

HIV and Related Programs Unit

# HARP

ISSUE 48 MAY 2020



# NEWS



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# FROM THE HARP MANAGER



Julia Purchas  
HARP Manager

Welcome to the first edition of the HARP News for 2020, slightly delayed due to our changed world and working circumstances in the realm of COVID 19.

It is great to see how everyone has stepped up to the challenges posed by the COVID 19 Pandemic. Our work at the HARP Unit has been primarily focused on the COVID 19 Pandemic response with many of our staff being deployed to the Public Health Unit for contact screening and case management. Some staff from the Sexual Health Services have also been deployed to COVID-19 testing clinics and the Kirketon Road Centre are providing COVID tests from their outreach bus to the more vulnerable populations within the District.

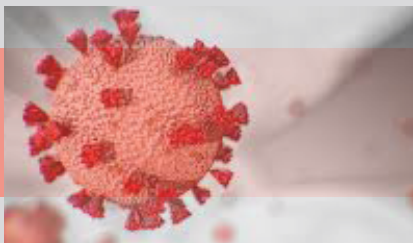
The Sexual Health & HIV Services have all made some changes to service delivery to minimize risks both to staff and clients whilst maintaining essential services. See below the article outlining the changes.

This edition highlights the pre-pandemic, pre-physical distancing days including some great coverage of the Mardi Gras Parade and Fair Day 2020.

Earlier in the year, we bade farewell to Chris O'Reilly who has retired. We pay tribute to Chris and his career in the HARP sector in this edition. The HARP Unit lost our much-loved Administration Officer Claudia, who died in February after several years of cancer treatment. She is hugely missed.

Stay well and I look forward to continuing our work together in whatever form as we adapt to these times of change.

*Julia*



## COVID-19: CHANGES TO SERVICES

SES HIV and Sexual Health services located have changed the way they conduct consultations to reduce risk both to staff and clients. This includes access to telehealth or video consultations, limiting the number and frequency of appointments, and a reduction of walk-in clients.

Services include:

- The Albion Centre
- Kirketon Road Centre (KRC)
- Sydney Sexual Health Centre (SSHC)
- St George Short St Sexual Health/Waratah HIV Clinic
- St Vincents Hospital IBAC Unit
- Prince of Wales Hospital HIV ID

Services are still providing:

- HIV medications; please access these through your regular service
- PrEP and PEP

Please note:

- There will be reduced requirements for blood tests, and extended pharmacy scripts may be provided for those on regular medications
- There may be restrictions on the ability to perform asymptomatic testing, and clients will be recommended to test 6 monthly, rather than 3 monthly at this time
- People who will still be seen are those with symptoms of an STI, are a contact of an STI, or need a sex work certificate
- Clients should call in advance to check if they can attend a service

For more information: Please refer to each of the service's websites or call the service direct.



# CHRIS O'REILLY FAREWELLS SESLHD

Many of you within the in the HIV sector would know Chris O'Reilly, who retired from SESLHD after a long career working across the NSW Health system.

Chris retired in February from the role of Deputy Director of the Directorate of Planning, Population Health and Equity (DPPHE). He started in this role in 2016 and was responsible for the HARP Unit, HIV Outreach Team, statewide services and HIV related NGO programs. Through his leadership, he shared achievements with his colleagues in safety and quality, successful accreditation and support for service restructures in addition to his many other responsibilities.

Chris' prior roles include Coordinator, Planning and Performance in the HARP Unit for 7 years and various positions in the HIV sector since the early days of the epidemic, including HARP Manager in Western Sydney and working as a consultant. Chris' knowledge, expertise, thoughtful and measured approach and his sharp wit, will be greatly missed by all who worked with him.

We thank you Christopher O'Reilly for your years of service in the HIV sector and wish you a very happy retirement.



## *Vale Claudia Tabares*

Our beloved Claudia passed away in February 2020 after suffering from cancer over the last 12 months.

Claudia had worked with HARP in an administration role for the last 12 years. Her kindness and compassion touched all those that knew her. Her warm smile, positive attitude and energy will be missed in the HARP Unit and by her many friends and colleagues at the Forbes St Centre.

Claudia was courageous and maintained a positive approach to her treatment until the end, which is testimony to her faith and approach to life. You will be missed Claudia.

# WHAT MATTERS

# MARDI GRAS 2020

The 2020 theme is WHAT MATTERS, a motif which builds on the legacy of Mardi Gras as a platform for activism and an even more inclusive future.

## PARADE

### KIRKETON ROAD CENTRE: HEALTH FOR ALL



Since its inception, the Kirketon Road Centre (KRC) has been part of the evolving response to the health needs of the LGBTIQ communities. KRC is committed to fair and equal treatment for all, with no-one ever having to endure being discriminated against, whether for their sexuality, gender identity, race, beliefs, age and/or abilities.

KRC can only do its important work in HIV and sexual health prevention and treatment because it has gained the trust and confidence of communities across South Eastern Sydney Local Health District and beyond.

Since opening in 1987, KRC has built a strong rapport in the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex communities, and has been a proud participant in the Sydney Mardi Gras parade for over 20 years.

Fashions may come and go, but some things remain constant, including KRC's vision to ensure that 'health for all' remains at the forefront of all its endeavours.

As it has done for the past 24 years, this year the KRC Bus and staff marched as an iconic image of the public health system at its best. The staff of KRC are proud to represent the public face of the NSW Health system.

We are proud to represent and advocate the health and well-being of KRC's clients and are especially proud to continue to act in solidarity with, and in support of, the LGBTIQ community.

### BOBBY GOLDSMITH FOUNDATION

BGF's entry in the Mardi Gras Parade this year was a mixutre of BGF clients, staff, volunteers, supporters and BGF board members who came together to share our message of "Helping people living with HIV to thrive".

We wore 'Positively Thriving' t-shirts and carried banners with our key messaging of "We Empower", "We Support" and "You Thrive".

The support we received from the crowds along the parade route was amazing and will be long remembered by all who marched.





## POSITIVE LIFE: HIV HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

People living with HIV (PLHIV) and our supporters proudly marched in the 2020 Mardi Gras under this year's Positive Life NSW message of Hidden In Plain Sight!

Our contingent of 60 people living with HIV, alongside [our families, partners and friends](#) marched with a range of placards promoting messages like,

*'Someone I love lives with HIV, Hidden in Plain Sight';*

*'Women living with HIV, we've been here the whole time';*

*'I'm not hard to reach. I've been here the whole time';*  
and,

*'People living with HIV, Hidden in Plain Sight'.*

Click [here](#) for more photographs from our 2020 Mardi Gras!

## THE ALBION CENTRE: CELEBRATING 35 YEARS

This year's theme of What Matters is something very close to the Albion Centre. Director, Professor Julian Gold, said: "What matters to The Albion is being an inclusive, caring, safe space that provides the best healthcare to all who need it."

2020 sees the Albion Centre celebrating 35 years of supporting the diverse communities affected by HIV. Albion opened in Surry Hills in 1985 at the heart of the HIV epidemic, bringing interdisciplinary treatment, care and support to the community. HIV has changed for the better but many people living with HIV face unique challenges managing and living with other chronic health conditions and high rates of social and psychological marginalisation due to the impact of stigma and discrimination.

The Ankali volunteer support program, is one of the most successful in Australia, providing emotional support to vulnerable and marginalised people living with HIV.

80 staff and volunteers marched, wearing the colours of the rainbow with sparkly red hats to match the centre's logo, proud to once again celebrate Mardi Gras with the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex community.





## SESLHD HARP SERVICES AT FAIR DAY 2020



South Eastern Sydney HARP Services came together this year to educate and celebrate at Fair Day 2020.

The Albion Centre, Sydney Sexual Health Centre, Kirketon Road Centre and the HARP Unit SESLHD collaborated on the Sexual Health in South Eastern Sydney Stall.

With an estimated 80,000 attendees it was an excellent day to engage with the community, increase their sexual health knowledge, and gave them the opportunity to meet some of the friendly staff who



support South East Sydney Siders around their sexual health needs.

The SESLHD Staff and Peer Educators engaged with the community in fun sexual health activities, including HIV knowledge quizzes, HIV and STI Prevention with condom games, glow-ups with environmentally-friendly, biodegradable glitter, and information on the services available including sexual health clinics and home testing with Dried Blood Spot Test.





## POZ LOUNGING ABOUT AT FAIR DAY 2020



Positive Life NSW made another strong statement representing PLHIV in the general community at the 2020 Fair Day.

Our experienced team of staff, community members and volunteers many with lived experience of HIV and other STIs, responded to a range of questions from the general public, reconnections with community members, new membership queries, and distributed over 500 showbags.

Our colourful Poz Lounge space attractively decked out with comfortable seating, cushions, large market umbrellas and free cold water offered a welcome respite from the crowds attending Fair Day.



We welcomed our community members and those who were seeking one-on-one support, information and advice around HIV and other blood borne viruses.

The popularity of the digital ano-rectal examination (DARE) kits once again highlighted the importance of promoting and providing evidence-based information to the community and the acute role of a DARE in the early detection of anal cancer. Our DARE bum provided an instructive opportunity to [practice a DARE](#) under the guidance of Positive Life's Treatments Officer - a registered nurse, and a researcher from the SPANC study into anal cancer. Additionally, we handed out over 200 free DARE kits through our Fair Day stall,



## BOBBY GOLDSMITH FOUNDATION

BGF's stall at this year's Mardi Gras Fair Day was a great success once again, with a chocolate wheel, mega raffle and The Fabulous Wonder Mama drawing in crowds and helping to raise our profile on the day!

Thanks to our wonderful volunteers who supported us on the stall.



# HARP IN THE SOUTH

## UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG ORIENTATION



As part of orientation for the newly arriving students at Kooloobong village, University of Wollongong, the HARP unit attended two information sessions on the 20th & 21st of February.

HARP offered 'Share Affection Not Infection' branded resources, including sunscreen and pop sockets along with free internal/female and external/male condoms.

The 45 student leaders were also informed about free condoms available from NSW Health. Services and organisations can order a bag of 144 Play Safe branded condoms every month from Play Safe Pro, as well as accessing a range of tools to support young people aged 16-29 in making safe sex choices.

HARP also provided Caddyshack Project, their outreach chlamydia screening program in partnership with the Illawarra Shoalhaven Sexual Health Service to the 350 students who attended.

Essential information about chlamydia, including its potential complications and current notification data for Australia, can be found at the [NSW Department of Health website](#).



Have you seen the landing page for the HARP Southern team? If you or your colleagues work in the boundaries of the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District...from Helensburgh to Ulladulla..... you can access the HARP Unit from [here](#).

The southern HARP team have created an easy entry point to their social media channels which include a fortnightly Blog, Instagram, Facebook & YouTube. Here you can also subscribe to their monthly e-newsletter, get the annual training calendar, enquire about having Caddyshack outreach chlamydia screening at your service, or get a Sexual Health Outreach Education session (SHOES) for your next team meeting/in-service.



## HEPATITIS C DETECTION AND LINKAGE TO CARE PROJECT AT POWH

A new initiative to uncover undiagnosed and untreated hepatitis C among in-patients is being piloted at Prince of Wales Hospital (POWH). Working with the Head of Infectious Diseases A/Professor Jeffrey Post, the HARP Units specialist community hepatitis CNC Dianne is opportunistically testing patients admitted to POW for other reasons.

Dianne aims to have all necessary tests and assessments completed prior to a patient being discharged. Where indicated, patients will be discharged with a prescription for treatment with direct acting antiviral (DAA) therapy. Where patients are discharged early, Dianne works with general practitioners to ensure people diagnosed with hepatitis C are able to receive treatment with DAA's and subsequent cure.

Across the POW campus, Dianne will follow-up patients who have returned a positive hepatitis C antibody or detectable hepatitis C PCR result and anyone with risk factors associated with hepatitis C e.g. current or past history of injecting drug use, tattoos and body piercings, history of incarceration and migrants from countries with a high prevalence of hepatitis C (Egypt, Pakistan, Mediterranean and Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia).

The HARP Unit is hopeful the pilot will provide valuable insights and evidence to inform HCV models of care in tertiary settings across SESLHD.

Contact details: Dianne How Chow Clinical Nurse Consultant mobile: 0411 021 218 or email: [Dianne.HowChow@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Dianne.HowChow@health.nsw.gov.au)

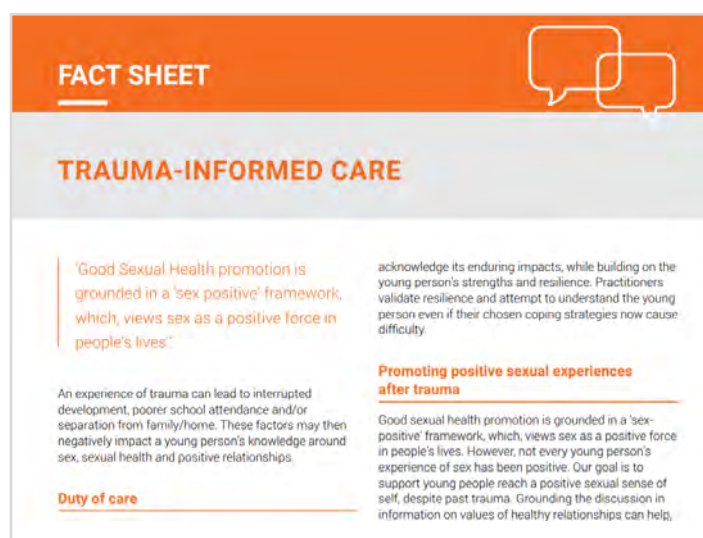


## TRAUMA INFORMED CARE RESOURCE

The HIV and Related Programs Unit (HARP) are excited to announce the release of a new factsheet on trauma informed care and young people's sexual health. This factsheet is in addition to several existing factsheets on young people and sexual health including: Culturally and Linguistically Diverse, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and sexually diverse young people. All of these factsheets can be found on Play Safe Pro, NSW Health's webpage for all things sexual health under tools <https://pro.playsafe.health.nsw.gov.au/>

This factsheet has been developed in consultation with those who specialise in Out Of Home Care and trauma informed practice within the community.

This is the first known resource of its kind in NSW which has addressed young people's sexual health needs, through a trauma informed lens. This resource will be especially beneficial (but not limited) to those working in the Out Of Home Care sector, or for those who are working with marginalised young people with complex and challenging needs.



An online sexual health training module for carers is also nearing completion and will complement this factsheet.



# YOU CAN ASK THAT!

## SESLHD STAFF GAIN INSIGHT ABOUT THE HEALTH NEEDS OF THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY



*What is the difference between sexual orientation and gender identity? What does non-binary and cisgender mean? My patient is transitioning genders, what do I need to be aware of? What if I say the wrong thing?*

These and other questions were addressed in the You Can Ask That! Forum held in February during the 2020 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Festival. The Edmond Blackett Function Room at the POWH was filled to capacity with staff from across the district who came to hear about the health needs and of people who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ+).

Jacqueline Stephenson (Manager Diversity Programs, POWH and Forum organiser) played host to the event and moderator for the panel.



Presenters and panellists included Felicity Pobje, (Consumer Participation Group, Kirketon Road Centre); Teddy Cook (ACON), Ken Murray (CNC Mental Health), Maggie Smith (CNC T150 Clinic, Albion Centre) and Gregory Smitheram, NSW Ministry of Health.

The forum finished with a Q&A session where the panel provided practical advice on: being an ally; confronting poor practices; pushing for system change; working in partnership; and the importance of understanding what matters to each person we care for.

The forum was organised in partnership with Prince of Wales Hospital, Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick, Prince of Wales Private Hospital and SESLHD HARP Unit.

## UNSW PLAYING SAFE AT O-WEEK

Early February, the Peer Educators from HARP Unit's Peer Education and Youth Advisory Committee (PEYAC) Program partnered with the UNSW Health Clinic and UNSW Health Promotion to promote the Play Safe website, key sexual health messages, and STI testing to students on campus.

Torrential rain did not deter our Peer Educators! On day one of O-Week, the pop-up sexual health stall was set-up in UNSW Roundhouse; attracting many UNSW students that crowd control actually transpired! The peers used games to promote discussions, including the ever popular spinning wheel, the always fun glitter bar, and the condom cram game – how many balls can you fit into a condom?

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





## SMART EATING WEEK 2020 AT THE ALBION CENTRE

Student dietitians Malcolm and Maddy from the University of Sydney used Smart Eating Week as an opportunity to get Albion staff involved in sprucing up their upcoming BBQ with fun and healthy choices and teaching clients tips and tricks about smart eating.

Each day from the 10th of February, a new 'themed' surprise was in store for the staff here at the Albion Centre. Daily emails were filled with creative ways to eat the rainbow including recipes and healthy BBQ ideas. The week finished off with an interactive client stall where the students showcased the hidden sugar in drinks and inspired clients to think about how to cut down on hidden sugar.

A Mardi Gras themed BBQ on the 25th of February demonstrated the healthy BBQ tips and information sent out in the Smart Eating Week emails. With the input of Albion staff and the dietetic students, the staff BBQ had an increased variety of nutritious foods including black bean patties, rainbow skewers, roast vegetables and wholegrain bread. The BBQ session was a great success with a large amount of positive feedback.

If you would like more information on 'eating the rainbow' contact the Albion nutrition team on 9332 9600.

THE **ALBION** CENTRE  
PARTNERSHIPS IN HEALTH



## ALBION EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT CELEBRATES THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE NURSE AND MIDWIFE

2020 has been declared the International Year of The Nurse and Midwife by the WHO, marking 200 years since the birth of Florence Nightingale. In celebration of the International Year of The Nurse and Midwife, Albion Education & Development is offering all places in our new course "Sexual Health History Taking for Nurses" free of charge.

The course is aimed at nurses who are new to taking sexual health histories. It is a six week interactive, facilitated online course that examines current epidemiological and sociological rationales for taking a sexual health history taking, and was designed in consultation with senior sexual health nurses in NSW.

It features up-to-date information on: epidemiology, communication, risk assessment, interview skills, follow-up care, and professional development.



THE **ALBION** CENTRE *Education and Development*  
PARTNERSHIPS IN HEALTH

For further information or to apply for the course, please contact Albion Education & Development: email [education@thealbioncentre.org.au](mailto:education@thealbioncentre.org.au); Ph 9332 9720; visit <http://thealbioncentre.org.au/education-and-information>



# KIRKETON ROAD CENTRE

## YABUN FESTIVAL 2020



The Kirketon Road Centre (KRC), alongside staff from the SESLHD Aboriginal Health Program, the Medically Supervised Injecting Centre and Playsafe participated in this year's Yabun Festival (yabun meaning 'music to a beat' in Gadigal language).

The Yabun Festival on 26 January 2020 was celebrated by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities along with their non-Indigenous supporters.

With the generous support of the HARP Unit, KRC were able to provide an engaging and colourful stall, while the outreach vehicle was very well attended with clients, interested community members and other agency staff keen to know of KRC's work in the community.

Twenty two people received training and take-home Nyxoid (a medicine that reverses opioid overdose) while others received Dried Blood Spot tests for HIV and hepatitis C.

Young Aboriginal peers from The Playsafe team were expert at encouraging young people in for discussions on



sexual health and safety, along with 'spinning the wheel' for a quiz and a prize.

Aboriginal staff and students from KRC were a constant presence: engaging, encouraging, and participating in the creation of a community artwork along with the many families passing by.

Tim Croft, Area Manager Aboriginal Health made sure everyone had enough iced water for the day – a merciful relief from the heat.

Tim, together with Michelle Ellis, KRC's Senior Aboriginal Health Project Officer, reached out to the passers by, engaging them and educating them on KRC's role in the community. They of course bring with them both the wealth of their community knowledge, their connections to community and country, and their grounded professionalism, skills and expertise.

KRC derives its successes through the commitment and passionate energy of its dedicated team. It is KRC's vision to ensure that 'health for all' remains at the forefront of all its endeavours.





# KIRKETON ROAD CENTRE

## KRC OUTREACH COVID-19 CLINICS



On April 8<sup>th</sup> KRC commenced daily outreach clinics to offer COVID-19 screening and testing for people impacted by homelessness across the Inner City of Sydney.

For the next three months, KRC is running three clinics each afternoon/evening.

The clinics will aim to tackle community transmission amongst the homeless and vulnerable populations in inner-Sydney.

The locations and times are:

- Northcott Social Housing Estate 1:30pm – 3:30pm
- Woolloomooloo (Walla Mulla Park) 4:00pm – 6:00pm
- Martin Place 7:00pm – 8:30pm

KRC acknowledges the support provided by the Australian Government Department of Health, the NSW Health Department and the Central & Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network to enable the rapid implementation of this program

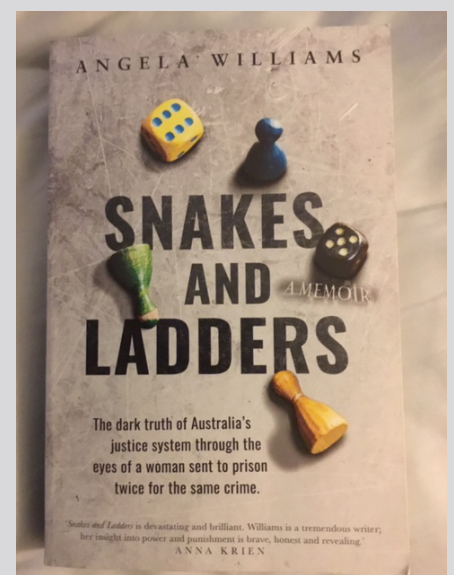
## TRIBUTE TO KRC

### Gary Hampton, Adahps

What a treat to discover this reference to KRC on page 151 of the book I was reading! **Snakes and Ladders**, by Angela Williams, is an autobiographical story is about a woman who was returned to prison 13 years after she got her life together, getting off drugs, and going to university (amongst other things).

All of us who have ever worked at KRC or worked in harm minimisation in our sector should be proud of this quote. Often we don't see end results of our work and approaches, but reading this review of KRC reminded me of the power in the work we do.

***“The only other time I have encountered health with this positive regard, this non-judgemental framing of the individual’s choices, was at the Kirketon Road Centre, a free and anonymous clinic in Kings Cross which works with anyone and bases every action and interaction on a genuine harm-minimisation framework. For a country with bipartisan support for harm reduction, the rest of our medical system has a hell of a lot of catching up to do.”***





# KIRKETON ROAD CENTRE

## ‘CONFRONTING THE OBVIOUS’

### Acknowledging trauma in a service which targets marginalised people

An exciting new project is under way at the Kirketon Road Centre (KRC) which acknowledges trauma in marginalised people. A link exists between adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and major health problems, yet there is a lag in services overtly addressing the relationship. Our pilot project assesses the use of the ‘ACE Questionnaire’ as a clinical counselling tool and evaluates its delivery clients’ responses, and suitability for routine implementation.

We rolled this project out in March 2020 at the Kirketon Road Centre (KRC). KRC is a walk-in, targeted primary health service in Kings Cross, offering multiple health care services to at-risk communities. The idea of working openly with underlying issues of adverse childhood experience was discussed thoroughly with the KRC Consumer Participation Group (CPG) as we formulated this project.

The project entailed half a dozen clients attending a one-to-one session with a counsellor and responding to the questions in the ACE questionnaire. In follow-up sessions we evaluated peoples’ experience of the questionnaire and its delivery. We are now in the process of looking into the challenges faced and insights gained in piloting this clinical tool and evaluating it in our unique clinical setting.

As we put this project into place, we quickly learned the value of psychoeducation in eliciting clients’ curiosity about overtly addressing these issues. We have received overwhelming support from our clients for this project.

We faced a series of challenges during the project, including ethical considerations, resourcing issues,



balancing clinical priorities and the issue of participant remuneration. To deliver the ACE questionnaire in a way that invokes genuine therapeutic responses was also a challenge.

This project sets a precedent for working routinely with the effects of adverse childhood experiences in marginalised clients. It also opens up the possibility of researching the hypothesised link between addressing trauma, improved health and wellbeing, and decreased medical presentations.

**Authors:** Sudhir Dean, Rachel Cowe, Julie Dubuc, Judith Isben, Wendy Machin, Edmund Silins, Phillip Read (all of the Kirketon Road Centre)

## SESLHD HARP IN THE NEWS

### CLINICAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM GRADUATE

Dr Rick Varma, Clinical Services Manager at Sydney Sexual Health Centre, was one of five SESLHD staff to have recently graduated from the Clinical Excellence Commission’s (CEC) Executive Clinical Leadership Program, after developing a speciality healthcare improvement project.



### SEXUAL ACTIVITY AND LOCKDOWN

29 April 2020 - Dr Vincent Cornelisse, Medical Unit Manager and Staff Specialist from the Kirketon Road Centre, is interviewed about how COVID-19 social isolation restrictions affect listeners’ sexual activity.

[Listen to JOY FM interview](#), between 4:10 &13:40 minutes



# COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS UPDATE



## BGF'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19



BGF values the health, safety and well-being of each person in our community as one of our highest priorities. In these unprecedented times, BGF is committed to continuing to provide support across all our vital client services, and is closely monitoring the coronavirus (COVID-19) situation.

Guided by public health best practices from the Australian and NSW Department of Health, we are taking steps to reduce the potential spread of COVID-19 while continuing to provide our most essential services and support. Supporting both the physical and mental health of all our community members is essential as the local and national response to COVID-19 continues to rapidly change.

BGF's Community Support Workers will continue to support our clients in-person, providing daily essential community services that are needed now more than ever, including grocery shopping, housing assistance, transport to medical appointments and psycho-social support for many vulnerable individuals, while practicing infection control and harm minimisation at all times to ensure the health and protection of everyone involved.

We're here to support everyone in the best way we can. Together we can help people living with HIV to thrive.

## BOBBY GOLDSMITH FOUNDATION ART VALUES PROJECT

BGF's Values Art project is well underway and the finished artwork is starting to take shape! Leon Fernandes, a well-established and renowned Newtown artist and BGF supporter, is currently curating the works of eight BGF clients - a 3-metre canvas that will showcase our values. The completed piece will be unveiled and exhibited at our Art Matters exhibition which will be later in the year. Thank you to Derivan Pty Ltd for donating the paint.



## BGF'S HEALTH & WELLBEING PROGRAMS



Due to the current COVID-19 situation, BGF has made the difficult decision to postpone all programs (which includes Life Writing Workshop, Art Phoenix, Live Well Eat Well and Money Minded) until the situation is resolved. The decision to postpone these programs was based on our duty of care to our clients, staff and program facilitators. As soon as new dates are confirmed, we will be in touch with further details.



# BGF EVENTS



All BGF events scheduled for the next few months have been postponed on the recommendations of the Australian Government and health authorities regarding non-essential, organised gatherings.

Our events are key fundraising activities on the BGF social calendar and the decision to postpone them has not been taken lightly. We are hugely disappointed but we must follow the advice of health officials to ensure the health and safety of all attendees and everyone involved in the events.

We are currently working through the implications of this decision and plan on rescheduling all events for later in the year. We will provide further information as soon as it's available.

We thank you for your ongoing support of the work of BGF and really look forward to seeing you at one of our events when they can be responsibly rescheduled.

## BGF'S FINANCIAL ADVOCACY AND COUNSELLING SERVICE

Many people living with HIV experience financial hardship and stress. To alleviate this, BGF provides financial counselling and advocacy, facilitated by a qualified Financial Counsellor.

BGF's Financial Counsellor is a skilled professional who has specific knowledge about the credit, bankruptcy and debt collection laws, concession frameworks and industry hardship practices. Our Counsellor provides information, practical advice and advocacy to our clients who have debts and are struggling to meet ordinary living expenses.

Our Financial Advocacy for clients includes but is not limited to:

- Help in understanding which debts are priorities
- Help in developing budgets and money plans
- Help in understanding the pros and cons of different options to manage financial issues
- Help in accessing grants or concessions
- Help with negotiating with creditors
- Help in accessing dispute resolution services
- Help in understanding their rights and access legal help

Financial Counselling at Bobby Goldsmith Foundation is available for face-to-face appointments or phone consultations. Please get in touch to see if we can help:

**Phone:** 02 9283 8666

**Email:** [tina.angelo@bgf.org.au](mailto:tina.angelo@bgf.org.au)



## POSITIVE LIFE AND COVID-19

Positive Life NSW will continue to support all people living with HIV (PLHIV) across NSW during this evolving health concern. As the largest peer-based state-wide body representing all PLHIV, we are still operating very much business as usual. We are using the strategy of 'physical distancing' and have taken the following steps to mitigate the risks to our community and staff:

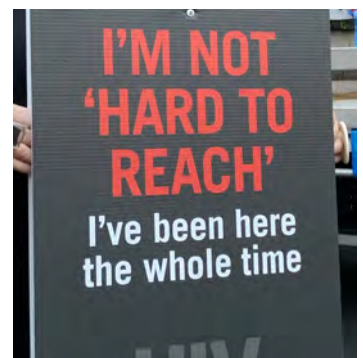
- We are carrying out the work of Positive Life under remote arrangements for all staff for the next two months, and are constantly reviewing this based on advice received.
- We have made the difficult decision to cancel our events scheduled throughout this time, but are currently looking at the feasibility of running a number of these online.
- Our Work Ready, Treatments, Silver Warriors, and Housing Programs will continue as usual by telephone, email or online tools. Staff will meet community members face to face with appropriate physical distancing arrangements, on an as needed basis.
- We will maintain a [COVID-19 and HIV webpage updated daily](#) with practical resources, tools and strategies as the go-to resource for people living with HIV in NSW.



People living with HIV have no greater risk of COVID-19 acquisition or severe disease than anyone else, and like anyone else, our main risk factors remain older age and co-morbidities including cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes and lung disease.

People living with HIV who are feeling anxious, isolated or alone or caring for someone living with HIV, can continue to find professional and peer support from staff living with HIV, or Treatments Officers at Positive Life NSW on (02) 9206 2177 or 1800 245 677 (free call) or email [contact@positivelife.org.au](mailto:contact@positivelife.org.au)

## PLHIV ARE HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT



Throughout 2020, Positive Life NSW draws attention to PLHIV 'hidden in plain sight'. This includes those who feel unable to disclose their HIV status to friends or family, people who have lived with HIV for a long period of time unaware of their health status, and PLHIV who are yet to be diagnosed.

Our messaging challenges notions of so-called 'emerging' groups or 'hard to reach' groups who arguably have been here all along throughout the epidemic and are living amongst us. We pose the question, what are the barriers to access services and care for these divergent groups?

Our [Hidden in Plain Sight messaging](#) also highlights people hidden in plain sight who are 'regular users of our health care system. These 'late presenters' are frequently classified as a 'mis-diagnosis' or 'late-diagnosis', but often present at multiple doctor visits eventually ending up in a hospital emergency department, simply because no one asked 'Could it be HIV?'

We must identify the barriers and processes hidden in plain sight that restrict access to treatment, testing or knowledge about HIV prevention, care and support.



# NATIONAL DAY OF WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV – 9 MARCH



On the [National Day of Women living with HIV](#) (NDWLHIV), Monday 9 March, Positive Life NSW and Femfatales, the national network of women living with HIV (WLHIV), celebrated the lives of WLHIV, with sixty supporters and WLHIV. Held at the Radisson Blu Hotel, over a relaxing afternoon High Tea, Femfatales Chair, Katherine Leane introduced the work of Femfatales to a mixed social environment.

This was followed by a presentation of epidemiological data specific to women - Diagnoses, Data & Discovery, from Professor Rebecca Guy from the Kirby Institute, UNSW.

“Women living with HIV in Australia are often diagnosed late, having lived unknowingly with HIV for many years

before discovering they have contracted HIV,” said Ms Leane. “For many of us, by the time we receive a HIV diagnosis, we have significant immune system damage, and we present to the health system with an AIDS-defining illness,” she said.

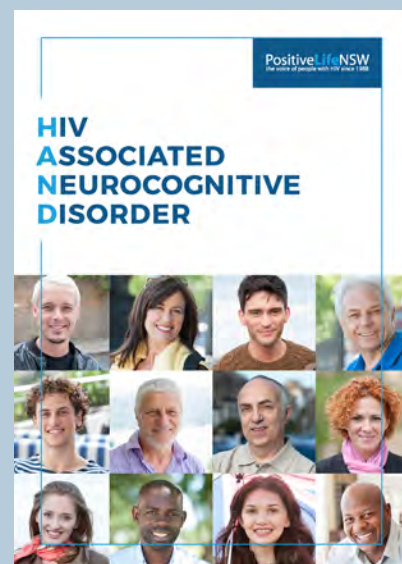
“Undiagnosed WLHIV often experience multiple doctor visits, usually ending in the hospital emergency department,” said Jane Costello, CEO of Positive Life NSW. “It’s time to make HIV testing routine for all populations, without assumption or discrimination, question or challenge, to ensure we step beyond virtual elimination of HIV,” said Ms Costello.

## PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV ASSOCIATED NEUROCOGNITIVE DISORDER (HAND)

Positive Life has published a companion [booklet resource](#) containing practical advice for people living with HAND and information on where to seek more assistance. An accompanying [booklet for partners, friends and family](#) offers information on support and practical advice in assisting a person living with HAND.

Positive Life NSW also acknowledges the work in the development of this resource by: Prof Bruce Brew, Department of Neurology, St Vincent’s Hospital, Darlinghurst; Denise Cummins, Clinical Nurse Consultant, Sydney District Nursing, Community Health, Sydney Local Health District and David Crawford, Treatments Officer, Positive Life NSW.

For free printed copies of these companion booklets, call Positive Life on (02) 9206-2177, email [contact@positivelife.org.au](mailto:contact@positivelife.org.au) or visit <http://bit.ly/HAND-Resource>

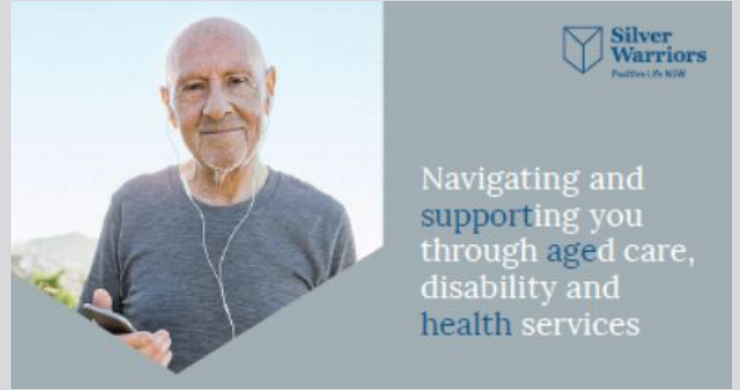


# POSITIVE LIFE SILVER WARRIORS

Silver Warriors is a Positive Life NSW free service [supporting people living with HIV \(PLHIV\)](#) over 45 years to navigate the aged care, disability or healthcare services. Many older people living with HIV are unfamiliar with these services, what's available, and what can help make life easier.

Silver Warriors aims to [support PLHIV to remain independent in their own home](#), navigate health care services, locate appropriate transport supports, engage socially, and any other support issues required.

Contact Silver Warriors by calling Positive Life on (02) 9206 2177 or 1800 245 677 (freecall) or email [peernav@positivelife.org.au](mailto:peernav@positivelife.org.au)



## BARRIERS TO AGED CARE FOR AUSTRALIANS LIVING WITH HIV

Positive Life has made a [comprehensive submission](#) to the Royal Commission on Aged Care based on direct input from PLHIV, our caregivers, partners and friends, and HIV service providers across NSW and Australia in 2019.

Our recommendations offer an evidence-based pathway to assist the Commonwealth and the aged care service sector to ensure and enable aged care services to meaningfully engage with PLHIV, and meet the Australian Aged Care Quality Standards (ACQS) in relation to PLHIV.

The submission also describes the cultural, clinical and social challenges that will be needed in the aged care system in meeting the needs of ageing PLHIV, including in regional, rural and remote Australia.



HIV Work Ready is a Positive Life NSW project that supports and mentors people living with HIV (PLHIV) to gain confidence 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](mailto:workready@positivelife.org.au)



## SUBSCRIBE TO POSITIVE LIFE NSW NOTICES

To stay up-to-date with Positive Life NSW HIV-related news, events and campaigns by subscribing online at [www.positivelife.org.au/subscribe.html](http://www.positivelife.org.au/subscribe.html)



# CONFERENCE NEWS



## Joint Australasian HIV&AIDS and Sexual Health Conferences

ASHM has been following the developments on COVID-19 closely, with a focus on ensuring the wellbeing of staff, stakeholders and the public. **ASHM has made the decision to run the Australasian HIV&AIDS and Sexual Health Conferences virtually towards the end of 2020.**

The program will be tailored from its traditional format to suit the demands of the current work environment. The virtual conference will be designed to be as interactive as possible, offering plenty of opportunities for live questions, discussion, polling and networking.

The next face to face conference will be held in Melbourne at the same venue – the MCEC, in 2021. An exact date will be announced shortly.

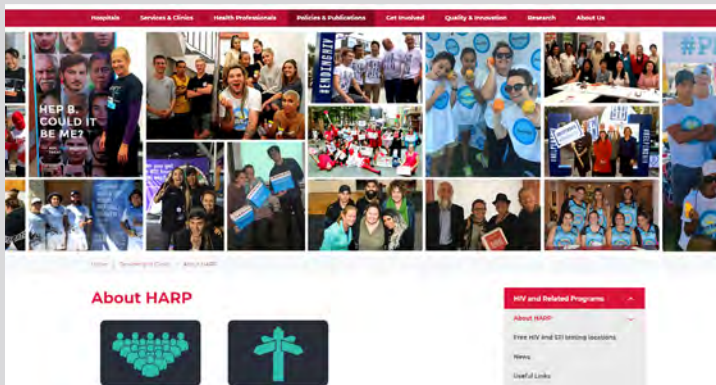
Registered delegates will have the option to roll over their current registration to attend the virtual conference (a refund for the difference in cost will be provided) or to roll over the funds to the 2021 conferences. Registered delegates will be contacted directly in due course to discuss options.

Those who have submitted abstracts will also be contacted directly with advice on how to proceed.

More information about the Virtual 2020 Australasian HIV&AIDS and Sexual Health Conferences will be announced in due course.

<https://hivshconferences2020.com.au>

## HARP ONLINE



### VISIT THE HARP WEBSITE

Visit the HARP page 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/harpseslhd)

# TRAINING AND EDUCATION



## ashm

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>



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.

**18 May to 21 May (POSTPONED UNTIL SEMESTER 2)**

HIV Nursing Practice Workshop

This comprehensive and practical workshop is for nurses who work, or are preparing to work, with HIV positive clients and wish to increase their knowledge and skills. The workshop recognises the unique role and knowledge of nurses in HIV care.

[More Information](#)

The full calendar can be viewed [here](#)

## USEFUL LINKS

NSW HIV Surveillance Data Reports

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/endinghiv/Pages/tools-and-data.aspx>

NSW STI Surveillance Data Reports

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

NSW Hepatitis Data Reports

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/hepatitis/Pages/resources.aspx>

SESLHD HARP Webpage

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



**Play Safe Pro**

