

## **New children's book a great start to sexuality education**

Queensland Minister for Child Safety Desley Boyle will launch Family Planning Queensland (FPQ)'s new children's book *'Everyone's got a bottom'* at the Cairns West State School on Friday.

Minister Boyle said the Queensland Government supported programs and resources that aimed to prevent child sexual abuse.

**She said the Department of Child Safety assessed 726 sexual abuse cases in 2005-06.**

'Books like *'Everyone's got a bottom'* are an important tool for parents, carers and teachers who share responsibility with government for protecting children from sexual abuse. After all, our children only get one chance at childhood.'

**FPQ Cairns Sexual Assault Service Coordinator Helen Sheeran said the book was for children aged three to eight because early childhood sexuality education helped prevent sexual abuse.**

*'Everyone's got a bottom'* is a story about Ben and his brother and sister learning and talking about bodies,' Ms Sheeran said. 'It is a story about children keeping safe, in a style that is fun and positive and a tool for parents and carers to start a conversation with children about self protection.'

**'To the best of our knowledge this is the first Australian book for young children, using children as characters, that correctly names body parts.'**

'All children are at risk of sexual assault. Children who have had an early sexuality education are better equipped to protect themselves against abusers. It is vital that this education begins early and is reinforced throughout the teenage years.'

'Police statistics show the average child is nine when he or she is first sexually assaulted. Research shows that child abuse perpetrators target children with little knowledge about sexuality. Perpetrators start when children are young, so education needs to start as early as possible.'

'There is a need to educate children beyond the notion of 'stranger danger' towards a better understanding of their rights over their own bodies.'

'Giving children the correct language is a vital part of self-protection education. *'Everyone's got a bottom'* provides age appropriate language and familiar scenarios children can relate to. Messages throughout the book help children to be assertive about their bodies.'

**'Giving sexuality information in an age appropriate way does not take away a child's innocence: it can help protect children's innocence,' Ms Sheeran said.**

*'Everyone's got a bottom'* is a collaborative work by FPQ, writer Tess Rowley and illustrator Jodi Edwards. Professor Freda Briggs OA, C&K, NAPCAN and QUT have endorsed the book.

**Book launch:**

**When:** 2 pm for 2.30 pm Friday, 25 May 2007

**Where:** Cairns West State School Library, Mayers St, Manunda

**Picture opportunity:** School teacher Tracy Mussap will read *'Everyone's got a bottom'* for a group of children at 2.30 pm. Media welcome.

To interview Minister Boyle, call media officer Carissa Mason on 0417 782 865

To interview FPQ staff, call media officer Vivienne Wynter on 0419 029 728