

HIV and Related Programs Unit

# HARP

ISSUE 47 SUMMER 2019

# NEWS



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# FROM THE HARP MANAGER



Julia Purchas  
HARP Manager

Another year draws to a close and we have many things to celebrate and achievements to reflect upon.

I am very pleased to announce that The SESLHD HIV and Sexual Health Strategy 2019-2024 was released in late November. The Strategy has been developed over the past 12 months and provides an overarching framework and model of care for HIV and

sexual health service provision and development over the next five years.

Two additional documents that accompany the Strategy reflect the thorough consultation undertaken including input and feedback from staff in SESLHD Publicly Funded Sexual Health Services and key partner agencies and an in-depth consumer participation process. An [article](#) on page 4 in this HARP News will direct you to the Strategy on the SESLHD website. Many thanks to all involved in the production and review of these documents.

This issue also highlights all the activity and fantastic events that took place to commemorate World AIDS Day 2019 by services across SESLHD and many of our NGO partners. NSW also rolls out HIV awareness week at this time to continue the quest to end HIV 2020. HIV testing information activation took place in a range of settings including Drug and Alcohol services and University and community settings. The HARP Health Promotion Team ran two workshops for SESLHD staff Play your part Ending HIV 2020. Over 60 Nurses and allied staff attended the full day training update on HIV and the drive for testing and treating priority populations in alternative settings.

In early December we farewelled Julie Dixon the outgoing Director of Planning, Population Health and Equity. Julie has played a huge part and achieved a lot in the HARP sector across the last 20 or so years which is highlighted in an article in this edition.

This week Dr Marianne Gale has started in the role as Director of the newly formed Directorate of Population and Community Health, we welcome Marianne and look forward to working with her as we head in to the New Year.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy and peaceful New Year.

*Julia*



The staff of SESLHD HARP Unit wish our readers a happy and healthy Christmas, and a safe and peaceful New Year

Thank you for your support of, and contributions to the HARP News in 2019

# Farewell to Julie Dixon



It was a mixture of sadness and celebration for everyone attending the Forbes Street Centre on Thursday December 5th to celebrate Julie Dixon's achievements in SESLHD and to wish her well in her new role in Mental Health Services with the NSW Ministry of Health.

As Director of Planning, Population Health and Equity Julie's drive, energy and always impressive networking skills saw the development of such innovations as an exhaustive range of service and development plans across both the inpatient and community settings, the development of the Maroubra Initiative, a community-led program of services provided to SESLHD's 'most in need'

communities, as well as a vibrant Health Promotion Service, HARP Unit and Community Participation Team engaging and involving staff, communities, priority populations, key community and NGO partners and the District in services reaching those most in need of them.

Julie's legacy in this District will be the in the wellbeing of the communities she has worked with during her tenure as Director and in the health of the programs she has helped nurture and support. We have much to be grateful for in Julies work over many years and she will be very much missed. Thank you Julie.



# RELEASE OF THE SESLHD HIV & SEXUAL HEALTH STRATEGY 2019 – 2024



SESLHD manages the most extensive HIV and sexual health services, health promotion and prevention programs in NSW, providing healthcare to around 40% of people living with HIV in NSW. Yet there is still much to be done to continue and maintain best practice HIV and sexual health treatment, prevention and support programs into the future.

The [SESLHD HIV and Sexual Health Strategy 2019-2024](#) has been developed to provide an overarching framework for HIV and sexual health service provision and development over the next five years.

The two companion documents to the Strategy include input and feedback from key agencies and consumers: [The State of Play](#) describes current overarching trends and models of care targeted at priority populations; and, [Stories Conversations and Consultation](#) captures issues that are important to people living with HIV in SESLHD.

Together, these documents provide a comprehensive account of the range of services available to SESLHD residents, and identify the way forward to maintain SESLHD's role as the leading provider of HIV and Sexual Health Services in this State.

*Many thanks to the SESLHD HIV and Sexual Health Steering Committee for their advice and review*





# world AIDS day

DECEMBER 1

EVERY JOURNEY COUNTS



THE NATIONAL WORLD AIDS DAY THEME FOR AUSTRALIA IN 2019 IS EVERY JOURNEY COUNTS.

World AIDS Day aims to encourage Australians to educate themselves and others about HIV; to take action to reduce the transmission of HIV by promoting prevention strategies; and to ensure that people living with HIV can participate fully in the life of the community, free from stigma and discrimination.

## ROUND UP FROM SESLHD HARP WAD EVENTS AND PROJECTS

### RED RIBBON WORKING BEE

On Monday 21 October, HARP Staff and volunteers took to the annual Red Ribbon working bee. Thanks to the amazing staff and consumers who access local HIV services, who volunteered their time at the Red Ribbon Working Bee, this year we managed to make 2400 Red Ribbons. The ribbons went out to many local events and organisations in SESLHD, so that we can continue raising awareness of World AIDS Day and raise funds for some amazing charities who work to support people living with HIV.



Distributed throughout SESLHD during World AIDS Day, the Red Ribbon is a symbol of remembrance for those who have lost their lives to HIV/AIDS and a representation of support and solidarity for those living with HIV.

### RED RIBBON FUNDRAISER

Each year two charities who work to directly support people living with HIV, are selected to receive the donations collected via the WAD Tins. One local charity and one international.

This year's charities are:

- [Positive Teen Camp](#) (Sydney Children's Hospital): This camp provides teenagers who are living with HIV, an opportunity to connect and reduce stigma and isolation through peer support and social connections.
- [Yayasan Gaya Dewata](#) (Indonesia): Founded in 1992, Yayasan Gaya Dewata is a community-based, non-profit organization providing HIV/AIDS education, prevention, care and support programmes, sexual health and empowerment programmes for the GWL community Bali. They are currently raising funds to set up a chat phone line.



### WORLD AIDS DAY BANNERS

Each year the HARP Unit organises for World AIDS Day banners to be hung in Darlinghurst, Kogarah and Taren Point.





# world AIDS day

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## ENDING HIV WORKSHOP



On Tuesday 26th at Wanda SLSC & Thursday 28th November at Coogee SLSC, South Eastern Sydney Local Health District healthcare workers attended The HARP Unit's two World AIDS Day Ending HIV Workshops. Healthcare workers play a crucial role in HIV testing, treatment and prevention, as well as reducing stigma and discrimination for those living with HIV. Various presenters from across the district provided their knowledge to staff from St George Hospital, St George Private Hospital, Prince of Wales, and The Royal Hospital for Women and The Sutherland Hospital.

## NATIONAL ART SCHOOL PRINT MAKING COURSE

In the lead up to World Aids Day the SESLHD HARP Unit, in partnership with the National Art School, ran a 6 week print making course for people living with HIV. The aim of the program was to reduce barriers that those living with HIV may face such as mental health issues, social isolation and social disconnection. Over the 6 week class participant's learned different forms of print making including etching on metal, lino, rice paper and transferring all designs onto paper with a print press.

Participant's evaluations of the program stated that physical health, mental health including anxiety and stress, independence and social relationships were areas of their lives that improved as a result of attending the program.



A special thank you to Peter Morgan from the National Art School capturing some great photos at the show case of art works on the final evening.



# world AIDS day

DECEMBER 1

EVERY JOURNEY COUNTS



## SESLHD RED RIBBON GRANTS

Each year the HARP Unit offer the SESLHD Red Ribbon Grants Program for World AIDS Day and HIV Awareness Week. The purpose of the SESLHD Red Ribbon Grants Program is to increase community conversations about HIV, increase awareness, reduce stigma and discrimination and to remember those who have passed away from HIV/AIDS. This year 8 grant applications were accepted.

### POSITIVE IMPACT OF HIV - KIRKETON ROAD CENTRE

Friday 29 November 2019

KRC, MSIC and The Wayside Chapel engaged with the broader community of Kings Cross at the El Almaein Fountain. The staff engaged with the chocolate wheel and educational quiz on questions about Prevention, Testing, Treatment and Myth vs Truth around HIV.



### WORLD AIDS DAY TRIVIA NIGHT

Friday 29 November 2019

This event was a collaboration between MSIC, KRC and the Wayside Chapel, and engaged with the consumers of their service around the topic of HIV awareness and tackling stigma and discrimination in a fun and engaging way through trivia, raffles and quizzes.



### KIRKETON ROAD CENTRE SOUTH

Monday 2 December 2019

Kirketon Road Centre south, hosted a World AIDS Day display in the auditorium of the Sutherland Hospital that provided information to hospital staff and the general public. They also engaged local cafés and businesses providing them with World AIDS Day resources for the week.



### HIV TESTING BLITZ - THE LANGTON CENTRE

Monday 2 December 2019

Langton held their yearly WAD HIV Testing Blitz Event, promoting free on site testing, reducing stigma, and educating PWID with the chocolate wheel and a pop-up nail bar. The team conducted 10 conventional blood tests, and signed 3 clients up for Dried Blood Spot testing. Over 50 clients participated in spinning the chocolate wheel and discussing aspects of HIV, which entered them in the draw to win prizes.



A huge thank you to Chloe Turner and the team at the Langton Centre for organising this event



# world AIDS day

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## SURRY HILLS NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE WAD MARKET STALL

Saturday 7 December 2019

Staff from the Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre, HIV Outreach Team, peer educators and other health professionals, engaged the community around the World AIDS Day message, promoted HIV awareness through fun activities and utilised peers from community organisations to engage the community.



## OASIS YOUTH SUPPORT NETWORK SEXUAL HEALTH AND BLOOD BORNE VIRUS EDUCATION NIGHT

This health education night was held for at risk young people living in Oasis Youth Accommodation Service, where the issues around HIV treatment and prevention, sexual health and AOD harm reduction and stigma and discrimination were discussed using small group work activities and informal discussion over a relaxed dinner.

## A WAYS SAFE SUMMER WORLD AIDS DAY OUTREACH

Sunday 1 December 2019

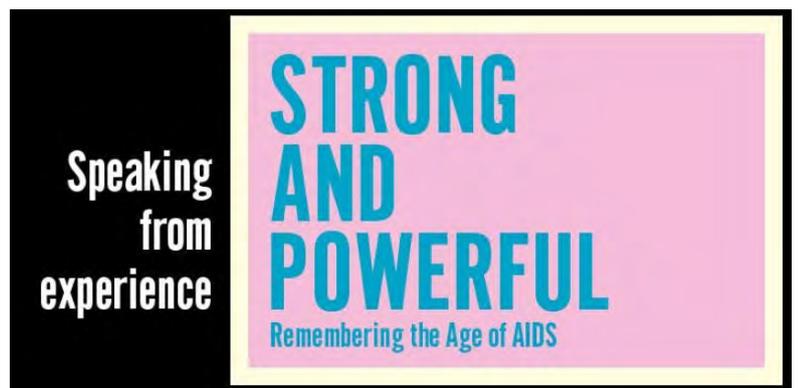
A WAYS Safe Summer's peer education program, in partnership with Waverley council conducted an outreach at Bondi Junction Oxford Street Mall, where they were able to engage young people in conversations around STI and HIV testing, prevention and treatment.

## UNIVERSITY OF NSW EVENTS

### SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE

Tuesday 3 December 2019

Held at the UNSW Library, attendees had the opportunity to hear first-hand experiences of a student living with HIV. This event was held in conjunction with the **Strong and Powerful – Remembering the age of AIDS** exhibition. This exhibition presents posters and ephemera drawn from personal collections that capture the community-lead response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic during the 1980s and 90s in Australia.



### GLOBAL CAMPUS WORLD AIDS DAY EVENT

Friday 6 December 2019

This event aimed to engage the international students attending the UNSW Randwick Campus, to reduce HIV Stigma, remember those who have passed and highlight the importance of HIV testing, prevention and treatment.

Participants were invited to make red ribbons to wear to honour those who have passed away from AIDS, and place on the Remembrance Wall – a large red ribbon constructed from the individual red ribbons.



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### STALLS & PROMOTIONS WERE HELD ACROSS SESLHD, FROM 29 NOV TO 7 DEC, INCLUDING:

- Prince of Wales Hospital
- Sydney Children’s Hospital Network
- The Albion Centre
- Sutherland Hospital
- Sydney Sexual Health Centre
- St Vincent’s Hospital
- Coogee Family Fun Day: Randwick City Council



### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to those who contributed to make 2019’s World AIDS Day so successful: Red Ribbon Working Bee volunteers; Red Ribbon Grant applicants; supporters of events including: The Langton Centre, UNSW Health Promotions Unit, KRC, KRC South, Oasis Youth Support Network, Ways Youth and Family, Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre, Medically Supervised Injecting Centre, Wayside Chapel; those who organised events or promoted HIV Awareness Week & WAD including: National Art School, St Vincent’s Hospital, The Albion Centre, Sydney Sexual Health Clinic, Prince of Wales Hospital, Sydney Children’s Hospital, Advanced Diversity Services, ADAHPS, HIV Outreach Team, Randwick City Council; SESLHD WAD committee: Douglas Knox, Maria Browne, Andrew Stone, Zoe Richards, Steph Martin, Drift Ishter, Amy Harper, Thomas Munro, Madeleine Leonard, Louise Farroway, Jo Spengeler, Frida Kitas, Pip Ditzel, Lucy Fromel, Geraldine Dunne, Sarah Holliday, Charley Gonzaga & Jen Farinella.

## ‘COMMUNITIES MAKE THE DIFFERENCE’ ON WORLD AIDS DAY

On WAD, **Positive Life** members, Board, staff, Positive Speakers Bureau (PSB) speakers and community celebrated the place of all communities in the HIV response through the voices of people living with HIV in NSW. Under the 2019 international theme **‘Communities make the difference’** we honoured the different communities of people living with or affected by HIV, including women living with HIV, people who inject drugs, trans and gender diverse people, heterosexual people, sex workers, people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, young people as well as men who have sex with men and gay men.

After a moving Welcome to Country from Ms Yvonne Weldon, we reflected on three different communities affected by HIV and their place in the epidemic. Michelle Tobin, Andrew Heslop and Mark Villar, three speakers living with HIV from the Positive Speakers Bureau (PSB), offered insight and reflection on Indigenous communities, the community of people who inject drugs and the culturally and linguistically diverse communities experience of HIV/AIDS.

As part of the celebration, Positive Life announced the launch of our state-wide peer navigation program bringing together all our existing peer-led programs under the one name of Peer Navigation, including treatments access, partner notification, housing, employment, and ageing or other co-morbidities. Our peer navigation program supported by ViiV healthcare, MAC Aids and NSW Health will be better positioned to support us and our peers to live well with HIV ensuring no one is left behind.



MARK VILLAR, ANDREW HESLOP, MICHELLE TOBIN, MS YVONNE WELDON, & JANE COSTELLO, POSITIVE LIFE CEO





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## BOBBY GOLDSMITH FOUNDATION WAD EVENTS



NEW THEATRE NEWTOWN

In the week leading up to World AIDS Day on 1st December, Bobby Goldsmith Foundation (BGF) in partnership with ACON were bucket shaking at theatres across Sydney which included the Roslyn Packer Theatre, Sydney Opera House, Capitol Theatre, New Theatre Newtown and The Concourse Chatswood. A big thank to the casts and audiences of these shows for their generous support and the incredible BGF and ACON volunteers who together raised over \$20,000.

On Thursday 28th November, BGF were invited to attend Google Australia's head office in Sydney to co-host a World AIDS Day event organised by the Gayglers (Gayglers is a term for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender employees of Google). BGF Board Member, Abby Landy and the amazing David Polson were hosted by Melanie Silva, Google Australia and New Zealand, Managing Director, for a Q&A session which discussed stigma and living with HIV, to an audience of Google employees.



IMPERIAL HOTEL - MAC VIVA GLAM



ABBY, MELANIE SILVA AND DAVID

On Friday 29th November, BGF in partnership with The Albion Centre, Surry Hills hosted screening of Holding the Man for a number of BGF and Albion Centre clients and support workers in recognition of World AIDS Day.

Sunday December 1st saw BGF staff and board members at The Imperial Hotel, Erskineville for 'Drag Me To Lunch' followed by a quick visit the MAC Cosmetics Viva Glam lipstick station. \$1 from each cocktail and drink sold at the event was donated to BGF as part of their World AIDS Day fundraiser.

The incredible David Polson and BGF staff member Ruan Uys were invited to talk at the NSW Police Force, World AIDS Day event held at Sydney Olympic Park on Monday 2nd December. Their speeches, which addressed testing, stigma and touched on the potential mandatory testing legislation to be introduced in NSW, were well received by the 60+ attendees including the Assistant Commissioner, Professional Standards Command, Gelina Talbot.



A/COMMISSIONER, DAVID POLSON & RUAN UYS

## HEP C BLITZ DAYS ACROSS SESLHD

### HEP C BLITZ IN MENTAL HEALTH

St George Liver Clinic and the HARP Unit partnered with St George Mental Health to deliver hepatitis C health promotion activities and incentivised hepatitis C blitz clinics throughout August. These followed on from the hepatitis C health promotion video that was made in partnership with the Wellness Network and screened in the waiting area.

The blitzes ran weekly alongside the Clozapine Clinic. A fabulous peer educator from Hepatitis NSW engaged clients who attended the service in conversations about testing and cures for hepatitis C. Blood tests and Fibroscans were used to test for viral hepatitis and liver damage. Clients were given vouchers for getting tested and then returning for their results.

Forty-four clients chose to screen during the month. Those requiring care will be actively followed up by the St George Liver Clinic. As well as diagnosing people with Hep C and offering cures it provided an opportunity to educate and advise some people that they weren't living with hepatitis C as they thought they were.



HARP and clinical services will continue to work with mental health services to ensure people living with mental health issues are supported to access testing and treatment for hepatitis C.

Huge thanks the St George Mental Health team for supporting this initiative.

### COMMUNITY HEPATITIS C “BLITZ DAYS”

An incentivised model of care for delivering hepatitis C screening in homelessness services has been piloted across Darlinghurst and Surry Hills during 2019.

Partnering with the Viral Hepatitis Harm Reduction Program (HARP, SESLHD), staff from the Kirketon Road Centre and Hepatitis NSW delivered screening “blitz” days. The model is delivered over four weeks and includes training and education for staff at a homelessness service, two, three hour screening sessions and a morning to discuss the results with clients.

Blood borne virus assessment is conducted with clients with conventional blood testing and fibrosis assessment by way of FibroScan® being offered. Clients who are tested are provided a \$10 Coles/Myer voucher and a second voucher when they return for their results.

Dried blood spot testing for HIV & hepatitis C is also available for clients who are unable to be tested through usual means. Blitz days at Edward Eagar Lodge, Foster House and Rough Edges were well received by the community accessing these services and 57 people were screened for hepatitis C.



The model is highly transferable and adaptable to other community settings and has also been delivered at Kooloora Community Centre at Malabar. New partnerships have been developed with community settings and existing partnerships strengthened. Planning is underway for similar events in 2020 and will be expanded to include community AOD and mental health services.

# THE HAYMARKET FOUNDATION: HEPATITIS C DRIED BLOOD SPOT (DBS) TESTING DAYS

A new initiative for DBS hepatitis C testing was recently launched at the Haymarket Foundation. Peer workers from NUAA partnered with the Viral Hepatitis & Harm Reduction Program (HARP, SESLHD) to deliver information, screening and DBS testing over two mornings which was very well received by the residents and staff.

The Haymarket Foundation welcomed and supported the initiative and encouraged staff to attend an up-date on hepatitis C that was delivered prior to the screening days and a BBQ breakfast was held for residents as part of the event. It was great to work together with peer workers from NUAA who helped facilitate the smooth running of screening & testing and provided important peer education to consumers on the days.

In response to the success of the two days, Charles Henderson, Deputy CEO NUAA stated that *“The focus of eliminating hep C needs to be people who inject drugs. Sometimes the barriers can be substantial and it’s working with peer specialists that can help overcome this. Our reach to injecting networks will be key”*.



HARP and NUAA will continue to work closely to provide new programs and find innovative ways to work together to reach people who inject drugs and support them to meet their health care needs.



## NORTHCOTT ESTATE SHARPS MANAGEMENT PLAN

Since May, the Viral Hepatitis and Harm Reduction Team at HARP and its partners NUAA, KRC, City of Sydney, Housing (Department of Communities and Justice), the Needle Clean-up Line and residents have been in full swing delivering the Sharps Management Plan at the Northcott Estate in Surry Hills.

The plan sits within an overarching Northcott Estate Project in which safe sharps disposal was identified as one issue affecting safety, security and cleanliness that the community wanted support to address. Whilst improving cleanliness on the estate, the Sharps Management Plan also aims to increase safe disposal options for people who generate sharps and improve pathways for people who do inject drugs to local health services. A communications strategy aims to inform residents about safe sharps disposal and reduce some of the stigma and discrimination associated with injecting drugs.

Trained peers from NUAA provide sweeps of the grounds four days a week. While they collect discarded sharps they have a significant role in providing health information and harm reduction education to people on the estate. Through this work they have referred people who inject drugs to local health services and NSPs.

Since the project began there has been a significant decrease in the number of sharps being collected on the Estate and their work has received much positive

feedback from residents and other service providers at Northcott.

The project is a great example of partnership and a strategic approach to harm reduction in a community setting. We also believe it to be the first project of its kind in NSW to address sharps management within a housing estate.



# PLAY YOUR PART: TOGETHER WE CAN



With new cures available, there has never been a better time to be talking about Hep C with patients, colleagues and communities.

The Viral Hepatitis and Harm Reduction Team at HARP has again been overwhelmed by the enthusiasm of health care workers across SESLHD at the Play Your Part one day hepatitis C workshop in November. All were keen to learn more about their role in eliminating Hep C in NSW by 2028!



We encourage health care workers to challenge the stigma and discrimination that people who inject drugs face when accessing health services, and to promote testing and cures to those people in their care who may have been at risk.

We'd like to thank our fabulous presenters from NUAA NSW, Kirketon Road Centre, Hepatitis NSW and the St George Liver Clinic – we couldn't do this work without you. And we look forward to continuing these workshops throughout 2020. Together we can!



## PARTNER UPDATE: SHARPS TRAINING AT NORTHCOTT

As part of the Northcott Sharps Management Plan, Andy from NUAA ran sharps training for residents at the Northcott Community Centre. This stigma-busting training was run in November and well attended by residents and volunteers.

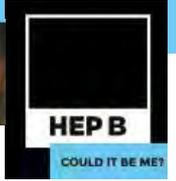
The City of Sydney 'Safe Sharps Disposal' video was entertaining to watch and gave the opportunity to address the fear and anxiety that community sharps generate. The participants were enthusiastic and asked a lot of great questions which facilitated a robust discussion about safe sharps handling and disposal at Northcott.

NUAA's training plays an important role in reducing discrimination towards people who inject drugs and through empowering the community of people who use drugs.

This training was part of the Northcott Sharps Management Plan and NUAA and SESLHD have collaborated together to deliver peer harm reductions workshops and peer education and training.



NUAA has peer volunteers who walk around collecting discarded community sharps on the estate, and also provide harm reduction and health promotion information to residents.



## HEPATITIS B HEALTH PROMOTION AND TESTING FOR CHINESE COMMUNITIES IN HURSTVILLE



Hepatitis NSW in partnership with HARP and St George Hospital Liver Clinic ran a very successful hep B testing, health promotion and education event in September at Club Central, Hurstville. Over 100 people aged 40 to 60 years from Chinese Australian communities attended. Full hep B screening including liver scans were provided.

Outgoing CEO of Hepatitis NSW, Stuart Loveday opened the event extending a warm welcome to people from the local Chinese community. Stuart emphasised the importance of testing, regular liver health monitoring and treatment, where needed, as essential liver-cancer prevention strategies. He encouraged people to talk about hepatitis B with their family and friends in order to raise awareness.

Ms Cristina Lu, Hepatitis NSW's bi-lingual Hepatitis B Project Officer delivered engaging education in Mandarin. This was extremely well received and many questions followed.

After the education session guests enjoyed a healthy Chinese dinner whilst viewing the Hep B digital storytelling clips that reinforce key health promotion messaging. Bill Jiang – Sales Manager, Soya King – delivered a Hep B and Chinese Culture Quiz which proved to be a lot of fun.

Forty-four people were tested at the event. Seven people diagnosed with hep B were linked to care, and many more were offered vaccinations and encouraged to refer their families for screening. Those unable to screen that night were given referral information and many have linked themselves in to the clinic since.

Hepatitis NSW thanks the students from Macquarie University who assisted with language interpretation; the Chinese Australian Services Society for their support with recruitment and Ms Defeng Jing, from the Centre for Social Research in Health at UNSW, who is carrying out social research within the Chinese community and with people living with hepatitis B.

## TAFE HEP B EDUCATION AND SCREENING PROGRAM

During the month of September, HARP in partnership with the Gastro and Liver Clinic at St George Hospital, Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Service and TAFE Kogarah, ran Hepatitis B Education and Screening Program for CALD Students attending the Adult English Programs offered at TAFE Kogarah.

Three education sessions were conducted, two in English and one in Mandarin, covering the basics about hepatitis B, including prevention, treatment and testing. The students were offered screening which included blood tests for HBV, HCV and Liver Function and a FibroScan on site at TAFE Kogarah with follow up session at the TAFE to obtain results. 165 students in total attended the education sessions, with 44 engaging in screening.



Following on from the success of these sessions, another round of education sessions were conducted in December, this time in smaller groups for a total of 13 sessions over 3 days, 8 English and 5 Mandarin sessions, engaging approximately 250 students.

# ST GEORGE MIGRANT INFORMATION DAY – HEPATITIS B EDUCATION STALL AND PRESENTATION

The St George Migrant Information Day is held annually and is an opportunity for new migrants to connect with and celebrate their diverse community and to engage with services who may be able to support their needs when settling in Australia including, housing, employment, education and health. In addition to information stalls, attendees were treated to cultural performances throughout the day.

The HARP Unit in partnership with Multicultural Hepatitis and HIV Service, and Hepatitis NSW held a stall at this event to provide information to the community on hepatitis B. The stall was also run by staff who were able to speak a number of community languages including, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean and Spanish.

Attendees were engaged through spinning wheel activities, giveaways and quizzes. 66 participants completed a short written questionnaire on Hepatitis B which aimed to provide basic information and debunk myths about the virus. An education session was also held on the day, facilitated by Natali Smud (MHAHS), providing an overview on Hepatitis B including testing, treatment and prevention.

Photo credits: St George Migrant Information Day Organising Committee & Nathalie Tabba



# TAKE HOME NALOXONE: PREVENTING OPIOID RELATED OVERDOSE DEATHS IN SOUTH EASTERN SYDNEY

Opioid overdose related deaths have been increasing over the last 17 years, with three deaths in Australia each day. Prescription opioids are now responsible for 70% of opioid related deaths.

In 2017, a research project on Overdose Response & Take Home Naloxone interventions was piloted in five LHDs in NSW, (including SESLHD), St Vincent's Health Network, and the Medically Supervised Injecting Centre.

There was a significant improvement amongst participant's "self-efficacy" in relation to overdose response, and many witnessed an overdose in the three months following the intervention. It was recommended that the availability of Naloxone be greatly expanded, so that it is available in most opioid overdose situations.

The NSW Ministry of Health is now rolling out this model across NSW with SESLHD Drug and Alcohol (D&A) Service providing the training and credentialing of LHD staff working in government D&A services and Needle Syringe Programs.

In SESLHD, Take Home Naloxone is now available for those eligible to receive following a brief intervention. Each person can receive a supply of two packets containing intranasal spray Nyxoid and/or the injection Prenoxad. The Take Home Naloxone is available from:



- The Langton Centre
- St George Drug and Alcohol Service
- Caringbah Community Health Centre Drug and Alcohol Service, Sutherland Hospital
- Kirketon Rd Centre
- KRC South, Sutherland Hospital

Take Home Naloxone will be available from Headspace, Bondi Junction, and The Prince of Wales Hospital Emergency Department in 2020.



# HARP IN THE SOUTH

The **Caddyshack Project** presents an annual awards program to recognise and acknowledge individuals and services within the Illawarra and Shoalhaven that are making a significant contribution to the sexual health and well-being of our communities. The winners of the 2019 Caddyshack awards are:

## WOLLONGONG YOUTH SERVICE - SERVICE AWARD WINNER



Since having dispensers installed at the service in November 2016, the Wollongong Youth Centre has been the largest distributor of condoms in the Illawarra & Shoalhaven. On average 200 condoms are distributed per month as part of the **HARP Condom Dispenser Project**; making condoms free and available where they are most needed. The service also partners with headspace to run 'Rainbow League' for LGBTIQ+ people aged 16-25, working to make a welcoming, supportive and inclusive safe space.

## EMMA BURTON - ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD WINNER

Emma got involved as a peer educator with the **Down To Test NSW Health Music Festivals Project** at the 2018 and 2019 Yours and Owls Festival. She is engaged, approachable and a lot of fun. Emma makes sexual health something that can be discussed openly and comfortably. Emma is on time, reliable and trustworthy. Having her as part of the festival screening experience has been a real pleasure for HARP and a wonderful contribution to the young adults she engaged with to make sexual health more accessible. As a third year student of Medical and Health Science at UOW, we know Emma will be a real asset to whatever organisation is lucky enough to employ her in the future.



## JOSEF CARRINGTON - INDIVIDUAL AWARD WINNER



In his role as ACON regional outreach, Josef heads up the newly established **Illawarra LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Network**, working to support and advocate for the LGBTIQ+ community. Josef plays a major role in guiding the network, not only as secretariat and co-chair, but with his warm, calm and approachable demeanour. Covering Coledale to Eden, Mittagong to Jindabyne, Josef is super busy beyond the Illawarra & Shoalhaven supporting, developing and delivering local events, peer education, interagencies, networks and initiatives. It is such a pleasure working with you!

## PORT KEMBLA YOUTH PROJECT - PROJECT AWARD WINNER

Port Kembla Youth Project, in partnership with Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra, run **GROW**, a program for newly arrived young women who attend the Intensive English Class at Warrawong High. The program incorporates a sexual health component, which is often the first exposure the young women have had to sexual health information, in the context of their own culture, or their Australian experience, and provides information about the Australian health care system and service providers. The young women are often the gatekeepers for their extended families, so the reach and impact of the program cannot be underestimated.



# HARP IN THE SOUTH

## ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR KATHERINE BROWN - SPECIAL LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

HARP created this category as a one off, because we know that Katherine cannot be encapsulated in any of the above categories.

Katherine has been the sexual health physician in the Illawarra Shoalhaven Health District for over twenty years and is a recipient of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians Australasian Chapter of Sexual Health Medicine division award for her contribution to the discipline of sexual health medicine.

Passionate about her work and mentoring others, she has played a key role in developing the Illawarra Shoalhaven Sexual Health Service through her clinical service development, community development, policy and advocacy and the promotion of the speciality through undergraduate education and general practise training. Katherine is also a state wide leader in sexual assault and forensic medicine.



We can think of no one who is more deserving of our humble award to put alongside all your other achievements (maybe next to your giant STI microbes in your office).

We reckon you're a bit of a legend!

**Congratulations again to all winners, and nominees. We feel honoured to be able to showcase your work, and celebrate your achievements.**

## DOWN TO TEST AT THE YOURS & OWLS FESTIVAL



Staff from the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (ISLHD) encouraged young people to get tested for chlamydia at the Yours & Owls Festival on the October long weekend.

NSW Health's "Down to Test" initiative capitalizes on a common festival-goers experience – the need to find a clean toilet, charge their phone and freshen up at the Glitter bar. At Yours & Owls, all of those needs were met in a fun VIP space – the exchange is to get tested for chlamydia. Rates of chlamydia and notification numbers in 16-29 year olds are some of the highest in NSW and they continue to increase.

Associate Professor Katherine Brown from the Illawarra Shoalhaven Sexual Health Service said the NSW Health initiative was helping raise awareness around the importance of STI testing with young people, as many people with chlamydia do not have symptoms but can still spread the infection. Left untreated, chlamydia can lead to infertility and other complications.

Festivals are a great opportunity to reach people aged between 16 and 29 to improve awareness of safe sex and to help normalize STI testing. We had 1025 young people register for the program over the 2 festival days, with 988 (96%) completing a sample for STI testing!

Tests were conducted by the STI Programs Unit, the Illawarra Shoalhaven Sexual Health Service, Drug & Alcohol service and the ISLHD HARP Unit with the assistance of peer educators.

To date the program has been run at 11 festivals across NSW, and has found it is helping to take away the stigma of STI testing, as well as offering important sexual health advice in a fun and engaging environment.

Watch a clip of DTT in action [here](#).

## ANKALI VOLUNTEER TRAINING COURSES: 108 AND COUNTING...

The **Ankali Project** are a division of the Albion Centre and provide volunteer social and emotional support to people living with HIV. Clients are matched with volunteers, and meet regularly for social engagement.

One client had the following feedback about the Ankali Project:

*'getting in contact with Ankali has best decision I've made this year. (My volunteer) needs stars in his margins at Ankali. I really put him through the ringer with all my health issues, but he has been just amazing. He comes over every week now, and I have taught him how to play canasta. It's something I played with my grandmother, and I look forward to it each week.'*

In October, the Ankali Project team delivered the 108th Volunteer Training course and graduated 8 volunteers to the community. Volunteers were trained in communication skills, how to use psychosocial framework, ethical dilemmas, and managing boundaries.

If you have a client who would benefit from meeting with a volunteer, get in contact with the Ankali Project team to make a referral. If you, your client, or someone you know would like to volunteer with the Ankali Project,



please get in contact with the Ankali Project team and share the love. Telephone: 93329742 or email: [ankali@thealbioncentre.org.au](mailto:ankali@thealbioncentre.org.au)

## NEW LIFESTYLE AND BODY COMPOSITION CHECK-UP PROGRAM



Improved HIV treatments have increased the life expectancy of people living with HIV, a trend that brings with it new and emerging challenges. Antiretroviral treatment long term side effects such as cardio-metabolic disorders and body composition changes place additional challenges on already complex health care needs. There is growing evidence that some antiretroviral medication may be associated with excess weight gain.

Early detection and regular monitoring can facilitate lifestyle modification interventions to reduce risk factors and improve the long term impact on health.

Albion launched a Lifestyle and Body Composition Check-up program on 15 July 2019. The program consists of a check-up with the doctor, nurse, full blood tests, pharmacist, dietitian and through the psychologists, a quality of life and mental health check. There is follow up on an annual basis with an interim check in with the dietitians at 6 months.

The body composition check uses Albion's BIA machine, which allows us to monitor muscle and fat levels, including abdominal fat.

This means we can assess weight changes which may appear to be unhealthy but are actually healthy increases and vice versa. We can also pick up frailty which has allowed us to help clients act on this as well.

All people living with HIV who see a doctor at Albion are eligible for a check

## WORLD AIDS DAY PODCAST

SSHC has launched a [podcast](#) for World AIDS Day 2019. We are sharing some stories of people who have made a positive impact for people living with HIV in Sydney.

It features Vickie Knight and Lizzie Griggs - nurses who have been working in the HIV/AIDS sector since the 1980s.

To keep up to date with the latest information from Sydney Sexual Health Centre, you can follow us on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.



## GENDER AFFIRMING RESOURCES

The **Sexual Health Infolink (SHIL)** has developed a resource collating key guidelines and resources supporting gender affirming care. [Bookmark it](#) for quick access to:

- Clinical guidelines and patient fact sheets about hormonal therapies
- Specialist trans and gender diverse clinical services
- Counselling and peer support services
- Information and resources for family and friends



## KRC HARM REDUCTION MASTERCLASS

KRC recently hosted the first of a series of Master Classes examining the theory and practice of Harm Reduction. This inaugural meeting explored how choice and availability of needles and syringes impacts the lives of people who inject drugs.

The Master Class was led by special guest, Andrew Preston. Andrew is the founder of Exchange Supplies (<https://www.exchangesupplies.org/>), a UK based social enterprise providing on-line equipment and information for people who inject drugs. Andrew has a wealth of experience in the harm reduction sector as an educator, activist and social entrepreneur.

Andrew was joined by KRC Connectors, Annika and Brett who have been delivering peer led interventions at KRC through the Consumer Participation Group and the Maroubra Outreach Program.



It was a packed house at Clinic 180 with participants from key partners such as NUAA, Wayside Chapel, Lou's Place, Foster House, HARP, Albion Centre, NEAMI and Western Sydney NSP, all joining in the lively discussion.

To find out more about KRC, visit [www.thekrc.org](http://www.thekrc.org)

# THE LANGTON CENTRE PRESENTS IN MONTREAL AND HOBART

A poster about the Hepatitis C screening and treatment program at the Langton OTP was presented at the International Network on Hepatitis in Substance Users (INHSU) conference in Montreal this year. An oral presentation of the same abstract was also presented at the Australasian Professional Society on Alcohol & other Drugs (APSAD) conference in Hobart just recently.

The presentations outlined: barriers to screening and completion of treatment; strategies that were implemented to successfully overcome those barriers; that number of clients treated increased; and, how successful practices were reviewed, implanted and evolved.

The group concluded that Multidisciplinary collaboration and broad treatment flexibility is needed in treating 'hard to reach' clients. Clients may remain resistant to interventions despite implemented strategies.

The poster and abstract can be viewed [here](#) and [here](#).

## HEPATITIS C SCREENING AND TREATMENT WITHIN AN OPIOID TREATMENT PROGRAM: CURRENT CHALLENGES AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS



Hall E, Finsterer K, Grummett S, Ridley N, Schwanz R, Turner C  
The Langton Centre, Surry Hills, Sydney, Australia  
Publication Date: August 2019

### Introduction

The Langton Centre (TLC) is a large Drug and Alcohol (D&A) service in inner-city Sydney. Since implementing a successful hepatitis C (HCV) treatment program in 2016 within the TLC opioid treatment program (OTP), the treatment landscape has transformed dramatically, with a notable decline in clients screened and initiated onto treatment; this decline being mirrored across many similar services. If Australia is to reach its target of HCV elimination by 2030, there is a clear need for services to increase treatment numbers, and perhaps develop novel models of care.

### Questions

- What are the barriers to screening and successful treatment for TLC OTP clients?
- How can these barriers be successfully overcome?
- How can we continue to overcome these barriers, within TLC OTP specifically, into the future?



Harm minimisation, screening, treatment Unique promotional resources

### Results

- Many 'hard to reach' clients were one or more of the following: Aboriginal; cognitively impaired; had poor pharmacotherapy dosing history; highly recidivist; had poor venous access; had problematic mental illness; had financial issues/ were unemployed; experienced re-traumatisation around venepuncture; received pharmacotherapy via pharmacy; had poor harm minimisation practices; and/ or had difficulties prioritising personal health over substance dependence.
- Effective strategies included: advanced venepuncture and testing methods e.g. dried blood spot testing, Cepheid viral load machine; opportunistic multidisciplinary coordination by staff skilled in HCV treatment including nurses, doctors, social workers, and consumer workers; dedicated health promotion/ screening days with various incentives for client engagement; interagency collaboration; promotion/ education re. harm minimisation; facilitating medication collection and dispensing alongside opioid substitution; and client health information sharing with other health services including jails, General Practitioners, other D&A services, hospitals, homeless services, rehabs, and other relevant clinics.
- After implementation of the above strategies, there was a steady increase in screening and treatment e.g. after an intensive promotional day, 11 from 12 identified HCV positive clients subsequently started treatment.
- Some, though not all, of the 'hard to reach' patients were successfully tested and treated due to clinician persistence and flexibility, and by taking into account all the reasons mentioned above when implementing our model of care. Determining successful strategies was an organic process, and often involved individualised care, and review of client and staff feedback.

### Discussion & Conclusions

- Multidisciplinary collaboration and flexible treatment tailoring assists in engaging and treating 'hard to reach' patients.
- Patients may remain resistant to intervention despite varying strategies.
- Novel strategies and health promotion are needed to engage and treat 'hard to reach' patients, including an upscale of 'point of care' testing.



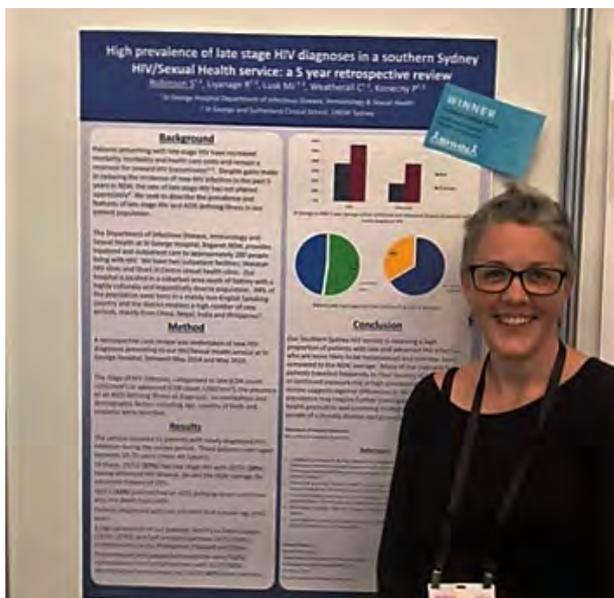
edmund.hall@health.nsw.gov.au  
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The Langton Centre  
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Surry Hills  
NSW 2010  
AUSTRALIA

Acknowledgments: Thank you to all the staff and clients of The Langton Centre, and also to the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District HIV and Related Programs team.



## HIV/AIDS CONFERENCE ASHNA POSTER PRIZE



Sharon Robinson was a successful ASHM Scholarship recipient enabling her to present her team's research on HIV late presenters at the 2019 Australasian HIV/AIDS Conference held in Perth in September. Her poster, "High prevalence of late stage HIV diagnoses in a southern Sydney HIV/Sexual Health service: a 5 year retrospective review" was awarded the 2019 HIV/AIDS Conference ASHNA Nurse's Poster Prize. This work highlighted the relatively high proportion of patients presenting with late and advanced HIV infection in the Southern Sydney sector. They were more likely to be heterosexual and overseas born, many of whom had travelled frequently to their country of birth resulting in continued HIV exposure risk in high prevalence areas. Recommendations arising from this review included further investigation of regional differences in HIV disease to more strategically target HIV health promotion and screening strategies, particularly for people of culturally diverse backgrounds.

Sharon Robinson is CNC 2 HIV /Sexual Health, at Short Street Sexual Health Clinic and Waratah HIV Clinic, St George Hospital, Dept of Infectious Diseases, Immunology & Sexual Health and Conjoint Lecturer, St George & Sutherland Clinical School, UNSW Sydney.

# SESLHD SEXUAL HEALTH/HIV SERVICES HOLIDAY CLOSE-DOWN

We are all no doubt looking forward to the holidays, but before and after Christmas and New Year is a busy time for services. Now is the time to prepare your clients for the Christmas and New Year holiday break.

## SERVICES CLOSURE OVER THE HOLIDAYS

SYDNEY SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE: Closed Dec 23 & reopens Jan 6

SHORT ST CENTRE: Closed Dec 24 & reopens Jan 2

KIRKETON STREET CENTRE: Closed Dec 25 & reopens Jan 2

THE ALBION CENTRE: Closed Dec 25, 26 & 30 & reopens Jan 2

A[TEST]: Closed Dec 20 and reopens Jan 6

SEXUAL HEALTH INFOLINK: Closed Dec 23 and reopens Jan 6

## PEP ACCESS

PEP HOTLINE: Open 7 days and public holidays: 1800 737 669

LOCAL HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPT: 24 hour access. SESLHD EDs [list](#)

GP S100 PRESCRIBERS: for example- [East Sydney Doctors](#), [Taylor Square](#)

[Private Clinic](#) and [Holdsworth House Medical Practice](#) are open daily,

apart from public holidays. A full list can be accessed [here](#)

## MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

LIFELINE: Open 24 hours. Ph: 13 11 14

MENTAL HEALTH LINE: Open 24 hours. Ph: 1800 011 511

NSW RAPE CRISIS: Open 24 hours. Ph: 1800 424 017

PEP HOTLINE: M - F 9am-9pm; S/S 8am-9pm; PHs 8am-9pm



Holiday Season Crisis Directory for Randwick & Waverley LGAs can be accessed [here](#)

## MEET CASI: THE UNSW STI TESTING KIOSK PROJECT



Late September saw the commencement of the UNSW Kiosk Project, an innovative 12-month pilot of an STI self-testing service via a kiosk at UNSW. The project is a collaboration between SESLHD HARP Unit, CESP HN, UNSW Health and Wellbeing, Sydney Sexual Health Centre and the NSW Sexual Health Infolink (SHIL).

The divergence in HIV diagnoses between Australian and overseas-born men who have sex with men in recent years indicates a clear need to engage the latter group with services. The project is therefore targeted at culturally and linguistically diverse MSM attending UNSW, and aims to not only facilitate free access to STI testing, but also promote HIV testing and the UNSW Health Service as a safe and non-judgemental service to access sexual health screens.

The kiosk is situated in the Kensington Campus, at a discrete site adjacent to the Health Service. Those eligible for testing complete a brief computer assisted self-interview (CASI), which includes health promotion messages around how and where to access HIV testing and information, and gives users the option to pick up a DBS kit from the UNSW health service.

Users self-collect tests for chlamydia and gonorrhoea, and nurses from SHIL contact those with a positive diagnosis, encouraging them to attend UNSW Health Service for treatment, thus linking them with the service for future STI/HIV testing.

The model of testing will be evaluated at 12 months, and if successful, could be utilised at other university campuses, language schools or other 'fit for purpose' sites across the state to increase access to testing for hard-to-reach groups.

For further information, contact Project Coordinator [Rebecca.Lorch@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Rebecca.Lorch@health.nsw.gov.au)



# HARP HEALTH PROMOTION UPDATE

## NEW SEASON OF PLAY SAFE SUMMER BEGINS

With 2019 coming to an end, it's great to know that the fantastic work of our Play Safe Peer Educators is returning in 2020.

Young people aged between 16 – 25 years are hired to provide their peers with sexual health and drug and alcohol information, resources, and safe sex packs, as well as inform young people on where and how to access health services.

Over 40 Play Safe Peer Educators from three services across the LHD, including Project Youth, WAYS Youth Services, and the HARP Unit, came together on Saturday 23rd November to train in sexual health, hepatitis C and harm reduction, working with LGBTQIA+ young people, understanding cultural diversity, and peer education and communication skills.



Look out for the Play Safe Peer Educators in your local area, as the new and returning Peer Educators hit the streets this Summer.

## PEYAC GOES TO AAH CONFERENCE

**Condoms and Consultations:**  
Complementary roles of an LHD Peer Education and Youth Advisory Committee

**Context**  
PEYAC (Peer Education and Youth Advisory) Committee is a team of young people, supported by South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLD), who have been educating and supporting PEYAC members around sexual health and alcohol education. PEYAC members provide health and alcohol education to young people through outreach and health promotion activities and consult with health services to improve their health services to the needs of young people.

**Outcomes**  
Since PEYAC's commencement in October 2017, nearly 1000 young people from 100+ health services representing 100+ organisations in SESLHD have been engaged and received peer education on sexual health.

**Youth-Friendly Checklist**  
PEYAC adapted the NSW Youth Friendly Checklist to create a new checklist that is more relevant to young people's needs and health services.

**7 Youth-friendly audits of SESLHD services conducted**

**2400+ Young people engaged in consultations about sexual health, AOD and harm reduction**

**12+ Presentations and professional development activities for health services**

**As a peer educator, I feel the responsibility to share the voice of youth which would otherwise not be heard.**

**6 Focus groups and consultations to explore current services, providing a 'youth voice' to services and product design delivery and roles.**

**Contact:**  
Stanya Sharota  
Project Manager  
stanya.sharota@health.nsw.gov.au



2019 has been a very energetic year for HARP Unit's Play Safe PEYAC (Peer Education and Youth Advisory Committee) Program, with over 70 outreach and activation activities completed and 4 youth friendly audits conducted across the LHD.

It was great to finish the PEYAC year on a spirited note with 2 Play Safe PEYAC members, Anna & Cagla, attending the Australian Association for Adolescent Health (AAH) Conference in Melbourne, late November.

A poster presentation showcased some work around PEYAC's complementary roles of an LHD Peer Education and Youth Advisory Committee.

Anna & Cagla also delivered an oral presentation titled "For Us By Us: Adapting the NSW Youth Friendly Checklist for Health Services", which highlights the process PEYAC went through to develop their own youth friendly checklist.

The Youth Friendly Checklist is used to consult with health services to improve their engagement with young people. If your health service is interested in conducting a Youth Friendly Audit, please contact SESLHD Youth Health Program Manager, [Stanya.Sharota@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Stanya.Sharota@health.nsw.gov.au).

Congratulations to Anna & Cagla on their fantastic presentations and to all the young people involved in the PEYAC Program. Your work and commitment to the PEYAC Program is unfathomable.

## HARP DOES SEXTEMBER AT UNSW

During the month of September, The HARP Unit partnered with UNSW Health Promotion and ARC Wellness Warriors to deliver sex positive conversations and STI testing around UNSW campus.

Tying into UNSW Welcome Week and UNSW Diversity Fest, the engaging panel talk and multiple interactive sexual health information activations around campus ensured that discussion of sex was normalised and celebrated among the diverse UNSW community. Having free and accessible self-testing kits available at the UNSW Fitness and Aquatic Centre and Campus Colleges increased the awareness and uptake of STI testing of UNSW students, with over 250 tests returned to UNSW Health Service across the 3 week SEX-TEMBER event.

ARC Wellness Warriors Dildo Toss attracted students to start the conversation about the diverse perspectives around sex, including sex positive behaviours like fun and consensual sex; while HARP Unit's fantastic Play Safe Peer Education and Youth Advisory Committee (PEYAC) young people took the reins by promoting regular STI checks and helping out with our new record of 40 oranges in the Condom Cram!



## CALD GAY MEN'S ACTION GROUP SYMPOSIUM

The biennial CALD Gay Men's Action Group<sup>1</sup> Symposium was held on the 13 November, with a focus on how government and non-government organisations can better engage and partner with CALD LGBTIQ+ Communities in improving the sexual health of CALD Gay Men and other men who have sex with men.

Presenters from Ministry of Health, Kirby Institute, ACON, Western Sydney Health, Liverpool Sexual Health Clinic and MHAHS discussed the current landscape of sexual health for CALD gay men and other CALD men who have sex with men. They showcased some of the work that is currently being done with CALD MSM communities and its members. Attendees had the opportunity to hear from a panel of CALD LGBT community members such as Ben Lau, Cedric Cheng (ANTRA), Sujith Kumar, Shiva Chandra (Fobgays), Oscar Sanchez (Sydney ARCO IRIS Latin American & Hispanic Community Group) who shared their own experiences as CALD Gay Men, their connection to their community and their experiences engaging with and working in partnership with government organisations and non-government organisations.

<sup>1</sup>The CALD Gay Men's Action Group, was established to plan, implement and evaluate HIV and STI initiatives targeting gay men and other homosexually active men from CALD backgrounds and is made up of a partnership between government and non-government organisations who work in the HIV and sexual health sector, including ACON, Centre for Social Research in Health (CSRH), the



Kirby Institute, Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Service, and HARP Units from SESLHD, SWSLHD, SLHD, WSLHD and NSLHD.

# NEW SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICE FOR TRANS AND GENDER DIVERSE PEOPLE



ACON, in partnership with the Kirketon Road Centre (KRC), has launched a new peer-led rapid HIV and STI testing service to provide trans and gender diverse (TGD) people easier access to sexual health screenings, resources and information.

The trans[TEST] clinic operates at Clinic 180 in Kings Cross on the first and third Friday of each month from 11.30am to 5pm. TGD peers, working in conjunction with nurses and doctors, will see clients and support them through the trans[TEST] experience.

ACON's Manager of TGD Health Equity, Teddy Cook said: "With our partner KRC, we have created a space with the community that we hope will reduce the barriers TGD people experience accessing health and wellbeing services, and to ensure the dignity, care and autonomy we deserve.

"Inspired by our a[TEST] facilities, which have become some of the most popular HIV and sexual health testing services in NSW for gay and bisexual men (cis and trans), along with the experience we have gained through this community engagement and peer-led model, we are extremely proud to now offer a dedicated service for TGD members of our communities.

In introducing the clinic, KRC Director Phill Read said: "We are proud to partner with ACON to run this clinic specifically to provide comprehensive HIV and sexual health services for members of the TGD community. This innovative partnership will deliver high quality health services in a community-based setting."

*The trans[TEST] clinic: every first and third Friday of each month, from 11.30am – 5pm, 180 Victoria St, Potts Point. Book and more information at: [transtest.org.au](http://transtest.org.au)*



The much-loved sexual health campaign that uses high-profile comedians to reach young Aboriginal people has returned from a year-long hiatus. Launching at the Koori Knockout on the October long weekend, the new Take Blaktion campaign features ambassadors Steven Oliver, Carly Wallace and Bjorn Stewart.

The heart of Take Blaktion is comedy skit videos published on Facebook and the newly revamped Take Blaktion website. Steven, Carly and Bjorn use humour to break through stigma and get young Aboriginal people talking and thinking about safe sex without shame. The campaign also includes activations at community events, including Yabun in Sydney this January. Keep an eye out for ambassador Carly Wallace at the yellow Take Blaktion marquee.



If you're hosting an event with a large Aboriginal youth audience and you'd like to know more about incorporating a Take Blaktion activation into your event, contact Heather at the NSW STI Programs Unit on [Heather.McCormack@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Heather.McCormack@health.nsw.gov.au). Follow Take Blaktion on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/takeblaktion) to keep up with the campaign.

## POSITIVE LIFE NSW WELCOMES NEW CEO



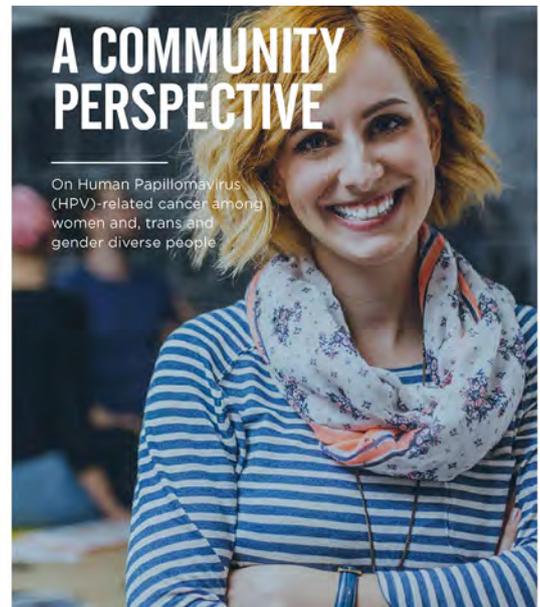
Positive Life NSW is [delighted to announce the appointment](#) of Jane Costello as CEO, effective from Monday 11 November 2019. Ms Costello was selected after a thorough and competitive Board selection process to lead the state-wide agency after Craig Cooper stepped down from the role in June 2019, where he'd served with commitment and dedication since 2014.

Jane brings a wealth of experience of over twenty years' in executive corporate roles, a strong track record of ten years in the HIV community sector, as well as her personal experience and sensitivity to contemporary issues faced by people living with HIV. Positive Life is fortunate to benefit from her demonstrated ability to gain consensus, provide strategic leadership, along with her formidable engagement to benefit people living with HIV (PLHIV) in NSW.

## COMMUNITY REPORT ON HPV-RELATED CANCERS

Positive Life NSW in partnership with Femfatales (the national network of women living with HIV) [has published a community report](#) of the findings of an anonymous online survey "Survey on Cervical and other human papillomavirus (HPV)-related Cancers" which targeted women and, trans and gender diverse PLHIV, and HIV-negative women and, trans and gender diverse people across Australia. The survey explored their awareness and experience of HPV-related cancers as well as assessed if these groups had enough information and strategies to prevent HPV-related cancer, detect HPV-related cancer early, and stay cancer free post-treatment and/or recovery. The survey also sought to understand and assess the experiences of respondents when accessing services to prevent, treat, and recover from HPV-related cancers, and to identify any potential health care access barriers.

The report highlighted that women and, trans and gender diverse people living with HIV require more information around HPV risk, screening, and vaccination. Respondents were completely unaware of the new three yearly cervical screening guidelines that apply for people who are immunocompromised. As a result, Positive Life has convened a regular HPV working group to provide advice, guidance and input into advising and implementing the seven key recommendations as outlined in the Report.



## POSITIVE LIFE SILVER WARRIORS



Supporting you through **aged care**, **disability** and **health services**

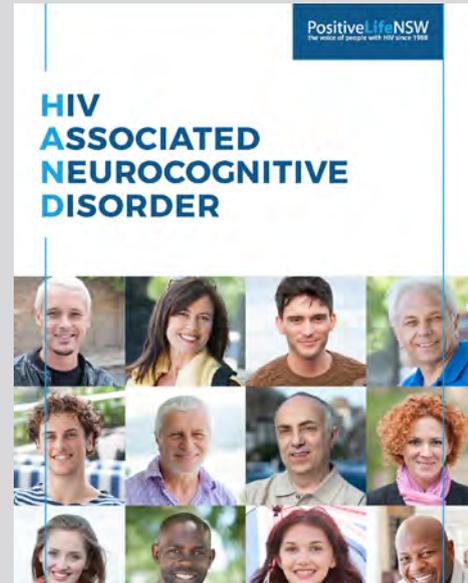
Silver Warriors is a Positive Life NSW free service [which supports people living with HIV \(PLHIV\) over 45 years](#) to navigate the aged care, disability or healthcare services. Many older people living with HIV are unfamiliar with these services, what's available, and what can help make life easier.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

# PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV ASSOCIATED NEUROCOGNITIVE DISORDER (HAND)

Positive Life has [published a booklet](#) containing practical advice on living with HAND and information on where to seek more assistance. An accompanying [booklet for partners, friends and family](#) is also available providing 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>



## HIV WORK READY

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)



## POSITIVE SPEAKERS BUREAU

Speakers from the NSW Positive Speakers' Bureau (PSB) are living with HIV, Hep C or other co-morbidities. They can complement your 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 including other co-morbidities today.

Our speakers came from a range of cultural backgrounds, ages, genders, time diagnosed with HIV, and life experiences and are remunerated 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, please call the Training Coordinator on (02) 9206-2177, 1800 245 677 or email [psb@positivelife.org.au](mailto:psb@positivelife.org.au)

For more information please visit the Positive Speakers Bureau website at [psb.positivelife.org.au](http://psb.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)

## WHAT IS RISE?

RISE stands for **'Recent Diagnosis and the Impact of Support on Experiences of HIV'**.

RISE is exploring people's experiences of being diagnosed with HIV and the changes in their lives following their diagnosis. RISE offers an opportunity to link individuals to services and to assess the impact of those services on their well-being.

RISE involves a series of on-line surveys, the first takes about 20 minutes to complete. Then, every six months after, a shorter survey will be sent to the participant's e-mail, until the study ends in 2022. As well as the online survey, participants are invited to take part in an optional in-depth interview to discuss their experience of HIV in more detail.

## SHARING EXPERIENCES OF DIAGNOSIS - THE STORY SO FAR.

Participants speak about the personal benefit they derived from sharing their experience, and the potential value it might have in the future in terms of building connections between peers, and in designing future clinical and support services.

*"The more I can help, the better it will be for the community and for the eradication of HIV. I really hope I am part of the last generation to contract HIV."*

*"I want to contribute to research to help others who have been diagnosed receive more services and assistance at the initial stages of diagnosis."*



## REFER INTO RISE

To find out more information about the RISE study, or to refer eligible participants please visit:

[www.risestudy.org.au](http://www.risestudy.org.au) | [bclifton@kirby.unsw.edu.au](mailto:bclifton@kirby.unsw.edu.au)

## PREP RESEARCH REPORT PUBLISHED



The PrEPARE Project investigates the attitudes of gay and bisexual men to new HIV prevention technologies, particularly pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and treatment as prevention. The first phase of the project, conducted in 2011–2012, involved an online survey of over 1,500 men and qualitative interviews with a subset of those men. This phase identified that a relatively small proportion of gay and bisexual men were very interested in using PrEP, and that willingness to use PrEP was concentrated among men who appeared to be most at risk of HIV.

Attitudes of HIV-positive and HIV-negative men towards PrEP and treatment as prevention were also compared, revealing scepticism about treatment as prevention in both groups of men. Follow-up online surveys were conducted in 2013, 2015, 2017 and 2019, showing more positive attitudes to treatment as prevention, greater interest in and support for PrEP, and the rapid uptake of PrEP by HIV-negative men, particularly between 2015 and 2019.

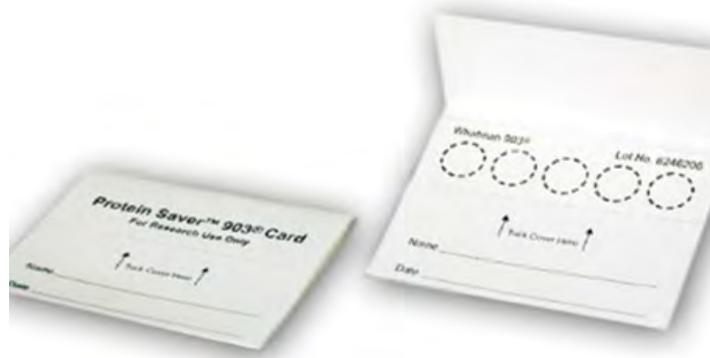
The full report can be viewed [here](#) and [here](#)

# DRIED BLOOD SPOT TESTING

The Dried Blood Spot (DBS) Test is an innovative pilot program that offers an easy, self-sampling option for anyone wishing to have a HIV or Hep C test. DBS kits are ordered through the website and mailed directly to the client to complete the test before returning the test card via reply-paid envelope. Clients receive results via text, email or phone call. Health and community services which are registered as DBS sites can also assist clients to undertake DBS testing or distribute DBS kits throughout NSW.

Recent changes to the DBS website mean clients can test separately for either HIV or Hep C, with the ability to opt-in for HIV testing for those eligible for Hep C only. The website will soon be translated into 9 community languages to make it more accessible to CALD communities: Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Thai, Khmer, Vietnamese, French, Chinese and Bahasa Indonesian.

SESLHD DBS sites utilise the DBS test in a number of both clinical and non-clinical settings and have found it to be particularly useful for people who may otherwise not be engaged with clinical care around their potential risk of HIV or Hep C.



As of September 2019, the DBS program completed over 3,666 tests for HIV, and over 2,140 for hepatitis C. In Q3 2019 158 tests were carried out in SES (classified by client postcode), bringing the total to 612 tests since November 2016

For more information please contact the DBS Pilot Coordinator, Nigel Carrington, at: [Nigel.Carrington@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Nigel.Carrington@health.nsw.gov.au) or 0409 382 966, or go to the DBS website [here](#)

## SESLHD HARP IN THE NEWS

### DR VINCENT CORNELISSE RECIPIENT OF LEVINIA CROOKS EMERGING LEADER AWARD



Dr Vincent Cornelisse, Medical Unit Manager and Staff Specialist, Kirketon Road Centre, is the 2019 recipient of the Levinia Crooks Emerging Leader Award, presented at the Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health Medicine conference.

The award honours the legacy of the late Adjunct Professor Levinia Crooks AM, a leader in public health and ASHM Chief Executive Officer, 1999 – 2017. The award recognises the outstanding work of emerging leaders in the field of BBVs and STIs.

“The award places importance on fostering emerging leaders to continue to develop leadership that is bold, innovative, inclusive and that inspires collaboration in the sector,” Vincent said. “I am very proud and humbled to receive the award and would like to thank all my colleagues at KRC for their continued commitment to our community.”

### WENDY MACHIN RECEIVES NSW HEALTH COLLABORATIVE LEADER OF THE YEAR AWARD



Wendy Machin has provided inspiration and leadership at the Kirketon Road Centre for over twenty years, bringing warmth, humour, expertise, professionalism, compassion and sharp intelligence to her role as the Clinical Services Manager. This has ensured that KRC has maintained its position as a world class primary health care centre for marginalised and disadvantaged populations.

Wendy supports KRC staff to provide a consistently excellent standard of care to clients across all KRC clinical services.

Kind, genuine and transparent, an inspirational role model who works collaboratively to promote positive change – always with the client at the centre of her efforts

# 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.

## **2020 Australian & New Zealand Addiction Conference, 11-13 May, Surfers Paradise, QLD**

Access the latest research, projects and strategies to help meet the diverse and complex needs of clients. Now in its sixth year, the all-encompassing conference program, highlights a range of mental, physical and behavioural addictions. <https://addictionaustralia.org.au/>

## **Global Hepatitis Summit 2020, 18-21 June, Taipei, Taiwan**

The 17th international symposium on viral hepatitis and liver disease theme is “Evolution and Revolution of Viral Hepatitis and Liver Disease”. <https://ghs2020taipei.com/#>

## **AIDS 2020 23rd International AIDS Conference, San Francisco, USA, 6-10 July**

Featuring a broad range of exciting sessions developed by an international committee of HIV scientists, leaders, policy makers, researchers and advocates, the early programme covers the latest and most pressing topics in HIV. <https://www.aids2020.org/>

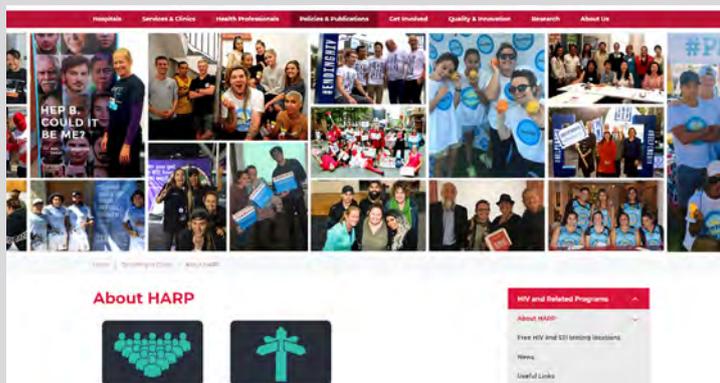
## **HIV2020: Community Reclaiming the Global Response, Mexico City, Mexico 5-7 July**

The HIV2020 alliance has organised this community-led event to provide a safe alternative for individuals who cannot or will not enter the U.S. in 2020 or who cannot afford to attend AIDS2020. It will also offer new opportunities to reaffirm the leading role communities play in the global HIV response. <https://www.hiv2020.org/>

## **12th Australasian Viral Hepatitis Conference 2020 Brisbane, QLD, 16 - 18 August**

The theme for the conference is “No one left behind” <http://www.hepatitis.org.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



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

**17 February - 29 March**

**The ABCs of ARVs: HIV Treatment for Pharmacists**

**2 March - 29 March**

**Essentials of Infection Prevention & Control in Clinical Settings**

**9 March - 4 April**

**The ABC of ARVs: HIV Treatment for Healthcare Workers**

**30 March - 10 May**

**Management of Exposures to Blood Borne Pathogens**

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



# 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>

## 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

