Spot the message: ‘Say NO to Violence against women. Say YES to equality and respect.’

Over the next few months banners, flags, bus shelter posters and other materials will be visible across Monash, carrying the same message: Say NO to Violence against women. Say YES to equality and respect. Keep an eye out for:

- Bus shelter posters across Monash
- Banners on flag poles at Clayton shopping precinct
- Magnets on garbage trucks
- Signage at Clayton Community Centre
- Promotional material in the Civic Centre

All of the materials provide a link to the Council webpage that has an overview of the program and the issue of violence against women, and also contact phone numbers for people who need immediate help. If you see some of our materials while you’re out and about, take a photo and tweet your support for the program to @monashcouncil.

Spreading the Message

The team have been busy promoting the program, the issue of preventing violence against women, and gender equality across Monash and more broadly. Here is a snapshot of some recent activity.

The Image of Women – challenging gender norms

More than 100 people attended the recent Sir John Monash public lecture, held at the Monash Gallery of Art. The event, which focused on the social construction of gender, was the most highly attended in the history of the event. The keynote speaker, Dr Leslie Cannold urged the audience to ‘join a domestic revolution’ she called ‘the work/life movement’. She challenged audience members to stop thinking of child care and housework as ‘women’s issues’, rather a shared responsibility of both men and women. “We all need to find the time to care,” she said. “The costs of rigid gender roles are high for men as well as for women. There is intense pressure to stick to social norms that perpetuate inequality and poorer health for us all.”

The photographic exhibition, by one of Australia’s great feminist photographers Carol Jerrems, acted as a perfect backdrop to the event. Jerrems captured a time of social change: women’s liberation, social inclusiveness for street youths, and Indigenous people, in the cities who were campaigning for justice and land rights. Shaune Lakin, curator of the exhibition, said Jerrems was an agent of change. Download the podcast of the Sir John Monash Lecture.

Laura Wood, Prevention Practitioner, from the Generating Equality and Respect Program explored the link between gender inequality, equal and respectful relationships, rigid gender roles and violence against women. “Societies which have greater inequality between women and men tend to have higher rates of violence against women. Violence in all its forms – physical,
psychological, social, financial – is one person exerting their power or control over another person to get what they want. Violence can be seen as a tool for obtaining and maintaining this power and control.” The evening prompted much discussion and debate, and supported people to reflect on their own lives and how ‘gender’ (the idea of what it means to be male or female) can impact their own and others perceptions, attitudes and behaviours. Perhaps a quiet revolution is starting in Monash.

**Strengthening Clayton & Clarinda Project ‘Presentation & Workshop’**

Program Manager, Natalie Russell presented on the Generating Equality and Respect Program on 31st July at the Strengthening Clayton & Clarinda Project ‘Presentation & Workshop’. Local residents who have been supporters of the Clayton project were joined in the audience by Council staff, key stakeholders and service providers from across the area. The evening showcased the work undertaken over the life of the Clayton and Clarinda Project and provided an opportunity to highlight the program activities to be implemented in Clayton as part of the Generating Equality and Respect Program. Visit the Clayton blog for more info [http://strengtheningclayton.wordpress.com/](http://strengtheningclayton.wordpress.com/)

**Together for Equality and Respect Regional Planning Forum**

About 30 people attended this planning forum from a range of women’s, health, community and local government organisations across the Eastern Metropolitan Region. Hosted by Women’s Health East, the forum was an opportunity for those involved in the development of the regional plan to consider the next steps for its implementation. Several presentations helped the forum to focus its discussion. Bronwyn Upston, Prevention Practitioner with the Generating Equality and Respect program, presented on the role of community health in primary prevention of violence against women: “Community Health Services have a unique role in prevention of violence against women. Community Health Services are committed to social justice and have close connections with their communities though their program and service delivery. Community Health Services have great capacity to prevent violence against women by incorporating primary prevention approaches into organisational plans, policies and programs.”

The forum identified key areas of integrated work for the first year of the regional plan to prevent violence against women – these being organisational development for primary prevention as well as the development of a regional communications strategy. Women’s Health East will coordinate the ongoing planning processes, with the establishment of an Action Plan Steering Committee this month. The Generating Equality and Respect program team will participate in this committee.

**Spotlight on a program activity - Monash Partners in Prevention Network**

Generating equal and respectful relationships among children and young people can have a lasting effect on their relationships in the future. Youth practitioners engage with young people where they live, work, study and play, and have an important role in supporting them to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours for healthy personal relationships.
The Generating Equality and Respect program is developing a local community of practice, called *Monash Partners in Prevention Network*, to increase the capacity of youth-focused individuals and organisations to deliver respectful relationships education, such as through whole-school activities. This Network supports the broader *statewide Partners in Prevention network* delivered by Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria.

We know that the single most important factor for effective violence prevention and respectful relationships education in schools is the adoption of a whole-school approach. This ensures coordinated action through school policy, teaching and learning, culture and environment, and relationships between the school, home and community. The local *Monash Partners in Prevention Network* will support workers across the Monash municipality to share ideas and experiences. It also aims to strengthen links between the education, health and youth sectors at a local level for respectful relationships education. For more information or to download a flyer to join the network visit [http://www.monash.vic.gov.au/community/equality-respect.htm](http://www.monash.vic.gov.au/community/equality-respect.htm)

**Media morsels**
Preventing violence against women is a topical issue in Victoria. Here are some recent articles of interest:

- The Herald Sun ‘Take A Stand’ Campaign
- Media surrounding the murder of Tracy Connelly

**FAQ**

**Q:** What exactly is primary prevention?

**A:** Primary prevention aims to prevent violence before it occurs, by addressing the underlying causes of gender based violence (rigid gender roles and unequal power between men and women)\(^1\). It differs from secondary prevention, which targets at risk populations, and tertiary prevention, which aims to prevent future incidents of violence by responding to past victims or perpetrators. The Generating Equality and Respect is a primary prevention program.

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\(^1\) VicHealth, 2007, *Preventing violence before it occurs: A framework and background paper to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria*. Carlton, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation.