

MEDIA RELEASE

14 July 2010

LEADERS TAKE ACTION TO FIGHT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Local Governments and community leaders from the western region of Melbourne will gather at a forum today (14 July) to tackle the leading cause of death in young to middle aged women – partner violence.

Victorian women aged under 45 are more at risk of ill-health and death at the hand of a partner than by high blood pressure, obesity and smoking combined. A woman is killed almost every week in Australia by a male partner or ex-partner, often when she is trying to leave.

To prevent violence against women, the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) and Darebin City Council are working together with local Councils across Victoria to get involved.

Today's leaders' event with western region councils to workshop grass-roots solutions is part of a growing contingent of Mayors, Councillors, executive and council staff finding creative ways to send a message to their communities that violence against women is not okay. Around 150 community leaders will attend.

This event was organised through the *Local Government Network and Capacity Building Project*, led by VicHealth and Darebin Council, in partnership with the seven councils of the Western Region of Melbourne.

Event: White Ribbon Leaders' Lunch
Location: Moonee Valley Racing Club, 4th floor Committee Room, McPherson St, Moonee Ponds
Time: 12.30pm to 2.30pm, Wednesday 14 July, 2010.

Photo opportunity with speakers, 1.40pm.

Speakers: The Hon. Maxine Morand, Minister for Women's Affairs
Brad Johnson, Western Bulldogs Football Club captain and White Ribbon Ambassador
Moonee Valley Mayor Cr Shirley Cornish
Jen, a survivor of family violence

Western Bulldogs Football Club Captain Brad Johnson will speak at the lunch as an advocate for preventing violence against women. "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," Johnson said.

Manager of VicHealth's Preventing Violence Against Women program, Dr Melanie Heenan, added: "While attitudes to violence against women are improving, there are still people prepared to excuse, trivialise or stand silent in the face of behaviour that is abusive or harmful to women. This is why we are working to assist local councils to lead the way in addressing the unacceptably high rates of violence against women that exist across Australia. It's time to continue these frank and open discussions and to decide, as a community, what we can do to create lasting change for our daughters, mothers and sisters and imagine a future for them that is violence free."

Media contacts

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For information on Victoria's Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women www.women.vic.gov.au/familyviolence VicHealth has carried out extensive research into violence against women and funds a range of prevention programs. Find out more at www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/en/Programs-and-Projects/Freedom-from-violence.aspx or more info about the partnership project at www.lgpcvaw.net.au