

# **A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO IMPROVING THE CONSISTENCY OF SCHOOL-BASED SEXUALITY AND SEXUAL HEALTH PROGRAMS**

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## **Background/Purpose:**

Sexuality and sexual health are fundamental to the health and wellbeing of adolescents and adolescent development. Many young people acknowledge school-based sexuality and sexual health programs as some of the most utilised and trusted sources of sexual and reproductive health information, however, the delivery of sexuality and sexual health education is often inconsistent and under resourced.

## **Approach:**

Guided by the NSW STI Strategy 2022-2026, an Advisory Committee of key agencies was formed to improve the health literacy of students around sexual health and support delivery of sexuality and sexual health programs in schools. The NSW Sexual Health in Schools Advisory Committee provides a collaborative working alliance between key professional stakeholders to improve the consistency, transparency and relevance for teaching about sexual health in all NSW schools, across all three education sectors. To combat inconsistent delivery, the Committee identified a gap in available NSW resources that support effective practice in the delivery of sexuality and sexual health programs.

## **Outcomes/Impact:**

A series of documents were developed by the Committee. These include a statement of effective practice and guidance documents to support the implementation (planning, delivering and evaluating) of sexuality and sexual health education in NSW schools. Content was developed based on current evidence and internationally recognised best practice for effective education. Materials have been focus tested with school leaders, educators and wellbeing staff across all three education sectors.

## **Innovation and Significance:**

With appropriate support, resources and availability of evidence-based teaching materials, schools are well positioned to equip students with evidence-based, age-appropriate knowledge and skills needed to have respectful and healthy relationships and to support and enhance their sexual and reproductive health as they mature.

## **Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

The Sexual Health in Schools Advisory Committee is convened by NSW Health with some members funded to engage in program work.