

strategies in the Grampians region

Working across the region we often learn about initiatives improving women's sexual wellbeing. This is an opportunity to profile excellent work underway locally.

'Whose job is sex education, parents or schools?'

We are proud to report that the Victorian Department of Health recently shared an article featuring a local partnership between **Wimmera Health Care Group** and **Horsham College** who have developed a program aimed at making it easier to talk about sexual health and puberty with teenagers.

The story was also promoted via The Wimmera Mail-Times and The Weekly Advertiser.



Wimmera teens havin' the talk with parents

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Wimmera Health Care Group family planning nurse Sharyn Cook with Horsham College teachers and students hosted 'Havin' the Talk' - a role play and question and answer session attended by parents.

To open lines of discussion students take on the roles of experts introducing a question to the panel – *Whose job is sex education, parents or schools?* – .

The role play panel discussion format allows students to play characters, drawing from information they have learned through their studies this year.

This is the third year Wimmera Health Care Group and Horsham College have worked together to produce the event.

'The role play works very well to take some of the awkwardness away from the subject matter for both the students and the parents,' said Horsham College health and physical education co-ordinator Sue Roberts.

'After the role-play panel discussions have finished, we have real experts talk on a range of topics,' Mrs Roberts said.

'The overall aim of getting students and parents to talk about sex is to help prevent unplanned pregnancy and sexual assault and promote good sexual health.'



With campuses in Horsham and Dimboola **Wimmera Health Care Group** is the major specialist referral centre for the Wimmera and Southern Mallee region.

For further information about this initiative please contact:
Sharyn Cook
Family Planning Nurse
Wimmera Health Care Group
03 5362 1240

strategies outside the region

Sharing knowledge of sexual health strategies underway outside our region aiming to inspire ideas locally.

TESTme is a free service

offering online ordering for chlamydia test kits and telephone consultations with a nurse for sexually transmitted infections and contraceptive advice.

Melbourne Sexual Health Centre (MSHC) are funded to provide this service for rural Victorians aged 25 years and younger, rural Victorian men who have sex with men and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In 2012 the TESTme service was redesigned to enable better access to chlamydia testing in rural Victoria, allowing clients to order a chlamydia test kit online without having to speak to a nurse.

At the SEXrurality Conference MSHC reported **requests for TESTme kits have doubled in the past six months**, clients reported high satisfaction rates and about 35 per cent of clients stated that they

would not have gone to a local doctor for testing if the TESTme service was not available.

While usage of the free telephone STI consultation service has been considerably less than anticipated, providing the option of **ordering a kit online has proved to be an effective method of increasing chlamydia testing for rural Victorians.**

Focus groups conducted by the Centre for Excellence in Rural Sexual Health found that **free online testing services address the issues of access for rural young people.** They noted that while the barriers to rural sexual health services may remain, free online STI testing services are acceptable to the rural young people they consulted.

People can access the service by **calling 1800 739 836** during office hours or email testme@mshc.org.au for an appointment or visit www.testme.org.au



'privacy, transport, rural workforce shortages and costs are barriers that prevent young people from seeking STI testing'

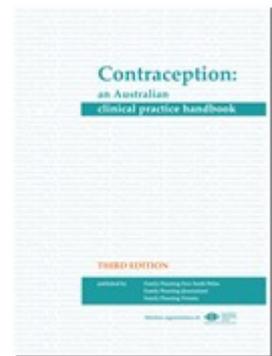
Associate Professor Jane Tomnay, Director, Centre for Excellence in Rural Sexual Health

links to research or resources

Co-authored by medical experts from Australian family planning organisations—the NEW edition of **Contraception: an Australian clinical practice handbook** is

available from [Family Planning Victoria's bookshop](#).

This provides current, evidence based, best practice recommendations for contraceptive delivery in Australia.



professional development

Family Planning Victoria: Sexual and Reproductive Health +FIRST AID 2-3 December 2013

Topics include:

Understanding personal and social values and attitudes and the potential impact on information provision

Positive self-esteem and self-concept

Knowledge of community resources and organisations

Basic knowledge and understanding of sexuality development across the lifespan, including:

- anatomy and physiology of human sexuality
- sexual function and dysfunction
- pregnancy, birth and contraception
- reproductive and sub-fertility issues
- sexuality events in the lifecycle



Location:
901 Whitehorse Rd
Box Hill
Cost: \$490 + GST
Unit of competency
CHCCED311A

in the media

Australian women need increased access to long-acting contraception

On 2 September an article in The Medical Journal of Australia noted that **WOMEN in Australia are using long-acting contraceptives at half the rate of women in Europe** with only 6.5 per cent of Australian women compared to 14.8 per cent of women in northern Europe using long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs).

Around 20 women in every thousand aged 15-44 in Australia experiences an unintended pregnancy and abortion compared to 17 per thousand in northern Europe.

One of the key strategies to reduce the unexpected pregnancy rate is to promote LARCs like injections, patches and vaginal rings.

A British study estimated if just 5 per cent of women of reproductive age using the contraceptive pill switched to LARCs there would be 7500 fewer unintended pregnancies.

The article calls for better education of GPs about LARCs and says doctors should be given incentives to provide advice on the methods to women. See [The Medical Journal of Australia](#) for the full article.

Raising awareness of local data

On 24 October Australian Bureau of Statistic released data showing fewer Australian women under the age of 20 are having babies than they were a decade earlier.

Fiona Henderson at The Courier noted WHG information indicated this trend was not the case in rural and regional areas. In fact in the Grampians region we have 3 local government areas within the top 10 highest teenage birth rates in Victoria: Horsham, Ararat and West Wimmera.

The subsequent article by The Courier was picked up and shared by ABC Local Radio Ballarat, Voice FM and The Wimmera Mail-Times.

The Courier

Friday November 1, 2013

Ballarat has high teen pregnancy rate, figures show



TEENAGE pregnancies in Ballarat are increasing, despite a statewide decrease in young mothers.

[2 Comments](#)

THE WIMMERA

Mail-Times

Monday November 4, 2013

Wimmera teen pregnancy rates remain high



WIMMERA teenage pregnancy rates remain high, despite a drop nationally.

[0 Comments](#)

Please contact Women's Health Grampians if you would like to contribute ideas or feedback to this newsletter

Women's Health Grampians along with our key partners have been holding discussions about how to support regional services to improve women's sexual and reproductive health across the Grampians region.

Our focus is on family planning including contraception, pregnancy counselling, abortion and the professional development needs of service providers.

We readily acknowledge that many organisations across the region have a long history of working hard to address these issues. With this in mind the aim is to build on existing relationships, and develop new connections, to enhance current work, add capacity, and where relevant, provide a new range of initiatives.

We welcome opportunities to consider the sexual and reproductive health issues for women in our region.

WHG women's
health
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Acknowledging Key Partners:

The Royal Women's Hospital
Grampians Medicare Local
Ballarat Community Health
Family Planning Victoria