



AIDSACTIONCOUNCIL



ANNUAL  
REPORT

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Health

# ANNUAL REPORT CONTENTS

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# 1

## PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

THIS HAS BEEN AN EXCITING YEAR FOR THE AIDS ACTION COUNCIL (THE COUNCIL). AFTER A PERIOD OF CHANGE AND RENEWAL LAST YEAR, THIS YEAR SAW THE COUNCIL UNDERTAKE A MAJOR STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS. THIS HAS RESULTED IN A NEW STRATEGIC PLAN THAT WILL SET THE DIRECTION OF THE COUNCIL FROM 2016 TO 2020.

It is a particularly exciting time to be looking forward. The extraordinary developments in the prevention and management of HIV mean that we are now planning for a future where there are virtually no new transmissions in our community. When we began our work in the 1980s, a key focus was supporting what was then a terrible illness. While there were high hopes for the development of a cure, it would have been difficult to fathom a future where we had come so far in being able to protect and support our community.

The strategic directions of the Council's new Strategic Plan 2016 - 2020 reproduced in this document were developed through engagement with the impacted communities, Board, staff, members, volunteers and other stakeholders. The Strategic Plan articulates the current context of the work of the Council and identifies the key areas of need and future work. It is clear that while the challenges have changed, there is still significant work for the Council to undertake.

New technologies and medications have seen the rates of HIV infections fall dramatically since the 1980s, and we are now aiming for a virtual elimination of new HIV transmissions by 2020. Even with this success, we still have members of our community who are managing HIV as a chronic condition and for the first time managing this condition in the context of ageing and other health needs. The Council also needs to be more aware of, to understand and to be responsive to young people's needs. The challenge around

prevention has changed with the advent of rapid testing methods and medications such as pre exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). A key role for the Council is advocating for these technologies to be available and accessible in our local community and supporting the community to access them. The Council also has a key role to play in challenging discrimination and stigma, and embraces its inclusion in the broader Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) community. While we remain in a jurisdiction that shows leadership in the area of supporting the rights of our diverse community, events across the nation remind us that there is still much to do to support the human rights of our whole community and remove discrimination.

The strategic planning process used in developing the Strategic Plan provided us with the opportunity to engage with issues that are common for many community sector organisations around sustainability and stability. It is a challenging period for the not for profit sector as a whole, and this period has seen the withdrawal of funding at a Commonwealth level from many of the organisations that have supported national networking and advocacy on HIV issues. The Strategic Plan provides a strong foundation to build the strength, resilience and sustainability of the organisation as it moves into a new phase of its development. This will be supported by professional operational management, strong partnerships and an ongoing commitment to its core mission and purpose as a community based and peer-led organisation.

This process provided opportunities to renew the way we present ourselves and engage with our community. As such, the Council has undertaken a rebranding project to develop a contemporary look that enables the Council to articulate its mission and work in a more effective manner.

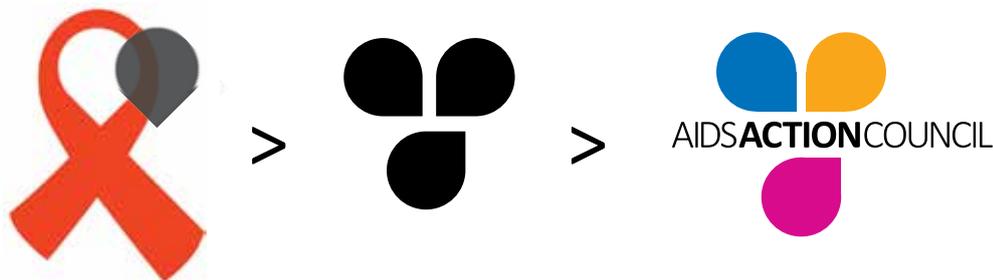
While this planning process has occurred, the Council has continued to deliver a wide range of services and activities. It continues to be supported by a vibrant membership and more

than 100 volunteers who are the foundation of the Council's unique peer-based model. The Council remains dependent on its dedicated staff, volunteers and supporters to deliver significant outcomes for the community.

The challenges remain great and the opportunities are significant. We thank everyone who has contributed to a successful year, and invite you to continue on this exciting journey next year, and in years to come.



## ABOUT OUR LOGO



The AIDS Action Council logo design elements and shape comes from the negative space within a folded AIDS ribbon. The red ribbon is used as symbol of awareness and solidarity for HIV/AIDS. The shape was duplicated and arranged together with consideration of key focus group statements about the Council. 'Guidance / direction and support without judgment' and 'Coming together around action.'

Colour was incorporated to help convey our role and work within the community. Blue has historical significance for the AIDS Action Council. Its associated with health, history, trust, experience, truth, stability and unity. Yellow relates to our acquired knowledge over 30+ years. It represents life, hope, creativity, energy and action. It inspires original thought and inquisitiveness. Pink has historically represented the LGBTIQ community. It relates to love, understanding, nurturing, friendship and diversity.



AIDS Action Council of the ACT

# HIVPriorities

PLAIN ENGLISH VERSION

AIDS Action Council of the ACT

**Recommended ACT Priorities for Action: HIV**

Thirty years into the fight against HIV, Canberra is home to many people affected by the disease, directly or as friends, colleagues, family or community, and despite a strong public understanding of the cause and prevention of HIV, a number of newly-reported diagnoses are added to this community every year. The team at the AIDS Action Council of the ACT is focusing its passion and resources in the following priority areas to achieve better health outcomes for all Canberrans:

## **ZERO TRANSMISSIONS**

It's good to have a goal, and our goal for 2016 and beyond is to see new transmissions drop to zero. It's also the goal of the United Nations, and we are working towards it with prevention programs especially targeting the young and other at-risk people. Science has made giant steps in this area recently and we will fight to make new prevention treatments (like the HIV-prevention drug PrEP) available locally.

## **TESTING TESTING**

Tests often make people nervous, and delaying getting tested for HIV and other STIs – because you're nervous about the result, because it's hard or inconvenient to go to a doctor or clinic – might have impacts on your own health, or others. We will be focusing on community-based testing – bringing testing and follow-up support out into the areas it is needed.

## **BEST PRACTICE TREATMENT**

Effective treatment of HIV has seen many once facing a dramatic and terminal condition, to managing a life-long chronic health condition, and the key to this outcome is information and treatment. We are constantly adapting to accommodate new science and new treatments as they become available (such as PEP, which can give those exposed to HIV a brief window for preventing infection) to help people manage their own treatments, including those who choose not to take treatments.

## **CARE AND SUPPORT SERVICES**

We aim to increase care and support services for people diagnosed and impacted by HIV, and their families. We are treating a person, not a disease, and so our focus is on that person and their community. We will continue to evolve our services to meet the needs of the growing group of ageing individuals who have survived and now face both managing HIV treatments and old age.

## **ENDING DISCRIMINATION**

Bringing an end to the stigma and discrimination faced by the communities we support is our ongoing struggle and priority. The ACT Human Rights Act 2004 made it law, but it is up to all of us to improve the community's understanding of HIV and consequently ensure all Canberrans equally enjoy its rights and protections.

## **KNOWLEDGE IS POWER**

We aim to improve collection of and access to data about HIV in our community, and share it with researchers – and we think that involving our HIV-affected community in the design, planning and implementation of research and data collection process will lead to better science outcomes.

This is a plain-English fact sheet written for those not familiar with complex health and medical terminology. For the full AIDS Action Council of the ACT 2016 priorities document, references and further information, visit: [aidsaction.org.au/documents/HIVPriorities.pdf](http://aidsaction.org.au/documents/HIVPriorities.pdf)



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# NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

As outlined in the President and Executive Director's introduction, the strategic planning process provided a significant opportunity for the Council to engage with its membership and stakeholders, examine the evidence base, and reflect on where the Council should be focusing its work over the next four years. The changing

landscape in relation to HIV prevention and management, the changing nature of our community and the evolution of the community sector present both challenges and opportunities for the Council. Specific activities that occurred as part of the strategic planning process included:

- 1 Undertaking research on the trends in HIV prevention, treatment and support at a global, national and local level;
- 2 Reflection on the trends in relation to the community sector at a national and local level and how this may impact the Council;
- 3 A review of the Council's performance across a range of domains including governance, financial management, program delivery and community and stakeholder engagement;
- 4 A stakeholder survey that was distributed widely to clients, members, volunteers, partners and stakeholders; and
- 5 Consultations with a range of groups including program participants, clients, members, stakeholders, staff and Board.

The in-depth consultation and planning process helped the Council devise a comprehensive Strategic Plan. Importantly, the findings of the stakeholder consultations provided valuable feedback

to the Council regarding the current work and impact. Some of the key findings from the stakeholder survey are reproduced below for the information of members and stakeholders.

## KEY FINDINGS FROM STAKEHOLDER SURVEY UNDERTAKEN AS PART OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING CONSULTATION PROCESS

71 people responded to the stakeholder survey including people living with or impacted by HIV, people identifying as LGBTIQ, sex workers, service users, Council volunteers and members, members of the community, participants at Council events and activities, representatives of community partner organisations and government partners.

### THE ROLE OF THE COUNCIL

When asked about the role of the Council, **50%** of respondents identified services for people living with and impacted by HIV and AIDS as the core purpose of the Council of the ACT; **30%** identified services for both people living with and impacted by HIV and AIDS and people that identify as LGBTIQ; and **7%** identified services for LGBTIQ people as the core role of the Council; and **13%** identified other roles.

### NEEDS IN THE COMMUNITY

Respondents were asked about needs in the community they would like the Council to prioritise. The most common responses were: ageing among LGBTIQ communities and people living with HIV and AIDS; engaging with the trans and gender diverse community; engaging with young people as a high-risk group; providing information and leading the debate on PrEP.

Respondents also raised the following priorities: mental health; building an online presence; community-based, onsite testing; rapid testing; sexual health; advocacy on new treatments for HIV.

# 3

## KEY HIV STATISTICS AND TRENDS

IN 2016, AUSTRALIA'S TOP HIV/AIDS EPIDEMIOLOGISTS, SCIENTISTS AND COMMUNITY SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES MARKED THE VIRTUAL ELIMINATION OF AIDS CASES IN AUSTRALIA AND THE AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF AIDS ORGANISATIONS (AFAO) ANNOUNCED THE END OF AIDS AS A MAJOR PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE. AFAO ALSO DECLARED THAT WITH APPROPRIATE INVESTMENT IN RESEARCH, COMMUNITY-LED HEALTH PROMOTION AND ACCESS TO NEW HIV PREVENTION TECHNOLOGIES, SUCH AS PREP, IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO VIRTUALLY ELIMINATE HIV INFECTIONS IN AUSTRALIA.<sup>1</sup>

The AIDS Action Council of the ACT (the Council) is working towards the vision of strong, connected and supportive communities that are free of new HIV transmissions, marginalisation, discrimination and stigma. Understanding trends in the transmission and prevention of HIV is critical to the achievement of this vision. The following is a summary of the key statistics and trends that inform the Council's work towards its vision of virtually eliminating new HIV transmissions by 2020.

### 90: 90: 90

Australia is on track to achieving the UNAIDS "90: 90: 90" target, which sets the milestone that by 2020, 90% of all people living with HIV will know their HIV status, 90% of all people diagnosed with HIV will receive sustained antiretroviral treatment, and 90% of all people receiving antiretroviral treatment will have complete viral suppression. In 2014 it was believed 88% of all people living with HIV in Australia were aware of their HIV status, 73% of people diagnosed with HIV were on antiretroviral therapy and 92% of people receiving antiretroviral therapy had viral suppression.<sup>2</sup>

### New HIV diagnoses are stabilising

New HIV diagnoses are stabilising in Australia. Of the 1081 newly diagnosed HIV in 2014, 18 (2%) were in the ACT.<sup>3</sup> These trends suggest that progress towards the vision of virtually eliminating HIV by 2020 is being achieved.

### MSM majority of HIV diagnoses

Certain groups in the community are disproportionately impacted by HIV, with men who have sex with men (MSM) comprising the majority of HIV diagnoses within Australia. Sexual contact between men accounted for 70% of new HIV cases in 2014.<sup>4</sup> As a result, targeted strategies for at-risk communities are likely to be most effective.

### CLAI with casual partners gradually increasing

Research indicates that condomless anal intercourse (CLAI) with casual partners among MSM has been gradually increasing over the past 10 years to 36% in 2015.<sup>5</sup> However, research has also identified numerous HIV risk-reduction strategies, for example pre exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), that are being used in some communities of MSM as an alternative to condoms.<sup>6</sup> The Council's use of peer-based models and strong connection to the communities in which we work ensures the Council is responsive to the experiences of these communities.



## Key prevention strategy

Testing continues to be affirmed as a key prevention strategy and as a result of increased testing rates, significant progress has been achieved in reducing the number of cases classified as late diagnosis or an advanced HIV infection.<sup>7</sup> This is significant because a high percentage of HIV transmissions result from high risk sexual behaviours by individuals who are not aware they are HIV positive, particularly in the first 3-6 months of infection.<sup>8</sup> The Council is working to increase access to innovative HIV testing technologies to increase coverage and frequency of HIV testing among MSM.

## Promoting more frequent testing

Results from a number of trials around Australia demonstrate that community-based models of rapid HIV testing can be highly effective at engaging previously untested MSM, and promoting more frequent testing among MSM currently not testing at recommended frequencies.<sup>9</sup>

## Highly effective prevention strategy

Early diagnosis and treatment is the most effective public health intervention to reduce future transmission of HIV. A growing body of evidence suggests that early detection of HIV promotes early commencement of anti-retroviral (ARV) therapies.<sup>10</sup> ARV therapies decrease HIV viral loads and reduce the risk of transmission. The proportion of HIV-positive men in NSW on antiretroviral treatment continues to increase (to 91% in 2015). Most of the men on treatment (96%) reported having an undetectable viral load in 2015.<sup>11</sup> Numerous clinical studies have shown treatment to be a highly effective prevention strategy, as positive people with undetectable viral load and no STIs present a low risk to HIV transmission.<sup>12</sup>

## Significant health benefits

Commencing ARV treatment earlier can also have significant health benefits for individuals, such as protection against opportunistic illnesses, non-AIDS conditions such as cardiovascular disease and cognitive impairment, and overall mortality.<sup>13</sup>

## Virtual elimination of HIV by 2020

There is a clear evidence base indicating that new testing and treatment technologies are critical to achieving the virtual elimination of HIV by 2020. In particular, research has demonstrated that both continuous and intermittent use of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) are highly effective at preventing HIV transmission among MSM.<sup>14</sup> Increasing access to PrEP is a core focus of the Council's HIV prevention strategy.

<sup>1</sup> Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations, Doherty Institute, Pacific Friends of the Global Fund, Kirby Institute and National Association of People with HIV Australia (2016) Australian need to work together to end HIV as nation marks extraordinary progress against AIDS. Available from [https://www.afao.org.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0015/27420/160711-PF-rel-AIDS-HIV-RELEASE-READY.pdf](https://www.afao.org.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/27420/160711-PF-rel-AIDS-HIV-RELEASE-READY.pdf) <sup>2</sup> The Kirby Institute. HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmissible infections in Australia Annual Surveillance Report 2015. The Kirby Institute, UNSW Australia, Sydney NSW 2052 <sup>3</sup> The Kirby Institute. HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmissible infections in Australia Annual Surveillance Report 2015. The Kirby Institute, UNSW Australia, Sydney NSW 2052 <sup>4</sup> The Kirby Institute. HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmissible infections in Australia Annual Surveillance Report 2015. The Kirby Institute, UNSW Australia, Sydney NSW 2052 <sup>5</sup> Hull, P., Mao, L., Kolstee, J., Duck, T., Prestage, G., Zablotska, I., de Wit, J., and Holt, M. (2015). Gay Community Periodic Survey: Sydney 2015. Sydney: Centre for Social Research in Health, University of New South Wales. <sup>6</sup> AFAO (2011) HIV Risk Reduction Strategies Among Gay Men. <sup>7</sup> The Kirby Institute. HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmissible infections in Australia Annual Surveillance Report 2015. The Kirby Institute, UNSW Australia, Sydney NSW 2052 <sup>8</sup> Kaufmann, G.R., Cunningham, P., Kelleher, A.D., Zunders, J., Carr, A., Vizzard, J., Law, M. & Cooper, D.A. 1998, "Patterns of Viral Dynamics during Primary Human Immunodeficiency Virus Type 1 Infection", The Journal of Infectious Diseases, vol. 178, no. 6, pp. 1812-1815. <sup>9</sup> Centre for Population Health, Burnet Institute (n.d.) Concept Paper: Trial of a Community-Based Rapid Point-of-Care HIV Testing Service Targeting Gay and Other Men Who Have Sex With Men in Melbourne; Yang, M., Prestage, G., Maycock, B., Brown, G., de Wit, J., McKechnie, M., Guy, R., Keen, P., Fairley, C.K. & Zablotska, I.B. 2014, "The acceptability of different HIV testing approaches: cross-sectional study among GMSM in Australia", Sexually transmitted infections, vol. 90, no. 8, pp. 592-595; Ellard, Dr J. (n.d.) Community-based HIV testing approaches for gay and bisexual men: Reflections from the field. <sup>10</sup> Centre for Population Health, Burnet Institute (n.d.) Concept Paper: Trial of a Community-Based Rapid Point-of-Care HIV Testing Service Targeting Gay and Other Men Who Have Sex With Men in Melbourne. <sup>11</sup> Hull, P., Mao, L., Kolstee, J., Duck, T., Prestage, G., Zablotska, I., de Wit, J., and Holt, M. (2015). Gay Community Periodic Survey: Sydney 2015. Sydney: Centre for Social Research in Health, University of New South Wales. <sup>12</sup> Experiences of HIV: The Seroconversion Study Final Report 2007-2015. Monograph, The Kirby Institute, UNSW Australia, Sydney Australia. <sup>13</sup> Centre for Population Health, Burnet Institute (n.d.) Concept Paper: Trial of a Community-Based Rapid Point-of-Care HIV Testing Service Targeting Gay and Other Men Who Have Sex With Men in Melbourne. <sup>14</sup> Spinner, C.D., Boescke, C., Zink, A., Jessen, H., Stellbrink, H., Rockstroh, J.K. & Esser, S. (2016) "HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP): a review of current knowledge of oral systemic HIV PrEP in humans", in Infection, vol. 44, no. 2, pp. 151-158.

# 4

## REDUCING NEW HIV TRANSMISSIONS

THE COUNCIL EMPLOYS A RANGE OF STRATEGIES TO MEET THE OUTCOME OF REDUCING NEW HIV TRANSMISSIONS. KEY TO THIS IS WORKING WITH AT-RISK COMMUNITIES TO EDUCATE THEM ON HIV PREVENTION STRATEGIES. THIS WORK DRAWS ON THE EVIDENCE-BASE AROUND WHAT WORKS IN THESE COMMUNITIES, AND USES A PEER, COMMUNITY-BASED MODEL.

### SEXUAL HEALTH TESTING, REFERRAL AND INFORMATION PROJECT (STRIP)

The Council believes it is important to enable easy access to sexual health information and services. STRIP Clinics continue to be an effective way of providing quick, easy and free access to sexual health check-ups and are conducted every third Monday of the month at the Council and The Ranch sex-on-premises venue. STRIP Clinics have been a project of the Partnership Approach to Comprehensive Testing (PACT) since 2002. PACT is a collaboration between the Council, Canberra Sexual Health Centre, Medicare Local ACT, Sex Worker Outreach Program (SWOP) ACT and Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT, as well as the venues that host the clinics on their premises. The Council has also been using these clinics to provide sexual health education sessions. The clinics have been increasingly popular, with a number of clinics approaching capacity.

### ACT TESTING MONTH

The Council has partnered with government and non-government agencies in the sexual health sector to deliver the ACT Testing Month initiative for the past two years. ACT Testing Month, held annually in November, enables government and non-government agencies to work together to promote HIV, STI and Hepatitis testing in the Canberra community and raise awareness of the importance and benefits of testing, particularly amongst at-risk groups. The Council and partners have used this initiative to increase access to testing for people who are most at-risk of Hepatitis, HIV and STIs. It has also identified working with men who have sex with men (MSM) as a priority group, and explored the potential of

rapid HIV testing through a funded pilot study during this initiative.

ACT Testing Month 2015 provided access to a testing van at beats and brothels and regular STRIP testing at Council and The Ranch. The month also included screenings at Civic NSP, Alcohol and Drugs Service and Hepatitis ACT, targeting Hepatitis C, CIT Navitas program targeting Hepatitis B as well as a concentrated media strategy to promote testing, including advertisements in Fuse Magazine, Grindr and Facebook and a social media and poster campaign.

Testing Month partners have been able to establish links and strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders in the sector which has had a lasting impact on the effectiveness of the sexual health sector. Testing Month has achieved notable success against a number of key benchmarks in the first two years of operation, and in 2015, the partnership saw a 300% increase in testing rates from the previous year.

### SEX WORKER OUTREACH PROGRAM

Working with groups in the community that are at-risk of HIV infection, as well as people who experience vulnerability and isolation remains a priority for the Council. The peer-led sex worker outreach program remains a priority service. During the year, the program connected with all ACT studios including a high number of sex workers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The Council is committed to supporting decriminalisation as a best practice and successful model of regulation of the sex industry. SWOP aims to achieve equality, social, legal, political, cultural and economic justice for past and present

workers in the sex industry. SWOP ACT is a leader in advocating for the health, safety and welfare rights of sex workers in the ACT.

Outreach ensures sex workers have access to tailored information about Australian laws and regulations, their rights and strategies for reducing risk. This work leads to empowering sex workers to make informed decisions creating a safer community free from stigma and discrimination. The Council also provides sex worker awareness training (SWAT) this training demystifies sex worker and breaks down the barriers of stigma.

### ADVOCATING FOR AND SUPPORTING ACCESS TO NEW PREVENTION AND TESTING TECHNOLOGIES

There are exciting advances being made in HIV prevention and treatment technologies to protect our community. There continues to be a role for the Council in advocating access to these technologies and ensuring the community gains access to these technologies. The Council is responsible for disseminating information, recruiting participants to trials, running online and social media campaigns and providing counselling and peer support. The Council provides health promotion and community engagement activities and resources that support and raise awareness of new prevention and testing technologies.

### POST-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS (PEP)

PEP is an effective technology that protects individuals recently exposed to HIV from contracting the virus. In early 2016, the Council promoted the new AFAO *Get PEP* campaign, which raises awareness of PEP amongst men who have sex with men. This included media exposure in FUSE magazine and the distribution of resources to at-risk groups. The resource card has been included in 1000 condom packs that have been provided to Cube Nightclub and ANU Sexuality Department and for general distribution.

### PRE-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS (PrEP)

PrEP has significant potential to protect at-risk groups in the community from HIV infection. Despite increased availability across the

developed world, access in Australia remains limited. During 2015-2016, the Council, along with all AIDS councils in Australia, signed on to the AFAO PrEP priority statement. This calls for PrEP to be made more widely available, and for trial participants to have access to PrEP after trials have concluded.

The Council is also working to increase awareness and understanding of the potential of PrEP as a tool in the prevention of HIV infection. In June 2016, the Council ran *PrEP in the Pub* – at a new LGBTIQ bar in Canberra, 16West. *PrEP in the Pub* was a free community forum to increase understanding of PrEP among the community. The event was well attended with 32 evaluations completed and very positive feedback.

The Council is the community partner for the PrEP trail in the ACT. Canberra will host a trial site with 200 places in the *Expanded PrEP Implementation in Communities in NSW (EPIC-NSW)* study run by the Kirby Institute. This study aims to assess the impact of the rapid expansion in access to PrEP amongst people at high risk of acquiring HIV. The Council's role will be advocacy, recruitment and marketing.

### RAPID HIV TESTING

Like PrEP, rapid HIV testing could be important in preventing the spread of HIV. It is an easier way to test meaning more people can be tested within their own communities, at places such as outreach clinics and community settings. The need for community based rapid HIV testing has been highlighted in a number of forums in recent years.

As noted, ACT Testing Month has provided a forum in which to explore the potential of rapid testing technologies, as part of the suite of testing technologies and within a comprehensive testing framework. In November 2015, ACT Testing Month included access to free rapid HIV testing for men



Lexxie Jury SWOP Education Officer  
Jane Duong Photography for the  
Queer ACT Photography Project  
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who have sex with men (MSM) at outreach sexual health clinics including at Havelock House, STRIP and in a testing van that visited beats around the ACT. Over the month, 250 people were tested (a 300% increase from 2014) including 40 people with disabilities, nine sex workers and 130 people from CALD communities. The rapid testing was funded, as a one off, by the AIDS Trust of Australia.

Given the success of this initiative, and the strong relationships that have developed through this process, the Council will continue to advocate for community based rapid testing in the ACT.

### **SUPPORTING AWARENESS RAISING AND EDUCATION IN THE GENERAL COMMUNITY**

The Council engages in a range of activities to increase understanding and awareness of HIV in the general community. The Council recognises that different messages are effective to different audiences. Activities during the year included:

- Engaging in mainstream media and community groups around issues of relevance: in March 2016, HerCanberra published a feature article on sex work and during the year the Executive Director presented at YWCA Canberra's She Leads Conference;
- Engaging with schools and educational facilities: throughout the year activities included a presentation to Gungahlin College history studies students, and information stalls at CIT on campus Community Days and International Students Market Day. The Council also partnered with SHFPACT to present to male international college students on puberty, consent, sex, STIs and pregnancy;
- Monthly information sessions are undertaken in partnership with Hepatitis ACT for residents at Ted Noffs Drug Foundation Canberra, and regular information sessions are held at Karralika; and
- Promoting awareness through events and resource distribution: During the year, the Council supported National Condom Day with condom packs for Cube Nightclub and

promoting the day through social media. The Council hosted a community BBQ lunch in Garema Place for World AIDS Day with information stalls, live music, testing van and the sale of red ribbon materials to raise awareness of World AIDS Day. The Council has been distributing the Women Living Well with HIV Resource and it has also supported SHFPACT in their distribution of roses with condoms attached at the Multicultural Festival.

The Council also recognises it has a specific role to play in contributing to learning within the sector we work in. As such, the Council has engaged in a range of activities including submitting abstracts to conferences, for example the Lesbian Health Conference scheduled for May 2017, and presenting learnings from the ACT Testing Month initiative at the National Gay Men's HIV Health Promotion Conference on the first two years of ACT Testing Month.

### **SUPPORTING EFFORTS TO IMPROVE DATA COLLECTION ON HIV PREVENTION, TRANSMISSION AND TREATMENT**

The Council recognises the importance of access to data, and the need for organisations such as ours to contribute to the development of the evidence base on HIV. There continues to be a need to raise awareness around access to data regarding HIV transmission, and this continues to be raised by the Council in forums such as the ACT Ministerial Advisory Council on Sexual Health, HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis & Related Diseases.

Once again this year, the Council supported the implementation of the Canberra Gay Men's Periodic Survey that was conducted from 31 October to 24 November 2015. Seven volunteers and three staff facilitated the completion of 207 surveys at a range of venues and events across the ACT. In addition, the online component of the survey enabled an additional 100 participants to contribute, which saw the total men surveyed to over 300. The results from this survey are currently being finalised, and the Council will work with key partners to deliver a community forum to present and discuss the results in August 2016.



Thanks so much for the excellent training provided to the team at Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol and Drug Services today. I really appreciate your kind and encouraging words. There have been many times in the last 2 1/2 years I have felt like we are banging our heads against a brick wall, although when I look back, we have been chipping away. AIDS Action Council membership and support has been invaluable and it really demonstrates the benefits of collaboration.

# 5

## PROVIDING CARE AND SUPPORT

### IMPROVE ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE, QUALITY SUPPORT SERVICES FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH AND IMPACTED BY HIV AND AIDS

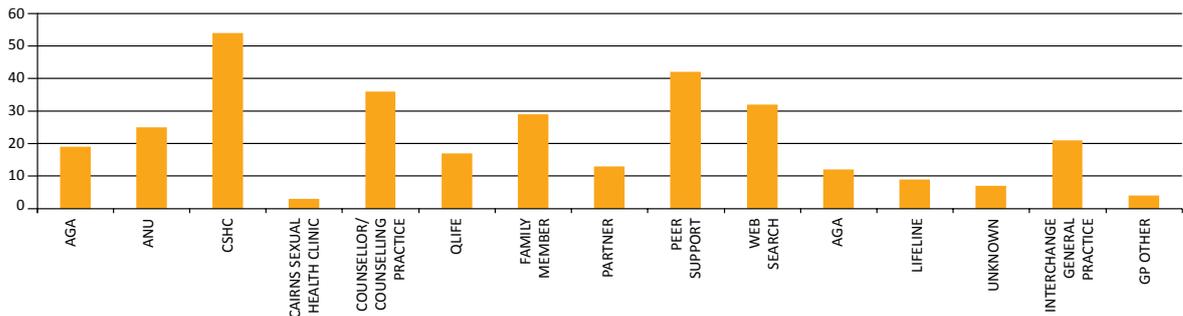
Providing direct services for people living with HIV and their families continues to be a core focus of the Council and was reaffirmed through the recent strategic planning process. The Council sees supporting people living with HIV as a priority activity and as such responds to all requests for support from people who have been newly diagnosed with HIV within one business day.

### PROVIDING COUNSELLING SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES LIVING WITH AND IMPACTED BY HIV AND AIDS

The Council continues to see a significant demand for counselling services, which are provided to members of the community

regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, lifestyle choice, cultural background, religious belief or economic circumstances. Priority is given to people who are impacted by or at-risk of HIV, including their partners and family. Counselling is also provided to a broader group of people in the LGBTIQ community. This service is able to provide assessments, as well as support and advocacy for people with issues such as coming to terms with their sexuality, emotional and physical health, relationships, employment, finance, legal, education and accommodation. The service is provided through a mix of ongoing professional staff and supervised qualified volunteers to expand capacity of these clinical services. This model enables 25 hours per week of counselling services. The Council is currently looking at models that can enable an expanded service and guarantee ongoing sustainability of the service model.

### COUNSELLING HOURS BY REFERRAL



### PROVIDING INNOVATIVE PEER-SUPPORT NETWORKS FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH AND IMPACTED BY HIV AND AIDS

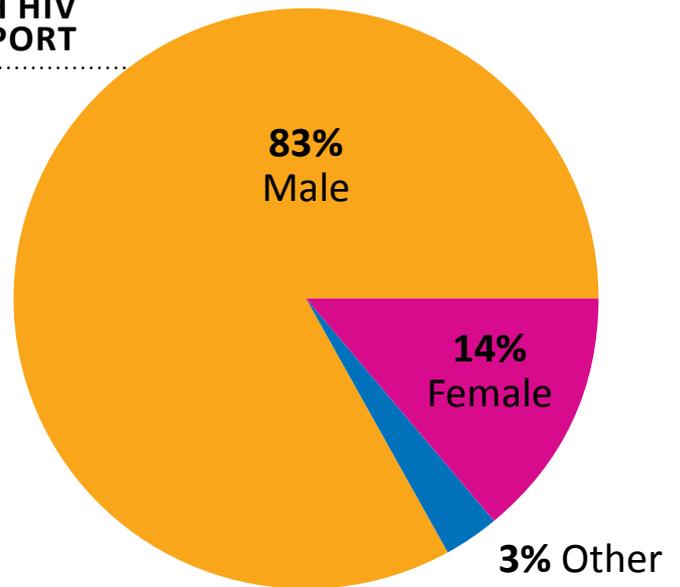
Peer based programs are an important way to engage and support people in the community. These programs provide a safe space for people to connect, share their stories, learn from and support each other.

One particularly important initiative is the peer support network dinners that are held monthly.

These directly reduce social isolation for people living with HIV and assist in building social connections and networks. These dinners are well attended and enjoyed.

The risk of onward transmission is likely to be less affected by immediate versus early treatment than it is by earlier diagnosis and peer support for people newly diagnosed with HIV. It has been qualified in research (Prestage et al 2016) that enhanced peer support may further reduce the likelihood of onward transmission after diagnosis.

## PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV WHO ACCESS PEER SUPPORT



### DIETITIAN AND TREATMENTS CLINIC

The Council has been independently funding a dietician and treatments clinic for people living with HIV in the ACT and regional communities surrounding the ACT. In 2016, the Council received funding from the AIDS Trust of Australia for the clinics, which has enabled the Council to increase the number of clinics from four to eight per year. The goal of the Dietician Clinic is to increase the health-related quality of life for people living with HIV and contribute to goals of treatment as prevention. This initiative will be comprehensively evaluated during 2016/2017.

### MINDFULNESS MEDITATION COURSE

The Council has been aware of an increasing interest of its members to engage in holistic approaches to health and has recently introduced new programs to respond to this. In March 2016, the Council commenced a seven week Mindfulness Meditation Course. Through structured teaching, group discussion and gentle mediation practices, participants learn techniques that have been proven to calm the nervous system, relax the body, heighten awareness and clarify the mind. The mindfulness meditation course was very popular and people provided fabulous feedback.

### CHRONIC CONDITIONS WORKSHOP

As people living with HIV age, new health issues are emerging for individuals. The Council was pleased to deliver a Chronic Conditions workshop in April 2016 for a period of six weeks to respond to these emerging needs. This program was based on the Self-Management of Living with a Chronic Disease and/or HIV workshop developed by Stanford University and was designed to support people living with HIV to develop confidence and strategies in chronic disease and positive self-management. This workshop was delivered in partnership with the Bobby Goldsmith Foundation.

### RESPONDING TO EMERGING NEEDS

The Council has been providing members of the *Peer Support Network* with the opportunity to participate in equine experiences at Peakgrove Equine Assisted Therapy Centre. This initiative aimed to provide participants with an opportunity to work with horses using a reflective feedback process. Because horses are

so sensitive to human behaviour and emotions, working with horses can provide people with an opportunity to improve their awareness and build their self-esteem. These workshops have also been utilised by staff to support their professional development and responsiveness in the workplace.

As the demographics of our community change, the Council is working to create new programs to respond to changing needs. The Council has formed partnerships in the aged care space to position the Council to support people living with HIV as they age and face additional health challenges beyond the usual aging process.

As the population ages, the way in which the aged care and health sectors respond to the needs of people living with HIV and LGBTIQ communities is a particular priority area. In 2015/2016, the Council once again provided training to service providers on the needs of LGBTIQ people and people living with HIV. Through working in this space, the Council has developed a strong relationship with the Council of the Ageing ACT (COTA). The Council has delivered inclusiveness workshops to COTA staff and the COTA Policy Committee. Additionally, COTA is supporting the Council by providing use of COTA facilities and promoting the LGBTIQ inclusiveness workshops within the aged care sector, such as through their newsletter, publications and website.

This has also led to work with broader groups, including the ACT Government's Seniors' Health Roundtable Consultation, in which the Council facilitated the involvement of people from the LGBTIQ community.



## 6

# CREATING A SAFE COMMUNITY

OVER ITS EVOLUTION THE COUNCIL HAS ACTIVELY ENGAGED WITH THE LGBTIQ COMMUNITY SECTOR AND RECOGNISED THE ROLE IT HAS TO PLAY IN SUPPORTING THE WORK OF CREATING A MORE INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY. OVER 2015/2016, THE COUNCIL HAS AIMED TO PROVIDE A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN SUPPORTING MEMBERS OF LGBTIQ COMMUNITIES, SUPPORTING JOINT SECTOR WORK AND BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF THE SERVICE SECTOR, IN ADDITION TO WORKING TO INCREASE THE RESPONSIVENESS OF MAINSTREAM COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS.

### ADDRESSING SOCIAL ISOLATION

As part of the LGBTIQ Program consortium, the Council has been working with Woden Community Service to address social isolation in older LGBTIQ communities, particularly among people in supported accommodation. Woden Community Service has agreed to sponsor a social group for older LGBTIQ community members, including providing access to their bus and possibly providing a small amount of start-up funding.

### CREATING CONNECTIONS

The Council initiated the Mature Aged Gay Men's Network (MAGNET) social group in early 2016 for gay men over 40 years old. The Council identified that there was a gap in services for older gay men that connected them to the community. Older gay men commonly report they found it difficult to meet other gay men because they are no longer interested in going

to gay clubs and are not confident using social media. This Network actively addresses social isolation by providing opportunities for isolated older gay men to build a social network. The Council facilitates a social group so older gay men have the opportunity to meet other men in a safe space and socialise over lunch.

### CREATING CAPACITY, SHARING EXPERIENCES AND RAISING AWARENESS

There have also been numerous requests from participants in the Aged Care Inclusiveness Workshops, including aged care providers, educational institutions and government departments, for speakers from within LGBTIQ communities to share their experiences accessing services. A number of LGBTIQ participants at the Seniors' Health Round Table indicated an interest in assisting health and community service providers by speaking

about their lived experiences at workshops, training and events. The LGBTIQ Program is facilitating this by creating an LGBTIQ Speakers Bureau to recruit speakers, connect them with opportunities and provide training and support to LGBTIQ people who want to speak about their experiences at workshops and events.

### INCREASING FINANCIAL LITERACY

There is anecdotal evidence from the Counsellors at the Council that clients often report high levels of debt, particularly credit card debt, and express a lack of understanding about superannuation and tax. In response, the LGBTIQ Program partnered with Money Mechanics and Hadrill Accounting to deliver a financial workshop to increase knowledge and skills around financial planning. The workshop also connected participants with Care Financial Counselling's low interest loan scheme. Eleven people participated in the workshop and more financial literacy workshops are planned. The program also supported a group of transgender people facing employment discrimination. Participants reported increased confidence and re-engagement with employment.

The Council's work in the LGBTIQ Program has highlighted the unique challenges faced by transgender people who experience significant discrimination and bullying in the workplace during their transition. The Council has been providing individual support to members of this community including developing a partnership with LEAD Employment Agency who have offered pro-bono professional resume support and partnered in resume writing workshops for LGBTIQ communities.

The Council has been undertaking capacity-building activities that support mainstream organisations to provide safe and welcoming spaces, and accessible and appropriate services to members of LGBTIQ communities. This a priority of the Council and a core output of the LGBTIQ Program. In addition, the Council supports a range of other initiatives and works with mainstream organisations to enable them to provide inclusive services.

The Council has responded to significant interest within generalist mainstream service providers to ensure that staff have an

awareness and understanding of the issues facing the LGBTIQ community and people impacted by HIV. This has resulted in working with organisations such as YWCA Canberra, Woden Community Services, Legal Aid, Relationships Australia and Gudan Gulwan to build their awareness and understanding of the issues faced by the LGBTIQ community and identify strategies for these organisations to deliver inclusive services to these communities. An example of this is the Council's involvement in ACT Health's *Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol and Drug Services LGBTIQ Working Group*. This has resulted in initiatives such as involvement in supporting an e-learning package for staff to increase awareness and promote better practice for staff working across mental health, justice health and alcohol and drug services. It has also been exciting to work with organisations such as the Canberra Institute of Technology in providing LGBTIQ awareness training to teachers.



**INTERNATIONAL AIDS CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL**  
A Program of the Global Health Council

**ENGAGE. EDUCATE**  
*empower*

**5:30-8:00PM SUNDAY MAY 15, 2016**  
NATIONAL ARBORETUM  
MARGARET WHITLAM PAVILION, FORREST DRIVE, CANBERRA

An opportunity to formally remember those who have gone too soon, and continue the legacy of more than 33 years of international HIV activism by committing to a future free from the grief and stigma of the past.

**AIDSACTIONCOUNCIL**

## MAJOR EVENTS

### FAIR DAY

Fair Day is the Council's largest annual event and is an important way to bring members of the community together and celebrate Canberra's diverse LGBTIQ community and is one of Canberra's major grassroots community events. Promoted as an outdoor festival, it involves markets, music and drag, gourmet food and entertainment. It also connects the community with businesses, social groups and community organisations.

Fair Day creates a safe, inclusive space for the community to come together to celebrate diversity and the contribution of the LGBTIQ community of Canberra.

This year Fair Day was held on Saturday 31 October at Westside Acton Park on the edge of the Lake — and in the heart of Canberra. Westside Acton Park is part of the ACT Government's 'City to the Lake' urban renewal project and is a unique venue in the ACT. This year's event was very successful with more than 3000 people attending. This is a significant increase in attendance from previous years.

This event was well supported by the general community with five sponsors contributing \$25,000 in sponsorship including ACT Government, ACT Health, Cream Residential, Property Stylists Canberra and Digress Cocktail Bar. More than 50 organisations and businesses registered as stall holders in 2015.

Fair Day is part of the SpringOUT Pride Festival. Fair Day also provides an opportunity for community organisations to raise awareness about their services and engage in health promotion activities with a highly targeted audience. The Council uses this opportunity to raise awareness about HIV as it is one of the best opportunities for health promotion and engagement with gay and bisexual men.

### CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL

HIV and AIDS is still a life limiting illness and there are many members of our community who have died as a result of illnesses related to HIV infection. Commemoration and remembrance continues to be important, and the Council organises a number of key events during the year. The Candlelight Memorial was held on 15 May 2016 and attracted a high number of family and friends of those who had died, in addition to friends and allies of the community.

The Candlelight Memorial is also an important HIV activism event, calling people to ensure that progress made supporting rights of people living with HIV and those affected by HIV remain a priority in public health and human rights' dialogues here and internationally in the face of competing priorities and ideologies.



## FUNDRAISING AND OTHER EVENTS

In recent years, the Council has looked at ways that it can complement its core funding with other funding sources including fundraising.

As well as raising much needed funding to support the work of the Council, fundraising activities also provide a unique opportunity to partner with businesses and other corporate organisations to profile its work, and ways to connect directly with members of the general community. Successful fundraising activities that were held during the year included:

- Several movie fundraisers were held including screening *Holding the Man* and *Oriented*.
- World AIDS Day Red Dinner: this combined the end of year party for the peer support network, volunteers, members and stakeholder.
- Fashion fundraiser with fashion house *Things of Desire*.
- High Tea for International Day of Women Living with HIV.

The Council is also exploring other ways in which the organisation can diversify funding sources, increase stability and expand its service offer. This includes testing fee for service approaches in areas such as the counselling service.

## CBR LGBTIQ COMMUNITY CONSORTIUM

The Consortium is a partnership of four agencies brought together by the common goal of ensuring health, wellbeing, access, social inclusion and equity within the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) community. The Consortium is a robust, inclusive partnership demonstrating the ability of four Canberra based organisations to work together and build a strong foundation that supports the LGBTIQ community into the future. The Consortium will encourage and build resilience by harnessing the strengths and resources of the LGBTIQ community, including families, friends, supporters and allies. Working with their established services, the Consortium will further develop a comprehensive suite of programs for the LGBTIQ community in the ACT.

This will be achieved through the collaboration of existing partners and stakeholders, while identifying and cultivating greater involvement of

the LGBTIQ community, and engaging mainstream agencies, government, other community groups and business communities to achieve these goals.

Over the last nine months the consortium has worked diligently to establish strong community connections and set the foundations for meaningful community consultations. This process started with a rigorous recruitment process to find a Community Development Facilitator who would be able to engage and be responsive to the LGBTIQ communities and the services, organisations and government departments who support and engage with them. The consortium has developed program branding including a dynamic and easily recognisable logo, a logo that speaks to the LGBTIQ communities and welcomes them into the work of the program. The LGBTIQ program has made contributions to the support of approximately 225 people from LGBTIQ communities since its inception in September 2015.

The volume of interactions, requests for support from both individuals but also organisations within the ACT demonstrates the successful campaign of the program to engage broadly to make its presence in the sector known. The consortia continue to meet regularly to leverage existing knowledge and networks within the agencies and to ensure the ongoing growth and development of the program.

There is significant goodwill within the community towards this program and the positive and engaged momentum of community members and the services around them makes a significant impact to the outputs of the program. The willingness of people to engage with the program has shown an overwhelming response and participation from community.





## SEXUAL HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING ACT (SHFPACT)

SHFPACT is Canberra's sexual health promotion charity, working to improve sexual and reproductive health in the Canberra community for more than 40 years. Operating within a framework of human rights and social justice, it has become a leader in integrated approaches to workforce development, health promotion and clinical service delivery. SHFPACT's multidisciplinary team works to identify and overcome barriers to health for priority populations such as young people, people who are financially disadvantaged, culturally and linguistically diverse people, people with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, plus the LGBTIQ community. It also provides clinic, counselling, education, health promotion, professional development training and information services in reproductive and sexual health, sexuality and relationships to the wider Canberra community, and works in partnership with many other community and government organisations to achieve these aims. SHFPACT is proud to be lead agency with its community partners for the Safe Schools Coalition ACT, working to create safe and inclusive school communities for same-sex attracted, intersex, and gender diverse students, staff and families.



## NORTHSIDE COMMUNITY SERVICE (NORTHSIDE)

For the last 40 years, Northside has provided a diverse range of community services to North Canberra and the broader ACT Community. At Northside, our team routinely makes brave decisions about service delivery, client involvement and sector engagement. We challenge long held beliefs about the capacity of individuals to control their service journey and in doing so have high expectations of our clients knowing what is best for themselves.

Today, in responding to the needs of our community Northside currently deliver a diverse range of services, including:

- Children's Early Childhood Education
- Aged Care and In Home Support
- Community Transport and Social Programs for Seniors
- Youth Engagement and Outreach
- Accommodation and Outreach for families experiencing family violence.
- Accommodation and support for people with lived experience of Homelessness
- Mental Health Support Programs
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Training
- Venue hire for community activities

The service was founded on a solid commitment to respecting and promoting the rights of each individual in the community – essentially the right to inclusion, respect, fair treatment, dignity, non-discrimination, safety and freedom.



# LGBTIQ COMMUNITY CONSORTIUM



## CBR LGBTIQ COMMUNITY CONSORTIUM



The Consortium is a partnership of four agencies brought together by the common goal of ensuring health, wellbeing, access, social inclusion and equity within the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) community.

The Consortium is a robust, inclusive partnership demonstrating the ability of four Canberra based organisations to work together and build a strong foundation that supports the LGBTIQ community into the future.

The Consortium will encourage and build resilience by harnessing the strengths and resources of the LGBTIQ community, including families, friends, supporters and allies.

Working with their established services, the Consortium will further develop a comprehensive suite of programs for the LGBTIQ community in the ACT.

This will be achieved through the collaboration of existing partners and stakeholders, while identifying and cultivating greater involvement of the LGBTIQ community, and engaging mainstream agencies, government, other community groups and business communities to achieve these goals.

### CONTACT

If you would like to know more about CBR LGBTIQ Community Consortium please call the AIDS Action Council on **02 6257 2855** during business hours.



### AIDS ACTION COUNCIL OF THE ACT

Founded in 1983, the AIDS Action Council is a peer-led, community based health organisation that was established in response to the looming Acquired Immune Deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) crisis. Today the Council's mission is to minimise the transmission of HIV and reduce the associated social and personal impact on the community of Canberra. The Council delivers a range of care and support services to people living with HIV throughout the capital territory, including financial assistance, mental health, social support, case management, dietician and treatment services, legal advocacy and general advice. The Council also focuses on HIV prevention by providing health education, promotion and events that target the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) community. The Council provides education and prevention services, counselling, health promotion campaigns and community events. As a grassroots organisation, the Council advocates the power of local support to address its core goal of ending HIV - by encouraging the community to test more, treat early and stay safe.



### A GENDER AGENDA (AGA)

Incorporated in 2005, AGA opened the doors of its first premises, AGA House, in January 2011, consolidating the organisation's support and advocacy work with Canberra's sex and gender-diverse community. AGA works with, and advocates for, intersex people, transgender people as well as other gender variant or non-binary gender people. Based upon a human rights framework, the organisation believes there is no 'right' way to be male or female, masculine or feminine. It encourages individuals to feel entitled to autonomy over their bodies, gender identity and gender expression. AGA provides training, education and public awareness initiatives which promote understanding of sex and gender diversity issues throughout Canberra – including social support, community events, information and resources, community education and law reform. In addition to friends, families and allies, AGA regularly welcomes the broader community to gatherings and events that promote understanding and awareness of sex and gender diversity issues.



An ACT Government funded initiative.





# INVESTING IN THE ORGANISATION

THE COUNCIL IS COMMITTED TO ENSURING THE ORGANISATION HAS A STABLE FOUNDATION TO PLAN ITS FUTURE, AND IS SUSTAINABLE IN THE LONG TERM. IT IS COMMITTED TO STRONG GOVERNANCE, EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS. THE COUNCIL HAS ALSO PLACED PRIORITY IN UNDERSTANDING ITS IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY, DEMONSTRATING THE DIFFERENCE ITS WORK MAKES, AND MEASURING THE WAYS IN WHICH THE ORGANISATION IS MEETING ITS MISSION AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES.

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## SUPPORTING STRONG GOVERNANCE – BOARD MEMBERS

The Council is committed to ensuring strong governance is a feature of the organisation. Board Members are elected by the membership and meet on a regular basis. As previously noted, the core work of the Board Members was developing the new Strategic Plan. In addition, the Board provided ongoing strategic advice, supervision and monitoring of the operations of the Council and representational work where appropriate.

This year the Board has co-opted a lawyer to add to the skill set of representatives. With this inclusion the Board make-up now includes governance and policy experts, auditing and accounting, research and evaluation specialists and HIV positive members.

The Board plays a significant role in the formulation and adoption of the Council's strategic direction, monitoring organisation performance and ensuring legal compliance. The Board ensures that the corporate decision making is consistent with the strategy of the organisation and with members' expectations. In addition the Board has worked to ensure a sound system of risk oversight and management.

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## NURTURING PARTNERSHIPS TO ENHANCE THE COUNCIL'S IMPACT

The Council is committed to being connected to the community sector and acknowledges the significant work undertaken by organisations across the sector that support people impacted by HIV, their families and the broader LGBTIQ community.

The LGBTIQ funding through the Consortium provides a unique opportunity for partnership to advance the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ and HIV positive communities. The Council thanks project partners including A Gender Agenda, Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT, and Northside Community Services for the collaboration that this project has provided.

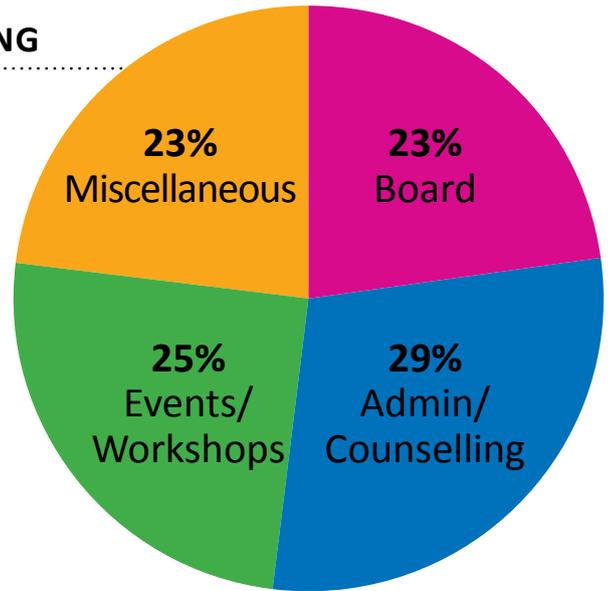
As previously noted, initiatives such as ACT Testing Month and Fair Day also provided an opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with a range of partners.

## ENGAGING SYSTEMICALLY TO INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COUNCIL

The Council continues to support policy development processes and work at a systemic level, and continues to be a member of the ACT Ministerial Council on Sexual Health, HIV, Hepatitis and related diseases (SHAHRD).

The Council has initiated work with Hepatitis ACT about how to engage cultural and religious leaders to help reduce stigma and discrimination of HIV and Hepatitis.

## VOLUNTEERING



In relation to improving practice, the Council is involved in a number of activities, including:

- Ongoing work with alcohol and other drugs-specific services to ensure that they are providing appropriate services to our client base.
- Participation in a group aiming to develop a trans pathway to care and involvement in the Canberra Standby Response Service (suicide).
- Ongoing engagement in a national HIV Sector Social Media Facebook Group, which brings together staff from HIV organisations who run social media to share resources, insights and problem solving. This connection was developed through participation at the National Gay Men's HIV Health Promotion Conference in 2016.

### WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS AS A KEY WAY TO DELIVER OUR SERVICES

Volunteer and peer-based work continues to be an important element of the work of the Council, and the Council is able to significantly enhance the impact of its work due to the support of its more than 100 volunteers.

The Council's counselling service is provided with the support of supervised and trained clinical students. Over the last period the Council has been hosting a student placement and once her placement ceases, she will commence volunteering in the out-of-hours clinic.

The Council continues to support and coordinate a number of partnerships around volunteer training and management. Organisations that the Council works with in this area include Northside Community Services, A Gender Agenda, SpringOUT, Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT and Encampment. In addition, during this financial year, the Council provided training to volunteer group facilitators for the new Mature Aged Gay Men's Network (MAGNET) group.

### MEASURING THE IMPACT OF THE COUNCIL

The Council has recently embarked on work to better understand its impact in the community. This new monitoring and evaluation framework is in the early stages of development and will be implemented throughout 2016/17. While the Council has evaluation mechanisms in place to measure the quality of its services and programs, this work goes beyond this, aiming to provide greater insight into the overall impact of the Council in the ACT community.

In short, the Council seeks a more structured reflection from its clients, staff, volunteers and the community on their experiences and asks them to share their insights on the relevance, quality and effectiveness of the Council's strategies and activities. This information will then be used to refine program approaches and ensure that the Council remains relevant to the community as it evolves and changes. This approach will support the existing program evaluation work and link into our information, communication and technology systems.



# ENDING HIV

Everything has changed. We can end HIV.

[ TEST MORE ] + [ TREAT EARLY ] + [ STAY SAFE ] = ENDING HIV

[ENDINGHIV.ORG.AU](http://ENDINGHIV.ORG.AU)

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## BOARD MEMBERS



**DR NATHAN BOYLE**  
President



**MELANIE CANTWELL**  
Secretary



**ANNI DUGDALE**  
Board Member



**CHRIS KENNEDY**  
Board Member



**JULIA O'BOYLE**  
Board Member



**LEANNE STAGGARD**  
Board Member



**KATHERINE BARRACLOUGH**  
Board Member

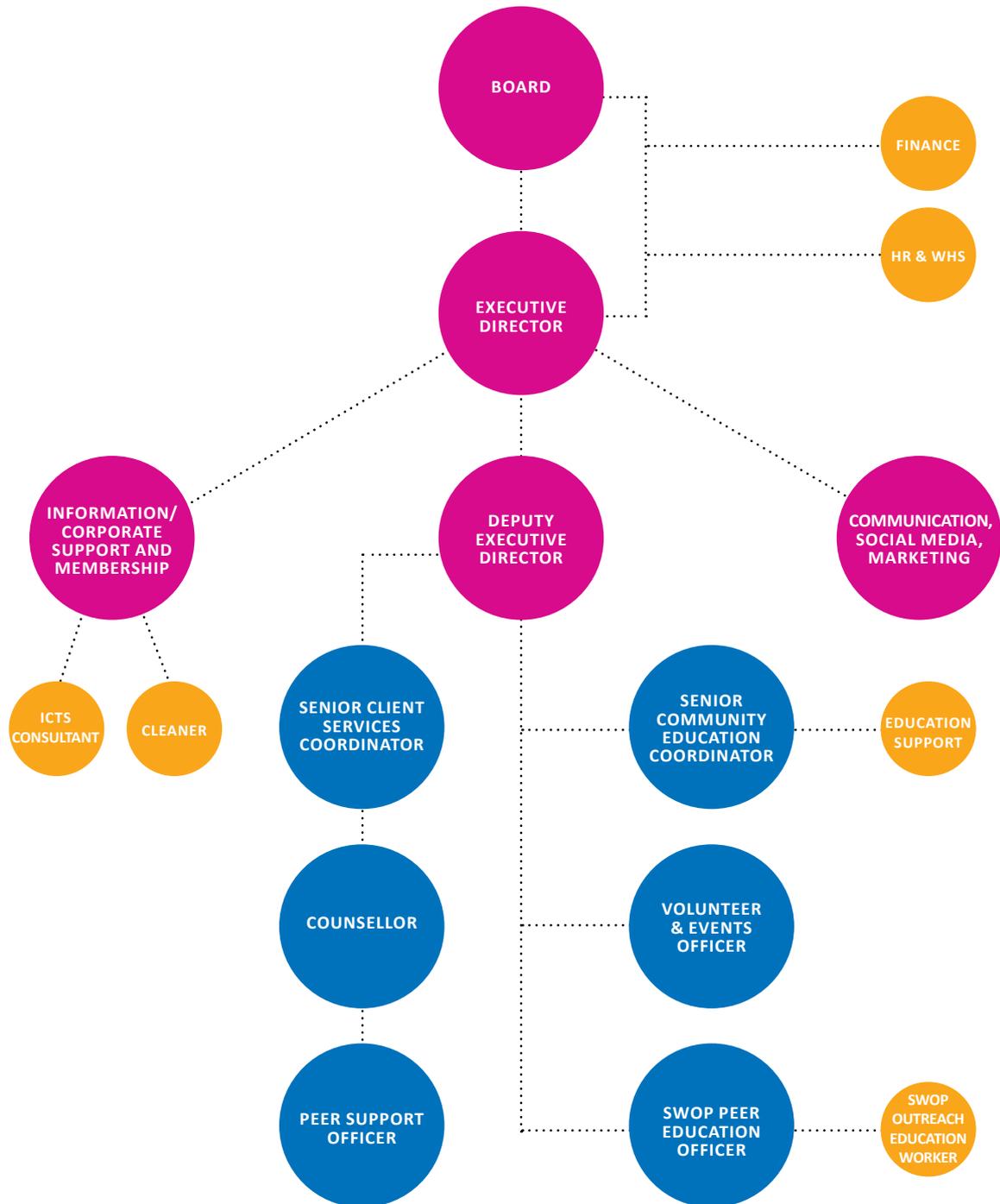


**ADAM STANKEVICIUS**  
Board Member



**PHILIPPA MOSS**  
Executive Director

# ORGANISATIONAL CHART





TODX Fashion Fundraiser

10

## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

THROUGH CAREFUL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT THE COUNCIL HAS AGAIN RETURNED A SMALL OPERATING SURPLUS.

In the 2015/16 financial year the AIDS Action Council increased its net asset position to \$57,410 from \$9,227. This was as a result of a marginal increase in revenue to last year of \$4,930 and decrease in total expenses by \$7,167. The Council's continued objective has been to increase its capacity and ability to support people with HIV and AIDS along with their families and carers. To achieve this increase in capacity we need to grow and develop new and existing services. To this end, this year has again seen an increase in funding from \$1,221,261 in 2014/15 to \$1,247,545 in 2015/16.

In the past four years the Council's revenue has increased by over \$274,881 or 36%. A significant component of the increase is a result of successful tendering for programs and activities. In the past five years the government grants we have received has risen from \$949,860 to \$1,182,239. Consistent with our strategic plan, the additional programs have seen the Council expand its footprint in Canberra, as well as increasing the number of people living with and impacted by HIV receiving information, support, education and advocacy. The Council received \$7,971 in donations and bequests as well as sponsorship of \$1,818 during 2015/2016. A substantial portion of these funds went directly to assisting clients. Over the past five years donations, bequest and fundraising activities have raised over \$80,000. This continued generosity has enabled the Council to invest and further expand its range of services for people living with and impacted by HIV and to strengthen its financial position for future growth opportunities.

**\$57,410**  
INCREASED NET  
ASSET POSITION

**\$26,284**  
INCREASE IN  
FUNDING

**36%**  
INCREASED  
REVENUE IN  
PAST 4 YEARS

**\$80,000**  
RAISED IN  
PAST 5 YEARS

Recently been exposed to HIV?

*ACT FAST.*



PEP (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis)  
can prevent HIV.

**THE SOONER YOU START THE BETTER,  
BUT IT MUST BE**



**OF EXPOSURE**

For where to get PEP and more information:

**[WWW.GETPEP.INFO](http://WWW.GETPEP.INFO)**



**Australian Federation  
of AIDS Organisations**  
Leaders in the HIV community response

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE COUNCIL HAS MANY SPONSORS, PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS, MANY WHOSE INVOLVEMENT AND SUPPORT IS ESSENTIAL TO OUR SERVICE DELIVERY. THE COUNCIL WISHES TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE FOLLOWING:

- 16 West
- 666 ABC Local Radio
- A Gender Agenda
- ACON
- ACT Human Rights Commission
- ACT LGBTIQ Ministerial Advisory Council
- ACT Office for Women
- ACT Sport and Recreation
- ACT Government
- ActewAGL
- ACTCOSS
- ACTQueer
- AIDS Trust of Australia
- Alcohol Tobacco & Other Drug Association ACT (ATODA)
- Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC)
- Alison Barclay
- Alex Sloan
- Ambassador John Berry
- Andrew Barr MLA
- Andrew Leigh MP
- Ansell International
- ANU Health Centre
- ANU Queer Department
- ANU Students' Association (ANUSA)
- Associate Professor Martin Holt
- Australian Federal Police
- Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO)
- Australian Society for HIV Medicine (ASHM)
- Bit Bent – Belconnen Community Services
- Boehringer Ingelheim
- Brendan Smyth
- Burnet Institute
- Canberra Gay and Lesbian Qwire
- Canberra Gay and Lesbian Tennis Club
- Canberra Institute of Technology Student Association (CITSA)
- Canberra Sexual Health Centre
- Capital Health Network
- Centre for Social Research in Health, University of NSW
- Clayton Utz
- Community Services Directorate, ACT Government
- COTA
- Danny Ryding
- Department of Health Pride Network
- Department of Education and Training Pride Network
- Directions ACT
- Dr Sarah Martin
- Dr Tuck Meng Soo
- Er-Kai Wang
- Felicity Wheeler
- Four Seasons
- FUSE Magazine
- GelWorks Pty Ltd
- Genevieve Jacobs
- Glyde Health
- Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation
- Haemophilia Foundation of the ACT
- Havelock Housing Association
- Hepatitis ACT
- Interchange General Practice
- International AIDS Society
- Jake Blight
- Jenni Atkinson
- Jenny McDonald
- Jenny Mobbs
- Joanne Byrnes
- John Mackay AM
- Johnathon Davies
- Julia Byford
- Justice Richard Refshauge
- Katie Howe
- Katy Gallagher MP
- Kenn Basham
- King O'Malley's
- Kirby Institute, University of NSW
- Legal Aid ACT
- Lifeline Canberra
- MAC Cosmetics
- Marianne Van-Galen Dickie
- Meegan Fitzharris MLA
- Mental Health Community Coalition
- Mental Illness Education ACT
- Mick Gentleman MLA
- National Association of People Living with HIV
- National LGBTI Health Alliance
- Neil Rogers
- Northside Community Service
- Philip Habel

- Positive Life NSW
- Prisoner's Aid ACT
- Primary Health and Chronic Conditions Policy Unit – ACT Health
- PrEP Access Now
- PrEP'd for Change
- Queer Minds Canberra Region
- Rebecca Vassarotti
- Reconciliation Australia
- Rodney Cole
- Saan Ecker
- Scarlet Alliance
- Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT (SHFPACT)
- Shane Rattenbury MLA
- Simon Throeth
- Snow Foundation
- Stephanie Marion-laundas
- Studios of the ACT (visited by SWOP)
- Sue Driscoll
- Successful Alliance
- The Ranch at Fantasy Lane
- Tim Bavinton
- TressCox Lawyers
- ViiV Health Care
- Victoria Firth-Smith
- Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service
- Women's Centre for Health Matters
- Women's Legal Services
- Youth Coalition of the ACT
- Yvette Berry MLA
- YWCA of Canberra

## AIDS GARDEN OF REFLECTION

[www.aidsgardenact.com.au](http://www.aidsgardenact.com.au)



AIDS GARDEN OF REFLECTION

THE AIDS ACTION COUNCIL WOULD LIKE TO FORMALLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE SPONSORSHIP, DONATIONS AND SUPPORT PROVIDED FOR THE AIDS GARDEN OF REFLECTION.

The AIDS Garden of Reflection will be a permanent, secluded place of tribute and memory within the National Arboretum's Gallery of Gardens as a place of peace and reflection. The development of sites such as this have the power to impact public awareness, provide a place of sanctuary for those mourning lost loved ones and reduce the stigma which stills remains for those who lose people in their life to HIV in Australia.

We have great hope that the AIDS Garden of Reflection will provide a place for not only remembrance and reflection but for inspiration and community building. This garden has the power, to become a focal point for the community and a call to action.

The Council would like to formally acknowledge the community working group led by Richard Allen and also involving Scott Malcolm, Philip Habel, Robert Sharp and Ian Goudie. Plant and garden support provided by renowned landscape architect John Patrick Pty Ltd and supported by Kenn Basham, Mandi Collins, Julie Foster and Alison Stewart. The Council would like to acknowledge the many community members who have made a donation to the garden with significant individual and corporate donations provided by:

- John Mackay – AIDS Action Council Patron
- The National Arboretum
- AIDS Trust of Australia
- ActewAGL
- Snow Foundation
- John James Foundation
- King O'Malley's
- Andrew Barr
- Canberra Gay and Lesbian Tennis Club

The many people who have been part of the AIDS Action Council's story over the last 25 years have made a difference that will last forever, and the legacy will live on in the spirit of our community. Into the future there will be challenges and opportunities to embrace, as we all make our own unique contributions, inspired by the values that guide the Council's work:

**RESPECT | INCLUSIVENESS | LEADERSHIP | PARTNERSHIP | EMPOWERMENT**



I just saw your message on CDNet and wanted to commend the AIDS Action Council and the Cancer Council on offering this group – I imagine there are many isolated men who would benefit from this group.

I have not heard of a group offering this support before. I hope the message gets out and about to reach the guys.

Team Leader  
- Child, Youth and Family Gateway

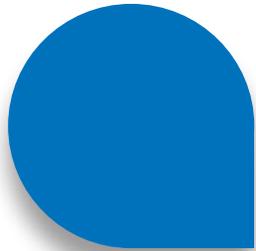


# THE GLOSSARY

<b>ACNC</b>	Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission
<b>ACON</b>	ACON Health Limited
<b>AFAO</b>	Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations
<b>BBV</b>	Blood Borne Virus
<b>CALD</b>	Culturally and linguistically diverse
<b>LGBTIQ</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, transgender, Intersex and Queer
<b>MSM</b>	Men who have sex with men
<b>NAPWHA</b>	National Association of People with HIV Australia
<b>PACT</b>	Partnership Approach to Comprehensive Testing
<b>PLHIV</b>	People living with HIV
<b>PrEP</b>	Pre-exposure Prophylaxis
<b>RAP</b>	Reconciliation Action Plan
<b>S100 Prescriber</b>	Qualified HIV medical practitioner
<b>SGD</b>	Sex and gender diverse
<b>SHFPACT</b>	Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT
<b>STI</b>	Sexually transmissible infections
<b>STRIP</b>	Sexual Health Testing, Referral and Information Project
<b>SWOP</b>	Sex Worker Outreach Program

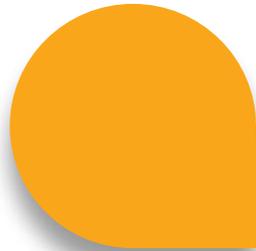


# THE AIDS ACTION COUNCIL PROUDLY SERVING THE CANBERRA COMMUNITY



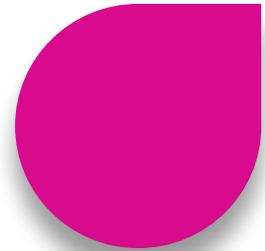
## CARE & SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV INCLUDING

New diagnoses groups  
Peer support network  
Peer based programs  
Women's groups  
Dietitian clinic  
Counselling  
Case management  
A safe community space



## COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND PREVENTION SERVICES

HIV awareness training  
Professional education  
Counselling services  
LGBTIQ awareness training  
Needle and Syringe Program  
Peer based outreach service  
to sex workers and brothels  
Health promotion activities  
and campaigns



## AIDS ACTION COMMUNITY EVENTS

World AIDS Day  
Candlelight Memorial  
Fundraising activities  
Youth engagement  
Yoga and meditation  
LGBTIQ workshops,  
events and activities  
Fair Day

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We love social media at the Council — we invite you to follow, like, look and tweet!

**Facebook** : fb/aidsactionact and fb/gaymenshealthcanberra

**Twitter** : @aidsactionact **Instagram** : @aidsactionact **Issuu** : issuu.com/aidsaction

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The **AIDS Action Council** has been serving the Canberra community for over 30 years  
For more information about our programs and services please call **02 6257 2855** or  
email us at **contact@aidsaction.org.au** Office hours: 9.00am - 5.00pm Monday to Friday



[aidsaction.org.au](http://aidsaction.org.au)

02 6257 2855

[contact@aidsaction.org.au](mailto:contact@aidsaction.org.au)

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