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FROM THE HARP MANAGER



I am delighted to be in my new role of HARP Manager as we herald in the new and refreshed HARP News. As well as celebrating the 2019 Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. this bumper issue reports on several innovative projects undertaken with our partners in the HARP sector in our combined quest to end HIV and hepatitis C and reduce the impact of STI within the population.

SESLHD is in the process of finalising its HIV and Sexual Health Strategy 2019-2024. The Strategy illustrates the need for sustained action within HIV and sexual health and will assist in advancing models of care, service development and the provision of high quality HIV and STI programs within the LHD over the next 5 years.

The Strategy, overseen by the SESLHD HIV and Sexual Health Steering Committee, has been out for consultation with all our key partners. Partnerships are fundamental to our model of care, and this Strategy is underpinned by us building and strengthening on those partnerships with our clients and consumers. It also recognises the central role that our NGOs and community-based organisations continue to play to optimise our community's health and wellbeing.

We are lucky to have so many of the state wide NGOs in our LHD and grateful for the wonderful work we can and do together.

The SESLHD Hepatitis Strategies Advisory Committee has a robust work plan that oversees the various programs and projects delivered across the district to assist with the elimination of hepatitis C. Membership on this committee includes; key clinicians, HARP Unit staff and community based NGOS. Again this illustrates the critical place partnerships play with our clinical services and key NGOs.

The HARP Health Promotion Team has been heavily involved in the NSW Sexual Health Action Plan, a state wide program overseen by STIPU, which focuses on young people. Several projects led by our SESLHD HARP health promoters have recently been scaled up to state wide projects including "Sexing up the Sector"-Youth Services Capacity Building Program and the Sexual Health and Peer Educator Program. SESLHD HARP has also employed ten young people as sexual health peer educators and advisors to the LHD about all things pertaining to young people. This has been a really successful program in partnership with Kirketon Road Centre and SESLHD Youth Health and you can read more about it in this edition.

Tulia



HARP ONLINE

HARP UNIT HAS A NEW WEBSITE

As part of South Eastern Sydney Local Health District's redeveloped website, the HARP Unit's page has a fresh new look. It is now so much easier to find information about the work that we do and what we can offer.

https://www.seslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/services-clinics/ directory/hiv-related-programs

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK



We encourage you to follow us, like, share and engage with our content. Together we can ensure important messages about HIV, sexual health, viral hepatitis and other related issues reach our communities. Check us out: @harpseslhd

https://www.facebook.com/HARPsesIhd/?ref=bookmarks

Mardi Gras



KRC TAKES TO THE STREET TO CELEBRATE MARDI GRAS

FOR 32 YEARS, THE KIRKETON ROAD CENTRE (KRC) HAS BEEN PART OF THE EVOLVING HEALTH RESPONSE TO THE HEALTH NEEDS OF LGBTQI COMMUNITIES, FEARLESSLY PROVIDING FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE TO VULNERABLE POPULATIONS WITHIN SOUTH EASTERN SYDNEY LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT.

To celebrate this commitment, 45 KRC staff and service users joyfully marched through the streets to showcase this year's Mardi Gras theme of being 'Fearless'.

Each of the KRC parade participants displayed the names of people who we believe have been fearless advocates for LGBTI health, needle & syringe services, and the expansion of testing and treatments for HIV, STIs and hepatitis C.

Some of these advocates have worked internationally. some have worked in our local communities. But they have all struggled to overturn inadequate or discriminatory barriers to health care.

They rallied support and overcame multiple barriers to ensure the opening of the Medically Supervised Injecting Centre, they fought tirelessly for social justice, and they are often the unsung local heroes without whom many services simply would not exist.

KRC is so very proud to bring honour to these individuals, to express gratitude and to celebrate their contributions. We remind ourselves of the necessity to continue to expand upon the extraordinary contributions already made - and to do so fearlessly.







Positive Life - ZERO HIV



People living with HIV (PLHIV) and our supporters proudly marched in the 2019 Mardi Gras under this year's Positive Life NSW message of ZERO HIV: ZERO HIV TRANSMISSIONS, ZERO HIV RISK, ZERO HIV DISCRIMINATION, ZERO HIV DEATHS!

Wearing dark green t-shirts and singlets with white ZERO HIV across the chest, 60-70 faces of people living with HIV alongside our families, lovers and friends marched with a range of placards promoting messages like, 'HIV doesn't discriminate...do you?', 'ZERO HIV deaths', and 'Let's make #HIVnoise'.

Click here for more photographs from our 2019 Mardi Gras!



BGF CLIENTS MARCH

OUR CLIENTS ARE THE HEART AND SOUL OF EVERYTHING WE DO HERE AT BGF.

Just recently, we had the privilege of walking alongside a number of our clients in the Mardi Gras parade.

One of our group is wheelchair bound and his BGF Community Support Worker Anthony was there to assist him throughout the day and night.

Observing the viewing crowd show their love and support for him as we walked 1.7km uphill towards Moore Park was incredibly heart-warming and reaffirmed for us how lucky BGF is - staff and clients - to have the support of our local community.



TRAINING

PRIDE IN HEALTH

AS PART OF THE GAY AND LESBIAN MARDI GRAS, PRINCE OF WALES DIVERSITY PROGRAMS ORGANISED AND CO-ORDINATED A TRAINING SESSION FOR STAFF FROM THE PRINCE OF WALES HOSPITAL CAMPUS AND OTHER INTERESTED STAFF FROM ACROSS THE DISTRICT.

The aim was to raise awareness of issues facing LGBTQI patients and offer tips on how we as health care workers can better understand and meet the needs of this very diverse community.

The event was a collaboration of the LHD services Diversity Program, The Albion Centre, ADAHPS and the HARP Unit along with ACON (NSW'S leading HIV & LGBTQI health organisation).

The training was well supported with around 40 members of staff coming to hear from the speakers who covered topics ranging personal experiences of the health care system to setting up a specialist service for transgender clients.

Participants also received advice on how to navigate and understand the difference between gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, sex characteristics and assigned sex, all of which combine to make the individual who is our client or patient.





-R: Jacqueline Stephenson, Diversity Programs; Mark Denoe, HARP; Maggie Smith, Albion Centre; Matt, Consumer; Pam Barker, ACON; Douglas Knox, HARP

THE ALBION CENTRE

THIS YEAR'S FAIR DAY SAW THE **ALBION CENTRE** TAKE ITS PLACE BESIDE OTHER SESLHD HIV SERVICES AND OUR PARTNER NGOS.

The Albion Centre used its Fair Day stall to:

- Raise awareness among Fair Day patrons of the HIV testing, treatment and care services that we offer
- Promote, our sexual health clinic for trans and gender diverse people
- Promote our professional education program to health workers
- Recruit new volunteers for the Ankali program

To attract people to our stall we ran a promotional raffle with an exciting prize: 2 tickets for the Mardi Gras Party. 84 people entered the competition, and John, our lucky winner, had a double-first: he'd never won a raffle or been to the Mardi Gras Party.

Albion staff engaged with hundreds of visitors, chatted with our colleagues from NGOs and other LHDs and distributed information on our activities and services.



The hard work of the Ankali team dedicated volunteers also saw four new people recruited to provide companionship and support for socially isolated people living with HIV.

Fair Day 2019 was a good day for the Albion Centre. We look forward to seeing our friends and colleagues for another fabulous day out in 2020.

POSITIVE LIFE

THIS FAIR DAY AT VICTORIA PARK IN CAMPERDOWN ON SUNDAY 17 FEBRUARY, THE **POSITIVE LIFE** TEAM TURNED OUT IN FORCE TO ENGAGE WITH COMMUNITY.

With a strong presence at three stalls, Positive Life Staff, Board Directors, Positive Speakers Bureau (PSB) Speakers and volunteers offered timely messages about HIV, personal experiences of living with HIV, and Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and detecting anal cancer.

PSB Speakers, Natasha, Zainab, Peter and Joel offered first-hand stories about what it is to live with HIV to the public alongside Gilead Sciences staff at their campaign stall for www.hivisjustapartofme.eu.

Treatments Officers David Crawford and Maxine Lewis supported by Board Directors and Staff raised the importance of regular digital ano-rectal examinations (DAREs) in the early detection of anal cancer. Our DARE bum provided an instant opportunity to practice a DARE and 400 free digital ano-rectal examination (DARE) kits proved an unexpected hit with the public!

Volunteers Tyler, Seraph, Emmanuel and Ann supported the staff team by setting up the main Positive Life stall, distributing over 300 Positive Life dog collars and leads and over 500 showbags responding to all kinds of questions.



Treatments Officer Maxine Lewis with PLNSW Board Director Brent Clifton at the DARE Stall



Volunteers Seraph and Tyler



World AIDS Day (WAD), 1st December, provides an important opportunity for us to remember those who have lost their lives from HIV/AIDS and show support for people living with HIV

SESLHD WORLD AIDS DAY 2018 CAMPAIGN

Late November 2018, SESLHD coordinated a WAD Campaign involving 22 events that aimed to positively change the attitudes and behaviours towards HIV and people living with HIV (PLHIV).

Awareness stalls, educational sessions, personal stories told by Positive Speakers from the Positive Speaker Bureau, and Play Safe Summer Peer Educator outreach increased the awareness that HIV still exists.

Remembrance, support, and solidarity for those living with HIV was shown through active community participation at the multiple WAD stalls held at community events and LHD hospitals.

The HARP Unit allocated 10 Red Ribbon Grants to Local Councils, NGOs, and other community organisations to ensure that conversations were had in the harder to reach communities. These conversations aimed to reduce associated stigma and encourage efforts to prevent transmission through increased testing.

Other highlights of the 2018 WAD Campaign include the Red Ribbon Working Bee, which saw healthcare workers and community volunteers' band together to make over 2,000 Red Ribbons that were distributed throughout the LHD.

Three training sessions for LHD staff, including an HIV and STI Testing Update for GPs and Practice nurses; and two Ending HIV Workshops for mental health, maternity, emergency department, Aboriginal Health, and Drug & Alcohol healthcare workers, saw nearly 80 LHD staff updated on PrEP, PEP, TaSP, alternate setting, new opportunities for HIV testing, and psychosocial issues when living with HIV.



L-R: Nadime, Kris and Mike at the POWH stall, with the HIV Book Project and strawberry plants donated by the Alexandria Community garden



Red Ribbon making at UNSW WAD event for Global CALD students



Ending HIV Workshop for healthcare workers @ Coogee SLSC on Thursday 29th November – 32 participants



World AIDS Day 2018

POSITIVE LIFE 30TH ANNIVERSARY & WORLD AIDS DAY



On Saturday 1 December 2018, **Positive Life NSW** celebrated our 30th Anniversary at the Australian Museum with a photographic exhibition called "30 Years of People Living with HIV" which reflected on significant events, loved ones past and present and memorable characters we respect and cherish.

This memorable event was well attended by PLHIV community members, our family and friends and HIV sector partners. The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence irreverently blessed the proceedings to the joy and amusement of all.



HIV TESTING UPDATE

A[TEST] CHINESE CLINIC



NSW's leading HIV prevention organisation ACON, in partnership with Sydney Sexual Health Centre, is now offering its popular rapid HIV testing service a[TEST] in Mandarin to provide Chinese-speaking gay men and men who have sex with men (MSM) easier access to sexual health screenings and information

The new a[TEST] Chinese Clinic will operate at a[TEST] Surry Hills every Thursday from 3pm - 6.30pm by either booked appointment or drop in. Mandarin-speaking community peers and sexual health nurses will be available to see clients and the computer assisted self-interviews are translated in simplified Chinese language. As with all a[TEST] clinics, the service is free and confidential. No Medicare card is required.

This service aims to reduce some of barriers to testing that may be experienced in traditional settings for Chinese gay men and MSM. With the enhancement of resources such as translated materials, the option to answer confidential sexual health questions on electronic tablets in Chinese and by utilising the bilingual skills of both nurses and peers, we hope to see an increase in numbers of Asian gay men testing in particular those who have never tested before.

For more information about a[TEST] or to book an appointment visit endinghiv.org.au or call Sydney Sexual Health Centre 02 93827440



The DBS test is a free, accurate and easy testing option for people at risk of HIV and hepatitis (hep) C. The self-testing process enables people to collect a sample of blood from a finger prick, at home or a health care facility, and send it back to the lab for testing.

In 2017, the DBS pilot was expanded to allow assisted collection and testing for services which provide care to people at risk of HIV and hep C.

Since the approval of this phase, 19 sites across 14 LHDs have registered, including Drug and Alcohol services, needle and syringe programs (NSPs), Sexual Health Clinics and Liver Clinics. These services are now able to recruit patients and aid in the registration process and sample collection.

As of February 2019, the DBS program has tested over 1500 patients for HIV, and over 550 for hep C. There have been 18 reactive HIV results and 82 reactive hep C tests.

There are some proposed changes to the DBS trial, most notably a reduction in the number of online questions, testing for hep C without HIV, and broader inclusion criteria. The changes, which will take effect soon, were suggested to reduce barriers and increase acceptability of testing for patients and non-clinical staff.

If your workplace is interested in participating in the DBS pilot please contact the co-ordinator on 0409 382 966 or anik.ray@health.nsw.au

HARM MINIMISATION NEWS

THE OPEN CLINIC ON CROWN OFFICIAL OPENING

On Thursday 29th November the NSW Users and AIDS Association (NUAA) and Kirketon Road Centre (KRC) officially launched the Open Clinic on Crown, situated at the NUAA NSP at 345 Crown Street, Surry Hills.

The celebration marks the opening of the expanded Primary Health Care Clinic, a collaboration between KRC and NUAA to provide "health for all" in the community. The clinic is run by a CNC from KRC, working closely with a NUAA peer support worker, Monday to Friday from 11.30 to 3.30 pm.

This nurse led walk-in clinic provides: assessment, testing and management of blood borne infections, sexual and women's health, vaccinations, hepatitis C assessment (including fibroscans), treatment and care, naloxone and overdose training and wound management. It also acts as a referral point for mental health and alcohol and other drug issues.

Dr Phill Read the Director of KRC thanked NUAA, SESL-HD HARP and KRC staff for their contribution in providing affordable, accessible and equitable health care. NUAA and KRC are proud of their ongoing partnership; the Open Clinic builds on a long standing relationship bringing Primary Health Care to some of Sydney's most marginalised communities.

For more information about the clinic, contact KRC on 9926 7366 or NUAA NSP on 8354 7343.



ront row: Lucy Pepolim, Anna Doab, Timmy Lockwood



UP-SKILLING GPs IN HEPATITIS C MANAGEMENT

The SESLHD Viral Hepatitis and Harm Reduction Program have partnered with the Public Health Unit (PHU) to pilot an innovative project to follow-up new notifications of hepatitis C with general practitioners (GPs).

The Integrated Community Hepatitis Assessment & Treatment project (iCHAT) and the St George Liver clinic clinical nurse consultants (CNCs), Dianne How Chow for northern SESLHD and Lisa Dowdell for southern SESLHD, contact GPs about new hepatitis C notifications. We provide an opportunity for GPs to contribute to the elimination of hepatitis C by providing support to up-skill in assessment and treatment.

Most people only require 8 or 12 weeks of treatment with direct acting antiviral (DAA) therapy. There are almost no side-effects, efficacy is greater than 95% and GPs are ideally placed to provide this treatment.

The community hepatitis CNCs contact GPs after receiving the notifications from the PHU, ascertains that the patient has been contacted with the result and has returned for

follow-up clinical interventions where necessary. GPs are also asked about their experience with managing hepatitis C and offered support to become familiar with assessment and treatment in their practice.

The first six months of the project has seen 49 GPs contacted with most GPs having initiated an intervention that contributes to improving the health outcomes of people living with hepatitis C.



COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS WITH PEOPLE WHO INJECT DRUGS IN **SOUTHERN SYDNEY**

In November 2018 the HARP Unit completed five Harwood community conversations with 33 people who inject drugs in the southern Sydney. The conversations were hosted and supported by KRC South and St George AOD service.

The Harwood Institute© advocates the "turning outwards" approach in community conversations. This enables communities being listened to in their space and focusing on what matters to them rather than the service providers. This provides an authentic and meaningful engagement.

This approach proved a successful way of engaging with a marginalised group of participants who repeatedly commented in both the conversations and feedback sessions that they were grateful for the opportunity to be heard and have their input accurately captured.

As a result of the conversations a range of actions have been undertaken with the endorsement of the participants which included; the placement of a privacy screen and establishment of a consumer advisory group at KRC South and the development of a one day health care worker training on hepatitis C and stigma and discrimination.



The training has been well received by attending SESLHD staff.

There are plans to develop peer programs and run further conversations with health care workers and police to ensure that they are involved in ongoing planning with the community of people who inject drugs.

INCENTIVISING THE ELEARNING MODULE 'STIGMA, DISCRIMINATION & INJECTING DRUG USE.'

From the Harwood community conversations with people who inject drugs, we heard that the experience of stigma and discrimination was a significant barrier to their health seeking intentions and behaviours; preventing their use of health services and uptake of treatments such as the new hep C cures.

The community felt that raising awareness of the issues that people who use drugs have faced amongst health care workers and other service providers was crucial.

As such, the Viral Hepatitis and Harm Reduction team incentivised the eLearning module 'Stigma, Discrimination and Injecting Drug Use'.

SESLHD health care workers were invited to complete the eLearning module to go into the draw to win one of six \$50 shopping vouchers. This incentive based promotion was successful in encouraging staff to complete the module with 173 completing it, significantly higher than the 43 who had completed the training in the 12 months prior.

The HARP Unit will continue to use the approach to increase SESLHD staff knowledge around this very important issue and to ensure a more positive health experience for people who inject drugs.

To complete the module go to **HETI** and search: Stigma, Discrimination & Injecting Drug use (course number 96479339)



ABORIGINAL SURFBOARD

After an extremely popular tour in 2018, the Aboriginal surfboard competition tour is back from January to July 2019.

The 2019 surfboard features art work by Lani Balzan, a nationally recognised Australian Aboriginal Artist. Lani's family come from the Wiradjuri people in NSW.

The surfboard is touring for 24 weeks at 12 organisations throughout the Illawarra and Shoalhaven and the winner will be drawn on the 10th July during NAIDOC week.

The Aboriginal Surfboard competition raises awareness in the area around sexual health & blood borne infections, while offering the opportunity to win the surfboard. Entrants text 'Take Blaktion' and their postcode to HARP and receive a reply text encouraging them to visit the Sexual Health Info Link to find their nearest free and confidential sexual health check-up.



Lani with the turtle dreaming surfboard

FIRST STEP BUS TOUR

The final First Step Program bus tour for December 2018 was conducted with three Policy officers from the BBV and STI Unit from the Ministry of Health on board.

The needle and syringe program bus tour gives participants an on the ground view of the current situation around drug use and blood borne infection transmissions. It provides the opportunity to dispel myths and get the real story on an often hidden, sensitive and rarely talked about area.

Previous participants have said the following about the

- I find that this style of learning has so many benefits as opposed to the traditional 'sit in a room watching a PowerPoint presentation' learning. It had a strong impact on my understanding and perspective on the many issues that are faced by clients of the drug and alcohol service.
- I thought it was very insightful, interesting and valuable for both my future practice as a social worker but also just for my overall knowledge.
- Loved every minute of it! Very informative and a great opportunity to speak with other people working in the field.

The FSP Bus tour has eight tours lined up for 2019 and we invite you to join us. Tickets are \$15.00 per person with proceeds going to Darcy House, Port Kembla which provides a hot lunch for participants

CADDYSHACK SUMMER TOUR

The Caddyshack Summer tour kicked off at Kiama and Shellharbour Beaches in 2019 in partnership with Kiama Municipal and Shellharbour City Councils. Caddyshack is a chlamydia outreach screening program which has been active since the summer of 2013 in the area.



(L-R) Jennifer Farinella, Scott Lockhart-HARP Unit, Nishtha Dwivedi, Anna-belle Stevens-MoH, Mick Fernandez First Step Program Manager in front of Darcy House, Port Kembla



Engaging young people from 16-29 with the spin and win freebies wheel and glitter bar, the HARP team and peer educators speak to young people about safe sex offering free chlamydia screens where young people hang out.

See Caddyshack in action here

NEWS FROM.... THE

POSITIVE WALKERS



'Positive Walkers' is a collaboration between HOT, HARP and Albion with 'Heart Foundation Walking'. The Heart Foundation has over 20 years of experience in running walking groups and 'Positive Walkers' is run as a closed group just for people living with HIV.

The walking group was set up in response to feedback about the need for a structured, sustainable and supported walking group for HOT and Albion clients. This prompted a HOT and Albion dietitians, and consumer collaboration to encourage healthier lifestyles and address social isolation.

The first walk was on 20 March 2018 which means that 'Positive Walkers' is about to celebrate its one year anniversary.



This is a fantastic achievement and would not have been possible without having dedicated client walk organisers supported by staff at Albion and HOT

Feedback from walkers

- † 'It's wonderful walking away your worries'
- ☆ 'It's refreshing and enjoyable'
- The routine motivates you'
- 'Exercise is good for my brain and thinking'
- ☼ 'I go home happy'

- ☼ 'It gets me out of bed'
- ☼ 'Walking stops me smoking'
- ☆ 'I breathe easier'. 'My lungs get fresh air'
- ☼ 'I get an appetite'
- ☼ 'Just turning up has boosted my confidence'

SMART EATING WEEK 2019

The 'Munch on Mediterranean' event ran from the 11th - 17th of February promoting healthy eating for both staff and clients of the centre with an emphasis on a Mediterranean style of eating. This diet has been shown to reduce the risks of chronic diseases, encouraging healthy eating and placing an importance on eating vegetables, fruits, fish and healthy fats.

A stall for clients was set up by student dietitian, Kristof from the University of Wollongong, with information on the Mediterranean diet and practical suggestions to implement some of its key components provided.

Awareness-rasing daily emails were sent to staff, which included the benefits of the Mediterranean diet, tips, recipes and competition details. Competition participants completed riddles, questions and prepared a Mediterranean styled meal throughout the week.

Furthermore for staff at the centre, Kristof gave a presentation along with a make-it-yourself Mediterranean themed lunch.



The presentation and lunch received positive feedback from Albion Centre staff.

COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS UPDATE

bobby goldsmith foundation

practical emotional financial support

CLIENT STORY: ROBERT

obert has been living with HIV for the past eight years and has been a BGF client since 2011. Due to the toxic medications Robert has had to take following his diagnosis in 2010, he suffered from brittle teeth syndrome - a rapidly advancing dental decay that led to him losing all of his teeth and needing to wear dentures.

Recently, Robert's two front teeth broke and he needed to get new teeth attached to his denture plate. Robert approached BGF for support and we were able to help him with his dental bills. Having his teeth fixed has had a big impact on Robert's mental health and he is feeling a lot more positive.

"My new teeth are fantastic so thank you for that and for all the help you have assisted me with this year. Your efforts are greatly appreciated and have had a positive impact on my well being".

LAUNCH OF BGF'S ART & INK EXHIBITION





In early March, BGF hosted an official launch of 'Art and Ink' at 107, an art gallery in Redfern. The week long exhibition was a celebration of creativity, showcasing work produced by participants of BGF's Art Phoenix and Creative Writing Programs. Both of these programs preserve and honour the work of artists and writers living with HIV.

The launch was officially opened by Alex Greenwich, who is a fantastic advocate for people living with HIV. Attendees of the event were fortunate to hear pieces created in the creative writing program read out by participants, as well having the chance to purchase artwork as they wandered around the gallery.

BGF's annual exhibition is an opportunity for our clients to have their creative skills on show to a wide audience and helps to build confidence and self-esteem.

BGF's Art Phoenix is a 6-week program that aims to support HIV+ artists to creatively express themselves through the medium of art. The workshops are delivered in partnership with Pine Street Creative Arts Centre. BGF's Creative Writing program is a 6-week workshop for people living with HIV that focuses on helping our clients to creatively express themselves through the medium of writing. The program is guided by well-known writer and poet Gavin Austin.

Positive Life NSW the voice of people with HIV since 1988

POSITIVE LIFE IS STEPPING UP TO ZERO HIV

This 2019, people living with HIV (PLHIV) are pushing for ZERO HIV in 2019 for four main reasons. PLHIV in NSW on anti-retroviral treatment who have an undetectable viral load (UVL) have Zero risk of transmitting HIV to our sexual partners.

When we use Treatment as Prevention (TasP), we become part of the solution to reach for Zero HIV risk! PLHIV challenge stigma and discrimination whenever and wherever we find these, to reach Zero HIV stigma and discrimination. Without HIV stigma and discrimination, the barriers to HIV testing, treatment and care are reduced.

NSW is on track with achieving the UNAIDS goals of 90:90:90 by 2020. With 90% of PLHIV diagnosed, 90% of PLHIV accessing and taking HIV treatment, and 90% of PLHIV on treatment with an undetectable viral load, we reach further to achieve Zero HIV transmission.

Let's leave no one behind especially people who are disproportionality impacted by HIV such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, heterosexual men and women, trans and gender diverse people, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The fourth reason is to reduce late diagnoses and increase awareness and access to HIV testing, while reaching out and supporting each other to remain in control of our care and connected, as we reach for Zero HIV deaths throughout NSW.

Join the ZERO HIV campaign! Contact Positive Life for copies of our ZERO HIV flyers to distribute to clients and promote the ZERO HIV message. Repost and retweet Positive Life's #ZEROHIV social media posts. Celebrate Zero HIV risk, challenge HIV stigma and discrimination, leave no one behind and reach for Zero HIV deaths.



PEER-LED PARTNER NOTIFICATION

Borne out of the expressed needs of people living with HIV (PLHIV), our members and community, this project is the first step in peers taking ownership of a critical diagnosis moment. Developed in partnership with NSW Health and Sexual Health Infolink (SHIL), Peer Led Partner Notification offers support from peers who received training and gone through the process of notifying our sexual and injecting partners that they have potentially been put at risk of an infection.

The program offers a road-map so peers can self-direct, empower and build individual agency, as well as increase testing for people who may have been potentially exposed to HIV. For support call one of the Treatments Officer at Positive Life on (02) 9206 2177 or email contact@positivelife.org.au

STORIES BY PEOPLE LIVING HIV

Talkabout welcomes personal stories about physical and personal experiences from anyone living with HIV, especially women, transgender or gender-variant people, anyone with a CALD background or Indigenous background.

Talkabout is an online magazine for and by people living with HIV (PLHIV) with the subhead: 'Where we speak for ourselves'.

Written contributions can be submitted on a word document to a maximum of 800 words, under a pseudonym or anonymously.



Contributors are encouraged to contact the Editor during business hours on (02) 9206-2179 or via email: editor@ positivelife.org.au. Click here to subscribe to Talkabout or visit the Talkabout website at http://talkabout.positivelife. org.au/



POSITIVE LIFE PUBLICATIONS

In 2019, Positive Life is publishing two annual magazines, Pozlite and Talkabout. Pozlite is a compilation of the most popular blog articles written by people living with HIV (PLHIV) and our friends, partners and family from the year before, while Talkabout is a collection of the most popular Talkabout Online articles written by PLHIV of the previous year.

If your service or clients living with HIV would like these magazines posted to them, please call Positive Life on (02) 9206-2179 or email communications@positivelife. org.au

POSITIVE SPEAKERS BUREAU

Speakers from the NSW Positive Speakers' Bureau (PSB) are living with HIV, Hep C or other co-morbidities and can complement health sector training in mental health and AOD units, sexual health units, and A and E units including allied health and aged care settings.

PSB speakers address HIV stigma and ignorance, dispel myths about HIV, and communicate a deeper understanding of what it is like to live with HIV today.

Our speakers came from a range of cultural backgrounds, ages, genders, time diagnosed with HIV, and life experiences and are renumerated for their time including travel costs. They undergo regular training to ensure they keep pace with the ever-changing landscape of HIV information, treatment, and prevention.



To discuss your requirements or to book a speaker, call the Training Coordinator on (02) 9206-2177, 1800 245 677 or email psb@positivelife.org.au For more information visit the Positive Speakers Bureau website at: psb.positivelife.org.au

HIV WORK READY

HIV Work Ready is a Positive Life NSW project that supports and mentors people living with HIV (PLHIV) to build confidence and quality of life to engage or reconnect through study, training, paid (casual, part-time or full-time) or voluntary work.

PLHIV can self-register by calling Positive Life on (02) 9206 2177 or email workready@positivelife.org.au



POSITIVE LIFE TREATMENTS OFFICERS

Positive Life has two Treatments Officers who can respond to gueries about HIV and health, treatments advice, HIV disclosure, partner notification and access to health services.

Both David Crawford and Maxine Lewis can offer support as peers living with HIV (PLHIV) in a safe and supportive approach to improve the health and wellbeing of people living with HIV in NSW.

Contact the Treatment Officers at Positive Life on (02) 9206-2177 or freecall 1800 245 677.





IN OTHER NEWS

"STEPPING ON" PROGRAM FOR **PEOPLE WITH HIV**

The population of people with HIV has aged substantially. In 1985 the proportion of the population aged over 55 years was 2.7%. By 2020 it is expected to be 44.3%, including 13.2% aged between 65 and 74 years. The natural ageing process and taking four or more medications often places people at an increased risk of falls.

In 2018, the HARP Unit in collaboration with the Albion Centre, HIV Outreach Team (HOT) and Health Promotion Service ran two sessions of the Stepping On program for people with HIV.

Stepping On program is a 7 week community program to maximise independence at home and in the community and reduce the risks of falling. The sessions were led by SESLHD Stepping On Coordinator/Physiotherapist with the support of the Occupational Therapist from the HIV Outreach Team and SLHD Stepping On Coordinator/ Physiotherapist.

Last year, 10 people with HIV participated in this program. Feedback from participants was positive with all participants indicating that they would recommend the program to others. Some additional comments include:

"Great information" "I unofficially care for a friend and this course will also assist him" "LGBT/HIV group worked well"



Stepping On will be run again in 2019.

For more information about Stepping On program contact Patricia Lynch, SESLHD Stepping On coordinator on 1800 823 002.

HEPATITIS B CALD COMMUNITY **EDUCATION AND TESTING PROGRAM**

The HARP Unit in partnership with the Department of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, St George Hospital and other key partners including the Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Service (MHAHS), Hepatitis NSW and Advance Diversity Service (ADS) continues to roll out the hepatitis B CALD community education and testing program.

In 2018 the program delivered 8 education and testing sessions. The sessions were predominantly targeted to the Chinese communities living in the St George area.

In total, 166 people were screened, 151 people undertook blood tests and Fibroscan and 15 people undertook Fibroscan only. Eight positive results (5%) for hepatitis B were received. Seventy-six people (50%) were found out to have past exposure to hepatitis B.

More hepatitis B education and testing sessions will be carried out in 2019 at various locations, including ADS -Bexley, TAFE - Kogarah and MTC Training Centre - Hurstville.

MAROUBRA COMMUNITY **EVENTS: TALK SOON. TALK OFTEN** & CYCLE TO END THE CYCLE

A community partnership between SESLHD HARP, The Bays Netball, and the U15 La Perouse Football team identified a need to educate and support parents/carers to effectively communicate sexual health and related topics to their children and local Aboriginal young people.

A Talk Soon Talk Often (TSTO) interactive information night was held in June 2018. Centred on the evidence-based booklet, education was provided on sexual health, viral hepatitis, and mental health by guest speakers from HARP, SESLHD's Peer Educator Youth Advisory Committee, and Livin & R U OK.

Twenty-nine parents/carers attended the TSTO evening, and reported feeling more confident to talk to their child about sexual health and related topics.

In November 2018. HARP and partners: Kirketon Road Centre, Hepatitis NSW, headspace Bondi Junction, and the SESLHD Go For Fun team, attended the Cycle To End The Cycle 12-hour Mental Health Awareness Event.

Organised by The Bays Netball and U15 La Perouse Football team, the event raised awareness for suicide prevention and the mental health cycle. Guest speaker, Dan Price, R U OK & Livin ambassador, spoke of his journey to wellness.

Health stalls provided support and information to seek help, support someone, start a conversation, and know how to speak and listen when discussing mental health, sexual health, and overall wellbeing.





Talk Soon. Talk Often Event: HARP staff and Peer Educators





KIRKETON ROAD CENTRE AND PARTNERS @ YABUN 2019



Yabun is one of the largest gatherings for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, honouring the survival of the world's oldest living culture and celebrating the resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, culture, dance, music, politics and heritage.

Opened with an inspiring speech by Hon Linda Burney MP, the festival attracted over 35,000 people to Victoria Park in Camperdown. A street rally also converged on Yabun calling for changing the date of Australia Day and for equal rights.

This year, the Kirketon Road Centre (KRC) collaborated with partner agencies to engage with local Aboriginal communities and to showcase the range of health services available across the District.

With the financial support of the Harp Unit, KRC were joined by SESLHD Aboriginal Health Unit, NSW Users and AIDS Association and the Medically Supervised Injecting Centre (MSIC) to provide a range health education and promotional materials to the community.

Alongside the KRC outreach, KRC and MSIC staff provided community members with drug overdose training, as well as distributing home testing kits for HIV and hepatitis C.

The "Spinning Wheel" and "Can you guess how many Condoms in the jar", facilitated by a team of peer educators, was a popular attraction for young people and families quizzed about hepatitis and sexual health issues. Staff from SESLHD and our partners were honoured to have played a small part in this year's vibrant festival.

NEW ONLINE LEARNING FROM ASHM TACKLES STIGMA & DISCRIMINATION IN HEALTHCARE



This year on Zero Discrimination Day (1 March 2019) - a day marked each year by the United Nations dedicated to speaking up and preventing discrimination from standing in the way of achieving ambitions, goals and dreams -ASHM has launched new online learning for people working in healthcare settings or studying in health related fields including clinic managers and receptionists, nurses and students.

This is called Removing Barriers found via the website http://removingbarriers.ashm.org.au.

"People living with, or at-risk of, a blood-borne virus—HIV, hepatitis B or hepatitis C-can face systemic and attitudinal barriers and stigma and discrimination when accessing the health system. By not addressing those, we will never achieve our vision towards virtual eliminations. ASHM's new online learning makes it everybody's business to change what we say, change what we do; and work together in removing the unacceptable barriers of stigma and discrimination across the health system," said ASHM CEO Alexis Apostolellis. Read more

PARTNER NOTIFICATION SERVICE PROVIDES SUPPORT TO INDONESIA

The NSW Sexual Health Infolink (SHIL) performs many activities including a Partner Notification Service for sexual and injecting partners of people diagnosed with HIV and who are difficult to reach. Traditionally we had a name, phone number or address enabling a reasonable opportunity of notifying the person. However today the context is different.

SHIL has enhanced methods of partner notification by incorporating internet based systems, which reflects the way that most people now communicate, meeting friends and sex partners on line.

On Wednesday 6th March, 2019, the service hosted a delegation from the Indonesian Ministry of Health Partner Notification Team. They were sponsored by the World Health Organisation to learn models of partner notification which may be adapted to enhance local HIV testing programs.

Indonesia has a population of 260 million people distributed over 17, 000 islands with considerable ethnic, social, economic and religious diversity. There is an estimated 630, 000 people living with HIV of which 42% know their status.



The workshop explored differences in HIV epidemiology and health systems between the 2 neighbouring countries. The delegates were provided education on the fundamentals of HIV partner notification as well as learning more about how specialised methods worked.

ADAHPS CASE MANAGEMENT **MODEL OF CARE UPDATED**

Adahps launched a new case management model of care (MOC) in February 2019 to ensure that all people living with HIV (PLHIV) have access to case management and psychosocial support, regardless of where they live.

As a state-wide service Adahps is able to respond to the changing demographics of PLHIV. Removing barriers to support will go a long way towards ensuring equity in the provision of specialist HIV case management to all residents.

Our team has been providing co-case management to PLHIV throughout NSW with HIV-related cognitive impairment and complex health needs, for more than 20 years. This won't change.

The major changes to the model involve the eligibility criteria for Adahps support, which differs according to the client's LHD (and access to support).

In addition to primary case managing people with HIV and complex needs who live in Far West, Murrumbidgee, Western NSW and Southern NSW LHDs, we have removed the need for clients in these areas to have HIV-related cognitive impairment. No local case manager is needed.

In all other LHDs we will continue to co-case manage clients who have: HIV-related cognitive impairment, moderate to severe functional deficit, and complex needs.



Referrals will need to be made by a case management service where they exist, for example SESLHD HIV Outreach Team, SLHD Positive Central and SWSLHD HIV Outreach Team. We will use WHO-DAS 2.0 to determine functional deficit.

The Model will be tested for 12 months, using an independent evaluation to see whether it is beneficial and sustainable.

For more information about Adahps services, eligibility criteria and referral forms for case management, neuropsychological assessment, brokered care and supported accommodation visit our website: https://www.health. nsw.gov.au/adahps/pages/default.aspx

SESLHD YOUTH PROJECTS UPDATE

PLAY SAFE SUMMER IS BACK WITH A FRESH NEW LOOK

The Play Safe Summer youth peer education program is back with a new logo and new look aligned to the refreshed NSW Health Play Safe website! www.playsafe. health.nsw.gov.au

Peer educators recruited by HARP, Project Youth and WAYS AWAYS Safe Summer have been out in the community delivering sexual health, AOD harm reduction and viral hepatitis health education to other young people since they completed their training in November.

We are so impressed by the knowledge, enthusiasm and compassion demonstrated by the young people in this program and are proud to support them in their peer education roles: providing young people in the community with information to make healthier choices.



PLAYING SAFE AT UNSW: O WEEK AND SEXUAL HEALTH DAY POP UP

Over the last 6 months the HARP Unit and the Play Safe Summer peer educators have worked with the UNSW health clinic to promote the Play Safe website, sexual health and STI testing to students on campus.

A pop up sexual health stall was held for World Sexual Health Day in September and an O-Week stall for 3 days in February were both a huge success. The peers used games to promote discussions including the ever popular spinning wheel with dares, the fabulous glitter bar quiz and the oranges in a condom game.

In addition to health promoting conversations chlamydia testing was offered. The focus was on highlighting that chlamydia testing is quick, easy and often free! It was a great opportunity to link young people to their on-campus GP service.

Over 50 students tested at the events and many more took urine jars to return to the clinic in their own time. More than half of those who returned tests reported it was their first STI test, said the experience was positive and was likely to encourage them to test again in the future. A great partnership!







PEER EDUCATION AND YOUTH **ADVISORY COMMITTEE PROJECT**

The HARP Unit Peer Education and Youth Advisory Committee (PEYAC) have been busy since they formed in late 2017. In addition to delivering Play Safe Sumer peer education this diverse group of young people have been working to make SESLHD health services more youth friendly.

Through their consultation activities with health services in 2018 the PEYAC developed a brand new youth friendliness tool based on the NSW Health Youth Friendliness Checklist for services. This tool enables them to work with services to review the accessibility and acceptability of the service's programs and settings.

They have developed and reviewed health resources intended for young people and they have been consulted by the Prince of Wales Hospital redesign team to ensure the youth voice is included in their community consultations.

The group provides a youth advisory function and are available for consultation across the district. Small grants are being offered to targeted services to enable them to take action. Together we can increase youth participation in the design and delivery of SESLHD health and wellbeing projects.



PEYAC POWH consultation

AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF ADOLESCENT HEALTH YOUTH HEALTH CONFERENCE – OWNING FUTURE CHANGE

The HARP Unit supported 3 members of the Play Safe Summer Peer Education and Youth Advisory Committee (PEYAC) to attend and present at the Australian Association for Adolescent Health Youth Health Conference themed "Owning Future Change"

The conference took place on the Gold Coast from the 8th to the 9th of November 2018.

The conference focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people's health and sexuality education and sexual health as its major themes which aligned nicely to their work within the PEYAC.

The peers presented on Play Safe Summer's secrets to successfully increasing chlamydia testing at Youth Week events across SESLHD. Their success highlights the value of co-design and youth participation in developing sexual health promotion strategies that effectively engaged more young people in sexual health conversations and chlamydia testing at Youth Week events across SESLHD.

Here is a video of their work from Youth Week last year: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yz8XBesZpuA&feature=youtu.be



L-R Jess, Rem, Sarah, Richie and Ashley

SEXING UP THE SECTOR AT THE IUSTI CONGRESS IN AUCKLAND

Sarah from the HARP Unit was invited by the NSW STIPU to present within the satellite symposium: 'Many Strands Make up one Rope' – "Many stakeholders make up one Sexual Health Framework in NSW" at the IUSTI Asia Pacific Sexual Health Congress, 1 - 3 November 2018 in Auckland, New Zealand.

Sarah presented on the Sexing up the sector pilot project she led within the NSW Sexual Health Promotion Framework.

The project aimed to build the capacity of youth services to engage with their clients around sexual health. It was developed with stakeholders from across NSW and piloted in three local health districts.

Within the project a resource kit for working with young people around sexual health was develop which now sits on the <u>Play Safe Pro website</u>.

Sexing up the sector is now being scaled up across NSW and forms the foundation for much of the work aimed at reaching marginalised young people within the current NSW Sexual Health Implementation Plan 2018-2020.



To listen to the presentation entitled 'Sexing Up the Sector': A Pilot Project that Builds the Capacity of Youth Services in NSW to Engage in Sexual Health." click here

SOUTH EASTERN SYDNEY MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID PROGRAM

The SES MHFAY program is a SESLHD-led partnership dedicated to improving mental health outcomes for young people.

Partners include: SESLHD Community Partnerships Unit, HARP and Mental Health Services; Department of Education; local councils; Central Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network; Family and Community Services; University of NSW; headspace Bondi Junction; and young people.

Since 2017 the program has rolled out Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training to adults in the community supporting young people including teachers, police, surf live-savers, sports coaches and youth workers.

Instructors are experienced youth workers and clinicians recruited from agencies within the partnership. In 2018 the program trained a further 281 adults in 21 courses, bringing the cumulative total to over 500 people now equipped with youth mental health first-responder skills in SESLHD.

Program data has evidenced significant improvements in participants' confidence to enact MHFA, and participants' evaluations are overwhelmingly positive.



Further 2018 program achievements include being short-listed for both the 2018 NSW Health and Premier's awards, and the release of the <u>program video</u>.

In 2019 the program continues to grow in partnership and scope to reach as many at-risk young people as possible. For more information email <u>SESLHD-MentalHealth-FirstAidYouth@health.nsw.gov.au</u>.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

A number of conferences and meetings on HIV/AIDS, sexual health, viral hepatitis and other public health topics are being held in Australia and internationally in 2019.

Click on the links below for more detailed information on each.

Australia

The art of ART Meeting, 24 - 25 May. Brisbane, QLD

Designed to give all attending clinicians a great insight in to ART prescribing and contemporary HIV management in

https://www.ashm.org.au/Conferences/conferences-we-organise/the-art-of-ART/

Australasian Viral Hepatitis Elimination Conference. 5 - 6 August, Sydney, NSW

Multidisciplinary Viral Hepatitis conference held in Australasia biennially in alternate years to the Australasian Viral Hepatitis Conference.

http://www.avhec2019.com.au/

Australasian HIV&AIDS Conference, 17 – 19 September, Perth, WA

http://www.hivaidsconference2019.com.au/

Australasian Sexual Health Conference. 16 – 18 September, Perth, WA

http://www.shconference.com.au/

13th International Congress on AIDS in Asia & the Pacific. 18 - 21 September, Perth WA Multidisciplinary conference which will bring together leaders from the community, clinicians and funders. http://icaap2019.com/

Australasian Hepatology Association Biennial Conference. 18 - 19 October, Coffs Harbour, NSW Educational and networking event for hepatology nurses and allied health professionals across Australia and New Zealand.

http://www.hepatologyassociation.com.au/education/2019-conference/

International

STI & HIV World Congress: Joint meeting of ISSTDR & IUSTI. July 14 - 17, Vancouver, Canada One of the largest international meetings on sexually transmitted infections, drawing delegates from around the world https://stihiv2019vancouver.com/

33rd IUSTI-Europe Congress on Sexually Transmitted Infections. September 05 - 07, Tallinn, Estonia https://www.conference-expert.eu/en/iusti2019

8th International Conference on Hepatitis Care in Substance Users. 11 - 13 September, Montréal, Canada Covers the latest advances on hepatitis C epidemiology, management and treatment of viral hepatitis among people who use drugs, with a specific focus on hepatitis C http://www.inhsu2019.com/

17th European AIDS Conference. November 6 - November 9, Basel, Switzerland https://eacs-conference2019.com/



ASHM Scholarship Opportunity: The program provides a variety of scholarships to assist ASHM members, affiliates and others in the HIV, viral hepatitis and sexual health sector to attend national and international conferences to support their continuing professional

https://www.ashm.org.au/Conferences/scholarships-and-awards/#CURRENT

TRAINING AND EDUCATION



The Albion Centre courses are designed to meet the needs of those working in clinical care, health, education, non-government and community organisations, business and industry.

Upcoming courses

29 April to 26 May **Essentials of Infection Prevention and Control in** Clinical Settings **More information**

6 May to 2 June **HIV** and Ageing More information

20 to 23 May **HIV Nursing Practice Workshop More information**

27 May to 30 June 2019 Introduction to HIV for Health Care Workers (ASK) **More information**

The full calendar can be viewed here



ASHM Training is available for a broad range of health professionals, including general practitioners. On offer are a range of training courses for clinicians and nurses at all levels who are seeking to up-skill in HIV, hepatitis C and hepatitis B management. Nurses may wish to learn about courses available in the ASHM Nursing Program. ASHM courses are accredited by relevant professional bodies, and participants are eligible for CPD points.

The full training calendar can be viewed here

ASHM/SSHC Clinical Education Sessions

The Clinical Education Sessions are run in collaboration by ASHM and Sydney Sexual Health Centre and consist of weekly Journal Clubs and Clinical Education Seminars.

https://www.ashm.org.au/training/SSHC-sessions/

Kirby Institute Seminar Series

ASHM offer webinar access to selected education seminars from the Kirby Institute Seminar Series https://www.ashm.org.au/training/kirby-seminar/ https://kirby.unsw.edu.au/events

USEFUL LINKS

Sydney Sexual Health Centre

www.sshc.org.au

Short Street Centre

https://www.seslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/services-clinics/planning-population-and-equity/short-street-centre

The Albion Centre

www.thealbioncentre.org.au

Kirketon Road Centre

https://www.sesIhd.health.nsw.gov.au/services-clinics/ directory/kirketon-road-centre

Waratah Clinic

https://www.seslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/st-george-hospital/ services-clinics/directory/waratah-clinic

NSW HIV Surveillance Data Reports

https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/endinghiv/pages/tools-anddata.aspx

NSW STI Surveillance Data Reports

https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/reports/Pages/ STI-reports.aspx

SESLHD HARP Services Reports

https://www.sesIhd.health.nsw.gov.au/services-clinics/directory/hiv-and-related-programs/what-we-do/reports



www.shil.nsw.gov.au





