

DO AUSTRALIAN TEACHERS FEEL SUPPORTED TO DELIVER RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS?

FINDINGS FROM THE THIRD AUSTRALIAN SURVEY OF TEACHERS OF RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION (2025–26)

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BACKGROUND

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is most effective when teachers are supported by the broader school environment.

Supportive leadership, professional learning opportunities, sufficient planning time, and clear school policies are frequently identified as important enablers of high-quality RSE delivery.

However, little is known about how Australian teachers experience these supports in practice.

This study examined teachers' perceptions of whole-of-school support for RSE and the relationship between support, perceived knowledge, and comfort delivering RSE.

METHODS

3RD AUSTRALIAN SURVEY OF TEACHERS OF RELATIONSHIPS & SEXUALITY EDUCATION

- National survey of Australian primary and secondary teachers (N = 482)
- N = 343 in-service RSE teachers



- PERCEIVED SCHOOL PRIORITISATION OF RSE
- ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT
- PARENT SUPPORT
- RSE TRAINING
- TIME FOR PLANNING AND PREPARATION
- PERCEIVED RSE CONTENT KNOWLEDGE
- COMFORT DELIVERING RSE

Associations were examined using chi-square analyses.

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR RSE

71.9%

FELT RSE WAS FULLY SUPPORTED BY SCHOOL ADMIN

60.1%

FELT PARENTS WERE SUPPORTIVE OF RSE

48.2%

HAD ACCESS TO IN-SERVICE RSE TRAINING

39.4%

FELT THEY HAD SUFFICIENT TIME FOR LESSON PLANNING

WHAT HELPS TEACHERS FEEL PREPARED TO DELIVER RSE?

SUFFICIENT TIME FOR LESSON PLANNING

INSUFFICIENT TIME SUFFICIENT TIME

ADEQUATE RSE KNOWLEDGE

52.9

96.5

COMFORTABLE DELIVERING RSE

57.5

95.3

ONGOING ACCESS TO TRAINING

NO ACCESS ACCESS

ADEQUATE RSE KNOWLEDGE

50

93.3

COMFORTABLE DELIVERING RSE

51.4

92.4

DEDICATED IN-SERVICE RSE TRAINING

NO TRAINING SPECIFIC SESSION

ADEQUATE RSE KNOWLEDGE

64.7

90.8

COMFORTABLE DELIVERING RSE

64.7

93.4

ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT

UNSUPPORTED SUPPORTED

ADEQUATE RSE KNOWLEDGE

47.1

85.9

COMFORTABLE DELIVERING RSE

58.8

84.6

All differences statistically significant ($p > .05$)

CONCLUSIONS

Teachers who reported stronger leadership support, greater access to training, and sufficient planning time were more likely to feel knowledgeable and comfortable delivering RSE.

Findings suggest that improving RSE delivery requires attention not only to individual teacher capability, but also to the broader organisational conditions that support teaching practice.

A whole-of-school approach that combines leadership support, professional learning, protected planning time, and clear policy frameworks may help strengthen the quality and consistency of RSE delivery across Australian schools.

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