



making
all the **difference**

**More than Rates,
Roads and
Rubbish...
The Road to
Women's Health in
Local Government**



**WOMEN'S HEALTH
IN THE NORTH**



The Road to Women's Health and Local Government

- Introduction
- Overview of local government
- *Safe Well and Connected* Action Plan
- Councillor candidate responses
 - Advocacy Strategies
 - Success stories
- 2010 Year of Women in Local Government




Women's Health In the North

- Regional women's health service for northern metropolitan region of Melbourne and one of 11 specialist services in Victoria.
- Core business:
 - Advocacy (policy makers, planners)
 - Research & development
 - Workforce development & consultancies
- Catchment: Banyule, Darebin, Hume, Moreland, Nillumbik, Whittlesea and Yarra.



How it all started



I've worked in
women's health
for 45 minutes
and counting!

I've worked in
women's health
for 20 years



What does local government do again?



“I’m not really sure of all of the things councils do. rubbish collections are helpful. Maybe [in the] next consultation you could write up a list of some of the services councils provide,” (consultation with an older woman).



“I didn’t realise councils do so much!” (consultation with women who have experienced mental illness).





Overview of local government

- Local laws
- Planning and building
- Roads, cycling, tracks and parking
- Family and young children's services
- Youth services
- Aged and disability services



- Local Plans and Municipal Public Health and Planning Plans



Nine stops to safe, well and connected women (1)

Safe: *“Having safe cycling and walking routes – free from speeding fast cars – is my main worry,”* (woman in Darebin).

Well: *“I have a diagnosis of mental illness ... it is hard to re-engage or access services to support wellness,”* (woman in Banyule)

Connected: *“A community [that] ... has raised awareness and articulated intolerance of men’s violence against women,”* (woman in Whittlesea).



Nine stops to safe, well and connected women (2)

Women on the map:

1. Develop a woman's health and wellbeing strategy (including a women's advisory committee).



Women's Safety:

2. Northern region strategy to prevent violence against women.
3. Introduce a local law to raise awareness that sexual slavery is a crime.



Nine stops to safe, well and connected women (3)

Women's Wellness:

4. Sponsor one officer and one community member to attend the Sixth National Australian Women's Health Conference in 2010.
5. Address women's mental health in Council's Municipal Public Health Plan. Consider mental illness, psychiatric and intellectual disability in Council disability strategies.



Nine stops to safe, well and connected women (4)

Women's Connectedness

6. Improve women's economic participation (family friendly work practices; affordable childcare).
7. Increase Council recreation, exercise and gathering opportunities for women.
8. Advocate for more frequent and accessible public transport.





Nine stops to safe, well and connected women (5)

9. Recognise and encourage women's participation by:
 - Holding a local annual council awards ceremony for women
 - Supporting the *Year of Women in Local Government* (2010)
 - Considering appointing a councillor for women



Waiting for Green Lights: This need not be a T-intersection!

“Could you please tell me if we have a similar commitment to men’s health as I feel both are equally as important?” (councillor candidate, 2008)





Tips for the Road (1)

“Often community members come to us with an extensive synopsis of their issue of interest, without clear steps forward. Councillors may be empathic to the issue, but are not likely to be experts on the matter. They look for clear steps forward from community members who are the experts,” (local government councillor).

“Examples of best practice are most useful to me if they are presented in concrete and practical terms,” (local government social planner).



Tips for the Road (2)

Formulating Proposals

- Concise actions
- Municipal-specific research
- Consider complexity of implementation strategies



Tips for the Road (3)

Advocacy Strategies

- Action plans
- Dual partnering strategies
- Briefings at council meetings
- Women's health training sessions
- Self-advocacy training for community women
- Involvement in council planning processes
- Good Practice Guides



Destination Reached!

- Women's advisory committee in Darebin
- Yarra is tracking its progress against the *Safe, Well and Connected Plan*





Where to Next?

2010 is the *Year of Women in Local Government*





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Copies of the More than Rates, Roads and Rubbish:
The Road to Women's Health in Local Government
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website