

Australia's campaign to
stop violence against women

White Ribbon

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White Ribbon response to NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Domestic Violence tends requests for information.

1. Extract from transcript – page 5: Re: The Victorian Women’s Trust research looking into the role pornography and social media and relating it to the incidence of sexual violence.

The Hon. Greg Donnelly: Would we be able to get from you the reference to the Victorian research?

White Ribbon has contacted the Victorian Women’s Trust to obtain the information as requested. The Victorian Women’s Trust does not hold the information as the research is funded by five different sources, primarily Brophy Family and Youth Services.

The chief researcher on the project, Marie Crabb, has provided a background document to the project (see *Appendix 1*) and advises that she is available to present further information to Committee as required.

2. Extract from transcript – page 7: Re: The Linfox Workplace Program and the White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation Program

The Hon. Natasha MacLaren-Jones: Could you briefly outline the Linfox workplace program?

Ms Davies: I have not got the exact details in front of me ...I am happy to provide that [Linfox Workplace Program Information] to the Committee and send you the [White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation] scoping research.

The Executive summary from the Women's Health Victoria Working Together Against Violence Final Project Report is inserted below.

Linfox Workplace Program Information

Working Together Against Violence Project: Executive Summary

History of the Working Together Against Violence project

Violence against women is a serious and pervasive issue that affects individuals, families and the wider community, including workplaces. Addressing the causes of violence through primary prevention activity is becoming increasingly necessary.

Women's Health Victoria's Working Together Against Violence project used workplaces as a setting for the primary prevention of violence against women. The project aimed to strengthen the organisational capacity of a male-dominated workplace to promote gender equality and non-violent norms. That workplace was Linfox.

Funded by VicHealth and comprehensively evaluated, the project comprised two phases spanning four years, from 2007 to 2011.

Theoretical grounding

Work to prevent violence against women must occur at an individual, organisational and societal level. The ecological approach to understanding violence, set out in VicHealth's framework, Preventing violence before it occurs, provided the grounding for the project.² The project was also informed by theories of masculinity, organisational culture theory, social norms theory and the bystander approach to violence prevention.

At a societal level, theories of masculinity were used to understand the context in which violence against women occurs. Organisational culture and change theory influenced understandings of workplace health promotion. Social norms theory overlayed these theories, informing efforts to prevent violence against women at an individual, organisational and societal level by examining how the norms that shape behaviour can be changed. The bystander approach provided Women's Health Victoria with the means to implement the theory in a male-dominated environment. Working Together Against Violence built the capacity of employees, particularly men, to challenge violence-supportive attitudes and

behaviours. It was reinforced by strategies across all elements of the ecological approach to understanding violence.

About Stand Up: Domestic Violence is Everyone's Business

Using this theoretical grounding and the evidence collected at Linfox, a workplace program was developed – Stand Up: Domestic Violence is Everyone's Business.

Stand Up: Domestic Violence is Everyone's Business is a whole-of-company program that addresses the prevention of domestic violence at a range of levels within a workplace. It is premised on the understanding that the health and safety of employees at home affects their health and safety at work. It is informed by the following concepts:

- *Primary prevention – Stand Up aims to prevent violence before it occurs by focusing on the determinants of violence against women.*
- *Bystander approach – Stand Up engages and encourages men and women to stand up against violence against women.*
- *Whole-of-company approach – Stand Up addresses all staff, systems, and levels of a company.*

Essentially, Stand Up helps companies prevent domestic violence before it occurs and support staff who might be experiencing it. This is achieved through three key elements – leadership, training and message promotion. Together, these three elements can create a workplace that does not tolerate violence. Stand Up was fully conceptualised and introduced into Linfox in March 2010.

Engaging Linfox

The engagement process was fundamentally about building a relationship. Successfully navigating the relationship between a community organisation and a for-profit company is vital. For Women's Health Victoria, this was a new way of working, and the project represented, in part, a process of understanding the expectations of the corporate sector and negotiating effective ways of working together.

Engagement occurred again and again as the project moved through diverse parts of the company, intersected with different employees, and implemented a range of primary prevention strategies. Women's Health Victoria was able to engage with Linfox on an ongoing basis through listening to concerns and responding to them. This included using language that

Linfox felt comfortable with. Linfox initially decided on Harm in the Home instead of more direct language around domestic violence. As a relationship of trust was developed, the language was able to change to 'domestic violence', as used in Stand Up: Domestic Violence is Everyone's Business. This was an important learning process for Women's Health Victoria.

Listening to Linfox's concerns enabled the project to proceed beyond its early stages.

Implementing Stand Up

Using workplaces as a setting for the primary prevention of violence against women is an emerging area of practice. Linfox's perspective and support all provided Women's Health Victoria with an invaluable learning experience.

Linfox's agreement to the project itself, and then to Stand Up in 2010, is evidence of their leadership in this area. Other signifiers of Linfox's commitment to violence prevention were the fact that training was provided on paid time. Many worksite managers also made the training compulsory. A Stand Up Contact was nominated by head office, further signalling Linfox's support for the program.

The bystander approach, used as the theoretical underpinning of the Stand Up training, was vital in gaining support for the project among managers and employees. It encouraged individuals to stand up against violence-supportive attitudes and behaviours.

Importantly, it regarded men not as perpetrators, but as individuals who can make a difference. A program in which men felt targeted, or one that was more confrontational, would not have gained traction in a male-dominated company. The bystander approach was therefore key to the take up of the program, and the receptiveness of employees in training. In total, 515 employees participated in the training, across 11 Victorian worksites.

- *Eighty seven percent felt that the training helped them gain a better understanding of domestic violence.*
- *Eighty seven percent of participants felt that the training helped them understand how things people say or do can support domestic violence.*
- *Eighty nine percent of participants felt that they were very likely or quite likely to speak out against domestic violence as a result of the training.*

Findings also showed that participants felt they were more likely to challenge violence-supportive attitudes and behaviours as a result of the training, and understood how sexism

occurs on a continuum of violence against women. Almost all participants felt that the training should be provided more widely. For the majority of focus group participants, the training had changed the way they thought about domestic violence and what they could do about it.

Following the Stand Up training, 95 percent of participants were happy or very happy that Linfox was working with a not for-profit organisation to prevent domestic violence.

Next steps

Women's Health Victoria learnt much about what is effective in engaging a company in the prevention of domestic violence, as well as what works in embedding and sustaining this work. The findings of this report make a valuable contribution to the evidence base for the primary prevention of violence against women using workplaces as the setting.

In looking to the future:

Women's Health Victoria will be developing a resource guide and training to share what has been learnt with organisations that want to work with the corporate sector to prevent violence against women.

Women's Health Victoria will seek to implement the Stand Up program in other companies so that more workplaces join in the primary prevention of violence against women.

See Appendix 2 for the full report.

White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation Scoping Research

Background Paper: White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation. February 2012

Executive Summary

This Background Paper has been prepared by a consultant (Penny Ryan) to assist in White Ribbon's development of a workforce accreditation system that aims to address and prevent violence against women by creating attitudinal and behavioural changes in workplace culture, safety and relationships with the goal of eradicating violence against women.

What is being accredited?

This section discusses descriptions found in the literature of workforce programs that address violence, and draws implications for the scope of a White Ribbon accreditation scheme. It identifies five main approaches: to focus on violence in the workplace itself; to focus on women's workplace safety and conditions in relation to domestic violence; to take legislative and regulatory action; to focus on prevention through activities such as 'bystander' education and by situating violence in a context of gender equity.

The section concludes that there are significant arguments for broadening rather than narrowing the scope of White Ribbon Accreditation and that a more comprehensive approach would reduce risks associated with accreditation and be more likely to achieve the attitudinal and behavioural change sought by White Ribbon.

Accreditation approaches and issues to be considered

The next three sections outline significant features of accreditation in general, and consider specific models that are relevant to White Ribbon's project. While accreditation systems differ widely, they most commonly develop standards that are industry accepted and evidence based, setting levels of quality for the delivery of services or products. Organisations commonly assess themselves against the standards and an external body does an independent assessment, providing final endorsement that the standards have been met.

Accreditation systems have worked to clarify the meaning and value of accreditation. Evaluations have not provided clear evidence that accreditation results in improved outcomes for clients; the evidence does, however, indicate that accreditation improves an organisation's overall focus on quality. As accreditation systems look at an organisation at one point in time, they cannot guarantee its continued performance, but they do generally assess that an organisation has policies, systems and processes in place to reduce risks of poor performance and to respond appropriately in the event of poor performance.

Other issues that all accreditation systems have had to address include:

- *the cost – both the time required for an organisation to participate and the cost of administering the system – which creates considerable barriers to participation, especially for small and medium sized businesses*

- *the importance of ensuring credibility and integrity, by having accepted standards, thorough assessment processes, and ethical and independent governance*
- *the need to balance action and documentation, to keep the focus on implementing quality approaches rather than on paperwork.*

Section four gives an account of particular models that offer lessons to the White Ribbon accreditation development process:

- *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency reporting*
- *Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace Accreditation*
- *50:50 Vision – Councils for Gender Equity Program*
- *Heart Foundation Tick.*

Based on the issues arising from the previous sections and from discussions with individuals involved in administering programs aimed at decreasing the impacts of violence against women and/or promoting gender equity, the fifth section poses key questions and implications for White Ribbon accreditation:

- *What will motivate participation?*
- *How will buy-in from smaller organisations be achieved?*
- *How will the system balance robustness and simplicity?*
- *How can the cost of the system be minimised without lessening its effectiveness?*
- *What does accreditation status mean and how long is it valid?*
- *How will the White Ribbon accreditation system be governed?*
- *How will White Ribbon manage the accreditation system?*
- *How can White Ribbon minimise overlap with other reporting?*

A proposed model for White Ribbon accreditation

The White Ribbon Reference Group has developed some preliminary principles for the accreditation system (that it should be voluntary; flexible to cater for diversity in workplaces; not be prescriptive in detail but provide guidance for taking action; have elements of self-assessment and external evaluation) that are a good match for existing systems. The Group also did some preliminary thinking on how an organisation doing a ‘good job’ would be addressing violence against women. It listed actions such as commitment and leadership; training for managers and staff; communication to staff at all levels; policies and procedures

that ensure confidentiality and safety planning for women; a White Ribbon Ambassador program; contact people for referral to external support agencies; entitlement clauses that outline what support a woman can have if faced with violence; partnerships with external agencies with expertise in the area.

This thinking sits well with the notion that the accreditation scheme should be comprehensive. Of the models considered in this paper, 50:50 Councils for Gender Equity (CGE) is most congruent with it. GCE has a three-tiered accreditation system:

- Bronze: a 'soft entry' point allows Councils to express commitment to the issue and undertake preliminary work.*
- Silver: over time, the organisation assesses itself using established standards and criteria, and that assessment is subject to validation through an independent and confidential survey of staff.*
- Gold: the organisation is going beyond the standards, taking leadership and innovating. Gold accreditation involves peer review.*

CGE faced similar issues to White Ribbon in establishing accreditation:

- a lack of direct incentives/carrots for participation in the system*
- the need for flexibility in how accreditation is achieved over time to encourage engagement by those councils with less motivation and/or resources*
- the need to minimise the cost of participation, especially for smaller organisations*
- the need for robustness (involving external scrutiny in assessing performance), balanced against the need to keep the system simple, flexible and cost effective (achieved by having different processes in each tier of accreditation)*

The diagram gives an overview of the proposed White Ribbon Accreditation Model. The model would also link to White Ribbon recognition awards.

Tier One: Awareness and Commitment

This is the entry level (although organisations could choose enter at Tier Two). It is designed to encourage organisations that have not yet taken action to do so and to provide recognition to those that have already been undertaking work. Possible criteria might include establishing a White Ribbon Ambassador Program and hosting a White Ribbon event, with a commitment to addressing the issue over time.

To maintain this level of accreditation, organisations would report on their activities to White Ribbon and have ongoing involvement via the Ambassador and event programs. Organisations would be encouraged to progress to Tier Two, but this would not be required.

Tier Two: Taking Action

Organisations would work to meet standards in areas of activity such as:

- *Prevention of violence against women in the workplace (criteria would relate to internal policies and practices on zero tolerance, reporting, complaints, communication strategies, codes of conduct)*
- *Prevention of violence against women in the community (criteria would relate to bystander education, training of staff to understand the causes and impacts of violence and tools to assist in preventing it, hosting WR events, supporting WR Ambassadors)*
- *Responding to violence against women in the workplace (criteria would relate to systems to support women to seek help, entitlements for leave, flexibility in work practices to create safety, safety planning, contact people)*
- *Responding to violence through community partnerships (criteria would relate to promoting referral, developing partnerships to assist women and men in addressing violence.*

Organisations would work towards the standards over time, documenting their progress and reporting to White Ribbon. The accreditation body would then conduct a confidential on-line survey of all staff. Accreditation is given if x % of staff indicate awareness and no issues of concern are raised. Accreditation remains valid for three to five years, after which a similar process is required for continued accreditation.

Third Tier: Leading

The final tier would be for a smaller number of organisations taking leadership on the issue. This might be through an innovative workplace program and/or through work in influencing other organisations or the public. An organisation would be required to demonstrate that Tier Two has been reached, that ongoing systems are in place and that something 'in addition' is being done. This level would be peer assessed (in the first instance by other Tier Two organisations).

Developing the system for pilot stage

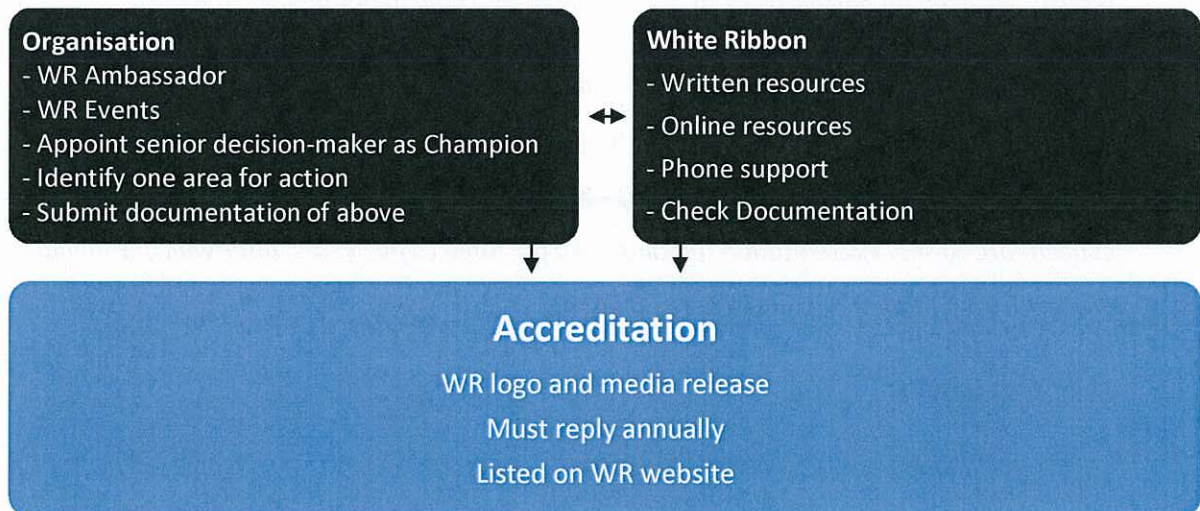
The final section of this paper outlines how White Ribbon might proceed from this point. It provides a stepped approach to developing the draft standards and the system for accreditation that includes consultation with employer organisations of different sizes, function, structure and gender mix. This process will allow further refinement of both the system and the standards. It will also engage a group of organisations for the pilot process.

A further suggestion is that White Ribbon develop a partnership with an NGO with significant research and evaluation capability to assist in the design and evaluation of the pilot, as well as helping to coordinate a research partnership with a university that can apply for research funding to further research issues related to violence against women in an Australian workforce context.

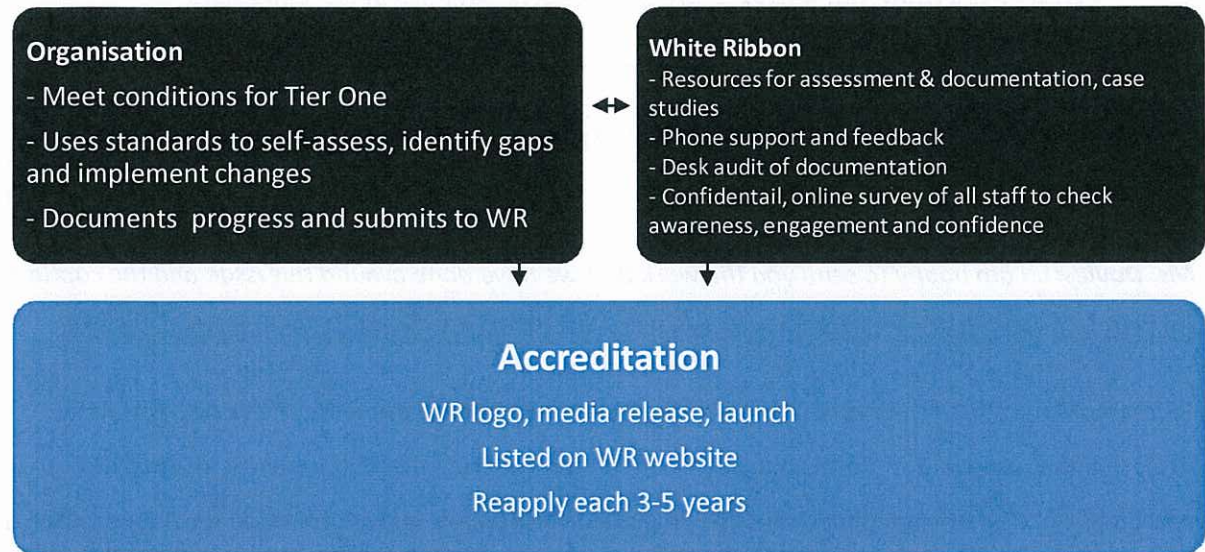
See Appendix 3 for the complete White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation Program document.

White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation Scheme

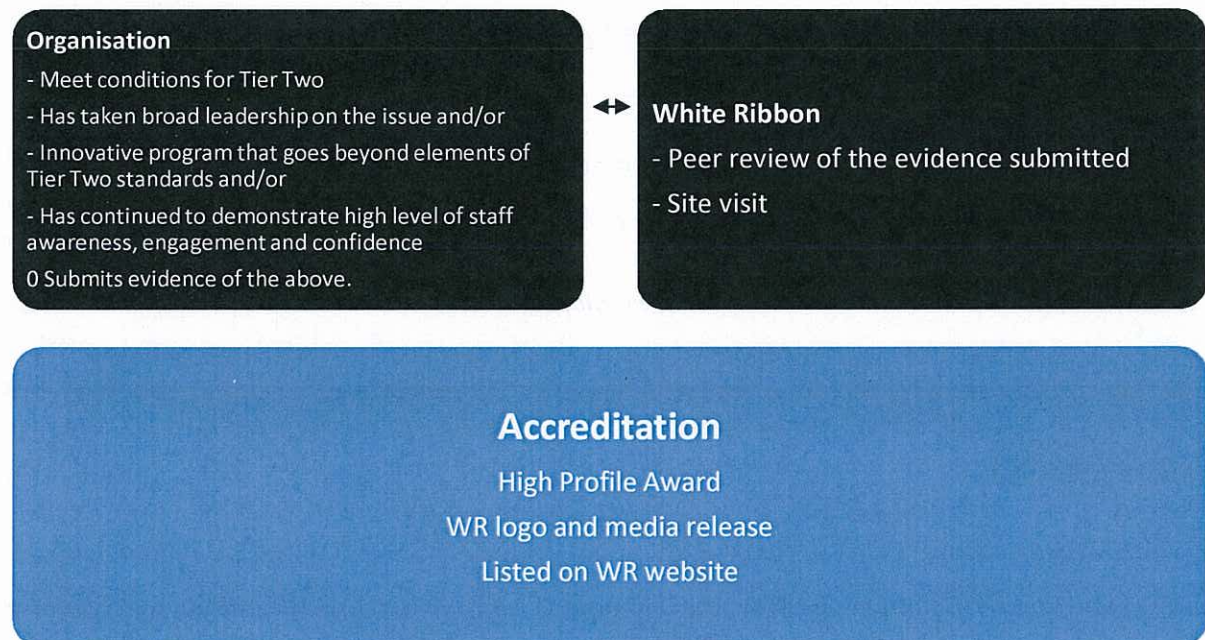
Tier One: Awareness and Commitment



Tier Two: Taking Action



Tier Three: Leading



3. Extract from transcript – page 8: Re: Definition of violence in the workplace.

The Hon. Catherine Cusack: ...I am very interested to get to the nub of a credible definition of psychological violence in the workplace.

Ms. Davies: ...I am happy to send you the work that we have done around this issue and the capture that we have identified as to the way in which violence is described in our accreditation process.

Please note that the definition of Violence that is the baseline for the work of the Accreditation Project is that used within the National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violence against Women and Children. There is ongoing discussion regarding the efficacy of this definition for the purposes of the project.

4. Extract from transcript – page 11: Re: “Change your ways” DVD.

CHAIR: Could I ask you to provide to the Committee who was the intended target of the DVD and why, what research formed the actual initiative and how the DVD is going to be rolled out?

Ms. Alexander: That is the NRL’s initiative. Kevin Maher, who is an ambassador, participated in that program, but it was embarked upon and initiated by the NRL. We have it as a resource on our website, but it was developed by the NRL. We can talk to them and get that information to you through the NRL.

White Ribbon has sought advice from the NRL about the DVD and was referred to Communities NSW. Sue Lindsay, Communities NSW, the DVD project lead, advised that the information requested above could not be provided to White Ribbon as it is confidential in nature and further, that the information requested had already been provided over one month ago in a letter to the Minister for Sports and Recreation, the Hon. Graham Annesley.