



**RECOMMENDATIONS TO  
THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
FROM THE FINAL PLENARY SESSION OF THE YOUNG WOMEN'S  
GATHERING ON SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH  
“LET’S TALK ABOUT SEX”  
SYDNEY, JULY 13 & 14, 2007.**

*The gathering was attended by over 100 women, mostly young, who addressed a diverse range of issues in the sexual and reproductive health field including fertility, negotiating consent, sex education, multiculturalism and sexuality, female genital mutilation, safe sex, rape, sexualisation of children by the advertising industry, drink spiking, “snake condoms” for indigenous youth, representation of young women in the media, unplanned pregnancy, and sex for young people with disabilities.*

**This Conference**

- Commends the Parliamentary Group on Population and Development (PGPD) on its RU486 achievements and supports the cross-party *Transparency in Advertising Bill* currently before Federal Parliament
- Calls for the abandonment of the ‘Harradine’ Family Planning Guidelines in Australia’s aid budget
- Calls for a change in the terms of reference for the pregnancy hotline such that it is required that counsellors offer referral on all three options (abortion, parenting, adoption)

*National SRH policy*

- Calls for the development of a comprehensive national SRH policy incorporating minimum standards and broad guidelines, in consultation with workers on the ground
- Recognises that the Public Health Association of Australia, in cooperation with Sexual Health and Family Planning Australia (SHAFPA), is developing such a policy and that this should at least be given serious consideration, if not adopted
- Recognises that access to SRH services must be accessible i.e. cheap, and culturally appropriate

### *Political candidates and policy*

- Calls for a diversification of political candidates, particularly in winnable seats, that include women and Culturally And Linguistically Diverse (CALD) candidates
- Urges the pre-selection by parties of candidates, whether male or female, who have a strong commitment to sexual and reproductive health issues
- Calls for the development of evidence-based sexual and reproductive health policies rather than policies based on religious belief

### *Sex education*

- Recognises the need for comprehensive sex education within a life-skills framework and one that builds life-skills such as self-esteem, awareness of media influences, peer influences etc
- Calls, therefore, for development of 'relationships and sexual health' education which has a whole school approach and with capacity building of teachers
- Recognises that cooperation between parents and health workers, students, teachers and community workers is necessary at all levels of the child's/student's development especially in primary school
- Calls for parent education at key times in a child's life: birth, starting school, puberty, transition to high school and choosing subjects for Year 12.
- Recognises that parental involvement must include parents from all socio-economic backgrounds and those not normally present at the school such as working parents and those of CALD communities
- Recognises that in Aboriginal communities the extended family is an extension of the family and could be involved in delivering safe sex health education
- Recognises that holistic child development, in particular emotional intelligence, is a key strategy in allowing children to communicate both pleasure and consent in their sexual development

### *National SRH resources*

- Calls for funding of a national resource, forum or clearing house on sexual and reproductive issues
- Calls for funding for regular national conferences on sexual and reproductive health – similar to this Young Women's Gathering – that is community run and with a high level of youth participation

### *Special needs*

- Recognises the sexual needs of disabled persons and calls for appropriate resources for different disability groups
- Challenges discriminatory laws such as forced sterilisation of minors with disabilities

- Recognises the sexual needs and rights of gays, lesbian, bisexuals, transgender and intersex (GLBTI) people
- Calls for the development of foreign language materials and resources in SRH that are suitable for people of CALD background
- Recognises the need for peer education in SRH matters that is supporting and encouraging
- Recognises that ‘youth at risk’, including young people who do not go to school, also need SRH education and services

#### *Advertising*

- Calls for a review of the Advertising Standards Bureau (ASB) guidelines to ensure there are no sexual images of children (‘corporate paedophilia’) portrayed in advertising, and that there be appropriate age time-slots on television
- Calls for a specialised consulting group, comprised of both young and older people, that works alongside the ASB to evaluate suitability of sexually explicit material

#### *Family policies*

- Recognises that, for women to balance their work and family commitments, they need greater job security with a guaranteed return to employment after maternity leave, government-funded maternity and paternity leave, fairer working hours, less unpaid overtime, family friendly programs such as the opportunity to breastfeed at work, and a nationally accessible and affordable childcare and preschool program with tax rebates that ensure all families pay the same.

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