



Tasmanian Principals on Sex Education in Their Schools

Attachment to Media Release of Wednesday 7 October 2009

Cassy O'Connor MP
Greens Health and Youth Spokesperson

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In late August 2009 Greens Health Spokesperson Cassy O'Connor MP surveyed Tasmanian school principals about issues regarding the provision of sex and relationship education in their schools. To protect the privacy of the principals who responded, all personal or school-related details have been removed.

Selected Responses from School Principals

- 1) "A fair question to ask Mr Bartlett might be if he is able to set the same target in relation to rates of teen pregnancy and Chlamydia transmission as he has with literacy."
- 2) "I imagine all Primary Schools face the dilemma of when to address this subject and to what degree. Clearly having a firm, clear and appropriate policy that has been made public would be highly advantageous. Presently my understanding is that Primary Schools that proceed with sex education do so at their own risk. Clarity is required. For your records it has not been the policy of this school to teach sex education. I believe this issue needs to be addressed given current data and firmly support your enquiry."
- 3) "Not this year – biannually we employ Family Planning Tasmania. This is quite an expensive option for the school."
- 4) "The information we provide to students spans an awareness of physical, social, and emotional changes associated with puberty to understanding those changes, to identifying attitudes and behaviours associated with adolescence and sexuality and further to understanding issues relevant to young people and identifying and challenging myths of stereotypes, relationships and sexuality."
- 5) "Our school provides sexual health/relationships education for P-6 classes biannually through Family Planning Tasmania. It is well received by our School Community."
- 6) "The cost is considerable."
- 7) "Until this year we have purchased the Family Planning Program ("growing up"). These wonderful providers have taught P – 6 at an age appropriate level, starting with body differences for the little guys and addressing issues of sexuality, relationships and how babies are made with the older children...This year we have made the decision to only provide this for children aged grade 4 up... This year, it will cost \$1300 for the program..."

- 8) "I can tell you that Family Planning come to our school every two years to run their program at the school's expense."
 - 9) "Teachers will always be concerned that a) they are expected to take responsibility for what is essentially a family responsibility, and b) if we do run programs they are commercial and therefore expensive + the quality of the presenter is problematic – some are excellent and others are less so."
 - 10) "We have Family Planning Tasmania conduct a variety of courses with all our students from Kinder to Grade 6 including a session for Parents and Staff. We run this program every two years."
 - 11) "Sexuality education has always been a priority. All our students from Prep to Grade 6 attend lessons with Family Planning Tas."
 - 12) "Yes we offer a 'Growing Up' program for our children each year. This program is run by trained Educators from Family Planning Tasmania."
 - 13) "We have had a program here for many years. It is very well received by everyone in our school community and is delivered to all classes."
 - 14) "A program has been conducted here for children, Grade 1- 6 were involved this year. However one of the things you need to take into account is that some parents do not like this being conducted in schools and ask that their children be withdrawn."
 - 15) "Every second year we offer a program K-6."
 - 16) "Yes we have an 'About Me' program (including sex education for the older ones) involving students from Kindergarten to Grade 6. This year it involved all years but we had started a system of 1 year the K-3 and the next year 3-6. We will probably go back to that system next year as it is easier to manage – program wise."
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