

Media Release

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PLANNING ON SEX IN THE CITY? DON'T GET 'CARRIE-D' AWAY!

As *Sex and the City* fans start mixing their Cosmopolitans and shining their stilettos in anticipation for the much awaited movie premier, Australia's leading sexual and reproductive healthcare organisation took the opportunity to issue a safe sex reminder.

"Everybody loves getting lost in the fashion, sex, romance and passion of *Sex and the City*, but it is important not to forget many of the realities of sex – and some of them are far from glamorous!" Jill Michelson, Operations Manager of Marie Stopes International said.

"If you are planning on hitting the town this weekend, it is not uncommon for feelings of euphoria and possible substance-abuse to lead to unprotected sexual activity.

"But even just one act of unprotected sex can result in a sexually transmitted infection or an unplanned pregnancy – both of which can be avoided by using a condom."

Marie Stopes International's calls came as research shows that the number of Chlamydia notifications for 2007 were the highest on record.¹

"Chlamydia notifications last year totaled nearly 52,000 – a frightening figure when you compare it to the 17,000 notifications in 2000," Ms Michelson said.

Chlamydia is an infection spread through vaginal, oral and anal sex and is referred to as 'the silent STI', given that most people carry the infection without displaying any symptoms. The infection affects both men and women, and all ages are at risk.

"Chlamydia is believed to be the leading cause of infertility in women, and has been linked to infertility in men," said Ms Michelson.

"These complications are preventable if diagnosed and treated early, but have the potential to create a very serious public health issue if ignored."

A recent survey conducted on 200 of Marie Stopes International's female clients around Australia found that only 35% of clients had been tested for STIs in the past, with 129 saying they had never had an STI check-up.

"Having regular STI check-ups and wearing condoms is the only way to ensure your sexual health remains STI free," said Ms Michelson.

"So this weekend, if you are planning on having sex in the city, a condom is your must have fashion accessory!"

With the fashion conscious woman in mind, Marie Stopes created Vixen Condoms. Designed as Australia's first femininely-packaged condom brand, Vixen Condoms is presented in a glamorous, yet discreet tin and \$1 from every pack sold is donated to the Marie Stopes Sex Appeal. For more information about Vixen Condoms, visit www.vixencondoms.com.au

To enquire about STI check-ups or contraception advice and insertion, visit your doctor or call Marie Stopes International on Freecall: 1800 003 707. (ends)

About Marie Stopes International: Marie Stopes International is a not-for-profit sexual and reproductive healthcare provider, with 9 centres in the ACT, Victoria, Queensland, New South Wales and Western Australia. The organisation offers a range of services, including abortion, vasectomy, sexually transmitted infection check-ups and contraception. Surplus proceeds from Australian activities support the work of Marie Stopes International Partnerships, which delivers sexual and reproductive health services to more than four million people in over 40 countries. For more information, visit www.mariestopes.com.au

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¹ National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System. Number of notifications of Chlamydial infection, Australia, in the period of 1991 to 2006 and year-to-date notifications for 2007