

Our Plan

Currently there is an enormous variation in the knowledge levels of Australians about sexual health and reproductive issues. There is also great variation in the availability of services and the legality of accessing certain options.

Increases in sexual abuse and violence and sexually transmitted disease, high rates of infertility and relatively high numbers of unplanned and unwanted pregnancies, in combination with increasing caesarean rates, restricted access to midwives, too few maternity supports and high levels of post-natal depression suggest that much still needs to be done.

The 4th National Survey of Australian Secondary Students Sexual Health (Year 10 and 12) in 2008 found:

- Student knowledge of STIs remains relatively poor particularly hepatitis A B and C, HPV and cervical cancer
- 78% of students had experienced some form of sexual activity
- The proportion of students who had sexual intercourse increased to 40% and only half always used a condom
- More sexually active students had multiple partners
- 38% of young women reported ever having unwanted sex

All Australians should be able to access the same choices and have the information they need in regards to their sexual and reproductive health.

- Comprehensive, evidence based, age appropriate **sexual health and relationships education** provided by suitably qualified professionals in all schools and assistance to parents in talking with their children about sexuality
- Free and confidential **sexual health centres** providing information, counseling, sexual health awareness, STI and pregnancy testing and contraception, provided in remote or small rural centres by visiting staff or pharmacies
- A full range of affordable **contraception** on demand, oral contraception over the counter and all forms of oral contraception on the PBS. Free or low cost condoms and emergency contraception in schools, universities health centres
- A national public awareness program on **emergency contraception**
- Equal rights for all potential parents in **assisted reproductive technologies**, regardless of marital status, sexual orientation or financial capacity
- Uniform national laws for **surrogacy, adoption and legal abortion**
- Unbiased **pregnancy counseling** where requested
- Government to award a contract for supplying **RU486** in Australia to all hospitals, specialists and GPs with training in its use
- Uniform national guidelines for routine **antenatal care**
- A **National Maternity Action Plan** to give all pregnant women greater choice in where and how they give birth, including home and other non-hospital birthing options, the option of publicly funded midwifery services throughout pregnancy and childbirth with a single caregiver and good access to most common birth options, including choices in natural birth, epidural or other pain management
- Postnatal care** and support which is flexible and tailored to individual needs and funding support for advocacy and support groups
- A national **home visitor program** for families with a new baby offering a range of services to supplement those of midwives and maternal and child health nurses