

# Media Release

**The Hon Jill Hennessy MP**  
Minister for Health  
Minister for Ambulance Services



Wednesday, 8 March, 2017

## VICTORIAN FIRST SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH PLAN

A new state-wide pregnancy support phone hot line, more funding to support women with polycystic ovary syndrome and the creation of eight new community-based family planning health hubs are at the centre of Victoria's first ever plan to improve the sexual and reproductive health of all Victorian women.

Minister for Health Jill Hennessy today released the Andrews Labor Government's landmark *Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health Key Priorities 2017-2020* plan as part of International Women's Day celebrations.

The plan, which is supported by \$6.6 million in funding, sets out key actions to reduce barriers and service gaps that affect women's access to reproductive and sexual health services.

Currently Victorian women and girls suffer from a range of preventable and treatable conditions, but there are still too many parts of Victoria where there is little to no access to the services and information they need to manage and treat these conditions.

Conditions such as polycystic ovary syndrome and endometriosis often go undiagnosed with many women living with these debilitating conditions for years before they are diagnosed. Endometriosis costs Australia around \$6 billion a year and affects approximately 200,000 Victorian women.

Through our new plan we're taking the action we need to improve access to affordable, effective and safe contraception and termination of pregnancy, tackle rising rates of chlamydia amongst young women and better manage reproductive health issues such as endometriosis and polycystic ovary syndrome.

Our \$6.6 million investment to support the plan will:

- Establish a new state-wide pregnancy support phone hot line
- Create eight new community based family planning hubs, four of which will be based in regional Victoria
- Develop a new app to support the work of the Centre of Excellence in Polycystic Ovary Syndrome
- Provide free facial hair laser treatment for women with polycystic ovary syndrome
- Deliver family planning training for doctors and nurses, particularly in regional Victoria
- Support the continued rollout of endometriosis resources
- Work with Aboriginal women and women with disabilities to improve sexual and reproductive health

The plan also aims to improve women's health literacy, enhance the knowledge of health professionals and ensure health services can better meet women's reproductive health needs.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Jill Hennessy

*"We're taking the action needed to break down the barriers women face when accessing affordable contraception and other services to control and manage fertility."*

*"Women's reproductive and sexual health issues are often neglected and poorly-understood. We know we need to do more to improve access to these services, and that's exactly what this Victorian first plan will achieve."*

### Quote attributable to Minister for Women Fiona Richardson

*"Women's health and well-being is an essential part of Victoria's Gender Equality Strategy."*

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