

MEDIA ALERT

Sex education needed in Tasmanian schools

Guest speaker Professor Marian Pitts from Melbourne's La Trobe University will discuss teenage pregnancy and rising rates of sexually transmissible infections at a public lecture in Hobart tomorrow night. The Tasmanian Branch of the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) is hosting the event to promote discussion on the urgent need for sexuality and relationships education in Tasmanian schools.

"The recent pregnancy of a 13-year-old Tasmanian girl raises the wider issue about Tasmania's high rate of unplanned teenage pregnancy and what should be done about it. There is also an alarming increase of Chlamydia among teenagers which has increased by around 400% since 2001," said Professor Pitts.

Where: UTAS Medical Science 1, Lecture Theatre (105LT)
17 Liverpool St, Hobart (Cnr Campbell and Liverpool Street)

When: Thursday 30 June 2011

Time: 6 – 7:30pm

"Tasmania experiences 27.1 births per 1000 for 15 – 19 yr olds compared to the National average of 16.7. The huge increase in rates of over the past decade points to the need for urgent action in terms of future prevention strategies. Chlamydia is a sexually transmissible infection which can damage a woman's reproductive organs and cause infertility. Education needs to play a key role in reducing these concerning statistics," explained Professor Pitts.

Marian Pitts is a Professor at the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society at LaTrobe University in Melbourne. Her presentation will discuss a range of national issues and options for specific action in the Tasmanian context, covering:

- Australian and Tasmanian data on teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections.
- Knowledge, attitudes and sexual practices among secondary students.
- Newly released results of the first National Survey of Secondary Teachers of Sexuality Education (~300 secondary school teachers), which examined what is currently being taught and what the barriers and facilitators are of successful sexual health education.
- What should be done in Tasmania in relation to sexuality and relationships education.

For further information/comment:

Professor Marian Pitts:

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