

POLICY FUTURES

A Reform Agenda



Implementing relationships and sex education to safeguard sexual wellbeing

Sexual violence and harassment is a prevalent public health issue with enormous social consequences. It is not enough to hope the imprisonment of perpetrators alone will slow the rates of sexual violence.

If Australia and its jurisdictions are to be champions of human rights and gender equality, the right to live free from sexual violence must be defended before it is violated.

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Key Policy Recommendations

1

Introduce legislation to mandate universal access to Relationship and Sex Education (RSE). Human rights jurisdictions should enshrine the right to access such information in their human rights legislation.

2

Create mechanisms for the delivery and evaluation of comprehensive RSE in schools and beyond. For example, by the creation of an intersectoral government body or by funding an appropriate NGO to undertake the task. That mechanism must provide for developing evidence based RSE programs, curricula (e.g. with the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA]) and resources by appropriately qualified people; equipping schools adequately to implement policies and roll out RSE, including through funding, training teachers, and using appropriate external providers; evaluating RSE programs as well as their implementation; identifying additional sites for intervention.

3

Community engagement. Develop action plans anticipating potential sources and nature of RSE opposition, and prioritise engaging parents/caregivers and community in RSE policy and rollout.

4

Raising public awareness. Engage governments in preemptive media briefings and public health campaigns highlighting the evidence-based need for, and nature and content of RSE delivery.

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