

# Media Release



Health  
South Eastern Sydney  
Local Health District

Monday, 26 November 2012

## 30 YEARS OF HIV/AIDS IN AUSTRALIA - HIV IS STILL IN NSW

The first HIV diagnosis in Australia occurred 30 years ago with limited treatment options and support services available.

Since 1982, advances in treatment options have brought important improvements for those living with HIV and prevention efforts have dramatically reduced the number of new diagnoses to achieve a relatively stable rate of HIV notifications in NSW.

In 2011, there were 330 new diagnoses of HIV in NSW residents, compared with 308 in 2010 and 329 in 2009<sup>i</sup>. Currently, there are around 10,000 residents in NSW who live with HIV<sup>ii</sup>.

Ms Julie Dixon, Director of Population Health and Planning, South Eastern Sydney Local Health District said HIV can affect people of all ages, genders, races and cultures. World AIDS Day, observed annually on 1 December, provides an important opportunity to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS.

“To overcome HIV, we need the support of the whole community. Not only do we need to combat HIV itself, but also cultural factors like stigma and discrimination in the workplace, in health care settings, schools, families and communities,” Ms Dixon said.

Due to improved treatments, people living with HIV are now living longer and healthier lives, but there is still no cure for HIV.

“The most effective way for people to protect themselves and their partners in reducing the spread of HIV is to consistently use condoms with all sexual partners and have regular HIV and STI testing,” Ms Dixon said.

As part of World AIDS Day, community groups and organisations within South Eastern Sydney are holding events and activities to increase community awareness about HIV and to highlight HIV-related stigma and discrimination:

- **Wednesday, 28 November: Milk Crate Theatre – *Red Ribbon Christmas*** - end of year ensemble performance, includes reading from a play *Unfinished*, which tackles HIV themes at Wayside Chapel. Enquiries: Milk Crate Theatre on 02 9331 0555.
- **Friday, 30 November: Albion Centre** - will hold a World AIDS Day information stall outside Albion Centre on the corner of Riley and Albion Streets, Surry Hills.
- **Friday, 30 November: Central Access Service, Shirewide Youth, St George and Sutherland Hospitals** - will hold a World AIDS Day information stall at Westfield Shopping Centre, Miranda.

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- **Friday, 30 November: Kirketon Road Centre** – will hold a World AIDS Day information stall at Springfield Mall, Kings Cross.
- **Friday, 30 November: La Pa Youth Haven** – will host a World AIDS Day Oz-tag family event for local Aboriginal community, with guest appearance from “Condoman.”
- **Friday, 30 November: Prince of Wales Hospital** – will hold a World AIDS Day information stall in the High Street entrance foyer.
- **Friday, 30 November: Sydney Sexual Health Centre and Sydney Sydney Eye Hospital** - will hold a World AIDS Day information stall in Sydney Sydney Eye Hospital and a stall and at 1pm will host a World AIDS Day ‘freezemob’ in Martin Place.
- **Friday, 30 November: Short Street Sexual Health Centre and St George Hospital** – will hold a World AIDS Day information stall and raffle in the Gray Street foyer and an outdoor BBQ, St George Hospital.
- **Friday, 30 November: University of NSW** – will host, *Paint the town Red - UNSW celebrates World Aids Day*, a red-themed HIV/AIDS awareness raising day, with high traffic areas decorated red across the Campus and volunteers distributing World AIDS Day red-ribbons.
- **Saturday, 1 December: St George Youth at the Ready Project present, Red Ribbon Raspberry Reminder (Reminder)** - a marquee photo booth in Memorial Square, Hurstville. The *Reminder* features a ‘life size’ red ribbon which community members will be able to stand in front of holding a sign with a fact regarding HIV/AIDS. Digital photos taken at the *Reminder* will be forwarded to people digitally and enable people to make a pledge to share their photo amongst their peer networks and via social networking mediums.
- **Saturday, 1 December: 9am – 4pm: Surry Hills Community Drug Action Team - Red Ribbon Goes to Market 2** - stalls with trivia quiz and prizes at Surry Hills Markets, Crown Street, Surry Hills.
- **Saturday, 1 December: Access to Life exhibition, Powerhouse Museum** - this powerful photographic exhibition has already moved millions of people around the world through its touching images of AIDS-affected communities, featuring the work of some of the world’s best photographers from the global agency Magnum Photos. Enquiries: (02) 9217 0111 or [www.powerhousemuseum.com](http://www.powerhousemuseum.com)

Twenty years ago, a small group of New York artists created a simple design which is now one of the most recognised symbols worldwide – the red ribbon.

The World AIDS Day red ribbon is now worn to show support and solidarity for the millions of people living with HIV and AIDS – with this year marking 30 years of HIV/AIDS in Australia.

On World AIDS Day, 1 December, people in NSW are being asked to show their support for those living with HIV, by wearing a red ribbon.

For information on World AIDS Day go to [www.worldaidsday.org.au](http://www.worldaidsday.org.au)

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<sup>i</sup> NSW HIV/AIDS database, Communicable Diseases Branch, NSW Ministry of Health, as at 25 May 2012. Accessed Sep 21 from URL:

[http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/resources/publichealth/infectious/diseases/hiv\\_aids/new\\_diagnoses\\_hiv\\_infection\\_2011.pdf](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/resources/publichealth/infectious/diseases/hiv_aids/new_diagnoses_hiv_infection_2011.pdf)

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<sup>ii</sup> HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmissible infections in Australia Annual Surveillance Report 2011. Accessed Sep 21 from URL:  
[http://www.kirby.unsw.edu.au/sites/hiv.cms.med.unsw.edu.au/files/hiv/resources/2011AnnualSurvReport\\_0.pdf](http://www.kirby.unsw.edu.au/sites/hiv.cms.med.unsw.edu.au/files/hiv/resources/2011AnnualSurvReport_0.pdf)