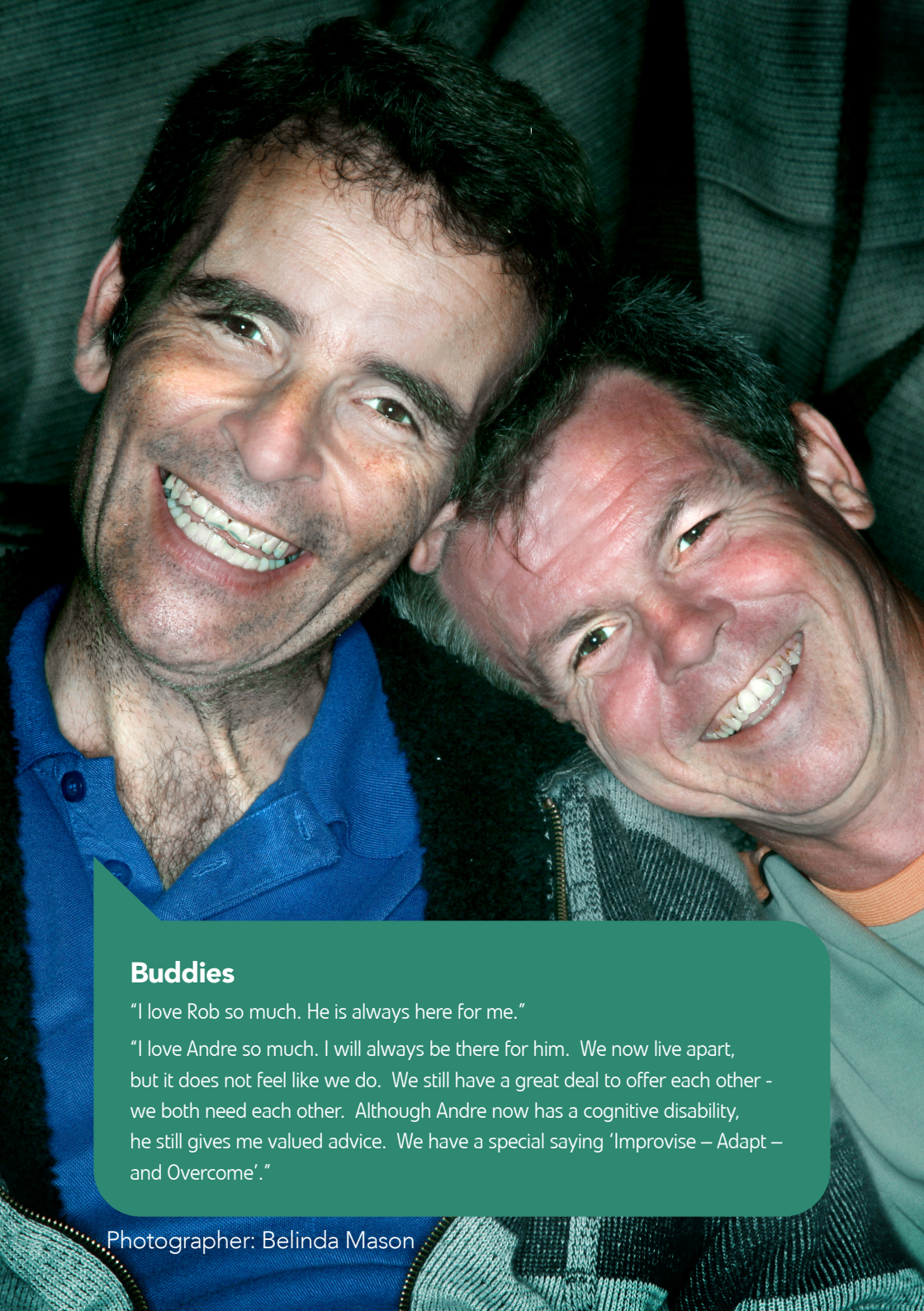




From 'Outing Disability' to Inclusivity:

An introductory guide for disability services on how to be more LGBTIQ inclusive*

*A service that is inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer people.



Buddies

"I love Rob so much. He is always here for me."

"I love Andre so much. I will always be there for him. We now live apart, but it does not feel like we do. We still have a great deal to offer each other - we both need each other. Although Andre now has a cognitive disability, he still gives me valued advice. We have a special saying 'Improvise – Adapt – and Overcome'."

Photographer: Belinda Mason

Introduction

Relationships and sexuality are an integral part of being human. It is a fundamental element of every person's sense of self, identity and connection to the world. People with disability are no different. They have the right to experience intimate relationships and explore their own identity. They have the right to access information, education, resources and support around sexuality and relationships. Unfortunately the reproductive and sexual health rights of people with disability are often not recognised and support can be difficult to access.

For people with disability who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ), ongoing misunderstanding, stigma and discrimination means that they may experience even greater difficulties in accessing their rights. It is increasingly acknowledged that recognition of the diversity of sexual behaviour and expression contributes to people's overall sense of wellbeing and health. Family Planning NSW has embarked on this project, Outing Disability, to bring to light the challenges faced by LGBTIQ people with disability and raise awareness of the diversity of this group.

This resource aims to support and engage disability organisations to promote safe and supportive environments that uphold the rights of LGBTIQ people with disability.

What is Outing Disability?

Outing Disability is a photographic journey documenting the stories of LGBTIQ people with disability produced in collaboration with internationally acclaimed photographer Belinda Mason. Through portrait and voice twenty six people share their hopes, dreams, struggles and triumphs. They tell their stories of coming out, exploring identity, discovering love and finding pride.

Comprised of photographic panels, audio stories and a documentary, *Outing Disability* encourages the viewer to reflect on the diverse and often challenging experiences of LGBTIQ people with disability. You can view the exhibition at: <http://outingdisability.com.au>

With this new series of *Outing Disability* posters disability services and allies of LGBTIQ people with disability can show their support for the rights of people with disability. These posters are free to order from the Family Planning NSW website www.fpnsw.org.au/shop

What is LGBTIQ?

The term LGBTIQ refers collectively to people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer. It is a commonly used term, but there are also many others in use.

- People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual are sometimes described as being same-sex attracted
- People who are transgender are sometimes described as being gender diverse. Being gender diverse means that a person's sense of their own gender may be different to the sex that they were assigned at birth
- Intersex refers to a diversity of biological sex characteristics, rather than sexual orientation or gender identity. It recognises that people may naturally vary from conventional ideas of having an exclusively male or female body.
- People who identify as queer may be same sex attracted, gender diverse or both. Queer means different things to different people and often refers to being different to the stereotypical norms

Collectively, the term LGBTIQ is used to refer to a group of people who even today continue to experience marginalisation, social isolation, exclusion and discrimination based on their identity. Though there are some similarities in the experiences of LGBTIQ people, it is important to remember that each letter in the LGBTIQ acronym refers to a different group of people with distinct identities and experiences. The experiences of people who are same-sex attracted are different from the experiences of people who are gender diverse. The experiences of intersex people are also unique. It is therefore important to not make assumptions and take the time to understand a person's needs and experiences.

Why focus on LGBTIQ people with disability?

We know that there are multiple barriers to people with disability accessing their reproductive and sexual health rights. However, LGBTIQ people with disability face additional discrimination that can further impact on their rights.

There is often an assumption that people with disability aren't same sex attracted, gender diverse or intersex. Some people think that a person with intellectual disability or different communication needs can't understand what it means to be LGBTIQ. This means that LGBTIQ people with disability can struggle to find adequate support from disability services and their friends and family. Barriers to education, social isolation and discrimination means that LGBTIQ people with disability may find it difficult to challenge negative attitudes and advocate for the support they need.

It can also be hard for people with disability to find a place within the LGBTIQ community. Barriers such as limited physical access, social exclusion and a lack of accessible information mean that joining in community life can be difficult. This is likely to be exacerbated where the person with disability has not been able to access education about sexuality and sexual orientation. This all has serious implications for the physical, psychological and spiritual wellbeing of LGBTIQ people with disability.


Public awareness of these issues is often limited. This is why the *Outing Disability* exhibition is focused on raising the awareness of disability organisations and LGBTIQ organisations about the particular issues LGBTIQ people with disability face.



Roxanne

"I'm Anthony. I was born gay. In the evenings I go out to the city where there are a lot of drag shows. Everyone dresses up like I do. One day I want to get married. I can't wait!"

Photographer: Belinda Mason



Photographer: Belinda Mason

Nothing to hide

"My name is Meredith. I had a large aneurysm when I was 16. In hospital I realised I was probably a lesbian. Being a lesbian and having a disability there's a double whammy but it's ok to be both. I want to be real with myself - with my disability and my sexuality. I don't want to be something that I'm not."

Becoming an LGBTIQ inclusive service

Disability service providers often have a big role in the lives of the people they support. These organisations therefore have a great opportunity to promote and enhance the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ people with disability. Whether you are a frontline support worker, team leader or manager, all staff have an important role in creating a welcoming environment in their service where all people with disability feel valued, heard and respected regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status. An inclusive service will also have ongoing benefits to people with disability who don't identify as LGBTIQ, as well as staff, parents and carers.

Below are some suggestions for how you can start making your service more LGBTIQ inclusive. Most of the suggestions are relevant for all workers. For those of you in more senior roles, you may find that you are in a position to initiate action. For others, it will be important to work collaboratively with senior management to advocate for change.

Get informed

- Build your own knowledge of LGBTIQ issues and why inclusivity is so important
- Research what LGBTIQ services are in your area
- Gather resources on LGBTIQ, sexuality and disability. There is a list of useful resources at the end of this booklet

Consult with people with disability

- Involve LGBTIQ people with disability who attend your service in the planning, development and review of services delivered
- If you don't know whether you have any LGBTIQ people attending your service, ask them!
- Get input from services who are more experienced in working with LGBTIQ people with disability

Start the conversation in your workplace

- Allies are important. Find colleagues who you know will be supportive of LGBTIQ inclusivity and ask them to support you in future conversations with your colleagues
- Raise LGBTIQ inclusivity at a staff meeting
- Prepare for how you will respond if some colleagues are not supportive of LGBTIQ inclusivity
- Keep in mind that if LGBTIQ inclusivity is to be achieved in your organisation, all staff need to be involved so it is important to start the conversation early

Consider your organisation's environment

- Consider your service's physical and social environment. Here are some useful questions to ask yourself and your colleagues:
 - How do we make LGBTIQ people feel welcome when they first join our service?
 - How do we make LGBTIQ people feel safe?
 - How do we continuously include LGBTIQ people in our program delivery?
- Encourage colleagues and people with disability to work together to review the environment and in planning how to improve it

- Consider:
 - Signing up to the 'Welcome Here' project (ACON)
 - Displaying a rainbow flag in a prominent place
 - Displaying posters and information about LGBTIQ (e.g. Outing Disability posters)
 - Celebrating significant events such as Mardi Gras, Wear It Purple Day, the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT), and Intersex Awareness Day

Consider your organisation's policies and practices

- Advocate for organisational policies that make explicit reference to and acknowledge the rights of LGBTIQ people with disability
- Advocate for staff guidelines to ensure that support workers are clear about their role in providing inclusive service delivery that meets the needs for LGBTIQ people with disability
- Organisation policy should support education for staff and people with disability on LGBTIQ issues
- Organisational policy should address if and how the service will collect and store information on a person's sexual identity, gender identity or intersex status
- Ensure:
 - All forms include gender options of 'Male', 'Female' and 'Other'. You could also leave a blank space instead to allow people to use their preferred gender term
 - Inclusive language and images are used in all documents, including policies, factsheets, posters and flyers

Staff training

- Ask your colleagues what training and support they need to be able to support LGBTIQ people with disability. There is a list of training organisations at the end of this booklet
- Implement or advocate for staff training on the following key topic areas:
 - Reflecting on the impact of personal values and attitudes
 - LGBTIQ inclusive practice
 - Legal responsibilities of staff (including anti-discrimination)
 - Organisational policy, procedures and expectations
- If knowledge or confidence is low or some of your colleagues are resistant you may need to start with more general education on rights and how to provide sexuality support to people with disability,

Educate the people with disability you support

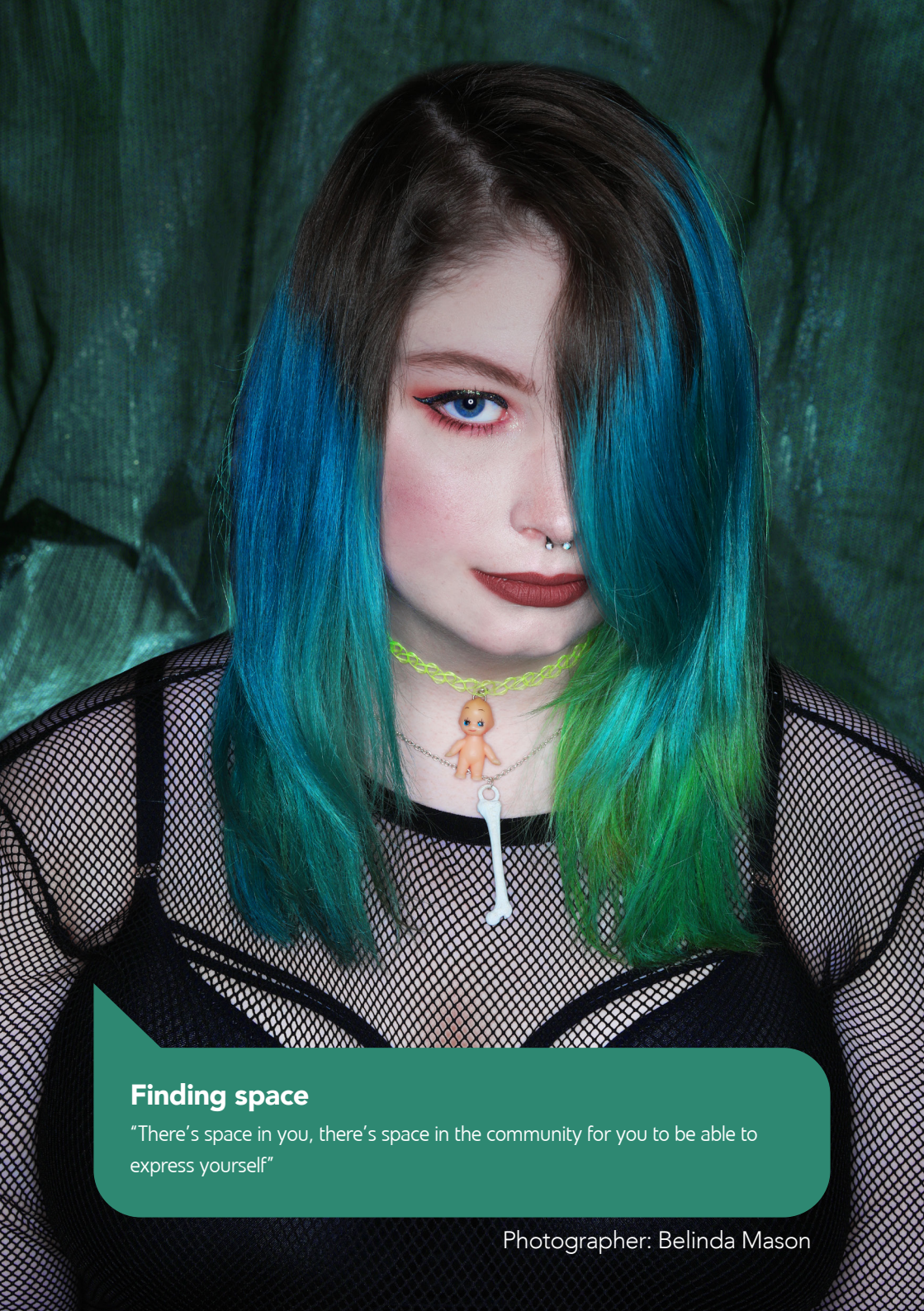
- Educate *all* people with disability that you support about LGBTIQ issues. Here are some suggested topics:
 - What is LGBTIQ?
 - Is it okay to be LGBTIQ?
 - What should a person do if they're not sure about whether they are LGBTIQ?
 - How should we treat LGBTIQ people?
 - Where to go for more information or support
 - How the service will provide support to all people with disability to be proud of who they are and their sexuality
 - How to complain if they are not receiving the support they need

Creating myself

"Able bodied people, straight people, cis-gendered people, need to stop and realise that sometimes they don't have all the answers, and sometimes they need to listen to the answers of others"



Photographer: Belinda Mason



Finding space

“There’s space in you, there’s space in the community for you to be able to express yourself”

Photographer: Belinda Mason

Resources and further information

LGBTIQ information and resources

- **All About Sex:** A series of fact sheets for people with disability and the people who support them, produced by Family Planning NSW. The fact sheets are easy-to-read and include illustrations to help people learn about sexuality and relationships. Includes fact sheets on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. www.fpnsw.org.au/allaboutsex
- **Family Planning NSW Disability Resource Collection:** Family Planning NSW has an extensive collection of sexuality, and reproductive and sexual health resources, including resources on LGBTIQ topics. Items from the collection are available for loan and purchase by community members, disability workers, clinicians and students. www.fpnsw.org.au/disability
- **Sex, Gender and Sexuality- The Basics:** A useful resource from Twenty10 that describes the difference between sex, gender and sexuality. www.twenty10.org.au/resources
- **Intersex Human Rights Australia:** An introductory guide that provides clear information about intersex and how to be an ally to intersex people. <https://ihra.org.au/allies/>

Support and information services

- **ACON:** NSW's largest community-based LGBTI health and HIV/AIDS organisation. ACON's mission is to improve the health and wellbeing of the LGBTI community and people living with HIV. It also aims to reduce HIV transmission. ACON provides a range of services and up-to-date information on LGBTI health matters. www.acon.org.au
- **Twenty10:** Twenty10 provides a broad range of support services to LGBTIQ young people across NSW. Social support, housing and mental health support is available for young people aged 12-25 years. www.twenty10.org.au
- **QLife:** A national counselling and referral service for people who are LGBTIQ. QLife provides telephone and online peer support services. There may also be local support groups for LGBTIQ people. <https://qlife.org.au>

Training for staff

- **Family Planning NSW** has a range of training courses to build the capacity of disability professionals and organisations to support people with disability, including LGBTIQ people with disability, around sexuality. www.fpnsw.org.au/education-training
- **ACON** trains and consults on all aspects of LGBTI inclusion. They have a variety of training courses for different organisations and workers in different roles. www.pridetraining.org.au
- **Twenty10** has its flagship LGBTIQ inclusivity training package, Here and Now, and is also able to tailor training to meet the needs of your organisation. www.twenty10.org.au/get-support/training

Inclusivity guides and resources

- **GLBTI-inclusive practice audit for health and human services:** This tool, developed by Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria (GLHV), is designed to assist services to identify how inclusive their service is for GLBTI consumers. www.glhv.org.au/lgbti-inclusive-practice
- **Inclusive Language Guide- Respecting people of intersex, trans and gender diverse experience:** A factsheet produced by the National LGBTI Health Alliance on how to be respectful and inclusive of LGBTI people in our daily communications. <http://lgbtihealth.org.au/resources/inclusive-language-guide>
- **Pride in Diversity:** Pride in Diversity supports employers to create LGBTIQ workplace inclusion. An initiative of ACON, Pride in Diversity is dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ people by reducing exclusion, invisibility, homophobia and stigma in the workplace. www.prideindiversity.com.au
- **Welcome Here Project:** Run by ACON, the Welcome Here project allows businesses to demonstrate that they are welcoming, supportive and actively engaged with LGBTI communities. Businesses apply to become a Welcome Place and in doing so commit to adhere to principles around equality, safety and inclusivity. www.welcomehere.org.au

About Family Planning NSW

Family Planning NSW is the leading provider of reproductive and sexual health services in NSW. We are experts on contraception, pregnancy options, sexually transmissible infections (STIs), sexuality and sexual function, menstruation, menopause, common gynaecological and vaginal problems, cervical cancer screening, breast awareness and men's sexual health.

Family Planning NSW has been delivering targeted services to people with disability for more than 35 years. We recognise the need to promote and protect the reproductive and sexual rights of people with disability. We provide education and training for teachers, disability workers, clinicians, family members and carers of people with intellectual disability. Our clinics are a safe place for people with disability to talk about intimate issues and to access confidential reproductive and sexual health care. We also produce innovative easy-to-read resources to support our professional and community education activities.

For more information go to: www.fpnsw.org.au/disability

Family Planning NSW Talkline

A confidential telephone and email service staff by experts in reproductive and sexual health. Family Planning NSW Talkline is open 8:30am to 5pm weekdays for information and advice

P: 1300 658 886

W: www.fpnsw.org.au/talkline

Family Planning NSW Shop

Our online shop sells a wide range of reproductive and sexual health books, education kits, clinical handbooks and other resources for professionals and community members. A range of resources specifically designed for people with disability and their support people are also available.

P: 02 8752 4307

W: www.fpnsw.org.au/shop

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Family Planning NSW is a not-for-profit organisation funded by the NSW Ministry of Health