

Ms Sarah Carter  
Mayor  
Maribyrnong City Council  
Cnr Napier Street and Hyde Street  
FOOTSCRAY VIC 3011

15 February 2011

**Re: Maribyrnong City Council 2011-2012 Budget**

Dear Mayor Carter

Thank you for your recent invitation to attend the Community Session on Maribyrnong City Council's 2011-2012 budget. While I was unable to attend in person, Women's Health West is pleased to make the following submission for consideration in the development of the budget for the year ahead.

Maribyrnong has long been a leader in promoting gender equity and preventing violence against women in the western region. Women's Health West commends you for this commitment, and we look forward to working with you in the coming year. In particular, Maribyrnong's endorsement of *Preventing Violence Together: The Western Region Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women* provides much scope for us to progress work in the area of women's human rights, safety, and security.

Now that *Preventing Violence Together* has been officially launched, the work of implementation begins. We hope that Maribyrnong will continue to show leadership to other endorsing agencies by fully funding the implementation of *Preventing Violence Together*. Without resources, our goal of ending all forms of violence against women will remain unattainable.

I also wish to advocate for the adoption of gender responsive budgeting across council. Gender responsive budgeting is a particularly effective mechanism for advancing gender equity, by ensuring the work undertaken across council is responsive to the different needs of women and men respectively. Gender budgets are not separate budgets for women, nor do they aim solely to increase

spending on women-specific programs. Gender responsive budgets link commitments to gender equity to the ways in which governments raise and spend money, and provide a concrete way to increase accountability to all community members. Although budgets may appear to be gender-neutral policy instruments, expenditures and revenue collection have different impacts on women and men. A gendered approach to budgeting helps ensure that gender equality becomes both a goal and indicator of economic governance.

By adopting this best-practice gender responsive budgeting model across council, Maribyrnong would continue to provide strong leadership for others in the west, and I would be pleased to refer to you to further resources and tools to facilitate gendered budgeting.

I have also included a copy of 'Safe, Well and Connected: Victorian Local Government Action Plan for Women's Health 2008-2012', which lists the priority areas that WHW have advocated with Council.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding this submission, and to continuing our good work together throughout the coming year.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Robyn Gregory  
CEO  
Women's Health West