



AIDS Council of New South Wales Inc.

**ANNUAL
REPORT
FOR
1988/89**



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COMMITTEE AND STAFF

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Rolf Petherbridge, Vice-President
David Buchanan, Secretary
Ross Duffin, Treasurer

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Phillip Black
Andrew Carter
Neil Sanderson
Gray Sattler
Michael Sheehan

Lex Watson
Paul Young
Lin Stenberg
(Bobby Goldsmith Foundation)

Graeme Flavel
(Community Support Network)

Robert Walmsley
(Gay & Lesbian Counselling Service)

Representatives
(PLWA NSW)

Staff of Council:

Bill Whittaker, Executive Director
Don Baxter, Education Programs Manager
Kevin Golding, Administration Manager
Anne Malcolm, Community Services Manager

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Ken Davis, Senior Education Officer
Simon Donohoe, Information & Resources
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David Edler, Community Services Officer

Terry Giblett, HIV Support Officer

Sean Harris, Administration Assistant

Tom Hatfield, Finance Clerk

Phillip Keen, Boat Education Officer

Ulo Klemmer, Boat Education Officer

Mark McAuley, Clerical Assistant,
Education Programs

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Tim Rigg, Training & Recruitment
Co-Ordinator

Chas Stewart, Community Support
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Hunter Region Branch:

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John Godwin, Legal Research Officer

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Michael Lockhart, Rural Education Officer

Brent Mackie, Peer Education Officer

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Policy Writer

ROLE OF THE AIDS COUNCIL OF NEW SOUTH WALES

1. Introduction: The AIDS Council of New South Wales (ACON), is a community-based organisation funded by the State and Commonwealth Governments. ACON is Australia's largest AIDS organisation.

The Council's activities include providing HIV/AIDS education to the community, counselling and support services for people affected by AIDS, and representing the interests of people affected by HIV/AIDS.

2. Formation and Membership: The AIDS Council was formed in 1985 at a public meeting, organised by members of Sydney's gay community, to discuss appropriate ways of responding to HIV/AIDS in New South Wales. The meeting subsequently resolved to form the AIDS Council, and adopted a constitution and elected a Committee to manage the affairs of the Council.

The Council represents and provides services for all people affected by AIDS in New South Wales.

A number of community organisations are closely affiliated to the Council. These organisations include the Community Support Network (CSN), which provides volunteer home caring and support for people with AIDS, and the Robby Goldsmith Foundation, a charitable organisation which provides financial assistance to people with AIDS. CSN is managed by a Liaison Committee consisting of members nominated by the AIDS Council and by CSN.

ACON and CSN together have around 700 members throughout New South Wales.

Branches of the Council have been established in Newcastle and in Lismore.

3. Management: ACON is incorporated under the NSW Associations Incorporation Act. The Council has a detailed constitution and a management plan to ensure efficient use of resources, clear lines of communication and efficient use of volunteers.

The Council is governed by an elected honorary committee of 12 persons, which determines policy and accepts financial accountability.

The staff of Council carry out day to day administration and implement policy as directed by the Committee of Council.

Staff also manage the operation of CSN, with the Executive Director of ACON also acting as the Executive Director for CSN.

ACON's Committee has a number of working groups and sub-committees to advise it and to develop policy. Membership of working groups and sub-committees is open to anyone willing to contribute to the work of the group.

4. Staff: The AIDS Council has twenty-three full-time staff and a number of other staff employed for fixed-term projects.

The staff are divided into three management units – Education, Community Services, and Administration. The staff are responsible through Unit Managers to the Executive Director, who is in turn responsible to the Committee of Council for all aspects of Council's operation.

5. Education Unit: The Education unit is involved in educating the community about HIV and is particularly involved in preventative education among men who have sex with men, which is a high priority for the Council's work. The Council has been conducting preventative education programs for over four years. The Council's programs are targeted to health professionals and service providers, as well as to the gay and general community.

6. Community Services Unit: The unit co-ordinates services for people affected by AIDS and works closely with health professionals, hospital social workers and other community organisations involved in helping people with AIDS.

7. Administration Unit: This unit provides administrative and clerical support for the other Council units and for the Council Committee and working groups.

8. Volunteer Participation: The Council and its affiliated organisations rely a great deal on the assistance of volunteers. Council actively encourages the involvement of its membership and the community in its activities, particularly in home care and participation in working groups.

9. Conclusion: The AIDS Council's philosophy is to work closely with the State and Commonwealth Governments and with other organisations. The Council and its affiliated organisations provide a very effective model of optimising community involvement in responding to AIDS in New South Wales.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The objectives underlying ACON's work are:

1. To minimise the transmission of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)
2. To ensure that provision is made for the adequate, effective and appropriate education, support, care and treatment of people affected by HIV/AIDS.

ACON aims to achieve these objectives through:

1. Education, which promotes behaviours which will result in stopping transmission.
2. Education targeted at people with HIV/AIDS and their carers which encourages and facilitates their involvement in the minimisation of transmission, maintenance of their health, and the development of appropriate support, care, and treatment.
3. Encouraging, promoting or assisting with research into the causes, prevention and treatment of HIV infection and into the psychosocial consequences of HIV infection and appropriate action to minimise these where they are damaging.
4. Assisting the development of a social context which facilitates rational and reasonable approaches to minimising transmission and to the provision of services to those infected.
5. Advocating for the provision of support, care and treatment for HIV infected people.
6. Directly providing such support, care and treatment where appropriate.
7. Advising and otherwise assisting governments and other bodies on the provision of such support, care and treatment.
8. Developing and maintaining an efficient, appropriate and effective organisational structure for the Council which acknowledges, defines and integrates the roles of members, volunteers and staff in its operation.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

INTRODUCTION

My report to members of ACON has been written a little over a month since returning from the 5th International Conference on AIDS in Montreal. Overall, there was not a great deal to be optimistic about from the various presentations made at the conference. While the situation regarding treatments for HIV infection is slowly improving, the current international response is clearly inadequate to contain the epidemic.

Current estimates of the extent of AIDS worldwide are alarming. The World Health Organisation (WHO) currently lists 157,000 cases of full AIDS from 149 countries, but this is generally acknowledged to be a considerable understatement, with the actual number being around 500,000. WHO estimates the number of people infected with HIV at between 5 and 10 million.

In Australia, as of July 1989, nearly 700 people have already died, another 700 are living with full AIDS and it is predicted that another 15000 to 25000 people are HIV infected. If there are no new infections or no cure, then it is likely that we have seen less than 10% of the total AIDS cases that Australia will experience over the next ten years. In New South Wales we have around 60% of the national caseload of AIDS cases and at least that percentage of people infected with HIV.

While AIDS/HIV statistics on both the international and national level give cause for great concern, like most other Australian representatives at the Montreal Conference, I did return with renewed confidence in the work being undertaken by our community AIDS organisations, by our medical and scientific colleagues and also, in most instances, by our governments. Montreal has again confirmed my view that Australia's policies and programs are equal to anything else in the world and are examples which many other countries could follow. I was particularly pleased to reflect on the significant role ACON has played and continues to play in developing AIDS programs and policies not only in New South Wales, but also at the national level.

It has been said before that to an extent we have been fortunate in having more time than some other countries to prepare for the full weight of the epidemic. We are also fortunate in that we can learn from the experience of other countries the price to be paid for failing to implement the right policies and programs.

Australia still has the opportunity to contain the AIDS epidemic. But we must act now or this opportunity will be lost. I will return to this theme later in my report.

PROGRESS OVER THE PAST YEAR

The achievements of the community response to AIDS in Australia are considerable. ACON has been at the forefront of this and we have set examples and provided leadership for other existing AIDS organisations, both nationally and overseas. The past 12 months has seen consolidation of our role in the epidemic as well as the development of a number of important new initiatives in our education, support and policy work.

Men Who Have Sex With Men Gay Identifying Men

There have been significant changes in sexual behaviour among homosexual men who identify with a gay community and who are reached by programs targeted at the gay community. Estimates of the rate of new infections remain at less than 1%. But we cannot afford to become complacent. Behaviour changes must be reinforced by ongoing programs.

ACON has and will continue to direct a major proportion of its programs to men who have sex with men. ACON's 1988-89 Summer campaign - "Out Loving, Out Living, Out Lasting" - directly targeted the reinforcement of safe sex behaviour, linking it to themes of living with HIV/AIDS and pride in the achievements of the gay community. Our involvement with the various gay community events held during the year is a very important way of reinforcing behaviour change not only among gays and lesbians, but also among non-gay people as these events are increasingly being attended by non-gay people as well.

ACON has always been aware of the needs of gay men for whom language, culture or disability provide specific challenges to developing appropriate and effective education. The past year has seen us much more involved in either developing these programs ourselves or in assisting others in this.

For example, education staff continue to have input into the work of the deaf gay community and our telephone typewriter service will assist our efforts further. We have supported the development of Saabe, the Latin American/Spanish-speaking AIDS support group and we will shortly be beginning our project targeted at gay men from Asian and Pacific backgrounds.

Recognising the particular needs of young gay men coming to terms with their sexuality in the years of AIDS, we chose to concentrate our Peer Education work on this group.

Non-Gay Identifying Men Who Have Sex With Men
It is worth reiterating here that as an AIDS organisation in New South Wales at a point in time where the impact of the epidemic continues to be felt largely by men who have sex with men, our primary obligation will remain the education and support of this group.

But there remains a significant number of men who have sex with men, some of whom have female partners, who do not identify as being gay and who have not been reached by preventative education programs because of insufficient resources or the inappropriateness of information that has previously been available to them.

Both ACON's Western Suburbs Beats Project and the ACON/AEAO Rural Education Project have been important in meeting this gap. These very innovative projects have generated considerable interest in other States and internationally.

Because many of these men are not a part of the self-identified gay community, at times ACON's work is not immediately obvious to the community from which it has sprung and from which it still draws its greatest support and involvement. At its extreme, it is reflected in the view that ACON is not giving priority to working among gay and bisexual men. While this argument does not stand up to actual examination, it is important that it be addressed by continuing to inform our communities about our work and our considerable achievements. This is an ongoing challenge for the organisation.

Heterosexual Transmission

Recent data shows that the number of heterosexually transmitted cases of AIDS in Australia has doubled over the past 12 months. Although there are only 18 cases, this represents the picture 7 to 10 years ago as these are cases of full AIDS. The actual number of HIV infections acquired by heterosexual transmission is unknown, but the number of infections is probably already significant and increasing.

Wider community awareness about AIDS and acceptance of the need to practice safe sex is a continuing problem and a matter for great concern. Overcoming community denial about the risks of AIDS must be urgently addressed by Governments as well as by community AIDS organisations.

ACON has always included heterosexual transmission within its brief. The Women and AIDS Project has been a significant part of our efforts this year. The involvement of women in the organisation is another area of challenge, both at the Committee and Staff level. It is encouraging that the number of women involved as ACON members and as CNX carers has increased considerably during recent years.

Intravenous Drug Users (IVDU)

In the United States and Western Europe, intravenous drug users are now the largest source of new infections and there is very real concern that this pattern will be repeated in Australia. Estimates of the number of IVDU in Australia who are HIV infected vary considerably from a low of 1.5% to a high of 9%. It has been suggested that a level of

5%-7% infection is likely to lead to a very rapid spread of infection among IVDU.

Of late, attention has been turned to men who have sex with men and who are also IVDU, some seeing them as potentially the highest risk individuals with infection possible through both sexual and drug use practices. The NID&MRC Cumulative AIDS statistics report that as at June 1989, "Homosexual/Bisexual/IVDU" account for 27% of all full AIDS cases to date.

ACON has maintained its efforts directed at IVDU. We were unsuccessful in securing funding for a full-time worker, but have re-submitted for funding for the position. We are still negotiating for the licensing of ACON premises as a needle exchange. Past efforts to conduct needle exchanges at dance parties have not been successful, but we see this as an area for ongoing discussion with party organisers. The series of IVDU cartoons, some of which are re-produced in this Report, have created considerable interest and are another example of the innovative work done by ACON. Finally, we have just produced two posters specifically targeting gay users, a first anywhere in Australia.

The establishment of the NSW Users and AIDS Association (NUAA), an advocacy and support group for IVDU, is most welcome and we look forward to a cooperative relationship. As with other developing community organisations, ACON's experience can be helpful in assisting other organisations to become organisationally sound and effective.

Community Care and Support Services

As more of those infected progress to AIDS related illnesses, the pressure on the provider of care and support services becomes greater. Provision of treatment, care and support through non AIDS specific services is increasing, spurred on by moves towards shorter stays in hospitals and a greater reliance on day clinics and home support, as well as the need to provide services for those infected in areas where geographical isolation or the small numbers of infected make specialist services unlikely.

Planning for the expected demands on services must be undertaken now. ACON has been vocal in calling for the development of an adequate multi-stage model of treatment care and support services.

We are directly feeling the pressure of this expansion in AIDS cases. The client load of the Community Support Network more than doubled over the past year. We have also begun providing supported housing through our accommodation project, and this facility is operating at capacity.

Our services for people who are HIV positive have also increased. The HIV Support Officer is offering a wide range of groups and information, and we are pleased to be able to offer this service which is clearly meeting a growing need.

Our Hunter and Lismore Branches are at the forefront of developing regional responses to the epidemic.

This is an area of our work that will inevitably need to expand in the next 12 months, making demands both on staff and on volunteers.

Legislative Issues

If we needed any reminding that legislative issues around HIV/AIDS still remain unresolved in a number of areas, we have only to recall early August and the detention of a sex worker under existing provisions of the Public Health Act. It is clear that the section of the Act in question provides for sweeping powers that raise serious concerns about civil liberties and whose presence, and now operation, may well have a disincentive for people to come forward for AIDS testing, education, treatment and counselling.

ACON has called for a comprehensive review of the Public Health Act. The Council will need to pursue this issue vigorously during the next few months. This issue has also highlighted the need for people to be extremely careful about who performs the antibody test and who they tell about the result. ACON will be stressing this as part of the information we provide on HIV antibody testing.

As an aside, the case of course also demonstrates that safe sexual practice is the responsibility of both partners and that there is much yet to be done in driving home this point to the general community.

Legislation in the area of intravenous drug use continues to present difficulties for the effective operation of needle exchange programs and we will undoubtedly hear more debate on the vexed question of the legalisation of presently illegal injectable substances. ACON is addressing this issue and a policy position will be completed in the next few months.

ACON's Policy Development and Input

ACON has always sought to provide well-researched, well-formulated, timely, accurate and appropriate policy advice. We have established an excellent reputation. We have been successful because of our constructive, commonsense approach to the problem of AIDS and our experience and expertise in dealing with the epidemic.

At the 5th International AIDS Conference, Dr Jonathan Mann expressed concern that the social, cultural, economic and political reaction and response to AIDS threatens increasingly to overshadow and overwhelm our capacity to rationally and effectively respond to the epidemic.

We in Australia have not been spared this irrational reaction, much of which has emanated from some ill-informed politicians, sections of the media and some members of the medical profession.

It is regrettable that we should see ACON's year begin with Mr Wilson Turkey's outburst at the 3rd National AIDS Conference in Hobart, and end with the Commonwealth Health Minister feeling constrained to publicly crush a muck raking campaign concerning his personal life. Both of these incidents involve the "theory" that AIDS has been "hijacked by the homosexual lobby". I do not want to enter that discussion here, it is a waste of words at a time when those who are HIV infected are crying out for action. But it is relevant to note that all Government advisory AIDS committees are overwhelmingly dominated by the medical profession and that the advice given by those committees has almost invariably been accepted by Ministers for Health at both the state and national level.

National AIDS Strategy

The single most time-consuming involvement for ACON in this policy process over the last year has been the various inputs we have made to the development of the National AIDS Strategy. ACON staff, the Executive Director and Education Program Manager in particular, were involved at every stage of the process, from the policy discussion document, *AIDS: A Time To Care, A Time To Act*, through membership of the six panels which undertook the subsequent national consultation, to making written and oral submissions to the panels and directly to the Government. We are yet to see the results of this effort, but we can be proud of the role we have played.

Testing

Some areas of debate are seemingly as unsettled as ever. Compulsory testing was raised throughout the year in a number of guises - prisons, surgery patients, "high risk" populations, and, most recently, prostitutes. In May 1989, a poll quoted in the Sydney Morning Herald not surprisingly found support for compulsory testing in prisons, for immigration, at STD clinics, and in drug rehabilitation and needle exchange programs. I say not surprisingly, as this is the inevitable result of the confused and emotive debate on testing conducted over many years which is often fuelled by so-called AIDS experts who have very little to do with frontline work in AIDS prevention or support for those infected. It is a credit to those policy makers with a firm grasp of the realities of effective public policy that we have so far been spared the excesses of law-making by popular vote.

There is another side to the issues of testing, that of the advice AIDS Councils give to those asking whether or not to take the antibody test. Many commentators now point to the increasing availability of treatments and evidence for efficacy through early intervention as significant basis for advising people to know their HIV antibody and health status. This is reflected in ACON's current HIV antibody testing policy. ACON needs to look at promoting this message more widely throughout the community, especially in the light of overseas experiences where we now see gay groups and AIDS organisations openly advocating HIV testing.

While there is no doubt that knowing one's antibody status and regular monitoring of health status has become increasingly desirable, it must be noted that issues about confidentiality, discrimination and possible serious adverse legal consequences are also issues that ACON must continue to warn people about, especially in the light of events in recent months.

Surgical Procedures

Another "expert" to add confusion to the national discussion of AIDS policy, this time in the area of occupational hazards to surgeons dealing with HIV infected patients, was Dr Lorraine Day, an orthopaedic surgeon from the United States brought out to feature at the Doctors' Summit on AIDS in April 1989. Offering speculation and misrepresentation of research as scientific fact, her visit could have precipitated a protracted and disruptive debate, "hijacking" the real debates on

AIDS into areas which, while of concern, are not those most urgently in need of action. As it was, the Summit did not become alarmist or acrimonious and the question of occupational transmission was put back where it belongs, in the context of universal infection control guidelines and voluntary testing.

Clinical Treatment Trials

One of the growing areas of dissatisfaction is that of treatment trials. There are a limited number of treatments being trialed, with some criticism being levelled at the link between drugs offered for trial and the financial gain for drug companies. There is also much dissatisfaction amongst people with HIV/AIDS and AIDS community organisations, including ACON, at some recent decisions about trials in Australia, decisions in which they have played no part. Some of this has been expressed through the subversion of trial protocols, some through non participation.

Recently, interest has been shown in developing a community based clinical trials system similar to those successfully being run in the United States. This concept has been strongly endorsed by ACON, with a number of people from ACON being involved in the development of a community research initiative proposal.

Recognising that there has been a real difficulty for people with AIDS and HIV infection in getting information on HIV treatments and on trials, AFAO and its constituent Councils have jointly contributed to funding a six month position of National Treatments Information Officer. This will at least ensure that up to date information on treatments and trials will be available, in the form of briefs on specific issues.

People Living With HIV/AIDS

In the face of all the difficulties and challenges posed by AIDS, it has been most gratifying over the last year to watch the growth of self-organisation among people living with AIDS.

From its beginnings at the 3rd National Conference in Hobart in 1988, through the two "Living Well" Conferences, and onto to the establishment of the conditions of People Living With AIDS in most States, we have seen the strength that comes from working together in collective action aimed at securing the policies and practices which ensure that the rights of those infected are protected.

ACON is fully committed to supporting this development. We have provided access to ACON facilities, financial and administrative assistance and identified places on the Committee of Council for people with AIDS.

The newly established position of HIV Support Officer is another expression of our commitment to working with and supporting people with HIV.

MEETING THE CHALLENGES

The Responsibility of Governments

As I said at the beginning of this Report, we in Australia are in some respects fortunate that the epidemic is still in the realm of the controllable, but this will only be achieved by taking action now.

The implementation of national AIDS strategies

in many countries, remains incomplete and the implementation of an adequate, sustained, and sustainable national AIDS program remains a major challenge. Major inhibiting factors are our governments' failure to take collective responsibility for AIDS and to develop a national will to contain the epidemic. Instead, the experience is that AIDS is almost invariably left to Health Ministers because it is hardly a popular issue, the issues are complex, difficult, contentious, and will never win votes.

President Kaunda of Zambia, speaking at the 5th International Conference, said that all governments must make AIDS the number one public health issue. This will mean the allocation of sufficient resources to combat the epidemic, even if it means reducing spending on programs like defence.

We should be looking to the release of the National AIDS Strategy to galvanise our response to AIDS and to put aside some of the complacency that has crept into the national government response to AIDS during the past 18 months. Australia is at a crossroads in the epidemic and ACON looks to the national government to provide leadership in both policy and funding commitments at this critical time. If this leadership is not forthcoming soon, the effects of this will be felt most dramatically in New South Wales, where our ability to control the national epidemic will either be won or lost.

ACON's Response

But it is not only at the level of government that leadership and decisive action must occur. It must happen at the level of our community AIDS organisations as well. I am pleased to say that ACON has again provided a leadership role in this. The development of our first Strategic Planning Document - *Future Directions for the AIDS Council of New South Wales* - is a clear indication of our determination to face up to the epidemic's many difficult challenges. It is an ambitious document, and many of its recommendations will take some time to put in place. But it sets the terms for our work for the next twelve months, and clearly identifies to governments those areas in which they too must take up responsibility.

ACON has had its most busy and productive year to date. With this the organisation has grown very considerably. The Report from the Executive Director will deal with this more fully, but I want to draw your attention to a few points relating to the future growth and operation of ACON.

Staffing: Our staff has been significantly increased from the 17 positions noted in last year's Annual Report to 33 positions currently. Many of these are project staff whose tenure depends on securing ongoing funding, and it is of concern that these positions are invariably in areas which there is a clear need for urgent action, eg. the Beats Project, Rural Educator, Youth Peer Education, Women and AIDS, Venues Outreach. We have lodged submissions with the State and National Government for a substantial increase in staffing this year, drawing on the directions in our Strategic Plan.

This 100% increase in staff numbers over the last year placed a strain on our physical resources, and ACON has now a second Sydney premise. However our accommodation is again at virtual full capacity.

The next few months will require some hard thinking about accommodation for ACON.

Branches: The development of the second ACON branch in Lismore is most welcome. Both branches are fully functional, devising education and support programs that are relevant for local conditions and providing ACON's central office with feedback on how to make our programs accessible to non-urban dwellers. The course of establishing these branches has been relatively smooth, though there is more work to be done in the areas of daily support, contact and more involvement of branch members in ACON's decision-making processes.

Membership and Volunteers: The strength of ACON will continue to be that it can confidently speak on behalf of the communities of interest that are the organisation's members. The work of recruiting, organising, and servicing volunteers and members is considerable. Our members need to be kept up-to-date on the policies and programs of ACON and to contribute their skills. They need to be helped to make more use of ACON as a resource for information and support. We have made good progress, but more work needs to be done during the next 12 months.

As we broaden the scope of our programs, so we will reach different groups of people who can be encouraged to become members. The challenge is to provide a flexible structure through which to involve a diversity of interests and capacities.

ACON's Working Groups need particular attention. They are one of the most direct ways that members and volunteers can become involved. Some of these have functioned very well, others have lapsed. Our expectations of working groups and sub-committees must be balanced by the fact that we often will be drawing on the energies and interests of people who are already much involved in other AIDS and community work.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

I am very optimistic about the work of ACON and about our capacities to meet the very complex challenges being set daily. We are where we are because of the commitment, enthusiasm and plain hard work of ACON members, volunteers, Committee of Council, and staff. I extend my thanks to all for their extraordinary contributions during 1988/89.

It is this level of effort and commitment that must be carried through into combating the epidemic at both a state and national level. We can achieve this only through a stronger forging of the partnership that has been developed between people in the medical and scientific professions, concerned people in government, people involved in community AIDS organisations, and, most importantly, people with HIV/AIDS.

Levinia Crooks
President

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Introduction

1988/89 has been a year of considerable growth for ACON as an organisation, most obviously reflected in the doubling of our staff, the securing of a second Sydney premise and the growth of the Lismore and Hunter Branches.

ACON is the largest community AIDS organisation in Australia and as such should ensure that it provides leadership to community organisations through its management and administrative practices. The Strategic Plan adopted this year identifies for ACON the aim of developing and maintaining an efficient, appropriate and effective organisational and administrative structure for the Council which acknowledges, defines and integrates the roles of members, volunteers and staff in its operation.

The rapid growth we have seen over the past year presents a considerable challenge. I am pleased to report that ACON has been able to achieve much during the past 12 months in meeting the aims of our Strategic Plan.

Staff and Personnel Practices

ACON now has in excess of thirty staff. Much of the growth has been in education staff, but it is good to see the increase in staff for community services, an area of our work that will continue to grow.

We have been fortunate in recruiting staff with a wide range of outstanding skills and talents. We have been able to make use of this variety in extending our work into new areas. It is crucial that we retain such staff as long as possible.

AIDS is a high stress work area. It expects a great deal of commitment to work that can at times be frustrating and not immediately rewarding. Worker burnout, characteristic of much of the human services sector, is also a part of AIDS work. It is gratifying to report that there has been little turnover in ACON's staff this year. ACON has been able to achieve this by continuing to work on improving our management and personnel practices and we will continue to do so in the future.

ACON has a special place as an employer. The nature of our work here is such that the impact of HIV/AIDS is likely to be greater in the workplace, both directly and indirectly. Recognising this, we have this year developed a policy on AIDS and the workplace. This policy guarantees the right of HIV infected employees to work for as long as they are able to maintain a productive life, guarantees their freedom from discrimination and harassment in the workplace, and commits ACON to workplace education and dispute procedures to ensure this. We are the first AIDS Council in Australia to develop such a policy.

Like other community organisations, ACON's staff can be disadvantaged in not having access to

some employee benefits that may get in other private or public sector employment. Superannuation is one of these, and we are looking at the possibility of establishing a fund.

As an employer of a large staff, ACON also has the responsibility to provide appropriate training for staff in skills and knowledge that both enhance and expand their capacity for effectively performing their work. ACON can provide a very effective training ground for further work in the area of AIDS. With this in mind, developing a comprehensive approach to staff development and training is on the agenda for next year. So too is the adoption of a suitable system of staff appraisal.

Premises

As any visitor to the ACON office in Sydney would be aware, space has always been at a premium. With the rapid increase in staff, the situation became even more critical.

The securing of additional premises in Riley Street, Surry Hills, relieved that pressure temporarily. However, by the end of the year, we are again near to capacity. Decisions about costly renovations have had to be foregone until we see what additional positions are granted under this year's State and Commonwealth Budgets.

The additional building enabled us to make a more rational physical arrangement of respective ACON Work Units (Education, Administration, Community Services). The concentration of community services in Riley Street is a good example of this. It approaches the ideal of a one stop shop for community services, physical care, and counselling support for people with HIV/AIDS. The co-location of the Bobby Goldsmith Foundation and of the Wollongong AIDS Project in Riley Street adds to this.

ACON has always offered what support it could to other community organisations working in AIDS. Continuing this practice, People Living With AIDS (NSW) and the Quilt Project are both at present making use of ACON's premises and resources. This can only benefit ACON in forging good relationships that enable work to be undertaken in areas that we are simply not resourced to take on ourselves and in the input to ACON's own programs coming from these relationships.

Branches

Last year we saw the establishment of the Hunter Region Branch of ACON. The branch has continued to grow and develop and has become an integral part of ACON's work outside Sydney. The success of our submission for a second staff position indicates that the State Health Department recognises the valuable role being played by the Branch.

I was, consequently, very pleased to travel to Lismore for the opening of our second Branch office, which already gives every indication of being as effective as that in the Hunter Region Branch. Again, the local community should be congratulated for its initiative in establishing the Northern Region Branch of ACON.

We have requested funds to establish other branches and offices in the next year. This is an important initiative. It makes ACON's services more accessible and responsive to the needs of local populations. Branches extend and strengthen the base of the organisation and bring it closer to achieving the aim of providing services to as broad a range of people as is possible.

It must be recognised that Branches need resourcing and support from the central office. Regular visits have been made by Sydney based staff to set up management and administrative structures, discuss programs, assist in volunteer training and so on. Branch staff have been encouraged and assisted to make visits to Sydney as well. Branches need a steady flow of information and the central office needs to keep abreast of Branch activities.

We are still in the early stages of working out these relationships and support functions. As more Branches and offices are established so the complexity and pressure on central office resources increases. We will have to monitor this carefully if we are to maintain what has to date been a largely successful beginning to the process of decentralisation.

Office Administration

Such a rapid growth in ACON in staff, branches and programs brings with it an increasing complexity to our financial and office administration. This has been a particular area of challenge to ACON during 1988/89. Adjustments to staff management and administration have been undertaken to complement our rapid growth.

We have purchased a very advanced accounting package to replace one bought only as a stop-gap some time ago. This should greatly simplify our cash management on a daily basis and improve storage and recall of data. This will prove beneficial in preparing funding submissions and keeping all sections of ACON informed about the status of their individual budget allocations and spending.

We have also upgraded and expanded our computer system allowing document storage and printing to be better shared.

Funding

ACON receives funding from a diverse range of sources, including the State Government, Commonwealth Government, the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations and various Commonwealth AIDS grant schemes.

While it is pleasing to note that funding levels increased significantly during the past 12 months, this funding is still insufficient to meet our needs, particularly in preventative educational work.

The completion of ACON's Strategic Plan gave us some very clear directions on where we need to expand our activities. We have acted by lodging over 35 separate funding submissions with the State

Government. Completion of this work was a huge undertaking and special thanks must go to the President for her work in coordinating the whole exercise.

Community Support Network

1988/89 concludes my first year as Executive Director of CSN.

It is pleasing to report that the CSN service is keeping pace with the demands of a significantly increasing caseload, not only in the inner city area but also in outer Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong. A review of recruiting, training and support procedures for volunteer carers resulted in a number of improvements to the service.

We plan to incorporate training in emotional support for carers being trained to care outside Sydney. A pilot training program incorporating emotional support was successfully undertaken in Newcastle during the year with support from the Anjali Project.

CSN is meeting its responsibilities not only because of dedicated staff, but also through the unifying efforts of carers and members of the CSN/ACON Liaison Committee, which plays a key role in managing CSN. I would like to pay a special tribute to the CSN Chairperson, Graeme Favel, who provided CSN/ACON staff with a tremendous amount of assistance during the past year.

Media

A significant amount of the Executive Director's work involves coordinating the media response of Council, backgrounding journalists on AIDS and making comment to the print and electronic media. Both the ACON Committee and staff are a valuable resource in this important work.

ACON's media profile has steadily improved during the past 3 years. We are becoming more proactive in the media. Most importantly, as our Strategic Planning document notes, ACON is regarded as an authoritative source of information and its views are respected by the media.

It is vital that the community response to AIDS be promoted and that we continue to strive to maintain a balance in media reporting between the views of the community groups and those of the medical profession and governments. The bias towards the medical viewpoint is still very evident, although we are making progress.

Overcoming this bias can be achieved through careful planning and by taking every opportunity to educate the media about AIDS. This approach is nearly always successful, but it is also time consuming and has to be balanced against the many other demands on our energies. More administrative and clerical support would provide extra time for the organisation to better promote community viewpoints in the media and elsewhere.

International Work

ACON's reputation as a successful and effective community organisation is now appreciated by a number of overseas countries and international organisations.

During 1988/89 ACON was invited to participate in various overseas AIDS activities.

At the invitation of the World Health

Organisation (WHO) I attended the first ever international meeting of non-government AIDS organisations, held in Vienna in February. Some 50 representatives from non-government AIDS organisations from around the world attended. I was a member of a small group formed at that meeting to draft a statement recognising the essential role of community organisations in the international response to AIDS. This statement was subsequently endorsed by WHO and resulted in an important resolution recognising the work of community AIDS organisations being adopted by the World Health Assembly.

I represented the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations at the 5th International Conference on AIDS in Montreal, where I presented a paper on *The Role of Community Organisations in the Australian Response to AIDS*.

Don Baxter, ACON's Education Programs Manager, participated in a special WHO planning workshop on preventative education for gay and bisexual men held in Geneva in May.

ACON's President, Levinia Crooks reported on the valuable work of the Wollongong University AIDS Project at the 5th International AIDS Conference. Levinia also attended a Conference on the role of tertiary institutions in AIDS held in Hong Kong and presented papers on the psychosocial aspects of AIDS and the work of Australian community AIDS organisations.

ACON is now receiving regular requests for advice and assistance from overseas countries, particularly in the Asian and Pacific regions. WHO has included ACON in its Sydney based AIDS training program for overseas politicians, medical practitioners, health administrators and community workers.

External Responsibilities

1988/89 has seen a considerable increase in external demands on ACON. As Australia's largest AIDS organisation this can only be expected.

The national AIDS strategy, initiatives involving the Australian National Council on AIDS (ANCA), involvement with the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations and requests from organisations, groups and governments for assistance on AIDS policy, were among just some of the external demands on ACON during the past year. Negotiating with governments and lobbying and briefing politicians about AIDS issues is also an increasing aspect of ACON's work.

As Executive Director, a great deal of my time is devoted to external activities. These responsibilities also affect other staff, especially the Education Programs Manager. And of course ACON Committee members are involved in a wide variety of legal, medical/scientific, economic and social issues relating to AIDS. Our external work nearly always has important implications for ACON, especially when it involves AIDS funding and policy which can impact on ACON's operation.

In recognition of the demands on ACON for policy advice, the ACON Committee recently decided to appoint an Executive Assistant/Policy Writer for a four month trial period. Already this has been successful in providing some relief to workload arising from requests for policy input and advice.

Nevertheless the overall growth in ACON's external responsibilities is placing strains on the organisation at all levels. The problem is compounded by the fact that ACON is under resourced in clerical, secretarial and administrative support.

It is vital that we maintain our important external commitments, not only for ACON but for the overall community response to AIDS. But maintaining a balance between internal and external responsibilities will present a continuing challenge for ACON during the next 12 months.

Conclusion

1988/89 has been an very busy and successful year for ACON. The whole organisation, from its staff through to its Committee and volunteers, have shown outstanding dedication to the fight against AIDS.

The next 12 months will see if this fight will be won. The community AIDS organisations and people with HIV/AIDS are doing their part, as are many of our colleagues in the medical/scientific profession. It is now up to Governments to provide us with the necessary resources and leadership and not to show signs of complacency which is threatening Australia's ability to contain the epidemic.

I conclude with some words of thanks. First, to the ACON staff team for their enormous efforts, personal support and good humour. Second, to Levinia Crooks, members of the ACON Committee and ACON/CSN volunteers for their many valuable contributions to ACON's work. Third, to the staff of the State Health Department's AIDS Bureau for their commitment and professionalism. Fourth, to the staff of the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations for their assistance to ACON.

Finally, special thanks to people with HIV/AIDS for their support and involvement in ACON which has been such a rewarding feature of the past 12 months.

Bill Whittaker
Executive Director

ADMINISTRATION SERVICES REPORT

Introduction

The primary focus of this Unit is the provision of support services to the whole organisation specifically personnel, financial, purchasing and general clerical services. Thus the mission of the Unit can be seen as ensuring that the organisation is properly resourced to enable overall organisational objectives and directions to be achieved effectively and efficiently. This is not always easy because of funding limitations.

During the year this mission was fulfilled with varying degrees of success as the organisation maintained its dramatic growth rates. This growth stretched the resources of the Unit highlighting certain needs for the future to ensure the Unit's overall efficiency.

Human Resources

The Unit's responsibilities in this area are the physical establishment of positions, staff recruitment, staff development, maintenance of personnel records, payroll, and occupational health and safety.

During this year the staff numbers increased from 15 to over 30, necessitating more formal procedures in certain areas. These included terms and conditions for casual employees, and guidelines and procedures for recruitment, travel allowances and leave application. As well in conjunction with the Management Committee the Unit is developing a staff appraisal system based on the peer review model.

As recognised by the Strategic Plan Council, needs to be more proactive in the area of human resources particularly staff development. A training program for Council's computer systems is currently being developed. Also required are orientation guidelines for new employees.

Overall the Unit was hamstrung by the lack of staff positions, and has been at times overwhelmed by these responsibilities. Limited resources has sometimes meant a crisis management approach which hopefully will be rectified in the new year by the recruitment of a Human Resources Officer.

Financial Management

The complexity of Council's operations are reflected in the wide spectrum of accounting tasks required. Besides general bookkeeping these vary from project management, job costing, stock control and product sales, to asset and investment management. The accounting package purchased in 1987 as a stop gap measure for \$200 became increasingly inadequate in handling those tasks along with turnover approaching \$3 million. Consequently Council approved the purchase of TetraPlan Business Accounting software. This package was selected on the basis of a report by the Australian Federation of

AIDS Organisations (AFAO) which had conducted a survey of accounting and financial reporting needs of all AIDS councils and examined accounting packages available to meet those needs.

This software provides many benefits to Council not previously available:

- (1) fulfilment of all external reporting requirements including those recommended in the Curran Commission of Audit regarding accrual accounting;
- (2) capital expenditure can be recorded against projects and in the balance sheet;
- (3) enhanced project reporting including comparative analysis and exception reporting;
- (4) productivity gains by eliminating manual or duplicated tasks;
- (5) provision of an accounting and financial infrastructure to facilitate expansion.

Conversion commenced in April with both accounting systems running in tandem until June for system testing purposes. Ian Malloy from AFAO was invaluable in the formative stages of conversion together with John Halford who has become the resident expert.

Once TetraPlan has been fully implemented a major review of accounting practices and procedures will commence. It is anticipated that procedures will be simplified and improvements will be made in cash management, cheque requisition turnaround and the accounts payable cycle. As the current payroll package cannot assign labour costs for an individual over more than one project, it is hoped to integrate payroll within the accounting system. This would also allow Council to offer direct depositing of wages to all staff instead of the present limited facility.

One important benefit of computerised financial systems is the improved collection and storage of financial data. This has enabled Council to prepare more realistic funding submissions and provide a consultancy service to other community organisations.

Information Systems

A grant from the NSW Department of Health enabled Council to embark on a major expansion of computer systems in the Sydney Office. A computer network with 11 terminals has been installed allowing printers and document storage to be shared. Council converted to WordPerfect which has emerged as the national standard for AIDS Councils. WordPerfect has additional advantages in that it can also be used for desktop publishing.

Council is now in the process of reviewing its requirements in other areas to improve information storage and retrieval. Alternative database management systems are being investigated which

offer greater flexibility, accessibility and user friendliness. Access to external information systems are also being examined particularly AIDS Daily Summary via OTC Dialcom.

Large quantities of paper based information such as journals, newspapers, newsletters, magazines, reports etc., create filing, storage and retrieval difficulties. Electronic storage and retrieval systems are being examined using scanners and optical character recognition software, as a more efficient alternative.

Accommodation

Satisfying accommodation needs is another responsibility of this unit. This encompasses lease negotiations, fit outs and building maintenance. Funding was received from different sources to establish, expand or refurbish premises leased by Council. Again, this has substantially increased the Administrative Unit's workload.

Branch Services

A lot of effort has been put into setting up and resourcing the branches by the Unit. The Unit

provided assistance onsite and remotely such as choosing premises, initiating accounts with local suppliers, ordering telephones, providing office equipment, establishing office and financial procedures. In the case of Lismore this also meant dealing with two major floods. Once on a firm footing the Unit continues to provide support by performing accounting and personnel functions.

General Administration

On a day to day basis, the Unit keeps the ACON machine well oiled ensuring that generally the mail is collected and sent, correspondence is registered and forwarded correctly, office supplies are there when required, photocopiers and printers are supplied, equipment maintained - the list is endless. Sean Hanis has approached these tasks enthusiastically, overhauling in particular the systems for ordering of office supplies, the file registry, the mailing and information distribution systems.

Kevin Gilding
Administration Manager

COMMUNITY SERVICES REPORT

Introduction

The Community Services Unit (CSU) has continued to develop and expand ACON's policies and programs for providing support and welfare services to people with HIV infection.

In developing new services we have attempted not to duplicate existing services, but to fill gaps within the range of services available.

We see that it is our role to develop better liaison strategies with other agencies and Government departments, to ensure that an appropriate range of community support and income care services for people with HIV infection is available.

The Unit has undergone some changes this year. ACON received enhancement funding in January which resulted in three new positions in the Unit. This increase in staff, and that in the Education Unit, put pressure on the available space in the Sophia Street offices, and made it necessary to look for other premises. These were found at 391 Riley Street and the Unit was relocated there, together with the Bobby Goldsmith Foundation, the Willongong AIDS Project and Quilt Project.

The name of the Unit was changed from the Welfare Unit to the Community Services Unit in recognition that the Unit's programs were broader than welfare services and to develop the concept of support and care, not welfare.

Community Support Network

CSN staff and activities have continued to be managed within the Unit.

The client load has increased by over 100% since last year and more carers are now needed to cover shifts.

With the addition of a full-time Community Services Officer, we have been able to increase activities such as publicity and recruitment. This has resulted in a cross section of volunteers joining CSN. 8 training courses have been run in Sydney and we are now running day courses alternating with weekend courses. 131 carers have been trained. These activities remain a priority.

CSN is liaising closely with community nurses who assist with assessments of clients and supervision of care.

A CSN/Ankali course was run in Newcastle in March/April this year and 2 carers are now available in the Hunter area. A CSN Co-ordinator is based at the ACON Branch in Newcastle to co-ordinate activities there.

Following the success of this combined CSN/Ankali effort another course was run in Willongong in May/June. There is now a small group of carers available to provide a service in that area.

The CSN/ACON liaison committee has been meeting monthly and is working well. Special thanks to Judith Rasonakis of the Triamphiela Centre, for her contribution to this committee. Judith resigned from the committee during the year.

Projects

Accommodation Project

The Unit has focused on developing services to address the accommodation needs of people with HIV as we recognise these present significant difficulties for many people getting sick with HIV.

In September last year a private benefactor donated to ACON 6 "bedchamber flats" to use for accommodation for people with HIV infection. These were occupied in February after renovations had been completed.

The units are specifically for those awaiting Department of Housing Priority accommodation and are therefore considered to be emergency accommodation. We have been able to achieve 100% occupancy since that time and have a waiting list of 2 or 3 people at any one time.

The other project the Unit has initiated is the Share Accommodation register for those looking for someone to share their accommodation and for those seeking accommodation. This has only recently been advertised and already there has been a good response.

ACON facilitates a Crisis Accommodation meeting every 6 weeks to enable social workers, accommodation agency staff, Department of Housing staff, representatives of hostels and other interested agencies to get together to discuss current issues.

HIV Support Program

HIV Peer Support groups commenced at Riley Street in May. This program is based on successful peer support educational model in Australia and overseas, aimed at preventing the spread of HIV and maintaining behaviour change.

These groups are intended to provide support and education to those infected with HIV and to focus primarily on those who are still well.

The groups are closed, with 6-8 participants and an experienced facilitator. It is intended that they set their own agenda for the twelve weeks that they meet. 2-3 groups are now meeting weekly.

In addition to the groups a number of information nights have been held to inform and update people infected with HIV about treatments available and monitoring health status.

Posters, pamphlets and kits are planned for the future, to specifically address the many issues for those who are infected.

Transport Service

In May this year ACON was funded to provide a transport service for PLWAs. The need for this service was pressing with the increase in clinics at hospitals and the Day Centre moving to opening 5 days a week.

There was already a transport service in the inner city capable of providing such a service – Community Transport, East Sydney – willing to extend their hours, and we contracted this service to them. Community Transport will co-ordinate and administer the service 5 days a week.

PLWA Vitamin Service

The Vitamin Service continues to be well used. Sales have increased this year as more people become aware of the service.

A review of stock is planned, as is an increase in the range of products to include food supplements.

Other Activities

The Community Services Manager has continued to develop and foster relationships with other professionals working in this area. She has also raised with Government policy makers in the areas of Home Care and Home and Community Care services, to clarify guidelines on use of these services. She has participated actively on the management committee of the East Sydney 118 Hostel and continued to represent the Council's interests on State AIDS committees.

Anne Malcolm
Community Services Manager



A group of volunteer carers from the Community Support Network

EDUCATION SERVICES REPORT

General Overview

Introduction

1988/89 saw both expansion and consolidation of our vigorous HIV/AIDS education programs directed to both the gay and general community.

Commonwealth and N.S.W. funds allowed the employment of 6 new project staff, to assist the four "core" staff in the Unit. An internal management review was necessary in early 1989 to ensure appropriate changes were made in management structure in the light of this expansion.

The Council sees five directions for HIV/AIDS education.

- HIV support education information on treatments, trials, nutrition, complementary therapies, lifestyle management and relationship issues for people living with HIV/AIDS.
- Gay community programs affirming, extending and maintaining the response of the gay community to the stresses caused by the epidemic, and reinforcing commitment to safe sex and safe needle use.
- Programs for men who have sex with men, special education outreach projects for men outside the gay community who may not have identified with or received "gay" safe sex messages.
- Information for the general public to lessen fear, reduce stigma and prejudice and promote safe practices; includes mailouts of brochures, phone counselling, making speakers available.
- Advice and consultation with government, education, employer, union, welfare, and community organisations, to ensure the optimal policy and education response to the epidemic.

Education Working Groups

Planning and review of the Council's education programs occurs through the Education Working Group, made up of volunteers and staff. With the scope of our programs now being so wide the Education Working Group coordinates an overall policy and planning, and specific working groups or steering committees have been established for projects.

The Rural Working Group has provided valuable guidance for the project officer, Michael Lockhart, and a steering committee has been established for the Living Well With HIV Information Events series. The Summer Campaign steering group was particularly successful in attracting highly skilled people from the gay community, especially from the advertising industry (Iboul Pach, Adrian Ogier), music (Andrew T. Wilson, Paul Gray), arts and theatre (Chris Lewis, Gaeane Murphy, Michael Rogowski), and ecclesiastical (then) Mother Inferior industries.

International Recognition

The quality of ACON's programs was recognised internationally with the World Health Organisation selecting Sydney as one of the 10 key cities to report at its (first ever) Workshop on Gay Community Education Programs in Geneva in June, 1989. The Sydney presentation by Gary Dowsett (ACON/Macquarie SAQA Project) and Don Baxter clearly indicated more sophisticated means of community involvement in program design and delivery than other cities, and was very well received.

Government and Interagency Liaison

Considerable energy and resources are devoted to policy and program planning and advice with both government departments and committees and other non-government agencies developing HIV/AIDS education programs. Don Baxter continued his membership on the Australian National Council on Aids (ANCA), including on its Education Committee, and his co-chairing the ANCA Gay & Bisexual Working Group. ACON is also represented on the N.S.W. M.A.C. Education Subcommittee and on CRIDA's Aids and IVDC Advisory Committee.

For the Commonwealth's planned "Ethnic Aids Campaign" ACON organised a consultation for their campaign planners with a wide range of gay men from non-English speaking backgrounds. The twenty-five participants were from ten different language groups.

The Council co-operated closely with the second Westmead Hospital Beats Survey, with Garry Bennett and his team using the ACON Resource Centre for the phone survey arm of this study of closeted and bisexual men.

ANCA Gay & Bisexual Educators' Workshop

ACON organized and hosted the second National Gay & Bisexual Educators' Workshop in April, 1989. 47 Participants attended an intensive review and planning weekend, leading to detailed proposals to the Commonwealth and state governments for expansion and consolidation of education programs for gay and bisexual men. Paul van Royk's comprehensive review paper for the Workshop provides a valuable summary of programs directed to gay and bisexual men undertaken nation-wide up to June 1989.

Other Conference Presentations

Education Unit staff have taken part and presented papers at several conferences. Don Baxter attended international conferences in Geneva and Montreal. At the Third National AIDS Conference in Hobart in August 1988, he gave a presentation on "Directions for Education Programs for Gay and Bisexual Men". Ken Davis gave a presentation on "An International

Perspective on HIV and Travel/Immigration Policies" at the US National Lesbian and Gay Health Conference in San Francisco in April 1989. He also presented at the Australian Council for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled Conference on Sexuality and Men with Disabilities in Sydney in mid 1988.

Several staff took part in the AIDS Bureau's First Conference of NSW HIV/AIDS Educators in Sydney in February 1989. Ken Davis presented four workshops on the politics of the epidemic there. In October 1988, Nicolaas van Schalkwyk represented the Unit at the national Sex Industry and AIDS conference in Melbourne.

Volunteer Induction Evenings

The Unit continued the Volunteer Induction evenings begun early in 1988 until September. The evenings introduced potential volunteers to basic issues and facts about HIV/AIDS and the range and roles community organisations developed to respond to the epidemic.

Programs and Projects

Gay Venues Liaison

Barry Fitzgerald and Nicolaas van Schalkwyk from the Education Unit have been in regular contact with the owners, managers and staff of most businesses serving the gay community in Sydney. In addition to the annual summer education campaign, this has resulted in better distribution of safe sex promotional materials.

The major achievement has been increased availability of condoms and lubricants in sex-on-premises establishments.

With the expansion of large dance parties, liaison with organisers to encourage safe sex and needle use practices has taken considerable staff time.

ACON is pleased to provide resources and assistance to venues, and to dance party organisers to ensure that the commitment of the gay community to AIDS prevention is reinforced, and that unsafe sex or needle use does not occur.

In particular the Education Unit would like to thank the Mardi Gras, Bacchanalia, Pride, Polynesians Social Club, Kona Karate Klases, King Steam, Numbers, Expectations, the Oxford, Flinders, Bahman Jura Hall, Lincoln, Newtown and Imperial Hotels, Madnight Shift, Scooters, the Base, Jayar Leather, and Blacktown Venus Shop.

Safe Sex Outreach Teams

Teams of appropriately dressed volunteers, often known as the Super Secret Society of Simply Stunning Safe Sex Shuts, have continued to distribute tens of thousands of lubricant sachets, condoms, and safe sex/needle use cards to major community social events, such as World AIDS Day, the Mardi Gras Parade and Party, Bacchanalia, Sleaze Ball, and the Erotica Party.

The presence of our talented, glamorous and humorous AIDS educators in bars and at gala events has been one of the most popular AIDS Council endeavours.

Summer Campaign - 1988/89

The annual Summer Campaign is ACON's major HIV/AIDS awareness and education campaign

directed to the gay men. Research continues to demonstrate the need for community development programs to reinforce norms of safe and supportive behaviour to combat the epidemic.

The context in which the Campaign was designed in mid-late 1988 was characterised by a perceived onset of widespread depression brought on by:

- a) Lack of medical advances reported at the Stockholm International Aids Conference;
- a) depressing figures apparently confirming progression rates higher than previously believed;
- aa) recognition that Sydney now had a large body of men with "long-term" HIV-infection, and
- av) people with HIV feeling that previous campaigns often overlooked their different needs.

By the 1988/89 summer we therefore developed a multi-faceted campaign aimed at achieving three objectives. These were:

- 1) To confirm the continuing need for men who have sex with men to consistently practise safe sex.
- 2) To congratulate the Gay community on its safe sex achievements.
- 3) To strongly support those people currently living with HIV infection by emphasising the benefits of living positively and encouraging appropriate monitoring/trust/sexual/lifestyle decisions.

The "OUT" concept we chose to complement the overall Mardi Gras spirit of being out in the streets having fun. Around this general theme we developed three campaign themes. These were -

• **OUT Loving:** - Communicating being out, finding new lovers, loving safely and loving warmly for people with HIV/AIDS.

• **OUT Living:** - Incorporating a strong gay pride message of being out of closet, both as a lifestyle choice and about HIV infection, and an equally strong message of congratulations about outliving AIDS as a community.

• **OUT Lasting:** - Another gay pride concept referring to the community "lasting out" against our critics, and supporting the determination to outlast the epidemic.

Overall this strategy invited the gay community to openly celebrate their lifestyles, achievements and futures.

The campaign was launched in early December in all the major venues by Mother Inferior of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, and a supporting cast of "hot" men and drag personalities.

Over the campaign period, which peaked in February to coincide with the Mardi Gras festival, a range of support materials was released: -

- Campaign logo, T-shirts, badges, mega disco hit with accompanying video.

- Press advertisements – OLT poster; Inseparable anal sex; Congratulations poster; Living Well 2 Conference
- 6 Tips for Hard Cocks, a pamphlet explicitly showing proper condom use.

A number of events were also part of the "OUT" campaign. –

- Outspeaking Youth seminar
- SATW and WARP Research Project Report-backs in the community
- OLT Theatre presentations of a safe sex cabaret (in association with Mardi Gras Association)

The final statement of the campaign was achieved by the 12 foot tall lifesaver float in the Mardi Gras parade, carrying a banner congratulating the community on it's safe sex achievements.

A post-campaign evaluation, conducted by an independent research consultant (report available), confirmed the overall success of the campaign to achieve the set objectives. This research clearly indicated which campaign items contributed to this success and which did not, and ACON can aim towards an even more productive education, information and advertising program for the next summer.

Western Sydney Beats Project

The Western Sydney Beats Project, funded as an innovative pilot outreach project by the NSW AIDS Bureau, began in November, 1988. Two full-time officers cover the area from the Blue Mountains through to Liverpool. The project targets men who use public areas such as parks or toilet blocks – "beats" – for having sex with other men or for meeting other men for the purpose of arranging to have sex with them at some other venue.

AIDS prevention education programmes for men who have sex with men had been primarily concentrated on the gay community. However, both the Westmead Hospital Beats Study and the ACON/Macquarie University SAPW project found a large number of men who have sex with other men but who do not identify with or participate in the institutions of the openly gay community, and for whom the only AIDS prevention education was often that which appeared in the general media directed at the community at large. As a consequence their level of knowledge about safe sexual practices was inadequate.

The Beats Project aims to provide accurate and appropriate information about HIV transmission and safe sex practices to men at beats, to make the possibility of HIV transmission a personal reality for them; to encourage behaviour change to safer sex practices; and, where feasible, to develop peer support for safe sex practices.

As education with this target group is extraordinarily difficult, the project is based on face-to-face contact with the men while they are visiting a beat. During these contacts, project workers aim to discuss HIV transmission and the individuals perceived risk; accurate information about safe sex practices and proper condom use; and safe needle use. Project workers also provide written information, condoms, and where appropriate, refer clients (e.g. to ACON's Youth Peer Education Program, or places in Western Sydney where clients can be receive confidential HIV testing).

To reinforce the verbal message given by project officers, stickers with safe sex and needle use messages, along with telephone numbers for further information and counselling are placed throughout Sydney beats.

Workers always work in pairs for safety.

An important part of the project has been liaison



with local police and local councils, who have generally responded favourably and given their support to the project. The liaison work done with local police by Sir Fred Miller of the Police Gay Liaison Unit has been particularly useful.

Project workers have been encouraged by the response from men in the target group, who mostly have been approachable and indeed, keen to improve their level of knowledge regarding HIV.

The effectiveness of reaching and educating this target group has been particularly rewarding to the project workers emphasising it's importance, the need to maintain it, and the need to expand it to encompass all of Sydney.

National Rural Education Project

The Rural Outreach Project, funded by the Federal Department of Community Services and Health through AFAC, commenced on the 14th of July 1988. The objectives of this project are to prevent the spread of HIV between men who have sex with men who live in non-metropolitan areas, and to stimulate a local community level of response to the epidemic.

A number of strategies have been used to achieve these objectives.

Direct contact has been made with members of the target group as individuals (at bars, or through responding to classified advertisements in gay magazines), and as groups (e.g. gay social groups).

Once contact has been made, we have supplied resources (including condoms and lubricant), visited regional areas, run workshops, and set up referral networks, in accordance with the needs of the target group in various areas.

The project has worked with health care professionals in regional areas with a view to enabling these workers to be able to more appropriately respond to the issues of the target group. It is clear that much of the support and care in non-metropolitan areas will have to be undertaken by generalist and not AIDS-specific services. Direct mail has been utilised to make contact with rural health care providers. We currently have over 1600 doctors and community health workers on our mailing list. This has been used to write to relevant workers when we are about to visit areas and also allows for new and revised print resources to be sent out automatically.

Advertising has also been used to reach men who have sex with men, to debunk the myth that AIDS is a big city problem, and encourage them to seek more information. Advertisements aimed at isolated gay identifying men were placed in gay magazines. These provide information about safe sexual practices in a very positive way.

A community service television advertisement has also been made which is directed at men who have sex with men but do not identify as being gay/bi-sexual/homosexual. This advertisement encourages people to seek further information.

One of the most tangible outcomes of the project so far has been the formation of the North Coast Regional Branch of ACON. This branch involves a wide range of local people including gay men, Ab+ people, workers in the health and health promotion areas as well as people involved in the IVDU community.

A comprehensive final report from the Rural

Project is available from the ACON Resource centre on request.

Youth Peer Education Project

The Youth Peer Education project has been running for one year. It is targeted at young gay men.

The program is designed to set up groups of "peers" who will support each other in always practicing safe sex.

The program starts with a "Fun and Esteem" workshop run over three evenings. These are held monthly. About 10 to 15 people attend each workshop. They are all strangers, who work through various issues together by discussing and sharing experiences. They are designed to empower and enable young gay men to practice safe sex, to improve assertiveness skills, particularly in sexual negotiations, and to have a well-developed sense of their own esteem and self-worth.

The second stage offers a choice of either a one night a week drop-in group or a 7 week one night a week, "Going Deeper" workshop. The drop in group is social but always framed in a safe sex setting, and provides the only peer support for many of these men, some of whom are too young to attend traditional gay institutions, bars. The "Going Deeper" workshop carries on the work covered in the earlier workshop but on a deeper level.

To date the project has run

- 12 "Fun and Esteem" workshops
- 3 facilitators workshops
- 52 drop in groups in the City (between 20 and 30 people attend)
- 10 drop-in groups in Parramatta (between 5 and 10 people attend)
- Started one "Going Deeper" workshop
- 1 young gay Xmas party with 150 participants
- 1 young lesbian and gay youth forum with 50 people

Through the year 100 young men under the age of 26 attended at least one of the workshops offered. The client group included young men from various social and economic backgrounds, and from different geographical locations with some emphasis on young men whose social circumstances put them at potentially increased risk.

The bulk of young men were recruited in venues by volunteers who had previously attended a workshop. About 25% were referred to the project by youth or welfare outreach services.

Although the project is not directed at dealing with issues related to HIV infection, these issues have been dealt with. About 20 to 25% of the client group has been HIV positive. In the same way, coming out for young gay or bisexual men is a major issue in the workshops. For 20 to 25% of the workshop participants these workshops represent the first contact they have with other men that have sex with men.

In the last two months we have established a Drop-in group in Parramatta. We intend to run a "Fun and Esteem" group there in the next month.

The facilitators workshops allow our volunteers to become trained as facilitators and run their own "Fun and Esteem" workshops.



Participants in a youth peer education workshop for deaf and hearing young gays

The program clearly provides a much needed support for young gay men.

Women and AIDS Project

In March 1989 Pamela Blacker began employment with the Education Unit, with AIDS Bureau funding for six months part-time work assessing and reporting on the needs of women in the epidemic.

This has involved more than a hundred consultations with women with HIV/AIDS, women health workers, women carers and partners of men with AIDS, women prisoners and corrective services staff, counsellors and social workers, women refuge workers, lesbians, women sex workers, women working in drug and alcohol rehabilitation, nurses and journalists.

HIV positive women are often isolated and extremely concerned about safeguarding their privacy. They also frequently have the added burden of families to care for, and sometimes feel pressure to place the family needs above their own personal welfare. Some HIV positive women have the stress of caring for already sick partners or children. Some have problems in relation to drug use.

Because of this, support groups for women with HIV are being established.

Pam's work is identifying great needs for easy to read and practical safe sex and negotiation skills print materials directed at different groups of women. One specific set of concerns has been addressed by the publication of a poster, in co-operation with the Corrective Services Department, with safe practices messages for women prisoners and partners of prisoners.

Planning for 1989/90

The ACON Strategic Plan and ANCA Gay & Bisexual Educator's Workshop have provided useful

frameworks for identifying program priorities in this stage of the epidemic. The Education Unit developed a comprehensive set of submissions for the N.S.W. government, as an AEO for the Commonwealth government, to adequately respond to the epidemic.

A number of priority areas have been identified. Men with Non-English speaking background have long been a priority, and funds for a pilot project were finally received in June 1989, seven months after the project approval by the Commonwealth. Outreach work among gay men who use IV drugs is now vital as governments have consistently failed to fund such projects in the past.

ACON is planning to develop a far more systematic and comprehensive education program for people with HIV. Plans are in hand for a series of information evenings built around the "Living Well with HIV" theme as part of HIV Support Officer Terry Gidlett's program. These evenings will be supplemented by an active HIV/AIDS treatments "fact-sheets" publication program.

Don Baxter
Education Programs Manager

INFORMATION SERVICES

Telephone Information and Counselling

ACON offers a telephone advice and information service on AIDS issues between 10am and 6pm on weekdays.

Our system of recording data on this service has been undergoing revision, hence data on a full year's operation is not available.

Data available from April to June 1989, gives an indication of the use of the service, however, 212 calls were received in that period.

Characteristics of callers

- 85% were local callers, 15% were non metro or interstate (the service does not have a 003 number).
- 35% of the callers were women
- 23% were heterosexual men
- 11% were gay identifying men
- 11% were from non-gay identifying men who have sex with men

when they were able to be identified as such –

- 17% were partners, family, lovers or close friends of PWVA
- 12% of the callers were people living with AIDS (including HIV1)
- 9% were sex industry clients
- 8% were from community organisations or workplaces
- 3% identified as drug injectors
- 2% identified as sex workers
- 2% identified as blood recipients

Issues discussed (more than one issue may be recorded for each caller)

- Transmission (in order of decreasing frequency) – "casual" transmission (35%); anal sex (27%); condoms and lubricants (22%); vaginal intercourse (22%); anal intercourse (20%); blood transfusion, products or accidents (5%); injectable drugs and needle use (7%); pregnancy and reproductive issues (4%).
- Health (in order of decreasing frequency) – HIV antibody testing (42%); emotional issues (20%); HIV/AIDS symptoms (18%); healthy lifestyles and nutrition (15%); alternative/complementary therapies (9%); other sexually transmitted diseases (5%).
- Other issues (in order of decreasing frequency) – AIDS related discrimination (12%); travel/migration restrictions (10%); occupational health/employment issues (7%); legal issues (4%); insurance (3%).

It should be noted that the nature of the calls and the characteristics of the callers change quite markedly at different times in the year, influenced by media coverage of AIDS, or large education programs. In other months, women have been the majority of callers, and school or tertiary students have been more significant.

In April AIDS Council installed a telephone typewriter (TTY) for communication with deaf and hearing impaired people with an independent number, 381 4925. In July 1989 the AIDS education project at the Deaf Society launched an excellent video, and began distribution of brochures on AIDS throughout the Australian deaf communities. This video advertises the ACON TTY. Use of the TTY will expand as the number becomes better known in that constituency.



The logo for ACON's highly successful 1989 Summer Campaign.

Information Material Production

ACON has continued to produce a comprehensive range of printed information on AIDS and HIV infection throughout the year. This year's print campaigns have been more mindful of inclusion of HIV infected people and recognition of the gay community's unprecedented response to the epidemic.

The 1988-89 Summer Education Campaign, *Out Living, Out Loving, Out Lasting*, incorporated information specifically for HIV infected people on issues of treatments, drug trials, and lifestyle, as well as the traditional safe sex and safe needle use messages. Elements of this campaign are listed in the Summer Campaign Report.

New materials have also been produced for various target groups of our new education programs. Boat stickers and condom wallets have been produced for the Western Sydney Boats Project and the Rural Project, as well as postcards for advertising the Youth Peer Education Program. A special information kit on AIDS for lesbians was produced as part of a seminar on Lesbians and AIDS organised by Sian ni Chrochain from the Women & AIDS Working Group.

In response to the World Navies visit in September 1988 ACON produced a special poster urging those visiting sailors to always use condoms for sex with women or men and to never share needles to inject drugs.

More than 25,000 wallets containing condoms, water based lubricant and condom use guidelines have been distributed at various large dance parties including Mardi Gras, Sledge Ball, Safe Sex Ball and various Bacchanalia Parties.

Both the pamphlets *Safe Sex & AIDS* (200,000 copies) and *AIDS & Your Rights* (25,000 copies) have

been revised and reprinted this year due to high demand exhausting previous supplies. *5 Tips for Hard Cocks* was also distributed nationally in addition to the Summer Campaign launch.

ACON's information newsletter *FRONTLINE* has been reviewed in the light of feedback from ACON membership and other service organisations working in the HIV/AIDS area. A changed format and a more regular production timetable is being examined.

Work is currently under way for three new pamphlets. One on safe sex guidelines for S & M, one on oral sex, and another addressing the issue of gay men and general sexual health. These should be available through ACON within the next few months.

Information Distribution

ACON is a major distributor of AIDS information in the State, nationally, and internationally.

In addition to the material ACON itself produces, ACON stocks leaflets and posters from other AIDS Councils, the NSW and Commonwealth governments, the Centre for Information and Education on Drugs and Alcohol (CEIDA), Streetwise Coaches, the Aboriginal Health Services, the Deaf Society of NSW, and a number of other community organisations developing AIDS related material.

Requests for mailed information were overwhelming staff in the Education Unit, and could only be met with the consistent assistance of many volunteers. In September, 1988, ACON hired a full time worker to take charge of information distribution. Stocks have now been expanded and regularised; new ordering forms have been introduced; and distribution is monitored on computer records.



Two examples of educational material produced in 1988/89

The volume of information distribution has risen dramatically, as has the speed of response. In the March quarter of 1989, 14,084 items were mailed in response to written or phone requests.

In addition to responding to specific requests, new products have to be dispatched in bulk. In the Month of June, 1989, for example, 20,000 copies of the second edition of *Safe Sex and AIDS* were mailed out, including 1164 copies to NSW country doctors. Also in that month, 25,000 copies of the second edition of *AIDS and Your Rights* were mailed nationwide.

Resource Library

The past few months has seen the total reorganisation of the resource library at the AIDS Council. The increasing number of requests for information made to the Education Unit staff in the areas of treatment information, policy development, and educational resources has made it necessary to develop a system of gathering and storing information so that it is easily accessible to those who need it.

As at June, 1989, our resource collection has over 70 subscriptions to various journals, newsletters and periodicals, much of which is up-to-date treatment information for people with AIDS. We have approximately 60 different educational video tapes, 50 audio tapes (largely of national and international conferences on AIDS), and over 150 books on the wide variety of social, educational and medical issues surrounding HIV/AIDS. Also, the Council maintains a collection of media clippings on the subject from all major newspapers in Australia, and houses a variety of articles, policy papers and documentation of educational strategies developed both in Australia and overseas.

The collection and its usage has now reached a stage that employment of at least a part-time librarian is imperative for its continued effective use.

Plans are currently in place for the development of a centralised computer listing of resource materials available from the Albion Street Centre, Family Planning Association and the AIDS Council of NSW which will greatly increase the accessibility of HIV/AIDS information throughout the community.

Liaison

The Education Unit is approached by a range of organisations for assistance and guidance in planning their response to AIDS: how to deal with sick workers, clients or students; how to minimise discrimination; occupational health and safety; preventive AIDS education. This may involve provision of reference material, model policies, or bulk information brochures and posters. It often involves advice on how to organise staff or membership education packages, which videos are available, whether AIDS Council can send speakers, and so on. This productive interaction with other organisations takes up a significant segment of Education Unit staff time. In addition, people from other AIDS Councils in Australia, and from overseas governments and AIDS organisations often visit to familiarise themselves with education programs here.

Employers who have consulted with the Education Unit include Coles New World, Australia Post, State Bank, CFC, Kuringai, Parramatta and Wyong Councils, Commonwealth Department of Community Services and Health, NSW Housing Department, Travelodge, the Opera House, Boehringer Mannheim, Bond Brewing, Consolidated Press, Qantas, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, State Transit Authority, Broadcasting Tribunal, Alcan, the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Westpac, Telecom, and Greentings Hotels.

Educational institutions consulting with the Education Unit have included several religious and state high schools, Macquarie University, University of Western Sydney, University of Technology, TAFE head office, St George TAFE, Bankstown TAFE, School of Architecture at Sydney University, Teachers Federation, Mitchell CAE, Randwick TAFE, and Sydney Institute of Education.

Community, health and service organisations consulting with the Education Unit have included the Boxing Association, several childcare centres, the Youth Affairs Council, Talking Books, Inceptor Services, Public Interest Advocacy Centre, Homecare, Salvation Army, Greek Welfare, Department of Social Security, Cumberland, Macquarie and Royal's hospitals, Grief Support, NSW Catholic Youth Ministries, Mt St Margaret's Hospital, several youth refuges, and the Intellectual Disabilities Council.

Overseas AIDS workers who have visited in the last year include people from Fiji, Britain, USA, Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, New Zealand, and Quebec.

Community Development Support

As a community-based organisation, one of ACON's operating principles is the fostering of community groups' responses to the epidemic. In many cases the Education Unit has been of assistance over a longer term for independent work on AIDS. Examples include:

- *Sache*, the Latin American/Spanish AIDS Support Network, which has held training seminars, done broad mailouts on HIV/AIDS to Spanish community groups, elected a management committee, established contacts in Latin America, and staffs a desk part time at AIDS Council.
- The Deaf HIV/AIDS Education Project, which now has a funded position located at the Deaf Society. HIV and safe sex workshops for deaf gay men and lesbians have been held at AIDS Council, a telephone typewriter installed, Australian Sign Language classes began for ACON workers and volunteers, and deaf gay men integrated into the youth peer education groups. The project at the Deaf Society has produced an excellent video and information brochure.
- The pilot Primary Schools AIDS Project, located at the Inner City Education Centre, which has developed an education package through work in 11 inner Sydney schools.
- A project, based at the Family Planning Association, to develop HIV/AIDS education material for developmentally disabled people.

- The Gay and Lesbian Immigration Task Force, which has held special HIV/AIDS workshops for its members and advisers at ACON, and has been jointly engaged with ACON in lobbying against travel and immigration restrictions based on HIV/AIDS.
- World AIDS Day on 1 December each year, as organised by a committee at the NSW AIDS Bureau. The Education Unit has input into this committee and shares in the preparatory tasks. In 1988 Terry Cablett was hired by the Bureau as the WAD co-ordinator.
- In addition the AIDS Bureau invite Education Unit staff to assist in training seminars for its regional and ethnic staff.
- Streetwise Comics, who have now produced three comics dealing with AIDS.
- Student Initiatives in Community Health who have issued a safe sex poster for heterosexuals, have spurred AIDS awareness efforts on campus, and are convening national seminars on sexual health and AIDS promotion.
- Radio journalists, in particular those working on the Public Radio AIDS Education Project located at 2SER FM, and funded through the Commonwealth government. Simon Denahoe represents ACON on the steering committee of this project.
- The Education Unit was involved in discussions between concerned individuals and the AIDS Bureau on the need for talking books on basic AIDS issues to be distributed initially to the 15,000 Royal Blind Society subscribers, in the same way that braille and talking book material was mailed out in the US and UK national education programs. As yet this initiative is unfunded.
- The Haemophilic Society who are running a project to educate nursing home staff about HIV/AIDS, with the co-operation of ACON and PISA presenters.

Speakers Bureau

The Speakers Bureau program was established in June 1987 as a means of training volunteers to answer the large numbers of requests for information talks about AIDS from different groups in the general community.

Speakers from ACON can give valuable up-to-date, non-judgemental information about the epidemic. Basic talks about AIDS serve to dispel misapprehensions, popularise safe sex and needle use practices, and initiate explicit discussions on AIDS issues. The presentations are often the first time that people in the audience can ask questions about AIDS, often the first time they have knowingly encountered a "member of a high risk group" or a person with HIV/AIDS.

In the year ending June 30 1988, 124 presentations were given by volunteers and staff, with a total audience of 5665. The presentations can be divided as follows:

- 28% were at campuses, or TAFE colleges
- 15% were at support or youth organisations
- 13% were to health workers
- 12% were in workplaces
- 11% were in service clubs or community groups

- 10% were at state schools
- 4% were to religious organisations
- 4% were in private or religious schools
- 4% were in prisons

With the appointment in June 1989 of Lindsay Daines as the first full-time co-ordinator, we envisage that a major volunteer recruitment and training campaign can take place in the second half of the year. We aim to increase the number of presentations, upgrade audio-visual and print resources for speakers, begin more deliberate targeting of potential audiences, and create new presentation models to address specific interests.

In the recent period, the number of requests for speakers who are people living with AIDS/HIV has increased. We plan to work in co-operation with the TIVA Coalition to improve our capacity to meet these invitations.

Ken Davis
Senior Education Officer

ACON BRANCHES

HUNTER REGION BRANCH

The Hunter Region Branch of ACON has had an extremely successful and active year. The aims and objectives set for the Branch have been achieved. The Islington Road office has remained an easily accessible, anonymous and non-institutional setting for all our services, allowing us to reach our primary target groups at a grass roots level. As a result, an estimated 80% of individuals using our services have been either gay, bisexual men, or intravenous drug users.

The Branch has an office in Islington, two staff, and 41 volunteers.

Education

The Branch has been actively involved in HIV/AIDS education throughout the area. Not only have we provided ongoing education for our volunteers through the monthly network meetings, we have also had the opportunity to provide education to other community groups through shopping centre displays, banks, fetes, trade fairs, youth expos, community centres, schools, colleges, universities, gyms, hospitals etc.

Our work has been well received. In many cases further contacts were made and additional information was sought. This has added further to the dissemination of accurate and up-to-date information throughout the community.

Community Support Network

The CSN service is now established and is working in close liaison with ACON and the Royal Newcastle Hospital AIDS service.

A training session for carers was held in March/April 1989 over two weekends, covering ACON and CSN training.

Counselling

There was a consistent demand for counselling across the full range of those affected by HIV/AIDS - those who were HIV infected, their lovers, family and friends, and individuals who may have put themselves at risk. A variety of problem areas have been dealt with such as HIV infection, drug use, discrimination, personal difficulties, relationship problems, legal issues, health and safety issues, loss and grieving, self-esteem, and adjustment disorders.

Our service is now well-established. We have developed a good referral network of related services for those who we consider need further assistance.

Condom Distribution

The office has continued to be venue for free condom distribution. The Branch also regularly distributes condoms at gay dances and benefits.

Antibody Testing

The Islington Road office provides a free and confidential HIV antibody testing service that includes pre- and post test counselling. This service operates in conjunction with the Hunter Immunology Unit. Testing is provided every Tuesday morning between 9.30 a.m. and 12.30 p.m. The service has proved popular, with 41 people being tested between June 1988 and April 1989.

Production of Materials

Since the inception of the Branch there has been a range of material produced especially for local use: screen printed t-shirts with safe sex logos, stickers, leaflets advertising the centre's services.

Community Support and Response

The centre's services are continually expanding and our success is due to the support we have received from affiliated organisations and individuals, from volunteers, ACON committee members, ACON Sydney, the Royal Newcastle Hospital, and the Gay Support Group.

The Branch regularly holds fundraisers, together with the Gay Support Group, and the money raised has gone to the AIDS ward at Royal Newcastle Hospital and to McKillop House, a residence for people with HIV/AIDS from outside of Newcastle who require accommodation while in the city to receive treatment or for people requiring respite care.

Generally the response to the ACON centre by the community at large has been good. We have experienced no negative feedback or discrimination in the past and we hope this will continue. Our service has provided many individuals with help and support which in other circumstances would not have been available to them if our service did not exist.

Yvonne Gough
Coordinator

Gail Maffesoni
Administrative Assistant

NORTH COAST REGIONAL BRANCH

The North Coast Regional Branch was formed in November 1988. In February 1989, funding was received from the State Health Department. A Management Committee was formed, two staff appointed, and premises located in Lismore. The Committee have worked hard in supporting staff and in making ACON and its resources known in

the area. The Committee has had to contend with changes of membership, but looks forward to consolidating after the AGM in September this year. The Clinical Assistant has resigned and the position has been re-advertised.

Premises

After a rather wet start (heavy rain has not been restricted to Sydney), the office and Resource Centre is now fully functional. The premises were officially opened in July by local National Party MP Mr. Bill Rixar. Local media - press, radio, and television, covered the event quite well, and representatives from local government agencies, churches, gay men, community organisations and health professionals all attended, about 1000 people in all. A highlight of the opening was having Bill Whittaker, ACON Executive Director, visit the Branch for the day.

Education

Since April we have been active in the local community with many requests for a speaker at local service clubs, Country Womens' Association, Parents' and Citizens' groups, and Lifeline, and generally there has been a positive response to our presence.

In April, we worked with and supported the Welfare students at the local TAFE to organise AIDS Awareness Week on campus. It is estimated that over 1000 students watched videos and participated in discussion groups. A phone-in was held at the ACON premises over a week-end, supported by ACON members.

The Branch was Charity of the Day at the local Byron Bay market. This was a successful exercise in raising money, publicising our existence, and educating the general population. It took a lot of effort and commitment by many people to make this day a success.

Volunteers

I was greatly assisted in setting up the first volunteers training program by Janine Given - on placement with us while undertaking her Welfare Certificate. Over 20 people attended over a week-end in July. The workshop covered: transmission of the virus, safe sex issues for gay men, issues for IVDU, and basic counselling skills. My thanks for their involvement to Michael Lockhart, ACON's Rural Education Officer, Paul Burr, Gordy Halfon (Hasnore Needle Exchange Program), and Greg Philpot, psychologist and management committee member. The next course, to be held in October, is already booked out.

We are hoping that through the volunteers program we will have a pool of informed people to help us at markets, shows, and fundraising events.

We are currently evaluating the training program, and we are planning more one day workshops around particular subjects or skills, as many of the participants indicated that they would like to learn more.

Groups

The "Positive Living" group meets once a month at the Resource Centre for lunch followed by a talk from a guest speaker. We have had a talk from a local nutritionist giving information about diet,

vitamins, and herbs and their relation to the immune system, and will be having a couple of local doctors with HIV patients attend for an open discussion on treatment and general health issues.

A strong informal network is developing through this group, with members having social-work days on each others properties - planting trees, clearing land, mending fences, and giving massage and Reiki sessions.

Other Directions

Anthony Babics, now a local artist, has very sandily put lots of time and energy into developing a comic strip character called Dick Rovey, undercover cock, whose mission in life is to save people from unsafe behaviour. We are not sure what to do with him, but he is a very lovable character.

A directory of services for our local area has been compiled and is almost ready for printing.

We are looking forward to a very productive year.

Judy Arpana
Co-ordinator

WORKING GROUP REPORTS

ACON/AFAO MEDICAL/CLINICAL WORKING GROUP

1988/89 has been a year of continuing growth and consolidation for the Medical-Clinical Working Group. Meetings have been held monthly, with two exceptions, and membership and attendance have steadily increased. Two important developments in this period have been the incorporation of interstate members, in order for the group to serve as the AFAO working group, and the appointment of the AFAO Treatment Information Officer. The AFAO arrangement is still very much in the testing phase, but should be functional by the time of release of this report.

The group is committed to the stimulation of local research and is convinced of the imperative for the involvement of the HIV infected in research, for these and other reasons it has devoted considerable time to developing a proposal for the establishment of a local clinical trials programme. This programme aims to incorporate the concepts and advantages of the US community trials initiatives but amalgamate them with the established clinical trials and research units. The proposal is currently being circulated for outside comment and input, before finalisation and the subsequent lobbying exercise required to bring it to fruition. However negotiations have already begun on a prototype trial and a "no-fills" version of this proposal should be operating very soon.

The group has been consulted at the development stage on a number of trial protocols and has recommended Council's endorsement of two, the protocol for the "Low-risk" AZT trial, submitted by the NH&MRC Special Unit and the protocol for the abandoned AZT trial from the A bicar Street Clinic.

The group continues to discharge one of its basic functions, that of providing advice to the Council, particularly to the Committee, the Education Unit, and the HIV Support Officer. It has also played an active role in the organising and presentation of the Council's HIV Information evenings and in the PLWA-sponsored forum on Passive Immunotherapy.

We are truly on the verge of a blossoming of treatment options, both of HIV infection itself and many of its related illnesses. Because of this the importance of this working group and its work load are increasing all the time. Thus I would strongly encourage anyone with medical or biological or biotechnological expertise to involve themselves in the group's work.

Rolf Petherbridge
Convener

HIV ANTIBODY TESTING WORKING GROUP

The HIV Antibody Testing Working Group has examined a number of ACON and Australian Federation of AIDS Organisation policies on antibody testing.

New or amended policies produced and endorsed by the ACON Committee include policies concerning testing of defence service personnel and seropanel testing.

A comprehensive review of the AFAO/ACON Position Paper on HIV Testing work is under way with the aim of producing an updated version of that document by the end of 1989.

Bill Whittaker
Convener

SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH AND ETHICS WORKING GROUP

This Working Group is comprised of people with an interest and expertise in research procedure. The group meets when matters within its brief come up. Any social research which is to be promoted or conducted by ACON must first be approved by the Working Group. A letter was sent earlier this year to all tertiary institutions informing staff and students of the role of the Group, and encouraging them to discuss research proposals with the Group. The process works well, and a number of research proposals have been submitted for endorsement over the last year.

Lavinia Cronk
Convener

IVDU WORKING GROUP

The working group began this year as a sub-group of the Education Working Group. The Committee believed that this was an area of growing importance and in September the education sub group became a working group in its own right.

Perhaps the most significant development over this year has been the founding of using community-based organisations: the NSW Users and AIDS Association (NUAA), a number of people involved in the working group have participated in the founding of this organisation which is now separately funded. A national body of user groups, the Australian IV League (AIVL) has also developed, again with the participation of working group

members. This group was affiliated with AFAO. As a community-based organisation itself ACON is ideally placed to support such developments and this should provide a significant part of our future activity in this area.

Funding received for a pilot project aimed at reaching "recreational" drug users with the messages of safe sex and safe sex drug use has been largely expended. The messages were carried in a cartoon format, and ran for one month (June) in a range of magazines and newspapers. Feedback from agencies in the drug and alcohol area has been good. The NSW "Get Real" project will be reprinting some of them. Magazines have also been interested in running some more material. The cartoon will be produced in individual strip and poster form. The project has taken over a year to complete, and is currently being evaluated.

A proposal for ACON to become a "primary" needle and syringe exchange outlet was approved by the Bureau. The training of ACON staff in order to locate an initial outlet at the Hapina Street premises is to be undertaken.

Two posters targeted for gay IVDU, and emphasising use in a recreational context, have been produced. This is a first in Australia.

Gray Sattler
Convenor

LEGAL WORKING GROUP

ACON's Legal Working Group continues to be the only AIDS law group in Australia. In addition to its work for ACON, further funding from the Commonwealth has allowed it to continue to supervise the AIDS Preventative and Legal Rights Project for AFAO, and other activities.

AIDS Prevention and Legal Rights Project

This national project involves the collection of materials relating to developments in AIDS related law both within Australia and overseas. A collection

of relevant publications including academic texts, journal articles and government reports has been established. The Project is compiling a resource base of statutes, regulations and cases to establish the state of AIDS related law in all Australian jurisdictions. Findings from this study should be published in the coming year. Funding for the Project has provided for the continued employment of a Legal Research Officer.

National Activities

A second edition of *AIDS and Your Rights* of 25000 copies has been produced for national circulation. The pamphlet is funded by the Commonwealth through AFAO.

The AIDS Prevention and Legal Rights Project gave a workshop on the project at the Habitat National AIDS Conference in August 1985.

Members of the working group prepared material and commented on drafts of law related parts of the national strategy discussion document *A Time To Care*; prepared written submissions for the Discrimination and other Legal Issues panel of the White paper on behalf of ACON and AFAO, appeared before the Testing and DLI panels in Sydney and assisted the Australian IV League with aspects of their submission. Those involved primarily in this were John Godwin (Legal Research Officer) and David Buckman. Lex Wilson was a member of the DLI, and John Godwin on behalf of the project prepared a bibliography for the DLI Panel Report.

Substantial contribution was made to the Condom Project, based at the University of Sydney on condom laws.

Assistance was given to AFAO on their Project Report on Prostitution and Homosexual Law Reform.

Assistance and information was provided to a range of academic and other research requests from Universities and other institutions in Australia, New Zealand, the United States of America, Canada, and Great Britain. Advice was also given to people working on media projects and educational resources for schools.

HANDY HOUSEHOLD HINTS FOR PART-TIME DRUG USERS:

Panel 1: "I'm sick of sticking stuff up my nose. This time I stuck it up my arm. Your turn." "Got any bleach?"

Panel 2: "You've made enough already." "No, no... I'll just stick up only once in my life - and I don't want AIDS."

Panel 3: "You can clean the needle to make it safe, or get free ones. You just can't share." "Let's hit the bottle!"

NEEDLE EXCHANGE NUMBERS: 551 2151 / call 21 008-42599 * PUCH INFUSES THROUGH TWICE WITH SOLID CLEAN TIP WASH TWICE WITH FRESH BLEACH AND TWICE WITH W/ OR AGAIN!

New South Wales

The Legal Working Group organised an AIDS and confidentiality seminar as part of Law Week, 1989. Other educational activities included John Godwin conducting seminars on legal issues for Anjali, the Youth Working Group of ACON, the Centre for Education and Information on Drugs and Alcohol and the Legal Aid Commission.

The Working Group assisted ACON in drafting an AIDS in the Workplace policy, and reported to ACON on developments in the law in relation to prostitution, drugs, the blood bank "lookback" campaign, censorship, and other matters.

The NSW AIDS Bureau was assisted in its video on workplace/discrimination issues.

Other

At the request of the Victorian AIDS Council (VAC), submissions were made to the Victorian government on their draft infectious diseases regulations, the review of the Equal Opportunity Act, and a discussion paper on Privacy and Breach of Confidence.

An increasing number of requests are being received from members of the public for legal advice and information. In the last year there have been approximately 120 enquires on matters notably concerning discrimination, insurance and superannuation, but also on medical issues and a wide range of other topics. While the Legal Working Group and the Legal Research Officer cannot take on legal cases as such, a referral and advocacy service is offered.

AIDS law is a rapidly growing field and it is expected that the work of the Legal Working Group and Legal Officer will increase significantly in the next few years.

When cases arise of a "test" case nature, the Legal Working Group offers on-going advice and liaison with legal representatives. Matters of this nature which have arisen over the past year include cases before the Equal Opportunity Tribunal, the Veterans Compensation Tribunal and the Western Australian Supreme Court.

Lex Wilson
Convener

John Godwin
Legal Research Officer

WOMEN AND AIDS WORKING GROUP

This working group was revived in 1988/89, in particular through the efforts of the President, Levisia Crooks. Direct contact was made with individual women, and with organisations and work-places who may have an interest in women and AIDS. The initial bias was towards women working in AIDS related areas. Women came for personal and work support, to exchange news and views, to network, to learn about AIDS, to find out what they could give and get from the working group. Many travelled from outside Sydney to those first large meetings, and for many women it has been their first direct encounter with the AIDS Council. Thus it's no surprise that working out our aims has been a major achievement! The actions springing from our monthly meetings and many sub-groups have been:

- Information sharing
- Networking
- Input to the consultations panels on the development of the National AIDS strategy
- Women & AIDS banner and leaflets at the Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade in February and The International Women's Day Event in March
- Liaison with PLWA (NSW), with the newly formed Positive Women's support Group, and with the Albion Street Centre in planning a Women and AIDS Seminar
- The Sapph Sex/Que Night Stand initiative exploring and developing information skills for lesbians regarding sex, STDs, and AIDS
- And most recently, three hours of community television broadcasting in Redfern as a women and AIDS forum.

Sáin ní Chrochuir
Convener

ADDITIONAL REPORTS

ACON/MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY AIDS RESEARCH PROJECT

The 1988/89 year has been a busy one for the ACON/Macquarie Project (also known as SABA). Our work analysing the data from the original SABA survey of gay and bisexual men in Sydney, Canberra, and other parts of NSW has continued, and three new reports from the project are to be released soon to accompany the three reports released last year.

Report 4 examines the effects of living a gay life and dealing with AIDS in Canberra. Preliminary copies of that report were presented to the AIDS Action Council of the ACT earlier this year. Report 5 is called *Pleasure and Power* and looks at the patterns of interest in gay sex that the men in our study told us about. This report will be an important contribution to understanding the overall gay sexual context in which AIDS education must operate. Report 6 is on *Discrimination*, what it means as a sexual identity and what that means for the spread of HIV. Copies of these will be made available for reading at ACON as soon as they are released.

In the second half of this year, our work will focus on the following issues: gay community identity and attachment – its role in AIDS prevention; HIV antibody testing; and further work on those men living outside of Sydney.

The second part of the project, the in-depth interviews with gay and bisexual men about their sexual and social responses to AIDS, is proceeding well, though it is slower than we originally planned. Half the interviews have been done and the study has now been split into two parts. The first part continues as planned, with data from the project finding its way into training courses and papers presented to a variety of audiences. The second half of the work will concentrate exclusively on working class men who have sex with men. This part is called SABA II or the *Class, Homosexuality and AIDS Prevention Project* (CHAAP) for short). We received an additional grant from the Commonwealth AIDS Research Grants Committee for 1989-90. An AIDS educator will be joining the staff to work on this part of the project later this year.

Much of the project's efforts this past year have been directed to the dissemination of our findings to various groups around Australia and overseas. The Project Co-ordinator, Gary Dowsett, has conducted a series of discussion sessions with education staff from ACON, and run two day-long seminars for the Victorian AIDS Council on the project's findings and research methods. In addition, short seminars have been conducted for the Family Planning Association, the NSW Health Department's regional AIDS co-ordinators. Papers from the project's team were

delivered at the Third National Conference on AIDS in Hobart, the Lesbian and Gay Health Conference and AIDS Forum in Boston, at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in Toronto, the UK Health Education Authority in London, and the Second National Gay and Bisexual Men's AIDS Educators Seminar in Sydney.

In May this year, Don Baxter and Gary Dowsett attended a *World Health Organisation Workshop on AIDS Health Promotion Activities* directed toward Gay and Bisexual Men. Gary was commissioned to write a paper for this workshop outlining the AIDS education activities which had been undertaken in Sydney and, through an analysis of Australian AIDS research findings, evaluating their effectiveness. Sydney was one of eight cities chosen for this workshop. The Australian team, which included Denis Altman, was able to show from the successes of AIDS education here, the value of consulting with gay communities and of finding gay community-inspired AIDS education. WHO will be publishing the eight papers from the workshop soon. Our thanks to Paul van Reyk from ACON and Ian Cregar and Ben Rudden from Macquarie University for their assistance in the production of the Sydney paper.

The ACON/Macquarie team wrote submissions to, and had appointments with, the panels touring Australia during the consultations on the Commonwealth's policy discussion document *A Time To Care*.

Finally, the team has contributed a considerable amount of research advice to, and had consultations with, various AIDS research and education programs.

SABA team members have offered input into VAC's *Places, Times, and Reasons* survey, the AFAC Designer Publication's *Gay Relationships* project, the ACON Western Suburbs Units Project, the National AIDS Radio Project, the La Trobe University Gay Community project, the Victorian Health Foundation Evaluation of Health Promotion Needs, and the Inner City Education Centre's Primary Schools AIDS Education Project.

Gary Dowsett Project Co-ordinator

The SABA team are – Don Baxter (Steering Committee), Bob Connell, Susan Kippax, Lex Wilson (Steering Committee), Gary Dowsett (co-ordinator), June Crawford (consultant), and Pam Rudden (research assistant).

PEOPLE LIVING WITH AIDS (NSW)

The first stirrings of a PLWA movement in Australia began at the 3rd National Conference on AIDS in Hobart in August 1988, and was well on the way with the first Living Well Conference in Melbourne in September of that year. April 1989 saw the first Annual General meeting of the newly formed People Living With AIDS (NSW), with the election of a committee and adoption of a constitution.

The aims of PLWA (NSW) are:

- to empower people affected by AIDS through providing information and advice on relevant AIDS issues;
- to lobby to ensure the best levels of care, support, and treatment;
- and to promote a positive image of people affected by AIDS;
- and to work with other AIDS organisations to achieve this.

To date, PLWA's primary focus has been to lobby for improved hospital services for PLWAs and to encourage debate around the issues of drug trials and treatments.

ACON has provided support for PLWA since the beginnings of the organisation. By allowing access to ACON office facilities, providing funds for production of our Newsletter "Talkabout", financial administration assistance, and help and advice on all levels, ACON has helped PLWA (NSW) grow in twelve short months to become a strong and recognised advocacy organisation in NSW. With the continuing growth and strength of the PLWA movement it is hoped this mutually beneficial relationship can continue for the good of all affected by the AIDS epidemic.

ACON has formally acknowledged PLWA as the organisation representing people infected and affected by HIV in NSW by reserving two positions for the organisation on ACON's Committee of Council. Through this relationship, PLWA has regular input to the Council on all matters relating to HIV infection.

Although PLWA has a strong relationship with ACON, it remains an independent and vocal body for the HIV affected.

PLWA received State government funding in mid 1989 for two part-time positions - Administrative Support Officer (Don Carter) and Newsletter Coordinator (David James). Both these workers are located in ACON's premises in Sophia St.

PLWA expresses its thanks for ACON's ongoing support and recognition of our work.

Robert Ariss
Convener

THE QUILT PROJECT

Inspired by the American NAMES Project, and based on folk art traditions of quilting and working bees, the Quilt Project is part of an international campaign to memorialise those we have lost to the AIDS epidemic.

The Quilt Project has three main goals:

1. To provide a positive and creative expression for those whose lives have been touched by the epidemic.
2. To illustrate the impact of the AIDS epidemic by showing the humanity behind the statistics.
3. To encourage support for people with AIDS and their loved ones.

The Quilt is composed of fabric panels, each bearing the name of an individual lost to AIDS, designed and completed by their friends, lovers, and families. The panels are then stitched together by volunteers to the main panel sections comprising the Quilt.

Launched by Ita Buttrose on World AIDS Day, 1989, the Australian Quilt now has 36 panels with 76 names memorialised. It has been displayed several times since its launch - Melbourne Town Hall, in front of Parliament House Canberra, as part of an international display coinciding with the IV International Conference on AIDS in Montreal among others.

Plans are underway for a tour of other capital cities, and for an extensive tour of NSW later this year. Since its inception the Quilt has gained unqualified support, not only from community organisations working in the AIDS area but also from the NSW Department of Health, Capra (who made a substantial donation), and the Dandy Cinema which organised a fund-raiser.

Membership of the Project is free. The support received has been sufficient to meet its needs. A newsletter keeps those contributing panels and those who have assisted the Project informed of the progress and various display venues of the Quilt.

The Quilt Project is a Working Group of ACON and is housed in ACON premises.

The Quilt is unique as it enables the compassionate spirit of ordinary people to emerge and to show all Australians how a caring nation responds in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

"We spend much time and energy covering up the process of dying. We spend too much time trying to forget a loved one's death rather than remembering their life. The Quilt challenges this denial. It also allows us to challenge that death in general and death from AIDS in particular is something to be ashamed of." Ms Ita Buttrose, launching the Quilt.

Andrew Carter
Convener

BOBBY GOLDSMITH FOUNDATION

In 1988, the Bobby Goldsmith Foundation will enter its sixth year of operation. During that period the Foundation has grown from an organisation that expended only a few hundred dollars in the first year, to something in excess of \$150,000 this year. Income has grown at a similar, if less dramatic rate.

How many of us at the beginning envisaged the task that lay ahead, or that we would at this time be looking at another six years of continuing and expanding need for the foundation?

With this continuing demand on both human and financial resources there will be increasing strains on individuals within the foundation and also between BGF, other volunteer organisations and professionals.

The last year has been a period of considerable turmoil and change for the BGF, perhaps more than in our previous five years. I think that this has proved beneficial for the foundation and we now have a keen and efficient committee with a good working relationship.

Another gain for the Foundation in the past year was the provision of funding, through the AIDS Bureau of the NSW Department of Health, for paid positions. With the expansion of the office to three staff members, the Foundation has been able to further improve and expand the services to our clients and better meet their needs.

Like any growing organisation, our administrative workload has increased. There are now three separate sections within the BGF -

- Operations and Public Relations
- Foundation Housing Project, and
- Welfare

Also gratifying has been a donation of \$10,000 from the Wellcome Corporation. This has been spent mainly on equipment for the AIDS Specialist Units in the major medical centres. BGF has matched the Wellcome donation, dollar-for-dollar, and the equipment is primarily directed at improving the comfort of People Living With AIDS. To date equipment has been provided to St Vincent's, Westmead, and Prince Henry Hospitals, as well as for the Eastern Area Community Health and the Community Support Network, Wollongong. Royal Newcastle, and Royal Prince Alfred Hospitals have been approached regarding any requirements that they might have.

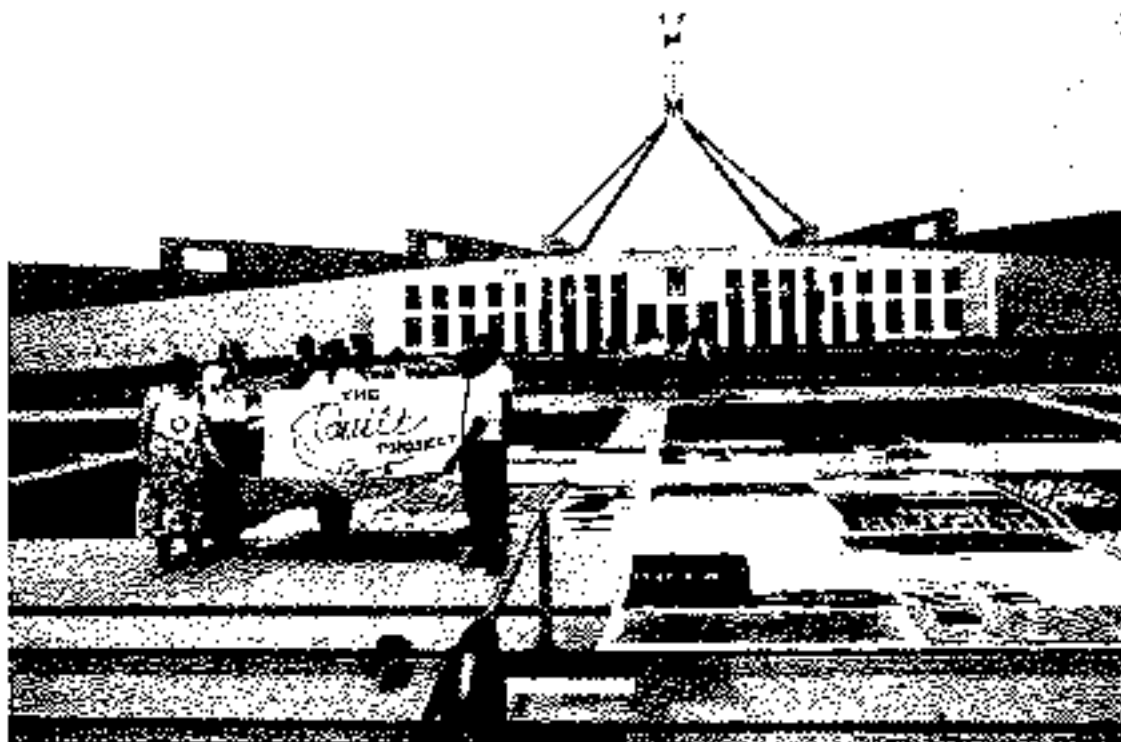
I would like to thank the Wellcome Corporation for their generous support and to hope that they might only be the first of further corporate support. I have pleasure in conveying that Mr Ted Clea from Wellcome has assured committee of future co-operation and support.

BGF appreciates ALON's continued support and the good working relationship that has developed over the years.

I should also like to take this opportunity to thank Ms Ruth Connor and Mr David Lowe from the AIDS Bureau for their continuity encouragement and support.

To the current committee members, I thank them all for their dedication and service to the Foundation.

James P Timmins
President



The Australian Quilt outside Parliament House, Canberra

COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS AND INITIATIVES

Over the last year ACON was involved in a number of important activities at the national level.

National AIDS Strategy

ACON contributed at all levels into the development of the National AIDS Strategy. Our involvement began with input at the stage of drafting the policy discussion document *AIDS: A Time To Care A Time To Act*, and continued with our written and oral submissions to the six panels which undertook the extensive national consultations on the discussion document.

Bill Whittaker and Dr Ralph Deakin were members of the panel on Treatment Services and Care, Don Baxter was a member of the panel on Education and Prevention, and Lex Watson served on the panel on Discrimination and Other Legal Issues. All have been involved in producing the written reports of the panels, leading up to the drafting of the White Paper.

ACON also substantially contributed to writing of the AFAO response to the national strategy discussion document.

Visit of Dr Neal Blewett

In September, 1989, the Commonwealth Minister for Community Services and Health, Dr Neal Blewett, visited ACON at its Sophia Street premises. A number of areas were discussed including research funding, treatment and treatment trials, education programs and the developing national AIDS strategy.

Meeting with Secretary of Commonwealth

Department of Community Services and Health In October, 1989, Bill Whittaker was a member of a delegation from AFAO which met with Mr Stuart Hamilton, Secretary of the Commonwealth Department of Community Services and Health. The delegation discussed the Commonwealth AIDS budget, the effectiveness of ANCA, the development of the national AIDS strategy, and the work of the AIDS Councils. Mr Hamilton followed this up with a visit to ACON's premises in April, 1989.

Australian National Council on AIDS (ANCA)

ANCA is the Commonwealth Health Minister's principal advisory body on AIDS. Don Baxter, ACON's Education Programs Manager, is a current member of ANCA.

He also served as Convener of the ANCA Working Group on Gay and Bisexual Men and is a member of ANCA's Education Committee.

Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO)

AFAO is a national body responsible for negotiating with the Commonwealth government and other

national organisations on behalf of the Australian AIDS Councils.

It is governed by a National Committee, comprising delegates from each State and Territory AIDS Council. ACON is represented on the National Committee by Levisia Crankie and Bill Whittaker. In between the annual AFAO National Committee meeting, an elected four person Executive is responsible for managing AFAO. Bill Whittaker serves as the current AFAO Vice-President. He represented AFAO at the 8th International Conference on AIDS and the International Meeting of AIDS Service Organisations in Montreal.

ACON has participated in a number of AFAO working groups in 1988/89 including the Regional Working Group, Clinical/Medical Working Group, Volunteers Working Group, Education Working Group, and IVDD Working Group.

Bill Whittaker provided advice on management and organisational issues to the Northern Territory and Tasmanian AIDS Councils, through the auspices of AFAO.

AIDS Trust of Australia

The Trust is a national charitable trust, founded by the Governor-General in April 1987. Bill Whittaker is an AFAO nominated Trustee. ACON staff and volunteers assisted the Trust in conducting its very successful AIDS Walkathon in May, 1989.

Condom Project

The project is a CARG funded two year research program looking at condoms, their quality and problems with their use.

The project is based in the School of Public Health at the University of Sydney. The Chief Investigators are Lex Watson (ACON Committee member), Dr Basil Donovan, and John Geroff. The project co-ordinator is Juliet Kuchers.

The first stage of the project tested condoms on the Australian market against the Australian Standard, AS 1919. Results were published in a summarised form in *Choice* in January, 1989. Several of the products were found to be sub standard or only marginally satisfactory. As a result of this testing, and an increased level of testing being conducted by the Commonwealth Department of Community Services and Health, a number of products have now been withdrawn from the Australian market.

Other research into breakage rates among male and female prostitutes was published late in 1988. This study suggested that at least among that population, the breakage rate in use was substantially lower than that reported in some other overseas studies.

Further research is being conducted in 1989, some into physical properties of condoms and some into issues such as the size, and consumer problems

with condoms. These results should be released in 1990.

As a separate but related issue, two of the chief investigators of the condom project, John Geroti and Lex Watson, are members of the Standards Association's condom standards committee. CSA CS9 is currently working on a revised version of AS 1919, and also contributing to the development of a new International Standard, which will seek to make condoms uniform internationally.

AIDS and Superannuation Working Group

Following the development of a voluntary Code of Practice for life insurance companies dealing with AIDS, the Commonwealth in 1989 established a Superannuation Working Group to develop a similar voluntary code of practice for this industry.

The Working Group includes representatives of the Commonwealth government, the Insurance and Superannuation Commissioner's Office, the life insurance industry, the superannuation industry, the Confederation of Australian Industry, the ACTU, and community interests - people with haemophilia and gay men. Lex Watson (ACON Council member) is a member of the group.

It is hoped that a Code of Practice will be adopted by the end of 1989.

STATE RELATIONS AND INITIATIVES

ACON continues to enjoy a good working relationship with the NSW Department of Health and with other State government Departments, government agencies and organisations and groups working in the area of AIDS. Developing a close working relationship with other agencies is an important part of ACON's philosophy. Only through such co-operative action can we maximise resources and provide the best possible level of services to people affected by HIV/AIDS.

Department of Health

Throughout the year ACON has worked closely with the AIDS Bureau. Bureau staff have been members of steering groups for some of ACON's projects, such as those for the IVDU Cartoon Project and the Western Sydney Beats Project.

ACON's Rural Project Office has had good contact with the Department's Regional AIDS Co-ordinators, and has worked jointly with them on education programs.

ACON considers it important that the Bureau retain substantial autonomy within the Department, and that it be adequately resourced to fulfil its role in helping to co-ordinate the NSW response to AIDS.

State Ministerial Advisory Committee on AIDS Policy (MAC)

This Committee is responsible for advising the State Minister for Health and the NSW government on all aspects of AIDS in NSW. Membership of the Committee is drawn from experts on medical, scientific, social, educational, policy and administrative areas relating to AIDS.

ACON's Executive Director, Bill Whitaker, has been a member of the MAC since its formation in 1987.

The MAC has established sub-committees to advise it on Education, Community Services, and Medical/Scientific issues. Ken Davis, Senior Education Officer, represents ACON on the Education sub-committee, and Anne Malcolm, Community Services Manager, and John Godwin, Legal Research Officer, represent ACON on the Community Services sub-committee.

The MAC has a number of working groups in addition to its standing sub-committees. Bill Whitaker is a member of the working groups on Prisons, and on HIV Antibody Testing and Surgery Patients.

World AIDS Day

The World Health Organisation set December 1st, 1989, as the first World AIDS Day. ACON was a member of the steering group for co-ordinating events in NSW. The AIDS Bureau decided to employ a Project Officer for 3 months to organise

appropriate events and after some consultation resolved to grant ACON funds through which to employ the worker.

A series of events was organised over three days, including an official opening by Dr Neal Blewett at Darling Harbour to coincide with the release of the new Commonwealth AIDS advertising campaign; the launching, by Ms Ita Buttrose, of the Australian Quilt Project; a reception for volunteer carers, and a very successful fair for AIDS organisations.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

AIDS Council of New South Wales Inc.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30th JUNE 1989

	NOTES	\$	1989 \$	1988 \$
INCOME				
Donations		24378		4855
Interest Received		87857		10706
NSW Government Grants	5	1179940		552550
Federal Government Grants	6	247201		57982
		<u>1497141</u>		<u>610532</u>
Grants Unexpended	4	(363781)		—
		1063360		610532
Membership Fees		3450		3150
Fundraising Events		3780		25470
Sales of Vitamins		64635		87076
Other Income		5395		13809
TOTAL INCOME			1292735	735598
LESS EXPENDITURE				
Accountancy		60		—
Audit Fees	7	5300		3000
Bank Charges		1951		1367
Board and Council Expenses		11824		3704
Building Security		8		1325
Casual Relief Staff		42877		5075
Cleaning and Garbage		4220		2682
Commissions on Sales		—		25
Computer Supplies		12770		1738
Courier		2023		2797
Conferences/Courses		12537		1490
Depreciation & Amortisation		94430		38945
Educational Material		42454		17457
Electricity		5346		4056
Facsimile Services		2134		763
Fundraising Costs		1753		18418
General Expenses		2018		4512
Incidental Purchases		12663		1471
Insurance		5430		5185
Interest Paid		237		314
Leasing Costs		513		1243
Legal Costs		1187		—
Losses on Disposal of Assets		6136		3022
Services to Other Organisations		8027		2034
Motor Vehicle Expenses		13552		—
Postage		13548		10923
Posters		3309		17514
Printing and Stationery		27562		10096
Programmes and Services		94833		23893
Publicity and Promotion		66383		32451
Purchases — Vitamins		58996		65529
Radio Pager & Communications Costs		8122		228
Rent		67450		41503
Repairs & Maintenance		5589		6772
Recruitment Costs		5661		5834
Staff Development & Training		1053		100
Telephone		18933		6331
Travel		43343		4785
Wages		<u>541882</u>		<u>286059</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURE			1206416	678296
NET SURPLUS FOR PERIOD			\$ 26319	\$ 10302

AIDS Council of New South Wales Inc.

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30th JUNE 1989

	NOTES	\$	1989 £	1988 £
CURRENT ASSETS				
Cash at Bank		—		12089
Hunter Region Imprest		2361		610
North Coast Imprest		6374		—
Cash on Hand		1900		1100
Cash on Deposit		527188		385077
Accounts Receivable		40874		10840
Deposits - Utilities		7573		100
Stock on Hand		3501		4085
Prepaid Expenses		10306		1301
Accrued Income		20805		
Others		207		
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		---	627169	399097
NON-CURRENT ASSETS				
Fixed Assets				
Furniture & Fixtures	56068			25913
Accumulated Depreciation	21498			10421
		35170		15492
Office Equipment	158025			28552
Accumulated Depreciation	51204			13040
		106821		14612
Library		5232		2747
Leaschold Improvement	110260			89852
Accumulated Amortisation	71690			32946
		44561		56906
Equipment Lease - Cost	12857			21507
Accumulated Depreciation	2591			3634
		10366		17873
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		---	202150	107360
TOTAL ASSETS		---	829319	506457
CURRENT LIABILITIES				
Accrued Expenses		24176		11382
Bank Overdraft		25091		
Lease Liability	2	5869		5812
Grants Received in Advance	4	363781		147450
Trade Creditors		53409		10547
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		---	477276	175191
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES				
Lease Liability	2		—	9812
TOTAL LIABILITIES		---	477276	185003
NET ASSETS		---	\$ 352043	£ 325124
ACCUMULATED FUNDS				
Accumulated Funds B/Forward			325724	218427
Surplus for Period			26319	107302
		---	\$ 352043	£ 325724

AIDS Council of New South Wales Inc.

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30th JUNE 1989

NOTE 1: STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting standards issued by the Australian Accounting bodies and with the disclosure requirements of schedule 7 of the Companies (N.S.W.) Code, with the exceptions where noted

(a) Basis of Preparation

The accounts have been prepared on an accrual basis and on the basis of historical costs and do not take into account changing money values or, except where stated, current valuations of non-current assets. The accounting policies have been consistently applied, unless otherwise stated

(b) Depreciation

Depreciation is calculated on a straight line basis so as to write off the net cost of each depreciable non-current asset over its expected useful life

(c) Fixed Asset

Fixed assets are included at cost or at independent valuation and are depreciated over the estimated useful lives commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

(d) Leased Assets

Equipment acquired on lease has been included as part of fixed assets at its full cost value and is depreciated over the life of the lease on a straight basis.

NOTE 2: LEASE LIABILITY

The lease liability comprises the acquisition of a Commander Telephone System

Lease commitments:

	1989	1988
	\$	\$
1. Not later than one year	5826	5812
2. Later than one year and not later than two years	Nil	5812
	<u>\$ 5826</u>	<u>\$ 11624</u>

NOTE 3: OTHER CAPITAL COMMITMENTS

During the period the Aids Council of New South Wales Inc. entered into Rental agreements for the use of several motor vehicles. The contractual capital commitments of those vehicles are as follows

	1989	1988
	\$	\$
1. Not later than one year	29700	Nil
2. Later than one year and not later than two years	23514	Nil
3. Later than two years and not later than five years	20911	Nil
	<u>\$ 74125</u>	<u>Nil</u>

NOTE 4: GRANTS RECEIVED IN ADVANCE

Grants received in advance represent the total of grants unexpended during the period. The balance of these grants will be carried forward to the next period where the relevant expenses can then be properly matched in period in which they are incurred

Grants are as follows:

	1989	1988
	\$	\$
Federal Government Grants		
Legal Research Project	13722	
National IVDU Caroon Series	5000	
Rural AIDS Outreach Project	23013	
Gay & Bisexual Mens Workshop	4519	
Ethnic Gays Mens Pilot Project	42000	
Hunter Region Branch Pilot	2032	
Community Radio News Tape	2560	
	<u>83726</u>	
NSW Government Grants		
PLWA Administrative Assistant	19945	
Capital Expenditure	89312	
North Coast Regn Branch	16943	
Hunter Regn	22137	
Community Services Unit	37075	
PLWA Transport Service	33447	28750
Condon Purchases	4959	10000
Production of Materials	6192	-
NRK Needle Exchange Western Suburbs Outreach	36405	80000
IVDU Caroon Series	5049	16000
Women And Aids Project	4552	13000
	<u>280105</u>	<u>147450</u>
Total of committed, but unexpended proportions of grants received	<u>\$303761</u>	<u>\$147450</u>

AIDS Council of New South Wales Inc.
NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30th JUNE 1989

**NOTE 5: NEW SOUTH WALES
GOVERNMENT GRANTS**

	1989	1988
	\$	\$
Main operating Grant	624940	512300
Capital Grant	214550	-
Safe Sex Seminar	16475	15000
Western Suburbs Outreach	40000	-
Administration Assistance PIWA	20000	-
Condom Purchase	10000	-
IVDU Cartoon	16000	-
Women & AIDS	15000	-
Materials	28450	16250
World AIDS Day	27675	-
PIWA Conference	4250	-
K.K.K. Needle Exchange	4000	-
C.E.I.D.A.	6500	-
Newcastle - Resourcing	76000	-
North Coast	60000	-
Poster Report	-	6000
	<u>\$ 177940</u>	<u>\$ 522350</u>

NOTE 6: FEDERAL GOVERNMENT GRANTS

	1989	1988
	\$	\$
Ethnic Gay Men	30000	-
Connell-Boston	800	-
Radio News Tape	2360	-
Newcastle	74450	31450
General	-	3000
Rural AIDS	69850	4490
Year Education	35820	6350
Ethnic Gay	12000	-
IVDU Consultations	3000	-
Montreal Conference	2621	-
Gay/Bisexual	18000	-
IVDU Cartoon	3000	-
Legal Research Project	43100	15950
Condom Purchases	-	2652
	<u>\$ 247201</u>	<u>\$ 57982</u>

NOTE 7: AUDITORS REMUNERATION

Amounts received, or due and receivable by the Auditors for

	1989	1988
	\$	\$
Auditing the accounts of AIDS Council of South Wales Inc.	\$ 5500	\$ 3000

**AUDITOR'S REPORT TO
THE MEMBERS OF THE
AIDS COUNCIL OF
NEW SOUTH WALES INC.**

I have audited the Income and Expenditure Statement and Balance Sheet of the AIDS Council of New South Wales Inc. for the year ended 30 June 1989.

In my opinion the accounts of the AIDS Council of New South Wales Inc. are properly drawn up so as to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the AIDS Council of New South Wales Inc. as at the 30th June 1989 and of the results of that organisation for the year ended on that date. The accounting records of the organisation have been kept in accordance with the provisions of the Associations Incorporation Act.

Level 1, 125 York Street, Sydney.



21 August 1989 Robert E. Curtin A.A.S.A., C.P.A., F.C.I.S.
Registered under the Companies Code



AIDS Council of New South Wales Inc.

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