



Media Release

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WHV calls for statewide strategy on sexual and reproductive health

Victorian women's health policy experts and advocates have welcomed calls for targeted sexuality education around the issue of sex and alcohol use in teens. The issue highlights a growing need for a statewide strategy on sexual and reproductive health.

Executive Director of Women's Health Victoria, Ms Marilyn Beaumont, said that it was crucial to educate young people through the real issues and choices that they face, including decisions around alcohol consumption.

"Sexuality education needs to take into account a range of issues:

- address social influences
- develop communication and negotiation skills
- encourage openness
- equip young people with skills to decode media messages
- as well as assist them to make decisions around alcohol consumption

"Excessive alcohol consumption and the increase in teen sex is a shared responsibility for young women and men – our education must address both in ways that are gender sensitive," Ms. Beaumont said.

"We have seen far too many incidences lately of what can happen when excessive alcohol consumption affects decision making around sexual activity. We have to make sure we are equipping our young people with the skills to handle these social situations with awareness.

"Women's Health Victoria and other organizations have been advocating for a statewide sexual and reproductive health strategy to target and address the high rates of unwanted sex, violence against women and unplanned pregnancies.

"For young women in years 10 and 12, experience of unwanted sex has increased from 28.1 to 37.8 percent of sexually active female students in 2008. Statistics like these emphasise the stark need to provide better skills and information to our young people.

"We will be seeking to hear from Labor, Liberal and Greens parties at our Women's Health Policy Forum on Monday the 11th October, what plans or policies they propose to address sexual and reproductive health in Victoria," Ms Beaumont said.

For more information on the Ten Point Plan for women's health see: <http://whv.org.au/publications-resources/publications-resources-by-topic/post/10-point-plan-for-victorian-women-s-health-2010-2014/>

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