

Media release



28 November 2016

Melbourne, Victoria, 28 November 2016

On behalf of the staff at Family Planning Victoria (FPV) we wish to express our deep sadness at the tragic loss of Tyrone Unsworth, the 13-year-old Year 7 student from Brisbane who took his own life, after being bullied over his sexuality.

"Our thoughts are with Tyrone's family, friends and everyone who has been affected by this tragedy. Tyrone's story shines a spotlight on the importance of educating our children about sexuality and respectful relationships," states Claire Vissenga, FPV CEO.

At FPV, the importance of supporting individuals, families and the community in sexual and reproductive health is paramount. FPV is a strong advocate for the implementation of comprehensive relationships and sexuality education (RSE) in Victorian schools and is an active contributor to the Safe Schools Coalition of Australia.

"Comprehensive RSE helps to empower all children and young people to develop a positive body image and manage important transitions such as puberty. It has also been shown to influence attitudes and values like respect, equality and diversity," says Claire.

There is compelling evidence that comprehensive RSE programs influence behaviours and contribute to a decrease in homophobia and transphobia. The programs also build learning about the social construction of gender and foster gender equality that can lead to greater resilience in individuals.

FPV welcomes the announcement by the Minister for Education James Merlino and Minister for Families and Children Jenny Mikakos that all Victorian students will learn about respectful relationships. Our organisation is strongly committed to a whole-of-school approach, with respectful relationships curriculum providing age-appropriate resources including lesson plans and activities that help students learn and practice social skills and apply them in a positive way to learning, life and relationships.

"When there is a committed, collective approach to comprehensive RSE from schools, in the home and community, a consistent message is being sent to our children that sexual diversity is accepted and supported. This approach can have profound impacts for young people struggling with their sexuality."

"Most importantly we would like to extend our deepest condolences to Tyrone's family and friends at this very difficult time." Claire Vissenga.

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Family Planning Victoria is a leader in sexual and reproductive health care, education and advocacy. Our vision is to improve reproductive & sexual health and wellbeing for everyone in Victoria and beyond.

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