

ACON
ACON (Source of New South Wales) Inc.

ANNUAL REPORT



FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

28 | 1999

LIVES

In a year in which diversity in positive life experience increasingly became the norm, when obituaries became marked by their infrequency rather than their constant presence, death returned; in particularly testing and traumatic circumstances.

Before the year was halfway through, four current or former staff members had left us, tragically. Both ACON and the wider Sydney HIV/AIDS sector were left in a state of collective shock that led me to reflect on the inadequacy of epidemic experience as a prophylaxis against the cutting edge of grief and loss. Death hadn't lost its sting and the fact that HIV wasn't necessarily central in ending the lives of these young gay men, simply added to the pain we felt and shared.

Geoffrey Fysh, former ACON staffer before his elevation to the bright lights of AFAO's Policy Unit, was found dead in his apartment by his friends and workmates on a sunny day in early January. "Bright light" encapsulated Geoffrey. Bright, charming, wicked, loving and eternally entertaining, he gave the lie to the notion of Darlinghurst Queen as boring stereotype. He died accidentally and the pointlessness of his death aligned to the style with which he'd shaped his life, shock us all. The grief was raw and intense.

In autumn, Paul Kinder, who'd left ACON at the end of 1997, took his own life. Paul, a Kiwi who'd worked for the NZ AIDS Foundation before joining the Trans-Tasman gay migration in 1995 was, as Don Baxter

recalled at the memorial service, "challenging." A party boy, and a thinker, he was committed and always engaged. I'd had dinner with him not long before he died, and he had talked over a range of future life options, with an intensity that only made his death harder to come to terms with.

Mark Gruber was ACON's Personnel Officer and had been with us through good times and bad. In 1999, he finally received the recognition that his knowledge and expertise merited. Professionally, he grew visibly in the last few months of his life and brought renewed enthusiasm to all he did. Perhaps however this only highlighted the dissatisfaction he occasionally alluded to in relation to his personal life. In the aftermath of a party weekend, alone, he too took his own life. His funeral brought us back to the same chapel in which we'd gathered to farewell Geoffrey in the summer but the winter only partly explained the chill that pervaded Mark's rites.

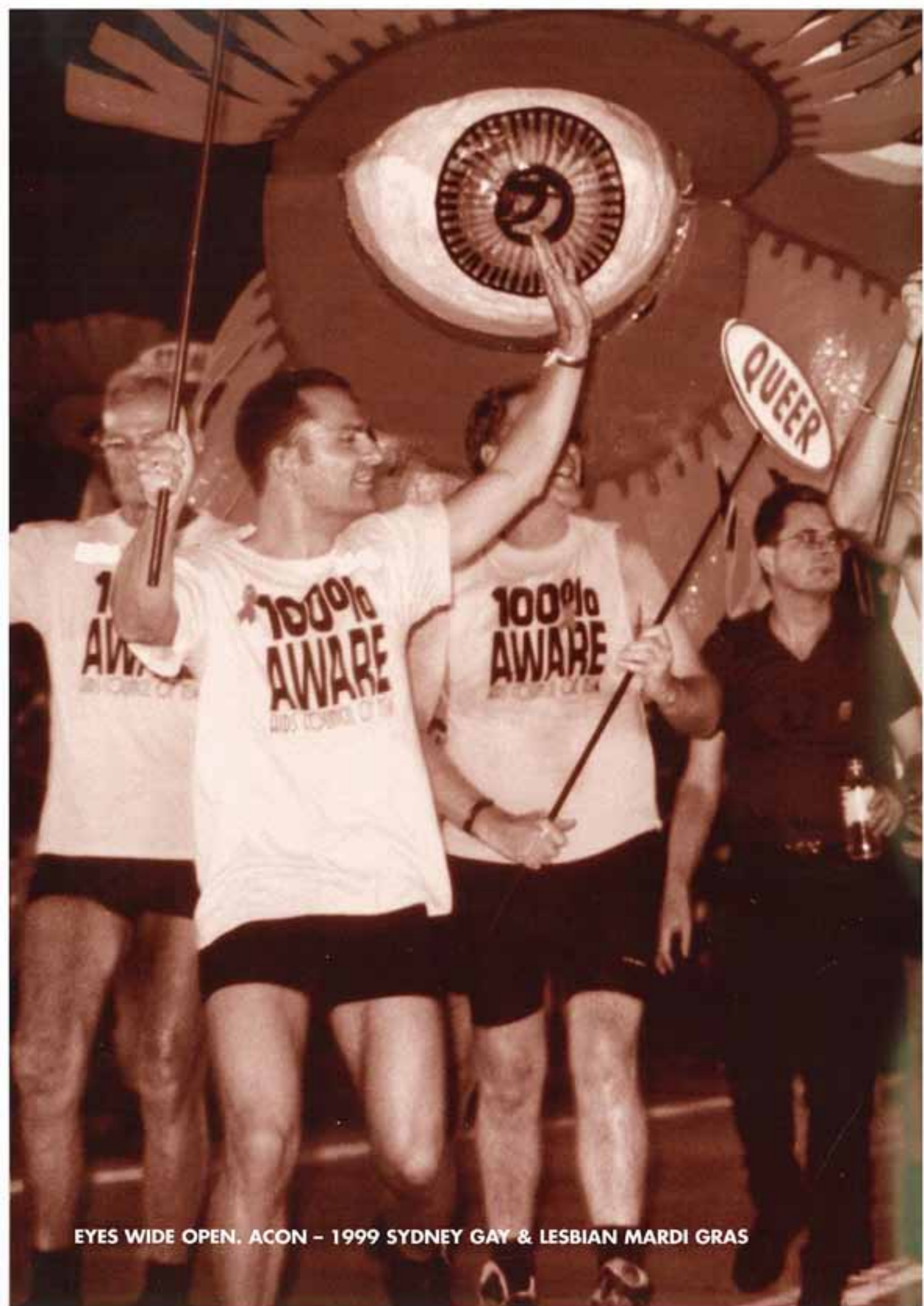
It was via email that I learned Vincent Dobbin had left us. Not the ideal way to learn of a death this personal. Vincent had been my former colleague on the Committee of PLWHA (NSW), a lawyer prior to HIV-induced retirement and thereafter a tireless worker in positive advocacy. I couldn't believe that his tenacious ability to wring a continued quality of life out of HIV could be extinguished so quickly by what was described prosaically as "an acute infection that spread rapidly."

Four lives, four deaths. If meaning is an essential part of grief resolution – then we're still searching for it. The whys, as always, are posed in far greater profusion than answers are made available. But we need to keep asking, and we will.

In the meantime, they're gone, they're missed and Christmas seems a long time coming. Shine on.

Geoff Honnor

Four lives, four deaths. If meaning is an essential part of grief resolution – then we're still searching for it.



EYES WIDE OPEN. ACON - 1999 SYDNEY GAY & LESBIAN MARDI GRAS

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The Board and management of the AIDS Council of NSW would like to acknowledge and thank the staff and volunteers of our organisation for their commitment, dedication and for the wonderful work they continue to do for our clients and communities. To staff who left the organisation during the course of the year, we would like to acknowledge your contribution during your time with ACON.

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ACON: KEEPING

In Memoriam

The Board, staff, volunteers and management of ACON dedicate this Annual Report to the memories of Geoffrey Fysh, Paul Kinder, Mark Gruber & Vincent Dobbin, together with all those who have lost their lives as a result of AIDS over the last 12 months.

ACON was established by a group of gay men in the early stages of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in NSW. It was a key part of the response of the gay community to the precipitate decline of friends and lovers into illness and death, fuelled by an abiding mistrust that government health services would deliver to our people with any sense of primacy or urgency. Also created at that early stage was the Community Support Network, which provided voluntary home care to those too sick from HIV and AIDS to look after themselves. CSN is now a proud part of ACON's constellation of services whilst maintaining its own identity and strong group of volunteers.

Although born of the gay community and based principally in the gay and lesbian community, ACON also serves all HIV positive people in NSW and includes projects targeting a range of positive groups, including importantly, positive women.

ACON began as a crisis response but has now been in existence for fifteen years and is a sophisticated community health organisation. The HIV/AIDS epidemic has changed fundamentally over the years and will continue to do so. This change creates tremendous opportunities and some difficulties for ACON.

This year, ACON has led sector engagement in addressing changing epidemic realities but that engagement has produced an often volatile and heated debate. The epidemiology is unarguable. Morbidity and mortality rates are significantly down. Acute admissions have dwindled. Opportunistic infections have been pushed back by the antiretroviral frontier and positive people have had the opportunity

to consider life options, as wellness circumstances permit, on a scale undreamed of a few years ago. In NSW positive service delivery, for most positive people, is now solely about an association with their prescriber.

The receding tide of morbidity has however uncovered areas of specific need generated by poverty, psychosocial problems, the inadequacy of treatment response and the longer term uncertainties around treatments toxicity and efficacy. Equally, workers in the sector can experience significant anxiety around their own sense of place and usefulness which can on occasion translate into claims that sector leadership is "uncaring" about them and their clients. Unarticulated but nevertheless real is a yearning in some for the certainties and purpose of early to mid epidemic response. However, largely uncelebrated and generally invisible the triumph of individual positive people in wresting lives of whatever shape and dimension from the constructs of disease, with or without treatments "success" has been a constant throughout. The diversity of positive life experience that has emerged is an epidemic success story that needs greater emphasis as do the other issues that we have yet to tackle - unresolved grief and loss.

Increasingly, the lines of demarcation between care and support and policy and advocacy are becoming blurred and indistinct as a new holistic approach to case management shapes. Existing positive services are unsuited to the changing lives of many positive people and we need to understand how we can respond to this simultaneously with a renewal of our commitment to individual client needs. As well, support is needed for clients returning to work. This involves both practical support and activist work to pursue issues such as discrimination and treatment access.

ACON has always been committed to sharing its expertise with other communities affected by HIV/AIDS. This commitment is particularly focused at present on the Aboriginal community and on injecting drug users. ACON also continues to auspice the Sex Workers' Outreach Project.

What we do

There are three pillars to ACON's services - services to positive people; prevention programs; and advocacy/community development. ACON is a statewide service with a concentration of effort at the epicentre of the epidemic in inner city Sydney. Of the 7,000 positive people in the State, the great majority are within relatively easy access of Sydney-based service delivery. That



ACON SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM From top left: Geoff Honnor, Robert Griew, Brent Allan, Alison Cunningham, Stevie Clayton

THE VISION

said, over 25% of ACON's resources are directed to regional and rural services, which include four Branches, an outreach service, a rural community development project, and a number of projects with statewide briefs.

ACON's staff are organised into five Divisions which run a larger number of projects. These five Divisions are:

Executive – the Senior Management Team, Media Officer, Board Secretariat, Policy Team, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Project, and the Events and Fundraising Team;

Education – the Sydney Education Team, men's and women's campaign positions, and peer-based projects (such as Mature Age Gays), positive health promotion positions, and the Sex Workers' Outreach Project;

Care and Support – peer-based support projects, Community Support Network, Counselling and Treatments Officers;

Regional Services – Regional Branches are located in Lismore, Newcastle, Wollongong and Parramatta, with an outreach service in Port Macquarie and a new community development position established for the 1999–2000 year; and

Organisational Support – all the things which make the organisation run, including Finance and Human

Resources, Information, Reception and Volunteer Co-ordination.

ACON has more than 100 staff and a large number of volunteers who contribute to the full range of programs which the organisation runs.



ACON BOARD: Back from left: Robert Griew, Douglas Barry, Heather McGillivray, Michael Riches, David Stone (President), Perry Head, Andrew Grulich (Treasurer). Front from left: Fraser Drummond (Secretary), Chris Gratton, Sarah Bergin (Staff Representative), Shayne Mallard.

Absent: Shelley Korn (Positive Women's Representative), David Buchanan, Craig Patterson (Vice President).

Michael Riches & Douglas Barry were standing in for the permanent PLWHA representatives Ryan McGlaughlin and Phillip Medcalf.

SNAPSHOT – AN ACON MONTH

ACON's services are many and varied. In the space of a month, we spend time with, speak with and serve large numbers of diverse people. In a month:

1630 people come into ACON Sydney's reception, while another 5030 call our main switch line.

100 people visit the Library, the average length of stay being an hour.

147 people contact the Information Project with general enquiries.

126 carers provide home care services for 120 people in the Sydney region. In the Hunter, Western Sydney and Illawarra regions, 74, 33, and 40 people, respectively, receive home care services.

24 people access the Mid North Coast Outreach Project.

700 people use the Northern Rivers Branch. 120 of these people are HIV positive.

150 people seek counselling services.

122 HIV positive men get one-on-one peer support, another 185 people contact peer support by phone. 25 people attend positive social events.

96 people attend treatment information sessions. 48 phone and write for treatment advice.

25 HIV positive women attend groups, and 62 HIV positive women seek one-on-one support.

18 people use family support services. 27 people call for advice.

41 young bisexual and gay men attend groups. 23 young men seek one-on-one support.

6 young positive men attend groups. 30 attend positive social events, and 10 seek one-on-one support.

135 mature age gay men attend groups. 50 mature men seek one-on-one support.

100 Asian gay men attend groups. 160 Asian men seek one-on-one support.

6,460 safe sex packs are given out to local venues and at parties. 50 local venues are visited.

Gay men's campaigns reach 80,000 people, positive campaigns reach 8,000, and women's campaigns reach 2,000.

6,000 people attend ACON events.

1,500 volunteers work with ACON Sydney. 15 new volunteers attend ACON information sessions.

450 people in the sex industry use ACON services.

6,500 people across NSW receive newsletters from ACON Sydney.

300 people access injecting drug use services at ACON Sydney.

PRESIDENT'S REP

The last twelve months have been a challenging and exciting time for ACON. 1998-1999 has seen us emerge from a difficult period, grounded solidly in our communities and ready for the challenges our future holds.

Since our last Annual Report, ACON has been involved in an impressive array of community activities. The Candlelight Memorial in Hyde Park again engaged many members of our communities, united in strength and grief. Red Ribbon Day, now an integral part of AIDS Awareness Week and World AIDS Day and for the first time this year run from within ACON, raised a significant \$84,000. ACON's annual fundraising extravaganza, Hand in Hand - All Fired Up! was the best yet, raising over \$100,000 from which 16 smaller community organisations benefited. I was a bit fired up myself In Bed with Miss Beverley at Mardi Gras Fair Day!!

The Northern Rivers branch turned ten with a fantastic party celebrating the efforts of local staff and ACON's service reach beyond the confines of the Sydney area. A new rural community development position is to be created in 1999-2000. Our broad-based community support throughout NSW is incredibly important to ACON's leadership in response to the epidemic.

ACON continues to draw its strength from its founders, the gay and lesbian community, and to work largely with its members. The post-combination therapy reality of HIV/AIDS has produced some inevitable ambivalence, with many people seeking to decentralise the experience of illness from their lives. Ensuring appropriate ongoing community engagement, while still combating the complicated and highly varied effects of HIV in individuals' lives, is one of our challenges. One particularly valuable vehicle is our regular Update to members, produced by our Information Section.

We also continue to work closely with People Living With HIV/AIDS (NSW) Inc and to evaluate and improve our existing services for positive people. We are creating new and innovative responses to



David Stone, ACON President

changes in the epidemic. The needs of positive women and men have definitely become more diverse, taking ACON in new directions and into new partnerships. One area clearly indicated for new collaboration is the impact of mental health issues, including AIDS related dementia. Service provision for positive people and advocacy for the positive community remains one of the cornerstone commitments of ACON.

Education must also remain a core focus for ACON's success to continue. ACON presented, with Mardi Gras, an education campaign for men during the Mardi Gras season that focussed on fucking; topping

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that with a sizzling campaign of pissing, piercing, and pegs jointly run with Sydney Leather Pride. We launched *The Informer*, ACON's well-received lesbian sexual health resource. We also collaborated with Sydney Sexual Health and South Eastern Sydney Area Health Service on campaigns around the dangers of gonorrhoea and hepatitis to gay men's health.

ACON's new direction in education continued with a number of health promotion initiatives for positive people, and with our implementation in NSW of the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) campaign Keeping Things in Focus, reflecting on the changing relationship of HIV to our communities and our lives. This campaign received rave reviews at the recent biopsychosocial conference in Ottawa.

ACON has this year reached out more effectively to Aboriginal people in our communities and across NSW. This will be an important part of our mission over the next years, as we work with Aboriginal communities and organisations in the fight to head off a new epidemic among the Indigenous communities of NSW. In Strategic Directions we made this a priority. We are now making real our commitment.

A Special General Meeting ensured a welcome representative role for women on the ACON board, when members voted to amend the ACON Constitution to create a designated position for a positive woman. This was filled by Shellie Korn as a casual vacancy, and an additional ordinary position was filled by Heather McGillivray. ACON acknowledged women's experience in the history of the epidemic and confirmed its continued support of women affected by HIV.

By December and January, ACON's outstanding new CEO Robert Griew had settled in, and the restructuring of the Sydney office was well underway. After considerable efforts from management and staff, at the financial year's end ACON has a vibrant new management team, a new organisational structure, a robust business plan and a clear budget for next year. Robert, management and staff are to be congratulated on their professionalism and vision during this process.

After years of close association and use of ACON financial and management services, the HIV/AIDS Legal Centre (HALC) struck out on its own at 30 June 1999. We wish HALC well as a fully independent and important HIV service.

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ACON's professionalism was also a key factor in the success of its political advocacy. ACON lobbied strongly and successfully, securing support from all major parties for a State HIV Strategy and a commitment from the Carr Labor Government for maintenance of real funding for all community HIV agencies and for HIV/AIDS as a whole in NSW. We were also involved with AFAO in successful lobbying and policy development for a 4th National HIV Strategy. Our relationships with government are strong.

ACON again demonstrated a forceful lobbying presence at the Premier's Drug Summit which saw CEO Robert Griew, as a delegate to the Summit, and our Vice President Craig Patterson also heavily involved on behalf of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians. ACON convened a broad community coalition to promote a reformist, harm-minimisation outcome. The recommendations of the Summit reflect our success.

After years of lobbying in partnership with the Gay & Lesbian Rights Lobby and Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras, same sex relationship reform finally became a reality in NSW. ACON also co-convened with Mardi Gras a drug forum for the gay and lesbian community, to discuss issues of drug and alcohol use and harm. ACON continues to affirm our commitment to the broad health and well-being of our diverse community.

ACON is now placed well for the future. The debate on what that future is will not be simple and ACON's Board and management are absolutely committed that it will not be simplistic. Looking back on this year as President, I have met so many talented and dedicated members of staff, and so many amazing volunteers, that I am confident of the organisation's future success.

David Stone

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

As outlined in the President's report, it has been a year of organisational consolidation for ACON, and a year of re-engagement with both government and community.

ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

In October 1998, a new management structure was created which is designed to give the organisation greater capacity for leading change. Our Projects and Units were amalgamated into four divisions with three new Directors appointed in late January, to provide strategic and professional standards direction. The Directors work with the CEO and Deputy as a team, exercising collective responsibility for ACON's management and leadership. The Deputy is responsible for deputising for the CEO and for the management of Regional Services.

Following the implementation of the new management structure, the next stage in organisational development was to review the structures within each area. This was completed between February and March. The new structures within each Division were in place by the end of April. Advantages of the new structure include the realignment of activities which can benefit from working more closely (for example, the men's and women's positive peer support programs or the Sex Workers' Outreach Project and the education team).

In December and January, we undertook a mid-financial year review of the 1998-99 budget which predicted a budget blowout in the second half of the financial year, with the potential to leave us with insufficient operating funds at 30 June. In March, management took to the Board a strategy which encompassed both the restructure, which would have been proposed in any case, and a series of decisions to reduce spending in the second half of the financial year. Mostly these involved reducing non-salary expenditure, with the four voluntary redundancies flowing from decisions made for restructuring and workload reasons. A limited number of positions were left unfilled for the remainder of the year while management reconsidered the overall budget for 1999-2000.



Robert Griew, CEO

All of these decisions were difficult for the organisation, following on, as they did, from a lengthy period of organisational uncertainty. Although there was consultation with staff and unions and there were actually few redundancies, the process did take a toll on morale in the early part of 1999. By the end of the financial year, the organisation has funds sufficient to provide for about one month's operations (albeit that some of that is tied to specific projects) and a much sounder budget for 1999-2000. Hiran Cooray left to move back to Queensland in May 1999, and a new Finance Manager started in July. New personnel and finance systems were implemented during 1989-1999 which are Y2K compliant and will contribute to an improvement in financial controls.

Between April and June, ACON management and staff, with Board strategy groups and key stakeholders, put together a Business Plan for 1999-2000. This allowed the organisation to reconsider all of our activities, to commit to some exciting new initiatives and to recommit to most of our ongoing ones. The

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OFFICER'S REPORT

Business Plan has been well received and includes clearer standards of accountability and performance information for ACON in 1999-2000.

ACON'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOVERNMENT

Policy is a key engagement of the organisation. This involves both the Board and senior management in policy-related lobbying activities. It also requires sophisticated capacity in our Policy Unit, which has continued as a strong part of the ACON Executive structure. ACON policy staff worked incredibly effectively to achieve most of our sector's aspirations in the NSW Statement of Strategic Directions which was endorsed by both sides in the NSW election, following ACON's election questionnaire.

Our input to the Ministerial Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS and government in general is recognised and listened to, which is important at this time in the epidemic.

Another example was our successful lobbying for NSW to initiate the second trial in the world of post-exposure prophylaxis for non-occupational exposure to HIV.

The NSW Drug Summit was a major involvement for myself, as a delegate and in helping convene a coalition of groups to push for a reform agenda. We saw most of our agenda endorsed at the Summit itself and continue to be heavily involved in promoting sensible implementation of the Summit outcomes.

ACON'S RELATIONSHIP WITH HIV SECTOR PARTNERS

ACON continues to work closely with AFAO, in the policy reference groups, through its committees and on the Executive. Particularly important this year has been the process surrounding the Review of the Third and the drafting of the Fourth National HIV Strategies.

ACON continues to convene the HIV Agencies Forum which has a number of roles, including jointly lobbying and promoting cross-sectoral communication and interchange. Successes this year include the input the group had to the Ministerial Advisory Council on the draft NSW Statement of Strategic

Directions, and keeping members informed and advancing members' concerns following the closure of the Caroline Lane needle and syringe service in Redfern.

With debate about change in the epidemic being particularly important, this is an important forum for sectoral input to government agendas. Debate has also started within the sector about whether other wider discussion forums are also needed, to focus larger groups of players on the diverse range of issues which need debating at this volatile time. ACON management has supported this process and is, at year's end, involved in a working group on this question with other HIV agencies.

One final partnership worth highlighting is with the Redfern Aboriginal Medical Service and the AMS movement in NSW more generally. This, together with the work ACON is Aboriginal HIV project has done with a range of significant Aboriginal agencies around NSW, has set a platform for a much larger program of action in this key area in 1999-2000.

ACON STAFF AND COMMUNITY

It has been a difficult year, with senior staff turnover, a lot of change and some very difficult challenges. It has also been a year of growth, with a Business Plan in place for next year - including a really impressive array of new programs and services - and ACON taking a sector leadership role in addressing the fundamental changes in the epidemic that confront us all.

I am very conscious of the strength of the organisation, its staff and community and this has made some of the changes that have had to be made difficult, even painful. As an organisation, indeed as a sector, we are very hard on ourselves, too often seeking responsibility among our own for change happening outside, across the whole health system. I have sometimes been quite worried about this as I have watched individuals hurt or hurt themselves. I would like to set a goal of more celebration of success and strength in the next year.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of my predecessor, Bernie Coates, and the support of the ACON Board over the last nine months. Especially, I would like to thank ACON's amazing staff and community for the wonderful things they do everyday.

Robert Griew

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REGIONAL SERVICE

The Regional Services Division was created in mid 1998 to bring together all of ACON's services for people living in rural and regional settings, including some statewide services, under a separate Director. Since that time, as a result of service reviews and budgetary decisions, the Regional Services Division has changed. Regional Services now encompasses our four Branch Offices located in Hunter, Illawarra, Northern Rivers and Western Sydney, the outreach service in the Mid North Coast, and a new Rural Project. Regional Services no longer has a separate Director but now falls into the area of responsibility of the Deputy Executive Officer.

During the 1998-1999 mid-year budget review process, ACON made the difficult decision to remove the position of Regional Services Director, with the workload being taken up by the Deputy Executive Officer, and not to fill the two positions in our Rural Project, as budget savings measures. These two decisions have earned ACON a fair amount of criticism in recent months, as people interpreted the move as an indication that ACON was no longer going to provide services to people in rural and regional areas.

This is clearly not the case, with approximately twenty-five per cent of ACON's budget being spent in the Regional Services Division and additional resources allocated to other parts of the organisation to provide statewide services. ACON continues to be a statewide organisation and we accept our responsibility to ensure adequate services are provided to

ACON continues to be a Statewide organisation and we accept our responsibility to ensure that adequate services are provided to people who fall within our client groups, irrespective of where they live in NSW.

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In April 1999, ACON had the first of what are now regular meetings with rural Area Health Service HIV/AIDS Co-ordinators and as a result believe we have found an affordable way to make a more constructive contribution to rural HIV services. As a result of these meetings, we have agreed to the establishment of a new joint venture, with ACON personnel and funds, between ACON and Area Health Services, to provide assistance with community development activities in areas where ACON does not have Branch Offices.

Most parts of Regional Services underwent detailed review processes during 1998-1999, involving extensive community consultation and stakeholder input. Implementation of the recommendations of those reviews has either commenced already or has been included in the ACON Business Plan for 1999-2000, including an increased commitment to staff development to equip staff better for their newly designed roles.

Following the forums organised as part of the business planning process, Branches staff will continue to meet with local service providers to identify changing needs and look for sector-wide solutions. This will be assisted by ACON's new structure which makes the Directors of Education and Care and Support responsible for the introduction of statewide standards of professionalism within their respective areas.

The role and function of Branch Advisory Committees has in the past been problematic. In late 1998-1999, a review commenced which we hope will lead to local community members having much greater involvement in our Branch Offices through the Advisory Committees.

HUNTER REGION

The past year was influenced by the Hunter Review and the activities which flowed from it. The initial review was conducted by the late Paul Kinder and completed in June 1998. Following consultation with staff, community, and service providers, the ACON Hunter Future Directions Statement was completed in March 1999. The Future Directions Statement provides for a refocussing of education services, an extension of the care and support positions and a greater emphasis on health promotion for HIV positive people.

Whilst the review period was difficult for the Branch, staff and volunteers ensured the majority of services were maintained so there was little impact on clients. The two exceptions were beats outreach and counselling services, which were not undertaken in the last few months of the year. This situation will change in the new year with funding from the AIDS Trust of Australia to employ a part-time counsellor for twelve months and beats/venue outreach now incorporated into the education and community development work plans.

Care and support staff have maintained a high standard of continuity of care for our clients. While combination therapies have had a major impact, the need for carers has remained a priority as new clients are presenting with a range of care needs not previously experienced, thus co-ordination of the Community Support Network remains an essential project.

CSN Hunter has for three years facilitated the Positive Speakers' Association (PSA). The last year has seen an unprecedented increase in requests for education sessions, with speaking engagements increasing by twenty per cent to forty-four sessions and speakers increasing from six to eleven.

This year also saw the first Positive Women's Group to form in the Hunter with CSN's assistance. Group members now meet regularly and numbers are growing.

Education work this year included training programs and peer workshops for young gay men (Start Making Sense), gay and bisexual men of all ages (Altogether), a relationship workshop (Falling in Love) and an Under 26 group.

Community development activities included providing facilitation, support and/or resources to: the On the Other Side group in the Upper Hunter; the Out

Now Magazine project; Hunter Lesbian and Gay Interagency; Hunter Gay and Lesbian Business Association Inc; ELAM Magazine; and the Two Stars project. A recent addition is the Hunter Harm Minimisation Interest Group, auspiced by ACON Hunter, which is developing a local response to the recent NSW Drug Summit.

The Sex Workers' Outreach Project is continuing to have regular contact servicing seventeen brothels and twenty agencies in the Hunter and Central Coast.

Project Hunterline was developed in conjunction with the Hunter Centre for Health Advancement and will result in a report based on surveys from thirty-eight local non-gay-identified men who are homosexually active.

Front-of-office services include information, referral, needle and syringe services, safe sex resources and the vitamin service. The Administration Officer also co-ordinates the Rainbow and Red Ribbon fundraising project.

Volunteers work as CSN Carers, ACON Administration Volunteers, Resources Volunteers, Venue and Beats Volunteers, CSN Carer Committee Members and Advisory Committee Members.



1999 CSN Carers Graduation

Last year, our volunteers were integral to the presentation of the successful education forums, 'Don't stay in the Dark,' with Ian Roberts as the special guest speaker.

MID NORTH COAST REGION

The Mid North Coast Outreach Service is now in its second year of operation and this year relocated to new premises in the Port Macquarie CBD and from the beginning of the new financial year moved 'structurally' to be an outreach service of the Hunter Branch. The new location is more accessible for clients and creates a more visible presence in the community. The office has a small library and resource room which provides privacy for interviews and accessing the counselling service which is attached to the office, through the Area Health Service.

The Outreach Service covers an area from Forster in the south to Red Rock, north of Coffs Harbour, and west to the ranges. Regular outreach service days have been established in the major centres where clients can now access ACON services on a regular basis. The available services are expanding as the needs of client groups in the area become better understood.

There are now two chapters of CSN on the Mid North Coast. CSN Coffs Harbour has carers from Woolgoolga, north of Coffs Harbour, Nana Glen, Dorrigo down to Nambucca Heads and Bowraville, and CSN Mid North Coast has carers from Forster and Old Bar in the south to Port Macquarie. CSN works closely with Coffs Harbour Antibody Positive Support (CHAPS) Outback to provide care and support services and to meet practical needs such as transport. CHAPS Outback and CSN conduct joint fundraising events which also translates into a very

interactive support network. Besides providing home care and transport services, CSN was also involved in retreats for positive people living in the region and provides meals for some clients, utilising a freezer sponsored by BGF.

During the year, we have had a close working relationship with both the Area Health Service and the local lesbian and gay social group, Coastal Lynx, which has included several jointly run programs, including the Me Young and Proud (MYP) programs targeting under 26-year-olds who are attracted to the same sex. These groups have provided ongoing support and social activities as well as education for young people. With many social issues and isolation factors in rural areas, the MYP groups have played a major part in supporting youth coming to terms with sexuality issues.

Another joint project has been the Tuesday/Friday Line which provides telephone peer support for non-heterosexual-identifying youth who want to talk about their issues with someone around their own age. ACON Mid North Coast has been involved in the sponsorship of this phone line as well as facilitating the training of the operators and supervisors. All of the operators are aged between 18 and 26 years.

We now have two Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) groups in the area, one in Port Macquarie and a newer group in Coffs Harbour. PFLAG Mid North Coast is now looking to introduce groups in the Southern areas as well.

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Mid North Coast Volunteers at Coffs Harbour City Mall on World AIDS Day.



NORTHERN RIVERS REGION

ACON Northern Rivers covers an area of over 23,000 sq km, from the Tweed Valley to south of Grafton. This region has the largest known number of people living with HIV/AIDS outside the Sydney Metropolitan Area.

ACON Northern Rivers has nurtured and maintained established relationships with other service providers from the Tweed Valley to the Mid North Coast. These collaborations allow us to provide a broader and more efficient range of services and ensures our voice and those of the clients and communities we represent are heard in the broader community.

Our most recent collaborative project is a joint initiative of ACON Northern Rivers Branch, the AIDS Dementia and HIV Psychiatry Service (ADAHPS) and the Northern Rivers AHS. The AIDS Dementia Complex and HIV Psychiatry Case Management Project will design a system to provide appropriate referral and assessment for clients with complex needs and develop a sustainable model for case management. The aim of the project is to ensure continuity of care across service units by providing co-ordination of specialist interventions using best-practice guidelines. The model developed will be promoted statewide.

With the advent of improved treatments, people living with HIV/AIDS in the region have had less need for hands-on physical living care. Nevertheless, the demand for services in other areas and on other levels has continued to increase. The PLWHA Support Worker provides support services and runs projects which reflect a 'wellness' model whilst still maintaining components of best practice from the medical model. An example of this is our training program to assist people with HIV/AIDS to gain employment in a clerical/administrative field.

The full-time Gay Men's Education Worker has been with us now for one year, and has implemented and evaluated a number of health promotion, peer education and community development programs and strategies for HIV positive and negative gay men. Examples of these include: health retreats for gay men and positive gay men; eleven regional community and social/information events; skills-based alternative therapy workshops; and community development activities, including strengthening

links with local gay groups, supporting PFLAG Lismore, and involvement in the Northern Rivers Lesbian & Gay interagency. The Education Worker also provided safe-sex resources at twelve gay and lesbian community events.

We continue to consolidate our working relationship with Aboriginal services. This has involved us in representation on several committees and continued liaison with relevant government agencies. ACON Northern Rivers is recruiting an ATSI worker to run a project in partnership with local Aboriginal sexual health workers.



The Tweed Valley Project continues to provide much-needed outreach and educational support in the region. The project works closely with Murwillumbah Community Health and is continuing to develop relationships with Queensland Positive People.

The Needle Exchange remains very much in demand. Along with information and referral, we dispensed over 30,000 1 ml syringes this year.

The contribution of volunteers remains important. In the past year, we have reviewed the needs of our branch and our clients and adjusted our volunteer and recruitment training accordingly.

This year, we will celebrate ten years of providing HIV/AIDS services to the gay and lesbian community and people living with HIV/AIDS in Northern Rivers.

NORTHERN RIVERS STAFF

From left: Kevin Orroll, Greg Kelly, Sue Rodda, Ian Gray, Ron Davis, Glen King

WESTERN SYDNEY REGION

The last year has been a period of great stability within ACON Western Sydney, allowing for the expansion of existing programs and the initiation of new projects.

Community Support Network in Western Sydney is responding to the changing needs of its clients and initiated changes to its referral policy. These changes have been adopted by all other CSN offices. Over the last year, CSN assisted thirty-three clients to receive 6,208 hours of care across 1,750 shifts, and trained fifteen new carers. CSN Western Sydney has also made a significant contribution to the design of the new CSN database and the new CSN Policy and Procedures Manual.

Last year, we began a new project with Community Transport to increase transport options for HIV positive people in Western Sydney. With a grant from Parramatta City Council, we developed an HIV sensitivity program for Community Transport workers and volunteers. Western Sydney received two Community Access awards from Parramatta City Council in recognition of the program's success.

The Education Team, which includes Gay Men's Education, and Fun and Esteem West, had a successful year, particularly in the area of peer support,

with the Liverpool Peer Support group continuing to be popular and a new group starting in Penrith in September 1998. Fun and Esteem West has moved to a new home in Liverpool and continues to run in Parramatta. Fun and Esteem West has been involved in a number of projects, including the Youth Careers Market Day, Youth Week Parramatta, and on the steering committee of the Young Men & Sexual Health Project at the WareHouse in Penrith.

One of the highlights of the year was the production of resources for the promotion of the Peer Support Groups and for Fun and Esteem West. These resources reflect the cultural diversity of Western Sydney and the needs of gay men living in the area. Two posters, postcards and cruise cards were produced.

The Education Team undertook a needs analysis of the education and social needs of HIV positive people in Western Sydney. The results of the needs analysis will be available later in the year.

Working collaboratively with other educators in the area, particularly in the three Area Health Services, has been a major theme for the Education Team this year, culminating in the production of a gay men's resource booklet to be published later in the year. The team was also approached by the University of Western Sydney to be part of a new research undertaking, entitled Memory Workshop, leading to further collaboration with the University.



Above: Cruise card designed for ACON Western Sydney encouraging safe sex and safe drug use.

Left: Out West Campaign Poster Launch - Western Sydney Gay Men's Project



Fundraising is always an important activity for the Branch, and the Miss Western Sydney Beauty pageant has gone from strength to strength, raising \$1,302 to buy Christmas hampers for PLWHA in Western Sydney. The Education team organised two fundraising nights with *Separate Tables*, produced by the Glenbrook Players, with the help of Q Theatre. The money raised was divided between the Blue Mountains PLWHA Centre and the Nepean Positive Women's Group.

The Community Liaison Working Party has played a valuable part in the direction and support of ACON Western Sydney by providing opportunities for interested community members to have direct input.

ILLAWARRA REGION

This has been an eventful year for the Illawarra branch, with changes of personnel, a highly productive planning process, and a range of exciting programs, including the Positive Art Project, the Art Therapy Project, development of a counselling proposal, the establishment of a doctor's clinic in the building, and a number of grants from our bequest fund being disbursed to community groups like Our Pathways Inc day centre and the Gay and Lesbian Line Illawarra referral line.

The monthly CSN Happy Hour was developed to bring together clients, community, staff and volunteers in a relaxed setting, to develop and encourage interaction and close working relationships, and it has done this very successfully. These are great evenings with good food and wine, catered beautifully by volunteers and staff, lots of fascinating conversation, and at most of these events, a guest speaker is scheduled, usually someone from an agency like BGF, Options or the Sexual Health Clinic, to talk about matters important and interesting to our clients.

One of the most innovative projects launched this year is the Transgender Resource and Advocacy Network (TRAN). TRAN has combined increasing visibility for transgender issues with compilation of a guide to supportive services, and has been trailblazing in its advocacy work for transgendered people with health and other service agencies. As with many projects, this one was initiated by people with a keen interest in the affected community, who initially approached ACON for support and are now an important part of the Branch.



Staff from Illawarra:
Back from left: Michael Long, Jake Leonard
Front from left: Deborah O'Neill, Suzette Jenkins

The Illawarra and Shoalhaven Safe Spaces Directory is a much-used resource which has already gone into its second printing. It has provided a wealth of information and many contact points for gay men, lesbians and transgendered people in the local area, and significantly helped raise community awareness and participation.

This year has seen an increase in outreach activities as we have begun broadening our boundaries to take in the Shoalhaven and Southern Highlands areas. Next year, a major focus will be on consolidating services to these areas.

The activities to mark this year's World AIDS Day were the best ever. ACON's Red Ribbon selling was an enormous success, raising more money than ever before, all of it going towards improving services for the local positive community. The Coomaditchie festival was organised by the Rawson St Centre, and ACON staff had a stall, a highly visible presence and a really good time. There were many other events and programs organised by the local AIDS Task Force Co-ordinator at which ACON and many other agencies participated, demonstrating there is a good core network upon which we can build in order to provide an even more effective service to our clients and communities.

This, in fact, will be the main focus of the work of our branch as we move into the new year: building on existing services, improving service delivery for our clients, developing greater opportunities for community involvement and ownership, and aiming to ensure the needs of our clients and communities in the Illawarra/Shoalhaven/Southern Highlands are met.

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EDUCATION

In response to changes both within ACON and throughout the HIV/AIDS sector, including the changing needs of the gay and lesbian community, the Education Division has been evaluating and considering new approaches to HIV/AIDS education and health promotion, not only for the gay and lesbian community but for HIV positive people and a range of other specific target audiences. This has led to the creation of several unique partnership campaigns and collaborations between education projects across the division.

The Education Division was created by amalgamating the Sydney Gay Education Unit with the Peer Education Unit, the Injecting and Other Drug Use Project, the Women's Campaigns position and the HIV Health Promotion program for HIV+ gay men, to form the Sydney Education Unit. The Sex Workers' Outreach Project (SWOP) combines with the Sydney Education Unit to make up the Education Division. In total there are now over forty staff in the Division with another eight education staff working in Branch Offices.

With this number and range of staff, it is no small surprise that the quality and quantity of work emanating from this division is continually increasing. With a firm commitment to quality on behalf of the staff and management, we have been able to produce some of the most innovative, relevant and diverse education materials for our communities.

VISIONARY CAMPAIGNS

Back to Basics Campaign – a set of seven eye-catching images, promoting clear messages of safe sex and safe drug use. The posters have been displayed throughout Sydney in more than 200 sites in sex-on-



premises venues and pubs.

The Informer – a comprehensive lesbian sexual health book, which has received wide acclaim. It provides lesbians and health care professionals with a comprehensive view of sexual health issues for lesbians.

Hepatitis and Gonorrhoea postcard campaign – a joint project between Sydney Sexual Health and South Eastern Sydney Area Health Service, encouraging gay men to get tested and vaccinated for Hepatitis A and B, and warning of the risks of gonorrhoea.

Give a Fuck Campaign – a high-profile media campaign, produced in partnership with Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras, encouraging safe sex for gay men during the Mardi Gras season.

Seven Deadly Sins campaign – conducted in conjunction with Sydney Leather Pride, in support of Leather Pride Week, incorporating the party theme into a highly explicit and targeted campaign for the leather community. The postcard and cruise card resources were enthusiastically received and highly complimented.

RooBoy Campaign – a campaign highlighting the importance of treatment compliance for HIV positive people and their GPs, produced in collaboration with the Australasian Society for HIV Medicine. As well as the posters and advertising, the campaign incorporated a comprehensive doctor's kit, containing a collection of resources and information. Treatment information workshops and a community forum were also staged to support the campaign.



Education staff – From left: Richard Knight, Ashleigh Rehn, Greg Staples, Brad Gray & Alexander Ku.



Getting Things in Focus Campaign – a campaign that examines gay men's lives in this changing time of HIV treatments and significant advances in gay rights. With a theme of personal and community reflection, the message was taken to the community through a number of engaging activities. These included an entertaining debate, attracting more than 400 people, and a highly successful photographic competition and exhibition.

Of course, the Education Division continues to provide workshops, groups, community forums, and social opportunities for a whole host of specific target audiences, such as Asian gay men, young gay men, sex workers, positive people, mature-age gay men, in Sydney and across the state. These groups continue to attract large numbers of gay men, providing them with information, education and social support. Several education projects produce and distribute newsletters as a method of providing education messages to their target audiences, as well as a means to inform about project and agency updates. This includes resources specifically designed for sex industry workers that are available in a multitude of languages.

The combined effect of these newsletters as well as the welcome addition of the new ACON website has enabled ACON to reach far more people than ever before with health promotion and harm minimisation advice. The ACON website has featured campaign graphics and information from RooBoy and Getting Things in Focus. In the future, it will be an important promotional tool for our education campaigns and

activities.

Literally hundreds of people have attended either an ACON workshop, a drop-in service, a community forum, a retreat or a launch in the past year. Even more people have been in contact with the education programs and services through outreach activities, such as needle exchange programs, sex worker outreach, condom and lube distribution at community events and venues, and hundreds of thousands of people have seen an ACON campaign in the past year.

1998-1999 has been an extraordinarily productive year for the staff and volunteers in the programs and services that make up the Education Division. Staff turnover has dramatically decreased from previous years, volunteer opportunities have increased, and with the dedication of all the program advisory members, focus group participants, as well as agency and partner organisations, we have been able to provide a range of programs and services that are able to identify and meet the needs of a variety of communities. Many of our services could not possibly be provided without the involvement of our many education volunteers.

The Division is looking forward to the forthcoming year, with many exciting and innovative campaigns being planned, the expansion of education to positive people in conjunction with the Care & Support Division, as well as a continued commitment to providing the most professional, relevant and expanding range of education opportunities for our communities.

Above: Launch of RooBoy Compliance Campaign at RooBar. Back from left: Robert Griew, Brent Allan, Mark Bebbington. Front from left: Andrew Grulich, Richard Knight.

Opposite page – Top: The Informer lesbian sex resource launched in February of 1999.

2nd from top: Poster from the Back to Basics campaign promoting safe sex and safe drug use.

3rd from top: Give a Fuck campaign promoting backroom safe sex for men.

ORGANISATION

The Organisational Support Division, the base for all the organisation's activities, has gone through a year of rapid and turbulent change in response to both internal and external influences, at times exhilarating, at times distressing.

Our objective was to move to a culture where ACON managers would be able to assume direct responsibility for organisational health in terms of human resource management, finance and administration, whilst the traditional providers of those services transformed into advisory and consultancy centres to support them. We have ended the financial year with a division in a very different place and space from that in which we started. The old Organisational Services Unit (OSU) and Client Liaison and Information Unit (CLIU) have been combined and restructured to form the new



Organisational Support Division. The foundations are now in place to become a responsive and supportive platform from which the extraordinarily diverse range of people, services and programs we service and supply, can take renewed energy and confidence.

The challenges created by the restructure in October 1998 and the mid-year review of February 1999 were to merge a group of separate support units into a single division and to bring about major improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of many administrative pro-

cedures. Both of these objectives were met, with the various smaller workgroups of the division now aggregated into three general areas dealing with physical resources, staff, volunteers and training (human resources), and financial resources.

The new organisational structure has allowed senior managers to focus collectively on ACON's organisational health. This has given the scope for other staff in the organisation to develop more specialised, expert services to the entire organisation which, in turn, provides greater job satisfaction. Divisional staff played an active role in designing and providing those services, with a strong focus on client service. We concentrated on building a divisional staff structure which emphasises flexibility, skills, ability and creativity.

Apart from the day-to-day issues of providing a comfortable and safe working environment and the delivery of services to ACON's staff, which are essential for them to service clients, the attention of those involved in the management of our physical resources has largely been devoted to the 'millennium' bug. We have taken all necessary steps to ensure that at the end of this year, our IT infrastructure, our telephone system, our security systems and other systems, such as air-conditioning, will continue to provide the level of service we have become accustomed to expect. Throughout this process, our reception and library staff have continued to provide a high standard of client service, both on the telephone and across the counter.

The Finance Section has had a particularly traumatic year, with almost 100 per cent staff turnover, a massive systems upgrade (required for Y2K compliance), and a sweeping culture change in the closing months of the year. These changes have resulted in a new, simplified, systematic approach to accounts processing, budgeting and management reporting. The appointment of a new Finance Manager means the unit is well equipped to take the culture change forward and that we are strategically placed to provide management with the reporting system required to capitalise on the benefits of our new organisational structure.

The merger of our human resources support, both staff and volunteer, has created a specific expertise base that ACON has long needed. The amalgamation of the management of our staff and volunteer base, with the staff development function, will provide a solid footing for management to direct and own people and organisational development. In 1999-2000 we will

Staff from Organisational Support Division – from left: Julian Archer, Maxine Lewis, Maude Frances, Kon Toumazos, Eric Bonanno

AL SUPPORT

be capitalising on this amalgamation of functions to undertake a skills audit and a comprehensive staff development program. Our payroll system was not immune to the Y2K problem and we commissioned a new payroll system during the year. Sadly, staff in this section, and ACON as a whole, also had to face the sudden and tragic death of Mark Gruber, ACON's Personnel Officer for the last 7 years.

Perhaps the least affected section of the Division over this period was the Information Section, whose presence at events and parties was visual confirmation of our continued engagement with our communities. As we produce more educational resources, the work of the Information Section also increases as they move to ensure that those resources are efficiently and appropriately distributed, and to respond to the seemingly endless number of enquiries for resources and other information. A dramatic increase in membership numbers this year has also led to an increased workload for Information as they continue to ensure that members are kept up to date with ACON activities.

Our commitment to best practice in external client servicing was utilised to develop an internal – or 'customer service' – ethos for improving our service standards to ACON staff. This development ran concurrently with specific area reviews of many of our cross-organisation support expenditure areas with the aim of achieving better use of resources.

Reviewing processes and procedures is not just a one-off budget reduction exercise. Constantly reviewing all administrative functions with a view to improving their efficiency and effectiveness is now a fact of life, and many more improvements will be made in the coming year. We need to turn policies into guidelines, make the inflexible become responsive, empower our managers to be their own resource controllers, develop and strengthen the internal customer service ethos, and transform our library into an interactive learning centre, among many other things, by 30 June 2000.

Information and Membership Services, whose presence at events and parties was visual confirmation of our continued engagement with our communities.

YOU KNOW,
THE DAY MY
GAY COMMUNITY
ATTACHED,
NON LESBIAN,
HETEROSEXUALLY
IDENTIFYING,
FEMALE,
DANCE
PARTNER,
SHOPPING
FRIEND
BECAME AN
ACON
MEMBER,
WAS THE
HAPPIEST
DAY OF
MY LIFE


Positive, negative, female, male,
Aboriginal, Asian, mature, young,
queer, heterosexual, employed,
unemployed. One of us, all of us. Our
diversity makes our community
organisation strong.

As ACON members we can make a
difference. As volunteers, as educators,
as carers for those who are not well.

We're all ACON members, we're all
part of this community and we're all
doing something important.

To find out more about joining ACON
call info at ACON membership on 9206 2023.

COMMUNITY IS THE ESSENCE OF WHAT WE ARE!



ACON Membership Advertisement



ACON information Stall at Leather Pride Fair Day

CARE & SUPPORT

For many years, care and support services at ACON have been characterised as a crisis response in a context of high death rates, with limited treatment options and still-evolving services. That context has been changing for some years and there is an increasing diversity of positive life experience and consequently of service needs. For many positive people, their GP is the sole source of support and information; others access community-based services at particular times of need, while others have a complexity of ongoing needs related both to their HIV status and other issues. During the last twelve months, ACON has been at the forefront of debate about how to reconfigure care and support services across the sector.

As an advocacy body, we have lobbied for resource allocation to reflect the shift in demand from acute to community-based services. As a service provider, we have changed the structure and content of our own services to respond better to the increasingly diverse range of needs of positive people. We have strengthened our relationships within the HIV/AIDS sector and built new partnerships with key players in the health, welfare and housing sectors.

The centrality of positive people in informing and participating in the development of our services remains fundamental. Building in continuous feedback and improvement mechanisms to our work is an important way for us to listen and respond to what positive people tell us about our services. We also recognise

the need to find new ways to make the concept of positive empowerment and mobilisation meaningful.

ACON's peer support service, staffed by HIV positive men and women, provides one-to-one and group support. It runs workshops, forums and events to enable and support positive people to manage the impact of living with HIV and to make informed choices about their health and their lives. 1999 saw the reunification of our men's and women's peer support projects into one team, while recognising ongoing gender differences in some areas of work.

In response to client feedback, our men's peer support staff have reoriented some programs and implemented new initiatives, including expanding their outreach service. The Planet Positive parties, run in partnership with PLWHA and the Positive Living Centre, have continued to be a great success in responding to issues of social isolation, and a collaboration with the AIDS Treatments Project Australia proved to be an effective way of fostering debate about treatments issues.



Care and Support Division – staff from CSN, HIV Living, Peer Support and Counselling Teams – Back from left: Adrian Ogier, Vivien Monroe, Suzie Matthews, Tess Ziems. Front from left: Julie Callaghan, Lyn Cuneen, Grant Farquharson

The Positive Retreats project held three retreats in 1998, bringing the number held during the course of its four years' funding to 17. ACON is currently auspicing an evaluation of the program, exploring the outcomes of the program for participants.

The release of *Standing on Shifting Sand* in August 1998 (a project by the National Centre in HIV Social Research) raised awareness of the particular issues faced by positive women and contributed to a more strategic response to program and resource development. This included development of new peer support programs for women on Sydney's North Shore and in Western Sydney. Recognising the isolation experienced by many rural positive women, ACON supported the attendance of seven women at the HIV/AIDS Rural Conference.

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Complementing treatments information provided by phone, in person, through workshops, forums and print material, ACON launched its Treatments Website in 1998. In collaboration with NAPWA's AIDS Treatment Project and other ACON staff, Treatments Officers tackled emerging issues such as drug holidays, side-effects from long-term use of treatments and immune restoration. The 'With Complements' newsletter continues to play a key role in giving up-to-date information on HIV and complementary therapies.

The Family Support Project works with health and welfare agencies to ensure the provision of appropriate substitute care services to families affected by HIV. The project has implemented several joint ventures with Sydney Children's Hospital, including an innovative education model, using video to allow clients to educate social workers on what works best for them. The two services supported forty families to participate in Camp Goodtime and provided parent support groups. Negotiation of a memorandum of agreement with Sydney Children's Hospital will enhance this partnership.

The departure of the Women Partners of Gay/Bisexual Men's Project Officer in 1998 gave us the opportunity to review the direction of this project. An independent review recommended that ACON's role be to produce campaigns targeting women who have sex with gay and bisexual men but that support for women partners was more appropriately delivered by women's and sexual health centres. For the next six months, we will focus on capacity building and supporting appropriate agencies to deliver support and information to this client group.

Community care services, such as assistance with cooking, shopping, cleaning and transport, provided through the Community Support Network, play an important part in the lives of many positive people. CSN assisted more than 100 clients on a regular basis over the past twelve months. Feedback from clients and volunteer carers tells us, however, that the nature of the demand is changing for a significant number of clients. To respond to our clients' changing needs, CSN began a process for the comprehensive reassessment of all of its clients in mid-1999.

With an increasingly tight Sydney rental market and long waiting lists for public housing, demand for housing information, referral, advice and advocacy from across New South Wales remains high. ACON's role in advocacy continues to be essential, given the

incidence of discrimination by landlords, the increasing number of clients with dual or multiple diagnoses, and the number of positive people experiencing difficulties in accessing the full range of government housing assistance.

ACON played a key role in the NSW Housing Strategy for People Living with HIV/AIDS, including joint design of policies and practices which will better respond to the changing housing needs of positive people. Outcomes included a collaborative project with the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning to design and produce a statewide brochure entitled Housing Options for PLWHA.

ACON's counselling team expanded its service in 1999 to include daily telephone counselling and extended opening hours. Our clients identified support with treatments issues and with issues of adjustment to a changed sense of future as key reasons for seeking counselling. However, the overwhelming need has been support with relationships, including serodiscordancy, communication problems and alcohol and other drug use.

ACON needs to continue to change and adapt its service provision if it is to respond effectively to the diverse and changing needs of positive people. Our business plan for 1999-2000 therefore signals a strengthening and expansion of our services for positive people, building and renewing our current services and piloting new initiatives.



Far right:
CSN Volunteers in Mardi
Gras Parade 1999

MEDIA, POLICY &

Progress on ACON's policy agenda has been significant in the last year, with some important outcomes, such as the development of the NSW HIV/AIDS Strategic Directions Statement, and securing of bipartisan support for key HIV issues from political parties in the lead-up to the NSW election.

ACON has been actively involved in development of the NSW HIV/AIDS Strategic Directions Statement. The NSW Ministerial Advisory Committee on AIDS Strategy (CAS) has been instrumental in overseeing the development and working to secure political support for and sector-wide engagement with the Statement. Both ACON and PLWHA (NSW) are represented on this body and have played an active role in shaping the tone and content of the Statement.

During the life of the Third National HIV/AIDS Strategy, there were significant public health funding reforms, resulting in the Commonwealth providing to the States combined public health funds. This change provided an imperative to secure a State-based strategy which both grappled with the challenges of a changing epidemic and ensured continued commitment to the HIV/AIDS response in NSW. In the coming year, ACON will take an active role in the development of statewide implementation plans for the Statement.

Another important event requiring input from the Media and Policy Team was the NSW election, held in March. An election survey was provided to the major parties and responses were analysed before distribution to stakeholders. The results were also published in the *Sydney Star Observer* prior to election day. Members of the ACON Board and Executive undertook intensive lobbying in the lead-up to the election to secure commitments to the key issues raised by ACON's survey. Written commitments from all the major parties included maintenance of current funding levels for the HIV/AIDS sector, support for the NSW HIV/AIDS Strategic Directions Statement and acknowledgment of the importance of harm minimisation.

Soon after the election, Premier Bob Carr announced a Drug Summit would be held in a matter of weeks to bring together a range of community representatives, health experts, researchers and politicians to discuss the consequences of the use of illicit drugs.

ACON led the establishment of the Communities for Constructive Drug Action. This coalition of groups and individuals agreed to a core agenda which we would all support at the Drug Summit. ACON prepared a detailed submission for the coalition, which was widely distributed to politicians, Summit participants and the media before and during the Summit.

Many of the principles we advocated were adopted and the State Government has introduced a range of measures that go some way toward addressing concerns we raised. Some issues, such as legal reform, were not agreed to and we continue to lobby around those concerns. The Summit also resulted in establishing stronger links with politicians, health researchers and a wide range of community representatives working in this field. Following the release of the State Government's Plan of Action, we continue to work closely with those organisations and individuals to ensure commitments made by the State Government are followed through.

The policy team continues to resource the Care and Support Strategy Group, the Treatment Strategy Group and the Law Reform Working Group. These groups are chaired by members of the ACON Board and provide opportunities for community involvement in ACON's policy agenda.

The Treatments Strategy Group was revitalised during this year and given a clearer role. We are currently working on access to anti-retroviral medications through community pharmacies, in response to the continuing call from PLWHA to remedy this situation. Policy staff also worked closely with AFAO on a number of policy issues of national significance.

The Care and Support Strategy Group was involved in the reshaping of care and support services provided by ACON and provided input to submissions prepared by the Policy Team, including the Sacred Heart Hospice Community Services Review and the NSW Review of HIV Treatment and Care Services.

The Law Reform Strategy Group was established this year to provide expert advice and lobbying support to progressing reforms in a range of areas. The Policy Team has prepared a number of submissions and undertaken advocacy work on legal policy and law reform including:

The policy team continues to resource the Care and Support Strategy Group, the Treatment Strategy Group and the Law Reform Working Group. These groups are chaired by members of the ACON Board and provide opportunities for community involvement in ACON's policy agenda.

ADVOCACY

- Review of NSW Public Health Act;
- NSW Legislative Council, Standing Committee on Social Issues, Inquiry into De Facto Relationships Legislation;
- South Sydney Council Sex Industry Policy;
- Review of Blood Donor Declaration Forms;
- Disorderly Houses Amendment Act; and
- Senate Inquiry into the impact of changes to the taxation system,
- Out FM Positive Women and interviews with most ACON departments
- Various issues affecting sex workers
- HIV/AIDS Hep C Media Guide Working Group
- Various articles in Talkabout/National AIDS Bulletin

The Policy Team also resources a quarterly HIV/AIDS Agencies Forum, bringing together all HIV/AIDS community based organisations to ensure a whole sector approach to issues of mutual concern.

The Policy Team has contributed to a number of committees and consultations, at both State and national level, including:

- St Vincent's Consultative Committee;
- ANCARD Legal Forum;
- NSW Attorney General's Taskforce on Needle and Syringe Programs and drug reform;
- CTTAC Vaccines Workshop;
- Hep A and Gonorrhoea campaign;
- HIV Agencies Forums; and
- Consultation on the development of the Fourth National HIV/AIDS Strategy.

The policy team has been actively involved in reviewing and improving ACON's accountability systems. New systems have been designed and put in place for the 1999-2000 financial year which will allow for improved accountability to our members and communities as well as being able to meet new accountability requirements from our funding bodies.

MEDIA ISSUES

- Regular review of media on HIV/AIDS issues
- Facilitated ACON's comment on issues in mainstream and community media
- Co-ordinate ACON's programs and services for publicity opportunities
- Media Policy developed and distributed
- World AIDS Day
- Reaction to a number of 'vaccine breakthroughs'
- Closure of needle exchanges
- Increase in STDs
- Hospital screening and testing of hospital medical staff
- Survival/Invasion Day

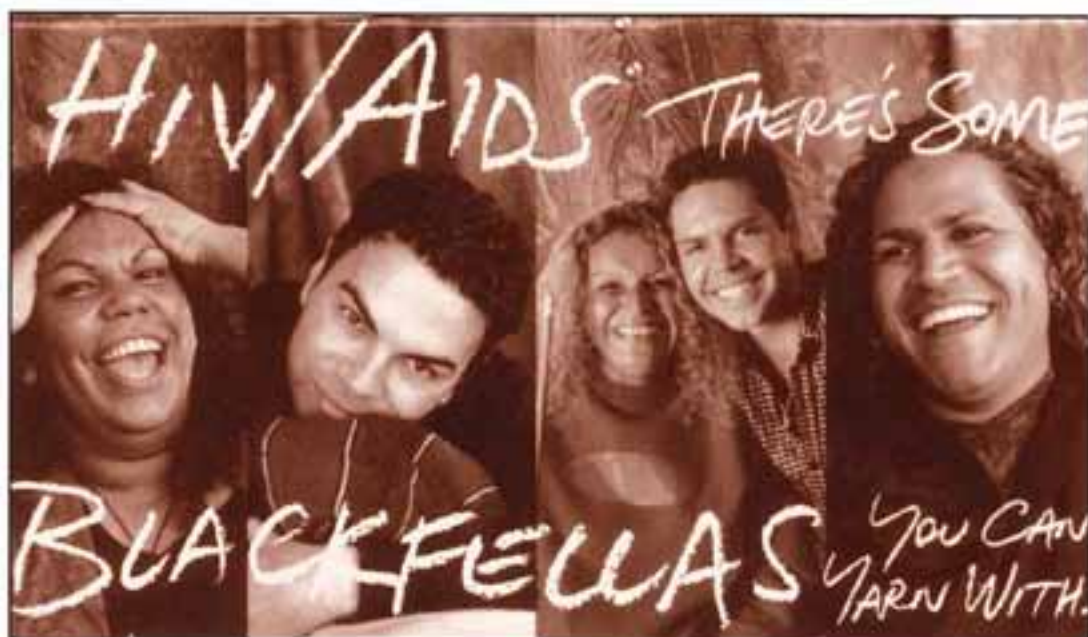
ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PROJECT

ACON has recognised the need to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for several years. Contributing to the Indigenous community response to HIV raises unique issues for the services ACON provides, including the way the organisation relates to Aboriginal communities, health organisations and Aboriginal people most affected by and at risk of HIV transmission. The past year has been an eventful one for the Aboriginal project as we have sought to play a role in that response, provide quality services and advocate on behalf of Aboriginal positive people, gay men, lesbians and sistagirls across NSW.

In October the project launched a poster, *Hey You Mob*. *Hey You Mob* is the first resource to advertise our Aboriginal projects and let Indigenous people across NSW know that ACON is committed to working with Aboriginal people. The poster has been distributed widely, raising interest across the country and overseas. The number of individuals to contact ACON has increased since the poster has been distributed.

During 1998, staff travelled across NSW visiting Aboriginal sexual health workers and exploring opportunities for ACON to support other organisations, especially in relation to services for positive people and at-risk groups. ACON and the Central Sydney Area Health Service have collaboratively produced a Koori Women's Safe Sex Pack and continue to run a support group for Aboriginal gay men. We have assisted the Family Planning Association and the Rape Crisis Centre develop resources for Aboriginal women and explored new opportunities for partnership with Redfern Aboriginal Medical Service.

The project has sought to use ACON's considerable expertise in the prevention, treatment and care of HIV. The project has delivered training about HIV and the issues facing positive people to a range of groups including Westmead Hospital, Cleveland Street School and the College of Nursing. ACON has also made use of air time on Koori Radio to discuss HIV lifestyle issues. At the same time, the project has been working with services within ACON to ensure that we are able to meet



Hey You Mob has also raised the profile of Aboriginal gay men, lesbians and sistagirls within the Indigenous and the broader gay and lesbian community. By using images which affirm the place and sexuality of gay men, lesbians and sistagirls, the poster has become an important training resource used across the State. The extraordinary reception *Hey You Mob* has received has laid the groundwork for ACON to play a greater role in contributing to the HIV response and in providing services to Aboriginal people.

our commitment that all of ACON's services should be accessible to Aboriginal people.

The work of the Aboriginal project over the past year has paved the way for us to expand our activities in 1999-2000. We intend to increase the range of services we provide, for the first time providing services which directly target young women and sistagirls. We will also be working in closer co-operation with Aboriginal primary health care services, improving access to quality HIV and related services.

'Hey You Mob' has also raised the profile of Aboriginal gay men, lesbians and sistagirls within the Indigenous and the broader gay and lesbian community. By using images which affirm the place and sexuality of gay men, lesbians and sistagirls, the poster has become an important training resource used across the State.

SEX WORKERS' OUTREACH PROJECT (SWOP)

The Sex Workers' Outreach Project (SWOP) is a Statewide service. In the past year, over 10,000 calls and visits by sex industry workers and service providers have been received at the SWOP centre in Surry Hills.

Promoting HIV and sexual health awareness in the NSW sex industry remains SWOP's core work. In 1998-1999, SWOP's Information & Support team's on-road travel exceeded 40,000km to facilitate peer education and workshops in almost 700 commercial sex establishments. Given the sheer size of NSW and the sex industry, SWOP's predominantly part-time projects are greatly stretched, but through increasing partnership work with Sexual Health and HIV services, many vital services are maintained. International partnerships were also expanded, with SWOP's multicultural workers providing training in China and Indonesia, and information exchange and advice to HIV and community development workers visiting here from Asian countries.

In recent years, SWOP programs have widened to address the range of education and support needs of the NSW sex industry. In the 1998-1999 year, SWOP conducted various projects through one-off grants from the NSW Department for Women, Attorney General's Department, WorkCover NSW and NSW Law Foundation. Two such projects are Community Legal Education and Sex Workers Ending Rape & Violence (SWERV) which were timed to end in July 1999 with the release of major print education resources. These resources will assist SWOP staff when fielding the vast array of legal information enquiries. However, the level of discrimination faced by sex workers and frequent opposition to the sex industry by some local councils continues to be a demanding, yet inadequately met, focus of SWOP's work.

SWOP's new Health and Workplace Safety project is supporting the provision of workplace occupational health and safety in the sex industry by implementing training forums and accompanying educational resources.

This year saw a first for SWOP in the establishment of specific services to Indigenous sex workers. The Sistagirls Project has facilitated access and appropriate service delivery to many Indigenous sex workers in the Sydney area.

Participation by sex industry workers and their supporters as volunteers in SWOP's work is invaluable.

It is the enthusiasm and energy of volunteers which in 1998-1999 enabled SWOP's involvement and sex worker visibility in community events such as the Mardi Gras Parade, Reclaim the Night, and SEXPO. With its volunteer editorial committee, last year SWOP produced and distributed 9,000 copies of the bimonthly magazine, *The Professional*.

Through community sponsorship and expertise, resources and articles from *The Professional* have been regularly included on the SWOP website. To date, there have been almost 10,000 visitors to the SWOP website, www.rainbow.net.au/~swop.

In 2000, SWOP will celebrate ten years of operation. Over these years, and especially in this past year, SWOP projects have continued during periods of statutory leave, through multi-skilling, flexibility and through the commitment of SWOP staff.

This forthcoming year of the Sydney Olympics is opportune for the planned redesign and launch of print resources for sex industry workers to use in promoting safe sex practices to their clients. SWOP will continue to work for the safety, respect, and recognition of the rights of all sex workers.

SWOP in the Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade



EVENTS & FUNDRAISING

The newly established Events and Fundraising Team has assumed responsibility for the production of key ACON events and management of fundraising and sponsorship.

1998 AIDS Awareness Week commenced with 2,500 people attending the revamped and well-received Candlelight Memorial. The same week, over 200 volunteers 'painted the town red' for ACON's most successful Red Ribbon fundraiser to date. The high number of businesses and schools which participated also contributed significantly to revenue raised.

The Mardi Gras Festival provides many opportunities to increase the profile of ACON and its services, and to communicate with many communities. Fair Day allowed us the forum to both entertain and inform the thousands who made a visit to the 'In Bed With ACON' tent hosted by the lovely Beverly Hills.

ACON's vibrant 'eyeballs' were one of the most spectacular entries in this year's Mardi Gras Parade. With exposure to both those present on the streets and those viewing the national television broadcast, the entry's theme – being '100% AWARE' of HIV/AIDS issues – sent a strong and relevant message to a total national audience of 2.38 million people.

Close to 6,000 partygoers got ALL FIRED UP! in June for another highly successful Hand in Hand, which each year raises money for ACON and many community organisations who receive disbursement grants from this event.

1999-2000 holds strong promise for ACON in the events and fundraising area. Preparations are well advanced for a strong Red Ribbon campaign, which forms a key part of ACON's 1999-2000 fundraising strategy. The 1999 Candlelight Memorial is approaching and options for a permanent AIDS Memorial in Sydney are being considered.

A range of other revenue and awareness-raising events are also on the agenda, including joint collaborations with other community organisations. All these events will continue to rely on the generosity and goodwill of the hundreds of volunteers who continue to support us each year.

For information on volunteering or making a donation or bequest, please contact Anthony (9206 2107) or David (9206 2110) or email events@acon.org.au



ACON's Hand in Hand Fundraiser at the Hordern Pavillion



ACON's Orgy of Drag Fundraiser.

YOUR ACON

TREATMENTS

REGIONAL
NSW

EDUCATION

SUPPORT
SERVICESINFORMATION
REFERRAL

VOLUNTEERS

LINKS

THE ACON
CHRONICLE

EVENTS

SEARCH THE
SITE

ACON HOMEPAGE

A SITE FOR SORE EYES

We are approaching the end of the decade which can probably be best described as the decade of change. Nowhere is change more evident than with the growth of the Internet. The web contains over 350 million pages of information and the number of users is doubling in size every 100 days.

The Internet provides significant advances in our ability to access our clients and communities. It gives us unparalleled opportunities to engage together cheaply and speedily. The Web provides us with a new medium to

deliver material in new, exciting and dynamic visual forms.

In February, ACON launched its homepage, with over 300 pages providing information on all our services, projects and activities, as well as information for our members and volunteers.

Since the launch, we have used the site for such purposes as: advocacy for the 1999 NSW election – "Call to the parties" and "The Politicians Respond"; the launch of two campaigns – "Getting Things In Focus" and "RooBoy"; presenting ACON's position for the "NSW Drug Summit"; and advertising the "Hand in Hand" party.

Although large, the site is still in its formative stage and will continue to grow. Our Education Division will continue to launch campaigns on the site, in conjunction with launches using other media. Other initiatives for the next year include making electronic copies of our resources available for downloading.

www.acon.org.au

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www.acon.org.au

*To pamphlete the
Windows 95
launch slogan,
"Where shall we
engage today?"
www.acon.org.au*

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 1999

I take pleasure in presenting ACON's financial accounts for the year ending 30 June 1999.

We've ended the year with an operating deficit consistent with the budget set by the Board following the mid-year budget review. This means that ACON has lower levels of funds in reserve than at the end of 1997-98 but still sufficient to cover all accrued staff entitlements and grant monies not yet spent. This was the original plan for 1998-99, although spending did have to be reduced in the second half of the financial year to limit the operating deficit.

ACON's financial health assessment during 1998-99 has been the most comprehensive and exacting of its history. We have a set of accounts now that is reflective of both rigorous process and greater clarity in deriving the organisation's financial position. Importantly we also possess systems, plans and people committed to and capable of ensuring that these gains are sustained.

This degree of rigour can now support appropriate financial strategy. For example, the new payroll system can, for the first time, provide a realistic figuring of accrued liability in respect of staff entitlements rather than "estimates." ACON's culture has been based on Time In Lieu-based days off rather than enabling meaningful access to, and consumption of, accrued leave balances. The Enterprise Agreement, recently voted on by all staff, is based on a philosophy of regular access to annual leave. The accrued liability in this area is planned to decline markedly during 1999-2000 as a result.

In January of this year, the mid-year financial review showed that ACON's monthly expenditure had been - and was continuing - at a rate that was in fact above that budgeted and would have left us without sufficient cash at bank to meet ongoing operational and credit expenses at 30 June.

Management's subsequent review and revised budget - endorsed by the Board in February - had the desired effect and we completed the year on target in terms of both cash flow and the revised budget and with sufficient leeway to comfortably maintain operational commitments.

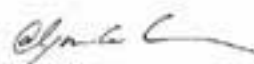
In acknowledging the efforts made by management, I should also point out that the overall financial management context for ACON has been, to say the least, challenging, in terms of what had to be achieved. A new CEO, Organisational Support Director and Treasurer, and Finance Unit staffing turnover that saw 3 managers come and go before Marlene Cornell joined us at the very end of the financial year. This, together with a budget review and organisational restructure followed directly by the construction of a Business Plan and Budget for 1999-2000, concurrent with the introduction of new management systems in both Finance and HR to meet with Y2K compliance.

There has never been a more testing year for ACON's financial systems integrity and Board, Staff and Management can take some pride in the result achieved.

The Board is committed to avoiding rolling over significant amounts of unexpended funds from previous years. However, the high level of expenditure which happened in the first half of the year, has led to a situation where we now need, to a certain extent, to build up our reserves. A modest insulation layer of working capital is essential assurance for any not-for-profit organisation, and Board and Management are committed to achieving and maintaining that goal.

ANDREW GRULICH

Treasurer



How we spend our money



REPORT OF THE BOARD FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 1999

The Board of the AIDS Council of New South Wales Inc., submit the Financial Report of the Association for the year ended 30 June 1999.

1. Attendances by Members who held office during the year at meetings of the Board during the year ended 30 June 1999 are as follows:

	Meetings held	Meetings attended
David Stone (Vice-President August to October 1998, President from November 1998)	15	14
Craig Patterson (Vice-President from November 1998)	15	12
Fraser Drummond (Secretary from November 1998)	15	12
Andrew Grulich (Elected November 1998) (Treasurer from December 1998)	7	6
Chris Gratton (President to November 1998)	15	13
Sarah Bergin (Staff representative elected June 1999)	1	1
David Buchanan	15	13
John Byrne (Staff representative resigned May 1999)	14	10
Alison Cunningham (Resigned December 1998)	9	9
Annette Gunnis (Term completed October 1998)	8	8
Perry Head (Elected November 1998)	7	7
Shelley Korn (Appointed May 1999)	2	2
Gary Lee (Elected November 1998; Resigned August 1999)	7	1
Shayne Mallard (Appointed February 1999)	5	5
Heather McGillivray (Appointed May 1999)	2	1
Bruce Meagher (Term completed October 1998)	8	4
Kathy Sant (Vice-President to July 1998) (Term completed October 1998)	8	4
Bernie Coates (CEO, ex-officio) (until August 1998)	2	2
Robert Griew (CEO, ex-officio) (from September 1998)	12	12
PLWHA NSW representatives (Andrew Kirk, Phillip Medcalf, Paul Cummins)	15	15

In addition, various representatives appointed by PLWHA (NSW) Inc., deputised under the Constitution.

2. The principal activities of the Association were education and prevention in respect of HIV/AIDS; care and support for people living with HIV/AIDS; and policy and advocacy on issues surrounding HIV/AIDS.

3. After providing \$nil for income tax, operations for the year ended 30 June 1999, resulted in a net deficit before abnormal items of (\$321,047), (1997/98: surplus of \$274,690) compared to a deficit revised budget of (\$269,330.)

Abnormal items totalled \$4,876 (1997/98: (\$234,897) of which \$55,000 were from gifts of works of art and (\$50,124) amortisation of the Commonwealth Street fit-out.

4. The Association is incorporated under the Associations Incorporations Act, 1984 (NSW) and is restricted from declaring any dividends.

5. During the year ended 30 June 1999, there was no significant change in the state of affairs of the Association other than those referred to in the above review or accounts.

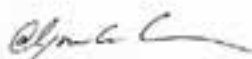
6. There has not been any matter or circumstance that has arisen since the end of the financial period, other than those referred to in the review or accounts, that has significantly affected or may significantly affect the operations of the Association, the results of those operations or the state of affairs of the Association in subsequent years.

7. Other than Staff Representatives and the Chief Executive Officer, no member of the Board has received or become entitled to receive, during or since the financial year, a benefit because of a contract made by the Association with the member, a firm of which the member is a member or an entity in which the member has a substantial financial interest.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Board, Dated at Sydney this Third day of September 1999.



DAVID STONE
President



ANDREW GRULICH
Treasurer

AUDITED FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 1999 BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30 JUNE 1999

	Notes	1999 \$	1998 \$
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash	3	528,358	1,383,905
Receivables	4	412,705	71,752
Inventories	5	11,499	6,128
Other	6	36,823	20,243
		989,385	1,482,028
NON CURRENT ASSETS			
Property Plant & Equipment	7	575,468	625,316
Other	6	3,317	20,577
		578,785	645,893
TOTAL ASSETS		1,568,170	2,127,921
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Creditors and Borrowings	8	627,529	701,089
Unexpended Grants and Grants in Advance	9	405,249	536,985
		1,032,778	1,238,074
NON CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Creditors and Borrowings	8	11,061	49,345
		11,061	49,345
TOTAL LIABILITIES		1,043,839	1,287,419
NET ASSETS		\$524,331	\$ 840,502
ACCUMULATED FUNDS			
Accumulated funds at beginning of year		840,502	800,709
Current Year Surplus/(Deficit)		(316,171)	39,793
		\$ 524,331	\$ 840,502

The accompanying notes form part of this Financial Report

INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 1999

	Notes	1999 \$	1998 \$
INCOME			
Grants Approved	11	6,905,066	6,635,690
Less: Grants Unexpended	9	(405,249)	(519,725)
		<u>6,499,817</u>	<u>6,115,965</u>
Add:			
Donations and Sponsorships		82,139	233,840
Events and Activities	13	114,130	87,376
Fund Raising	12	127,422	93,015
Interest		69,338	93,841
Sales of Vitamins		53,451	62,064
Other	14	177,718	76,788
		<u>624,198</u>	<u>646,924</u>
TOTAL INCOME		<u>7,124,015</u>	<u>6,762,889</u>
EXPENDITURE			
Accommodation		600,477	567,597
Audit Fees	15	38,668	17,835
Board and Council		23,795	31,053
Cost of Goods Sold		46,876	57,838
Donations		96,380	62,203
Financial Charges		19,389	29,055
Events and Activities	13	33,430	3,010
Office Supplies		403,197	275,564
Payroll	16	4,479,722	4,057,629
Postage, Freight and Telecommunications		245,976	208,974
Program, Resources and Client Services		554,135	605,096
Publicity and Promotion		168,848	224,669
Insurances and Professional Services		371,593	97,672
Travel and Representation		343,886	250,004
Other Expenses		18,684	-
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		<u>7,445,058</u>	<u>6,488,199</u>
Net surplus/(deficit) before abnormal and extraordinary items		(321,047)	274,690
Abnormal Items	2	4,876	(234,897)
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) AFTER ABNORMAL AND EXTRAORDINARY ITEMS		<u>\$(316,171)</u>	<u>\$39,793</u>

The accompanying notes form part of this Financial Report

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 1999

	Notes	1999 \$	1998 \$
Cash flows from operating activities:			
Receipts from customers & granting bodies		6,581,988	6,849,606
Payments to suppliers & employees		(7,402,214)	(6,535,445)
Interest received		69,338	93,841
Interest and other costs of finance paid		(9,587)	(5,474)
Unpresented cheques written back		-	21,122
Net cash from operating activities	18 b.	(760,475)	423,650
Cash flows from investing activities:			
Payments for furniture & fittings, and plant & equipment acquired		(54,540)	(162,304)
Proceeds for plant & equipment sold		-	2,599
Net cash from investing activities		(54,540)	(159,705)
Cash flows from financing activities:			
Payments reducing lease liability		(40,532)	(40,532)
Net cash from financing activities		(40,532)	(40,532)
Net increase in cash held		(855,547)	223,413
Cash at the beginning of the year		1,383,905	1,160,492
Cash at the end of the year	18 a.	528,358	\$1,383,905

The accompanying notes form part of this Financial Report

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 1999

NOTE 1 - STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

This Financial Report is a general purpose financial report that has been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements and the requirements of the Associations Incorporations Act (NSW). The Financial Report is prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historical costs and does not take into account changing money values, or except where stated, current valuations of noncurrent assets. Cost is based on the fair values of the consideration given in exchange for assets. The accounting policies have been consistently applied, unless otherwise stated.

(a) Income Tax

AIDS Council of NSW Inc. is a recognised public benevolent institution and is therefore exempt from paying income tax. No provision for income tax has been made in this Financial Report.

(b) Inventories

Inventories consist of vitamins and are measured at the lower of the cost and net realisable value.

(c) Fixed Assets

Freehold land and buildings are brought to account at cost or at independent or directors' valuation.

The depreciable amount of all fixed assets are depreciated on a straight line basis over the useful lives of the assets to the Association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use. Leasehold improvements are amortised over the shorter of either the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful lives of the improvements.

The depreciation rates used for each class of depreciable asset are:

Class of Fixed Asset	Depreciation Rate
Leasehold improvements	20%
Leased plant and equipment	20%
Office Equipment	20-33%

The carrying amount of fixed assets is reviewed annually by Members of the Board to ensure it is not in excess of the recoverable amount of those assets.

The recoverable amount is assessed on the basis of expected net cash flows which will be received from the assets' employment and subsequent disposal. The expected net cash flows have not been discounted to their present values in determining the recoverable amounts.

(d) Leases

Leases of fixed assets where substantially all the risks and benefits incidental to the ownership of the asset, but not the legal ownership, are transferred to the Association, are classified as finance leases. Finance leases are capitalised and recorded as an asset and a liability equal to the present value of the minimum lease payments, including any guaranteed residual values. Leased assets are amortised on a straight line basis over their estimated useful lives where it is likely that the Association will obtain ownership of the asset or over the term of the lease. Lease payments are allocated between the reduction of the lease liability and the lease interest expense for the period.

Lease payments under operating leases, where substantially all the risks and benefits remain with the lessor, are charged as expenses in the periods in which they are incurred.

(e) Employee Entitlements

Provision is made for the Association's liability for employee entitlements arising from services rendered by employees to balance date. Employee entitlements expected to be settled within one year together with entitlements arising from wages and salaries, annual leave and sick leave which will be settled after one year, have been measured at their nominal amount. Other employee entitlements payable later than one year have been measured at the present value of the estimated future cash outflows to be made for those entitlements.

Contributions are made by the Association to an employee superannuation fund and are charged as expenses when incurred.

(f) Cash

For the purposes of the Statement of Cash Flows, cash includes cash on hand, at banks and on deposit.

(g) Revenue

Interest revenue is accrued at balance date.

Accrued Income - Grants

The Association prepares financial statements on an accrual basis, therefore all funds to be committed for the financial year have been recorded as income for that year.

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 1999

Notes	1999 \$	1998 \$
NOTE 2 - ABNORMAL ITEMS		
<p>(a) During the year ended 30 June 1995, the AIDS Council of New South Wales Inc. moved offices from Goulburn Street to Commonwealth Street, Surry Hills. The fitout of the new office was being amortised over the considered life of the fitout of five years. During the year ended 30 June 1999, the Board has revised its opinion on the life of the fitout to coincide with the term of the lease (29 September 1994 to 29 September 2004). The remaining written-down value of the fitout at 30 June 1998 will be written off over the next seven years.</p> <p>As the capital expenditure of the fitout was treated as an Extraordinary item in 1995, the Board considers the amortisation write off of this item as Abnormal.</p>		
Amortisation on fitout of Commonwealth Street offices	(50,124)	(234,897)
Works of art donated to ACON by the artist David McDiarmid have been introduced into the financial report at the value determined by independent valuers	55,000	-
	\$4,876	\$(234,897)
NOTE 3 - CASH		
Cash at Bank: Commonwealth Bank	(37,929)	(101,317)
Cash on Investment Account:	-	-
Australian European Finance Corporation (A subsidiary of the Commonwealth Bank)	-	1,470,013
Commonwealth Bank	\$62,387	11,309
	\$62,387	1,481,322
Cash on Hand:		
Petty Cash	3,900	3,900
	\$ 528,358	\$1,383,905
NOTE 4 - RECEIVABLES		
Accrued Income	400,064	-
Accounts Receivable	12,641	71,752
	\$412,705	\$71,752
NOTE 5 - INVENTORIES		
Vitamins on Hand - at cost	\$11,499	\$6,128

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 1999

	Notes	1999 \$	1998 \$
NOTE 6 - OTHER			
CURRENT			
Prepaid Expenses		\$36,823	\$20,243
NON-CURRENT			
Deposits - Utilities		\$3,317	\$ 20,577
NOTE 7 - PROPERTY, PLANT & EQUIPMENT			
Furniture & Fittings - At cost		1,255,464	1,247,547
Less: Accumulated Depreciation		(952,918)	(893,918)
		302,546	353,629
Office Equipment - At cost		1,037,933	996,168
Less: Accumulated Depreciation		(866,092)	(772,871)
		171,841	223,297
Equipment Under lease - At Cost		71,390	74,004
Less: Accumulated Depreciation		(34,607)	(25,614)
		36,783	48,390
Library Resources		3,663	-
Gifts of Artwork		55,000	-
Less: Accumulated Depreciation		-	-
		58,663	-
Leasehold Improvements		8,494	-
Less: Accumulated Depreciation		(2,859)	-
		5,635	-
		\$ 575,468	\$ 625,316
NOTE 8 - CREDITORS AND BORROWINGS			
CURRENT			
Trade Creditors		95,252	319,197
Accrued Expenses		129,132	-
Lease Liability	10	38,284	31,306
Provisions	17	364,861	350,586
		\$627,529	\$701,089
NON-CURRENT			
Lease Liability	10	\$ 11,061	\$ 49,345

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 1999

	Notes	1999 \$	1998 \$
NOTE 14 - OTHER INCOME			
Rental Income		49,731	4,679
Sales of Materials		81,360	52,426
Membership Fees		7,125	11,118
Wages Reimbursed		441	-
Buyers Club		-	-
Blue Phone Income		274	225
Positive Retreat/Treatment Workshop Fees		1,525	1,940
Project Male Call Reimbursements		-	-
UNH Survey - SWOP		1,840	6,400
Other Miscellaneous Income		35,422	-
		\$177,718	\$76,788
NOTE 15 - AUDITORS REMUNERATION			
Amounts received, or due and receivable by the Auditor for:			
Auditing the main and project financial statements of AIDS Council of New South Wales Inc.		33,373	17,085
Other Accounting Services		5,295	750
		\$38,668	\$17,835
NOTE 16 - PAYROLL			
Wages and wage-related expenses		4,201,905	3,847,379
Superannuation		277,817	210,250
		\$4,479,722	\$4,057,629
NOTE 17 - PROVISIONS			
Annual leave		240,911	223,303
Leave Loading		42,159	39,078
Long Service leave		82,370	88,205
Workers Compensation		[579]	-
		\$364,861	\$350,586

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 1999

	Notes	1999 \$	1998 \$
NOTE 18 - CASH FLOW INFORMATION			
(a) Reconciliation of Cash			
For the purposes of the statement of cash flows, cash includes cash on hand and in banks and investments in money market instruments. Cash at the end of the year as shown in the statement of cash flows is reconciled to the related items in the balance sheet as follows:			
Cash on hand		3,900	3,900
Cash at bank		(37,929)	(101,317)
Deposits at call		562,387	1,481,322
		\$528,358	\$1,383,905
(b) Reconciliation of net cash from operating activities to operating profit/(loss) after abnormal items.			
Operating profit/(loss) after abnormal items		(316,171)	39,793
Gifts of Artwork - Abnormal		(55,000)	
Depreciation and Amortisation		159,388	358,255
Lease Interest		9,226	12,164
Loss on Disposal of Assets		-	32,512
Increase in Provision for Employee Entitlements		14,275	(53,321)
		127,889	349,610
Changes in Assets and Liabilities:			
Decrease/(Increase) in Receivables		(340,953)	54,510
Decrease/(Increase) in Other Current Assets		(16,580)	14,771
Decrease/(Increase) in Inventories		(5,371)	12,318
Decrease/(Increase) in Other Non-Current Assets		17,260	(16,850)
Increase/(Decrease) in Trade Creditors		(223,945)	101,337
Increase/(Decrease) in Accrued Expenses		129,132	(4,046)
Increase/(Decrease) in Unexpended Grants		(131,736)	(127,793)
		(572,193)	34,247
Net cash from operating activities		\$(760,475)	\$ 423,650

AIDS COUNCIL OF NEW SOUTH WALES INC. STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

In the opinion of the Members of the Board, the Financial Report being the Income and Expenditure Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows, and notes to and forming part of the Financial Report:

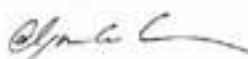
1. Present fairly the financial position of AIDS Council of New South Wales Inc. as at 30 June 1999 and the results and cash flows of the Association for the year ended on that date in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements.
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Association will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board and is signed for and on behalf of the Board by:



President,

DAVID STONE



Treasurer,

ANDREW GRULICH

Dated this 3rd day of September 1999.

AUDITORS REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF AIDS COUNCIL OF NEW SOUTH WALES INC.

We have audited the Financial Report being the Income and Expenditure Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows, notes to and forming part of the Financial Report and the Statement by Members of the Board of AIDS Council Of New South Wales Inc. (ACON) for the year ended 30 June 1999. The ACON Board is responsible for the Financial Report. We have conducted an independent audit of the Financial Report in order to express an opinion on it to the members of AIDS Council of New South Wales Inc.

Our audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards to provide reasonable assurance whether the Financial Report is free of material misstatement. Our procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the Financial Report, and the evaluation of accounting policies and significant accounting estimates. During the year, in order to comply with year 2000 requirements, AIDS Council of NSW Inc. introduced new accounting and payroll systems which necessitated a significant expansion in audit testing and procedures. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion as to whether, in all material respects, the Financial Report is presented fairly in

accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements so as to present a view of AIDS Council Of New South Wales Inc. which is consistent with our understanding of its financial position, the results of its operations and cash flows.

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

Audit Opinion

In our opinion, the Financial Report presents fairly in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements the financial position of AIDS Council of New South Wales Inc. as at 30 June 1999, and the results of its operations and cash flows for the year then ended.



RAYMOND KAZZI, BEc. CPA

Level 2
105 Burwood Road
CONCORD NSW 2137

Dated this 6th day of September 1999.



FOR SOME ACON PROJECTS, A LOGO HELPS ESTABLISH THEIR PRESENCE IN THE COMMUNITY



ACON peer education projects include: Silk Road - for Asian gay men, Fun and Esteem - for young gay and bi men and Mature Age Gays - for mature age gay men.

ACON
2005 / 2006

ANNUAL REPORT



2008/2009

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