution to the growing body of practice and evidence and will be valuable to other local governments, organisations and workplaces. Evidence, undertaking evaluation and engaging with research have been essential to the success of this project.

Respect & equity impacts

As a result of the R&E project Maribyrnong has demonstrated:

- An increased level of skill and knowledge of Council staff to plan, implement and evaluate primary prevention activities
- Positive cultural change through policy, programming, planning and practice across Council
- Evidence based activities are undertaken in partnership across Council departments and sectors to address the determinants of violence against women
- Leadership and mentoring has been provided to other local government areas increasing engagement in this issue
- There is an increased awareness and capacity of the community to create safe, inclusive and gender equitable environments
- The project effectively documented and disseminated evidence for primary prevention activity across local government and local community.

Recommendations

This report outlines six interlinked factors to consider in preventing violence against women in local government. These recommendations are most effective if undertaken in conjunction, within a participatory, empowering approach, locally contextualised and based in the VicHealth framework for action:

- Provide leadership and support
- Increase awareness and capacity to create gender equitable environments
- Increase and share skills and knowledge
- Undertake and evaluate evidence based activities
- Support and promote a respectful, inclusive, gender equitable culture

Ending violence against women has a positive impact not only on individuals, but society as a whole. It requires a whole of council, whole of community approach; it is everyone's business and it is achievable.

2. Context

Violence against women is a gross violation of women's rights. It affects the whole world over. However, it is not inevitable and it is preventable. Increasingly the international community is coming together to prevent this violence from happening in the first place. Through the right mix of policy, programs, tools, training, resources, effort and education we can change attitudes, behaviours and cultures and eliminate violence against women.



Maribyrnong City Council (MCC) have been involved in research and good practice through the Respect and Equity 2008-2011 VicHealth funded project (R&E project), the subject of this report. As the local arm of government closest to community, it is important to engage with the broader state, national and international context. The impacts of this project have been achieved in part because we continually consider our role in relation to the community not just locally but globally. Through relationships and networks we have drawn from diverse practice experience and research. The growing momentum across Victoria has also significantly invigorated the Maribyrnong work and fostered innovation.



Figure 1 Map of Maribyrnong local government area

The City of Maribyrnong is located in Melbourne's Inner West. Over 72,000 people call Maribyrnong home representing a wide range of cultures and socio-economic backgrounds. Around 34% of Maribyrnong's residents were born in non-English speaking countries and 43% speak languages other than English. While higher income earners have moved into the municipality in recent years, many residents are low income earners and experience disadvantage.

2.1 Global

Adopted in 1979 by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is known as the major international human rights treaty or bill of rights for women. CEDAW defines discrimination against women as "...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human

rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field." (UN General Assembly 1979)

Through ratifying CEDAW states commit themselves to undertake a series of measures to end discrimination against women in all forms (UN General Assembly 1979). Australia became a signatory to CEDAW in 1983.

While the implementation of CEDAW has been instrumental in advancing women's rights, it does not provide specific protection for women who have experienced gender based violence. Moreover, the frameworks on which most global human rights law is based is only concerned with rights violations that are perpetrated by states and on the whole does not provide protection to violations which occur in the private sphere or those which are perpetrated by individuals (Edwards 2011).

In recognition of the lack of protection provided by CEDAW in addressing violence against women, the UN adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in 1993 and the Optional Protocol to the CEDAW in 1999.

The Optional Protocol is an important legal mechanism, which allows the Committee on the Elimination of Violence Against Women to hear complaints from individuals or inquire into 'grave or systematic violations' of CEDAW. Of the five decisions made since the Protocol came into force, three of these relate to intimate partner violence (Byrnes & Bath 2008).

In 2000 world leaders adopted a series of targets or the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) to tackle extreme poverty. These are comprised of eight key goals, which were identified as critical to reducing multi-dimensional poverty with concrete, numerical targets to be achieved by 2015.

These are the key indicators to achieving the MDG (UN 2010) (UN General Assembly 2000). Gender equity is central since goals such as reducing extreme poverty and hunger, reducing child mortality and improving maternal health are dependent on improved rights, opportunities and access for women to fully participate in community life (UN Secretary General 2010).

Established in 1976, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) was dedicated to advancing women's rights and achieving gender equality. UNIFEM's work was framed by CEDAW. In 2010 the UN General Assembly created UN Women - The UN entity for gender equality and empowerment of women. UN Women integrates the work of other UN agencies that have gender equality as part of their larger mandate and ensures the global policy work on gender equality is coordinated. UNIFEM has been subsumed into this entity (UN Women 2011).

In 2002 the World Health Organisation (WHO) published the landmark *World Report on Violence and Health* (WHO 2002). This identified violence against women as a key area for action. By positioning it as a leading worldwide issue for public health it gave global relevance to the epidemic rates and serious long-term impacts of violence against women.

The WHO multi-country study *Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women* found significant variation of prevalence of gendered violence within countries. The global proportion of women who have ever had an intimate partner who had perpetrated physical or sexual violence ranged from between 29% and 62% in most countries (WHO 2005).

2.2 Australia

The Commonwealth Government established the National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children (the National Council) in May 2008 to advise on measures to reduce the incidence and impact of violence against women and their children.

The Council presented its recommendations in *Time for Action: The National Council's Plan for Australia to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children, 2009-2021* (Commonwealth

Government 2009) and four companion documents. The Commonwealth released its response *Immediate Government Actions* in April 2009 (Commonwealth Government 2009) supporting the direction and focus of *Time for Action*. In 2011 after consultation with the state and territory governments the Australian Government released *The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022* (Commonwealth Government 2011).

The National Plan brings together the efforts of state and territory governments across Australia to reduce violence against women. It is the first plan to coordinate primary prevention action across jurisdictions. The National Plan focuses on responding to the key determinants of violence against women through building respectful relationships and working to increase gender equality (Commonwealth Government 2011).

Alongside the national plan, each jurisdiction will develop and make public a jurisdictional implementation plan every three years. Jurisdictions will report annually to ministers on progress against the national and jurisdictional plans. (Commonwealth Government 2011)

The National Survey on Community Attitudes to Violence Against Women 2009 – Changing Cultures, Changing Attitudes – Preventing Violence Against Women builds on the design and approach of two previous national surveys of community attitudes to violence against women, undertaken by the Office of the Status of Women in 1987 and 1995 as well as a Victorian survey undertaken by VicHealth in 2006. The results of the survey contribute and strengthen the National Plan initiatives and provide a baseline from which to measure changes in attitudes over time (VicHealth 2010).

2.3 Victoria

In 2005 the Victorian Government announced the family violence reforms as a discrete strategy within *A Fairer Victoria*. This signalled government's commitment to building a strong, cohesive response to family violence.

Dedicated strategies and plans were developed to uphold the rights of Victorian women and their children to live free from family violence and sexual assault. These include *Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families: Towards a Safer Future for Indigenous Families and Communities; The Sexual Assault Reform Strategy* and *A Right to Safety and Justice: Strategic Framework to Guide Continuing Family Violence Reform in Victoria 2010-2020*, a policy statement of the previous state government.

Legislative reform has meant the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* provides a comprehensive definition of family violence and recognises it is a fundamental human rights violation, most often perpetrated by men against women, children and other vulnerable people (*Preamble Family Violence Protection Act 2008*).

Victoria Police has also been a key leader in the reforms with a range of initiatives led by the introduction of its *Code of Practice for the Investigation of Family Violence* in 2004 and more recently, identifying family violence as a priority area in its strategic plan *The Way Ahead 2008-2013*. This commitment is also demonstrated through the development of a specific strategy *Living Free From Violence – Upholding the Right: Victoria Police Strategy to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children 2009-2014*.

Evidence based policy is essential for the development of appropriate programmatic responses and prevention strategies and to monitor the effectiveness of current initiatives in Victoria (Ferrante et al. 1996). The Victorian Family Violence Database was initiated through a previous Victorian Government Interdepartmental Committee on Violence Against Women and developed and established in 2000 by the Victorian Community Council Against Violence. The database was established to provide reliable and meaningful statistics on family violence and is the only project of its kind in Australia (Victorian Government 2009). The most recent *Volume 4* provides information about the number and demographics of people accessing specific services for family violence in Victoria from 1999-2008.

In 2009, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development in conjunction with VicHealth, completed a review to identify best practice schools-based approaches to primary prevention. The report, *Respectful Relationships Education: Violence Prevention and Respectful Relationships Education in Victorian Secondary Schools* (DEECD 2009) was used to inform the design of a pilot school-based program for the Victorian education system, implemented through a demonstration project with four secondary schools during 2010.

A Right to Respect Victoria's Plan to Prevent Violence against Women 2010-2020 (the State Plan) was released in 2009. Vic Health's primary prevention framework, *Preventing Violence Before it Occurs: A Framework and Background Paper to guide the Primary Prevention of Violence against Women in Victoria*, formed the basis for the ten-year, whole-of-government prevention strategy to promote gender-equitable and non-violent communities, organisations and relationships across the state (Office of Women's Policy 2009).

Local government was identified as one of the five key settings to drive prevention in addition to the settings of education and training; health and community services; sports and recreation; workplaces; and media, arts and popular culture. The Victorian government has recently provided three year funding to the *Local Government Preventing Violence against Women in Our Community Program* which will pilot a range of locally relevant initiatives to prevent violence against women in three local government clusters in the outer east, western metropolitan and Loddon Campaspe regions of Victoria. Brimbank, Wyndham and Maribyrnong City Council will be involved in the Western region pilot.

The Victorian Government has also invested in a range of other programs to prevent violence against women including *The Eliminating Violence against Women Media Awards (EVAs)* managed by Domestic Violence Victoria in conjunction with No To Violence and Centre Against Sexual Assault Forum www.evas.org.au and *the My Workplace Rights Project* led by the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission www.myworkrights.com.au. This policy and practice environment well places Victoria to support the implementation of the National Plan.

2.4 VicHealth

Over the last eight years, VicHealth has overseen a considerable area of activity to prevent violence against women in Victoria. These initiatives provide the most immediate program context for the Maribyrnong R&E project, which has been funded as an integral part of VicHealth's primary prevention activity.

VicHealth first prioritised the prevention of violence against women in 2003 as part of a broader program aimed at addressing the preventable causes of poor mental health and wellbeing. This was followed in 2004 with the publication of a groundbreaking study on the health costs of violence against women using a burden of disease methodology (VicHealth 2004). The study, *The Health Costs of Violence: Measuring the Burden of Disease Caused by Intimate Partner Violence* demonstrated that intimate partner violence was the largest known contributor to the total disease burden of Victorian women aged 15–44 years (VicHealth 2004). Moreover the contribution of violence outstripped other more commonly known risk factors of disability and death such as obesity, high cholesterol, high blood pressure and illicit drug use.

In 2006 VicHealth published *Two Steps Forward, One Step Back: Community Attitudes to Violence Against Women*, which showed that overall the Victorian community has a good understanding of the issue of violence against women and does not support men's use of violence (VicHealth 2006).

From 2006 VicHealth partnered with the Victorian Government to develop a framework to guide whole-of-government policy and activity on preventing violence against women (PVAW). *Preventing Violence Before it Occurs: A Framework and Background Paper to Guide the Primary Prevention of Violence against Women in Victoria*, (the VicHealth framework) published in 2007 (VicHealth 2007).

VicHealth plays an active role in building a skilled Victorian workforce for primary prevention through the PVAW short course. The short course was piloted in 2010, including at MCC and is currently being rolled out across Victoria.

The Local Government Networking and Capacity Building project (funded by VicHealth from 2009 to August 2011) builds on the efforts of many local governments that have already stepped into the primary prevention arena by increasing opportunities for the sector to network, develop partnerships, share resources, and build skills. Municipal Association of Victoria through The Local Government and Community Partnerships Program 2011-12 will continue to support all Victorian local governments so that they can also take action to prevent violence against women.

Fair Game – Respect Matters is a program for Victorian community football clubs to build safe and inclusive environments for women. This program builds on the pioneering work of VicHealth and the Australian Football League (AFL) through the Respect and Responsibility Program since 2005. Education programs are delivered to elite-level clubs with the aim of fostering respectful attitudes towards women and encouraging players to take responsibility for addressing violence-supportive attitudes towards women.

VicHealth's involvement with the Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service also continues through the Media Advocacy project since 2007. This initiative supports survivors to speak to the media and public as advocates who can influence myths about violence against women that persist in the wider community by bringing lived realities to the statistics.

In 2006 VicHealth announced a new funding stream to develop Victorian policy and practice in PVAW. The Respect, Responsibility and Equality: Preventing Violence Against Women program (RRE) provided grants of up to \$30,000 to government and non-government organisations to undertake primary prevention activities. Twenty-nine projects received support from VicHealth through this program (VicHealth 2007). MCC were successful in receiving this grant.

In 2008 VicHealth embarked on phase two of RRE by providing further funding to five of the original 29 projects for an additional three years to scale up their interventions. The projects worked to consolidate and identify models of good practice in the area of primary prevention, contribute to a growing evidence base of violence prevention and build a solid foundation on which the primary prevention agenda could progress. This substantial resource allocation has allowed VicHealth's partners to consolidate their efforts across priority populations and identified settings. The funded projects are:

- Respect and Equity (MCC). Engages local government and the community it serves in PVAW. Activities comprise of internal capacity building strategies and external partnership development.
- Baby Makes Three (Whitehorse Community Health Service). Engages new parents attending maternal and child health services in the City of Whitehorse. Programs focus on building equal and respectful relationships during the transition to parenthood.
- Northern Interfaith Respectful Relationships (Darebin City Council). Engages faith leaders in Melbourne's north with primary prevention activities such as using scriptures and teachings to promote respectful relationships between women and men.
- Partners in Prevention (Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria). A state wide network for community sector professionals working with young people. Resources include a website, network meetings, email bulletins, an annual forum, and consultations and referrals – each assisting members to plan, implement and evaluate activities that promote respectful relationships between young men and women.

- Working Together Against Violence (Women's Health Victoria). Engages a major corporate workplace to stand up against violence against women. Activities include awareness raising sessions, customised tools/resources and policy development.

2.5 Local government

Local governments play a pivotal role in creating environments for communities to prosper and enjoy improved health and wellbeing. In particular they have a track record and commitment to creating safe public environments, developing community facilities, supporting access to sport, culture and employment and providing health and community services. This influence can be used to develop shared understandings and encourage whole of community responses to PVAW. Both the VicHealth framework and Victorian government strategic direction recognise the unique role of local governments.

PVAW is a complex and sensitive issue to address. Champions on the ground are pivotal for creating awareness and implementing strategies to promote gender equitable, safe and inclusive communities and organisations.

Local governments provide the most strategic starting point for coordinating whole-of-community PVAW strategies. Local government has in many instances excellent links with primary health agencies, women's health and family violence services who continue to provide leadership in work on PVAW alongside a response to victims/survivors of gender violence. As significant employers in local communities by modeling respectful and gender equitable relationships internally and developing internal policies on family violence and gender equity, councils can significantly affect the broader community.

The leadership role and mandate of local governments within their communities provides an essential strength for undertaking a whole-of-community approach:

- Local governments are visible and accessible to local populations and have a democratic mandate to lead and implement change
- PVAW can be addressed through a range of settings and processes over which local government exert influence such as local level planning, sport and recreation services
- Local government plays an extensive role in creating safe public spaces, developing facilities, and delivering a range of services to the community
- Local government can draw upon existing infrastructures to undertake this work eg: departments and teams such as community wellbeing and health promotion, youth, child, family and community services, social and strategic planning and council-convened taskforces, working groups, forums and committees.

There is also a strong rationale for focusing effort on developing initiatives driven by local communities, for example:

- Successful anti-violence strategies require a shared local whole-of-community vision. Strong and committed local leadership is crucial to this process
- Strategies for PVAW are much more likely to be effective when tailored to local contexts
- Local level whole-of-community programs can focus resources intensively on a relatively small number of people and organisations enabling concentrated activity with a limited budget
- Local level whole-of-community programs provide a defined focal point for activities and can therefore be more readily and effectively evaluated and replicated
- Small-scale local initiatives can be carefully managed, supported and monitored to help avoid negative impacts when sensitive issues are being addressed
- Good practice in violence prevention has been shown to emerge from established local structures eg: working groups, committees, forums, networks, and council teams that can sustain commitment and effort into the future (Office of Women's Policy 2010).

VicHealth research highlights that 'primary prevention efforts are most likely to be effective when a coordinated range of mutually reinforcing strategies is targeted across levels of influence' (VicHealth 2007). Given its planning, service provision and partnerships cutting across the social, economic, environmental and cultural domains of civic life, local government is well placed to integrate violence prevention using a whole of council approach, in partnership with the local community.

According to Whitzman, when it comes to integrated violence prevention the local governance scale is most appropriate at ensuring equity across smaller areas and neighbourhoods that comprise the community and promoting civic awareness and engagement to the issue (Whitzman 2008). Whilst the case for preventing violence is often disseminated internationally and nationally, the actual work of creating safer environments is typically undertaken at the community and/or municipal levels (Shaw & Capobianco 2004).

3. Respect & equity project

3.1 Project history



Maribyrnong City Council (MCC) initially identified violence against women as a key objective in the Maribyrnong Safer Communities Policy 2003-2006 (Maribyrnong City Council 2003). In 2005, in response to local advocacy from Women's Health West (WHW), concerns from service providers and the community, MCC established the Family Violence Working Group.

MCC participated in a three-year research project in partnership with Melbourne University, to develop strategies at the local government level to prevent violence against women, Gender, Local Governance and Violence Prevention (GLOVE) 2006-2009. For more information see www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au. The project was funded by an Australian Research Council Linkage Project grant. It had two aims:

1. Explore the continuing divide in research and public policy between violence prevention in the public and private realms.
2. Assist in developing local government policy that utilised an integrated approach to violence prevention in both public and private space, which acknowledged gender differences in the experience of violence and utilised a community-government partnership model.

In 2006 MCC was successful in receiving VicHealth Respect, Responsibility and Equality (RRE) phase one funding. Key achievements from phase one included:

- Development of the Preventing Violence Against Women (PVAW) Action Plan 2007-2008 (Maribyrnong City Council 2007) which described a range of primary prevention actions based in the VicHealth framework for action relevant to the local government setting
- Audit of selected Council policies to determine how gender responsive they were
- Audit of selected Council facilities such as sporting clubs, maternal and child health centres, libraries and community centres, to assess their level of safety and provision of welcoming and supportive environments for women.

Council's involvement in both the GLOVE project and RRE phase one resulted in significant increased capacity within MCC to plan, implement and evaluate primary prevention initiatives. MCC was able to demonstrate an ongoing commitment to the issue and attract VicHealth RRE phase two funding for the Respect and Equity: Preventing Violence Against Women project (R&E project) 2008-2011 (the subject of this report). This project builds upon a strong international and national evidence base, which suggests that local governments are uniquely placed as the arm of government closest to the community to play a pivotal role in coordinating, facilitating and planning across a number of settings at a municipal level.

3.2 Overview

The MCC respect and equity vision is a community in which women are able to live free from violence and fear of violence.

Project goals:

- An increased level of skill and knowledge of Council staff to plan, implement and evaluate primary prevention activities

- Demonstrated positive cultural change in policy, programming, planning and practice across Council
- Evidence based activities in partnership across Council departments and sectors to address the determinants of violence against women
- Local governments are provided with leadership and mentoring which will increase their engagement with this issue
- Community will have increased awareness and capacity to create safe, inclusive and gender equitable environments
- Effective documented and disseminated evidence for primary prevention activity disseminated across local government and local community.

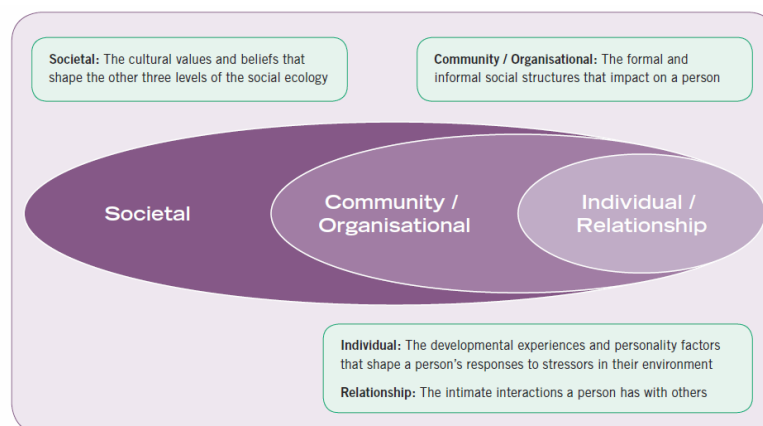
The R&E project has been designed using the VicHealth framework. The framework provides a sound evidence base to support the primary prevention activity of government and civic society alike. It outlines main themes for action, broad intervention types, settings, and population targets to coordinate efforts. The project responds to the determinants (key contributing factors), which underpin violence against women. The themes for action directly oppose these determinants to provide relevant primary prevention strategies.

There is a strong evidence base attributing specific causes and dynamics to violence against women by a known perpetrator, as opposed to violence perpetrated by a stranger or violence against other population groups. The VicHealth research found that while a cluster of factors are sometimes correlated with intimate partner violence (e.g. alcohol and drug use), none of these are necessary or sufficient for men to perpetrate gender-based violence. Many men affected by these other health determinants are not violent and these factors are not significant for many men who are violent. Rather the factors become significant when they interact with broader social and cultural norms. This specific causal matrix requires an equally specific approach to prevention.

The three key determinants are:

1. Unequal power relations between men and women.
2. Adherence to rigid gender stereotypes.
3. A lack of systematic and community support along with weak legal and structural sanctions against gender violence.

These determinants or drivers can be explained through the ecological approach to understanding violence. This recognises that the cultural values and beliefs in society shape the other two levels of social ecology. The formal and informal social structures in organisations and communities impact upon a person. The developmental experiences and personality factors shape a person's responses to stressors in their environment and similarly the intimate interactions a person has with others.



Adapted from: CHANGE 1999; Heise 1998; WHO 2002

Figure 2 An ecological approach to understanding violence

The project is situated in the Safer Communities and Health Promotion (SCHP) team, within the Community Planning and Advocacy branch in the Community Wellbeing department of MCC. Two workers have coordinated the project over the three years, both in a full time capacity: Rebecca Mangan (December 2008 to February 2010) and Emma Wilkinson, author of this report (March 2010 to September 2011). See appendix 8.1 MCC organisational structure.

As the author, I have chosen to write in the first person throughout the report. I have referred to activities as our work, which we have done, to capture the collaborative approach. I have introduced people involved in the project by name and continued to refer to them by name throughout the project. Key people include:

- Rebecca Mangan former Respect and Equity Coordinator MCC
- Georgie Hill former Safer Communities and Health Promotion Coordinator MCC
- Andrew Day former acting Community Wellbeing General Manager and former Organisational Development Manager MCC
- Jenny McMahon former Community Wellbeing General Manager MCC
- Kerry Thompson former CEO MCC
- Jane Torney former Safer Communities and Health Promotion Project Officer MCC
- Kate Waters former Senior Health and Social Planner, MCC
- Peter Daghish Capital Works Officer MCC
- Jess Dean Communications Officer MCC
- Erin Richardson Health Promotion Worker WHW
- Grace Nicol Early Years Facilitator MCC
- Kellie Nagle Local Government Networking and Capacity Building Project to Prevent Violence Against Women, Darebin City Council in partnership with VicHealth
- Wei Leng Kwok Research and Practice Leader VicHealth
- Dr Helen Keleher Monash University
- Maryanne Clarke Community Planner Yarra City Council
- Nick Matteo Manager Community Planning and Advocacy MCC
- Chris Lynch Phoenix Youth Counsellor MCC
- Abbey Newman Family Violence Sector worker
- Vince Haining current CEO MCC

Internally the R&E Project Coordinator has been supported by Georgie Hill. Georgie provided significant strategic support and was instrumental in driving and coordinating Maribyrnong PVAW work since the GLOVE project began in 2006. Georgie's expert knowledge and experience has had a significant impact upon the reach and depth of this project.

Additional policy, program, coordination and administrative support have been provided during the project period by Kate and Jane. It is estimated that these three positions provided an additional 0.8 effective full time annually to the R&E project.

The integration and mainstreaming of PVAW across the SCHP has been an important factor in the success of integrating and sustaining the R&E project throughout Council. The diverse range of health promotion and safety planning, policy and initiatives delivered relationships the team has across the organisation and community has been a valuable asset.

As R&E Project Coordinator I have also been linked into a series of local and state networks, which have supported the development and implementation of the project. These include the Gender Equity in Local Government Network, Leadership, Evaluation and Sustainability Network (LEAS), the Networking and Capacity Building website, the VicHealth Learning Circle, Preventing Violence Together: the Western Region Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women Working Group (PVT), Western Region Integrated Family Violence Committee (WIFVC) and the Partners in Prevention (PiP) Network.

3.3 Objectives and strategies

Specific activities were designed and refer to what actually happened in the project. Mutually reinforcing strategies were developed to guide these activities and contribute to realising the overarching objectives. The objectives are reflected in the evaluation questions and provided program logic for demonstrating the impact of the project. The development of the plan is described in 4.1.

The nature of our approach to this work has meant that in some instances we have placed more emphasis on strategies and activities over others because this is where interest and opportunity lay. Our approach is further explored throughout the activities and discussion.

Objective 1	To consolidate and strengthen the activities undertaken within the Maribyrnong Preventing Violence Against Women Action Plan 2007-2008.
Strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate and review the Maribyrnong Preventing Violence Against Women Action Plan 2007/2008. 2. Develop a revised three year Respect and Equity: Preventing Violence Against Women project action plan based on feedback, evidence, local context and capacity using the findings of the evaluation review. 3. Develop a comprehensive evaluation framework and establish monitoring mechanisms to evaluate the progress of the R&E plan.

Objective 2	To embed and drive cultural change by incorporating the determinants of violence into local government policy, planning, strategy, programs and action plan development.
Strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop an understanding of the Council policy context including opportunities to work within it. 2. Build awareness of violence against women among Councillors and Council officers. 3. Influence organisational policy making processes. 4. Implement the outcomes of the Council facilities audit. 5. Influence planning, policy and program development to address the determinants of violence against women.

Objective 3	To increase awareness and understanding of violence against women issues across settings with the broader community.
Strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build a local profile of the prevalence and seriousness of violence against women. 2. Identify settings to work with. 3. Raise awareness and promote the VicHealth identified key themes settings for action. 4. Implement a local integrated communication strategy. 5. Incorporate violence against women prevention into existing promotions or events where possible.

Objective 4	To document and disseminate the learning and challenges of the primary prevention activities implemented across a local government area.
Strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Disseminate learning and challenges across the wider sector. 2. Influence the development of the State Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women. 3. Establish learning and opportunities for other local governments and organisations in the western region.

3.4 Evaluation approach

The findings in this report cover the activities, processes and impacts of the R&E project August 2008 to May 2011. These findings contribute to the growing body of local, national and international evidence on gender violence prevention. This report is of interest specifically to other local governments in Victoria, considering or already engaged in PVAW. These findings are also more broadly applicable to local and state governments outside of Victoria, community and women's health organisations and workplaces.

I have undertaken evaluation with the understanding that as an evaluator I and those connected to the project, engage in and respond to the process of research from diverse social and material experiences and that these individual realities are gendered. I acknowledge that my values and beliefs and my role as researcher have been significant in the conceptualisation, implementation and analysis of the project. There can however, be no unbiased perspective since we cannot remove ourselves from our approach to the world. In actively recognizing and reflecting on this I have been able to explore a richer more nuanced evaluation story.

The purpose of evaluating the project is to explore and determine its effectiveness. The following research questions have guided the evaluation design:

- Is there an increased level of skill and knowledge of Council staff to plan, implement and evaluate primary prevention activities?
- To what extent is positive cultural change demonstrated through policy, programming, planning and practice across Council?
- Are there evidence-based activities undertaken in partnership across Council departments and sectors to address the determinants of violence against women?
- Has leadership and mentoring provided to other local government areas increased engagement in this issue?
- Is there an increased awareness and capacity of the community to create safe, inclusive and gender equitable environments?
- Has the project effectively documented and disseminated evidence for primary prevention activity across local government and local community?

Feminist participatory and empowerment models of evaluation have informed my approach. Where traditional modes of project evaluation use external objective experts to conduct evaluation activities, participatory and empowerment models position the Project Coordinator as the main researcher for the evaluation. This explicitly acknowledges the subjective nature of research and knowledge production and recognises that truth does not exist out there but is constructed by people in relation to one another.

Feminist methodology is a way of re-thinking cultural assumptions and traditional methodological practice. Empirical truth remains provisional and continually (re)viewed within each context. This approach allows for a deeper more complex construction of narrative, based on prioritising values, emotion, uncertainty, diversity and the reflexive nature of truth making. It questions who can be creators of knowledge, what can be known and how knowledge is validated, as well as the relationship between knowing and being.

This approach strengthens the evaluation narrative allowing for a more honest account. This in turn enhances the engagement of those involved in the project and importantly, the reader with this report. Participatory and empowerment models support evaluation expertise to be integrated into core project activities along each step of the way, recognising reality is co-created. This approach is not static and does not try to contain the findings within arbitrary boundaries, labels or expectations.

Mainstream conceptions of objectivity, reason and truth are rejected in place of knowledge shaped continuously by the lived reality of those linked to the project and alongside the evaluator. Thus, the interactions between participants, the project and myself have created a unique dynamic. The essence of this practice narrative is transferrable, even though specific circumstances from one project to another will vary. Readers of this report will be able to identify elements from the Maribyrnong respect and equity story, which resonate with their current environment and take from it whatever suits.

This approach is underpinned by a methodological tradition that draws on feminist post-positivist research. It is beyond the scope of the report to present this methodology in full detail. Some further suggested reading see Lincoln and Guba's work on the five paradigms (Guba & Lincoln 2005), the Resources for Feminist Research Journal and The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader.

Evaluation capacity building (ECB) is a key concept and strategy of participatory and empowerment models. ECB is:

- Participatory and inclusive
- Empowering, strengths based
- Prioritising the interconnected nature of things
- Provides a language to talk about peoples experience and practice
- Learning by doing, done in real time not after the fact
- Grounded in action research, applied by nature for policy and programming
- In response to a social problem.

ECB is defined as the design and implementation of learning activities to support program stakeholders in learning about and undertaking effective evaluation practice (Preskill & Boyle 2008).

ECB is not commonplace in PVAW practice; however VicHealth's PVAW program has recognised the importance of such an approach to the evidence base for primary prevention in Victoria and beyond. Strengthening the capacity of programs to conduct evaluation helps to ensure evaluation practice is mainstreamed into core program activities. A workforce strengthened in evaluation know-how increases the chances of program evaluation. The more programs evaluated, the greater the contribution of findings and learning to the emerging field of primary prevention.

For these reasons, VicHealth has adapted overseas examples of ECB in primary prevention – such as those documented by the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention in the USA (Cox et al. 2009) – to conceptualise an ECB model for the five scale-up projects. VicHealth's ECB model is a partnership model where:

- Project Coordinators are positioned as the main researchers for their project evaluation activities
- A considerable level of evaluation support is provided to Project Coordinators by the funding body through a Research Practice Leader (RPL), a core staff member of the PVAW program at VicHealth
- Project Coordinators are expected to work closely with the RPL for the duration of their projects to develop all aspects of their evaluation design/research and for technical assistance in implementing various evaluation strategies

- Specific processes are put in place and continuously refined throughout the funding period to foster a learn by doing environment for Project Coordinators so that the RPL's evaluation support is both meaningful and effective eg: a combination of group instruction and individual assistance.

In practice this means I have received ongoing coaching and structured guidance to undertake evaluation from the RPL, a core staff member of the PVAW program at VicHealth, Dr Wei Leng Kwok. Wei Leng has acted as a sounding board to support me in solving evaluation problems such as establishing indicators of effectiveness and developing methods of data collection. As evaluator Wei Leng's involvement stops short of actually conducting the evaluation since the point of ECB is to encourage me to learn by doing.

In certain situations, Wei Leng has been involved in undertaking discrete evaluation activities that have been identified and developed as part of ECB practice (undertaking reflective interviews). In these cases though, Wei Leng is seen as part of the program rather than as an external investigator conducting an independent evaluation.

ECB has enabled me to draw from evaluation findings in real time to improve the project, as part of an action research cycle. The fluidity of ECB has strengthened the evaluation, as well as my capacity to be involved in and evaluate future projects.

This ECB model was highly successful and has been documented in detail by VicHealth. More information can be found at www.vichealth.vic.gov.au.

3.5 Method

Information has been collected in a range of ways over the entire project to demonstrate its impact. The tools I have used to collect information are referred to as the method. The method is the mode, manner or technique used to do something. In this case, to gather information which indicates the processes and impacts taken place within the project. These methods allow me the language and evidence to thread together the Maribyrnong respect and equity story:

- Reflective journaling to capture my real time perspective and experiences working on the project
- Observational and substantive notes from emails and conversations
- Qualitative data from activities, events and reports
- Quantitative data from events, training and activities
- MCC staff surveys conducted in 2008 and 2011
- Annual community survey 2009 (Maribyrnong municipality)
- Local media watch 2006-2011 undertaken by MCC communications and SCHP team
- International and local literature review
- Narrative technique (detailed below)
- Gender facilities audit 2008 and review in 2011 undertaken by Jane Torney involving Council sites
- External evaluations undertaken of PVAW work in MCC including the GLOVE project, organisational policy review, the facilities audit review and the Equity Focused Health Impact Assessment
- Photographs from events and the workplace
- In-depth interviews with Chris Lynch from the Phoenix Youth Service Counsellor, Jane, Kate, Georgie and the White Ribbon Working Group (WRWG)
- Reflective interviews between Wei Leng and myself and Wei Leng, Rebecca and Georgie
- Project collateral audit.

It has been important to consider what methods I use; practically, what information will illicit the data I require to demonstrate the evaluation impacts and ethically what collection methods are used, what perspective is prioritised and how is consent given to do this.

Information is never value free. It is a version of the story, influenced by and read within the individual and social context. The intersecting contexts, power and perspectives in which the data collection takes place colour the knowledge produced. There is no response, survey or numerical quantity, which can be considered the absolute truth. It is only a thread in a larger story being told. With this in mind, I have mainly collected qualitative data in the spirit of and commitment to exploring people's lived experiences and prioritising participant personal narrative as evidence.

As part of its support to the scale-up projects, VicHealth provided a set of capacity building activities that explored narrative technique and its application to project evaluation.

This technique drew on the local example of the Narrative Evaluation and Action Research (NEAR) project that had been offered by the Department of Human Services (DHS) to its community partners since 2004 (Wadsworth et al 2007). According to the NEAR project, storytelling is an important part of evidence gathering and a valuable adjunct to methods that typically feature in evaluation research design (eg: feedback sheets or statistical collection). This is because telling the story can help stakeholders to illuminate what really went on during program implementation and shed light on attendant impacts. Stakeholders should therefore be encouraged to tell the story for evaluation purposes as often as possible in order to capture the multiple viewpoints inherent in complex program delivery.

For VicHealth, one of the most critical viewpoints that can be captured as part of evaluation belongs to the Project Coordinators themselves. PVAW is an emerging field of practice; and VicHealth saw the Project Coordinators as having important insights that needed to be shared with a growing community of practitioners (Kwok 2010).

During the project I encountered challenges and overcame barriers unique to the violence against women field (in conversation we referred to this as the hard stuff). This knowledge and learning was at risk of not making it into my final evaluation report using only conventional evaluation methods. We needed a method of making sure that such data could find a way to the broader practice field.

Narrative technique provided an innovative answer for VicHealth and me. The technique began with a reflective interview on 9 August 2010, where Rebecca as previous Project Coordinator and Georgie delved into reflections on project activities, events, conversations and observations – including the surprising and unexpected or the light bulb moments. Wei Leng conducted this interview. I participated in a similar reflective session with Wei Leng on 13 September 2010.

Through three writing group workshops from September 2010 to March 2011, I was supported in shaping this data into themes, metaphors, pivotal moments, low points, high points, revelations, learning and insights – elements of which became the basis of a my stories about the project.

The results of this process – the stories – are included in this evaluation report to give readers and a community of practitioners a glimpse into part of what really happened in the implementation of the project – to give colour and flavour to the project in addition to the presentation of evaluation findings sourced by more traditional methods.

The application of narrative technique to project evaluation was highly successful and has been documented in detail by VicHealth. More information can be found at www.vichealth.vic.gov.au.

3.6 Indicators of success

Indicators allow the evaluation narrative and its importance in relation to PVAW to be told. The process indicators demonstrate what, when, where and how the activities happened. The impact indicators signpost the desired changes sought. They make sense of the changes that have occurred because of the project. Rebecca, Georgie and the former RPL, Michael Flood developed the indicators. I refreshed the indicators with Wei Leng before I began writing this

report so the evaluation story flows with meaning and is not merely a clunky retrofit. It would have had an artificial feel and prove less useful to the audience otherwise.

1. To consolidate and strengthen the activities undertaken within the Maribyrnong Preventing Violence Against Women Action Plan 2007-2008	
Process	Impact
1.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation report produced • Consultation conducted with all stakeholders • Evaluation report distributed and promoted to interested stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RRE phase two planning reflects a greater depth of understanding, use of local evidence and engagement with stakeholders
1.2. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three year action plan developed • Feedback from working group and other key stakeholders considered in R&E plan • Plan promoted and disseminated to key stakeholders and available on the Council website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council have increased awareness and commitment to preventing violence against women. • The R&E plan reflects stakeholder engagement
1.3. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive evaluation plan is developed • Monitoring and performance mechanisms established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The R&E plan and evaluation reflect and is responsive to the current context

2. To embed and drive cultural change by incorporating the determinants of violence into local government policy, planning, strategy, programs and action plan development.	
Process	Impact
2.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of policies identified and review dates noted • Review undertaken of the four selected policies to assess the inclusion of recommendations from the audit • Integrate the Municipal Public Health Plan (MPHP) into the Council plan • Mechanisms in place to feed back progress to Councillors • Attendance and active participation during the development of the Council Plan utilising cross branch meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit report produced that identifies areas of action • Evidence of the determinants of gender violence are included in plans • Annual interdepartmental reporting on the R&E plan • Council consider community attitudes and behaviours on violence against women in the development of the Council Plan • Council demonstrate a commitment to reduce the prevalence of violence against women
2.2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least two Council wide events held per year to raise awareness of violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the life of the project there is an increase in the number of staff and

<p>against women</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over ten staff attend the VicHealth PVAW short course • A variety of Council departments represented through the short course attendance • Discussion held with selected departments including maternal and child health, leisure and open space • Council initiative bids are submitted in conjunction with other departments • Council internal and external mechanisms are utilised • At least two executive management team (EMT) presentations or reports made to Council annually • Family violence is include as part of the community wellbeing presentations to newly elected Councillors • Family violence is included as part of the online induction • PVAW training and family violence Policy training is incorporated in the Council training • Referral pathways are used for staff who disclose family violence • PVAW and gender equity training is provided for Council staff • Meetings with departments responsible for training are documented • The year of women in local government activities conducted internally • Five key PVAW champions identified • Individual and group support and networking opportunities offered to Council PVAW champions • The Council White Ribbon Working Group (WRWG) is supported by the Safer Communities and Health Promotion (SCHP) team • Training is provided to PVAW champions • At least three external training or networking sessions are provided to champions throughout the project 	<p>Councillors involved in White Ribbon activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an increase in cross organisational participation in White Ribbon activities • Staff attending the PVAW short course demonstrate an increased understanding of the problem of violence against women • Staff demonstrate an increased awareness and commitment to addressing the underlying causes of gender violence in their role in Council over the following six months • PVAW projects and consultation takes place between the SCHP team and other teams across Council • Council demonstrate commitment through provision of financial support for PVAW related projects • Increased engagement in PVAW messaging across Council • Training is delivered on a regular basis • Training guidelines exist on why and how to use a gender lens • Organisational development staff have successfully completed PVAW training • Year of Women in Local Government is supported by high level management across the organisation • Council staff and Councillors become White Ribbon ambassadors at Council • Champions across the organisation demonstrate coordinated actions and leadership • Champions across the organisation are confident in role modelling the themes for action to PVAW • Cross Council departments seek advice from the WRWG about developing gender equity projects
<p>2.3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings held with key staff in organisational development • List of key policy review dates is developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopted family violence policy accessible to all staff and shared with other local governments • There is cross departmental, high level

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In principle agreement reached to incorporate gender into policies • Number of organisational policies addressing the determinants of violence against women • Cross Council input into the family violence policy • Policy developed and adopted by EMT 	<p>Council staff and Councillor awareness and endorsement of the family violence policy</p>
<p>2.4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings held with relevant departments and teams • Outcomes of the audit are promoted to Council staff and the community • SCHP team work with relevant departments to develop an implementation plan with each site • Recommendations are introduced based on the facilities audit • Facilities audit tool is made available for other Councils and organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are aware of the audit and prioritised recommendations are implemented • A checklist (which incorporates the facility audit review) is developed for new community facility contracts • Recommendations are enacted across sites • Tool is being assessed and inquired about from other Councils and organisations
<p>2.5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular informal and formal discussions held with key staff across the Council • Documented discussions with relevant departments regarding the determinants of gender violence into planning and program development • Gender analysis models are investigated • A gender analysis tool is developed in consultation with women's health organisations and other local governments to trial in local government • Advice and feedback received from key stakeholders on gender analysis tool • A network is formed to oversee gender analysis tool development and trial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built capacity of staff to use a gender lens across their practice, program and policy development • Gender analysis tools for local government developed and piloted • Increased capacity to use a gender lens through enhanced relationships and partnerships with other local governments and women's health

3. To increase awareness and understanding of violence against women issues across settings with the broader community.	
Process	Impact
<p>3.2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literature review conducted Consultation to engage settings conducted Cross departmental meetings held to develop work Consultation with sporting clubs conducted Consultation with the appropriate networks and partnerships across the settings to identify organisations to work with conducted Separate PVAW category in Council Community Grants retained Local champions are acknowledged internally and externally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship developed with settings Action plan developed to work with settings Successful funding bid to work with sporting clubs Training provided to sports clubs Cross settings partnerships and action developed and endorsed by Council Civic awards recognised PVAW achievements Council fund community groups to undertake PVAW work Local community champions receive media attention Young people's engagement with PVAW increased Resources are produced by local champions promoting the themes of action
<p>3.3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective partnership with the Western Region Football League (WRFL) Western Region PVAW action plan developed Promote family violence referral pathways and PVAW material through local sports clubs Attend the Women's Football Foundation (WFF) club night 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These settings show a willingness and readiness to engage in PVAW
<p>3.4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least two PVAW media releases from Council per year The Council family violence pages are visited Council website contains up to date information on the project A resource is developed profiling the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three or more media releases are picked up by the media and published Increased traffic to the PVAW section of the Council website for the month before and after White Ribbon Day External communication is made with Council as a result of the website and

<p>personal stories of people working across the settings who have been involved in gender prevention strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff share information on gender violence • The resources is distributed at external events and online • Appropriate PVAW social marketing campaigns are identified • Council develop a kit of social marketing resources and tools • Resources are distributed internally and externally • Localised versions of social marketing tools are designed and developed in consultation with WRWG • Develop partnerships with local organisations to deliver social marketing campaigns • Media and communications event calendar is reviewed • Branding for the project is developed and selected by Council staff • Branding reflects the key settings and themes for action 	<p>media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The resource is independently promoted by staff outside of the SCHP team • Speaking about personal connections to PVAW is acceptable normalised behaviour • Social marketing campaigns engage local community and key partners • External organisations request permission to copy Maribyrnong City Council activities and resources developed • The capacity of external organisations to participate in social marketing strategies is improved through MCC role modelling • The R&E project has a presence at three or more external events per year • Increased visual recognition by stakeholders of the R&E project
<p>3.5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender violence prevention messages are incorporated in relevant Council events • Specific gender violence prevention dates are promoted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross Council teams independently initiate gender violence prevention messaging into promotions and events • External organisations display Council gender equity resources at their events

4. To document and disseminate the learning and challenges of the primary prevention activities implemented across a local government area.	
Process	Impact
<p>4.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual gender prevention forum is held and attended by Council staff Key partners are Council staff give presentations at forums on PVAW Information disseminated to a variety of audiences at least three times per year An evaluation report is completed Evaluation report is distributed and promoted to key stakeholders and the wider sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reported increase in knowledge and skills of those who attended forum The R&E project is requested to give presentation and report at various forums and through various mediums Council endorse the report and accept the recommendations The report contributes to the PVAW in the local government setting
<p>4.2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant sector meetings are attended The role of local government is advocated for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Right to Respect acknowledges the role of local government in PVAW Maribyrnong R&E project is used as a case study in the state plan
<p>4.3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings are attended An efficient and effective amalgamation of local PVAW networks takes place to streamline and connect the work across the western region R&E project updates provided MCC resources disseminated through the Leadership and Sustainability Network (LEAS) PVAW on the Western Region Integrated Family Violence Committee (WIFVC) agenda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preventing Violence Together: the Western Region Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women (PVT) is developed to coordinate evidence based action and relationships PVT endorsed by Council and internal strategy developed to progress the work Management support is represented through participation on the Preventing Violence Together steering committee External requests for further information Support is provided and relationships are built through LEAS network PVAW work funded through the WIFVC

4. Activities

In these three chapters I will describe the mutually reinforcing strategies and activities undertaken and present the evaluation findings from the project:



1. Build on previous work
2. Shift the culture in council and the community
3. Share the learning

4.1 Build on previous work

In this chapter I will describe phase one of the Maribyrnong Preventing Violence Against Women (PVAW) Action Plan 2007-2008, evaluation of this plan and the subsequent Respect & Equity Action and Evaluation Plan (Maribyrnong City Council 2007).

4.1.1 Phase one

A key objective of the phase two R&E project was to build on the work undertaken in phase one. We have done this by consolidating and strengthening the activities undertaken within the Maribyrnong PVAW Action Plan 2007-2008 (Maribyrnong City Council 2007). During phase one we developed strong networks and relationships, evidence and an understanding of PVAW in Maribyrnong municipality. This supported us to develop the evidence based contextual action and evaluation plan for phase two.

During phase one Georgie undertook research into the prevalence of violence against women in Maribyrnong through existing qualitative and quantitative data sets from local community service organisations (CSO). Consultant Kirsten Campbell undertook an external analysis of four-selected Council polices in February 2007. This analysis assisted council to understand where it could strengthen the integration of PVAW in policy, programs and practice across the organisation.

In 2007 Maribyrnong City Council (MCC) hosted a local forum Preventing Violence Against Women – A Local Forum to Develop Local Action. The forum brought together a diverse range of CSO and community members to discuss the local priorities for PVAW action. Forum participant indicated, “Putting this issue out in the public sphere by naming it and resolving to respond to it, encouraged the Council and community to discuss the issue and put it on the local agenda.”

From this forum a number of interested people joined the Maribyrnong Preventing Family Violence Working Group. The outcomes of this forum informed the Maribyrnong PVAW Action Plan 2007-2008 along with local and international research and evidence and a series of follow up consultation meetings with the working group. Georgie drew from these findings to develop the R&E plan.

During consultation for the Maribyrnong PVAW Action Plan 2007-2008, MCC with assistance from the DHS and Monash University undertook an equity focused health impact assessment. This aimed to ensure that any unintended health inequalities in the plan were minimised and health benefits enhanced. It involved a literature review and rapid assessment workshop with twenty participants. The process of undertaking the assessment validated and further embedded our public health approach across the whole of MCC. For more information see *Preventing Violence Against Women Action Plan 2007-2008* (Maribyrnong City Council 2007).

4.1.2 Evaluating Maribyrnong PVAW action plan 2007-2008

To evaluate and review the Maribyrnong PVAW Action Plan 2007-2008 we conducted an independent process evaluation based on the existing evaluation framework. Bridget Henley an external consultant was engaged to complete this work and develop the *Maribyrnong Preventing Violence Against Women Action Plan 2007-2008 Evaluation Report* (Henley 2008). The evaluation:

- Reported on the implementation and impact of actions in order to set directions for future priorities of the next action plan
- Contributed to the knowledge base of what works in primary prevention of violence against women
- Reported to VicHealth and MCC the findings of phase one.

Bridget undertook a literature review and internal and external interviews with key participants, including staff from Women's Health West (WHW), Relationships Australia, the Health West Primary Care Partnership and the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association. Consultation with the Maribyrnong Preventing Family Violence Working Group and a review of the working group minutes also informed the findings.

The working group minutes revealed a 'high level of discussion of trends, issues and violence prevention initiatives at the working group meetings...[as well as] an impressive amount of time being dedicated to...planning projects and implementation' (Henley 2008) 'A further positive feature of the working group was the high level of attendees at each meeting' (Henley 2008). This community commitment, deepening of understanding, local knowledge, evidence and connection with local stakeholders is reflected in phase two planning.

From the evaluation findings, Bridget made recommendations for future actions. These informed a review of the working group and the development of terms of reference making more explicit the primary prevention focus of the group. The Western Region Integrated Family Violence Committee (WIFVC) was established by this stage as the committee funded to coordinate and provide the tertiary response to violence against women. The results of Bridget's evaluation were disseminated through the working group, SCHP networks and on the MCC website.

4.1.3 Respect & equity action & evaluation plan

MCC commitment was evidenced publically as early as 2006, with the following motion moved at the ordinary council meeting on 17 October 2006: "Maribyrnong City Council reaffirms its commitment to a violence free community." (Ordinary council minutes can be accessed on the council website). The R&E plan was developed in an atmosphere of organisational commitment and the critical learning experienced participating in Respect, Responsibility and Equity (RRE) phase one and the GLOVE project.

Within this context and using the VicHealth framework, Georgie wrote the R&E plan. The objectives are based around each of the seven preventative actions in the framework and informed the development of complimentary strategies. The intermediate impacts, identified by VicHealth were integrated into the PVAW work at MCC during phase one.

On successful funding from VicHealth for RRE phase two, Georgie shared the R&E plan with the working group. The plan was also displayed on MCC website. The plan was presented to the executive management team (EMT) and Councillors on the Community Access and Strategic Planning Meeting on the 8 July 2008. Councillors subsequently endorsed it, demonstrating their commitment to PVAW action at the Council Ordinary Meeting on the 15 July 2008.

The R&E plan was designed to strategically guide the project and allow for a flexible, responsive approach. For the first half of the project the R&E plan systematically guided the

work. The plan functioned as an operational document to effect change in such areas as the policy environment and to initiate the White Ribbon Working Group (WRWG). As the project progressed and when I became Coordinator, the readiness of the environment allowed me to take a more organic and opportunistic approach, building on the groundwork since established. When I began to write this report, the plan again became a very operational document. It guided me through the project activities, strategies and the measures of success providing a frame to discuss the Maribyrnong respect and equity story.

Regular internal and external monitoring, reporting and feedback mechanisms were set up to support the project. In accordance with MCC organisational policy, annual performance review processes have been in place throughout the project. These were conducted between SCHP coordinator (Georgie) and me. Regular supervision with Georgie has also taken place. PVAW is a standing item on the bi-monthly SCHP team agenda. In 2010 I established PVAW meetings every three weeks attended by Georgie, Kate, Jane and me. These meetings were occasionally extended to staff outside the SCHP team also working on PVAW activities. They proved a fantastic way to strategise, coordinate activities and build on each other's strengths, relationships, networks, interests and expertise.

The project was reported to Council at least bi-annually in order to monitor and report on progress, raise awareness, build knowledge, further engage Councillors and EMT in this work and create a gender equitable culture.

Externally, the position has been supported through the VicHealth Learning Circle and Wei Leng as Research Practice Leader (RPL). The Learning Circle is comprised of the Project Coordinators from the RRE phase two funded projects, Wei Leng and VicHealth contract managers. The Learning Circle met quarterly over the three years. It provided a space to share information, resources, practice wisdom, discuss challenges, brainstorm alternative ways of working and ensure the project was current and responsive to the emerging Victorian context.

I delivered bi-annual progress reports to VicHealth. Every couple of months throughout the project the contract manager, Wei Leng and I also met more informally to discuss the progress. These site visits helped develop my capacity and a collegial relationship between VicHealth and MCC. This partnership is further documented at www.vichealth.vic.gov.au.

In 2006 as part of the GLOVE network, the SCHP team established the Maribyrnong Family Violence Working Group as a sub group of the Maribyrnong Safety Taskforce. This working group was the local level reference group for the GLOVE project and acted as a key guide to the R&E project from 2008-2010.

At the commencement of the R&E project (and after the Maribyrnong PVAW 2007-2008 plan evaluation) the focus of the group shifted from family violence service response issues to focus more specifically on primary prevention. The name changed to Maribyrnong Preventing Family Violence Working Group to reflect this. The coordination of this group demonstrates Councils commitment to a whole of community approach. It also provided a local level of transparency and accountability to community. The group was a key way for Council to continue to develop relationships with service providers and ensure our approach to PVAW was grounded in the experience of women.

The WHW Chief Executive Officer (CEO) chaired this group. It had representation from Relationships Australia, Melbourne City Mission, Sunshine Magistrates' Court, Westbay Alliance PCP, Victoria Police, Footscray Legal Centre, Australian Vietnamese Women's Association and MacKillop Family Services between 2008 and 2010.

The group reported back to the Maribyrnong Safety Taskforce general meetings via the Chair on a regular basis. This gave the Taskforce an opportunity to provide support and feedback to the group. Likewise, members of the working group had an opportunity to provide input into the broader work of the Maribyrnong Safety Taskforce through attending the meetings and at the annual planning day.

In 2010 the group reviewed the current local PVAW governance structures and recognised that other networks were now serving the role the group previously had. The group decided to cease to meet formally as the Maribyrnong Preventing Family Violence Working Group since members were already meeting as part of the Western Region Integrated Family Violence Committee (WIFVC) and Western Region Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women (PVT). The WIFVC and PVT are high functioning, regional strategic and operational coordination networks for tertiary and primary responses to violence against women. MCC are involved in both the WIFVC and PVT.

The R&E plan was reviewed at the release of the *Maribyrnong PVAW Action Plan 2007-2008 Evaluation Report* (Maribyrnong City Council 2007) and found to be consistent with the findings in direction and approach. I revised the R&E plan at the beginning of 2011 as I was beginning to write this evaluation report. I did this in consultation with the SCHP team, WRWG, Wei Leng and VicHealth Learning Circle. I explicitly considered the current political context in Victoria, the western region and MCC to ensure the plan was in synch with the environment of the work. My attendance and participation at the WIFVC, PVT, Leadership, Evaluation, and Sustainability Network (LEAS), Council meetings and SCHP team attendance at local, state, national and international PVAW events have also lent experience and understanding. This has ensured the plan and evaluation are responsive and relevant. These networks are discussed further in the next chapter.

4.2 Shift the culture in council and community

To embed and drive cultural change, we have undertaken a range of activities to incorporate the determinants of gender violence into local government strategic direction, policy, planning, programs and practice. We have worked with teams and individuals across Council using a range of mutually reinforcing strategies simultaneously to build momentum and saturate the environment. Increased internal capacity at council to undertake and model good PVAW practice has contributed the increased awareness and understanding of violence against women issues across the community.

Through this project, we realised to influence and inform others, we needed to get our own organisation and culture right first. As this internal culture has taken root, it has spread through Council into the community, through direct services, champions, our media communications, partnerships and networks, infrastructure planning and Council governance. In this chapter I will demonstrate these findings:

- White Ribbon: engaging men, engaging the community
- Working across Council
- Preventing violence against women shortcourse
- Political leadership
- Understanding and influencing council policy
- Nested approach: Council's connection with the community
- Building a local profile
- Networking and building capacity across Victoria
- Working in partnership.

4.2.1 White Ribbon: Engaging men, engaging the community

Since 2006 MCC has been involved in promoting White Ribbon Day (WRD). The campaign was created by a handful of Canadian men in 1991 in response to one man's massacre of fourteen women at a Montreal University in 1989. The campaign urges men to speak out against violence against women. In 1999 the UN General Assembly declared November 25 the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women - the White Ribbon has become the symbol for the day. The campaign has grown to be the largest effort in the world of men working to end violence against women.

The VicHealth framework recognises that while working with men as perpetrators has long been seen as an important intervention, increasingly it is critical to involve men and boys in primary prevention (Michau cited in VicHealth 2007). There are a number of reasons for this:

- While most men do not perpetrate violence against women, it is perpetrated largely by men
- Men are more likely than women to hold attitudes which support or are linked to the perpetration of violence (VicHealth cited in VicHealth 2007)
- Constructions of masculinity play a crucial role in shaping some men's perpetration of physical and sexual assault (Flood & Pease cited in VicHealth 2007)
- Men have a positive role to play in helping to end men's violence against women (Flood cited in VicHealth 2007), and have a stake in doing so
- Men play an important role in shaping attitudes and behaviours of children (as parents) and of other boys and young men (for example, as peers, colleagues, sporting role models, coaches and the like).



Photo 2 White Ribbon banner at town hall

In 2008 growing interest from staff across the organisation led to an initial cross-branch working group to organise WRD 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 group has provided a space for men across the organisation to develop their confidence and skills in PVAW. Meeting and working together regularly has contributed to creating a normalised PVAW environment. A strong collegial relationship has established between the men based on respect, equality and trust. The core group continue to meet for the third year in a row, a clear demonstration of commitment.

The benefits to having men from a range of departments and levels of management champion this issue have been significant. Through the group I have gained access to resources, diverse viewpoints and a direct link to cross-organisational planning and decision-making. The group

have become a focal point to test ideas, gain organisational support, brainstorm innovative approaches and channel work.

They are recognised and valued for the contribution they make. A message from the CEO on the staff intranet is an example of support for the group. “Peter’s nomination (for national White Ribbon Ambassador of the year) is a wonderful recognition of the leadership he has shown in this organisation and the community as a role model for preventing violence against women. We wish Peter all the best at Thursday’s National Award ceremony.” (Vince Haining intranet message, 31 August 2011). This is the only message the CEO put up during July and August 2011 and staff use the message board daily.

In 2009 Rebecca developed the WRWG terms of reference and 2009 WRWG action plan to guide the work of the group. The purpose of the working group outlined in the terms of reference was to plan activities and events to:

- Raise awareness of violence against women among Council staff
- Encourage male staff to take responsibility and action to prevent violence against women
- Encourage ownership of the issue within the organisation.

In June 2010 the group revised the terms of reference to reflect the current thinking and elected Chris Lynch, Youth Counsellor at Phoenix Youth Services as chairperson. Chris, a White Ribbon Ambassador since 2008, was chosen because of his ongoing commitment and passion to the issue. Chris was also a founding member of the group. He suggested the idea initially to gather men from across the organisation. Chris was engaged in Council White Ribbon activities before the group formally began. Prior to Chris taking the role of chair, Rebecca and Georgie chaired and took minutes for the group. The election of an internal chair and more detailed terms of reference demonstrated the increased independence and leadership the group had.

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 MCC
- Provide feedback, guidance and support when appropriate to the Maribyrnong R&E project.

In July 2009 the group attended Engaging Men in this Issue presentation delivered by No To Violence, Victoria’s male family violence prevention association. The feedback from this training was instrumental in shaping the direction Rebecca took at MCC. The group felt the “He (the trainer) was telling us what to do” and in setting himself up as “an expert”, the group felt they were “targeted, blamed” and that their experience, efforts and commitment were not heard or validated. This viewpoint persisted when I asked the group about it a year a half later.

In response to this experience the SCHK team and my approach to engaging men and women around this issue has been based on listening to each others stories, considering each others ideas and suggestions (without assuming the position of authority), working together and very much guided by where the group and Council is at personally and as an organisation. The findings in this report validate our approach.

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 with 170 guests 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.

Abbey spoke openly and honestly about what it is like to work with women who are experiencing family violence. What a safety plan is and why this is different for every woman. Why it is so hard for women to leave and why some women go back to violent partners. Abbey shared some of her experiences in past roles and debunked some of the myths associated with violence against women. Abbey established free flowing conversation and invited everyone to contribute stories as well. This atmosphere was positive, inclusive and respectful. As Abbey shared her stories, others in the room shared their own experiences, fears, uncertainties and desire to do something. It was an incredible session and many people came and spoke to me at length in the weeks following.



Photo 3 CEO and WRWG at 2010 White Ribbon luncheon

During 2010 the group used the intranet message board to put up a series of PVAW related messages, information, links to relevant websites, surveys, training and statistics. These messages were initiated, wrote and edited by members of the group over email and then posted by different men. Working on these messages, provided the opportunity to consider and reflect on the experience of women. The group often emailed back and forth discussing the wording, tone, pitch and appropriateness. These discussions built trust in each other as we all struggled to get the message right.



Photo 4 Councillor and WRWG at White Ribbon luncheon

MCC intranet message 2010: “A Christmas message from the White Ribbon Day Working Group

The White Ribbon Day Working Group would like to wish everyone and their families a happy and safe holiday season.

For most people this Christmas will be a time of relaxation and celebration with family and friends, for others it will be a time of increased anxiety and fear, brought on by mounting stress and growing financial burden. Unfortunately the period between Christmas and New Year coincides with an increased incidence of domestic violence.

Maribyrnong’s Employment Assistant Program is a free and confidential service which can help those who might be experiencing difficulty or hardship at this time of year.

Thankyou for your support during 2010 and helping us spread the message that violence against women is not ok.”

MCC intranet message 2010: “Members of the White Ribbon Day Working Group will be wearing their tee shirts today to re affirm their respect for mothers and all women, to highlight their commitment to eliminate violence against women and to generate further reflection, discussion and awareness.”

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.

In 2010 the cost of the shirts was subsidised by the traffic and local laws department. The manager contributed over \$1000 from his budget, so that we could offer a reduced price of \$10 for a shirt. The shirts for EMT, WRWG, and Councillors are paid through the respect and equity budget. The manager of Parking and Local Laws indicated via email “There’s no time limit on the offer. If you get it done and send me the invoice, we will pick it up this time around.”

Each year we have printed extra shirts to give away. In 2010 50 extra shirts

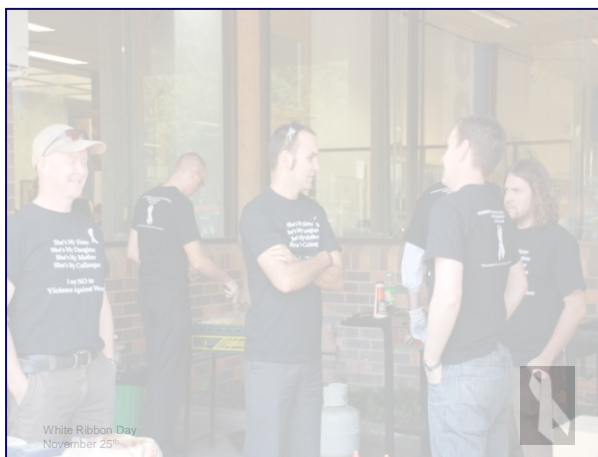


Photo 5 WRWG at the 2009 Council barbecue

were printed on top of the pre-order to use as giveaways. These are all gone and if we had more, we would have been easily able to give them to people asking for them. We also printed shirts for all performers at the White Ribbon Day event. We frequently get inquiries about whether community members and people at events can buy the shirt after seeing the men wearing them. At a recent event (outside the scope of this project) attended by the SCHP team, Deputy Mayor and some of the WRWG, we had our photo taken with the Hon. Mary Wooldridge, MP, Minister Mental Health, Women's Affairs and Community Services. The Minister loved the t-shirts and asked if we could send her one, which we have since done.

In 2010 the group attended the Not 1 More event held at Federation Square. This event was broadcast on the Channel 10 News with the men in their shirts shown in the background.

"Can you please send me details of where your t-shirts were purchased/printed. Would you also mind sharing the different text you have done over the years - our crew really want to copy you guys this year!"

Email from a Victorian local government 2010

"I was wondering where you got your fabulously large swear jar from?"

Email from Hobsons Bay City Council 6 July 2011

The group have also developed White Ribbon collateral each year to promote the White Ribbon message and raise awareness of violence against women. The Council Relations Officer developed a signature block for staff across the organisation to use. See the table of collateral developed over three years.

With regards.

Brooke Hobson
Council Relations Officer
Maribyrnong City Council
Cnr. Hyde & Napier Street, Footscray Vic 3011
PO Box 58, Footscray Vic 3011
Tel: 9688 0344
Fax: 9688 0288
Email: brooke.hobson@maribyrnong.vic.gov.au



UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN
WHITE RIBBON DAY - 25 NOVEMBER

www.myoath.com.au

Figure 3 Email signature for White Ribbon Day

Table 1 White Ribbon Day collateral

2008	
Preventing Violence Against Women pull up banner	WRD T-Shirt: She's my Sister She's my Daughter She's my Mother She's my Colleague I say NO to violence against women

2009	
Posters for the back of toilet doors about Positive roles men can play Challenging sexist behaviour The positives for men in respectful relationships	WRD T-shirt: All Maribyrnong men should swear Never to commit violence against women Never to excuse violence against women, and Never to remain silent about violence against women This is our oath White Ribbon Signature block with a message about preventing violence against women
Large outdoor banner for Council building	Library bookmarks with local family violence service information
Truck magnets for Council trucks	Bumper stickers for staff cars
WRD stencils for footpaths	'I swear' jar for people to put their 'I swear' commitments

2010	
WRD flag Not Violent Not Silent Maribyrnong says NO to violence against women	WRD T-Shirt Real men show RESPECT Real men show COURAGE Real men show INTEGRITY Real men in Maribyrnong say NO to violence against women
Another Large outdoor banner for Council building	Hip hop CD
Posters for the back of toilet doors	Intranet messages around key events, such as international women's day, mothers day, Easter, fathers day and Christmas
Signature block	Updated bookmarks
10 Community signature boards – not violent not silent	

In August 2010, I came to work one day to see the previous General Managers for Sustainable Development and Community Wellbeing (WRWG members) had put White Ribbon stickers on the front of their offices. This public demonstration from leaders in MCC sent a clear message to all staff and visitors and made a significant contribution to supporting the PVAW culture at MCC. It was a bold, courageous statement and generated conversation across the office.

The group began to correspond more frequently through email. I initially started sending links to relevant media articles, academic articles, resources and local activities they could get involved in. This led to other members in the group also sending around stories, links to sexist ads on TV and their commentary on these. This discussion continued in the hallways, around desks, in the tearoom,



Photo 6 White Ribbon Day stickers

on trains to PVAW events and at the beginning and end of the working group meetings. This is a significant demonstration of the men making a connection between the outcomes and violence and the determinants and taking action and really living their politics.

Peter Daghish began writing to companies with sexist advertising and encouraging others to do so as well. In August Peter email the WRWG “If people want to contact Brut & express a view, GOOGLE - Brut contact address and leave a message.”

Not long after this, the group submitted a letter to the Australian Association of National Advertising Code of ethics review “calling on advertisers to commit to depicting women and girls in positive respectful ways.” The letter cited the National Survey on Community Attitudes to Violence Against Women 2009, along with VicHealth identified actions as evidence that we need to “create societies in which there are strong regulatory frameworks supporting gender equity, promote positive portrayals of women (eg: in advertising) and support communities, which foster the development of healthy and respectful relationships between men and women.”

Email from General Manager Sustainable Development 2010:

Hi All,

I have been meaning to mention this book for a while...

On my recent trip to the South Africa for the World Cup I heard some horrific stories concerning the treatment of people of all ages and of both sexes, but most notably women. I met a middle aged Australian couple at the Gateway shopping Centre in Durban who ran an orphanage funded by the Baptist Church back here in Australia. The woman told me some of the truths about what life is like to be a woman living in Africa. She recommended to me the book titled 'Half the Sky - Turning Oppression Into Opportunity For Women Worldwide'. I recently borrowed it from the Footscray Library and have nearly finished reading it. I highly recommend it to you all. I think it would also be worthwhile purchasing a copy. I imagine some of the new arrivals to our municipality may have most certainly been exposed to the some of the oppression described in the book. It's hard to believe.

Email response from the WRWG Chair person 2010:

“Sounds like a real eye opener John, thanks for sharing that. I thought I'd follow up your email by providing a link to Foundation House, which is a service committed to providing the best possible support for refugees and asylum seekers who have experienced torture and trauma prior to their arrival in Australia.”

The group noted that the Victorian Government “identifies media, arts and culture as a powerful tool for social change” and reminded the reviewer “the media has a unique opportunity and enormous potential to promote respectful relationships and build non-violent gender equitable communities.”

In September 2010 The Age conducted a web poll about whether sports clubs should be required to be inclusive of women and girls. The group emailed it around to everyone they knew and then emailed back and forth about the progress. One of the members emailed to the group, “52% yes 48% no...this is as exciting as election night!!!!!!”

In October 2010 a group member emailed with a link to watch a relevant story on TV “Hi Folks/ Q and A on Monday night discussed the sex scandal involving Collingwood. There were some interesting comments made by the panel guests. The following link is to the transcript: <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/qanda/txt/s3029147.htm>”

The SCHK team regularly monitored and shared online media relevant to PVAW. While reading comments on the 27 January 2011 from an online petition to prevent a degrading sexist music video release we accidentally came across this quote left by one of the WRWG members. "We live in barbarous times. Speak out against this outrageous behavior."

In January 2011 Peter's daughter Kate (who works in the Infrastructure department) began emailing links to news stories about gender stereotyping and gender inequity, after learning that the group email each other on these issues. This is a further significant impact the group's contribution to normalising the culture across Council, where men and women feel comfortable engaging in discussion on what is and how we can achieve gender equality.

In December 2010, I spoke with customer service and arranged to have photos from events the WRWG have attended to be put on rotation next the intranet message board. These photos are still on the website nine months later. These photos are now in the organisational picture database and one has been used on the 2011 organisational staff survey communication flyer. This flyer was sent to all staff attached to payslips. The photo was also used in the survey poster and pinned on notice boards throughout all MCC work sites.

"Yes [I] feel very comfortable talking about it (PVAW) in the workplace. I think there is a general acceptance that violence against women in any form is not acceptable as most of the staff at Phoenix come from a social justice, welfare or community background. I think in other areas of Council this may be more difficult, so having a platform to speak from like the White Ribbon Working Group makes this easier"

Chris Lynch interview 2011

Using the photo demonstrates the high profile and recognition of the group. A photo of the WRWG has become synonymous with the organisation as a whole.

During meetings the men encouraged each other to become White Ribbon Ambassadors. At the beginning of 2010, two members of the group were ambassadors. By the end of 2010, another three had successfully applied, supporting each other to write the application. This included former Acting General Manager Community Wellbeing, Andrew Day and Councillor Zahkarov.



Photo 7 Walk Against Violence 2009

In July Chris Lynch of the WRWG suggested we nominate someone from the group for the National White Ribbon Ambassador 2011 Award. The group chose Peter for his commitment and passion. At the time of writing this report, Peter was a successful nominee, attending the White Ribbon gala event in Sydney in September 2011.

Peter Daghish's t-shirt reads "Real men show Respect, Real men show Courage, Real men show Integrity. Real men in Maribyrnong say NO to violence against women".

Introduced as a role model, Peter stands in front of a room full of people meeting to create a vibrant, safe and equitable local community, and talks about how male violence has deeply affected his family. He speaks of what violence against women means to him and what he is doing to challenge it. He tells of his daughters and sons, his colleagues and friends, his community, who inspire him. He encourages everyone in the room to be role models too.

As an umpire, he stopped a football game recently when a derogatory slight was yelled at the female boundary umpire. He went over to the offending man and asked "how'd you like it if that was yelled at your daughter or wife?" He makes a point not to let these things slide.

The Maribyrnong WRWG has met monthly for the last few years, attending events and training together. During the Leaders Lunch Peter shares how important it has been to be part of the group and "talk and listen and learn". On Peter's encouragement, other men at Council have become White Ribbon Ambassadors, including the Deputy Mayor.

Thanks to Peter, last year a popular book on experiences of gender inequality circulated the Council desks and conversation. The media treatment of women also comes up a lot. Peter now writes to editors frequently. I hear him telling others "it only takes five minutes, hold them to account, make them think about the message this sends to young women and men".

Peter speaks at the Western Region Community Health Centre, saying how he wears the White Ribbon everyday, not just WRD. He wants the people he meets to ask him what it means. He encourages everyone there to start these conversations everyday with anyone they can. "Wear the ribbon, its something small you can easily do. We've been silent too long. Take a stand".

Every year, Peter supports the construction team at Council to stencil the White Ribbon on city footpaths and make large White Ribbon signboards for hundreds of signatures. Peter arranges for the White Ribbon banner to be displayed across the municipality.

Pete is definitely our action man in Council. Anything you want to do or know, speak to Pete. Large scale community White Ribbon concert in the middle of town; 500 sausages, two marquees, a water truck, stage and sound equipment, road blocks and 200 plus audience. Possible because of Peter. Over the last three years the events have grown along with Pete's ideas and energy.

Peter asks the questions, looks for solutions and challenges behaviour. He lives his politics in his personal and professional life and brings others along with him. Peter is a true and outstanding White Ribbon Ambassador.



Photo 8 Peter at 2011 National White Ribbon Ambassador Awards in Sydney

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. In 2008 activities included:

- T-shirts designed and worn by all members of the group in the lead up to the day and on the day. All Councillors were also given a t-shirt to wear
- Information on where to seek help for men and women stapled to payslips over two consecutive pay periods
- Flyers put up on the back of toilet doors with targeted information for men and women about violence and practical tips to prevent it
- A banner was displayed at the town hall from early November to February with the White Ribbon Day logo and the words "Maribyrnong City Council says no to violence against women."

In 2009 these activities were increased to include:

- T-shirts were designed and worn on key dates throughout the year
- Distributing WRD bumper stickers to be put on Council vehicles (if the driver wanted to)
- 50 large magnets on Council trucks
- Swear jars at events for people to sign swear slips and commit to the not violent not silent oath
- 10,000 WRD bookmarks were distributed to all the libraries to give out with book loans. These have local family violence service information on the back side and are handed out all year around.
- \$432 wristbands and ribbons sold across Council
- PVAW Survey attached to payslips with gift vouchers as prizes, drawn at the morning tea
- White Ribbons were stencilled on pavements across the municipality
- A White Ribbon signature block was designed and distributed to members in the working group to use.

(We) saw some men wearing black t-shirts with the words "She's my sister, she's my daughter..." etc in white writing at the MCG Preventing Violence Against Women Conference back in August at this year's Not One More event. Would we be able to get them and how would we go about doing that? Where did you get them printed and how much were they?

Violence Against Women and their Children Strategy Group, Crime Department, Victoria
Police email, July 2010

In 2010 along with all the above activities the WRWG also:

- Designed t-shirts and made available to all Council staff with over 100 purchased
- Attached a survey using questions from the *National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women 2009* (VicHealth 2010) to all staff payslips
- Designed and distributed a White Ribbon signature block for all members in the working group to use
- Sent \$640 of ribbons and wristbands to all the community centres and Council sites and sold to staff and community using the venues
- Held sessions with secondary schools to develop the Text Against Violence messages and make the banners

- Held workshops with local musicians and dancers in preparation for the Maddern Square performance
- Displayed the WRD banner at Council town hall, Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre and Footscray Library
- Set-up display tables at all the Council community centres and office sites with White Ribbon Day and family violence information, R&E project resources and a board for people to sign in support of ending violence against women which was to be paraded at the Maddern Square event (organised by the Strategic Planning Coordinator)
- Display the Not Violent Not Silent banner at St Jerome's Music Festival (2011) with support from the Arts and Culture team.

For a number of years, MCC has organised successful awareness raising activities as part of WRD. The annual events began in 2007, growing on the momentum of Council's involvement in the GLOVE project. In 2008 and 2009 activities and events for WRD included all MCC staff. In 2010 we extended our event considerably to include the general public in Footscray, local community health services, the police, emergency services, local businesses, the AFL and a range of other Council partners.

What are the three things you are most proud of from 2007 White Ribbon Day?

1. The involvement of three secondary schools across Maribyrnong in making the banners and delivering speeches at the launch.
2. The attendance of the Minister for Women's Affairs, state MPs and local Councillors.
3. The attendance from broad range of organisations and the general public.

SCHP email to the White Ribbon Foundation January 2008

The Hon. Maxine Morand, MP, former Minister for Women's Affairs launched the Maribyrnong PVAW Action Plan 2007-2008, and the Maribyrnong Schools Banner Project at the 2007 WRD community event in Maddern Square. Students from local secondary schools and local agencies participated in the event which aimed to challenge male attitudes and behaviour towards women. MCC staff, the Maribyrnong Police Inspector and Marsha Thompson, Member for Footscray also attended. This event set a precedent for subsequent PVAW partnerships and events.



Photo 9 Young people performing at WRD 2010

We held WRD lunchtime BBQ event for all MCC staff at the town hall in 2008. Over 100 staff attended, including staff from the community centres and the work centre. White Ribbon Foundation of Australia board member and former Assistant Police Commissioner Leigh Gassner addressed the group describing his experiences around violence against women through his work with Victorian Police. This speech is still talked about today when MCC staff are discussing WRD.

In 2009 a breakfast was held at Council's work centre from 9-10:30am. Approximately 30 staff attended from Council's Operations and Maintenance department. This department previously had minimal engagement with MCC PVAW work. Phil Clearly, ex-Victorian Football League player, local politician and long-term prevention of violence against women advocate spoke at the event.

A morning tea was held at the town hall building for MCC staff. This event was attended by over 50 staff and was launched by the CEO Kerry Thompson. Phil Cleary also spoke at this event. The *Everyone can . . . Make a difference in preventing violence against women* resource, along with the organisational family violence policy were launched at this event. See further discussion below.

The same event was held over two locations to capture a wider audience and engage work centre staff who are 'off-site' and find it logistically difficult to attend events at the Council building.

With support from Council's Youth Counsellor, Chris Lynch, and WRWG Chair, the FReeZA Committee (comprised of young people who organise music events for other young people) held a White Ribbon event. The committee developed the slogan 'We don't hit chicks' and design for a t-shirt which was worn by committee members and sold at the event.



Photo 10 Kerry Thompson former CEO speaking at 2008 staff barbecue



Photo 11 Young people at 2009 FReeZa event

"Finding out what young people already know so they are driving the conversation and learning from each others experience."

"Don't be rigid with the outline, allow passionate conversations to flow."

"Young people are more likely to take responsibility when they have contributed to the idea."

"The power of reclaiming a word like chick."

Chris Lynch, Involving Young People in White Ribbon Day Presentation 19 May 2011

Maribyrnong City Council

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.



Photo 12 White Ribbon stencil in Maddern Square

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.

Council released a media statement on 23 November 2010 about this new partnership "Council teams up with Western Region Health Centre to make a stand for the elimination of violence against women." This attests to the benefits of building partnerships through existing work and structures. The capacity of MCC group meant that WRHC have been supported in finding their way with this work and don't need to reinvent the wheel to do it.

MCC circulated a media release on 18 November 2010 where Cr Sanli stated, "Council will be getting the White Ribbon Day message out to the community through displays in each community centre and by flying the flag at the Town Hall. These symbolic gestures demonstrate that Council is serious about preventing violence against women in our community."

"It gets me all *tingle-y* when I walk around Footscray and see the stencils on footpaths and the magnets on trucks!"

Comment by participant at a community health forum 2011

Students from Braybrook Secondary College, Maribyrnong College and Footscray City College launched their "Text Against Violence" text messages, focusing on PVAW. Everyone on the day was encouraged to send on the text messages to their personal contacts. The schools developed these messages with support from Chris Lynch through a healthy relationships program. The "schools willingness to be involved has been because I have developed an ongoing strong relationship with them and they trust the work that I am doing and they see results" (Lynch 2011)

Council also issued a media release about the text against violence project. The Maribyrnong Leader 16 November 2010, published the mayor saying, "Texting against violence is an important and innovative program. By engaging young people in this most important issue and using technology relevant to them, we hope the message that violence against women is unacceptable is texted far and wide amongst their peers and beyond".

Table 2 Text Against Violence texts written by local schools

Footscray City College	Maribyrnong Secondary College	Braybrook Secondary College
2GETHER WE STAND, ALONE WE FALL. It takes all men 2 stand up & say NO 2 violence against women. Support White Ribbon Day & send them on.	By passing on this txt I swear 2 neva use violence against women. Lets work 2gether 2 prevent this issue. Support WHITE RIBBON DAY & send this on	Play by the rulz, it ain't kool to hurt women. Support WHITE RIBBON DAY, send this on & help end violence against women



Photo 13 Young people arriving at Text Against Violence November 2010



Photo 14 Text Against Violence banner

On the day activities included:

- A march using three different routes to maximise our impact across the city, from Council's town hall to Maddern Square. Over 40 MCC staff including Councillors marched with banners and whistles
- 10 large white corflute boards were printed with the Not Violent, Not Silent slogan, the White Ribbon logo and the Council logo. These boards were available at the event to sign and demonstrate commitment to a Maribyrnong community, which is free from violence against women. CEO, Mayor and the Police Inspector, publicly signed the boards. These are now on display across Council
- A local hip group of young people supported by the Phoenix Youth Worker wrote and performed a powerful hip-hop piece exploring respectful relationships between men and women available on CD
- A water fountain provided by Yarra Valley Water
- Two large marquees with seats and an information stand
- Two BBQ's, one vegetarian and one halal (600 sausages)
- Key note address by Luke Ablett former Sydney Swans Player and current AFL Lead Education Facilitator, spoke about violence against women and the work of the AFL's Respect and Responsibility program
- Performance by MASSIVE, Australia's first youth hip hop group
- Performance by Jungle City dancers local talented young people
- The Phoenix street surfer was set up with video games
- Professional roving photographer to capture the day in picture
- Our customer service at town hall distributed the hip hop CDs after the event.



Photo 15 Texting against violence



Photo 16 Hip-hop dancers and performers

“If I wasn’t concerned, I wouldn’t be rapping on this track”

“I’m a man and I don’t stay silent / get up / stand up / say no to violence”

Lyrics from rap Respect, Courage and Integrity

In 2010 the vastly talented young people of Maribyrnong municipality with Maribyrnong City Council Phoenix Centre wrote, recorded and performed ‘Respect, Courage & Integrity’. Insightful lyrics announce, “I’m doing my best to try / to make the right decision / to get your ears to listen / this is my mission”. The hip-hop artists rap “why’s there so much hate toward women?” and answer “speak up, til the day you’re heard...men need to learn / to give more respect / just relax / stop this gender based violence”

Handout for the LG Pro Marketplace, 2011

After the event I got an email from a MCC strategic planner who after briefly seeing the success of the event wanted to get involved. This demonstrates one of the many unexpected opportunities to engage others in PVAW, which has arisen in MCC. The courage and leadership Council demonstrates through public events such as WRD enthuse and bring along others. This is a significant impact of the project. “Just wanted to say I hope everything went well in Maddern Square today!! It certainly looked good when I walked through a few times and congrats on the day’s festivities!! What I wanted to chat to you about is for next years White Ribbon day...using the shop’s TV for greater awareness about the purpose of the day and marketing the event in Maddern Square. I’ll fill you in next time I see you!!”



Photo 17 Gerogie Hill, Tony Long, Vince Haining, Peter Daghish and Luke Ablett

During the writing of this report, the WRWG are working in partnership with WRHC again to hold a WRD community event. The events have become institutionalised across MCC and the Wellbeing Committee has offered to get involved with it this year. This involvement is significant as it comes unsolicited and on top of the numerous activities the committee are already involved in: The committee emailed me on the 3 May 2011 “Maybe we can help with White Ribbon Day (whether it be for promotion or if you need us to follow up on anything). Please let us know. I will definitely bring this up at our next meeting.”

4.2.2 Working across Council

To build awareness of violence against women amongst Councillors and Council officers, we conducted activities which engaged the whole of Council as well as more targeted and strategic activities to work with key leaders and teams, capitalise on opportunities and embed PVAW throughout the organisational culture.

We conducted staff surveys in 2008 and 2011 to assess the level of awareness among MCC staff of their understanding the prevalence and determinants of violence against women and to measure staff awareness of PVAW initiatives undertaken by MCC. Gift vouchers were offered as prizes for three participating staff in both survey years. See appendix 8.2 MCC Staff Survey 2011.



Photo 18 Cr Clarke and Cr Zakharov lead the march to Maddern Square

While the survey demonstrated an increased awareness of the multifaceted nature of violence against women and the key determinants and highlighted increased personal engagement among respondents, these respondents were voluntary and self-selecting. The sample was not the same in 2008 and 2011 and given the potential bias within the results, cannot be extrapolated as attitudes of the entire Council. Moreover, it is impossible to attribute this increased awareness among respondents solely to the R&E project, given the number of prominent violence against women initiatives, both primary prevention and tertiary responses and also mass media coverage, that have occurred during the project period locally through to locally.

Hi CMT

I write to you on behalf of the White Ribbon Working Group to seek your support for staff involvement in this year's White Ribbon Day event. As you may be aware, each year, for the last three years, Council has organised activities for staff to raise awareness of violence against women and promote equal and respectful relationships between men and women... We are seeking your support again for the participation of your department in this White Ribbon Day event... More information will be circulated closer to the date but we would like to take this opportunity to encourage all managers to promote this event and support staff to attend where possible. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Email from Andrew Day to Council managers 19 October 2010



Photo 19 WRWG manning the barbecue

However, the survey results do highlight the engagement of 100 staff members willing to complete the survey. There are 736 staff in the organisation at June 2010 (Maribyrnong City Council 2010). In particular it highlights the strengths of the WRWG and annual WRD events as an approachable method to engage staff. The t-shirts were also highlighted as an effective means to enable female staff to discuss violence against women with male family members.

Another respondent was similarly praising of the WRWG, saying that the group has raised internal awareness of the issue, which the respondent hoped would filter into people's private lives as well as working lives. This is a clear example of the significant impact the WRWG have had on the culture at Council.

In the 2011 survey we asked, "has your understanding of the term 'violence against women' changed over the time you've been at Council?" 23.5% of respondents believed their understanding had changed, but did not expand on this. 20% of respondents highlighted an increased awareness of the many forms of violence against women and/or an increased understanding of the determinants of gender violence. Of these, one staff member who has been at Council for over 15 years, commented that in addition to his understanding of the term changing, Council's workplace culture has changed significantly in terms of jokes, emails and Kris Kringle presents that were previously acceptable are no longer accepted. Again this is a clear example of the change in Council culture.

Another respondent answered that "my understanding of the term [has not changed], but most definitely my understanding of primary prevention strategies and also of the huge scope that local government has in influencing local community attitudes, behaviours and environments."

When we asked respondents in question nine to rate a series of statements, one of these being "Local governments have a role to play in preventing violence against women" 90% of respondents agreed or highly agreed. This is notable, since traditionally this has not been a core role of local government. It may also reflect MCC staff increasingly seeing their role in influencing the health and wellbeing of the community, which has been a goal of integrating the MPHP into the Council plan, discussed later in this chapter.

"I love the men's working group and the pledge idea. I bought t-shirts for my husband and son and it was a great opportunity for me to discuss it with them and the role they can play with their peers."

Staff survey response 2011 question 17

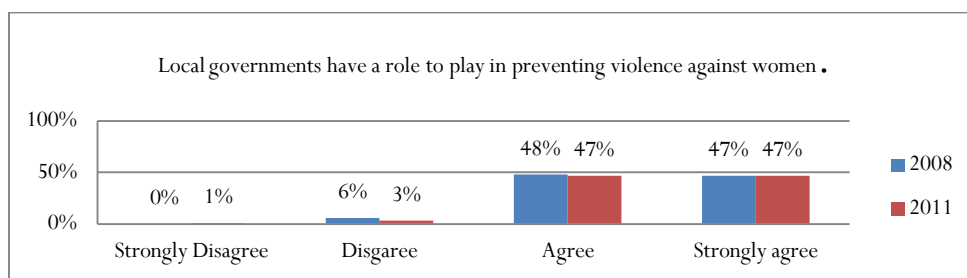


Figure 4 Staff survey results – local governments have a role to play

We asked what PVAW activities staff were aware of. This question highlighted a substantial increase in the proportion of staff that identified WRD activities, from 19% to 79%. Of these 79%, 65% only identified WRD activities and/or the WRWG. Another 35% identified WRD activities in addition to a diverse range of project activities, including:

- Information sent with payslips
- Regular intranet messages on gender equity and other PVAW messages and messages/information in toilets
- Display of family violence services information specifically the western region help cards
- Leaders Lunches
- Work with local sporting clubs specifically the WRFL
- Council facilities audit
- Development of a public statement
- VicHealth training course
- Internal awareness raising and capacity building to create safe and equal spaces for women
- Development of the ‘Everyone can’ resources
- Council’s family violence policy
- Work with young people.

There were only 10 respondents who did not identify any White Ribbon activities. This is in comparison to 2008 where a fairly low level of understanding of the PVAW work being undertaken by Council was indicated. 48% having no response and a further 15% of respondents answering they were unaware of the PVAW action plan.

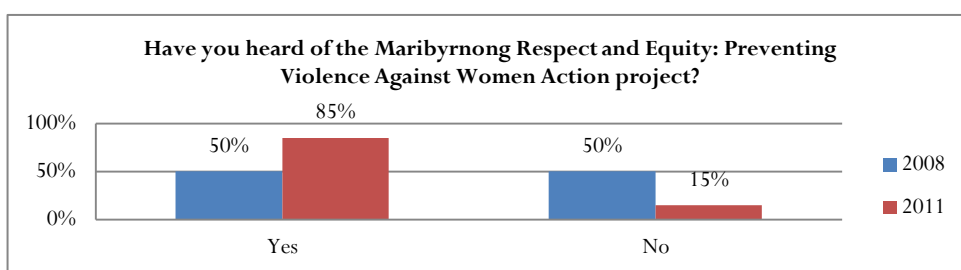


Figure 5 Staff survey results - awareness of R&E project at MCC

There was also a small but important increase in the proportion of respondents (from 9% to almost 14%), who identified that PVAW was everyone’s role, regardless of their role at Council, in both their work and personal life. “I see it as part of my role as a person, not as part of my profession”. A range of suggestions on what Council can do were given, all of which are recommendations in this report:

- Empowering women through education and support groups to increase women's connections within the community
- Economic empowerment of women through education and employment pathways (although the respondent expressed uncertainty about what Council's responsibility in this was)
- Assess Council's services for women and families and see how they could be strengthened to support gender equity
- Discussing respectful workplace relationships at staff meetings and modelling these
- Supporting activities in action plans and strategic directions that raise awareness and build capacity of Council and the community to implement prevention strategies
- Ensuring funds are allocated to support actions identified through the facilities audit tool
- The need for discussions on links between women's empowerment initiatives and Council priorities
- Comprehensive analysis and assessment of the barriers that prevent women's participation in all levels of Council.

In 2008 MCC undertook an audit of eleven selected Council facilities including child care centres, sporting clubs, recreation centres, community centres, libraries and our work centre to assess the extent to which the physical and social environments of the facilities promoted the primary prevention of violence against women. Recommendations from each of the assessments were then discussed with relevant facility managers for further action and follow up. The assessments were done using the PVAW assessment tool, developed for this project and took place during July and August 2008.

The tool provided a checklist of key features in both the built and social environment recognised as being either protective or risk factors in the prevention of violence against women in community settings and workplaces. To undertake the assessment features of the built and physical environments of each facility were linked to a growing body of research that recognises protective/risk factors in the primary prevention of violence against women. For example, we know that gender equity is an important determinant in PVAW so we looked at gender balance in staff numbers, programs offered for women, facilities available for women ie: change rooms and breast feeding spaces.

I have been reading about the terrific work that you are doing in relation to prevention of violence against women. I am involved in establishing partnerships to do similar work in the North East PCP catchment and am particularly interested in the audit tool that you used to look at Council facilities in Maribyrnong. Are you able to share this tool with me and do you know of any other similar audit tools? We are particularly interested in whole of agency approaches to family violence prevention. Thank you.

Request from Health Promotion Advisor North
 East Primary Care Partnership 8 March 2011

Bridget Henley developed the eight page assessment tool after an extensive search of local, national and international literature and primary prevention models. The tool brought together a broad range of criteria recognised as having an impact on the PVAW in particular:

- Victoria Police on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
- GLOVE Project
- Metrac, Canada (Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children)
- Environments for Health (Department of Human Services, cited in Henley 2008)
- Women's Design Service, UK
- Women's Safety Strategy 2002 (State Government, Victoria, cited in Henley 2008)
- A Good Night for All 2005 (State Government, Victoria, cited in Henley 2008)

- Preventing Violence Before It Occurs: A Framework and Background Paper to Guide the Primary Prevention of Violence Against Women in Victoria, 2007 (VicHealth, cited in Henley 2008).

The background paper to the assessment tool explains the purpose of the tool drawing on the VicHealth framework, evidence and demonstrates Council's methodological approach to PVAW. "Violence against women is recognised as being the end point in a continuum of attitudes and behaviours in relation to women that constantly surround us, in our homes, workplaces and communities. In this context, what messages, both overt and covert, do Council owned facilities send the community about respect for all community members including women and the importance of positive gender relations" (Henley 2008).

"This assessment tool is a part of a process that aims to bring about social change by creating settings – in the built and social environments – where individuals are not exploited, power is not abused and all members of the community are involved and respected...the tool recognises the broad benefits that creating safe spaces for women has for all community members. Spaces that are safe for women are safe for everyone and are evidence of a community that cares for all its members" (Henley 2008).

The sites were assessed from a range of perspectives:

- As workplaces where women are employees
- As community services which women access as community members
- PVAW in public spaces - identifying risks and protective factors in built and social environments of the facility
- PVAW in the home - identifying the impact that these facilities have on developing risk or protective factors in individual women employees and community members.

Eleven Council facilities were assessed as part of the audit process:

- Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre (MAC)
- RecWest
- Braybrook Community Centre
- Maidstone Community Centre
- Footscray Library
- Work Centre
- Roberts Street maternal and child health centre
- Angliss Children's Centre
- Yarraville Tennis Club
- Town Hall
- Skinner Pavilion, Braybrook.

Contact was made with the manager or responsible staff member, at each site and a time was arranged for an interview and site tour to take place. Most sites were also visited a second time at night to identify possible problematic features associated with car parks and lighting.

The first part of the site visit involved an interview focusing on aspects of the social environment at the facility and enabled staff to identify specific areas of concern. This was done with between one and five managers and staff members and Bridget. Following the interview stage, a tour of the site's physical environment was done using the audit tool. This was completed independent of any staff involvement, although occasionally this was required.

Specific issues, features and recommendations at individual sites are in summary form in the body of the *Report on the Findings of Council Facilities Audit* and in complete version in individual site reports written in August 2008 by Bridget. See appendix 8.3 Gender facilities audit 2008 key themes and findings for more detail. Most of the recommendations made in the 2008 report were site specific or on a grand scale and not particularly feasible for implementation.

The next steps proposed were to rollout the audit tool to other facilities and to up-skill key staff so facility managers could use the tool on a regular basis. In addition, it was proposed that a new tool be developed, based on the current tool, as a checklist for new facilities being built by MCC. A budget bid was submitted to Council to resource the next steps which was unsuccessful. Lack of financial support to implement these recommendations made it unfeasible to pursue the costly aspects of the recommendations and no work was undertaken to support the sites to implement any recommendations.

In early 2011 Jane from the SCHP team undertook interviews as part of the evaluation research design, with the managers who participated in the facilities audit to assess whether any of the recommendations had been independently implemented. These interviews (except one which took place via email) all took place in person, with Jane going out to visit each site. The purpose of these interviews was to discover what aspects of ongoing Council work has linkage to the respect and equity project and whether this could be attributable to the facilities audit.

Jane found that any changes in line with the recommendations were coincidental or happened regardless of the audit, since they were priorities of the site before the audit was completed. Staff did not have the capacity to change infrastructure and organisational practice in their individual roles. Overwhelmingly it was indicated that this would need to be an overall MCC strategy driven at an organisational level.

An unexpected impact from Jane's interviews was the awareness and interest in the R&E project. People discussed the links between facilities as safe and welcoming places and PVAW. Staff also mentioned the WRD campaign and the work of the WRWG across the organisation.

MAC has begun to build a strong relationship with the Phoenix Youth Services and develop referral processes for young people. Jane's interviews were useful in discovering work happening across the Council, not formally linked to the R&E project, but nonetheless were promoting the principles of gender equity and were cultivated in the warm climate provided by the R&E project. These are future opportunities for coordinating and building on great current work. For more information see appendix 8.4 Gender facilities audit review 2011.

As part of these interviews Jane talked to the Customer Services Manager who retold a humorous anecdote about gender stereotypes. The re-telling of this story is evidence of the culture within Council where it is acceptable to talk about gender equality and sexist behaviour is ridiculous.

The Women of Maribyrnong

Helen Frost began in her position in 2006. As part of taking the role, she was committed to 'changing the face' of customer service, as she believed it didn't reflect the diversity of the Maribyrnong community. She focused on increasing the number of CALD staff and on the number of male staff. Prior to 2006, there were only female staff in customer service. Helen believes that the current gender composition within the team improves team morale and the female's staff sense of value of their job, as customer service has shifted away from, just being a female domain.

In early 2010, there was a community member who contested a parking fine. The customer demanded to see the customer service coordinator, and when Helen came out, refused to discuss the issue with her because she was a woman. He then asked to speak to her manager. The Manager of Governance and Customer Service was also a woman, and so the customer asked to speak to her manager who at this time was also female (General Manager, Corporate Services).

He was getting increasingly frustrated and then asked to speak to the CEO (who was also female). He refused to believe that this was true, and so Helen printed Kerry Thompson's photo off the internet and gave it to him, which he then crunched into a ball, threw the paper away and said "this is ridiculous" before leaving!

A range of opportunities has arisen over the project to promote gender equality in local government.

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) briefing *Gender Justice: Key to Achieving the Millennium Development Goals* calls on urgent action in four areas that are critical to both gender justice and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). One of which is increasing women's voice in decision-making. Full participation of women in society, starting from autonomy in the household, to a voice in all political processes at community, national and international levels (UNIFEM 2011).

The briefing identifies 'local government [can] provide opportunities for women to participate in decision-making at community and district levels' and 'supporting women's participation in local politics and community organising can help to increase women's decision-making within the home, and also prepare and encourage women to participate [and be] more visible in their communities and political decision making' (UNIFEM 2011).

During 2010, to coincide with the Year of Women in Local Government, LGPro Maribyrnong emerging leaders group undertook research and developed a presentation on women in MCC. This was presented at branch management team meeting and generated conversation about the representation of women in senior leadership positions at MCC.

After this presentation Andrew Day spoke at length with me about future possibilities of the respect and equity work looking at the organisational structure, policies and practice. Exploring how we can better enable women access to senior management positions and flexible working practices, which reject the mainstream, traditional career trajectory as being continuous and linear. What pathways are available into traditionally gendered roles (e.g. maternal and child health is seen as a female role and the work centre as a space for men) and ways to address gendered pay inequities across MCC. There is a lot of opportunity at Council to pursue this work further, but at the time, we were unable to pursue these avenues due to time constraints and commitment to other projects. Andrew left the Council not long after this, which also affected the leadership readiness for some of the more radical aspects of this thinking.

In 2010 the Coordinator of Library Services organised a *Women of Change* event to celebrate the Year of Women in Local Government. The event was held 26 October at the library, with leading women talking about how they succeeded in instigating change in MCC and the community. The Mayor sent invitations to key partners in the community. Twenty people attended the evening. Guest speakers included Sika Kerry OAM Footscray's first female Councillor (1972-1977), Noelene Duff, CEO, Whitehorse City Council and Cr Sarah Carter former Deputy Mayor. The event was supported by an art exhibition of women in local government curated by the historical society and displayed on the walls in the library.

This event was initiated and ran independently of the R&E project but is suggestive of the enabling culture across Council. The libraries are very responsive and supportive of promoting local issues, events and activities that enhance community life. Following this event, Jane began to work with the library to put together a display of materials, which promote gender equity. This work is still underway. It will include a number of such books the library have acquisitioned on suggestion from the SCHP team over the last two years.

MCC also supported two tables to attend the LGPro dinner to promote and support the Year of Women in Local Government. These tables were filled with 20 male and female staff from across the organisation. We sent out invitations via the Branch Managers to either attend or invite their staff. The tables were paid out of the CEO budget as another practical, financial demonstration of support for women in local government.

4.2.3 Preventing violence against women short course

Developing the workforce through training was a strategy of the project. The VicHealth PVAW short-course provided this opportunity. The two-day course was held in March at MCC for attendees from across the western region. The course introduced participants to:

- Nature and impact of violence against women on individuals and communities
- Underlying causes and factors that contribute to high rates of violence against women
- Case for prevention and for developing strategies that can stop violence against women before it occurs
- A framework for understanding how to address violence against women and to create environments that are safe, inclusive and supportive of women
- Promising practice examples, tools and resources in doing prevention across sectors and settings
- Approaches to project planning and in evaluating what works in PVAW.

Georgie identified and invited potential participants who had shown an interest in this work. The WRWG and SCHK team were also invited. Nine people attended from different departments across MCC, including the Customer Services Manager, Youth Services Counsellor, Strategy and Economic Development staff, the Maternal and Child Health and Sports and Leisure staff.

There were mixed responses to the delivery and length of the training but feedback from everyone registered the importance of specific PVAW training. “While I appreciate that there are constraints around how to most effectively deliver this information ie: peoples availability, time taken out of other work, it ends up undermining just how important this issue is. For me, it needs to be compulsory attendance (for at least some staff), where participants need to commit to the whole course and not just parts of it. I witnessed people arriving late, leaving early across the two days and it felt disheartening” (Lynch 2011).

Chris talked in his interview about how valuable he found the articulation of the underlying causes, which lead to violence against women. “They offer tangible areas for action and explain what we can do to prevent violence against women. The determinants of health... (are) excellent. I felt it gave me a greater capacity to put what I’m sometimes talking about into a more understandable context. Justifies what I’m doing and where I’m coming from in my work... looking at how social, economic, cultural and physical environments impact on and advantage or disadvantage a person depending on their gender, is important and a real opener (Lynch 2011). “The texting against violence project was certainly developed from considering and implementing these principles” (Lynch 2011).

“In group work with males... when addressing the issue of violence against women (or unhealthy relationships) it is often centred around how their gender has historically privileged them... to explore the idea of positive healthy relationships the participants need to explore their false sense of entitlement and embrace the ideas of equality in all aspects of life, including work, home, sport etc. For either gender it’s about questioning and challenging ‘traditional roles’ and how these limit their potential to have equally satisfying and fulfilling lives” (Lynch 2011).

The short course cannot be attributed all the credit for Chris’s work approach. Chris talked about his personal and political belief in social justice as always underpinning his work with young people. What the short course did offer was a tangible framework, language, evidence base and network of other practitioners, which he could place his work in.

Three months later, I held two follow up sessions with participants to talk about how they have been able to implement the learning from the workshop, reflect on the goal they set in the personal action plan completed at the end of the second day and identify any linkages between the R&E project and other work going on at MCC.

Being relatively new to the position, this also provided me a good opportunity to meet with staff outside my team, interested in PVAW. I caught up with those who could not attend the meeting via email and informally in the following weeks.

I developed a *Maribyrnong PVAW – What You Said* document to guide our discussion. I used the personal action plans completed by participants, advice sought from VicHealth and preliminary informal conversations I had with the short course participants. The identified opportunities uncannily reflected the R&E project plan activities and goals. This may be

because the participants were aware (subconsciously or not) of activities already happening across MCC. Also, the activities in the R&E plan fit the current Maribyrnong culture of practice. Given the R&E plan and short course is based on the VicHealth framework for action, the consistency in approach to PVAW may be a reason for the resonance. This document assisted me in planning how to further work with teams across MCC.

This post short course meeting led to further meetings and opportunities to work with the Early Years team, Customer Services, Sports and Leisure and Youth Services:

- The Early Years Coordinator approached me about incorporating primary prevention into the 2010 early years action plan
- Knowing a short-term goal identified by the Customer Services Manager was to “promote the [PVAW] program through our customer service area”, I approached the Manager to display the family violence help cards on the front counter. This display is ongoing. In Council foyer a poster about family violence is always displayed and during the lead up to WRD, posters, ribbons and wristbands are for sale and the banner are all displayed
- A short goal for MAC was to display information. This has led to family violence cards made accessible at the front counter and during the lead up to WRD, ribbons and wristbands are for sale and the banner is displayed.

Table 3 Opportunities identified after PVAW short course

Opportunities
Incorporate PVAW activities into the 2010 Action Plan (team plans) Work more closely with the Community Planning & Advocacy team Advocate to existing alliances, networks and committees already involved in Induct new and existing staff with the Council policies and actions relating to prevention of violence against women Ensure there is a prevention focus in the Council Plan Contribute to key events such as WRD Create awareness in existing and new Council programs Frame prevention work within the Right to Respect: state wide plan Use evidence and statistics to demonstrate the impact of violence against women Plan projects which are manageable and have short term goals to gain traction

4.2.4 Political leadership

Working with Councillors and the EMT has been an important way of gaining strategic support and leadership on the respect and equity work. Writing reports to Council has kept PVAW on the agenda, raised awareness, educated and inspired the formal leaders of the organisation. Before 2008, PVAW was presented to Council six times. During the R&E project we formally presented to Council fourteen times.

Council reports must to be endorsed by EMT before they go to a Council meeting. These reports are a good way to test ideas and language and gauge senior management response and connection to our work. When a report is on the agenda at an EMT meeting and sent to Council, this is a good sign. When endorsed by Council it's a great indicator demonstrating significant Council commitment.

Email from Andrew Day, Acting Community Wellbeing General Manager “Congratulations to all who contributed to the reports...five Councillors spoke to the notice of motion regarding the prevention of violence against women... a fantastic illustration of the Community Wellbeing Branch's contribution to the City.”

Councillors have been exposed to PVAW messages through attending external events, forums and conferences related to PVAW. The internal and external messages are consistent and mutually reinforcing. For further detail on these presentations see appendix 8.5 PVAW Council reports 2006-2010.

At the beginning of the R&E project, Georgie submitted a successful budget request to Council stating to “continue the initial work of the GLOVE project by developing a further three year action plan aimed at preventing violence against women.” We received \$5000 for the three years of the project. This money supported PVAW resource development, training and attendance to conferences for staff connected to the project. Throughout the project, MCC have provided financial support for PVAW work from discretionary budgets across the four departments of Council.

MCC endorsed the Victorian Local Government Women’s Charter in July 2008. By endorsing the charter, Council demonstrated commitment to “recognising the need for increased women’s participation in the key decision making forums in the community and in democratic governance”. Through the charter Council committed to the following principles:

- Gender equity - that women and men have an equal right to be representatives in local governments, committees and decision-making positions.
- Diversity - the inclusion of different experiences and perspectives in local governments and community decision-making strengthens local democratic governance and helps build cohesive communities. Council and communities encourage and welcome the participation of all women.
- Active citizenship - local governments will work with the community to increase the numbers and participation of women in public life, so that decision making more clearly represents and reflects the interests and demographics of communities.

We applied to the Victorian Local Government Women’s Charter Awards for Local Governments and their communities in 2008 and 2010. We were awarded for ‘outstanding contribution in supporting and championing women’s participation in local government’ in 2008. In 2010 we were awarded ‘recognising your important contribution to women’s participation in local government through gender equity, diversity of women and supporting their active citizenship’. Awards have also been a great way to raise the profile of respect and equity work.

In May 2010 two female Councillors attended the Australian Women’s Health Conference in Hobart along with Georgie, Kate, a young woman nominated through the Young Persons Independent Network and myself.

In 2010 I attended my first Council meeting to present a report on PVAW. It was here I first witnessed the impact of the project on Council, the leadership of MCC and the organisational prioritisation of this work. This narrative captures my experience of Councils leadership in PVAW at this meeting:

My first council meeting

“Don’t forget to address all questions and comments through the chair.”

“Ill be asking questions?”

“No! No! The Councillors may ask you questions, just pay attention, keep calm.”

My hands were sweating. But I was practicing sitting up really straight and really still. So I couldn’t wipe them anywhere.

Like a mantra, in my head, I repeated everything everyone had been saying all day.

“Wait until your report is called up. Take a seat at the table. Briefly outline the purpose of the report. *If*, the chair asks you to otherwise the manager will speak to it. Don’t worry, we have put up heaps of reports on preventing violence against women before, reinforce why it is so important and relevant to focus on violence as a *gendered* issue. This affects women disproportionately and Council have a role to play in coordinating this prevention work...stick to the evidence, you’ll be fine’...

“Wait.”

Argh. I’m next after this one. I lean over and write on my colleague’s notebook ‘Now?’ She squeezes my hand, smiles and reassures me. “Yep”.

“...Really important issue”

“Thanks. Well done, thanks for coming to the meeting tonight, great work...”

“Yes, yes, Maribyrnong has a key role in preventing violence against women.”

“Crucial”

“...Leaders in this space”

The Councillors and managers around the table smile at me and all nod.

After making it out the room without tripping and breaking the spell. I rush down the hallway with a couple of others as we all wildly and silently exclaim! We get back to our office, laughing and out of breath.

“I thought I was going to freeze!”

“That was unbelievable – they love it, I think they really get this work!” “No objections, no concerns. Just support. We are going to be the first Council to endorse the regional action plan!”

Waiting for the taxi to take me home to bed I contemplate next week. My second ever Council meeting. I can’t wait for the public meeting. Where Councillors, in front of media, community members and each other will speak about preventing violence against women – proudly and publically!

4.2.5 Understanding and influencing council policy

During the R&E phase one the SCHP team identified a number of opportunities to influence policy and strategic planning across Council. By slowly embedding a gender lens through Council policy and planning, we have been able to work toward ensuring there is a structural mandate for including women and the consideration of women’s experience in all Council business. The formal demonstration of commitment communicates to staff, the community and Council partners that we are striving for gender equity and consider violence against women unacceptable.

Embedding these principles through Council policy, positions PVAW as an organisational issue, requiring an organisational response. Rather than being reliant on individual interest and drive to generate action.

As part of our participation in the GLOVE Project, a policy audit was undertaken in 2007 to assess the extent to which the determinants of violence against women were addressed in key Council policies. This review was extended in 2008 to focus on our broader organisational policy environment. The review involved analysing each policy using a series of questions:

- How the policy specifically addresses the prevention of violence against women?
- How the policy broadly addresses prevention of violence against women?
- Gaps where prevention of violence against women could be specifically addressed?

- Gaps where prevention of violence against women could be broadly addressed?

The review findings led to the development of a stand-alone organisational family violence policy officially launched by the CEO on White Ribbon Day 2009. This policy builds upon and reinforces the existing organisational development policies by recognising and addressing the impact of family violence and specifically, violence against women.

The former Organisational Development Manager Andrew Day (also a member of the WRWG) took the lead in driving this work and writing the policy. The MCC Organisational Development template along with the Women's Health Victoria policy was used to guide the policy writing. The relationship between Andrew and the SCHP team was strengthened through this work and Andrew began to emerge as a key advocate. The former Community Wellbeing General Manager Jenny McMahon (who had long supported PVAW work in Council) and the SCHP team provided advice to Andrew with revision of the policy. The policy was taken to the Staff Consultative Committee for endorsement and then presented to EMT in November 2009.

The policy details the procedures available to MCC employees who are victims of family violence including available support services, leave options, payroll changes, performance management and the disciplinary actions for employees who commit acts or threats of family violence. It outlines the responsibilities for managers of employees who are victims of family violence to develop appropriate safety plans and to ensure that any required support services are provided to employees.

Council is committed to being a workforce and community leader in the prevention of violence against women:

- To developing policy and programs which shift attitudes and behaviours within the community
- To promoting an organisational culture that does not tolerate or condone violence
- To promoting the policy extensively throughout the organisation

Council has a powerful role in influencing behaviours and attitudes within the workplace and positively contributing to creating a violence-free community by modeling non-violent, equitable and respectful gender relations.

White Ribbon Day 2009 CEO Organisational Family Violence policy launch speech notes

The policy has been promoted as an example of whole of organisation approach to PVAW at local and international external speaking events, on staff information boards, on the MCC intranet and internet site, at White Ribbon events and on the Networking and Capacity Building website. It has been used as an effective tool to leverage further action internally and externally. I have responded to numerous requests to share the policy with organisations and local governments considering developing a policy.

In 2009 MCC was the first Victorian local government to integrate the MPHP into the Council Plan (2009-2013). For more information see appendix 8.6 Background to integrating the MPHP into the Council Plan. This leadership and innovation provided the opportunity to mainstream PVAW into key Council planning documents. Prior to the integration, the Council plan did not refer to equity, equality or gender or articulate a determinant of health approach.

The integration acknowledges that every area of Council has a contribution to make toward positive health and wellbeing outcomes for all community members. This commitment puts people first and recognises that wellbeing is achieved when everyone has - and feel they have - the ongoing opportunities to reach their full potential. It gave the determinants of health, including gender, a new primacy to inform integrated strategies and provided a high level

mandate to create and develop internal processes and relationships to progress this integration across the whole organisation.

‘By doing this (integrating the MPHP into the Council Plan) we acknowledge whatever actions we undertake – whether collecting rubbish, planting trees, constructing new buildings or providing maternal and child health care – contribute to the wellbeing of our community’ (MCC 2009)

Subsequently the Council Plan has been a significant enabling tool for the R&E project. By reorienting the focus of health and wellbeing planning and embedding it within the Council Plan, MCC are able to better plan, implement and evaluate PVAW.

The strategic direction of the four-year Council Plan is realised through the Annual Action Plan. During the project, the annual plans have included a number of PVAW and gender equity actions. Each year the SCHP team have developed suggested actions based on the R&E plan. We have then advocated for the actions to be discussed at branch management meetings, endorsed and then given to EMT for consideration. The ongoing support of each level of management across the departments is necessary to ensure PVAW related actions are included in the annual plans. This support is sought and maintained through the integrity of SCHP internal relationships.

The PVAW actions have increased the visibility of the project objectives across Council departments. They provide another opportunity for PVAW reporting in Council from a department other than community wellbeing. Each year the organisational development team compile quarterly and an annual report to Council on the outcomes of the annual actions. The team contact those responsible, for an overview on the process and impacts of the action and any details interesting or important to Councillors. This information is then compiled and presented in the Annual Report.

In 2008-2009 before the integration, only one action included the word gender in the Annual Action Plan. This was in relation to the GLOVE project, ‘Support to resource and support the following networks, including the Gender and Local Government project’ (MCC 2008).

No actions throughout the plan were gendered (none referred explicitly to women or girls). Nor did they refer to equity, equality, preventing violence against women or family violence. It should be noted though, this 2008-2009 GLOVE action ensured MCC continued involvement in regional PVAW networks which eventually led to the development of a western region action plan, discussed further 4.2 and 4.2.9.

In 2009-2010 the SCHP team included six actions across a range of strategy areas with the view to mainstreaming PVAW across MCC. The SCHP team involvement in integrating the MPHP provided the opportunity to heavily advocate for the inclusion of so many PVAW actions in the Council plan. The across department management support also ultimately meant these actions were successfully included.

The actions ranged from supporting networks and partnerships, implementing communication strategies to raise awareness of violence against women, implementing training around diversity (including gender and sexuality), proposing a permanent site for the Women’s Circus and working collaboratively with departments across MCC to effect positive culture change.

In 2010-2011 four actions were included. The strong networks and partnerships MCC had made by this time, laid weight to the SCHP team advocacy for the action “Implement Council related actions in the Western Region Strategy for the Prevention of Violence Against Women” (Western Region Strategy later became PVT). This continued public demonstration to working together with the western region on an evidence-based set of actions legitimates Councils work. It demonstrates MCC understanding of the important role of local government in PVAW, a whole of community partnership response and working from a local evidence base.

In 2011-2012 a number of PVAW related actions were proposed to be included. At the time of developing the actions, the SCHP team were in a state of uncertainty around continued PVAW

funding and capacity. MCC also had recently appointed a new EMT who were not as familiar with the previous PVAW work undertaken. Given these circumstances we were unable to include specific PVAW related actions. For full details of the annual Council actions see appendix 8.7 PVAW Council annual actions 2008-2011.

The Maribyrnong Story is a web-based resource developed by MCC to support the integration of the MPHP into the Council Plan. The resource uses a determinant of health approach to explore and describe the foundations necessary for health and wellbeing and the connections to the work of every area of Council. It is designed to support staff to recognise the links between their work and wellbeing outcomes for the community and to better integrate policies, strategies and programs with other areas of Council. It provides demographic data and an updated list on MCC services and initiatives. It is laid out in a series of chapters. See www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au

- Life needs: Requisites for health
- Social and community life: belonging
- Liveability: Environments for health

The SCHK team coordinated the development of the Maribyrnong Story. The long standing involvement of the team with Council's PVAW work was critical in ensuring that gender was included as a determinant of health and mainstreamed through the story. Gender mainstreaming is:

'...the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.' (International Labour Organization 2011)

Including gender in the Maribyrnong Story is an important strategy to ensuring that when staff use the resource, for example, to assist in writing an external funding application or develop a program plan, gender is considered. This is another opportunity for staff to become familiar with the concept and use of gender as a determinant of health. The impacts of the Maribyrnong story and the integration of the MPHP into the council plan are currently being evaluated by the SCHK team.

In 2009 the SCHK team included in the annual community survey, a series of questions about community attitudes towards gender equity and violence against women from the *National Survey on Community Attitudes to Violence Against Women* see appendix 8.8 Annual community survey PVAW questions 2009. The community survey measures community satisfaction with a range of MCC services and determines emerging issues and priorities, which subsequently inform policy and program development. It is a requirement under the local government act for councils to measure their performance. In addition to the standard questions on satisfaction with Council services, facilities and infrastructure, a number of health and wellbeing questions are included annually.

We intended to repeat the questions in the 2010 survey, as a way to measure change in community attitudes. This did not happen, since we decided our efforts were better placed building internal capacity and the R&E project did not have a whole of community impact on attitudes and behaviours. No change in community attitudes can therefore be measured.

The survey results are shared across the organisation each year. The intention is, these will inform the planning and become the priorities reflected in the annual actions. We did not measure the impact of the inclusion of the questions for either community or Council staff. We did not use the community comments as an advocacy tool for the inclusion of PVAW annual actions. Successful inclusion of these questions does however demonstrate both high level and

across team commitment to the issue as there are many competing issues vying for inclusion in the annual survey.

4.2.6 Nested approach: Council's connection with the community

The R&E project has engaged staff within Council and built individual and organisational capacity to incorporate PVAW into core business, including work with community, partners and networks. External PVAW events we have been involved in, youth programs, community grants and PVAW funded project initiatives have all provided opportunities and had significant impact on capacity, culture change and embedding commitment. The VicHealth framework identifies a range of settings for action. Settings is another word for groups, or formal sites, people connect through or identify with. Working through the settings

is a way to reach population groups and engage with them in a way that is tailored to that setting.



Photo 20 Western region White Ribbon Leaders Lunch

In 2009, MCC attended the Northern Region Local Government PVAW Leaders Lunch, a working lunch to discuss the important community issue of violence against women. This was the first PVAW Leaders Lunch held in Victoria and provided the template for the very successful western region lunch.

The northern Leaders Lunch event was organised by Darebin City Council through the Local Government PVAW Networking and Capacity Building project. Guests numbering 197 from across the seven local governments in the north (Banyule, Darebin, Hume, Moreland, Nillumbik, Whittlesea and Yarra), as well as Maribyrnong from the west attended. MCC was invited to share the learning and replicate the event in the west. Approximately 85% of attendees were from local government including eight Mayors, 12 Councillors, six CEO's and approx 25 Directors/General Managers. Other guests included faith leaders, community and health services, police and emergency services, sporting league representatives and Aboriginal leaders.



Photo 21 Cr Sarah Carter and Cr Martin Zakharov at Leaders Lunch

Four members from the SCHP team facilitated table discussions and scribed the conversations. This event had a significant impact on the WRWG, who came back from it very keen to hold an event similar in the west. The WRWG wore their t-shirts at both events, which raised a lot of interest and generated a positive inclusive vibe.

The event served as a key moment where Council really began to see themselves as leaders in this field and the benefits of working together regionally. Similarly, following the western Leaders Lunch, MCC staff have since advocated for a Maribyrnong Leaders Lunch. These Leaders Lunches have rallied those from MCC who attend and fostered more nuanced, locally specific actions. A MCC Leaders Lunch is now being pursued outside the work of the R&E project.

The western Leaders Lunch was held on 14 July 2010. Local governments and community leaders gathered at the Moonee Valley racecourse. 150 community leaders attended. The lunch workshopped grass-roots solutions and brought together a growing contingent of Mayors, Councillors, managers and council staff interested in finding creative ways to prevent violence against women.

The event was organised through the Local Government Network and Capacity Building Project, led by VicHealth and Darebin City Council in partnership with the seven western region councils. I was closely involved in the planning for the lunch and I developed the evaluation questions with Erin Richardson from WHW. I drew on the MCC experiences and learning from the northern Leaders Lunch to inform my involvement.

The momentum and political will to prevent violence against women in the western region is strong and growing. At the recent Western region White Ribbon Leaders Lunch, 98% of attendees supported their organisation endorsing the region wide action plan.

Western Region PVAW Working Group 2010

Speakers included the Hon. Maxine Morand, former Minister for Women's Affairs, Brad Johnson, Western Bulldogs Football Club Captain and White Ribbon Ambassador, Moonee Valley Mayor Cr Shirley Cornish and Jen, a survivor advocate from the survivor advocate program at Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service Victoria.

"Tackling this issue head on is important not only for this generation, but so that our children grow up experiencing healthy, respectful relationships and know that violence against women is completely unacceptable," Brad Johnson said. This was picked up by the Channel 10 local news and shown on TV that evening.

By seating people according to their area of work, the workshop aimed to facilitate the sharing of ideas to implement primary prevention in the different spheres of work. On each table there were seven guests along with one expert scribe to capture discussion. Staff from the SCHP team used their experience from the northern lunch to facilitate and scribe these tables. Others working on PVAW in western region councils also scribed at tables.



Photo 22 (l-r) Jen, survivor advocate, Brad Johnson and Maxine Morand

More than 20 staff attended from Maribyrnong including the Deputy Mayor, Councillors, Managers, WRWG, a SCHP student on placement from Deakin University, staff from Organisational Development, Youth and Maternal Child Health Services, Aged and Disabilities Services Infrastructure, Libraries, Arts and Culture, Leisure and Open Space, City Design and Placemaking, Media and Communications, Traffic and Local Laws, the work centre and the Partnerships Manager. This was a larger representation than any other Council or organisation and demonstrates commitment from all the departments across Council.

Councillor Carter conceived of the idea to develop a public statement demonstrating Councils commitment to PVAW at the Leaders Lunch. In December 2010 I presented a report to Council, to develop this statement with the community. Our Community Planning and Advocacy Manager seconded Jess Dean from the Media and Communications team for a day a week over six months to implement this project working closely with the SCHP team, WRWG and me.

Have Your Say is a MCC community engagement project targeted at community leaders from across the five key settings – education and training, workplaces, media, arts and popular culture, local government, health and community services and sports and recreation. Two community conversations were held to help develop a range of public statements that will form part of MCC approach to combat violence against women and promote gender equity.

The primary objective of this project is to build the capacity of the Maribyrnong community to recognise and utilise the right to gender equity in their day-to-day interactions. This will in turn decrease the gendered violence and threat of violence women currently experience in the Maribyrnong municipality. The overwhelming involvement in the project internally and externally demonstrates a readiness and keen interest in achieving gender equity.

Jess engaged external consultants to facilitate the two community conversations. Both were held at town hall, one in the morning, and one in the evening. Jess used Council and the R&E project networks to distribute invites and followed these up with targeted phone conversations. Each event had over 20 participants. The Community Planning and Advocacy budget contributed \$10,000 to support the project cost.

The conversations explored opinions, ideas and stories about experiences of gender equity and inequity. We collected these words, concepts and images as resonations and reflections of our community. The Mayor spoke at and participated in both conversations and Peter from WRWG presented at both conversations about his personal commitment to PVAW, passionately encouraging others to get involved.

Jess engaged a professional photographer to take portrait shots of every one involved. These will be used to develop a pictorial accompaniment to enhance the statements and will be matched with written visions of gender equitable, safe, inclusive, respectful communities written by each participant.

After the event a Council staff member left a post-it thank you note on Jane's desk (Jane facilitated the conversation on one of the tables). "Thank you for the session last night. It was really interesting. It's great to have such open discussions about gender inequality and violence where outcomes and dialogue is based on positive and not just the doom and gloom. Thanks again. P.S I would be interested in participating in other opportunities in the future."

To follow up with participants and those who were unable to attend, but were interested in being involved, a blog was set up and a survey emailed through the networks. These gauged that draft messages worked and where people imagine seeing the messages displayed (across the municipality, for example on city markers, spoken at the beginning of Council speeches, as posters in sports clubs etc). What form they take and where and how they will be used will be dependant on community input and feedback. This survey is underway during the writing of the report. To date over 150 people from a wide variety of backgrounds have responded.

A significant impact of the project has been the work with young people in Maribyrnong. MCC Phoenix Youth Services team works closely with young people (both in schools and informal settings) to promote non-violent means of conflict resolution and positive gender relations. "There has been no specific funding of PVAW work, it's just something that has been, over



Photo 23 Publicity for Text Without Violence

time, incorporated into the delivery of existing programs, projects, events, activities etc” (Lynch 2011).

Chris Lynch, Youth Counsellor, White Ribbon Ambassador and Chair of the WRWG has been a strong advocate for this work and made significant contributions to embedding PVAW through the youth services. It cannot be understated the incredible impact working with young people has had inspiring staff across MCC and in the sector. We gave away 100 WRD hip-hop CD's within a fortnight of the event. Specific programs at Phoenix that address the determinants include:

- Health and wellbeing programs in schools ie: sexual education, bullying, general health, young people and rights
- Girls only programs for social and relationship development in a safe environment
- Festivals and events that promote safe, fun and positive activities ie: FreeZa
- Basketball and soccer programs which promote positive behaviours
- Street surfer bus, which aims to reduce anti-social behaviour and boredom
- Induction program for new arrivals at the Western English Language School which includes health and wellbeing, rights, relationships with the police and the promotion of positive behaviours
- Development of the school banners program with secondary schools to develop positive messages and images about respectful relationships
- Texting Against Violence Project
- Respect, Courage and Integrity Hip-Hop project.

In May 2011 Chris gave a presentation at a state youth services conference about involving young people in WRD. This presentation was well received by the audience. Chris and I talked before he wrote his presentation, about the synchronicity between the R&E project, youth work and how his involvement with the WRWG has provided opportunities to work with young people and PVAW. Chris' leadership is another significant unexpected impact of the warm environment and culture at Council created and supported through the R&E project. Chris describes the elements of his approach to working with young people:

- Collaboration - involving young people in an existing project (linking to Council WRWG)
- Flexibility - demonstrate a project has meaning and is not tokenistic
- Engage - recognition so that young people see their work is valued
- Confidence - negotiate
- Honesty - work with young people to shape up projects they are interested in
- Ownership – so they see the importance of their contribution

Table 4 Advantages to involving young people in White Ribbon Day

Advantages for young people	Advantages for the community
Empowerment	Empowered young people
Relevance to their life	A project that is relevant to the needs of the community
Motivation	Belonging/connectedness – enhances individual and community relationships
Ownership	Contribution – the community gets anti-violence project/product
Belonging/connectedness to community, friendships	Development of skills/capacity – young people more likely to stay in community and use these skills
Development of skills/capacity	

The Looking Glass is a joint project between Victoria Police and MCC run by Phoenix. It is supported by a collaborative partnership involving Victoria Police, Phoenix Youth Services, Braybrook Community Centre, WHW, WRHC, Westgate Community Initiatives Group,

Melbourne City Mission, RecWest and YMCA. This project is another example of work happening through MCC youth programs, which responds to the key determinants of violence against women.

The 10-week project ran in 2010 and was for 15 young women between the ages 15-20 years. The Looking Glass project aims to strengthen positive relationships between local young women and the police, particularly those who are from newly settled communities or who may be at risk. It is underpinned by the philosophy of being, belonging and becoming. The project provided a positive and supportive environment, where participants were able to gain life skills and confidence and a stronger sense of self, acceptance of self and strengthened connections to the community.

A large mosaic was created by the young women and displayed in the Council town hall foyer and at the phoenix centre Splash gallery. Individual glass mosaics were also produced which tell the unique journeys of each young woman. Guest speakers attended the sessions to chat with the young women about life issues such as body image, family and peer relationships, and general wellbeing in themes such as health, hygiene and nutrition.

In March 2011 the Phoenix held an International Women's Day art exhibition in the Splash Gallery showcasing the achievements and talents of inspirational women in Maribyrnong. The WRWG rescheduled the location of their meeting to the youth centre, so that the group could have a chance to see the exhibition. WRWD member emailed to the group asking, "Just wondering whether we should schedule our next WRWG meeting on the 17th at Phoenix so the working group can see the current exhibition of local women for Women's Day in the Splash Gallery?"



Photo 24 Women's Day Splash Gallery

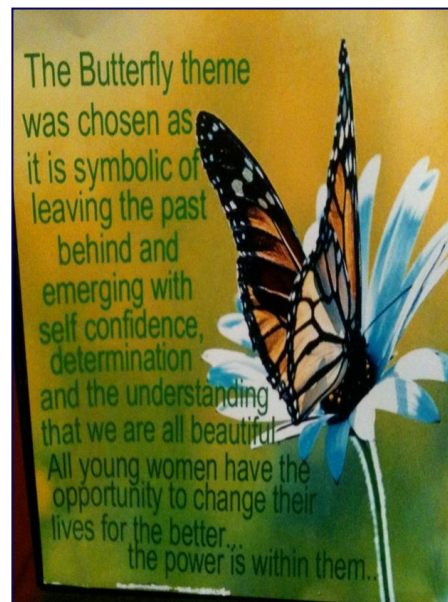


Photo 25 Section of Women's Day Splash Gallery

Phoenix and the Leisure and Open Space team successfully nominated two young people for their PVAW work for the 2011 Civic Award. The award ceremony was held on 26 January 2011. These nominations were done independently of the R&E project. These were featured in the Maribyrnong leader 8 February 2011. The nominations are an impact of the project and demonstrate how integral PVAW has become to teams across Council.

"I nominated this person because they were involved in both the anti violence projects for WRD, the hip hop CD and Texting Against Violence. The young person involved demonstrated real commitment to both projects and the issue. He was also very supportive and positive influence on other young people in the program" (Lynch 2011).

“It was a pretty straight forward process, filling out some forms, and obtaining some signatures and writing up a bit of a profile about the young people and why they are being nominated” (Lynch 2011). Awards like this are an enormous boost for a young person’s confidence. Young people need to be acknowledged for their participation and commitment. The public recognition that an award affords them means that the broader community take young people seriously and they see that young people have something important to say and that they do take action if they are supported to do so. It is also inspirational to other young people. It’s the leadership potential of this young person that influenced my nomination. Does he see himself as a leader, at this stage, probably not, but I do and I let him know that and encourage him to seek out opportunities and continue to stand up and be counted” (Lynch 2011).

The Community Services Group Award went to Footscray Hockey Club (Junior). Run by a workforce of 90 volunteers, the Footscray Hockey Club is the second largest hockey club in Melbourne. With playing members ranging from five to 70 years old, the club is proud of its emphasis on equality for female players. The club has been awarded the Sue Hounslow Trophy for providing the strongest junior girls program in Victoria and has an active school promotion program, specialist training, free equipment hire for disadvantaged families and free come and try days.

Young Citizen of the Year award went to Sanjana Preeti Kumar. A Bachelor of Youth Studies student at Victoria University and a Phoenix Youth Centre Management Committee volunteer, Sanjana is a strong advocate for young people. She supports two dance groups, Jungle City and Diversity Dancers, who encourage young people to be the best they can be. Sanjana is also a mentor for Council’s Hip Hop program.

The Mayoral Award went to Oti-Annan Willoughby. Oti is a role model and vocal spokesperson for WRD’s message of eliminating violence against women. Oti is involved in Council’s Hip Hop program and wrote lyrics to the rap Respect, Courage and Integrity that was performed at a recent WRD event. He demonstrates professionalism and dedication and performs with passion and compassion and encourages those who feel less confident about performing.

In 2009 discussions were held between Community Projects team and Georgie about including a separate category to recognise and award women for their civic contributions. This was unsuccessful with the reasoning being ‘If we had a category for women, what about men?’ At the time it was decided energy was best spent on other projects and activities in the plan. Considering the positive recognition for PVAW work in 2011 awards and the nominations made without any direct influence from the SCHP team our efforts have been better spent building the capacity of teams across Council to celebrate the civic role of women independent of a category or requirement to do so.

In 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 MCC included a PVAW category in the community grants program. Through financial support, community grants are a great way of acknowledging the efforts and priorities of the community. These grass roots community groups are often flexible enough to respond to issues as they come up within the community. These groups *are* the community, independently forming around activities or issues they identify as relevant.

Community groups are community identified, mobilised leaders. Although people may attend school or work, they may not identify with or feel connected to this setting. Community groups are groups of people that are connected with each other. This is different from government-funded organisations funded to work with the community.

Georgie sat on the panel for the Council community grants and used this position to influence the inclusion of a PVAW category. The team sought applications from organisations and community groups to develop community projects with priority given to:

- Projects which seek to prevent violence against women before it occurs in the first instance
- Projects which seek to raise awareness and influence attitudes and behaviour towards women by promoting positive and healthy relationships

- Projects seeking to support changes in community settings such as schools, sporting clubs, faith communities and create environments which are safe and supportive for all community members and in particular women
- Well-developed and comprehensive projects that have demonstrated community support.

These grants and the inclusion of a specific PVAW category was reported in the Star on the 28 April 2009 media “preventing violence against women as one of the six categories including social support, healthy active communities, volunteerism, environment and arts and culture” funded by Council.

A lot of the applications we received were more tertiary focused ie: focusing on working with women after they have experienced violence. While this is beneficial work to fund the purpose of the grants were to prevent violence before it occurs by addressing the underlying causes which contribute to violence.

We realised that we cannot expect community groups who may not be health promotion trained to necessarily articulate their work within a prevention/determinants frame. Georgie had some preliminary conversations with WHW about how we could work together to support community groups in the future to better respond to the determinants of violence. Due to staff changes this work was not progressed but may be followed up through PVT.

We did not continue with the specific PVAW category in 2009-2010 however, 15 grants were given to groups that inadvertently addressed the determinants. While it important to structurally embed MCC intentions and action to PVAW, this demonstrates that informally this work is prioritised. A future consideration for Council may be to include a category on gender equality, given the inadvertent addressing of the determinants. For more information See appendix 8.9 2009-2010 community grants addressing one or more determinants of violence against women.

Table 5 PVAW community grants

Program	Group/Organisation
Speak Out – Preventing Violence Against Vietnamese Women	Australian Vietnamese Women’s Association
African Women’s Support Group	Centacare
Self-defence anti-bullying program	Western English Language School
Women’s Support Group	Vietnamese Community in Australia
Women Behind the Wheel	Sudanese Women on the Move
Sudanese Family Strengthening Project	Western Region Health Centre



“This project aims to achieve a better alignment between Vietnamese men’s current values, attitudes and behaviours with those of mainstream Australia. It will provide men with time out among other supportive men away from family pressure during the weekend. It will assist them to learn about ‘Aussie rules’, examine their current role as husband and father in the new social context and reflect on what to keep and what to abandon from their old ways.”

Australian Vietnamese Women’s Association Vietnamese Men’s Support Group

The Women’s Community Support Program provides social, recreational, living skills and educational opportunities to long-term rooming house residents to increase sustainability of tenancies, community and neighbourhood linkages and overall wellbeing. It also supports residents with drug, alcohol and mental health issues to feel more connected to their local community.

Wombat Housing and Support Services Women’s Community Support Program

During 2010 and 2011 the SCHP team had discussions with the Family Services team on ensuring the Maribyrnong child friendly city approach recognises and responds to the varied experiences of boy and girl children. These conversations were initiated and led by the Family Services team.

After the short-course follow up meeting, I met with Kate Waters and Grace Nicol, Early Years Facilitator to talk about girl’s experience of gender and how gender stereotypes play out on children from a young age. We discussed how a boy child may be allowed to play in the park after school but a girl child not. We discussed the perceived risks for girl children as opposed to boy children (sexual assault, becoming sexually active) and the perceived interests of and expected role of girl children. There is sometimes a perception that girls would rather be at home and boys outside adventuring.

In this way, the delineation of access to and participation in public space is often inadvertently gendered. We talked about the blind spots that can occur in practice and policy, which only considers children and assumes girls and boys similarly (are provided the opportunity to) experience space, physically and relationally.

After this conversation, Grace invited me to a team meeting to speak about PVAW. The manager of child and family services then invited me along to a family services presentation where Caroline Whitzman talked about how children use space and how it can be better designed to respond to their needs and approach.

In 2009 the SCHP team worked with the Family Services Manager to support a \$2500 budget bid (request for internal funding) to introduce Baby Makes 3 to Maribyrnong as part of the R&E project. A professional development workshop will be provided to the Maternal and Child Health team late 2011 by the Baby Makes 3 facilitator. The workshop will introduce the Baby Makes 3 program – a three-week group program for first time parents – and will cover topics including key principles underpinning the program, group activities and content, ways of working with first time parents to promote gender equality and strategies for building the Baby Makes 3 program into current services.

In 2009 the SCHP team also submitted a \$2500 budget bid for a joint project with the leisure and open spaces team to deliver Respect and Responsibility training for sports clubs. This request was successful and demonstrates financial support for respect and equity work. The

Everyone Wins VicHealth training will be delivered to football clubs across Maribyrnong late 2011.

‘The purpose of this initiative is to build on established relationships with sporting clubs to develop a suite of strategies to create a club environment that is safe, inclusive and supports gender equity. The project will allow a more intensive and tailored approach to be developed with sporting clubs who have an established relationship with Council and have expressed an interest in being involved. It will deliver a forum/series of training sessions for sporting clubs examining the development of codes of conduct, policies and the use of current tools and resources that are available.’ (Maribyrnong City Council 2010)

After becoming aware of the Moreland City Council gender in sports clubs work, the team have started collecting sex disaggregated data from clubs throughout the year, with a view to better understand how MCC sports facilities are being used. Previously this was only done when funding required it. This is a good example of how by sharing innovative policy and practice can encourage others to follow it is a broader impact of the momentum across Victoria local governments to PVAW (Torney 2011).

On 2 December 2009, Rebecca ran the Respect and Responsibility in Sports Clubs information seminar for local sporting clubs in Maribyrnong. Rebecca working closely with the Sport and Leisure team to invite the right people, ensuring the pitch of the presentation was right and coordinating RSVPs. The training was held in a regular meeting held between MCC and sports clubs. Without this support and established meeting time the training would not have been a success.

The first part of the session focused on respect and responsibility in sports clubs. This assisted clubs and explore how Council and they can work together to ensure clubs are more inclusive, respectful and provide a safe and welcoming environment for women. Luke Brennan, former Hawthorn and Sydney football player and current AFL Respect and Responsibility Program Facilitator spoke about the AFL’s Respect and Responsibility Program including impacts and benefits for sporting clubs. The second part of the seminar provided clubs with the opportunity to provide feedback, ask questions and discuss ideas or issues.

Thirty-nine people attended from 24 sports clubs. At this session a number of clubs indicated they would be interested in exploring what they can do to prevent violence against women. This gave impetus to the successful budget bid. Rebecca also used her experience from this session when developing the PVAW WRFL social marketing campaign with the western region local government PVAW prevention network (this network is discussed later in the chapter).

The network approached the WRFL who, envisioning the potential for aligned and strategic efforts referred the network to the leagues Women’s Football Foundation (WFF). The WFF and the network formed a partnership for 2010. The partnership’s work was decided through conversations between the WFF, the WRFVC, the network and the learning from previous work with sporting clubs. This initial piece of work was intended to raise the issue of PVAW in the sporting club environment and to be built on in subsequent years, depending implementation of associated work.

The partnership developed a social marketing campaign with PVAW as a theme for the WFF during 2010. This included distributing relevant PVAW information and resources in packs to all clubs during the Women in Football Weekend (8-9 May 2010). We used local print and online media opportunities to promote the PVAW theme and posted information about the partnership on the WRFL and the western region council’s websites. The partnership also developed family violence help cards based on the northern region family violence cards. The MCC Deputy Mayor launched the western region cards at the WFF night, a significant demonstration of the impact of MCC investment in the partnership.

Since then I have distributed over 3000 family violence help cards across 19 sites, including sports clubs, Footscray police station, community centres, employment, family, housing, legal

and family violence services, the town hall and DHS. At the time of writing this report, due to demand more cards are being printed and distributed across the western region.

In June 2011 Peter from the WRWG attending his local football club function started chatting to a board member of the WRFL. The work of Maribyrnong came up in conversation and they each agreed to speak to their respective colleagues about progressing some joint work between MCC and the WRFL for 2011-2012. This coincided with EMT expressing their desire to further pursue PVAW work with sporting clubs and MCC successful application for the PVAW in our community funding which will provide an opportunity for work with sports clubs.



Photo 26 Family violence help cards

Further conversations are now taking place and the Community Wellbeing General Manager and Kate are attending the WRFL board meeting in August 2011 to discuss future possibilities. While this work lies outside the scope of the R&E project, it demonstrates MCC reputation, commitment and the culture shift in Council supporting PVAW initiatives and opportunities.

“Our local Governments Preventing Violence Against Women Network has worked with the Western Integrated Family Violence committee to develop special wallet-sized referral cards for both men and women. These will be on display at all of the Western region clubs”

Deputy Mayors speech 19 July 2010

As a further way of supporting MCC partners to build their capacity to prevent violence against women, Nick Matteo, Manager for Community Planning and Advocacy has written a number of funding application support letters. An example of this is in September 2010 Nick wrote to the Department of Planning and Community Development in support of Australia Light Foundation application for a Women’s Leadership Grants. “The program aims to particularly engage women who identify as Muslim and feel isolated, disadvantaged or targeted in order to provide mentoring and leadership development. This project will build self esteem and confidence enabling women to feel more connected, build strong networks and enhance the diversity amongst Victoria’s female leaders.”

4.2.7 Building a local profile

Throughout the project we have worked with the MCC Media and Communications team to produce and promote media releases, promotional material at events and resources relevant to the project. Building a PVAW profile has had the dual impact of encouraging Council to become more involved and take on a leadership role in this work as well as influencing our relationship with others and their engagement to PVAW.

The Media and Communications team have increasingly approached me to generate media releases demonstrating the interest of the team and the normalised culture around discussing PVAW. This is an important impact of the project. To generate a media release usually we complete the media template and advocate to the team to write the release. The release is then sent to the Mayor for consideration and approval. A successful media release, one suggested by the Media and Communications team demonstrates a high level of awareness of the role of the media and Council in PVAW.

In December 2010 the Communications Manager invited and supported me to include 35,000 bookmarks in the Maribyrnong News residents pack. This is distributed to all households across the municipality. In January 2011, I was also invited to include WRD bookmarks in the Australia Day citizenship ceremony gift bags. These were both opportunities to communicate Councils commitment to PVAW, to the community and share family violence support service contact numbers on the bookmarks.

Each year we have been successful in having at least two media releases picked up by local media within the municipality. There are multiple benefits of media releases being turned into media stories. Approval by the Mayor means the issue is understood and endorsed publicly and it ensures Council are accountable to community. The media stories also compliment a range of R&E project strategies to positively influence attitudes internally and externally.

Crack down on home violence: “Mayor Michael Clarke said it was time the Council took a hard line against the issue. He said there was a strong need to change the social and cultural mindsets that condoned physically and emotionally abusing women”

Star Newspaper 21 April 2009

The mayors message In the Maribyrnong Leader 5/5/2009 opens with information about the PVAW showcase forum: “violence and fear of violence is seen as a major factor that prevents the full participation of citizens, particularly women, in public life...we all have a role to play in preventing violence against women – as community members we can all make a difference”

Maribyrnong Leader 5 May 2009 & www.themail.com.au 6 May 2009

In December 2009, the former Mayor wrote a letter to the editor in response to *The Facts on Domestic Violence* in the Maribyrnong Leader. It challenged violence supportive attitudes and demonstrated Council’s nuanced understanding of the complex causal factors and statistics of violence against women and recognised the role of Council in this work. ‘The burden of disease data is not a “rogue statistic” but an internationally accepted approach to estimating the impacts of health problems across a population...violence continues to be perpetrated by men against women and it takes many forms including threats, financial and emotional abuse, property damage, social isolation and behaviours which cause a person to live in fear. It is therefore, not just attitudinal change that is required, but behavioural change though addressing the biological, social, cultural, economic and political factors across a range of settings that combine to cause violence against women...Violence against women is an unacceptable reality in our community. Maribyrnong City Council is committed to becoming a violence free community.’ (Maribyrnong Leader 8 December 2009)

Respect and equity branding was developed to promote the themes for action and build the project profile. Graphic designers Isis and Pluto were engaged to do this because of their prior experience in developing branding for WHW *Building the Capacity of Organisations in the Western Region to Prevent Violence Against Women: A Guide to Health Promotion Action* fact sheets. Isis and Pluto have since been engaged by other organisations across Victoria to develop branding for primary prevention activities, demonstrating that within the PVAW sector the branding and designer has been interpreted as beneficial to promoting the messages.

Isis and Pluto were presented with background information on the project, including examples of work Council had already undertaken in this area, key definitions, an overview of the methodology of the project and branding criteria:

- Be inclusive of the community and have a community feel and not a corporate feel)
- Be inspirational
- Promote equal and respectful relationships between men and women
- Be in colour

- Be used on the MCC website, on the R&E plan (both electronic and hard copy), policy documents, calendar for staff (both electronic and hard copy), possibly as letter head, a banner, mugs etc
- Be used in conjunction with the VicHealth logo.

The target audience was considered to be MCC staff, Maribyrnong community, other local governments and community health organisations. Draft branding was mocked up and shared with MCC staff including EMT and WRWG for feedback. A final series of six single images and three collated images including variations of the six images together were endorsed.

This branding has been used on PVAW relevant web pages in PowerPoint presentations, on the family violence policy and on promotional material produced about the project such as handouts for presentations. It is also used in this report.

The unexpected rise in the White Ribbon profile and collateral developed by the WRWG has meant that the impact and ability to raise the PVAW profile through the R&E has been diminished. The impact of the WRWG provided a segue into the broader White Ribbon social marketing campaign. This has had subsequent benefits; the messaging resonates with men, it has international status, celebrity endorsement and the extensive media coverage means people easily identify and more readily accept the messages associated with the campaign.

When I began the project, I found the MCC reputation as a PVAW leader was established in the sector. Using MCC branding in public forums has served to further embed this credibility. It presents the image of solidarity and a whole of organisation commitment to PVAW.

MCC branding elevates the issue to the organisational level instead being seen as a stand-alone, discreet project of Council. This has been a significant finding and impact in the project. Using MCC branding, taking the MCC banner along to conferences and events and presenting the project using the MCC PowerPoint template have been key ways in promoting PVAW as a local government issue. The status and prestige of 'leader' is also an important way to further engage Councillor support. The more Council is recognised and praised as leaders, the more involved Council has become.

I have continued to use the R&E branding complementary to the MCC and White Ribbon branding. When speaking to people across Council and in the sector I have found it is the MCC name and White Ribbon working group, which is remembered in terms of this work, not the individual title of the project or the specific project branding.

I saw your "presentation to sporting clubs" on the local government prevention of violence against women site. I think it is just fantastic! Would you allow me to use some pages in my presentations to my local sporting clubs? I would of course acknowledge your Council as the author.

(Email from Health Promotion Practitioner Respectful Relationships Project Peninsula Health - Community Health 14 April 2011)

4.2.8 Networking and building capacity across Victoria

The state wide local government Networking and Capacity Building project has provided a high level LEAS Network to support Victorian PVAW, local government work. This project has provided an unexpected, but excellent platform to share Maribyrnong's respect and equity work. It has provided a website to share resources, connect with other projects and local governments and build the body of local knowledge and practice. I have used this website to promote a range of Maribyrnong tools and resources <http://www.lgpvaw.net.au/Home.aspx>.

The central point of reference to load our resources, access other resources and direct people who may be interested in learning more about PVAW in local government has had significant

impacts for MCC. It has allowed me to promote the R&E project and demonstrate the role local government can have in PVAW. I have shared the website with numerous people from other local governments who contact me to talk about the R&E work. I have directed academics, community health workers and people working in private business to the website, when they have shown an interest in knowing more about PVAW. In this way the website has raised the profile of the R&E project work. Many local governments and community health organisations have contacted me after they have seen MCC work there.

I cannot overstate how important a central resource point has been and will continue to be for the practice narrative, evidence, policy and program tools and general PVAW innovation in Victoria. The website, conference, Project Coordinator and LEAS network have all provided equally important elements to my work. I have learnt and been supported through the collegial atmosphere of the LEAS network. I have developed great working relationships and had access to resources through the website I otherwise would not have known existed.



Figure 6 Postcard from the *Everybody can ...* resource

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. It looks at the way these people are taking action to change attitudes and prevent violence. It was developed with the intention that the resource will, by reading others stories, encourage people to be inspired to take action in their own lives.

The idea was conceived by the SCHK team in response to the growing valuable body of material that documents effective prevention projects. Rather than duplicating any of this work, 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. We believe these stories are inspirational and 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.

Rebecca engaged a consultant from Kathy Wilson Consulting to develop the resource and Brendan Finn to provide the photography. MCC employees, community members, other local governments, businesses, faith communities and sporting clubs were the target audience. The booklet and postcards were launched at the WRD event 2009.

The stories considered how people have become involved, the skills and approaches they bring to the projects they have been involved with and the impact of the experience. They present a diverse profile of people and settings. The theme underpinning the stories is that each person can make a difference.

After informal conversations, invitations were sent to potential participants. Six people were selected based on previous relationships and engagement with PVAW through the R&E project and other partnership work with Council:

- Jenelle Kelly a police woman in a sports setting in Bendigo
- Ron Dumas a businessman in an industry setting in the western suburbs
- Graeme Cann a pastor in the City of Casey
- Nick Mazzarella a council officer at the City of Darebin
- Andrew Day a council officer at the City of Maribyrnong
- Minh Bui an Australian Vietnamese Women's Association worker working in the community in Maribyrnong.

Everyone was requested to sign Council consent forms to use the transcript from the two hour semi structured interviews to develop a full and brief version of their story, quotes and photographs to be used in promotional material associated with the project.

The booklet and postcards have been distributed across council and at PVAW events Council have been represented at. In November 2010 while Jane was working with the libraries, she unexpectedly noticed the postcard pinned up at a staff desk. This demonstrates the connection people have with the stories.

The resource is available on Council website and the Networking and Capacity Building website. When I interviewed Chris he thought they were "a great resource, but...it would be great to see an additional story included that reflects youth...I would certainly recommend a young person for this" (Lynch 2011). The stories are part of a wider culture shift at Council, which supports sharing experiences and prioritises individual stories.

I am fortunate to come from a loving family and have always lived in an environment where I have been free of the fear of any form of violence, however I know that for many people this isn't the case. I think that it is appalling that any female has to live in fear of violence and live with the reality that one in three will be a victim of violence at some point in their life, and particularly in a country that considers itself to be mature, developed, free and ultimately first world. I think it is up to men to stand up and say that we don't accept this as part of our society and that we can influence others in an attempt to make ours a society that is truly free, where women of all age, background, religion, cultural group, can feel an equal member of society and safe in any circumstance and in any environment.

Email from WRWG member 10 February 2011

4.2.9 Working in partnership

The activities in the R&E project have been guided by an understanding that work is best done with a collaborative and inclusive spirit. Through existing external and internal partnerships we have been able to advocate for primary prevention and the role of local government.

The networks in the table below have provided links to the community and a way of measuring the pitch and progress of the project. Our partners have provided experience, knowledge and advice to learn from. These networks have been instrumental in progressing this work and are referred to in the report. This section of the chapter will describe the central collaborative role, which the R&E project has played in the development of a regional action plan to prevent violence against women and in turn the impact this has had at Council.



Figure 7 PVAW networks and partnerships

The Western Region Local Government PVAW Network (the network) was initially established in 2006 to coordinate a Maribyrnong Week Without Violence initiative. This brought together local governments in the western region to deliver a series of workshops on preventing family violence. While this project had a finite time, the network continued to meet afterward to maintain dialogue on family violence prevention, share ideas and discuss further possible joint work.

In 2008-2010 members from the SCHP team provided secretariat support for the network. This ongoing role of a number of SCHP staff in the group served to build the knowledge and networks of the team to assist the MCC respect and equity work. The intention of the team involvement was to build the individual capacity of all team members as a way of embedding PVAW beyond the project period. This also meant that significantly more activities have happened during the project due to increased interest and support from the team. This has had considerable impact on the R&E project.

In June 2010 through a series of conversations, members reviewed the purpose and role of the network. We made the decision to subsume the network into the PVT network since both groups shared similar members and purpose.

Preventing Violence Together vision

To create communities, cultures and organisations in the western region that are non-violent, non-discriminatory, gender equitable and promote respectful relationships.

In 2008 through the Women’s Health West (WHW) Building the Capacity of Organisations in the Western Region to Prevent Violence Against Women: A Guide to Health Promotion Action project, feedback suggested that PVAW needed to be a priority at all levels of organisations to enable effective work to happen on the ground. The Health West PCP of which Maribyrnong is a partner formed The Health West PVAW Working Group to develop a strategy. WHW took a lead facilitating role and the group met bi-monthly over the next two years for rigorous discussion and strategy development. Rebecca was part of this group from the beginning of the R&E project.

Maribyrnong City Council

The release of a Right to Respect fuelled the growing momentum and prevention activity in the west. This along with changes in staff representation and the inclusion of Councils and organisations outside of the Health West catchment organically guided the project's ambition and evolution. The working group undertook extensive consultation with CEOs, Mayors, and Managers, Councillors and key staff in local government including MCC. Managers and key staff in community health settings as well as family violence prevention networks and the WIFVC were also engaged in the consultation process and content development.



Photo 27 PVT action plan at launch

PVT demonstrated the increased capacity of organisations, including MCC to understand, articulate and coordinate responses to PVAW and formalises the ongoing collaborative work in the west. PVT is a fantastic example of a truly collaborative, ongoing partnership. Experience at MCC due to the Respect and Equity project meant we were able to more readily and practically engage in this partnership.

During 2010 Georgie and I had extensive involvement with WHW in guiding the strategic direction, drafting, editing and advocating for the proposed action plan. We drew from our experience working on the R&E project, working with Office of Women's Policy (OWP) to develop A Right to Respect and MCC PVAW past research and practice. I was part of the subcommittee to select the communication strategy (a class of RMIT students submitted proposals as part of their course work) and to plan the launch of the action plan. The strategic thinking involved in PVT development built Georgie and my capacity to think of western region PVAW work and influenced our MCC PVAW planning.

MCC was the first organisation to formally endorse PVT at the Council meeting 19 October 2010. At the public meeting Councillors and the Mayor spoke eloquently to the importance of this work. The leadership and engagement of Council built through the R&E project meant that it was a relatively smooth process to present PVT to EMT and then Council for endorsement. This endorsement is the result of the Council's actions for three years preceding PVT, which mandated Councils involvement with the regional PVAW network action plan development.

MCC Managers, Councillor and White Ribbon Ambassador Martin Zakahov, members from the WRWG and SCHP team attended the PVT breakfast launch 2 December 2010. This date was chosen to fall during the internationally recognised 10 days without violence and a year after the launch of a Right to Respect. The event was highly successful I have used photos from the morning to further promote the role of local government in PVAW internally and externally.



Photo 28 WRWG members at PVT launch

4.3 Share the learning

Throughout the project we have documented and disseminated the learning and challenges of undertaking primary prevention activities in MCC. In sharing the learning, we have influenced the development of state government policy, attended and presented at local, national and international conferences, hosted PVAW forums, facilitated networks, shared many stories and contributed to creating a culture of respect and equity.

The activities throughout the project have provided endless opportunities to learn. In learning together as an organisation, we have simultaneously shared the learning with each other. This new way of being and doing has been practiced and shared through contact with others in which the cycle of learning continued through these new interactions. The circular, intuitive process or action research approach has built our capacity as individuals and an organisation to learn more. It is a reflective way of working and has been an important approach and also an impact of the project.

In this chapter I will describe the findings:

- Showcasing respect and equity
- Right to respect - the role of local government
- Evaluating the project.

4.3.1 Showcasing respect and equity

Between 2008-2011 the SCHP team including myself, WRWG members, Councillors and different Community Wellbeing Managers have presented the R&E project at numerous local and international conferences, events and more informally at network meetings and in conversation. For full details on the external presentations given see appendix 8.10 Respect & equity presentations.

These presentations have contributed to the capacity of other local governments to undertake PVAW and built the confidence and capacity of MCC staff to articulate and undertake PVAW. They have provided another opportunity to learn and share our resources and tools. These events have contributed to achieving the project goals. Whenever possible we have uploaded the presentations to the conference or associated website and circulated it electronically to attendees at the event.

Over the project, the number of public events we presented at has increased. This is due to the raised awareness and interest of this project both locally and internationally as well as the increased capacity within the Council to present the work. In my interview with Jane, She spoke about going to India to represent the project at the third International Women's Safety Conference in India. "People were amazed with the work Maribyrnong is doing and in terms of capacity building it proved to me [participating in the conference] how much I actually know about the this issue. I hadn't been exposed to PVAW before working here (MCC)" (Torney 2011).



Photo 29 PVAW collateral

In 2009 the SCHP team organised the *PVAW Showcasing Projects from the West* workshop. This was hosted in the MCC town hall. Nelly Thomas the renowned feminist comedian facilitated the day. Seventy-nine participants from local government, primary care partnerships, Victoria Police, community service organisations and state government attended.

Other local government officers attended the forum as a way of hearing what was happening in PVAW, to make connections and build relationships. This workshop was before the Networking and Capacity Building project when there was no coordinated forum for local governments to share and learn from each other about this work. This forum provided that much-needed space (Hill 2011).

The event shared the learning and challenges of three local primary prevention projects and built the capacity across sectors to undertake primary prevention work. Outcomes from the event were:

- Improved knowledge of the local action currently in place to PVAW
- Preliminary actions developed by each sector to address the primary prevention of violence against women and the determinants of violence against women
- Longer term participation and commitment in initiatives to PVAW.

The workshop ran from 9:15am-2:30pm. The Mayor Michael Clarke opened it. He spoke of the importance of PVAW work to Council, quoted the evidence and complex causal factors, which contribute to violence against women. The Mayor listed work and achievements of MCC and thanked everyone for attending to discuss this “significant health problem requiring urgent attention” (Mayor speech notes 5 May 2009).

The workshop was framed with a presentation from OWP on the development of the PVAW Victorian state plan, followed by VicHealth describing what works as an evidence base for primary prevention. Georgie then gave an overview of the R&E project. WHW presented Building the Capacity of Organisations in the Western Region to PVAW: A Guide to Health Promotion Action. WRHC presented their Supporting Traditional African Mediators Project, also known as STAMP. This workshop provided the opportunity for other organisations to equally demonstrate their PVAW practice.



Photo 30 Discussion at Showcasing Projects from the West workshop

These presentations were followed by an afternoon of discussion and brainstorming in workshop style to discuss the role of local government, how to get involved in primary prevention and what that action may look like.

Twenty-nine people participated in evaluation at the end of the event. Feedback suggested the “future forums [could be] directed at councillors and senior executives, having more interactive sessions at lunch”. This comment foreshadowed the 2009 and 2010 White Ribbon Leaders Lunch.

In August 2010 the WRWG responded to a call for abstracts for the inaugural local government PVAW conference. This conference was the first of its kind to showcase state wide innovative sector specific strategies in local government.

“Excellent including great forum, I really enjoyed it, I would not change a thing, really really (sic) worthwhile.”

Participant evaluation form

Maribyrnong City Council

Andrew Day's abstract was accepted and he spoke on behalf of the WRWG. Andrew wrote his own presentation and spoke eloquently in the session 'Stories from local government – journeys so far'.



Photo 31 Andrew Day presenting at LG PVAW conference

Over 50 people from MCC were invited and encouraged to participate by Maribyrnong CEO via email. Attendees include General Managers, Councillors, officers from different departments and the WRWG. Georgie participated in the distinguished Q&A panel with Dr Mel Heenan, Dr Garth Japhet, CEO from North Melbourne Kangaroos Football Club, VLGA CEO, Cr Colleen Furlanetto and Nick Mazzarella, White Ribbon Ambassador and Manager at Darebin City Council. The WRWG wore their t-shirts to the event and received applause from the audience.



Photo 32 WRWG receive applause at LG PVAW conference

The Maribyrnong family violence policy and White Ribbon bookmark were included in the conference folder available to everyone on the day. The R&E project was included in the *Local Government and Community Leaders: Inspiring examples in the prevention of violence against women* booklet. The two page centrefold included an:

- Overview of the project
- Leadership, Mentoring and Advocacy
- Building the capacity to generate cultural change across Council and within the community
- Building on relationships with others to prevent violence against women and
- Enabling the full participation of women in public life.

At this event, Stewart from the work centre and WRWG was approached by the Jewish Taskforce Against Family Violence and asked for more information about the work we do at MCC and the resources we use. Stewart independently followed up this request in the weeks

after the event. This demonstrates an active engagement by staff from non-traditional health promotion areas and is an important impact of the project.

Dear Vince,
I look forward to the event. Maribyrnong is a leader in this field. I'm proud to be associated with the occasion.
Regards, MC

Email from Councillor
Michael Clarke to CEO
Vince Haining 29
September 2010



Photo 33 Councillor, Mayor and managers at LG PVAW conference

During the Australian Women's Health Conference in Hobart Georgie, Maryanne Clarke (Yarra City Council) and Kellie Nagle (Darebin City Council) and myself began talking about how we could work with Dr Helen Keleher. Helen's presentation on her gender policy audit tool at the conference was inspiring and we all saw an opportunity to bring this approach to local government.

Following this, MCC were instrumental in establishing the Gender Equity in Local Government group along with Darebin and Yarra City Council. The group is a collective of people from the local and state government sector, together with VicHealth, Women's Health Organisations and Dr Helen Kelleher from Monash University, interested in building capacity to integrate gender equity into core business of local government. We met initially at VicHealth and invited a few other Council officers and women's community health staff who we knew to be particularly interested in this work. As the group became established we began to meet bi-monthly at Yarra City Council.

The group is leading and overseeing the development of tools and resources and will assist in embedding gender mainstreaming into local government. The resources produced by the group will be another tool to use in communicating and connecting with various departments across Council. Georgie, Jane and myself have contributed to the group at various stages since it began in July 2010. The group are in the process of developing fact sheets in consultation with different teams across Councils. Jane developed a draft infrastructure fact sheet and has provided a lot of feedback on the other fact sheets in development.

Working with this group has significantly developed Jane's capacity to clearly articulate gender equity and gender mainstreaming in plain language appropriate to the audience. In my interview with Jane she told me about working with the men from the Infrastructure departments on using sex disaggregated data. Jane found that this terminology along with other health promotion speak was not understood, so worked with the team to break down some of the jargon.

This need to avoid jargon has been a key learning through the project. We need to use language that is accessible, resonates with the audience we are speaking with and coincides with the priorities, values and interests of the audience. We need to use examples that are context specific and offer a point of influence and connection for the listener. Jane's ability to articulate and respond to this need is a significant impact of how the project has built capacity of staff and teams across Council.

'Gender interactions are played out in all parts of community life, including public spaces and community facilities. Planning and designing community infrastructure, which supports use by women and girls means analysing the various uses of public spaces, who uses them, when, and for how long, as well as which groups, like women and girls, don't use a particular space and why.

Infrastructure that is poorly maintained, such as poor lighting; graffiti; low levels of natural surveillance; cracked footpaths and litter, can have significant impacts on poor perceptions of safety and on use of public spaces.'

(Draft Infrastructure fact sheet not published June 2011)

There have been many unexpected opportunities to share the learning of the project, which has come about because of the reputation Council now have in this space:

- Masters of Public Health Curriculum - The University of Melbourne Masters of Public Health course, Health Policy subject (Castelino & Whitzman 2008) is currently using MCC as a case study of innovative local governance strategies to prevent family violence.
- University of Minnesota International research study - I was invited to participate in this international study. The study is gathering in-depth information about organisations across the world engaging men in PVAW. The information gathered will be used to gain a more comprehensive understanding of current programs. The findings of this report will be released in late 2014.
- Kookaburra Award - In 2010 we applied for the Our Community Kookaburra Awards. These awards look for 'What is the difference this project is designed to bring about in the world? How is it working towards that goal? How successful has it been?' We emailed the Community Wellbeing Branch Managers for contributions to the application. While we were unsuccessful in receiving the award, this was another opportunity to raise awareness of the project and ask Managers across Council to consider how their existing work is contributing to PVAW. Subsequently Managers from across the organisation have since emailed me about other relevant award and funding opportunities they know of.

4.3.2 Right to respect: the role of local government

In February 2009 as part of the development of the Victorian state plan to prevent violence against women, OWP called for nominations from the five priority settings to form working groups. Dr Melanie Heenan, Manager of the PVAW program at VicHealth nominated Georgie from MCC. Kerry Thomson former CEO was also nominated These nominations were successful and Georgie and Kerry participated in the Local Government, Health and Community Services Working Group.

To further advocate for the role of local government, Georgie, supported by Nick, Community Planning and Advocacy Manager, and Jenny, former Community Wellbeing General Manager, initiated a motion at the bi-annual MAV state meeting 'That the MAV nominate to represent local government on the state plan to prevent violence against women advisory structures with a view to advise the state government on an appropriate model for embedding commitment across local government to preventing violence against women.' This motion was accepted by Council and at the MAV state council meeting.

The working groups brought together government representatives from that setting (education, sport, etc), along with non-government practitioners and academics working in the field of prevention of violence against women and/or those with setting-specific knowledge of primary prevention work generally.

The groups were responsible for refining and prioritising action areas within that setting, which then contributed to Right to Respect. They provided setting specific knowledge and expertise, feedback on the draft plan, identified priority actions and gaps and ensured that population groups and life-course issues were addressed.

The Local Government, Health and Community Services Working Group chaired by Leigh Gasner met twice between April to August 2009 at Department of Planning and Community Development and were convened by OWP staff and associates. Recommendations developed by the working groups were reported on to the Inter Departmental Committee, Statewide Advisory Committee to Prevent Sexual Assault Family Violence Statewide Advisory Committee and Indigenous Family Violence Partnership Forum through representatives to receive guidance and feedback on chosen directions.

Georgie advocated for the Maribyrnong PVAW work to be included in the state plan as a case study. Through the strength of Maribyrnong's leadership the inclusion was successful and features as the first case study in the Local Government, Health and Community Services pull-out section of the plan as well within the document itself (Victorian Government 2009).

In 2009 the Mayor wrote to the former Hon. Richard Wynne, MP Minister for Local Government and Minister for Housing on behalf of MCC, VicHealth and Darebin City Council to arrange a mutually agreeable time to discuss in more detail possible strategies to progress and support the delivery of the state prevention plan. "As an authority of local government you would be well aware of the leadership capacity for local government to be innovative and support partnerships to create social and cultural change. As the arm of government closest to its people, the diverse and comprehensive reach of local government into the community makes it an ideal setting to introduce and coordinate a range of mutually reinforcing strategies."



Photo 34 Councillor Michael Clarke (centre) at launch of Right to Respect

The CEO, Councillor and members of the WRWG attended the launch of *A Right to Respect: Victoria's Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women* at Parliament House in November 2009. The group wore their t-shirts and definitely stood out in the crowd. At the time I was working in the family violence sector and attended the launch in this capacity. I noticed the men in their shirts. This was the first time I became aware of MCC PVAW work. When I was applying for the position of R&E Project Coordinator this memory influenced my desire to work for MCC. Other people I spoke to about the job also mentioned the positive reputation of Council and how this was demonstrated by recalling the men in shirts at the launch.

4.3.3 Evaluating the project

The learning and challenges of the project have been shared along the way in a multitude of forums. These have been described over the three chapters and include internal and external reports and presentations, through the media, through the production and use of resources and through discussions at network meetings, in tearooms, over email and after conferences.

I have written this report to share the overall learning and challenges of the project. I have collected qualitative and quantitative information. I have undertaken relevant research on the project, sector and Council. I have reflected, analysed and sorted data talked with people through interviews and informal conversations and worked with the teams across MCC and VicHealth along the way. This evaluation report will be presented to Council in September 2011 for endorsement. It will be promoted on the MCC website and launched formally at the VicHealth forum in October 2011.

I recommend that findings from the report are used to inform future work at MCC and that evaluation continues to be a focus of PVAW work across Maribyrnong. The report will contribute to the field of primary prevention of violence against women in a local government setting and more broadly workplaces and community organisations. Gathering information on the impacts of the report is outside of the formal funding phase though it is highly recommended this be incorporated into the future work of Maribyrnong.

5. Discussion



The respect and equity project (R&E project) demonstrates the vital role local government has in coordinating, facilitating and actualising primary prevention of violence against women (PVAW) work. Local government infrastructure, services, partnerships, governance, practice and direct connection to community make it the ideal setting through which to drive gender equity, promote respectful relationships between men and women and create communities which are safe, inclusive and equitable.

As the elected arm of government closest to the community, local government has a responsibility to ensure the wellbeing of its citizens. To do this, we need to engage with local through to international research, evidence and practice to prevent violence against women. Through understanding the gendered nature of violence, Councils can plan and implement innovative strategies specific to the local neighbourhoods and communities.

An ongoing, participatory empowerment model of evaluation has ensured that the R&E project happened in an environment of reflection, collaboration and with a learn-as-we-go approach. The evaluation prioritises the story and experience of those involved in the project and their reflections on what has or hasn't had an impact and why. It has meant that we were not locked into pre-designed activities, but rather, could elevate, prioritise and link into existing or new opportunities with the most potential for success.

The combined ingredients of strong political leadership, best practice evidence, reflective planning and a developmental approach have significantly contributed to the success of the project. The project findings demonstrate that a range of concurrent, mutually reinforcing approaches which build on work already happening and link into existing networks and structures, coupled with flexible, responsive opportunistic gendered practice provides a fertile environment for PVAW and influences positive cultural change.

“This is the Maribyrnong story...but...I think you can do it in any situation. You just go about it in a different way”

Georgie Hill reflective interview 2010

“If I want to effect change I don't try and change anything at first. I acknowledge and accept my reality the way it is and from there I can move on. By knowing this is how it is, I can see how it could be. I can then work toward making that happen”.

SCHP team

This work has been slowly cyclical and cumulative, not firmly linear. We did not take a step one, two, three approach. It is both the planned and unplanned activities happening at the same time and reinforcing each other, which have contributed to the organisational culture shift at Maribyrnong City Council (MCC). We could not have done one without the other. The momentum and range of PVAW activities, networks and events across Victoria have provided alternative and innovative approaches, which we have then been able to bring back to MCC and use to shape our own work.

In shifting the culture at Council we have been able to in turn begin to positively influence the community. The project evaluation has found that getting the organisational culture right in Council contributes to effective community partnerships just as, working through effective community and stakeholder partnerships is essential for Council to undertake ongoing meaningful and practical work. This reciprocal relationship means that PVAW impacts are more likely when the work happens together.

The Safer Communities and Health Promotion (SCHP) team and White Ribbon Working Group (WRWG) have been pivotal in advocating for cultural change and demonstrating that everyone

can make a difference. The evaluation findings demonstrate the significant impact of champions and leaders in driving and embedding this work. Positioning PVAW within a team in Council and establishing an across organisational working group has supported, promoted and facilitated individual and organisational change and brought the MCC structural framework to life.

It's my view that the R&E project has also begun to contribute to a societal shift. It is the mainstream cultural practices, values and beliefs of society, which tend to impact and influence organisations and individuals. So when individuals and organisations reject a culture which stereotypes gender and upholds male privilege - and challenges violence supportive attitudes and behaviours - they are effectively creating alternative cultural practices, values and beliefs. In this way the old society and culture is slowly replaced with new values, beliefs and practice - in this case, those of gender respect, equity, safety, diversity and inclusion.

This social change requires long-term effort and momentum to achieve the goal of eliminating violence against women. It requires not only individual and organisational commitment, knowledge, skills and practice; but resources, structural support, courageous political leadership and both broad-based and specific action through a range of means and methods. The R&E project is a demonstration of how local government can start to provide a supportive environment for social change.

The R&E project has had a number of impacts across Council and the community. The practice of reflection has allowed impacts to be identified along the way and has ensured that we have focused our work in areas which demonstrate the most potential. We have built on the Maribyrnong momentum and learning. We have found there is not one way of embedding prevention work – there is no one size fits all. The key indicators that have demonstrated our approach is working have been:

- Political leadership and commitment. Majority of Councillors are engaged and supportive, speaking publically and to the media, promoting and participating in PVAW events, becoming White Ribbon ambassadors, providing funding for PVAW specific projects such as a Baby Makes 3 workshop and White Ribbon Day (WRD) community and Council events
- Multi level support from management: Various executive managers, branch managers and coordinators across the organisation have supported the inclusion of PVAW in the Council plan and annual actions, the development of an organisational family violence policy, staff to attend training such as the two day PVAW short course and promoted across department collaboration on evidence based activities
- Champions and role models. The WRWG journey has been inspirational to staff within Council and also other Councils and organisations across Victoria. The men advocate through their work, develop PVAW resources and live as non violent men
- Individual stories. The project has fostered an atmosphere of discussion and sharing the journey together. There has been an increase in corridor conversations, emails, posters and participation in PVAW events. This is captured through the Everybody can... resource, the Have Your Say: Gender Equity project and as slogans on the White Ribbon t-shirts
- External support. We have a respected and valued role in the PVAW networks and as part of Preventing Violence Together: the Western Region Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women (PVT). MCC role and experience in PVAW is recognised through recent state funding to develop a community model of practice with the western region
- Evidence based activities. The work through the Phoenix Youth Centre such as the hip-hop Respect, Courage and Integrity CD, Text Against Violence project, respectful relationships programs, civic awards for young people involved in PVAW demonstrates how the determinants of violence are being incorporated into MCC practice

- Transferrable learning. Former General Manager of Community Wellbeing continuing his ambassador work into his new role through another Council, instigating a WRWG and supporting the development of a PVAW action plan and former Project Coordinator adopting a PVAW action plan based on the Maribyrnong plan at a new Council.

In this discussion framed within the evaluation questions, I will draw on the project findings to further explore the key role local government has and demonstrate why and how this work can and must continue.

“We know because people are actually turning up when before there were not as many people involved; but it’s the talk afterwards, that’s how we know it’s working.”

Rebecca Mangan reflective interview 2010

There was a number of enabling environmental factors, which led to MCC undertaking the three-year R&E project including:

- Development of the Safer Communities Policy and Action Plan 2003-2006 (incorporated into the Community Safety role)
- Lobbying by and support from Women’s Health West (WHW)
- Establishment of the Family Violence Working Group (a sub-committee of the Maribyrnong Safety Taskforce which has Councillor representation)
- A female CEO and majority of female Councillors and female representation on the Executive Management Team (EMT)
- An organisational culture that was open to addressing this issue
- Participation in WRD activities since 2006
- Participation in the international GLOVE research project
- Representation at the World Urban Forum in Vancouver, Canada 2006 and Nanjing, China 2008
- Councils public commitment to a violence free community.

As a result of the R&E project there was:

- An increased level of skill and knowledge of Council staff to plan, implement and evaluate primary prevention activities
- Positive cultural change demonstrated through policy, programming, planning and practice across Council
- Evidence based activities undertaken in partnership across Council departments and sectors to address the determinants of violence against women
- Leadership and mentoring provided to other local government areas which has increased engagement in this issue
- An increased awareness and capacity of the community to create safe, inclusive and gender equitable environments
- Effectively documented and disseminated evidence for primary prevention activity across local government and local community

An increased level of skill and knowledge of Council staff to plan, implement and evaluate primary prevention activities

Throughout the R&E project there have been specific people that have demonstrated an increase in understanding and an ability to plan, implement and evaluate primary prevention activities. The consequence has been that as more staff thread primary prevention into their core work, the more it’s embedded in Council culture and the more opportunities there are for influence within the community. This has not happened across all Council departments - it requires a long-term sustained effort to affect an increase in skill and knowledge across all teams and departments.

At the beginning of the project we did not anticipate how important or how long it would take to build the internal commitment, capacity and leadership. This commitment, capacity and

leadership has been necessary to build skills and knowledge hence our internal focus - working with staff and teams across the Council - became a core aspect of the project. We then began to see the benefits and necessity of getting our own house in order first.

We approached skill and knowledge development incrementally to build the momentum. We started small with non-threatening approaches, in ways that were broadly engaging. We used a woven approach of working intensively with those who showed an interest and willingness to increase their skills and knowledge in PVAW. At the same time, through a range of complementary messaging, we used broader approaches such as White Ribbon events to increase awareness and commitment among staff that were identified as either neutral or resistant to PVAW. We also made use of identified leaders at all levels of the organisation to reinforce the messages to their own teams and within their networks.

These concurrent activities were further supported by activity targeted at senior leadership including the EMT and Councillors. These leaders provided the necessary authorising environment for PVAW and in turn assisted to raise awareness, skill and knowledge across the organisation.

“I think with individuals it has challenged their thinking and belief systems and the way they live their lives...they have become quite passionately involved.”

Georgie Hill reflective interview 2010

This multilayered approach creates an informal social and knowledge network. It means that people at different stages of engagement stay involved and connect with others across the organisation for inspiration and support. The skills and knowledge being developed and shared are Maribyrnong centric. Because everyone is involved in their own way, along the way, there is a stronger connection and likelihood of the practice being sustained and embedded through Council.

We found the essential ingredients for involving others, supporting champions and increasing skills and knowledge have been:

- Making informal connections, building rapport, maintaining relationships and making the issue and causes of violence against women personal
- Sharing and listening to the stories and experiences of women and men
- Engaging with international context through to local research and evidence of the prevalence and causes of violence against women
- Borrowing language and style, which the audience can locate them in. Some groups prefer hard statistics or to consider structural changes through policy and programming, others talk about how we can work with children to effect generational change
- Working with people in their own environment, at their level of understanding and capacity, by incorporating PVAW into what they already do. Our work with the Western Region Football League (WRFL) is an example of this
- Witnessing inspirational leaders and courageous champions demonstrating practical ways to enact PVAW in every situation
- Offering an identity that people can relate to and adopt, such as the ‘Real Men’ White Ribbon t-shirts
- Providing opportunities and a culture for people to discuss alternate versions of masculinity and respond to wider societal issues
- Training and events such as the PVAW short-course, presentations by others in the PVAW field and social marketing campaigns like Not One More
- Building on knowledge by being willing and able to adapt the approach, be responsive to needs, reflexive to the environment and accommodate the unexpected. This is a more authentic way of working because it doesn’t try to retrofit a situation into a formula, but lets the people in the situation guide and decide.

We constantly checked in with others to make sure we brought people along on the journey. This work has been very much about working it out together in a way which best fits

Maribyrnong. So we did not start with the conversation around gender equity and male entitlement. We started with topics that were safe and comfortable for people to engage in – topics that resonated. The evaluation findings show a progression in the complexity of messaging throughout the project. At first, there was more of a focus on recognising violence against women, so that people had a shared understanding of what it was, its prevalence and why it is wrong.

Toward the end of the project we were having conversations with staff on how to apply a gender lens to infrastructure and address insidious gender inequity in the workplace. By slowly shifting the frame from the outcome of violence, to the causes, we have been illuminating the themes for action. By allowing the time for people to understand and increase their skills at a slow pace, we have successfully fostered individual and some organisational change. For this to continue, the supportive enabling environment needs to be further embedded.

In sharing the respect and equity workload across the SCHP team, we have certainly been able to achieve a greater reach into more areas of Council. More significantly, we have built the skills and knowledge of the team. This has meant that any staff member can attend PVAW network meetings, present the project at conferences, respond to internal and external requests for information and support other staff confidently.

This team approach coupled with a specific Respect and Equity Coordinator has provided a skill and knowledge resource for staff across Council to access whenever they need. For this reason, as Coordinator, my connections and experience with the family violence and women's sector have been necessary. I have been able to draw from my lived reality as a feminist, the skills I have developed working practically and conceptually in the tertiary sector and frequently check back to make sure MCC is on the right path.

“A dedicated resource really validates our work in this space, people just come up to your desk all the time and want to talk to you about this issue and to be able to give it the space and time to really respond to their issues...I really think it gave a face to the project...someone has responsibility for driving it”.

Georgie Hill reflective interview 2010

The challenge in building skills and knowledge is that everyone is at different points of understanding and engagement with PVAW and everyone has their unique experience they bring to this issue. We were constantly revisiting our messaging and activities to ensure that we were inclusive and non-threatening but true to a gendered understanding of violence and working at the causal level to prevent violence before it occurs in the first place. We were always considering how we can empower others in the organisation to share their own knowledge and skills to build up the body of practice at MCC.

In this way, skills and knowledge are only one part of building an organisation, which effectively prevents violence against women. The skill and knowledge development can only occur in a willing environment, with leadership, champions to demonstrate practice, research, evidence, a framework to guide the skill development and structures and opportunities in place to assist people to implement their new learning.

Positive cultural change is demonstrated through policy, programming, planning and practice across Council

The culture within MCC has begun to significantly shift as a result of the R&E project. This change has been central to the impact of the project and around which the activities have revolved and evolved. The project has contributed to an environment where Council staff and Councillors can begin to see their role in PVAW.

This culture shift is evidenced through some aspects of policy, programming, planning and practice at Council. A shift in culture can also be demonstrated by the more intangible atmosphere, or feel at Council. It is the conversations in the hallways and over desks and the

unexpected support to include PVAW on an agenda, in a budget or at an event. It is the men in White Ribbon t-shirts with slogans they have thought long over to develop. It is the absence of blockages and too many suggestions of how we can do more.

While there is evidence of this culture shift in aspects of Council, there is still along way to go before PVAW is normalised. To sustain this culture the predominant messages, infrastructure and activities need to continue to uphold and promote gender respect and equity. As staff change at Council there needs to be a range of organisational and individual supports to ensure this culture shift is not eroded. MCC integrity and leadership is grounded in this culture of good practice. To maintain this reputation we must continue to invest in this culture.

We have contributed to this positive shift using a saturation method. Spreading a consistent message everywhere and in a range of places to a range of people. Through promoting awareness raising, skill development, capacity building, normalising the culture, embedding practice, establishing structures, influencing policy, mainstreaming gendered approaches and using a gender lens, we have begun to engage with a broad audience. We have built a supportive network, mentors and champions, nurtured self-sufficiency, created a learning environment and created new opportunities for problem solving. This has led to new relationships being formed, new opportunities arising and PVAW envisioned. This has led to increased confidence, skills, self-belief and attitudes, which in turn has enhanced the capacity to act.

However, this focus on individual change is fraught with risk. When key champions and leaders across the organisation move on to other employment, the gap left needs to be smaller than the sum of the PVAW influence. We have been mindful throughout the project to look for opportunities and encourage others to embed this culture structurally to minimise against this risk. Within the

cyclical cumulative approach there is room for moments of regression as long as the drive and momentum remain forward looking. This risk can also be offset by the integrity of a practice, which focuses on individual as well as organisational change.

There was growing acceptance of the issue (after Phil Cleary spoke at the depot). It sparked a lot of discussion at the work centre for weeks afterward. I think it resonated a lot with them."

Georgie Hill reflective interview 2010

In the second half of 2010, a number of senior management left the organisation. During the farewell speeches the commitment to PVAW of three managers (including the CEO) was mentioned as demonstration of their contribution and achievements at MCC and in the community. This is a significant record of changing views and values in Council.

Integrating the MPHP into the Council Plan has provided leverage for integrating PVAW work into core Council business. The Council Plan uses determinants of health approach to the role of local government and makes the direct links between the core business of council and the health and wellbeing of the community. This is a paradigm shift away from a focus on illness to wellness. This subtle shift provides an environment where we can frame violence against women as a public health issue and focus on addressing the underlying causes through a positive, strengths based approach. This has been more symbolic than practical to date and more work needs to happen within the organisation to embed this approach.

The WRWG have been instrumental in building the culture across Council. Throughout the project the group have worked to engage men and women and raise violence against women as an issue, which everyone has a role in preventing. There are inherent risks in involving men as champions and leaders without any surety they do not perpetrate violence or adhere to rigid gendered stereotypes. We have continually reflected on how we ensure a gendered approach framed by evidence and the lived experience of women.

There is a valid argument that in putting forward men we are upholding male privilege to leadership, while often women are doing all the background work. It has been a constant balancing act, which we have discussed frequently with the WRWG, PVAW networks and in

the SCHP team, to reduce this effect. As the WRWG knowledge, confidence and commitment has grown, so has their sense of awareness and responsibility. I have actively and consistently reduced my role in supporting the group behind the scenes over the project. A key finding from the evaluation is that a range of leaders, both men and women with various experience, knowledge and perspective are needed to drive PVAW across Council and the community.

Mainstreaming gender in local government without diluting, segregating or homogenising gender is also a constant challenge. We have had to balance feminist ideals and language with the receptiveness of our audience at each moment. We have debated and discussed this through our partnerships with other Councils, PVAW networks, women's health organisations and the tertiary sector. It is essential that these tensions are frequently revisited to contribute to positive culture change.

Through the narrative evaluation process I reflected on others and my experience of the shift within Council. It's the many layers of leadership, role modelling, practice, policy, awareness, skills, engagement and commitment which make Maribyrnong distinctly so. To sustain this culture we require a long term concerted effort together.

On the road

I felt Sam squirm beside me. The presenter continued to talk about men's responsibility to create alternate versions of masculinity, become active in men's education campaigns, challenge other men's belief and practice, which normalise violence against women. I noticed Alex begin to squirm on the other side of me.

When we got in the car I expected, and shamefully, hoped we would all make light chat and mentally, silently and more importantly, without the scrutiny of each other work out where we stood on the ideas presented. I felt completely connected to the politics of what had been said. But wasn't sure if I wanted to personally out myself as such an extreme feminist! I was sure that when it really came down to it, I couldn't stay silent on the disastrous effects for a community, which upholds the man's right, just because he is a man. I would have to say something.

Before we even got back to the car, Sam was lamenting the presentation of being too theoretical, unrealistic and critical of men. Alex took the other side of the debate and quoted some reasons why we need to be involved in this work.

I mildly asked, "Is this the kind of thing you discuss with your partners or friends?" to get a sense of how out of the ordinary I might sound. They both said "no".

We headed back into traffic and Alex asked whether we thought the men at our Council practice male entitlement and how? I didn't know what to say. Alex then fired another round of questions,

"Do I exhibit male privilege at work?"

"Give me an example."

"How does that make women feel?"

"What can I do to change it...what's it like to be a woman?"

"What does male privilege look like to you?"

I was comfortable talking about structural change and ways in which Council can implement policy that has been rigorously viewed through a gender lens. Discussing at length the role of education, consciousness raising, co-ordinated, multi-faceted approaches with strategic whole of community frameworks. Comfortable with the jargon, the acronyms; political and social theory which shapes my everyday work; sharing my specific lived experience with colleagues I barely know? That was another story!

But I did.

We talked non-stop, clumsily and energetically the whole trip back.

Over the next while things started to change. The more I shared my own challenge with defining gender and gender stereotypes, knowing how to draw the line between a funny joke and a sexist joke, the constant hurdles of translation, the more people came up and talked with me. I became more at ease each time.

Soon people were emailing media stories and commentary back and forth on sexual violence in sport. That started a nearly daily visit to my desk by men exclaiming in disgust over the latest news coverage of gender violence not being taken seriously. We went along to the local football league club night. We listened to stories told by inspirational women in football.

It seemed every conversation I was in words like feminism, patriarchy and gender stereotype came up! Books about gender violence, anti-violence movements and feminist pop culture guides began circulating the men's desks around the Council. Through rapid meetings and emails we got together a submission to the National Advertising Code of Conduct to call for a stop to negative constructions of gender, which affect body image and perpetuate sexist stereotypes. We started brainstorming what real men look like in Maribyrnong.

Then I realised.

Listening to a manager talk about how he wants his daughter to grow into a strong independent woman. With her own money and the right to make her own choices in her life. How he and his wife remember when they were kids, only the boy's sports games were attended on the weekend. How in their family now the kids go to each other's sports game, the young son is water boy on his sister's football team.

It was then I realised we are a community of women and men connected, connecting, finding ways to achieve gender equality. We all have our own way of answering those questions back in the car and we are all working in different ways, together.

Evidence based activities undertaken in partnership across Council departments and sectors to address the determinants of violence against women

Given there is only an emerging body of evaluated practice experience, we have relied in the VicHealth framework to broadly guide our approach in implementing PVAW in local government. We have framed and guided activities to ensure they respond to the determinants of violence and the international research on how to prevent violence. The work and momentum across Victoria has also significantly contributed and been incorporated at MCC enhancing our approach. The respect and equity project has purposefully built a body of evidence through our experience of what works for MCC. This learning, gathered along the way has further informed the MCC PVAW work and is documented in this report.

There are areas across Council beginning to use this evidence in their practice and programming but this is not happening across all departments. In building the commitment and capacity there are a range of teams across Council keen to incorporate evidence in their work. These teams require further support and this will only happen with long-term commitment and resourcing from Council. The findings from this evaluation identified a range of opportunities both internally and externally to work with others on PVAW.

We have learnt that to have a meaningful impact and sustain this practice, it is better to build the confidence and capacity of teams to both be a part of building the evidence and then use that evidence to inform their work.

The WRWG has been a great vehicle for doing this. The group who consist of men from across all departments, have supported each other to consider what PVAW means for them, understand the issue and the causes and areas for action. They have

"We are always looking for that opportunity - how do we find champions, how do we align with what is currently going on? What opportunity currently exists out there?"

Rebecca Mangan reflective interview 2010

brainstormed and designed a range of activities and resources to engage others across Council and the community including posters about sexual harassment, White Ribbon community events, messages on the intranet and public presentations which motivate and inspire.

The range of work happening across Victoria has meant we can draw on evidence and various approaches to build the capacity of Council staff. This has happened most notably through the Gender Equity in Local Government group and Leadership, Evaluation and Sustainability (LEAS) network. We have been able to reiterate and localise activity which has been developed and trialled elsewhere eg: Leaders Lunch and family violence cards.

We have experienced significant positive changes in staff after hearing community leaders and other men and women speak about what they are doing to make a difference. This sharing of stories and activity has been both a significant way to share evidence but also helps to build evidence of what works and what doesn't. These presentations generate conversation across Council for weeks afterward.

It is vital this evidence building and practice is fed back through the women's health and tertiary sector to ensure we are contributing to gender respect and equity and minimising the effects of violence against women. It is essential that as we build and use the evidence, it is framed within a gendered understanding and relevant to the lived experience of women. It is the women's sector working with and advocating for women who have the language, theory and experience to also teach how we can prevent violence against women. The evaluation has found that integrity, legitimacy and authenticity come from engaging in the personal and the lived experience. As long as the project is grounded in the framework and maintains relationships with the tertiary sector, we have a test to make sure the work is not having none or a detrimental effect.

Leadership and mentoring provided to other local government areas has increased engagement in this issue

The Maribyrnong model provides a replicable approach within local government that has been tried and tested. While it requires a long-term approach and we can't claim in this short period to have had a substantial impact, we have provided a leadership role to other local governments starting out and continue to do so. At the same time, we are assisting to build the evidence and make the case so that the role of local government in violence prevention is legitimized over time and provides a key setting for action for now and into the future.

Through the R&E project, Council have been able to take a lead role in the community, the western region and the state. The project has allowed MCC the resources, learning and opportunity to share PVAW practice and support and encourage other Councils in this work. MCC have been instrumental in establishing the Gender Equity in Local Government working group and taken an active role on the LEAS network and local government networking and capacity building project.

A dedicated Respect and Equity Coordinator has meant MCC have had the capacity to advocate and be involved in the Right to Respect development and subsequent Office of Women's (OWP) policy direction. We have supported and contributed resources to the development of PVT and will continue to engage with local governments across the western region and Victoria through recent funding to develop a whole of community model of PVAW practice.

This external leadership role has also come from and been driven by the internal leadership shown at MCC. Without the courageous political leadership Councillors and the EMT have shown throughout the project, MCC would not be looked to for advice, innovation, practice examples and support. The number and range of MCC staff that attend PVAW events provides an image of cohesion and leadership within the organisation. Their counterparts in other local governments for PVAW advice have contacted these staff. This role is dependent on continuing to build the internal culture, capacity and willingness to drive the PVAW agenda.

There is momentum across Victoria to prevent violence against women. We cannot claim that MCC has definitely influenced other local governments and increased their engagement in this issue. Through MCC political leadership, resources and increasing capacity though, we have been able represent PVAW at a range of different forums and contribute a loud voice for the necessity of this work. The positive impacts and change that can be seen across the state demonstrate that together, government, the tertiary sector, community health and a range of other settings are leading, supporting and increasing each other's engagement together.

An increased awareness and capacity of the community to create safe, inclusive and gender equitable environments

We have worked from the assumption that we are able to influence community attitudes through all the connections local government has with the community by providing direct services, funding, infrastructure, governance and municipal planning. We have used the physicality of being situated in the municipality and the metaphysical role as the governing body for the community. In building Councils capacity internally there have been multiple rippling effects into the community in many unexpected, unanticipated implicit and explicit ways.

We cannot effectively demonstrate this increased awareness and capacity of the community yet. By creating a culture within Council that prevents violence against women we confidently assume this will directly influence the community. We have used a nested approach to conceptualise this.

In the diagram below the outer ring demonstrates the ultimate goal of stronger families, resilient communities, and safer women. By using our capacity as Council to influence, we can contribute to this goal through:

- Integrated public policy both at local level and influencing state policy
- Developing inter-governmental partnerships
- Societal and cultural awareness
- Enabling the full participation of women in public life
- Building on relationships with other organisations and groups
- Building skills and knowledge, commitment and action to generate cultural change across Council and within the community
- Embedding and creating ownership of violence prevention efforts across Council and the community.



Figure 8 Nested approach

We have found role modelling is more effective to generate social change, than just telling people what they ought to be doing. Social movements take time and are about flicking the switch: bringing people along through co-created conversations and by presenting and accepting different lived experiences. Social movements are what we can galvanise around to generate a sense of being part of a community. It is this momentum, which we have built up in Council and capitalised on more broadly, which flows into our partnerships and relationships with the community.

The more Council see themselves as part of the community and break down the barriers, which exist to divide and make council inaccessible to the public the more seamless this influence will become.

There is much more work to be done to effect real change within the community. We know we are on the right track through demonstrated

examples such as the work happening at the Phoenix Youth Centre. Through Chris Lynch's continued engagement with PVAW, attending the short course, chairing the WRWG and his social justice framework for working with young people we have seen incredible impacts.

"There are quite a few examples when Rebecca went out to sporting clubs for example that has generated the follow-up discussions and provoked thought and conversations beyond just that one interaction. I think that has been a measure of success."

Georgie Hill reflective interview 2010

The self-written lyrics of the Respect, Courage and Integrity hip-hop track are incredibly inspiring and heartfelt. The enthusiasm for the Text Against Violence project and WRD event both indicates the awareness, knowledge and skill of young people, which consequently influences others. Both at the White Ribbon community event where the song was performed, texts displayed and young people present, a number of community and Council staff came up to me and expressed feelings of pride, inspiration and community connection. The impact evidence-based-action working can have on others witnessing is profound.

Chris has run respectful relationships between young men and women programs for years now. When he surveyed year nine boys coming fresh into the program in 2011 asking what they already knew about it over 90% talked about WRD. This suggests that the awareness in our community is beginning to increase because of Chris's ability and confidence to lead this work. It is important to note that this has happened because of the consistent mandate across Council and not just in service delivery areas. It has been the whole of council approach, which has enabled the environment for this work with young people to flourish and have an impact on such a diverse audience.

Effectively documented and disseminated evidence for primary prevention activity across local government and local

Over three years we have produced a variety of resources and shared the progressive learning from the project with a wide audience. The effectiveness of this documentation and dissemination is demonstrated through our sound PVAW partnerships and the role MCC have played in progressing the issue across the region and state. This evaluation report will contribute to the documentation and dissemination of MCC PVAW story.

The evaluation has found there is a sector of respect and desire for MCC learning, demonstrated through increasing requests from other Councils and organisations for respect and equity material and invitations to present the project locally, nationally and internationally.

The networking and capacity building website has provided a fantastic platform to promote MCC evidence and learn from others. Our successful advocacy to state government and the connections we are making through teams at Council with the community, suggest that both the evidence we are developing and our approach are having positive impacts.

The success of MCC contribution is in the sound evidence we are sharing, our methods for sharing it and our understanding that providing our evidence is also about listening to others

experience, needs and approach. Through the process of consolidating evidence regularly we have had the opportunity to reflect on what works and the best ways of communicating this with other staff at MCC and the wider audience.

The increasing invitations to present the project to various audiences has challenged us to consider how to communicate in a variety of different ways to suit the context and the audience. More importantly engaging with others on how to undertake primary prevention in local government has provided us with unique opportunities to learn and then integrate this into our practice at MCC.

Our effective documentation and dissemination is a result of increasing skills and knowledge at Council to undertake and evaluate evidence based activities and develop policy, planning and practice, which upholds and promotes gender respect and equity. As discussed earlier, this skill and practice development will only persist when there is a supportive culture at Council. A key element of this culture is the leadership and champions who embody PVAW. It is this interconnected way of working which we have found to have the most meaningful impact and produce evidence of how to effectively undertake PVAW in local government.

There have been many examples of our leaders in Council showcasing the project and demonstrating courage and integrity. Among MCC Councillors this public commitment is evidenced through quotes to the media, launching PVAW resources, participating in PVAW events, initiating incredibly innovative projects with the community, becoming White Ribbon Ambassadors, funding PVAW projects and sharing personal stories about how important this work is. We have invested a lot of energy to work with leaders at MCC to drive a whole of organisation approach, generate political will and promote this approach externally.

The benefits of other staff across Council speaking about the R&E project and sharing their learning has contributed significant impacts and built the capacity of those staff. To engage support and rally action we have supported people with different backgrounds, skills in different roles across Council and with varying experience to publically talk about PVAW. It's this practical demonstration that we all have something to contribute, we are all capable and we all need to work together (since violence against women affects everyone), which has had significant impact.

In championing PVAW, the WRWG are indirectly promoting the important role men have in PVAW. Wearing their t-shirts, developing resources, running White Ribbon events and having challenging conversations with colleagues have all been ways of promoting the evidence that by addressing the causes of violence, we can begin to stop it before it occurs.

Providing feedback to a western region health service developing a PVAW presentation:

Thanks Emma. You have been so helpful, I really appreciate you taking the time out to look at the presentation. I think your thoughts make it a lot more relatable to women and easy to understand.

Email 4 March 2011

There is always the risk when other people present the MCC respect and equity work that they will misrepresent, misconstrue and project their own biased assumptions into the delivery. We have often had to let go of technical language, more complex explanations and detail in preference to the benefits and experience of others talking about this work. It's this prioritising of the personal narrative, the provisional nature of truth and a collaborative approach, which has underpinned the respect and equity work. In rejecting the role of expert as the holder of all valid knowledge and information, we can empower everyone to become experts.

The release of this evaluation report is anticipated by other local governments, organisations and workplaces in Victoria and more broadly. How and where the findings from the project are shared will be important to whether the evidence is disseminated effectively. It is outside the scope of this project to do this work. We are currently developing a toolkit of resources on the Maribyrnong respect and equity experience. This will be available early 2012. With MCC

continued commitment to PVAW I am confident that we can continue to develop and evaluate practice and engage with others to share this.

Next steps

At the time of writing this report, Council are engaged in a range of PVAW activities:

- A 0.5EFT PVAW position will sit in the SCHP team for 12 months to work with teams across Council to embed gender equitable practice into their work, support the WRWG, develop a business case for an ongoing PVAW position in Council, seek external funding and promote the R&E report externally at events. The team are also working on further embedding gender as a determinant of health into the 2014-2018 Council Plan, which will incorporate the MPHP
- With funding and support from VicHealth, Council are developing a local government PVAW resource suite, organising a Maribyrnong Leaders Lunch, hosting a leaders symposium and trialling the Everyone Wins training for local sports clubs later in 2011
- MCC in partnership with the community are developing a range of gender equity statements to use across the municipality to promote gender equitable, safe and inclusive communities. These statements will be used in a range of ways and launched at the end of 2011
- MCC, Brimbank and Wyndham City Council were successful in receiving three and a half year funding from OWP to implement the PVAW in a community pilot. MCC is the auspice for this position.

Conclusion

The report and the report findings contribute to the local, state, national and international evidence base for PVAW. The significance of the project goes beyond the transferrable tools and approaches for local governments in Victoria to an international scene. The genesis of this work was in the GLOVE international research project and this has shaped our approach. The respect and equity work over the last three years has pioneered practice, which draws from an international context and makes it real and locally relevant for the Maribyrnong community at this time.

Gender violence prevention requires a long term commitment and sufficient allocation of resources to have a sustainable impact on the key determinants of violence. The systemic and societal nature of the causes of violence against women are entrenched in society and require a concerted, comprehensive and sustainable approach led by all levels of government across a number of settings to achieve and embed change.

Within MCC there is a strong desire and commitment to continue this work. The evaluation has found that by working with others, using a range of approaches and the VicHealth framework, emerging evidence and a gendered understanding of violence, we can make a difference. By being responsive to different ideas, opportunities and the specific needs of Council and the community we have had more impact and brought people along, so that they truly feel connected, capable and want to continue. This voluntary action demonstrated through Council public leadership, resourcing, the evolution of the WRWG and the work happening in various teams including the Phoenix Youth Centre is the most significant impact of the project.

It is this voluntary action which leads to the development of policies to ensure this work continues beyond individual initiative. It inspires others to also get involved and it continues in individuals beyond their time at work into their various roles in family, social groups and in their community.

Our approach has been:

- Developmental

- Contextual
- Consultative, collaborative and reflective
- Accommodate diversity and change
- Embrace contradictions
- Avoid essentialist ways of thinking and assumptions
- Recognising and celebrating that everyone has different strengths, experiences and will engage with this in different ways.

Using this approach we have opened the organisation to have conversations they have never had before. We have begun on the path to preventing violence against women and we have done this together. The R&E project has been the Maribyrnong way. This way will hopefully develop as the organisation continues to engage and embed the practice of creating a community which is safe, equitable, and inclusive and celebrates diversity for everyone.

6. Recommendations

Eliminating violence against women requires courageous leadership and a long-term investment in a range of concurrent mutually reinforcing approaches. These strategies must be grounded in a gendered understanding of violence and informed by evidence and ongoing program development and evaluation. Preventing violence against women (PVAW) before it occurs in the first place requires a shift in awareness, attitudes and behaviours. It requires a shift in culture. Local government is an ideal setting to achieve practical impacts within the organisation and subsequently the community.



Based on the evaluation criteria discussion and findings, these recommendations in combination and in context, have emerged as essential to undertake and continue PVAW efforts across local government and can be organised under these broad themes:

- Provide leadership and support
- Increase awareness and capacity to create gender equitable environments
- Increase and share skills and knowledge
- Undertake and evaluate evidence based activities
- Support and promote a respectful, inclusive, gender equitable culture

6.1 Provide leadership and support

Role models and leaders have the capacity to inspire, challenge the status quo, bring others along on the journey and promote the values of diversity, inclusion, respect and equity. Role models are essential players in creating and sustaining cultural change.

Councillors as the elected political leaders representing the community have an important role to advocate for political leadership and guidance at a state level and national level. Violence against women is the leading contributor to death, disability and illness in Victorian women between the ages of 15 and 44. Political and community efforts must demonstrate equal effort to prevent this.

Within the context of this project, leaders within local government are fantastic allies and advocates for PVAW. As an employer, Council can support and promote champions and create significantly more impact across the organisation which will flow into the community. Leaders from across the organisation, not just those in traditional hierarchical positions of power, bring a range of perspectives, styles and approaches. When these are all happening side by side to promote gender respect and equity, the mutually reinforced message generates momentum and change. Supporting this diversity is another way of prioritising a contextual, experiential approach to PVAW. It recognises and values that we all have unique perspective and experience of the world and we can contribute to PVAW in a unique way.

Equally, local government are able to support the leaders and role models in the community. An essential element to preventing violence against women, is to increase the active participation of women in civic and political life. Local government have the capacity and responsibility to positively effect the experience of women in the organisation and community.

Recommendations for local government:

- Courageous political leaders advocating for and promoting PVAW within the community and to local, state and federal government
- Strong organisational leadership and commitment demonstrated through visionary gendered policy, resourcing, strategic direction, planning and practice
- Ongoing organisational support, gender training and PVAW skill development for men and women across the organisation to become champions

- Affirmative action to address the gender imbalance and support women to be representatives in local government, committees and decision making positions within Council and the community
- Meaningful, accessible formal structures and informal opportunities for women in the community to engage with, advise and advocate to local government
- Encourage and welcome the participation of all women in the community through gender equity community grants, women's civic awards, gendered program development, resource allocation, city design and a gendered approach to working with the media, educational institutions, sporting clubs, community health and through the various Council partnerships.

6.2 Increase awareness and capacity to create gender equitable environments

Local governments have the reach, resources and opportunity to increase the awareness and capacity of their local community to create a gender equitable and respectful place to be. In order to do this local governments need to focus initially on increasing the awareness and capacity internally. Recognition that violence against women is prevalent and preventable needs to occur before skills, commitment and action usually takes place.

The movement between awareness, capacity, commitment, skill, action and sustained culture change is fluid and circular. Council, council staff and community will identify themselves at different points depending on the situation. Awareness raising activities need to happen in conjunction with the other recommendations made in this report to ensure that change over time is successful, contextualised and sustained.

Awareness is raised through a variety of mediums and a range of strategies. As a workplace local government can reinforce consistent messages promoting gender equity, respectful relationships between men and women and address attitudes, beliefs and behaviours which support violence against women. These messages need to be embedded through organisational policy and practice to ensure its sustainability.

Local governments can provide training opportunities for staff, host and attend PVAW events, support PVAW networks, undertake in research projects and review Council practices through a gendered lens. Through the workplace culture, Council can support sharing information and experiences and encourage staff to think about, talk about and integrate PVAW into their core business.

The resources and knowledge to build local government and capacity exist in the family violence sector, women's health organisations and through local and international research and evidence. By working with these sectors as well as other local governments, awareness and capacity can be enhanced and strong partnerships developed to support skill development and positive action.

Popular social media campaigns and movements such as White Ribbon Day (WRD), International Women's Day, Week to End Violence, Reclaim the Night and Not One More are accessible ways to link into resources and recognisable messages to build awareness. These campaigns in and of themselves do not create social change, but can be used as platforms to launch other work. The international reach of some of these media campaigns and public celebrities promoting the PVAW can positively influence and inspire others to begin to take action.

Through the close connections local governments have with the community, this awareness raising can happen concurrently and the journey can be shared together. However, it is important that some parts of Council already demonstrating PVAW leadership and knowledge, guide this process thoughtfully.

Local governments can engage in healthy dialogue about PVAW with the media, educational institutions, sporting clubs, community health and other community partners to increase

Council awareness and involvement with those that local government frequently works with. This dialogue over time increases confidence to discuss gendered violence prevention and also begins to normalise conversation and action to prevent violence against women and promote gender equity.

Recommendations for local government:

- Tailor PVAW messaging through the organisation which is relevant, inclusive, respectful, simple and easy to connect with. Make the personal political
- Promote and participate in social marketing campaigns which raise awareness of violence against women and promote gender equity
- Provide and promote PVAW resources, access to training, internal and external events and conversations on creating gender equitable environments
- Promote gender equitable, respectful relationships between men and women and a peaceful, inclusive community where women live free from violence and fear of violence as a Council vision and develop strategies to achieve this
- Undertake a local government gendered policy and facilities audit with resources to implement the recommendations
- In conjunction with staff across the Council, develop localised resources, stories, events and messaging which is relevant and meaningful to the local government
- Participate in, support and advocate for all Council partnerships to embed the principles of PVAW into their core function.

6.3 Increase and share skills and knowledge

Local government staff need to be encouraged and supported formally, through policy and processes, and informally, through a culture in the organisation to develop skills and knowledge to effectively integrate PVAW into their work.

Conventionally skills and knowledge are increased through external training, access to resources and tools like factsheets, templates, audit tools, and checklists. However, through strong innovative leadership and an enabling culture, skills and knowledge are more dramatically increased and sustained when there is informal constant communication and consideration of PVAW in all practice at Council.

More formalised tools and training have much less impact than an hour long lunch time conversation such as 'what is the difference between gender equity and equality'. When staff work together for months on developing a PVAW event or WRD t-shirt slogan, the skills and knowledge, commitment and connection developed during that process outweigh a theoretical how-to list or externally run workshop.

This action research approach validates individual experience, contributes to building evidence of good practice, engages people as experts of their own environment and brings people together, so that new skills and knowledge are incorporated into existing ways of doing things and are more likely to be sustained.

Local government can provide the expert respect and gender equity staff to support these internal processes and conversations, offer guidance and advice, research and evidence, connections to the PVAW sector, leadership and advocacy to management. Skills and knowledge are best developed in an environment of trust, understanding and mutual respect. Without someone within the organisation to build the relationships across the organisation, and drive skill and knowledge development, external training will only have partial benefits. The most successful and unexpected results of developing staff skills and knowledge is when everyone is engaged, sharing and doing PVAW. These moments can be triggered by participating in training, listening to a family violence survivor advocate speak, workshoping ideas with other local governments, in conversation after a meeting or over the desk. These moments provide an opportunity to take action, trial and build specific skills in the process.

Through strong partnerships with PVAW training organisations, the family violence sector and women's health organisations and other local governments, Councils can link into a variety of supports, ideas, training, workshops and tools to enable these trigger moments. Through these partnerships, local governments can provide resources and political leadership to coordinate further PVAW work across the community and continue to embed a PVAW culture.

Recommendations for local government:

- Maintain strong partnerships with women's health organisations, the family violence sector and PVAW research and funding bodies
- Provide ongoing funding within Council for a specific respect and equity coordinator
- Ensure regular opportunities for all staff to participate in PVAW activities, workshops, training, conferences and PVAW networks
- Enhance and strengthen a determinates approach to health and wellbeing throughout Council planning and practice and evaluate all Council action against health and wellbeing outcomes
- Facilitate conversations, information sharing and opportunities to promote practice and learning through Council, partnerships and community networks
- Encourage all staff to make use of and contribute to local through to international sex disaggregated data, research, good practice stories, tools and resources
- Link in to other initiatives, opportunities and projects undertaking evidence based PVAW practice.

6.4 Undertake and evaluate evidence based activities

Developing and implementing primary prevention strategies are most successful when they are informed and supported by research, evidence, experience and insight. The World Health Organisation and UNIFEM have made significant contribution to the international discourse and evidence on how to prevent violence against women. Local governments, as the level of government closest to the community, are able to interpret and use this research to generate practical impacts within local communities and neighbourhoods.

Local governments have the opportunity to contribute back and enhance the practice evidence and research, by undertaking and evaluating local PVAW initiatives and activities. Research and evidence is only significant and meaningful when there is a direct connection between the high level theory and vision and on the ground practice.

Hence evaluation is an equally essential part of undertaking evidence based activities. PVAW is a growing field of practice. To improve outcomes, we must continue to develop and share the learning. Evidence is also a strong advocacy tool which can be used to campaign for broader structural change. It legitimates and guides the role of local government in PVAW and gives voice to the lived reality.

The VicHealth research and framework for action provides a solid basis from which to develop evidence based activities. This framework has informed the work at Maribyrnong. The practice wisdom and knowledge held in the family violence and women's health sector is also valuable to ensure primary prevention initiatives have integrity, are relevant to women's lived experience and violence prevention remains a gender issue.

To ensure local government approach is appropriate, relevant, empowering and making a difference it needs to be engaging with the tertiary sector and guided by the VicHealth framework. The risk in not using evidence to plan is activities may be tokenistic, patronising and coloured by prejudice or stereotype. They may be unintentionally narrow or scattered in focus, misdirected and disconnected from the lived experience. Not only will this result in no positive impact, but have the potential for causing detrimental impacts and may undermine other PVAW evidence based activities happening elsewhere.

Recommendations for local government:

- Partner with research institutions and other organisations to undertake PVAW research and evaluation projects
- Ensure all policy, planning and practice across Council is informed and contributing to sound local and international research and data is sex disaggregated
- Prioritise participatory empowering models of evaluation which recognise the value of the individual experience
- Engage in local and state networks and partnerships including the family violence sector and specific PVAW groups
- Advocate to all departments within State and Commonwealth Government to use PVAW research and provide evidence based funding, policy, planning and activities.

6.5 Support and promote a respectful, inclusive, gender equitable culture

To influence organisational culture, local governments need to implement a diverse range of individual and structural strategies and approaches. These strategies must be embedded in evidence based practice and policy to sustain an organisational culture which actively supports gender respect and equity. They must be actively promoted and enacted by champions and the leaders across the organisation. A long term sustained effort is necessary to create a healthy PVAW culture that doesn't regress when staff leave or the elected political leaders change.

Culture persists through societal beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. As a leader in the community, local government have a responsibility to role model a culture of respectful, inclusive, gender equitable beliefs, attitudes and behaviours to influence the community. There are a range of mediums which channel, promote and enforce cultural beliefs and attitudes and influence behaviours. Local governments have connections to these settings and are able to influence culture through partnerships such as with all levels of government, the media and popular culture, sporting clubs and social groups, schools, workplaces, cyberspace, faith and military institutions and so on.

Prioritising the inclusion of PVAW across local government encourages an expectation for this to continue and a normalcy develops. It slowly becomes commonplace to include PVAW messaging, consideration and approaches to all Council business. This supports the development of skills, confidence and commitment. Changing attitudes and practice are reinforced in structural support such as policy. Embedding PVAW into the council structural framework ensures practice is not driven by individual whim, external funding, interpretation and need for constant advocacy - they provide the foundations for culture to wrap around and be guided by.

Individual, organisational and structural supports lend to a sense of connection, cohesion and purpose. When people feel proud of and included in the culture, a more harmonious, respectful and non-discriminatory environment can flourish.

Recommendations for local government:

- Embed a gendered perspective through all organisational policy, planning and practice
- Advocate through the settings for consistent messaging, practice and infrastructure which supports an inclusive, respectful and gender equitable culture
- Develop partnerships and undertake evidence based practice with the local communities to role model gender equity
- Through strong political leadership advocate for a PVAW culture in all levels of government
- Demonstrate courageous leadership within the organisation to formally and informally contribute to an inclusive, respectful and gender equitable culture
- Promote an atmosphere in Council where conversations thrive, opportunities for creatively and innovatively working together are supported.

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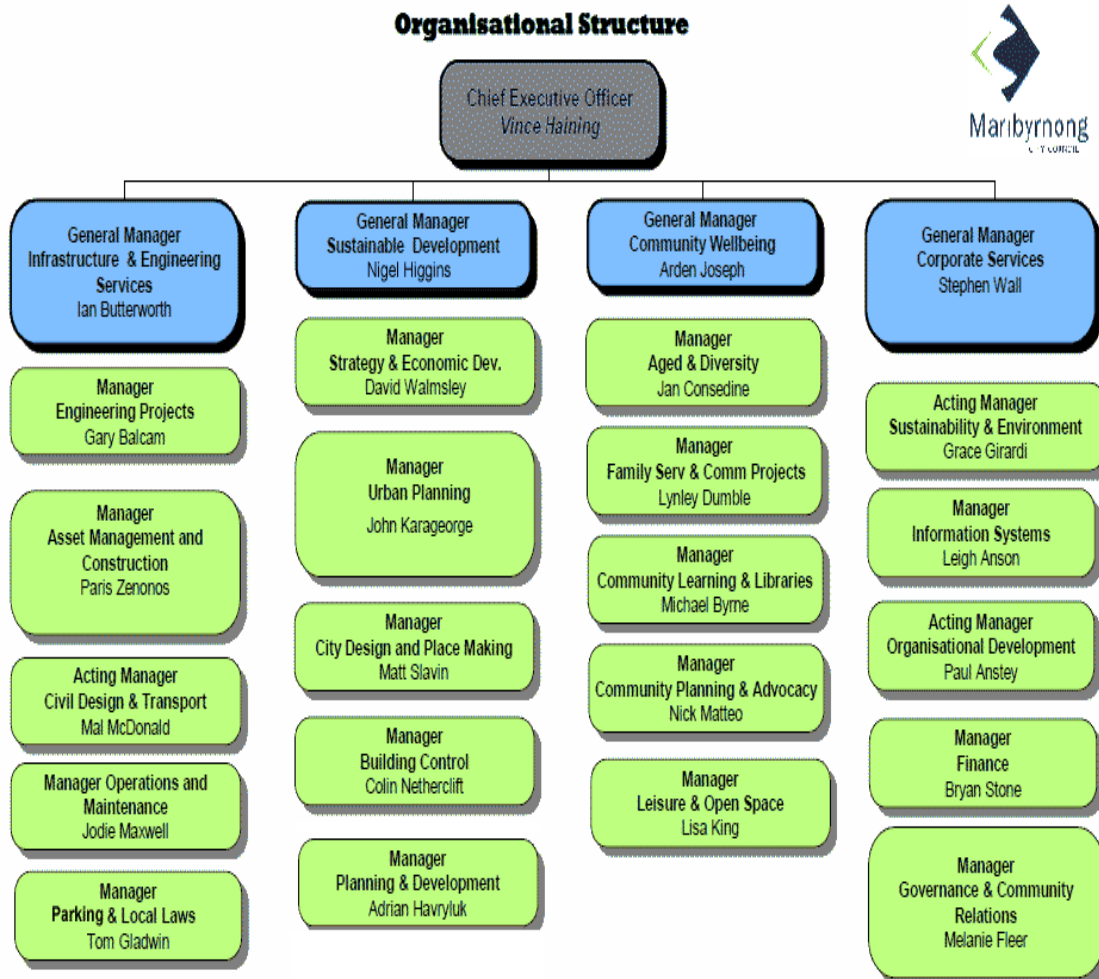
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8. Appendices

- Appendix 8.1 MCC organisational structure
- Appendix 8.2 MCC staff survey 2011
- Appendix 8.3 Gender facilities audit (2008) key themes and findings
- Appendix 8.4 Gender facilities audit review (2011)
- Appendix 8.5 PVAW Council reports 2006-2010
- Appendix 8.6 Background to integrating the MPHP into the Council Plan
- Appendix 8.7 Council PVAW annual actions 2008-2011
- Appendix 8.8 Annual community survey PVAW questions 2009
- Appendix 8.9 2009-2010 community grants addressing one or more determinants of violence against women
- Appendix 8.10 Respect & equity presentations

Appendix 8.1 MCC organisational structure



Appendix 8.2 MCC staff survey 2011

MARIBYRNONG RESPECT AND EQUITY: PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN PROJECT

STAFF SURVEY

Super Prizes for you to WIN by Participating in this Survey
 Complete this survey and WIN either a \$50, \$30 or \$20 Coles Myer gift voucher! This survey will likely take 5-10 minutes to complete.

Who Should Complete this Survey

This survey is for everyone who works at Maribyrnong City Council.
 2 years ago staff at Council completed this survey to help shape the Maribyrnong Respect and Equity: Preventing Violence Against Women Project. This project works across Council raising awareness and influencing attitudes and behaviour towards women by;
 Promoting equitable and respectful relationships between men and women
 Supporting a gender-equitable, safe and inclusive work environment and
 Role-modelling non-violent, non-discriminatory social norms.

In order to learn where Council is 2 years on and meaningfully progress this work we are asking you to complete the survey. Your answers are valuable and much appreciated. The results will also inform the evaluation report published later this year.

Your responses to this survey are anonymous and the results will not be able to identify you personally

Please fill in this survey:

- even if you think your area has nothing to do with preventing violence against women
- even if you're not sure what violence against women is
- even if you've never heard of preventing violence against women

Thanks!

1. Which area of Council best describes your unit (please tick)?

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Corporate Services | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sustainable Development | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Infrastructure Services | <input type="checkbox"/> | Community Wellbeing | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2. What is your role at Council (please tick)?

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| CEO / General Manager | <input type="checkbox"/> | Team Leader | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Manager | <input type="checkbox"/> | Team member / officer | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Coordinator | <input type="checkbox"/> | Councillor | <input type="checkbox"/> |

3. Are you female or male (please tick)?

- | | | | |
|--------|--------------------------|------|--------------------------|
| Female | <input type="checkbox"/> | Male | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--------|--------------------------|------|--------------------------|

4. Please leave your name if you would like to enter the competition to win one of three Coles Myer Vouchers

5. What is your understanding of the term 'violence against women'?

6. Has your understanding of the term 'violence against women' changed over the time you've been at Council?

Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate partner violence refers to violence occurring between people who are, or were, in an intimate relationship. It can include physical and sexual violence as well as economic, psychological and emotional abuse.

7. Who is the main victim of intimate partner violence (please tick)?

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Mainly men | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mainly women | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Both, but men more often | <input type="checkbox"/> | Both, but women more often | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Both men and women equally | <input type="checkbox"/> | None of the above | <input type="checkbox"/> |

8. Who mainly commits intimate partner violence (please tick)?

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Mainly men | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mainly women | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Both, but men more often | <input type="checkbox"/> | Both, but women more often | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Both men and women equally | <input type="checkbox"/> | None of the above | <input type="checkbox"/> |

9. Please rate the following statements (please tick):

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. Violence against women is a serious issue for our community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Intimate partner violence is a private issue to be handled in the family.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Most people who experience intimate partner violence are reluctant to go to the Police.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. One of the causes of intimate partner violence is unequal power between men and women.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Local governments have a role to play in preventing violence against women.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Violence against women is one of the most common public health issues in our community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Have you heard of the *Maribyrnong Respect and Equity: Preventing Violence Against Women Action* project?

- Yes No

11. If yes, what *Preventing Violence Against Women* activities are you aware of?

12. In your job at Council do you see yourself as having a role in preventing violence against women?

- Yes No Unsure

13. If yes or no please describe why?

14. Are you interested in being involved in the work Council is doing to prevent violence against women through the White Ribbon Working Group?

- Yes No Unsure

15. If yes, what is your name?_____

16. Violence against women is a very important issue. Please take a moment to think about what Council can do to prevent violence against women in our community. Please share your ideas below.

17. Do you have any further comments on your role or the role of Council or the issue in general?

Appendix 8.3 Gender facilities audit (2008) key themes and findings

Gender Facilities Audit 2008 Key General Themes and Findings
<p>Social Inclusion and Community Building</p> <p>Facilities audited were found to be strongly inclusive with significant effort being made to encourage local participation from the diverse Maribyrnong community. This was demonstrated by both formal and informal practices, including the Women's Swim Night at the Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre, and by the tolerance of people experiencing homelessness at the Footscray Library.</p> <p>Policies and practices at all facilities provided clear evidence of services with a sound understanding of the communities they serve, and are a part of. Employees as diverse as lifeguards and librarians were found to be doing active community building on a daily basis, and are to be commended for this.</p> <p>High Attendance Rates</p> <p>It became clear during the course of the assessment process that Council facilities take on many additional informal roles in disadvantaged communities, in a way in which they perhaps do not do in other communities. Because of the lack of resources and options available to those experiencing disadvantage, utilisation rates and community expectations of Council facilities is high.</p> <p>The library becomes a place of refuge, the pool and all day activity for local young people with limited finances. This is great because it makes them dynamic and active places for diverse groups within the Maribyrnong community, including women. However, the challenge comes in the additional pressure this can place on these both male and female staff and the facilities themselves. It means that library staff become a referral point for the homeless, or pool staff find bathers for those who come with nothing, wanting a swim.</p>
<p>Young People</p> <p>An identified gap at a number of facilities, including the MAC, RecWest, Footscray Library and Braybrook Community Centre, was young people. This is a concern because of research that indicates the higher levels of violence experienced – as both perpetrators and victims - by young adolescent men and women, particularly those that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reside in areas with concentrated disadvantage • reside in areas with low levels of social cohesion • who have been exposed to interpersonal and collective violence • who are delinquent • who experience a level of social isolation • who are from cultural groups with traditional views about gender roles and relationships. <p>This identified gap in attendance is compounded by reports from several facilities of aggressive behaviour and violence by groups of local young people in Braybrook.</p>
<p>Car Parks</p> <p>As is the case with many safety audits, car parks emerged as an area of particular concern to many staff and community members throughout the audit process. Issues regarding safe car parking emerged at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RecWest • Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre • Roberts Street Maternal and Child Health • Angliss Children's Centre • Work Centre • Maidstone Community Centre
<p>Working Alone</p> <p>A further issue to emerge at a number of site visits related to staff – in the interests of this project, particularly female staff – working alone. There are a number of Council facilities where female staff may be working on their own for significant periods during the day or at night, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RecWest • Maidstone Community Centre • Roberts Street Maternal and Child Health Centre

Appendix 8.4 Gender facilities audit review (2011)

Gender Facilities Audit Review 2011
<p>General Recommendation 1: Accreditation Scheme</p> <p>Council to consider developing an accreditation scheme for local community services and businesses that are identified as Safer Places for Women. This could be similar to the Canadian Safer Bars Program, and require participants to undertake a site assessment as well as training. Participants could be recognised by logo/sticker displayed at the entrance, and incentives could include free promotion via council avenues, including Maribyrnong News and local newspapers.</p> <p>There is a lack of clarity about how such an accreditation scheme might work and the levels of required resourcing. These include coordination; training; criteria and incentives for businesses involvement. It is also unclear if the assumption underlying this recommendation is that businesses would be able to provide safety for women if violence was occurring in a public space, or whether the purpose was to signify community opposition to violence against women and violence supporting attitudes (similar to the Safe Place program in Sydney).</p> <p>In Sydney, the Safe Place program has been running for a number of years and aims to provide a network of businesses and community organisations across NSW that people can use if fearful of street-based homophobic violence. There are currently over 200 Safe Places throughout New South Wales. A Safe Place sticker identifies each location as being part of the Safe Place program. The sticker is usually attached to a door or window that faces the street. Stickers are valid for the years indicated. This ensures that Safe Place locations are always up-to-date with information and support.</p> <p>However, the development of the Gender Equity public statement, and the multiple forms this could take (eg branding, text or other visual), could be used to highlight business and community support for gender equity and safe spaces for women.</p>
<p>General Recommendation 2: Maribyrnong Grameen Bank</p> <p>Council to consider establishment of a Maribyrnong Grameen Bank, providing micro-finance to local women experiencing socio-economic disadvantage to establish small businesses or undertake training (for example, textiles, catering, cleaning, clothing, training etc.) This strategy recognises the high level of socio-economic disadvantage experienced in many areas of the municipality and the increased risk of violence towards women with low levels of financial autonomy.</p> <p>Micro-finance is not a traditional role of local government in Australia. Only one LGA in Australia (Alice Springs) provides micro-finance services. Neither the processes, the funding or the capacity is currently available within local government.</p> <p>Local agencies, such as the Brotherhood of St Laurence and Good Shepherd, have long established microfinance programs and expertise and remain best placed to deliver micro-finance schemes . In 2011, after a significant period of time of being non-operational, the Maribyrnong No Interest Loans Scheme (the Scheme) has been relaunched. The Scheme offers eligible residents of Maribyrnong, low income earners and families, the opportunity to access interest free and affordable credit up to \$1,000, for the purchase of essential items. Wesley Footscray Outreach auspices and operates the Scheme, supported by a Management Committee comprising a representative from Council, various community agencies and other individuals.</p> <p>Through Council's Community Partnership team, Council has previously partnered with National Australia Bank volunteers to run financial literacy programs in the community.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3: CALD Women in Maternal and Child Health and Children's Services</p> <p>Council to consider strategies to enhance the involvement of women from CALD backgrounds in formal group structures in Maternal and Child Health and Children's Services. Low rates of women from CALD communities in these structures are a concern because of the links between violence against women and levels of community connectedness, social cohesion and pregnancy.</p> <p>Fundraising initiatives like World Food Days or Food Festivals might be an avenue to encourage local women from CALD backgrounds to become involved in Committees of Management at local Children's Centres.</p> <p>Both the Early Years and Maternal and Child Health teams have implemented actions to increase the</p>

number of CALD women in their formal structures, with varying degrees of success.

Parents from CALD backgrounds attending supported playgroups participated in Playgroup Leader Training in February-March 2011. Eleven CALD participants participated in the six day training session. This included learning about playgroups and early years services, allied health, first aid and food handling.

The number of supported playgroups has increased from 2009 to 2011, with around half of all supported playgroups targeted at CALD families.

However, there are a number of CALD communities that have been difficult to engage with and support into formal structures, including Japanese and Horn of African communities. In more gentrified suburbs of Maribyrnong and Yarraville, the playgroups remain predominately Anglo-Saxon.

General Recommendation 4: Community Audits

Council to consider utilising the assessment/audit tool to enable women (and perhaps men) in the community and Council staff of both genders to undertake safety audits in a range of community settings.

Although training on safety audits has not been conducted with Council staff, local service providers or community members, the tool has been disseminated and adapted by other local governments within Victoria and internationally (Canada and Papua New Guinea). Within the broader scope of the Respect and Equity, insufficient resourcing was allocated to the implementation of audit recommendations and the development of an overarching audit tool for use in new developments and redevelopments.

General Recommendation 5: Local Youth in Braybrook – Sudanese Origin

Council to consider ways in which to engage with and understand issues facing young men in Braybrook, particularly those of Sudanese origin. Some options for consideration are:

- A partnership project with Sunshine Magistrates Children's Court to undertake early intervention by working intensively with young men from Braybrook to connect them with local schools, employment, community services etc
- A partnership with the Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI) to provide spaces for the community to hear these young men's stories, and promote understanding and cohesion.

A cross-section of Council teams (including Community centres, Youth Services and Safer Communities and Health Promotion), Victoria Police and local NGOs have implemented community development and diversion programs to better engage with young men who use public spaces in Braybrook. While there was a perception among staff that levels of violence had decreased between 2008 – 2010, in early 2011, there was a sharp increase in the number of violent incidents occurring in public spaces in Braybrook, namely at Skinner Pavilion. These include assaults, arson and theft. There has also been an increase in the amount of injecting drug use in the area and public overdoses. Council, Victoria Police and local agencies have been involved in developing complementary community safety and community engagement responses.

Whilst it is important to engage young men, it is equally important that resilience building strategies and community support services are targeted at and accessible to young women in Braybrook, as a determinant of VAW. Although some young women have been engaged through projects at Phoenix Youth Centre focusing on self esteem (in conjunction with Footscray Police Youth Liaison Officer) and programs for young women and girls are mainstreamed into other larger programs, the majority of work by both Council and other agencies is focused on young men.

General Recommendation 6: Council Secondment Program to Community Facilities

Council to consider establishing a secondment program to encourage male staff to undertake short-medium term positions at community facilities.

As most of the centres visited were overwhelmingly staffed by women, it would be beneficial to have some men in these centres, who may then be in a position to encourage local men in the community to become more involved.

Research shows that men and women with higher levels of community connectedness are less likely to either perpetrate, or be victims of, violence.

This strategy also recognises the wide range of skills that many Council staff have in relation to community building, and would also provide a means of further professional development and community based education that a later stage could become formally accredited.

The gender balance of Council staff at community centres remains very unbalanced, with only one male staff member employed across the three community centres, and only a part time basis. In many of Council's Community Wellbeing teams, in particular Maternal and Child Health, Safer Communities and Health Promotion, Early Years teams, there is a majority of female staff members in both service delivery and program/policy development roles. Similarly, there is a dominance of male staff in many teams, such as Parking and Local Laws, Asset Management and the Works Centre.

The areas where there is a staffing gender imbalance reflects sectors where there are long-term gender imbalances in both training and employment, in sectors that are perceived as 'feminine' or 'masculine'. This has well known ramifications on remuneration and perceived value and status of careers. While there are a number of national and state initiatives in place to attract women to 'masculine' occupations and men to 'feminine'; occupations, within Council's scope is the ability to implement gender positive recruitment strategies to increase the gender balance within specific teams. This may include a quota system (after seeking EEO exemption), traineeships, and language in position descriptions which states that men/women are encouraged to apply.

General Recommendation 7:

Working Alone Policy

Council to continue development of the Working Alone Policy, encompassing a gender overlay of staff safety issues.

Council's Working Alone Policy was endorsed in June 2010. The policy outlines the procedures to identify generic risks associated with working alone, and an overview of control measures that could be implemented. However, there is a lack of specific detail within the procedures for assessment and the control measures.

The policy is not gender neutral and does not acknowledge the specific risks for women working alone, or recognise the high number of women working in isolated conditions in Council facilities such as MCH centres and community centres.

The isolated working conditions for female staff in community centres was raised by staff during the 2011 facilities analysis. Whilst community centre staff had implemented their own working alone procedures, there were not aware of that the Council Policy had been finalised.

Appendix 8.5 PVAW Council reports 2006-2010

PVAW Council Reports 2006-2010		
Forum	Report Title	Purpose
2006		
7 th February Councillor Briefing Meeting	GLOVE making the links	Inform Council of a new project entitled "Gender, Local Governance, and Violence Prevention: Making The Links".
14 th February Community Access and Strategic Planning Meeting	GLOVE making the links	Inform Council of a new project entitled "Gender, Local Governance, and Violence Prevention: Making The Links".
21 st February Ordinary Council Meeting	Gender, Local Governance & Violence Prevention Project - Council Nomination To World Urban Forum	Seek Council's endorsement of a Council representative to attend the world Urban Forum in Vancouver as required under the project "Gender, Local Governance and Violence Prevention: Making the Links".
<p>Officer recommendation /council resolution: That Council nominate the Coordinator Health & Community Safety to be the Council representative on the Gender, Local Governance & Violence Prevention Project and to attend the World Urban Forum on 19 June 2006. Cr J. Rossiter/Cr C. Cumming response That Council request that the State Government provides the cost of the airfare and accommodation expenses incurred by Maribyrnong Council in sending a representative to participate in the violence prevention activities at the World Urban Forum in Vancouver 19/6/2006 and State Government funds any further initiatives that are agreed to as a result of that forum.</p>		
10th October Community Access and Strategic Planning Meeting	World Urban Forum Report And Gender Local Governance And Violence Prevention Update	Report back on the World Urban Forum held in Vancouver in June 2006 and to update Council on the Gender Local Governance and Violence Prevention Project.
2007		
11 th September Community Access and Strategic Planning Meeting	Presentation of PVAW action plan	PowerPoint presentation
16th October Ordinary Council Meeting	Maribyrnong PVAW Action Plan	Present the results of the consultation and to seek Council endorsement of the Maribyrnong <i>Preventing Violence Against Women Action Plan 2007-2008</i>
<p>Officer recommendation /council resolution: That Council adopt the <i>Maribyrnong Preventing Violence Against Women Action Plan 2007-2008</i>. Moved by: Cr Cumming Seconded by: Cr Rossiter</p>		
2008		
8 th July Community Access and Strategic Planning Meeting	Maribyrnong PVAW phase 2	Update Council on the progress of the <i>Preventing Violence Against Women Action Plan 2007-2008</i> Inform Council of the additional Vic Health funding for Preventing Violence Against Women and outline the project goals and objectives Seek Council's endorsement of the Victorian Local Government Women's Charter.
<p>OFFICER RECOMMENDATION: That: 1. Council endorse the Victorian Local Government Women's Charter and write to VLGA expressing commitment. 2. Council note the update on the Preventing Violence Against Women Action Plan 2007-2008 and</p>		

Maribyrnong City Council

directions for phase 2. Committee Resolution: 1. Council endorse the Victorian Local Government Women's Charter and write to the Women's Participation in Local Government Coalition, the Australian Local Government Women's Association, the Municipal Association of Victoria and the Victorian Local Governance Association, expressing commitment. 2. Council note the update on the Preventing Violence Against Women Action Plan 2007-2008 and directions for phase 2. Moved by: Cr Cumming Seconded by: Cr Lynch		
2009		
25 th March Memo to Councillors	Getting Women's Health on Your Local Government Agenda Workshop	invite Councillors to attend the Getting Women's Health on Your Local Government Agenda workshop organised by the Victorian Local Governance Association, Women's Health in the North and Women's Health West. The workshop is for councillors and council officers to explore strategies to achieve better health and well being for women in the community and opportunities to strengthen local government's role in women's health.
29 th April Memo to Councillors		One of the outcomes of the GLOVE project was the development and distribution of a set of fact sheets for local governments based on the research findings. The fact sheets cover the following topics: Creating local partnerships around violence prevention Creating local policies, programs and practices to prevent violence Getting local data about violence Evaluating crime prevention Maribyrnong City Council has been highlighted as an example in three of the four fact sheets
14 th April Community Access and Strategic Planning Meeting	Women's Health West	Robyn Gregory CEO from Women's Health West present to Council the <i>Safe, Well and Connected: Victorian Local Government Action Plan for Women's Health 2008-2012</i> .
14 th April Community Access and Strategic Planning Meeting	Maribyrnong Preventing Violence Against Women	Update to Council on the following initiatives: The Maribyrnong Respect and Equity: Preventing Violence Against Women Project The Gender Local Governance and Violence Prevention (GLOVE) research project The Safe, Well and Connected: Victorian Local Government Action Plan for Women's Health 2008-2012. To provide background information to the CASP presentation by Women's HealthWest.
14 th June Community Access and Strategic Planning Meeting	Safe, Well and Connected: Victorian Local Government Action Plan For Women's Health 2008	PowerPoint presentation
14 th July Community Access and Strategic Planning Meeting	Safe, Well and Connected: Victorian Local Government Action Plan For Women's Health 2008	Response to a request from Councilors' (at the April 2009 Community Access and Strategic Policy meeting), following Robyn Gregory's presentation to Council on the Safe, Well and Connected: Victorian Local Government Action Plan for Women's Health 2008-2012. The purpose of this report is to outline Council's current position in relation to the 4 priority areas and 9 actions prioritised in the action plan.
4 th November Executive Management Team Meeting presentation	Family Violence Policy	The Family Violence Policy has been developed to promote an organisational culture that does not tolerate or condone violence. The policy explicitly outlines Council's commitment to this

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		issue and details a procedure to support employees who are victims of violence and to respond to employees who commit acts or threats of family violence.
2010		
21 September Ordinary meeting	Preventing Violence Against Women Project	The following Notice of Motion has been submitted in accordance with the Governance Local Law and Code of Meeting Procedure.
<p>Officer Recommendation/council resolution: That Council hear the following Notice of Motion: NM07/206 – Cr Carter Preventing Violence Against Women Project</p> <p>That, in line with Council's Respect and Equity: Preventing Violence Against Women Project, Council receive a report in December 2010 on options where Council may publicly acknowledge its aspirations and raise community awareness to prevent violence against women, promote respectful relationships between men and women and promote gender equity. Moved by: Cr Carter Seconded by: Cr C Cumming</p>		
29 September Executive Management Team Meeting	Preventing Violence Against Women	Update Council on the progress of the Maribyrnong Respect and Equity Project: Preventing Violence Against Women. Seek, the in principle endorsement Preventing Violence Together Western Region Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women. Seek endorsement of the 10 Point Plan for the Victorian Women's Health 2010 – 2014 developed by Victorian Women's Health Services.
12 th October Councillors Briefing Meeting	Preventing Violence Against Women	Brief Council on the progress of the Maribyrnong Respect and Equity Project: Preventing Violence Against Women, The Preventing Violence Together Western Region Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women, and the 10 Point Plan for the Victorian Women's Health 2010 – 2014.
19 th October Ordinary Councillors Meeting	Preventing Violence Against Women	Update Council on the progress of the Maribyrnong Respect and Equity Project: Preventing Violence Against Women. Seek, the in principle endorsement Preventing Violence Together Western Region Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women. Seek endorsement of the 10 Point Plan for the Victorian Women's Health 2010 – 2014 developed by Victorian Women's Health Services.
<p>Officer recommendation /council resolution: That Council: Note the update on the Maribyrnong Respect and Equity: Preventing Violence Against Women Project Adopt, in-principle, the Preventing Violence Together Western Region Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women Formalise Council's endorsement of the Preventing Violence Together Western Region Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women at the launch on 2 December 2010 Endorse the 10 Point Plan for the Victorian Women's Health 2010–2014 and write to Women's Health West to formally notify them of Council's endorsement. Moved by: Cr Sarah Carter Seconded by: Cr John Cumming</p>		
17 th November Briefing	Respect and equity development of council's public statement	Seek Council's endorsement to proceed with the development of an external public statement that reflects Council's aspirations to prevent violence against women, promote respectful relationships and promote gender equity.
14 th December Ordinary meeting	Respect and equity development of council's public statement	Seek Council's endorsement to proceed with the development of an external public statement that reflects Council's aspirations to prevent violence against women, promote respectful relationships and promote gender equity.
<p>OFFICER recommendation/council resolution: That Council endorse the proposal to develop a public statement on violence against women. That a draft public statement be presented for Council's consideration by June 2011. Moved by: Cr Martin Zakharov Seconded by: Cr Sel Sanli</p>		

Appendix 8.6 Background to integrating the MPHP into the Council Plan

In 2008 a number of emerging policy directions and external influences provided MCC with an opportunity to re-examine the best framework to plan for improved health and wellbeing including

- The ratification of the new *Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* by Parliament,
- The concurrent review and development of the new Council Plan and Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS),
- The changing environment influencing local government health and wellbeing planning, and
- The shift in focus of health planning away from “illness” to “health and wellbeing”

In September 2008, the Victorian Parliament passed the *Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*. The Act set out revised requirements for local government in terms of municipal health planning providing for more flexibility regarding whether the document is stand alone or integrated into other key strategic documents of Council.

In the past, MCC had felt a mismatch around the higher order status of MPHP's without the influence or strategic weight to determine state or local government investment (especially around programmatic impacts). Traditionally MPHPs are prepared as stand-alone documents, limited in harnessing organisational interest and effort in designing actions and evaluating the contribution of local governments in addressing health at a determinants level. This legislative change meant that Council's could choose to elevate the status of health and wellbeing by integrating it into the Council Plan.

The Council plan is the strategic document which guides planning and allocation of resources and provision of services to the Maribyrnong community (Council Plan 2009 – 2013:2). It is the mother plan for the organisation. Strategic integration of health and wellbeing planning acknowledges that there are multiple contributions made across the organisation to positive health and wellbeing outcomes. The changes to include “wellbeing” as part of the new “Health and Wellbeing Act” prompted further thinking about how this could best be achieved through local government municipal public health planning. It provided MCC the opportunity to formally acknowledge that the ultimate outcome of every area of Council is to improve the health and wellbeing of the community and the best approach needs commitment, accountability and mandate across all areas of Council business without duplicating existing processes.

Developing a wellbeing statement

In order to respond to the emerging directions outlined above, the Community Planning and Advocacy team undertook initial research into integrating the MPHP into the Council Plan via the development of a health and wellbeing statement. MCC had also been working in partnership with the Western Region Local Government Health Planners Network and the Department of Human Services on the Municipal Public Health Plan Evaluation Tools Development Initiative. The purpose of the project was to develop and pilot evaluation tools customised to each local government to effectively measure health and wellbeing outcomes for the community. The Maribyrnong Council Plan cross branch team, of which the SCHP team were active members worked closely with the consultants undertaking this project on behalf of the western region health planners network and endorsed this approach in principle.

Council's commitment to gender equity and PVAW is detailed in the Wellbeing Commitment and in Key Commitment Area 1: Building Community Spirit, Engagement and Places.

Building Community Spirit, Engagement and places:

‘We want to be recognised as a City that embraces diversity and builds respect, tolerance and equity’ (Maribyrnong City Council 2009).

Wellbeing Commitment

- We will strive to ensure our city is just and equitable
- We will promote and celebrate the diversity of our people and their unique circumstances – such as life stage, gender, ethnicity, faith and socio-economic status’.
- We will promote social inclusion, strengthen participation and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate in local decision making and mainstream community life
- We will create sustainable, healthier and liveable communities by making effective use and reuse of our natural resources

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- We will ensure that our City is designed for people and that our communities have access to services and infrastructure that are high quality, safe, adaptable and affordable.
- We will actively ensure investment and development is responsive to current and future community recognising diversity of needs
- We will create pathways to economic participation through the provision of affordable housing, secure employment or financial support and education to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to make their own lifestyle choices

The following diagrams explain the key elements, which underpin Council's Wellbeing Commitment and Key Commitment Areas:

The six Key Commitment Areas are strongly integrated with the Wellbeing Commitment and Council's principles and values, as shown in this diagram.



Georgie took a briefing paper to EMT in October 2008 to seek feedback and endorsement to integrate the MPHP into the Council Plan. EMT accepted this. In May 2009 the Acting CEO wrote to the Director of Public Health, Department of Human Services to request an exemption under the Health Act 1958 for MCC to lodge a separate Municipal Public Health Plan under the Health Act. The letter informed the departments of Council's intention to lodge the Council Plan 2009-2013 (incorporating the MPHP). The letter also sought feedback from the Department of Human Services to "ensure that the requirements under the Act are not just met but exceeded."

Appendix 8.7 Council PVAW annual actions 2008-2011

PVAW Council Annual Actions 2008-2011		
2008-2009		
Strategies	Actions	Expected outcomes
3.3 Become strong advocates by strengthening partnerships with community groups, agencies and service providers on matters of community interest	3.3.2 Resource and support the following networks; Municipal public health plan advisory group Western region health planning group Gender and Local Government project Refugee brokerage program Rail emissions working group Brooklyn Community Reference Group Arts and Culture advisory committee.	Active collaborations between Council and a wide range of local agencies, Government Departments and citizens around issues of local importance.

2009 - 2010		
Strategies	Actions	Contribution to wellbeing outcomes
1.3 Promote the City's arts, culture, heritage and diversity.	1.3.9 Develop a proposal for permanent Women's Circus facility in the city	Improved opportunities for cultural participation and expression. Promoting strong connections with cultural heritage
1.5 Promote environments that support the health and wellbeing of the community	1.5.2 Raise awareness of violence against women and promote positive, respect and healthy relationships in the community through a range of initiatives such as developing a comprehensive communications strategy	Harmonious and resilient communities that embrace diversity in culture, ability, gender, lifestyle, faiths and ideas Reduced incidence of violence against women
1.5 Promote environments that support the health and wellbeing of the community	1.5.7 Work in partnership with Women's Health West and HealthWest PCP to develop a regional plan to prevent violence against women	Reduced inequalities Reduced incidence of violence against women
4.2 Improve and maintain the quality and accessibility of social and physical infrastructure through development and implementation of policies and actions to improve the built environment.	4.2.8 Implement the recommendations from the Facilities Review to promote safe and welcoming environments for women	Providing universal inclusive community and social infrastructure Reduce the incidence of violence against women Building attractive, healthy and liveable neighbourhoods
6.1 Develop systems and processes that are innovative, continually improving and ensure accountability and responsiveness.	6.1.8 Prevent violence against women by embedding and driving cultural change across the organisation by working collaboratively with different departments on joint initiatives	Reduced incidence of violence against women Responsive, productive and financially sustainable Council
6.2 Develop our staff to optimise the performance of the organisation to deliver quality outcomes for the	6.2.4 Implement strategies, such as training sessions, to ensure Council's workforce has a strong understanding of diversity (ie gender, disability, culture, faith, sexuality)	Reduced inequalities Promoting social interaction and community participation Harmonious resilient communities that embrace diversity in culture, ability,

community.	gender, lifestyle, faiths and ideas.
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2010 - 2011		
Strategies	Actions	Contribution to wellbeing outcome
1.5 Promote environments that support the health and wellbeing of the community	1.5.4: Lead a 'child friendly city' approach through implementation of the Maribyrnong Early Years Plan	Improved equitable access to and participation in child friendly facilities, spaces and services
1.5 Promote environments that support the health and wellbeing of the community	1.5.8 Implement Council related actions in the Western Region Strategy for the Prevention of Violence Against Women	Improved community attitudes and behaviours that promote gender equity and respectful relationships.
1.5 Promote environments that support the health and wellbeing of the community	1.5.11 Continue to implement the Maribyrnong Respect and Equity: Preventing Violence Against Women project.	Improved community attitudes and behaviours that promote gender equity and respectful relationships.
1.5 Promote environments that support the health and wellbeing of the community	1.5.12 Develop a social marketing campaign to raise awareness of violence against women and challenge violent and disrespectful attitudes and behaviours towards women.	Improved community attitudes and behaviours that promote gender equity and respectful relationships.

2011 – 2012			
Strategies	Actions	Performance Indicator	Contribution to wellbeing outcome
1.5 Promote environments that support the health and wellbeing of the community.	1.5.2 Continue to work with government and community stakeholders to improve safety and perceptions of safety.	Council, government and community stakeholders working collaboratively to improve perceptions of safety.	Improve community safety.
1.5 Promote environments that support the health and wellbeing of the community.	1.5.6 Develop and implement a Gender Equity Public Statement.	The Gender Equity Public Statement endorsed by Council, and a Communication Plan developed and implemented.	Improved community attitudes and behaviours that promote gender equity and respectful relationships. Improved community harmony that embraces diversity in age, culture, gender, lifestyle, faiths and ideas.
1.5 Promote environments that support the health and wellbeing of the community.	1.5.8 Continue to promote and develop opportunities (such as staff training and tools), to ensure determinants of health are integrated into core Council policies, strategies and actions.	Opportunities to embed determinants of health into Council's core business units have been delivered.	Improve access to health and support services for those at risk of health inequality. Increased community harmony that embraces diversity in age, culture, ability, gender, lifestyle, faiths and ideas. Improve social interaction and community participation Improved city design that promotes attractive and inclusive neighbourhoods
6.3 Develop an organisational culture driven by our core values to achieve a clear and common focus shared by Councillors, management and staff.	6.3.2 Develop Council's Social Justice Charter.	Social Justice Charter presented to Council.	Improved access to health and support services for those at risk of health inequality. Increased community harmony that embraces diversity in age, culture, ability, gender, lifestyle, faiths and ideas.

Appendix 8.8 Annual community survey PVAW questions 2009

Community survey PVAW questions
<p>On a scale of 1 (disagree) to 3 (agree), please rate your agreement with the following statement.</p> <p>'domestic violence is common in the community'</p> <p>'Domestic violence excusable if partner genuinely regrets after'</p> <p>'Excused if acceptable in culture'</p> <p>'Rape results from men not being able to control sex drive'</p>
<p>"Which, if any, of the following actions do you believe are examples of domestic violence?"</p> <p>One partner controlling the other through money</p> <p>Controlling social life of partner by denying access to family/friends</p> <p>Criticism of partner to make them feel bad or useless</p> <p>Constant checking up on a partner</p> <p>Preventing partner from practicing religion</p>
<p>"On a scale of 1 (totally disagree) to 3 (totally agree) please rate your agreement with the following statements"</p> <p>When jobs are scarce men should have more right to them</p> <p>Discrimination against women no longer a problem in workplace</p> <p>Men should be in control/head of household</p>

Appendix 8.9 2009-2010 community grants addressing one or more determinants of violence against women

2009 – 2010 Community Grants which address one or more determinants of violence against women		
Program	Group/organisation	description
Australian chin women's and children's charity Thli Zil-Smooth Air Project	New Hope Foundation	Seed funding to establish a handicraft group for Chin women. The project will develop craft skills and build the group's capacity and its connections within the community.
Healthy Lifestyles Program	Greek Women's Group Maribyrnong	Social activity promoting healthy and engaged lifestyles.
Women's Community Support Program	Wombat Housing And Support Services	Social support funding to support the delivery of recreational and social activity to build community connections for individuals.
Refugee Women's Support Group	Westgate Baptist Community - Refugee Support	To develop a support network for newly arrived Burmese women. The project will use a playgroup model to create the structure for women and children to come together, provide parenting support and link them with networks and other communities.
Strengthening Braybrook and Maidstone Women	Western Region Health Centre	Social support in the provision of a regular yoga class for community members in the Braybrook area.
WFNH Women's Welcome Textile Art Project	West Footscray Neighbourhood House	To bring newly arrived Indian women and non-Indian together and textile artist to learn skills and produce a Toran. The project will build knowledge and connections between communities.
Connection for the Aged People	Australian Vietnamese women's association for Ava elderly group in Maribyrnong Inc.	Provide opportunities for elderly people to come together and have fun by making new friends sharing social and emotional feelings as well as enjoy lunches together.
Human Milk for Human Babies	Australian Breastfeeding Association	To increase community breastfeeding rates by running two free breastfeeding education classes for new mothers on limited incomes.
Come on in	Western Health Volunteer Team	Connecting newly arrived and refugee women's groups within the Maribyrnong area into an information program about the way that their local public hospital works. The program will also seek their participation as volunteers where appropriate.
Memorial Bench Project	Women's circus for Memorial bench project group	To commemorate those members of the Women's Circus and the Performing Older Women's Circus who have died. The women will be commemorated through a memorial bench.
Fostering Traditional Craft Skills for Sudanese Women	New hope foundation for Sudanese women on the move network	To foster and transfer Sudanese handicraft skills amongst Sudanese women living in Maribyrnong.
Leadership Training and Orientation for Sudanese Women	New hope foundation for Sudanese women on the move network	To provide leadership training to a group of Sudanese women living in the City of Maribyrnong. In addition there will be the provision of an orientation program to women to build their capacity to interact with services and other networks.
Development of African Women's Sewing	Green Collect	To provide African women with the opportunity to increase their sewing expertise and enable them to produce quality items that can be sold

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Enterprises		locally. Build the capacity of the women to connect in with community and grow a strong and vibrant group.
Building Better Relationships	East African Women's Foundation	Seed funding to develop links and networks between women and providers and agencies.
Women Growing Stronger	West CASA	Supported social and recreational engagement.

Appendix 8.10 Respect & equity presentations

Respect & equity presentations	
Event	Location
2008	
The World Urban Forum	Nanjing, China
From Margins to Mainstream Mental Health Conference	Melbourne
2009	
Preventing Violence Against Women: Showcasing projects from the West Projects from the West Forum	Footscray
Footscray 150 (a community event and celebration of 150 years of Footscray) Respect & Equity table display with resources	Footscray
Melbourne University, Master of Environment and Master of Urban Planning presentation (facilitated by Dr Carolyn Whitzman)	Melbourne
Respectful Sporting clubs presentation	Footscray
Maribyrnong PVAW Forum	Footscray
Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria – Domestic Violence Forum	Melbourne
Vic health Board Meeting	Melbourne
Hobsons Bay City Council Executive meeting	Altona
Eastern Metro Region Community Safety Network meeting	Melbourne
City of Casey White Ribbon Day event (Peter Daghish Capital Works officer spoke)	Casey
Footscray 150 (dissemination of materials and informal conversations with community members)	Footscray
East meets West Lunar New Year Festival (dissemination of materials and informal conversations with community members)	Footscray
2010	
Australian Women's Health Conference	Hobart
Western Region football League, Women's Football Foundation Club Night (Deputy Mayor spoke)	Melbourne
Inaugural Local Government PVAW Conference (both Andrew Day, Community Wellbeing General Manager & Georgie Hill Coordinator SCHP spoke)	Melbourne
Australian Health Promotion Association 19th National Conference; Walk the Talk together: Partnerships for Health Promotion	Melbourne
Vic Health PVAW Forum	Melbourne
Third International Women's Safety Conference	Delhi, India
Doncare Preventing Family Violence Forum	Doncaster
Western Region Health Centre WRD breakfast (Peter Daghish – Capital Works officer spoke)	Melbourne
MCC Family Services and Community Projects planning meeting	Footscray
Hobsons Bay WRD breakfast (Andrew Day, Community Wellbeing General Manager spoke)	Altona