

Sexual Health

Approximately 93% of young people in Australia participate in school based sexual health education programs and young people themselves cite school programs as one of their primary sources of information on sexual health. It is important that Tasmanian schools provide young people with comprehensive and up to date information on sexual health to assist in developing healthy attitudes towards sexual health. Young people should not be left to find all information on their own; schools provide young people with limited information and many young people then rely on the internet or friends for more information. This is a risky practice as it can lead to incorrect or misleading information. Recently, advancements were made with the proposed implementation of the *Relationships and Sexuality Education in Tasmanian Government Schools Strategy 2012-2014*. This strategy covers sexual health and relationships which will cover emotional sexual health which is vital for young people to be aware of and to understand both the emotional and physical aspects of sexual health.

The number of young people contracting sexually transmitted infections (STI) is continuing to rise and given the long term consequences of untreated STI's it is crucial that young people are educated on safe sexual health. Young people need to have services they can access confidentially and confidently to assist them with their sexual health needs. Regular and routine STI testing is the most effective means of identifying several STI's that don't have symptoms in the early stages. Treatment can then be given in the first instance and is effective in treating the infections before they become untreatable infections that can cause additional health concerns. Many young people only seek medical assistance if they are experiencing symptoms or suspect they have an STI but regular testing can be the most effective means of maintaining sexual health. In order for young people to access regular testing the services need to be affordable and accessible.

YNOT is committed to:

- Advocating for sexual health and healthy sexual relationship programs to be a compulsory component of the curriculum in Tasmanian schools.



- Ensuring that young people have access to the resources and information they require regarding sexual health.
- Contributing support for the evaluation of sexual health programs to ensure continuous improvement and efficacy in services and education programs.
- Advocating for free or bulk billed sexual health services, contraception and STI testing.

Future Vision

A Tasmania where all young people are informed about sexual health and have access to information through their education provider. In future it is hoped that access to affordable and youth appropriate sexual health services will be increasingly promoted and accessible state wide.

References

Department of Education (2012), *Relationships and sexuality education in Tasmanian government schools strategy 2012-2014*, Tasmania.

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