

Young people & sexual health in rural and regional Victoria

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About YACVic

Our vision is for a Victorian community that values and provides opportunity, participation, justice and equity for all young people.

Victorian Rural Youth Service

That all young people have access to the services, programs and resources they need and that they need, and are not disadvantaged by their rurality.

Young people and sexual health in rural and regional Victoria

(YACVic, 2013)

- Explored sexual and reproductive health inequalities faced by young people in rural and regional Victoria
- Suggested approaches to overcoming these inequalities

<http://www.yacvic.org.au/policy-publications/publications-listed-by-policy-area/33-rural-regional-and-urban-fringe-issues/521-young-people-and-sexual-health-in-rural-and-regional-victoria>

Why is it important to address sexual health inequalities?

To reduce the cost to:

- Individuals
- Communities
- The economy

Key areas of concern

- 75% of all STIs in Australia occur in young people (15-29)
 - Increase 20% 2009-2012
 - Chlamydia
 - HIV & syphilis
- Disparities between metro and rural young people

Key areas of concern

- Fertility rates

Key areas of concern

- Unwanted sexual relationships
- Violence against women

Key Inequalities

Access

- Contraception
- Education
 - Inconsistent approaches
 - Young people not in school
- Information
- Support and advice
 - Sexual health
 - Relationships
 - SSAGD



Youth Affairs
Council Victoria

Key Inequalities

Rural context

- Social determinants
 - Isolation
 - Transport
 - Employment
 - Education
 - Income
 - Gender

Futher rural considerations...

- Access to emergency contraception, fertility counselling, terminations & support with the process.
- Boredom, drugs & alcohol

Responding to inequalities:

CERSH Health Promotion Approach

- Local response
- Values: equality, justice & diversity
- Integrate respectful relationships
- Engage proactively with difference and diversity
- Address vulnerability
- Cross sectoral partnerships
- Range of actions
- Coordinated to link health promotion to clinical practice.



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Recommendations:

1. Support young people to become community leaders in sexual health and respectful relationships

Recommendations:

2. Support the implementation of long-term, sustainable, whole-of-community sexual assault prevention programs in every region of Victoria.

Recommendations:

3. Reduce barriers to practicing safe sex and encourage young people to get tested for STIs regularly.

Recommendations:

4. Support the development and promotion of a state-wide pregnancy information service, with capacity to assist women in all rural, regional and remote communities in Victoria.

Recommendations:

5. Consult with the Centre for Excellence in Rural Sexual Health (University of Melbourne) to apply findings from their pilot programs to other rural settings.

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Recommendations:

6. Advocate for a compulsory, consistent national curriculum of sexuality education in secondary schools, including independent and Catholic schools.

Recommendations:

7. Data collection

Thank you!

Case studies of good practice and references available in *[Young people and sexual health in rural and regional Victoria](#)*
(YACVic, 2013)

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