

THIS IS HOW WE DO IT & WE DO IT FOR

YOU!

2016

2017

ACON ANNUAL REPORT



# THIS IS HOW WE DO IT AND WE DO IT FOR YOU

This year's Annual Report is inspired by our 2017 HIV prevention campaign, How Do You Do It? Launched during the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Festival, the campaign educates our community on their options for staying safe, including new technologies and biomedical advances in HIV prevention. By asking 'how do you do it?' we're empowering gay men to take control of their health.

This Annual Report reveals how we do it at ACON. We're here for HIV prevention, we're here for HIV support and we're here for LGBTI health. We're here for community and we do it for you.



# ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

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WELCOME

# ACON PRESIDENT & CEO MESSAGE

In 2013, we launched our award-winning Ending HIV campaign to engage and mobilise our community towards the prospect of a future where HIV transmission has ended. It's an initiative rooted firmly in the principles of partnership and collaboration which have been hallmarks of our community's response to HIV/AIDS since the epidemic began in the 1980s. Four years on, we are proud to report we are heading in the right direction.

This year, NSW recorded the lowest rate of new HIV notifications since 1985. Data from the NSW Ministry of Health showed 101 new HIV diagnoses in gay and bisexual men in NSW from January to June 2017 – the lowest figure since 1985 when HIV surveillance began. The results build on 12 months of steady decline and is 25% less than the average of the previous five years. The report also showed there was a 39% drop in the number of gay and bisexual men diagnosed with HIV acquired within the previous 12 months of infection compared to the same period over the past six years. This is a strong indication that new transmissions are becoming less frequent.

This reduction in HIV transmission rates shows our collective efforts in meeting our goal of ending HIV transmission in NSW by 2020 are working. These efforts reflect a comprehensive response to HIV, taking into account a combination prevention program, facilitating access to treatment and community mobilisation. Earlier diagnosis through increased testing, greater reach and earlier uptake of treatment, and improvements in access to PrEP are all contributing to changing the prevention landscape in NSW.

This outcome is a testament to the HIV partnership in NSW. We commend the NSW Government for its commitment to leading the way for a contemporary Australian response to HIV, and the ongoing dedicated work of our sector partners.

**THIS REDUCTION IN HIV TRANSMISSION RATES SHOWS OUR COLLECTIVE EFFORTS IN MEETING OUR GOAL OF ENDING HIV TRANSMISSION IN NSW BY 2020 ARE WORKING**

Image: ACON President Dr Justin Koonin and Chief Executive Officer Nicolas Parkhill

The challenge before us now is to ensure we maintain momentum. While HIV testing rates continue to remain high, there are still a number of people being diagnosed late with infection. This means we must ensure gay and bisexual men continue to test more frequently, and that we continue our efforts to connect with members of our communities who may be harder to reach such as gay men with Asian backgrounds, Aboriginal gay men and gay men who are HIV testing avoidant. We will continue to develop our programs to make sure these population groups have access to the latest HIV testing, prevention and treatment technologies.

In addition to our work in HIV prevention, ACON also provides support to people living with HIV. This year, we continued to deliver a range of programs and services to HIV positive people, whether they are newly diagnosed or have been living long-term with HIV.

Many LGBTI people in the broader community also experience health issues, and we continued to support them across NSW. Now more than ever, the delivery of these programs and service is vital, especially in the wake of events this year such as the removal of support for Safe Schools and the protracted discourse on marriage equality. Because of these divisive debates, we have seen an extraordinary demand for our client care and support services across the state. And while we continue to rate highly in our annual client satisfaction survey, we understand the importance of ongoing improvement and development in our client services to ensure we continue to meet the needs of our communities.

These events, and the impacts of discrimination and exclusion on the health and wellbeing of our communities, also underscore the importance of our national social inclusion programs. This year, we launched Pride in Health + Wellbeing, a national program designed to assist organisations in the health and human services sectors in LGBTI inclusive service







delivery and provision. Coupled with our work with Pride in Diversity and Pride in Sport, we continue our efforts in helping make the places our community members live, work, study, play and heal more inclusive of LGBTI people and people living with HIV.

This year, we have seen continued growth in our work on broader LGBTI health with expanded programs to support people affected by domestic and family violence, older LGBTI people and members of our communities experiencing problems with their drug and alcohol use. We also continued to sharpen our focus on the health and wellbeing of lesbian, bisexual and queer women in our community by developing breast/chest and cervical health initiatives.

In partnership with the Victorian AIDS Council, we were very proud to produce the 3rd annual LBQ Women's Health Conference in Sydney, which saw more than 300 academics, healthcare professionals, service providers and community members converge in Sydney to explore best practice and research in working with LBQ women around mental health,



sexual health, alcohol and other drug use, and broader women's health issues. We look forward to continuing our work with women, and other communities across the LGBTI sphere, in the coming year and beyond.

Many of the achievements outlined in the pages of this year's report show we are moving in the right direction. The Mid-Term Review of Our Strategic Plan indicates we are on track

in improving the health and wellbeing of our communities. However, we have also identified a number of areas where we need to be increasing our efforts, including trans and gender diverse health and cancer programming. Over the next year, we will be continuing to build on this work as we develop our next strategic plan.

Of course, the work we do and the many important outcomes we accomplish across the spectrum



**THE WORK WE DO AND THE MANY IMPORTANT OUTCOMES WE ACCOMPLISH ACROSS THE SPECTRUM OF HIV AND LGBTI HEALTH WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE MANY PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS IN OUR COMMUNITY THAT HELP TO MAKE IT HAPPEN**



of HIV and LGBTI health would not be possible without the many people and organisations in our community that help to make it happen. ACON thanks our staff, board, members, volunteers, partners and supporters for their ongoing commitment, contribution and service.

We also pay tribute to our many sectors partners and allies. We particularly honour Jillian Skinner, whose six-year tenure as NSW Health Minister heralded a raft of important advances in relation to HIV prevention, care and support. The development and implementation of NSW's ambitious strategy for ending HIV transmission by 2020 was driven by Minister Skinner and

the success that the strategy is moving towards will be an important and lasting legacy. We thank Minister Skinner for her vision and commitment to ending HIV and supporting the health and wellbeing of LGBTI people and people living with HIV, and look forward to continuing our strong partnership with the NSW Government under the leadership of NSW Health Minister Brad Hazzard.

Finally, we thank our clients and community members for their continued support. Their passion and dedication in caring for each other inspires us to continue our efforts in making our community healthy, strong and included in all aspects of society.

Opposite page: ACON President Dr Justin Koonin launching our new Pride Inclusion Program, Pride in Health+Wellbeing; with NSW Chief Health Officer Dr Kerry Chant and other sector partners at the announcement of HIV Q2 Data Report. This page: Delegates at the LBO Women's Health Conference in Sydney; ACON CEO Nicolas Parkhill and ACON President Dr Justin Koonin with former NSW Health Minister Jillian Skinner

Dr Justin Koonin  
President

Nicolas Parkhill  
Chief Executive Officer

# ABOUT US

We're a New South Wales based health promotion organisation specialising in HIV prevention, HIV support and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) health.

Established in 1985 as the AIDS Council of NSW, we're here to end HIV transmission among gay and same sex attracted men, and promote the lifelong health of LGBTI people and people with HIV.

Our head office is in Sydney, we have offices in key regional locations and we provide services throughout NSW.

We're primarily funded by the NSW Government through the NSW Ministry of Health and our work forms an integral part of the NSW Government's HIV Strategy.

## WHO WE'RE HERE FOR:

- People living with HIV
- Gay and bisexual men
- Lesbians and same-sex attracted women
- Transgender people
- Intersex people

## WE ALSO HAVE DEDICATED SERVICES FOR:

- Young gay men
- Asian gay men
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Sexually adventurous gay men and lesbians
- Older LGBTI people
- LGBTI people who use drugs

## THROUGH OUR TRAINING & CONSULTING DIVISION WE WORK WITH:

- Employers
- Service providers
- Community organisations

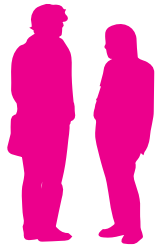




# OUR YEAR SNAPSHOT

## STAFF

108



## SYDNEY GAY COMMUNITY PERIODIC SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

3,000



## VOLUNTEERS

500



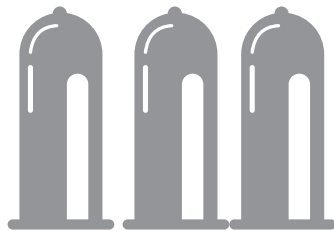
## HIV TESTS

8,000



## EVENT PARTICIPANTS

10,400

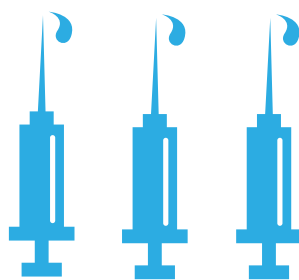


## SAFE SEX PACKS

227,578

## CLIENT INTERACTIONS

21,500



## UNITS OF INJECTING EQUIPMENT

526,761

## UNIQUE WEBSITE USERS

660K



## VIDEO VIEWS

1.1M









# OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

## THIS IS HOW WE DID IT IN 2016/17:

- HIV Prevention
- HIV Campaigns
- HIV Testing
- HIV Support
- Sexual Health
- Women
- Mental Health
- Ageing
- Alcohol and Other Drugs
- Safety & Social Inclusion
- Domestic and Family Violence
- Regional NSW
- Advocacy and Research
- Inclusion
- Community Engagement
- Organisational Development





# HERE FOR HIV PREVENTION



With a comprehensive, coordinated and innovative approach, coupled with advances in HIV testing, HIV treatment and HIV prevention technologies, we are making significant progress towards virtually eliminating new HIV transmissions in NSW by 2020. Key to achieving this ambitious goal is to effectively engage and mobilise gay men – the population in NSW most at risk of HIV transmission. Part of how we educate and engage is by developing and promoting campaigns that urge gay men and other men who have sex with men (MSM) to test often, treat early and stay safe.

## NSW HIV DATA

This year, NSW recorded the lowest rate of new HIV notifications since 1985. Between January and July 2017, there were 101 new HIV diagnoses in gay and bisexual men – a 32% decrease on the average and the lowest since 1985 when HIV surveillance began. This builds on 12 months of steady decline. In 2016, there were 317 new HIV diagnoses in NSW which was

## WE'RE HERE TO ENGAGE AND MOBILISE GAY MEN AND OTHER MSM TO TEST MORE, TREAT EARLY AND STAY SAFE

This page: ACON CEO Nicolas Parkhill with ACON staff at the launch of the How Do You Do It? campaign in February. Opposite page (from top): Our staff and volunteers took the streets of Sydney to educate the community on PrEP; Ending HIV posters in Sydney; a poster from our Is PreP For You? campaign; our partners at our media conference announcing the lowest rate of HIV notifications since 1985; and we continued our support for the EPIC-NSW study

a 9% decrease compared to the average for 2010-2015. Of these cases, 259 were attributable to male to male sex, which was an 8% decrease on the six year average. Knowing your status is central to HIV prevention, so the fact that HIV testing rates continue to increase is really important. HIV testing rates increased by 34% since 2012. Approximately 95% of people with HIV in NSW are now on treatment, with a similar proportion of that group having a suppressed – or undetectable – viral load.

## HOW DO YOU DO IT?

Our How Do You Do It? campaign was launched during the Sydney Mardi Gras Festival in February to raise awareness of new approaches to HIV prevention. Biomedical strategies such as pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, and undetectable viral load (UVL) now sit alongside condoms as effective methods of preventing HIV transmission. The campaign featured a diverse range of community members and employed an attention-grabbing approach by delivering HIV prevention messages through relevant sub-messages such as 'I do it every day', 'I do it all the time' and 'I do it with my doctor'. The campaign was promoted across community, social and outdoor media. A video accompanying the campaign garnered significant engagement, reaching 166,442 people on Facebook and recording 65,660 views. Go to page 10-11 for more on our work with the How Do You Do It? campaign.

## I'M ENDING HIV

Launched in early 2013, our award-winning community education and mobilisation initiative ENDING HIV continues to educate gay men and other MSM about what they can do to help end HIV transmission in NSW. Since its launch, we've significantly improved people's understanding of the need for increased HIV testing, the benefits of starting HIV

treatment early and the important role condoms continue to play in reducing the risk of HIV transmission. This year, we continued to promote ENDING HIV's key messages of staying safe, treating early and testing more, along with other biomedical strategies such as PrEP and UVL. We continued to generate strong community engagement with forums and activations, as well as through our ENDING HIV website and associated social media platforms. We had over 480,000 visits and close to 710,000 page views. Our combined social media community exceeded 21,000 contacts across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and email and we recorded over one million interactions.

## PREP CAMPAIGNS

PrEP is an antiretroviral medication taken by HIV negative people at high risk of acquiring HIV to prevent infection. Studies have shown that PrEP is extremely effective at preventing HIV transmission. Throughout the year, we continued to educate gay men about the role of PrEP through a range of campaigns and initiatives.

Our *Is PrEP For You?* campaign rolled out in the beginning of the year. The campaign featured local community members and focused on fostering knowledge on the emerging science around PrEP. Campaign videos on social media reached over 180,000 people and generated more than 98,000 views.

To ensure broader understanding of PrEP across diverse communities, we also partnered with Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Service to develop tailored PrEP education resources, which were translated in Mandarin, Cantonese, Thai and Vietnamese.

We also continued to provide support to the Expanded PrEP Implementation in Communities in NSW, or EPIC-NSW, a study looking at the impact of rapid expansion in access to PrEP amongst those at high risk of acquiring HIV. We helped with the recruitment of participants through our a[TEST] facilities in



Sydney and our network of regional offices. At the end June 2017, there were 6336 enrolled in the study and taking PrEP.

## EMEN8

Developed and implemented in partnership with the Victorian AIDS Council, our digital resource *Emen8* went live in May to deliver HIV and sexual health information to gay men and MSM across Australia. *Emen8* is part of our National Gay Men's Education Program and is funded by the Australian Government.

The national website adopts an innovative approach to health promotion by developing content underpinned by evidence-based HIV and STI prevention strategies. By making information more accessible and appealing, *Emen8* is harnessing the power of peer networks, technology and social engagement to amplify health messaging that can, in turn, encourage healthy behavioural change.

Engagement is building, with *Emen8* reaching audiences in each state and territory and importantly, those in rural and regional areas.

## OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- We distributed over 230,000 safe sex packs (condoms and lube) to almost 50 venues.
- We delivered over 40 peer-run workshops across NSW on HIV, safe sex and risk reduction. These workshops included *Start Making Sense* and *ConverAsians*.
- We continued our partnership with Australia's #1 gay web series *The Horizon*, in which the producers embed messages related to safe sex, HIV testing and treatment into the storylines.
- We conducted over 377 HIV prevention and awareness outreach sessions across NSW. This included our *Sexperts* program in selected sex-on-premises venues in Sydney, as well as major community events such as Sydney Mardi Gras and Tropical Fruits in Lismore.



# HERE FOR HIV PREVENTION

## HOW DO YOU DO IT?

During the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Festival in February, we launched How Do You Do It?, a multi-platform campaign to educate the gay community on the range of options available to prevent HIV transmission – the first combination prevention campaign in Australia.

### RATIONALE

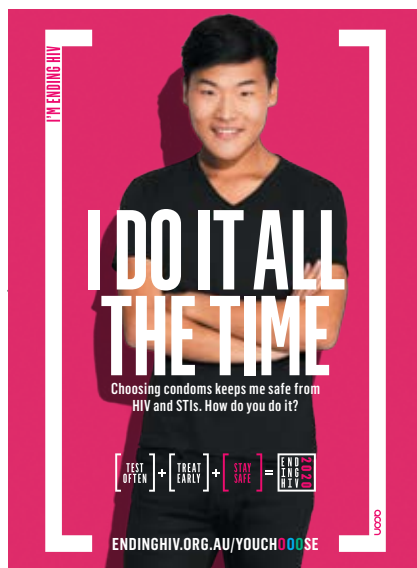
For 30 years, reinforcing the use of condoms has been a strong foundation and a vital aspect of our work. Since the creation of the ENDING HIV campaign in 2013, 'Stay Safe' has remained an integral part of our communications strategy. Over various campaign executions of ENDING HIV, the 'Stay Safe' message has promoted consistent condom use in the gay community.

But as our response to HIV has evolved, so too has the HIV prevention landscape. With recent biomedical advances and strong evidence of effectiveness for pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and undetectable viral load (UVL), gay men have more options and need more information about an increasingly diverse range of HIV prevention strategies. The different situations in which sex happens, in terms of location, relationship status and individual circumstances were important elements that needed to be addressed in this campaign.

Delivered on multiple platforms – social media, out-of-home media, video, print and online – the campaign sought to ensure that sexually active gay men were informed about each HIV risk reduction strategy – condoms, PrEP or UVL – and how they can utilise the most appropriate strategy or strategies in this new era of HIV prevention. It was important to reinforce 'combination prevention' by incorporating this messaging without diminishing the traditional condom-based practices which gay men in NSW have sustained to date.

### DISTRIBUTION

The overarching campaign message 'How do you do it?' was supported



by six distinct but linked executions for different HIV prevention strategies focusing on condoms, PrEP and UVL, with the tag-line 'You Choose' (three 'o's were intentional).

Understanding the power and reach of video content, this campaign introduced three characters – 'Tom', 'Dick' and 'Harry', each having their chosen HIV prevention strategy. The video introduced the complexities of combination prevention, showcasing the advantages of the different prevention strategies and their synergistic ability.

Advertisements ran throughout NSW including outdoor placements on Sydney metropolitan buses and bus stops, six cars and 26 billboards. These were complemented by a full suite of social and digital placements for online and mobile devices.

### RESULTS

The online evaluation survey was completed by 900 gay and bisexual men across NSW. Overall, 62% of respondents had seen the campaign, with the majority of people seeing the campaign on Facebook or at events like the Mardi Gras Parade and Fair Day.

On Facebook, the video reached 166,442 people, garnered 65,660 video-views and accumulated 2,193 engagements (reactions, comments and shares). Among those who had seen the video, 88% thought it was very effective or effective at communicating its message.

The campaign also grabbed international attention from the United Nations and other HIV organisations worldwide.

Continuing to measure the knowledge and attitudes/beliefs of our audience, ACON can demonstrate over time how these campaigns have increased gay/MSM health literacy, which is important to our Ending HIV goals.

Left: How Do You Do It? posters. Opposite page: The How Do You Do It? campaign roll out and activations.







# HERE FOR HIV & SEXUAL HEALTH

We're here to help LGBTI people in NSW take control of their sexual health by providing information and a range of support services including:

- Screening for HIV and sexually transmissible infections (STIs) through our a[TEST] service
- Sex, health and relationship workshops
- Free condoms, safe sex packs and resources
- Dedicated programs for young gay men, sexually adventurous men, lesbians and same sex attracted women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as well as Asian, Middle Eastern and Arabic gay men.

## YOUNG GAY MEN

2016/2017 marked the first full year of our rebranded program for young gay men, SPARK. Formerly known as Fun and Esteem, the program has been a huge success for our Young Gay Men's Project. Over the year, the project conducted workshops covering sexual health, HIV prevention, sexuality, resilience and relationships. There were also six outreach sessions for young gay men in rural and regional NSW utilising technologies such as Skype. Participation in our these workshops grew – such has been the demand that there was a 40% increase in the number of HIV and sexual health workshops being run compared to the previous year. We recruited and trained 15 new volunteers to facilitate our workshops on sexual health, dating and relationships.

SPARK's digital engagement also grew with its Facebook contacts rising from 390 to 1135 in 12 months – an increase of 191%. We also partnered with other programs and organisations such as Headspace and our Asian Gay Men's project to produce a range of events younger gay men and other men who have sex with men (MSM).

## ASIAN GAY MEN

Educating Asian gay men and other MSM on HIV prevention and sexual health remains a strong focus of our health promotion



**WE'RE HERE TO  
HELP LGBTI PEOPLE  
IN NSW TAKE  
CONTROL OF THEIR  
SEXUAL HEALTH**



This page (from top): Participants and supporters of ACON Young Gay Men's Project SPARK; a forum at Headquarters hosted by HowHard; the CLAUDE team at Mardi Gras Fair Day; and supporters and friends of ACON Young Gay Men's Project. Opposite page: ACON's Aboriginal Project at the Mardi Gras Parade

work, and this year we undertook several events and projects to engage this important section of our community. Our Asian Gay Men's Project hosted bi-monthly social and health promotion workshops called ConversAsians, which saw the number of participants in the project more than treble from the previous year. The project also held two community forums on relationships and PrEP, with more than 50 people attending each event. Of particular note was the Finding Our Voice forum held at the Colombian Hotel in Darlinghurst, which provided the community with the key outcomes from the Asian Gay Men's Periodic Survey. The Asian Gay Men's Project also led work with the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Gay Men's Action Group to develop responses to reported increase of HIV/STI notifications among gay Asian men. In February, we launched 'Effective HIV Prevention and Health Promotion Among Asian Gay Men and Homosexually Active Men in NSW', a discussion paper focusing on the sexual health challenges experienced by Asian gay men in NSW, particularly men who have recently migrated to Australia. The paper outlines new strategies to enhance effective HIV prevention and education among Asian gay men.

## ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

The ACON Aboriginal Project delivered a series of projects in 2016/17, including the Ngawli Djardi (Sit and Yarn) HIV Positive Retreat in November. The event attracted 18 Aboriginal and Torres Strait people living with HIV, giving them the opportunity to relax in a safe space, connect with culture and receive important health messages. We also engaged LGBTI Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people during Mardi Gras. Our 'First Nations' Mardi Gras parade entry featured over 100 participants including Senator Malarndirri McCarthy, Senator for the Northern Territory, and Chansey Paech, MP for the Northern Territory seat of Namatjira. In partnership

with several community groups, the project helped host Klub Koori, the Good Looking arts exhibition and the Koori Gras exhibition and art event celebrating First Peoples involvement in Mardi Gras.

## SEXUALLY ADVENTUROUS MEN

Sexually adventurous men (SAM) are at higher risk of contracting STIs such as syphilis, chlamydia, and gonorrhea as well as HIV. We target this population through our HowHard initiative which includes specifically tailored digital communications and social events. We have distributed a total 2,800 play packs through a variety of channels, providing safer sex equipment and sexual health information to this community. We also took part in a number of community events including Mardi Gras Fair Day and forums at local sex on premise venues (SOPVs). Our online engagement continues to grow with over 2000 followers on Facebook and a new-look HowHard website.

## LBQ WOMEN

We continued to engage women on issues around sexual health through a range of activities, events and partnerships delivered by our successful CLAUDE initiative. Launched in 2012, CLAUDE is a sexual health resource for sexually adventurous women. This year, we continued partnerships with a wide range of organisations such as Heaps Gay, Queer Screen and Perv Queerotic Film Festival to promote our sex-positive, safe sex message.

We extended the awareness of CLAUDE by appearing at various summits including the Australasian Sexual Health Conference. During the Mardi Gras Festival, we hosted an art exhibition and panel discussion exploring cervical and sexual health. This year, we distributed almost 900 play packs for women, which contain resources and sexual health information.

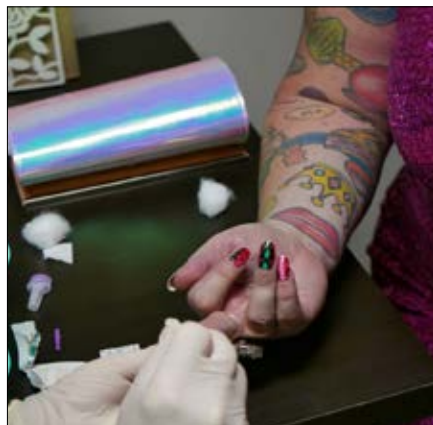
## OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- We delivered 42 peer run workshops for gay men in Sydney on sexual health, risk reduction and HIV.
- Our ACON Sexperts, a team of specially trained volunteers, provided hundreds of hours of sexual health education at sex on premises venues, as well as online.
- We developed cultural specific sexual health programs and resources, including for Middle Eastern and Chinese gay men and other MSM, addressing language and other barriers to sexual health for culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- We continued to work with the Sexually Transmissible Infections in Gay Men Action Group (STIGMA) to reduce and prevent STIs among gay men and other MSM in NSW.
- We continued to deliver safe sex education and health promotion messages and resources to sex on premises venues through PlayZone, our Code of Practice on SOPVs. Ten venues signed up to the new code, increasing safety in these venues and promoting awareness around sexual health and HIV prevention.





# HERE FOR HIV TESTING



Testing is key to ending HIV in NSW because if gay men don't know their HIV status, they can't improve their health or take action to prevent potential transmissions. Making testing easier and more accessible as well as educating gay and MSM about the importance of testing more regularly are important areas of focus for our approach to HIV prevention.

## a[TEST]

Our a[TEST] services continue to offer community based rapid HIV and STI screening at four sites across Sydney in Oxford Street, Newtown, Kings Cross and Surry Hills, and is now one of the largest HIV testing services in NSW. The service, which began in 2013 and operates in partnership with clinical services, has grown year on year. The success of the service is a testament to the hard work of the peer workforce, who offer a high quality service which is unique in NSW. Since the first full-time a[TEST]

site opened on Oxford Street in 2015, the clinic has provided over 10,000 HIV and STI tests, making it the state's most popular community-based testing centre for gay men. Such has been its success that funding for a[TEST] Oxford Street has been secured, which will see the service operate until 2020.

Over the past year we diversified our service model by introducing PrEP services to clients who are taking part in the EPIC-NSW study. A new nurse's room was also added to the Oxford Street site increasing the number of clients we are able to see per day. Over the coming year we will be adding more hours of service across the four a[TEST] sites and continue to look for new and innovative ways to offer sexual health screening services to gay men with transgender experiences in our community.

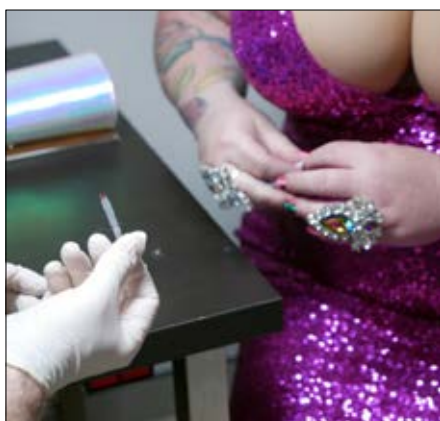
## TESTING DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A DRAG

Coinciding with NSW HIV Testing

Week in June, we released a video promoting HIV testing featuring one of Sydney's most popular drag entertainers, Maxi Shield. It follows her journey through a sexual health check-up at a[TEST] Oxford Street. The video framed the process of getting a HIV test as quick, easy and convenient while showcasing the staff and facilities of a[TEST] Oxford St. The video generated significant engagement on social media, reaching almost one million people on Facebook in less than one week. Despite the frequency of HIV testing messages, this unique campaign video has become ACON's most widely shared video ever.

## DRIED BLOOD SPOT TESTING

Supported by ACON, the NSW Ministry of Health launched the Dried Blood Spot (DBS) study in December. The DBS test uses technology which allows people from at-risk communities to test for HIV in the comfort of their own



**MAKING TESTING EASIER AND MORE ACCESSIBLE AS WELL AS EDUCATING OUR COMMUNITIES ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF TESTING MORE REGULARLY ARE IMPORTANT AREAS OF FOCUS FOR OUR APPROACH TO HIV PREVENTION**

Images: Our video 'Testing doesn't have to be a drag', which featured Sydney drag queen Maxi Shield at our a[TEST] facility in Darlinghurst, is ACON's most widely shared video ever

home. It is a self-collection test that requires a finger prick sample of blood to be collected at home and sent by mail for laboratory testing. Results are delivered by phone, text message or email. ACON has been active in promoting DBS to our communities, especially those who are not attached to regular HIV and sexual health screening.

**PREP RECRUITMENTS & HIV TESTING**

In partnership with RPA Sexual Health Centre and Sydney Sexual Health Centre (SSHC), our a[TEST] peers have helped facilitate the enrolment of over 740 clients onto the EPIC-NSW trial. Each enrolment includes an assessment of eligibility, and a HIV and STI screen. Clients are required to undertake these same tests at their three month follow up visits. a[TEST] peers have managed thousands of these follow up visits, all of which require HIV testing. EPIC-NSW participants who are

enrolled with SSHC can use the a[TEST] Oxford Street site to attend follow up visits, get tested and collect their PrEP medication. These follow up visits have been integrated into the service delivery, contributing to increased levels of HIV/STI testing.

**HIV TESTING IN REGIONAL NSW**

Getting gay men to test more is key to achieving our goal of ending HIV transmission by 2020, and we continue efforts to ensure HIV testing remained high and frequent in regional NSW. Under the banner of our award-winning initiative ENDING HIV, we produced a localised version of our TEST OFTEN campaign for the Hunter and New England region. In partnership with the Hunter New England Local Health District, the campaign launched in September featured local men and healthcare providers to encourage gay and same-sex attracted men to test more often. We also delivered HIV and STI screening activations at the Broken Heel Festival in Broken Hill in September, Border Pride Fair Day in Albury in November and Tropical Fruits New Year's Festival in Lismore.

**OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

- This financial year, we delivered over 8000 HIV tests through our network of a[TEST] community testing facilities in Darlinghurst, Kings Cross, Surry Hills and Newtown. Our a[TEST] services, operated in partnership with publicly funded sexual health clinics, are the largest providers of rapid HIV testing in NSW.
- We supported NSW HIV Testing Week to spread the testing message through social media using #endinghiv.
- We provided HIV and sexual health outreach online across Southern and Far West NSW, providing gay and other MSM in those regions the opportunity to receive information relating to HIV testing, where to get a test, as well as PrEP, HIV and STI risk.



# HERE FOR HIV SUPPORT

We're here to help people with HIV take control of their health, as well as the health of their partners, by providing up-to-date information as well as a range of programs and services including workshops, support groups, one-on-one peer support, counselling, care coordination, home-based care, health retreats and meals.

## HELPING NEWLY DIAGNOSED PEOPLE WITH HIV

Despite seeing some of the lowest numbers of new HIV diagnosis since the early days of the epidemic, new cases are still occurring and, as such, supporting people newly diagnosed with HIV remains an important part of our HIV support work. One of our key services for people newly diagnosed with HIV is Genesis, a weekend workshop for gay men who have been diagnosed with HIV within the last two years. Presented in partnership with Positive Life NSW, it's a peer-based workshop which means it is run by gay men living with HIV who can relate to the experience of a new diagnosis. Genesis provides participants with practical help and knowledge to manage their HIV diagnosis, gain confidence and build resilience. This year we held seven workshops which were attended by 56 people, all of whom said they would recommend the workshop to other gay men newly diagnosed with HIV.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT NETWORK

We continued to provide practical support for people with HIV through our Community Support Network. Our team of trained volunteers deliver practical assistance to help people with HIV live as independently as possible in their own homes. Services include helping with household chores, grocery shopping, light maintenance and transport to and from medical appointments. This year, over 50 volunteers provided over 1100 occasions of care to over 60 clients.



## HEALTH RETREATS

We produced a range of regional retreats designed specifically for people living with HIV, providing a unique opportunity for participants to relax, connect and receive key health promotion information. The Ngalawi Djardi (Sit and Yarn) HIV Positive Retreat for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was held in November and attracted 18 participants, while our NSW Rural Retreat for Gay Men with HIV saw 12 attendees gather in the Northern Rivers region. Both retreats were well received among attendees.

## PARTNERSHIPS

We work with a range of HIV organisations and groups to help improve the health and wellbeing of people living with HIV including Positive Life NSW, HIV/AIDS Legal Centre and Local Health Districts across NSW. ACON also works closely with organisations from across the country like Living Positive Victoria on programs such as the Positive Leadership Development Institute. We also work with the grassroots peer-led group, The Institute of Many, to provide peer contacts and events for people living with HIV.





**WE'RE HERE TO  
HELP PEOPLE WITH  
HIV TAKE CONTROL  
OF THEIR HEALTH,  
AS WELL AS THE  
HEALTH OF THEIR  
PARTNERS**

#### OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- Our Care Coordination team provided 1318 occasions of service to HIV positive clients with complex needs including mental health issues, alcohol and/or drug use, housing stress, family/domestic violence, or financial/legal matters, and a further 30 people at high risk were supported. These clients are assisted by allied health professionals who can help them access relevant healthcare and support services and increase their ability to manage their care and treatment.

- We provided 137 occasions of service to people newly diagnosed with HIV.
- Our counsellors provided 625 occasions of service to people living with HIV, and a further 149 people received support for harm reduction.
- We provided over 2,150 meals during 47 meal based social services for people living with HIV in the ACON Café in Surry Hills.
- We provided one-on-one peer support for over 90 people with HIV. We also provided advice to more than 50 people seeking information about living with HIV.

Image: The ACON counselling, HIV support and community care team

# HERE FOR WOMEN



We're here to help lesbian, bisexual, queer (LBQ) and other women in our communities take control of their health. We are working across policy, advocacy, research and service deliver domains to increase awareness of, and build programs for, the specific needs of women in our communities.

## LBQ WOMEN'S HEALTH CONFERENCE

This year, we hosted the third annual LBQ Women's Health Conference. Presented in partnership with the Victorian AIDS Council, the conference was held in July with the generous support of the Cancer Institute NSW and NSW Health. Over 300 delegates attended the conference to hear from a diverse range of speakers and presenters including activists, industry experts, health and human services providers, academics and community members. More than 50 sessions, workshops and presentations were held over two days, exploring issues relating LBQ women's health including mental health, sexual health, alcohol and other drug use, including issues for women with transgender and intersex experiences.

## WELCOME TO BREASTVILLE!

This year, we produced Welcome to Breastville!, a day-to-night women's festival held as part of Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. Held at Marrickville Town Hall, the event raised

## WE'RE HERE TO HELP LESBIAN, BISEXUAL AND OTHER WOMEN IN OUR COMMUNITIES TAKE CONTROL OF THEIR HEALTH

This page: ACON's Welcome to Breastville at Marrickville Town Hall; the ACON team at Welcome to Breastville. Opposite page: The LBQ Women's Health Conference at the NSW Teacher's Federation Conference Centre

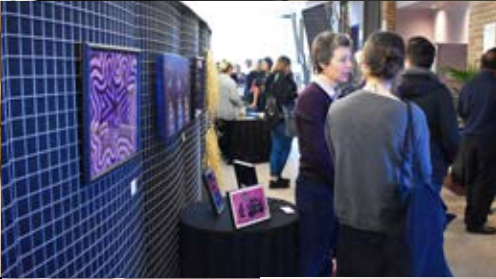
awareness of breast and chest health through our #TalkTouchTest campaign, as well as the importance of breast and chest screening with support from BreastScreen NSW and Cancer Institute NSW. The event included a broad range of community groups including arts, sporting, cultural, social and other groups and a variety of entertainers such as bands, singers, the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Choir and other performers. It was the biggest event for LBQ women in the Mardi Gras season, running for 14-hours and attended by around 650 people from a diverse range of backgrounds.

## AT YOUR CERVIX

Cervical cancer is one of the most preventable cancers, yet studies show that LGBTI people are less likely than the general population to access screening services. In response, we have been funded by Cancer Institute NSW to develop a new cervical screening campaign for LGBTI people with a cervix. The new initiative will work with diverse communities to build awareness, increase support for cervical cancer prevention and educate about the changes to the National Cervical Screening Program.

During the Sydney Mardi Gras festival, we produced A Public Cervix Announcement, an art exhibition and forum that brought cervical health to the fore, raising awareness about sexual and cervical health and cervical screening and support.







# HERE FOR MENTAL HEALTH



While many LGBTI people lead happy, healthy and productive lives, there are a range of mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, self-harm, suicide ideation and suicidality which affect a disproportionate number of people in the LGBTI community compared to the general population. We're here to help LGBTI people and people with HIV take control of their mental health by providing information, a range of counselling services and a care coordination program for people with complex needs.

## COUNSELLING SERVICES

This year our team of counsellors responded to a range of issues affecting over 800 people who sought help from us in relation to their mental health. Our principal focus is on people affected by HIV and we provide free counselling for people living with, at risk of, affected by or testing for HIV, as well as a service for people newly diagnosed with HIV. For LGBTI people experiencing non-HIV related mental health issues, we provide a low cost fee based service. This year our LGBTI counselling service supported close

## WE'RE HERE TO HELP LGBTI PEOPLE AND PEOPLE WITH HIV TAKE CONTROL OF THEIR MENTAL HEALTH

This page: ACON's TL Tran is among a team of workers that provide counselling and care coordination services for people with complex needs. Opposite page: In May, NSW Minister for Mental Health and Ageing Tanya Davies toured ACON in Surry Hills and announced new funding to address suicide prevention in the LGBTI community; (bottom) ACON counsellor Deb Broughton at our Welcome to Breastville event in Marrickville

to 81 people. Through our Substance Support Service, we provide counselling services for LGBTI people and people with HIV who need help in relation to their use of substances. This year we supported 189 people through this service.

## HELPING PEOPLE WITH COMPLEX NEEDS

Sometimes people in our community experience health, personal or social issues which can impact on their capacity to look after themselves and others. These needs may include mental health issues, domestic and family violence, alcohol and/or drug use, financial/legal matters, or housing stress. Through our Care Coordination Service, clients with complex needs get teamed up with allied health professionals who can help them access relevant healthcare and support services and increase their ability to manage their care and treatment. Our care coordinators work with clients over three months to develop a care plan and provide support to help clients achieve their goals and meet their needs. This year we provided over 1300 occasions of care coordination for clients.

## SUICIDE PREVENTION

In May, we received \$500,000 in new funding from the NSW Government to address suicide prevention in the LGBTI community. The funding, to be provided over four years, will be used to train GPs to increase their capacity in responding to the needs of LGBTI people at risk of suicide, as well as enable ACON to provide direct aftercare services for those experiencing emotional distress and requiring support.

## OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- In September, we produced a resource for healthcare service providers assisting members of the LGBTI community experiencing distress as a result of the marriage equality debate. The resource provided information to health care professional providing support to LGBTI people.

- Our counselling and care coordination services scored very well in our annual client satisfaction survey. The average rating of clients who used these services was 9.6/10 for satisfaction, 9.5/10 for value and 9.3/10 for recommending to others.





# HERE FOR AGEING

We're here to offer support, companionship and advice for older members of the LGBTI community by providing health information and a range of programs and services.

## LOVE PROJECT SURVEY

We continue to shine a light on the needs of older LGBTI people through our LOVE Project (Living Older Visibly & Engaged). Established in 2013, the project aims to improve the health of older LGBTI community members by providing social opportunities, creating understanding about healthy ageing issues, and encouraging people to maintain healthy lifestyles. A key activity was the implementation of a survey to better understand the health needs of older people living with HIV. More than 160 people completed the survey and the results informed the development of a new weekend health retreat for people aged 50 and over and living with HIV planned for Sydney, Kiama and Newcastle in 2017/2018.

## COMMUNITY VISITOR SCHEME

Launched in 2015, Our Community Visitors Scheme (CVS) continues to provide much-needed social support to older members of the community experiencing loneliness or isolation. Throughout the year, trained volunteers make regular one-on-one visits to homes of older LGBTI people, delivering social interaction through a range of activities – whether it's a cup of tea, listening to music, watching a movie or participating in a game or hobby. While social isolation can affect anyone's mental health no matter their age, the impacts of loneliness can be more severe for older members of the community. With warm company and friendship, CVS volunteers are helping to improve the mental health and wellbeing of rainbow seniors. Funded by the Australian Government, this year over 80 volunteers delivered support to 67 clients in their own home or in residential facilities.

**WE'RE HERE TO  
OFFER SUPPORT,  
COMPANIONSHIP  
AND ADVICE FOR  
OLDER MEMBERS  
OF THE LGBTI  
COMMUNITY**

Clockwise from left: ACON staff and supporters at the LOVE Project stall at Fair Day; LGBTI 55+ Shared Luncheon at Petersham Town Hall; Afternoon Delight in Sydney in March; the LOVE Project team at Fair Day



## AFTERNOON DELIGHT

Afternoon Delight is ACON's premiere annual calendar event for older LGBTI people. It comprises a series of free movie matinees and afternoon tea parties for LGBTI seniors and their friends, providing a safe and welcoming environment to come together for an afternoon of entertainment, refreshments and social contact. Now in its ninth year, the event's focus is on reducing social isolation, increasing community networking, and giving participants





access to LGBTI specific healthy ageing information and inclusive local health services. This year, Afternoon Delight events took place in March and were held across six locations in NSW including Sydney, Newcastle, Shellharbour, Wagga Wagga, Sawtell and Lismore. Over 600 people attended the events. Afternoon Delight is presented in association with Queer Screen and NSW Seniors Festival and is made possible by funding from NSW Family and Community Services and the NSW Seniors Festival.

#### OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- In partnership with Inner West Council, we hosted a luncheon event at Petersham Town Hall. The LGBTI 55+ Shared Luncheon event explored healthy ageing and wellbeing. Hosted by Auntie Mavis, over 40 attended the event, making new connections and friends, learning about nutrition and getting information on how to lead active, healthy and social lives.
- We presented a NSW Seniors Week Brunch at Surry Hills

Neighbourhood Centre in March.

- We participated in a range of research reports including the Secure and Affordable Housing Report and Factors Which Sustain Social and Support Groups for Older LGBTI People Discussion Paper.
- We assisted in the development of the 'Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex needs in Residential Aged Care' resource by the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association, which formed part of their 10 Questions leaflet project.

HERE FOR

# ALCOHOL & OTHER DRUGS

We're here to help people reduce the harms associated with the use of alcohol and other drugs (AOD) by providing a range of resources and support services. We also work with service providers to help them better support the needs of LGBTI people and people living with HIV.

## PARTY PLAYGROUNDS FORUM

In October, we hosted a community forum exploring drug use in Sydney's LGBTI community over the last ten years. Entitled Party Playgrounds: A Decade of Drugs in Gay Sydney – Changes, Impacts and What Next?, the forum featured Dr Adam Bourne, one of Britain's leading researchers on recreational drugs. An assistant professor at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Dr Bourne gave a presentation on drug and sex related trends in London and joined a panel of local drug experts, researchers and community health representatives. By exploring the LGBTI community's relationship with party drugs over the last 10 years, the forum aimed to enable a better understanding of the medical, sexual and social implications of contemporary drug use, as well as improving the community's capacity to reduce harm.

## SUBSTANCE SUPPORT SERVICE

We know that most LGBTI people and people living with HIV who use alcohol and other drugs do so in a non-problematic way but some require support. Our Substance Support Service provides short term counselling of up to 12 sessions with the ability to re-enter as required, assisting people to better manage their use, cut down or quit. Counselling support is also available to family, friends and partners of loved ones who have problematic use. ACON provides a community based setting that we know our communities find approachable. Additionally LGBTI people are able to access remotely through phone/Skype which offers convenience and additional privacy. This year, we supported 189 people through this service.



## EXPANDED AOD PROGRAMS

Throughout the year, we secured funding enabling us to continue our Substance Support Service and expand the capacity to include underserved regions and populations. A total of \$605,000 over the next two years will be received from five primary health networks (PHN) and a further \$295,000 over two years in Commonwealth transitional funding. This will deliver direct client services and inclusive practice training of mainstream AOD services across North Sydney, Central Eastern Sydney and South Western Sydney PHNs; inclusive practice training in Murrumbidgee PHN and inclusive practice training and capacity building of AOD

services in South Eastern NSW PHN. As a result we have increased our counselling team across the state.

## NEEDLE AND SYRINGE PROGRAM

ACON continues to provide sterile injecting equipment to injecting drug users across NSW via our Needle and Syringe Programs (NSP) located in Sydney (Surry Hills), Hunter (Newcastle) and Northern Rivers (Lismore). At our primary NSP program at ACON Surry Hills, we dispensed an estimated 282,851 units of injecting equipment while our secondary service in the Hunter dispensed 24,3910 units of injecting equipment. Throughout the year, we delivered over 16,387 occasions of service and made over 652 referrals



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PEOPLE & PEOPLE  
WITH HIV REDUCE  
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Opposite page: UK research Adam Bourne (centre) with ACON CEO Nicolas Parkhill (right) and VAC CEO Simon Ruth; ACON Rovers. This page: ACON and our partners at the announcement of funding by the South Western Sydney Primary Health Network for our alcohol and drugs support programs; and our Director of Community Health Sarah Lambert at the announcement of funding by Central and Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network for our alcohol and other drugs support programs



to a variety of health, housing, employment and social services.

The NSW Ministry of Health also reinvigorated the NSP Leadership Group, which aimed to support ongoing distribution of injecting equipment, reduce receptive syringe sharing and decrease new Hepatitis B and C infections. ACON participated in the group and responded to meeting the objectives by developing a comprehensive strategy involving health promotion campaigns and services.

## OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- We provided 15 community parties and events with the services of ACON Rovers, teams of specially trained volunteers who attend events to help people experiencing problems due to alcohol and drug use. Our Rovers provided over 460 hours of service, interacting with more than 2080 partygoers, supported 840 partygoers with health information enquiries, and assisted more than 70 people experiencing issues with their drug use.
- In partnership with the Murrumbidgee PHN, we delivered inclusive practice training for mainstream AOD service providers and community workers in Broken Hill, Dapto, Griffith, Deniliquin, Nowra, Wagga Wagga and Wollongong.
- In partnership with the Kirketon Road Centre, we conducted a pilot Fibroscan Clinic at the Sydney NSP in November, which was well supported by NSP clients and gave clear indication of the ongoing need for this health service.
- With funding from Central Eastern Sydney PHN, we're developing a website tailored to LGBTI communities that will provide information on alcohol and drugs, a self-assessment tool for people to assess their alcohol and drug use, and information on how to get support for problematic alcohol and drug use.

# HERE FOR SAFETY & SOCIAL INCLUSION

We're here to help LGBTI people who have experienced homophobic/transphobic violence and to improve the safety and security of our community by providing information and a range of programs and services. We aim to celebrate the diversity of our communities and build on their resilience.

## HISTORICAL VIOLENCE PROJECT

People from our communities experienced harrowing levels of hate-motivated violence during the 1970s through to the 1990s, and the impacts of this violent period continues to be felt today. Justice and recognition of these gay and trans hate crimes are important for our community. Throughout the year, we continued to advocate for justice for victims of these terrible events and their families. We teamed up with local LGBTI organisations including the Inner City Legal Centre, the NSW Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby and Dowson Turco Lawyers to develop a broad-ranging response to the crimes. This included a comprehensive review into a range of cases. We have now completed that review and are in the process of preparing a policy report that will propose recommendations relating to honouring the victims and survivors, and ongoing support and improvements to future responses to violence.

## BONDI MEMORIAL PROJECT

In October, we launched the Bondi Memorial Project, a long-term initiative in honour of the gay and trans members of the community who were assaulted and, in some cases, murdered in Sydney from the late 1970s through to the 1990s. With support from Waverley Council, the project is aiming for the construction of a memorial artwork in Bondi's Marks Park, located near Hunter Park, a site where many of these attacks occurred. The memorial will play an important role in not only honouring those who lost their lives, but also in helping heal the trauma these terrible events

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WHO HAVE  
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HOMOPHOBIC/  
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VIOLENCE AND  
TO IMPROVE  
SAFETY OF OUR  
COMMUNITY**

Image: ACON staff commemorating International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia which, in 2017, also incorporated International Family Equality Day



have caused for the families and friends of the victims, as well as the broader LGBTI community and local residents. We are continuing to work closely with Waverley Council on the ongoing development of the project, including awareness initiatives, engagement activities and community consultations.

## IDAHOBIT GRANTS

In May, we delivered funding to a range of initiatives and events across NSW in marking International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT), which in 2017, also incorporated International Family Equality Day. Our small grants scheme,





now in its fifth year, provided support to 13 community groups and organisations to help them undertake activities that focused attention on the impact of LGBTI discrimination and prejudice has on rainbow families and build resilience. This year, IDAHOBIT events were held in Albury, Deniliquin and the Blue Mountains for the first time. Among the events held throughout NSW were family BBQs, bingo, art exhibitions and storytelling nights.

#### FAIR PLAY

For the fourth year, ACON played a key role in implementing Fair Play, a project that assists Mardi Gras partygoers understand their legal

rights, obtain health and other information and monitor police activity. Coordinated in partnership with the Inner City Legal Centre and Sydney Mardi Gras, we provided resources, campaign collateral, volunteer training and logistical support. As a community based initiative, Fair Play performs a vital role in raising awareness and providing information to the LGBTI community on a wide range of issues relating to health, safety and legal issues during the Mardi Gras period. While drug searches and police arrests were up from the previous year, Fair Play volunteers reached out to partygoers to ensure they were adequately informed of their rights and appropriate police measures.

#### OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- We continued to operate our Safe Place program, which involves over 600 venues demonstrating support for the LGBTI community. We also undertook a review of the program this year. We will be implementing the findings from the review in 2017-2018, which will see the program refreshed with a renewed focus on engaging with the LGBTI community.
- In May, we co-presented with Waverley Council, an in-conversation event at Waverley Library featuring Duncan McNab, author of *Getting Away With Murder*, which attracted over 40 people and generated robust conversations about safety, inclusion and justice.

HERE FOR

# DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE

We're here to help LGBTI people who have experienced domestic and family violence (DFV) by providing a range of resources and support services.

## DFV PROJECT

LGBTI people are just as likely as people in the general population to be involved in an abusive intimate and/or family relationship. However they are less likely to identify it in their relationships, report it to police or seek support from mainstream DFV services, and when they do they are less likely to find support services that meet their specific needs. This year, ACON's DFV Project has focussed on increasing awareness amongst our communities of what constitutes abuse and where and how people who have been affected by DFV can get help or can find help for people they care about.

## SAY IT OUT LOUD

In November we launched a ground-breaking resource to raise awareness

of domestic and family violence in the LGBTI community. Called Say It Out Loud ([www.sayitoutloud.org.au](http://www.sayitoutloud.org.au)), the online resource was designed for LGBTI people, their friends, family and community and for professionals who work with individuals from the LGBTI community, and encourages people to start talking about their relationships. It includes information and support for people experiencing violence, for people who need help changing their behaviours, and for people who want tips on making their relationships healthier. Its launch also heralded the premiere of the short film Red Flags, which shone a light on DFV in LGBTI relationships.

## RED FLAGS

As part of the Say It Out Loud initiative, we produced Red Flags, a short film that explores DFV in LGBTI relationships. The seven-minute film highlights the early warning signs of DFV as well as less overt

**WE'RE HERE  
TO HELP LGBTI  
PEOPLE WHO HAVE  
EXPERIENCED  
DOMESTIC AND  
FAMILY VIOLENCE**

Below: Scenes from the short film Red Flags, part of our Say It Out Loud initiative





forms of control such as jealousy and possessiveness, threatening to 'out' their partner, sexual coercion and threatening self-harm. The key message in Red Flags is 'abuse is abuse in any relationship'. As well as being featured on Say It Out Loud, the film was also made available on YouTube and Facebook, garnering more than 16,000 views in the first two months. Its reach was further extended after being featured on Triple J's breakfast news and the Hack program, as well as Radio National.

### PERPETRATOR INTERVENTION

In partnership with Relationships Australia NSW, we secured funding from Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) in December to tailor, pilot and evaluate perpetrator intervention groups as well as survivor support groups for the LGBTI community. This two-year research project will contribute to what is known about effective

DFV intervention programs for LGBTI clients and how best to evaluate them. Part of the project features therapeutic groups for perpetrators of DFV which aim to help them change their patterns of abusive behavior, as well as ways to explore and evaluate new support structures for survivors of LGBTI DFV.

### OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- We continue to build the capacity of mainstream services who work with the LGBTI community so they are better able to understand and meet their needs. Throughout the year, we delivered 27 presentations and workshops to professionals working with both victims and perpetrators of DFV across NSW and Victoria.
- We continue to work closely with other community organisations to address DFV in LGBTI communities. ACON is a member of the NSW LGBTIQ DFV Interagency, the NSW Men's Behaviour Change (MBC) Workforce Development Standards

Committee, the NSW Sexual Assault Strategy, the NSW Women's Alliance and 1800RESPECT's advisory committee. These networks inform improved understanding of the needs of LGBTI communities including current trends, service gaps and sector changes.

- Our team in the Northern Rivers supported the development of a local project promoting the inclusion of transgender and gender diverse people in domestic and family violence services. It included a poster and a community referral resource featuring the faces and words of local transgender and gender diverse people.
- We partnered with Relationships Australia in a pilot Safer Pathways DFV program for male victims. Funded by Justice NSW the program provides information, referrals, counselling, and advocacy for gay, bisexual and trans men in NSW. From December to July, 20 clients were supported through this program receiving 69 occasions of service.



## HERE FOR REGIONAL NSW



**WE'RE HERE TO  
HELP LGBTI PEOPLE  
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HIV IN REGIONAL  
NSW TAKE  
CONTROL OF THEIR  
HEALTH**



We're here to help LGBTI people and people with HIV in regional NSW take control of their health by providing a range of local services and supporting a variety of local community groups. We have offices in the Hunter and Northern Rivers regions, with outreach services operating across Western and Southern NSW.

### ACON NORTHERN RIVERS

ACON Northern Rivers works with partners and services throughout Northern NSW and the Mid North Coast local health districts. Among

our highlights this year was the Tropical Fruits New Year's Festival in Lismore. It's the busiest health promotion event for ACON Northern Rivers, where over 13,000 safe sex packs, 500 Play Packs and over 1500 health promotion posters/fans were distributed. Our Ending HIV campaign ensured key messages around condom use, PrEP, sexual health testing and treating HIV were prominent and visible.

Another achievement was the launch of an LGBTI domestic and family violence resource, 'Opening Doors: Promoting the Inclusion of Transgender and Gender Diverse People in Domestic and Family Violence Services'. The project, which produced a poster featuring local community members, aimed to raise awareness and support for transgender and gender diverse people in the Northern Rivers region experiencing domestic and/or family violence.

Our annual rural retreat for gay men with HIV in March, affectionately known as the 'Retreat' by many gay men in the Northern Rivers, was a huge success. Twelve participants attended the event, receiving important health education and information.

### ACON HUNTER

ACON Hunter works with partners and services throughout the Hunter New England, Central Coast, Western and lower Mid North Coast local health districts. One of the major achievements of the year was the successful launch of the Hunter New England Test Often Campaign. Launched in September, the campaign was a collaboration between the Hunter New England Local Health District and ACON, and continued on from the well-received Test Often campaign of 2015. The campaign aimed to increase HIV testing rates within the region, and featured local people who gave their time and voices to convey strong messages across the rural towns and cities throughout Hunter New England.

This year, ACON Hunter was proud to sponsor the inaugural Pokolbin Pride

This page: Central West Pride March and Festival in Dubbo (top); ACON at Tropical Fruits in Lismore (bottom). Opposite page (top to bottom): Test Often launch in Tamworth; ACON at Broken Hill Festival in Broken Hill; Test Often launch in Armidale; and ACON at Pokolbin Pride.





Festival in the Hunter Valley, which provided us with a great opportunity to engage with the local Hunter Valley community and deliver important health promotion messages.

## REGIONAL OUTREACH

ACON's Regional Outreach team works with partners and services throughout southern and far-west NSW, including Illawarra Shoalhaven, Southern NSW, South Western Sydney, Murrumbidgee, Albury Wodonga and Far West Local Health Districts. We returned to Broken Hill in September for the second Broken Hill Festival, offering free HIV and STI screening, talking with festival goers on HIV and sexual health and handing out over 1000 safe sex packs, resources and campaign materials. We also took part in Border Pride Fair Day in November. We partnered with local services and LGBTI groups in the Albury Wodonga region to deliver a warm and inclusive event for our communities and their families. We also provided a pop up HIV and STI screening service and a special Fair Day Doggywood.

## OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- We delivered outreach, supplied resources for LGBTI communities and people with HIV and supported local service providers in Albury-Wodonga, Batemans Bay, Bega, Bowral, Broken Hill, Cooma, Dareton, Deniliquin, Goulburn, Griffith, Jindabyne, Narooma, Nowra, Moruya, Mittagong, Queanbeyan, Temora, Tumut, Wagga Wagga, Wilcannia, Wollongong and Young.
- We facilitated peer sexual health education workshops in Albury, Broken Hill, Griffith, Nowra, Wagga Wagga and Wollongong including at the Queer Collaborations Conference at the University of Wollongong.
- We had peer volunteers who helped distribute campaign materials, resources and nearly 1000 safe sex packs over two days during Camp It, an event held in Ballina.
- We delivered LGBTI inclusive practice training programs for

those working in alcohol and other drugs, disability, mental health, homelessness, community health and aged care in Broken Hill, Dapto, Griffith, Deniliquin, Nowra, Wagga Wagga and Wollongong.

- We collaborated with Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network and The Gender Centre to co-host a forum in Wagga Wagga for GPs, allied health practitioners and specialists to improve their capacity to initiate transition related healthcare for their trans and gender diverse clients, with a particular focus on strengthening GP confidence to prescribe transition hormones using an informed consent model.
- We supported emerging and existing LGBTI social and support groups in Albury-Wodonga, Bega, Broken Hill, Deniliquin, Griffith, Nowra, Wagga Wagga and Wollongong.
- We provided HIV and sexual health outreach using geo-locating hook up apps across Southern and Far West NSW to enable regionally living gay and bisexual men to ask trained gay peer 'Sexperts' questions in a non-judgemental, sex-positive and anonymous space. The questions we typically receive relate to PrEP, HIV and STI risk, addressing HIV-related anxiety and where to get a test, and the service always receives extremely positive feedback.
- All of our regional teams worked with local LGBTI rights advocates to help raise the visibility of rainbow families, as well as tackle LGBTI-related prejudice as part of a range of activities to mark the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOT) on Wednesday, May 17. For the fifth year running we provided a small grants program to support local groups and individuals, including many in rural and regional NSW to host an event for the important day.
- We attended four local NAIDOC events in the Northern Rivers and the Hunter regions, providing health promotion support, engaged with the local community and delivered health resources and information.

# HERE FOR ADVOCACY & RESEARCH

We're here to work with legislators, policymakers, researchers and service providers to help them understand and address the health needs of LGBTI people and people with HIV.

## PREP

This year has been important for advocacy for the inclusion of PrEP on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). In order for the community to receive the full benefit of PrEP, it needs to be accessible in an affordable manner and the PBS is the primary mechanism for achieving this.

After a rejection from the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) in August, ACON supported the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) to work with manufacturers to ensure a refined submission would be submitted. At time of writing, PBAC's decision on the subsequent applications has been deferred.

We continued to work with the NSW Ministry of Health and other partners to ensure that EPIC-NSW would remain open for recruitment so that NSW would see the benefit of reduced HIV transmission.

## POLICY SUBMISSIONS AND POSITION STATEMENT

Throughout the year ACON made policy submissions across a diverse range of fields, including listing of PrEP on the PBS, the NSW Public Health Act review, reducing homelessness, improving LGBTI content in the PDHPE curriculum, health impacts of marriage equality, voluntary assisted dying and human trafficking prevention. We prepared discussion papers on HIV prevention among Asian gay men, immediate uptake of HIV treatment, and our organisational response to chemsex.

We conducted advocacy on proposed criminal offences around STI transmission, stealthing, non-consensual sharing of intimate images and mandatory testing of



people whose body fluids come into contact with emergency services.

We provided input into the NSW Tobacco Strategy, NSW Women's Strategy and Fifth National Mental Health Care Plan and produced a Health Outcome Strategy on Ageing. We continue to advocate for improved inclusion of gender and sexuality indicators in data collection.

## MARRIAGE EQUALITY

Marriage equality is primarily a matter of ensuring the LGBTI relationships are shown the same dignity and respect as other relationships. However, it is also clear that when a group in society receives unequal treatment this can lead to negative health outcomes.

This year ACON, in partnership with the Centre for Social Research in Health at University of NSW (UNSW), developed a literature review on the health benefits of marriage equality and the negative health implications of inequality in this area.

We wrote a submission to

**WE'RE HERE TO  
WORK WITH  
LEGISLATORS,  
POLICYMAKERS,  
RESEARCHERS  
AND SERVICE  
PROVIDERS  
TO HELP THEM  
UNDERSTAND AND  
ADDRESS THE  
HEALTH NEEDS OF  
LGBTI PEOPLE AND  
PEOPLE WITH HIV**

This page: ACON Research Manager Johan Kolstee collecting responses for the Sydney Gay Community Periodic Survey at Fair Day. Opposite page: A sample of ACON discussion papers and resources we produced this year



the Senate Inquiry into a draft Marriage Equality Bill and we have assisted Australians 4 Equality in keeping our community up to date with progress towards this change.

## RESEARCH

ACON continues to work closely with researchers to better understand our communities health needs and to develop effective responses. By representing our communities on research teams and through our Research Review Ethics Committee we ensure that the research we engage our communities with is inclusive and beneficial. Through our involvement with key research projects in the HIV space, such as the HIV prevention revolution project, the PrEPARE project and EPIC-NSW we have been part of innovative work that is helping to end HIV transmission in NSW. We have also commenced new research projects this year in the LGBTI health space, for example in collaboration with Relationships Australia NSW we have started a project to develop and test new models of support for both the perpetrators and victims of domestic and family violence (DFV) within LGBTIQ relationships.

## SGCPS

The Sydney Gay Community Periodic Survey (SGCPS) is a critical research project for ACON which helps to inform our programs and policy work. The results allow the HIV sector to monitor changes in sexual behaviour, drug use and other key health behaviours amongst men in our communities. ACON coordinates the venue based data collection for the survey each year, engaging with over 2000 men across venues during Mardi Gras. The study is run by the Centre for Social Research in Health, a key research partner for ACON.



## OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- In partnership with Family Planning NSW and NSW Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby, we advocated for LGBTI specific programs to address school-based bullying and harassment.
- In partnership with other community-based organisations working in sexual health and blood-borne viruses, we have advocated against the introduction of mandatory testing for people whose bodily fluids come into contact with police and emergency services personnel.



# HERE FOR INCLUSION

We're here to help make the places where our community members live, work, study, play and heal more inclusive of LGBTI and HIV positive people. Through our Pride Inclusion Programs, we work with a range of employers, sporting organisation and service providers to help ensure LGBTI people and people with HIV feel included and supported.

## PRIDE IN DIVERSITY

We continued to support Australian employers in becoming more inclusive through our Pride in Diversity initiative, Australia's first and only national employer support program for all aspects of LGBTI workplace inclusion. As a member-based program, Pride in Diversity works closely with HR, diversity professionals and executives across all sectors of the Australian workforce. This year, we welcomed our 196th member, increasing our membership by 36% on the previous year.

We also recorded growth in participation in Pride in Diversity's Australian Workplace Equality Index, an annual benchmarking tool that allows employers to measure their LGBTI inclusion practices against their sector. The number of employers taking part in the AWEI increased by 36.5%, rising from 85 in 2016 to 116 in 2017. There are now over 16,000 employees participating in the annual employee survey accompanying the AWEI, up 25% on the previous year.

The work of employers in making their workplaces more LGBTI inclusive is celebrated annually at our LGBTI Inclusion Awards. This year, 629 people were at the event, which was held at Doltone House in Sydney, a 6% increase in attendance on the previous year. Participation also rose for our LGBTI Inclusion Conference, recording a 7% rise in delegates from 509 in 2015 to 546 in 2016.

## PRIDE IN SPORT

Our Pride in Sport initiative is Australia's first and only sporting inclusion program specifically designed to assist national and state



sporting organisations and clubs with the inclusion of LGBTI employees, players, volunteers and spectators. Since its launch in 2016, the program has nearly doubled its membership, rising from 7 to 13 members.

This year, Pride in Sport also released its first index. The national benchmarking framework provides all sporting organisations the opportunity to have their LGBTI related initiatives, programs and policies reviewed, measured and monitored. The inaugural index has a participation rate of 10 national sporting organisations alongside 18 award nominations.

## PRIDE IN HEALTH + WELLBEING

To complement our Pride in Diversity and Pride in Sport initiatives, this year we launched, Pride in Health + Wellbeing. The national program provides year-round support in the provision of LGBTI inclusive services for organisations working in the health, wellbeing and human services sectors. Eight foundation members were signed up prior to the launch of Pride in Health + Wellbeing including Uniting, Flourish Australia, ViiV Healthcare, Murrumbidgee PHN, Reliant Healthcare, NurseWatch, Lifeline Australia and Medibank.

## TRAINING & CONSULTING

Our Training and Consulting program, launched in 2014, assists organisations with LGBTI inclusion and awareness with customised training and consultancy packages. Through this program, we work with all types of organisations regardless of size or industry.

This year, we delivered LGBTI inclusive practice training days to

organisations and community groups across regional and rural NSW. These training sessions provide a broad range of health workers with a valuable opportunity to develop their skills and capacity, ensuring the LGBTI community is provided with culturally appropriate care and support. Training programs were delivered for those working in alcohol and other drugs, disability, mental health, community health and aged care in Sydney, Dubbo, Bathurst, Armidale, Tamworth, Orange, Port Macquarie, Coffs Harbour, Broken Hill, Dapto, Griffith, Deniliquin, Nowra, Wagga Wagga and Wollongong.

## LGBTI AGED CARE TRAINING

This year, over 2800 workers across Australia enrolled in our LGBTI Aged Care Training e-Learning Module. This module has been developed and delivered by ACON as part of the national training initiative funded by the Australian Government, through the National LGBTI Health Alliance.

This initiative represents an important step towards meeting the needs of LGBTI seniors by supporting the aged care sector workforce to provide inclusive health and support services.

## OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- The Australian LGBTI Recruitment Guide moved from a hard copy to an online website renamed LGBTI Inclusive Employers ([www.inclusivemployers.com.au](http://www.inclusivemployers.com.au)) featuring Pride Inclusion Program members and those achieving a minimum of Bronze standard within the AWEI.

- The 2016 Annual Publication Anti-Discrimination Law & Practice – A legal guide to LGBTI workplace inclusion was launched with the pro bono assistance of Corrs Chambers Westgarth.

- On Wear It Purple Day, the Sydney skyline lit up with the Pride in Diversity logo on the Bloomberg Building in Sydney in recognition of the achievements of the program and the AWEI Awards.

This page: Foundation members of Pride in Health + Wellbeing. Opposite page: Our LGBTI Inclusion Awards in May at Doltone House in Sydney







# HERE FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We're here to bring our community together by providing opportunities for people to get involved, connect, contribute and celebrate.

## VOLUNTEERS

Our work and achievements in improving the health and wellbeing of our communities would not be possible without the help of our amazing volunteers. This year, we had over 500 volunteers assist us in various roles across ACON including on our board, delivering safe sex education programs, packing safe sex packs, providing care and support services, helping us run community events and raising much-needed funds. We are extremely grateful for the contributions of our volunteers and, each year, we thank them with a special event in Sydney during National Volunteers Week in May. Around 200 volunteers and supporters attended this year's event.

## GLAAD GLOBAL VOICES

As part of the Mardi Gras Film Festival, we presented a series of events that explored LGBTI representation in the media, including a panel discussion and an industry roundtable. Both events featured Ross Murray and Ray Bradford, two directors of GLAAD, the influential US-based non-profit agency that works to ensure LGBTI people are represented fairly and inclusively in the media. The panel event, which also featured author Benjamin Law, comedian Jordan Raskopoulos and presenter Fenella Kerenbone, generated a robust and thought-provoking discussion, while the industry summit was well-attended with representatives from some of Australia's biggest media organisations including FOXTEL, ABC, SBS, Bauer Media, Fairfax and the Australian Radio Network.

## HONOUR AWARDS

Founded in 2006, the Honour Awards is an annual event that celebrates outstanding contributions and achievements



## WE'RE HERE TO BRING OUR COMMUNITY TOGETHER

This page (from top): The 2016 Honour Awards; Red Ribbon Street Appeal, the Sydney Candlelight Memorial. Centre: ACON at the Mardi Gras Parade. Opposite page (from top): ACON's Doggywood at Fair Day; volunteers at Bingay; GLAAD Global Voices panel at Giant Dwarf

within NSW's LGBTI community. Held this year at the Ivy Ballroom in Sydney, the awards are also a gala fundraiser for ACON and LGBTI charity Aurora. More than 300 people attended the event to honour the work of 34 individuals and organisations across the media, entertainment, business, community, health, visual arts and youth sectors. Over \$40,000 was raised for community initiatives supported by ACON and Aurora.

## WORLD AIDS DAY

World AIDS Day (December 1) provides us with a unique opportunity to honour those we





have lost to an AIDS related illness, educate people on how we can end HIV transmission in NSW by 2020 and raise money for programs and services that are vital to ending HIV. This year, our World AIDS Day-related activities included our statewide Ending HIV Red Ribbon Appeal, which saw hundreds of volunteers take to the streets of the Sydney's CBD and Inner West, as well as regional centres such as Lismore, Wollongong, Albury and Newcastle, to sell Red Ribbon merchandise. We also held film screenings, bucket collections at theatres/events and supported a series of special benefit events and memorial ceremonies throughout



NSW. Across our own events, as well as others we supported, we raised more than \$81,000.

#### SYDNEY GAY AND LESBIAN MARDI GRAS

The annual Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Festival provides us with a valuable opportunity to promote key health messages and engage with community members through a range of activations and events. At this year's Fair Day, we celebrated the role of pets in improving one's health and wellbeing by producing the much-loved Doggywood program. Our entry in the Mardi Gras Parade,

which featured over 300 volunteers, allowed us to promote our new How Do You Do It? campaign, as well as showcase ACON to the hundreds and thousands of spectators on the streets and watching at home. And we produced, presented and/or supported a range of events that traversed various categories across the season, including Welcome to Breastville, GLAAD Global Voices and An Evening With Greg Louganis and other Sporting Greats.

#### OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- We provided important health and safe sex information and resources at the Mardi Gras Party in March.
- This year, our Parramatta Pride Picnic was the biggest yet, attracting around 700 attendees to the River Foreshore Reserve in late October. Now in its 10th year, the picnic is among a range of events we produce to support the health and wellbeing of LGBTI communities in Western Sydney.
- We continued to present our monthly bingo fundraiser Bingay. Over 1200 people attended the much-loved event at the Midnight Shift and more than \$20,000 was raised.
- In partnership with Queer Screen, we presented The Queen of Ireland, a film starring drag activist Panti Bliss, to promote the film's message of LGBTI inclusion, and support Australian Marriage Equality.
- We teamed up with LGBTI social group Gay4Play Social Adventures to present a Eurovision party in May. The event attracted over 200 people and raised more than \$800.
- In partnership with Positive Life NSW, we produced an event to commemorate International Candlelight Memorial Day in May. Over 150 people attended the event at the Eternity Playhouse in Darlinghurst in Sydney.
- We provided office accommodation, meeting spaces and small grants for a range of health, sporting and cultural organisations which work in our community.

HERE FOR

# ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We're here to build ACON's operational capacity, effectiveness and profile. We do this through marketing and communications, planning, evaluation and knowledge management, fundraising, and our finance, human resources and information technology services.

ACON's Corporate Services team played a key role in ensuring our operational effectiveness. This was achieved through supporting our people and improving our workplace, providing sound financial management, driving process and efficiency improvements and implementing new technology initiatives. It also included enhancing communications with stakeholders, increasing our profile and generating much-needed funds through events and fundraising.

This year, we strengthened income diversification by increasing the proportion of income from self-generated sources including Pride Inclusion Programs, fundraising initiatives and Commonwealth grants.

Our fundraising programs – general donations, tax appeals, regular giving and bequests – raised over \$280,000.

We also operationalised new procurement systems enhancing the efficiency and timeliness of our accounts which, coupled with our real time profit and loss reporting, allowed us to achieve a 1.8% positive variance for the 2016/17 budget overall.

Other highlights this year include:

## OUR PEOPLE

- We continued to grow our team to deliver our HIV prevention, HIV support and LGBTI health programs and services. This year, we undertook 33 recruitments and contracted 18 new staff.
- We continued to offer our organisational wide learning program, facilitating over 400 hours of professional learning and development to staff. Our annual scholarship program allowed four staff to participate in their

choice of professional and career development program.

- We held our annual staff development conference, Big Days In, where staff came together for a two-day summit to hear about the latest developments in HIV prevention, HIV support and LGBTI health, as well as learn about best practice in service delivery and community engagement for organisations in the community/not-for-profit sector.
- We achieved high results in employee satisfaction with 76% of staff reporting positive engagement with the organisation.
- We established a working group to head efforts to produce a Reconciliation Action Plan.
- We maintained all work, health and safety compliance obligations and achieved zero workers compensation claims.

## DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

- We implemented a number of technological initiatives to improve organisational performance for both existing and future ACON applications including increasing our internet bandwidth, upgrading our virtual server infrastructure and rolling out equipment as part of our mobile technology strategy.
- We commenced work in implementing a new electronic document records management system and dashboard reporting solution.
- We continued to embed our client service database system Penelope to support our counselling and home based care services. The ongoing rollout of this system to other areas will enhance an organisation-wide data management and reporting system.

## PLANNING, MONITORING & EVALUATION

- Our annual client satisfaction survey yielded high results with all our direct client services – HIV and LGBTI counselling, care coordination and substance support – rating very highly among respondents. In



**WE'RE HERE TO  
BUILD ACON'S  
OPERATIONAL  
CAPACITY,  
EFFECTIVENESS  
AND PROFILE**

Above: The ACON team at ACON's annual staff development conference Big Days In in October.





most cases, ACON scored 9/10 on all measures and feedback about ACON and its staff was extremely positive.

- We continued our focus in planning, monitoring and evaluation processes, which gives us the ability to measure program results, ensure accountability to our community and stakeholders, and provides the basis for continuous quality improvement in all our work.

#### MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

- We continued to increase ACON's profile and extend the reach of our health promotion messages through our media activities. We recorded

more than 800 mentions of ACON in community and mainstream media, ranging from our announcements, initiatives and responses to emerging issues to our programs and services, reaching an estimated audience of 117 million.

- We continued to deliver a range of external and internal email newsletters to keep supporters and staff up to date with ACON's work and activities. Our external digital subscribers continued to grow across our mailing lists, increasing by 18%.

- We managed ACON's suite of ten websites including ACON Health, Ending HIV, Emen8 and Say It Out Loud. This year, our

corporate website traffic grew by 5%, attracting over 90,000 unique visitors.

- We increased our engagement on social media through various channels and platforms. Across 25 Facebook pages, followers increased by 28% while Twitter activity grew by 169%. We also recorded strong engagement on Instagram with over 3,000 followers across four accounts.

- We extended the reach of our health promotion and community engagement messages through video. Across Facebook, YouTube and Vimeo, we recorded over 1,120,000 views on various ACON campaigns, corporate and social marketing videos.

# HERE FOR HEALTH

[www.acon.org.au](http://www.acon.org.au) —

## The Annual Financial Statements FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017





## ACON HEALTH LIMITED

ABN 38 136 883 915

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These financial statements are the consolidated financial statements of the consolidated entity consisting of ACON Health Limited and its subsidiary, AIDS Council of New South Wales Incorporated. The financial statements are presented in the Australian currency.

ACON Health Limited is a public company limited by guarantee, incorporated and domiciled in Australia. Its registered office and principal place of business is:

414 Elizabeth Street  
Surry Hills NSW 2010  
Australia

A description of the nature of the consolidated entity's operations and its principal activities is included in the directors report on pages 46 to 51 which is not part of these financial statements.

The financial statements were authorised for issue by the directors on 20 September 2017. The directors have the power to amend and reissue the financial statement.

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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### ACON HEALTH LIMITED

*The directors present their report on the consolidated entity (referred to hereafter as the group) consisting of ACON Health Limited and its controlled entity, the AIDS Council of New South Wales Incorporated, for the year ended 30 June 2017.*

#### DIRECTORS

The following persons were directors of ACON Health Limited during the whole of the financial year and up to the date of this report:

- Andrew Purchas
- Benjamin Bavinton
- Christian Dunk
- Julie Mooney-Somers
- Justin Koonin
- Louisa Degenhardt
- Manda Hatter
- Richard Lee
- Steven Berveling
- Robert Stirling was director from the beginning of the financial year until resignation on 3rd November 2016
- Atari Metcalf was appointed as director on 31st January 2017



## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

### ACON BOARD



**Justin Koonin, President, BSc (Hons), PhD, GAICD**

Justin is a former convenor of the NSW Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby, having worked within LGBTI community organisations for the past decade. He is trained as a mathematician, and currently works as an investment analyst. He has also worked as a postdoctoral research associate (at the University of Sydney), and as a consultant in the areas of predictive analytics and data science.

**Andrew Purchas OAM, Vice President, BEc, LLB**

Andrew has over 20 years of experience as a senior executive in legal and financial services including roles as a senior associate with Corrs Chambers Westgarth and Chief Security Officer for Westpac Banking Corporation. He has significant commercial experience in business process redesign, change management, risk management and business development. He currently holds a number of senior roles in technology start ups. Andrew has had a long involvement with sports administration and is founder of the Sydney Convicts Rugby Club, Chairman of International Gay Rugby and Co-Founder of the Pride in Sport Index.



**Steven Berveling, SJD, BSc, LLB**

Steven is a barrister specialising in town planning and environmental law. He has been HIV+ since May 1996, and lives life to the full. He is an avid competitive cyclist, and is training to become the 7th Australian and 1st HIV+ person to complete solo the Race Across America, to confirm that stigma and discrimination against HIV+ people is totally unwarranted. Steven speaks regularly to a range of groups about living with HIV.

**Julie Mooney-Somers, BSc, GradCertEdStud, PhD**

Julie is a Senior Lecturer in Qualitative Research in Health at Sydney Health Ethics at the University of Sydney where she teaches on the Master of Public Health. Her research examines equity in health and health services in relation to sexuality, gender, indigenous status, and youth. She has been the joint coordinator of SWASH, the longest running regular survey of lesbian, bisexual and queer women's health, since 2009.



**Christian Dunk, BA (IR) Hons**

Christian is a mentor with the ANU Alumni Mentoring Program and has previously been a member of the Postgraduate Coursework Committee of the University of Sydney where he completed a Masters program.

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

### ACON BOARD



#### **Louisa Degenhardt, BA (Hons), MPpsychology (CLINICAL), PhD**

Louisa joined the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC), Faculty of Medicine, UNSW in 1998 and has worked across a wide range of projects examining the epidemiology of illicit drug use, comorbid mental health problems, and illicit drug surveillance. From 2001 to 2008 she established and expanded national drug surveillance and strategic early warning systems across Australia. Louisa has been conducting increasingly diverse epidemiological studies and continues to work with WHO and UNAIDS examining epidemiology of illicit drug use and associated health risks across the globe.

#### **Richard Lee, BCom, Major Marketing UNSW**

Richard is the founder and director of Brandview, a brand strategy and marketing consultancy that has shaped the positioning and stories of well-known brands in Australia and around the world. Core skills are research & analytics, brand positioning strategy, brand story frameworks, Go To Market strategy, cultural change strategy and creative idea generation.



#### **Benjamin Bavinton, BA (Hons), MPH, PhD**

Benjamin has worked at the Kirby Institute, Faculty of Medicine, UNSW Sydney since 2010 and is currently a postdoctoral research fellow. His research focuses on the behavioural, biomedical and epidemiological aspects of HIV prevention among gay and bisexual men in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region. Both in Australia and internationally, he has worked in HIV prevention for over a decade in the areas of community education, policy, capacity development, and research. He worked at ACON in gay men's peer education from 2004 to 2010.

#### **Atari Metcalf, BSc (Health Promotion)**

Atari brings over a decade of experience in health promotion research, policy and strategy, specialising in e-health services, youth health and suicide prevention. He is a former board director of Suicide Prevention Australia and has worked in senior research roles for ReachOut Australia and as an analyst on national inquiries into asylum seeker, transgender and intersex health and human rights for the Australian Human Rights Commission. Atari also helped establish WA's first transgender youth peer support and advocacy groups between 2002-2006, and later served as co-chair of Twenty10 incorporating NSW Gay and Lesbian Counselling Services, where he remains a board director. Atari is currently studying graduate medicine with the goal of continuing to promote human rights and health as a future medical doctor.



#### **Manda Hatter**

Manda is a passionate television industry professional who started 30 years ago as one of the first female camera operators in NSW and since then has worked across all facets of TV, including project managing morning TV, general broadcasting, production and the past 15 years spent in senior leadership roles. Outside of her leadership roles in the television industry, Manda has been involved in the LGBTIQ community for almost two decades. Since 1997, Manda has held the roles of Secretary, Ride Leader and President (2014 to 2016) of Dykes on Bikes, championing its focus on diversity and inclusiveness. She has worked with various organisations to help grow Dykes on Bikes through her connections within the community. In recent years, Dykes on Bikes has expanded its membership, supporters, allies, friends and impact.



## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

### MEETINGS OF DIRECTORS

*The number of meetings of the Company's board of directors during the year, and the number of meetings attended by each director were:*

#### **ACON HEALTH LTD - MEETINGS OF DIRECTORS** **FROM 1 JULY 2016 - 30 JUNE 2017**

BOARD MEMBER	MEETINGS ELIGIBLE TO ATTEND	MEETINGS ATTENDED
Atari Metcalf	5	5
Andrew Purchas	11	8
Benjamin Bavinton	11	9
Christian Dunk	11	10
Julie Mooney-Somers	11	10
Justin Koonin	11	11
Louisa Degenhardt	11	7
Manda Hatter	11	10
Richard Lee	11	9
Robert Stirling	4	3
Steven Berveling	11	10

# DIRECTOR'S REPORT

## PRINCIPLE ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES

### ENDING HIV TRANSMISSION AMONG GAY MEN AND OTHER HOMOSEXUALLY ACTIVE MEN BY:

- Increasing the knowledge of gay men and other men who have sex with men about when to seek a HIV and STI test.
- Using innovative, targeted engagement strategies to motivate gay men and other men who have sex with men to test more regularly.
- Increasing the number of HIV positive gay men who understand the benefits of accessing treatment earlier.
- Sustaining the safe sex knowledge of gay men and men who have sex with men utilising both condom and noncondom based risk reduction strategies.
- Advocating for better access to home-based or self-administered HIV testing and access to Pre Exposure Prophylaxis for those who would most benefit.
- Reducing psychosocial barriers to testing and treatment uptake for people who are newly diagnosed through education, counselling and peer support.
- Ensure the range of HIV Health Promotion programs continues to be relevant and useful for people with HIV.
- Developing a HIV Health Promotion Strategy focussing on post diagnosis support, living well with HIV and planning for healthy ageing.

### PROMOTING THE HEALTH THROUGHOUT LIFE OF LGBTI PEOPLE AND PEOPLE WITH HIV BY:

- Providing HIV Care and Support services including:
  - Counselling
  - Enhanced Primary Care
  - Community Support Network
  - Newly Diagnosed Service
- Reviewing our current care and support programs to ensure they continue to meet the needs of people with HIV.
- Intensifying our focus on immediate post diagnosis care and support to prevent infection rates and improve the health outcomes for newly diagnosed.
- Enhancing our intake and case management processes to ensure person centred, tailored responses.
- Enhancing our treatments advice and adherence support capacity to educate people with HIV about the benefits of earlier and increased treatment uptake.
- Developing programs to address the health areas that have the most negative health impact on people living with HIV, e.g Enhanced Primary Care.

- Addressing substance support use co-morbidities through counselling from the substance use service, Needle Syringe Programs, harm minimisation support and referrals to drug and alcohol treatment services.
- Addressing the health disparities experienced by the LGBTI community and to reduce the impacts of negative health determinants including:
  - Alcohol and Other Drugs
  - Mental Health and Wellbeing
  - Smoking
  - Homophobic and Transphobic Violence
  - Healthy Ageing and Aged Care
  - Domestic and Family Violence

### CONTINUING TO STRENGTHEN ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY AND SUSTAINABILITY BY:

- Ensuring our infrastructure and systems enable staff to effectively deliver programs and services to rural and remote NSW.
- Investigating and implementing new partnerships, fee for service models and social enterprise approaches to diversify our funding base.
- Exploring opportunities to grow discretionary revenue through fundraising, new grants and fee for service.
- Continuing to invest in building our data collection, analysis evaluation and knowledge management capacity.
- Building the research capacity of our staff through seeding grants and partnerships with academic institutions.
- Continuing to build our presence, capacity and effectiveness in the digital space to increase reach and impact.



# DIRECTOR'S REPORT

## PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES

### ADVOCATING AND PROMOTING SOCIAL INCLUSION BY:

- Providing LGBTI employees within Australian workplaces targeted initiatives via education and benchmarking and through the Pride in Diversity Program.
- Establishing Partnerships with government, other NGO's, health care providers, researchers and affected communities.
- Ensuring all direct LGBTI services are sensitive to the needs of and available to all of our communities,
- Ensuring all of our training packages for service providers are inclusive of our populations,
- Ensuring our advocacy work in the areas of discrimination and human rights are inclusive of the needs and views of all our communities and is conducted in consultation with relevant stakeholders,
- Developing strategies, in collaboration with key partners to maximise inclusiveness and reach of health promotion strategies.
- Developing 'population specific' communication strategies to ensure our programs are visible to all of the communities they are intended to reach,

### PERFORMANCE MEASURES (KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS)

- A decrease in HIV infections among gay men and other MSM in NSW.
- An increase in reported levels of health and wellbeing by people with HIV.
- A reduction in the number of people in our communities who experience negative health and other outcomes as a result drug and alcohol use.
- An increase in reported levels of health and wellbeing by women in our communities.
- An increase in reported levels of health and wellbeing by older people in our communities.
- An increase in ACON's involvement with LGBTI health and HIV/AIDS policy and programs delivery at the local, national and international levels.
- Increase the capacity of ACON to effectively use and manage its resources.

### REVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Operations for the year ended 30 June 2017 resulted in an operating surplus of \$645,880 (30 June 2016: operating deficit of \$79,276). Set out below is an analysis of the result for the

year adjusted for the effects of the Accounting Standard which recognises government grants on receipt rather than on a performance basis. The Directors believe this methodology is a fairer reflection of the result for the year and track this amount for their own reporting purposes.

	2017 \$	2016 \$
Operating result	645,880	(79,276)
Adjustment of grant receipts on a performance basis	(430,279)	348,495
Adjusted result	215,601	269,219

### APPLICATION OF FUNDS

The net surplus obtained from fundraising activities was applied to the purposes of ACON Health Limited as described under 'principal activities' above.

### WINDING UP

Each Member undertakes to contribute to the assets of ACON Health, if it is wound up while they are a Member, or within one year afterwards, an amount of money not exceeding the limit of liability of \$2 at the time of winding up the debts and liabilities of ACON Health exceed its assets.

### MATTERS SUBSEQUENT TO THE END OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR

No other matter or circumstance has arisen since 30 June 2017 that has significantly affected, or may significantly affect:

1. The Group's operations in future financial years, or
2. The results of those operations in future financial year
3. The Group's state of affairs in future financial years.

### LIKELY DEVELOPMENTS AND EXPECTED RESULTS OF OPERATIONS

Information on likely developments in the operations of the Group and the expected results of operations have not been included in this Directors' Report because the Directors believe it would be likely to result in unreasonable prejudice to the Group.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Board.

Dated at Sydney this 20th September 2017



Justin Koonin  
President



Andrew Purchas  
Vice President

# CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS & OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

INCOME	NOTES	2017	2016
GRANTS:			
NSW Department of Health		10,637,700	10,444,301
NSW Department of Community Services		435,149	391,870
Local Health Districts		2,367,147	714,189
Other grants			
Conferences		546,680	740,987
Fundraising	14(a)	1,279,812	487,428
Interest received/receivable		189,519	170,434
Membership		3,188	2,969
Fee for service		1,075,199	451,689
Rent received		251,933	249,237
Sale of vitamins		10,087	14,014
Sale of materials		33,003	38,801
Other Income		447,163	508,510
<b>TOTAL REVENUE FROM OPERATIONS</b>		<b>17,276,580</b>	<b>14,214,429</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Salaries & associated costs		8,614,895	8,012,766
Campaigns & Education		2,780,816	1,663,119
Rent and rates		1,754,656	1,695,758
Depreciation – plant & equipment		337,672	497,280
Amortisation – lease incentive		150,500	150,500
Building maintenance		247,868	261,112
Communications		204,774	183,544
Travel and representation		391,273	355,382
Donations given		57,659	51,009
Events and activities		485,064	392,355
Administrative costs		1,565,846	1,001,794
Cost of goods sold		39,676	29,086
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>16,630,700</b>	<b>14,293,705</b>
<b>NET SURPLUS/DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR (BEFORE TAX)</b>		<b>645,880</b>	<b>(79,276)</b>
<b>TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR</b>		<b>645,880</b>	<b>(79,276)</b>
Operating surplus of ACON Health Limited			

The above Consolidated Statement of profit and loss should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes



# CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS AT 30 JUNE 2017

CURRENT ASSETS	NOTES	2017	2016
Cash and cash equivalents	4	6,731,808	5,261,260
Receivables	5	380,882	589,978
Inventories	6	4,101	3,696
Prepayments		83,898	94,305
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>7,200,689</b>	<b>5,949,239</b>
NON-CURRENT ASSETS	NOTES	2017	2016
Other Financial Assets		25,300	22,000
Plant & equipment and lease incentive	7	1,320,770	1,714,075
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>1,346,070</b>	<b>1,736,075</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>8,546,759</b>	<b>7,685,314</b>
CURRENT LIABILITIES	NOTES	2017	2016
Trade and other payables	8	1,346,351	953,651
Employee entitlements	9	1,354,226	1,228,966
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>2,700,577</b>	<b>2,182,617</b>
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	NOTES	2017	2016
Deferred lease liability	10	388,792	689,763
Total Non-current Liabilities		388,792	689,763
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>3,089,369</b>	<b>2,872,380</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>5,457,390</b>	<b>4,812,934</b>
ACCUMULATED FUNDS	NOTES	2017	2016
Retained surplus at the end of the year	16	4,458,746	4,028,455
Funds Reserve		966,824	751,235
Revaluation reserve		31,820	31,820
<b>Total accumulated funds</b>		<b>5,457,390</b>	<b>4,811,510</b>

The above Consolidated Statement of Financial Position should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

## CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN STAKEHOLDERS' FUNDS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017	RETAINED SURPLUS	REVALUATION RESERVE	FUNDS RESERVE	TOTAL
Total stakeholder funds - beginning of financial year	4,028,455	31,820	751,235	4,811,510
Transfer to funds reserve	(215,589)	-	215,589	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	645,880	-	-	645,880
Total stakeholder funds - end of financial year	4,458,746	31,820	966,824	5,457,390

YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016	RETAINED SURPLUS	REVALUATION RESERVE	FUNDS RESERVE	TOTAL
Total stakeholder funds - beginning of financial year	4,376,949	31,820	482,016	4,890,786
Transfer to funds reserve	(269,219)	-	269,219	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	(79,276)	-	-	(79,276)
Total transfer to Sex Workers Outreach Inc	-	-	-	-
Total stakeholder funds end of the financial year	4,028,455	31,820	751,235	4,811,510

The above Consolidated Statement of Changes in Stakeholders' Funds should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.



# CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	NOTES	2017	2016
Receipts: customers, granting bodies & fundraising (inclusive of goods & services tax)		17,087,061	14,035,994
Payments to suppliers and employees (inclusive of goods & services tax)		(15,529,238)	(13,148,272)
Interest received		189,519	170,434
<b>NET CASH INFLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>		<b>1,747,342</b>	<b>1,058,156</b>
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES	NOTES	2017	2016
Payments for property, plant & equipment		(276,794)	(224,264)
<b>NET CASH OUTFLOW FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>		<b>(276,794)</b>	<b>(224,264)</b>
<b>NET (DECREASE)/INCREASE IN CASH HELD</b>		<b>1,470,548</b>	<b>833,892</b>
<b>CASH AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR</b>		<b>5,261,260</b>	<b>4,427,368</b>
<b>CASH AT THE END OF THE YEAR</b>	4	<b>6,731,808</b>	<b>5,261,260</b>

The above Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

# NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## 1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

*The principal accounting policies adopted in the preparation of these consolidated financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated. The financial statements are for the consolidated entity consisting of ACON Health Limited and its subsidiary, AIDS Council of New South Wales Incorporated.*

### A. BASIS OF PREPARATION

These general purpose financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board and the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission Act 2012. ACON Health Limited is a not-for-profit entity for the purpose of preparing the financial statements.

#### I) COMPLIANCE WITH AUSTRALIAN ACCOUNTING STANDARDS – REDUCED DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS

The consolidated financial statements of the ACON Health Limited group comply with Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements as issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB).

#### II) NEW AND AMENDED STANDARDS ADOPTED BY THE GROUP

None of the new standards and amendments to standards that are mandatory for the first time for the financial year beginning 1 July 2017 affected any of the amounts recognised in the current period or any prior period and are not likely to affect future periods.

#### III) EARLY ADOPTION OF STANDARDS

The group has not elected to apply any pronouncements before their operative date in the annual reporting period beginning 1 July 2017.

#### IV) HISTORICAL COST CONVENTION

These financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, as modified by the revaluation of art works.

#### V) CRITICAL ACCOUNTING ESTIMATES

The preparation of financial statements requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise its judgement in the process of applying the group's accounting policies.

### B. PRINCIPLES OF CONSOLIDATION

The consolidated financial statements incorporate the assets and liabilities of the subsidiary of ACON Health Limited ("company" or "parent entity") as at 30 June 2017 and the results of the subsidiary for the year then ended. ACON Health Limited and its subsidiary together are referred to in this financial report as the group or the consolidated entity.

Subsidiaries are all entities (including special purpose entities) over which the group has the power to govern the financial and operating policies, generally accompanying a shareholding of more than one half of the voting rights. The existence and effect of potential voting rights that are currently exercisable or convertible are considered when assessing whether the group controls another entity.

Subsidiaries are fully consolidated from the date on which control is transferred to the group. They are de-consolidated from the date that control ceases.

Intercompany transactions, balances and unrealised gains on transactions between group companies are eliminated. Unrealised losses are also eliminated unless the transaction provides evidence of the impairment of the asset transferred. Accounting policies of subsidiaries have been changed where necessary to ensure consistency with the policies adopted by the group.

### C. REVENUE

Revenue is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable. Amounts disclosed as revenue are net of any rebates and amounts collected on behalf of third parties.

The group recognises revenue when the amount of revenue can be reliably measured, it is probable that future economic benefits will flow to the entity and specific criteria have been met.

### D. GOVERNMENT GRANTS

Revenue from non-reciprocal grants is recognised when the company obtains control of the funds.

### E. LEASES

Leases in which a significant portion of the risks and rewards of ownership are not transferred to the group as lessee are classified as operating leases (note 17). Payments made under operating leases (net of any incentives received from the lessor) are charged to profit or loss on a straight-line basis over the period of the lease.

Incentives received on entering into operating leases are recognised as liabilities (note 12).



# NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## F. IMPAIRMENT OF ASSETS

Assets are tested for impairment whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount may not be recoverable. An impairment loss is recognised for the amount by which the asset's carrying amount exceeds its recoverable amount. The recoverable amount is the higher of an asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use. For the purposes of assessing impairment, assets are grouped at the lowest levels for which there are separately identifiable cash inflows which are largely independent of the cash inflows from other assets or groups of assets (cash-generating units). Non-financial assets that suffered an impairment are reviewed for possible reversal of the impairment at the end of each reporting period.

## G. CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

For the purpose of presentation in the statement of cash flows, cash and cash equivalents includes cash on hand, deposits held at call with financial institutions, other short-term, highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and which are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value.

## H. TRADE RECEIVABLES

Trade receivables are recognised initially at fair value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less provision for impairment. Trade receivables are generally due for settlement within 30 days. They are presented as current assets unless collection is not expected for more than 12 months after the reporting date.

Collectability of trade debtors is reviewed on an ongoing basis. Debts which are known to be uncollectible are written off by reducing the carrying amount directly. A provision for impairment of trade receivables is used when there is objective evidence that the group will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of the receivables.

The amount of the impairment loss is recognised in profit or loss within other expenses. When a trade receivable for which an impairment allowance had been recognised becomes uncollectible in a subsequent period, it is written off against the allowance account.

## I. INVENTORIES

Inventories are represented by vitamin stock and are stated at the lower of cost or net realisable value on the basis of first in first out.

## J. INVESTMENTS AND OTHER FINANCIAL ASSETS

### CLASSIFICATION

The group classifies its financial assets in the following categories: loans and receivables, held-to-maturity investments, financial assets at fair value through profit or loss and available-for-sale financial assets. The classification depends on the purpose for which the investments were acquired. Management determines the classification of its investments at initial recognition.

## (I) LOANS AND RECEIVABLES

Loans and receivables are non-derivative financial assets with fixed or determinable payments that are not quoted in an active market. They are included in current assets, except for those with maturities greater than 12 months after the reporting period which are classified as non-current assets.

## (II) FINANCIAL ASSETS AT FAIR VALUE THROUGH PROFIT OR LOSS

Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss are financial assets held for trading. A financial asset is classified in this category if acquired principally for the purpose of selling in the short term. Derivatives are classified as held for trading unless they are designated as hedges. Assets in this category are classified as current assets if they are expected to be settled within 12 months; otherwise they are classified as non-current.

### MEASUREMENT

At initial recognition, the Group measures a financial asset at its fair value plus, in the case of a financial asset not at fair value through profit or loss, transaction costs that are directly attributable to the acquisition of the financial asset. Transaction costs of financial assets carried at fair value through profit or loss are expensed in profit or loss.

Loans and receivables are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

### IMPAIRMENT

The Group assesses at the end of each reporting period whether there is objective evidence that a financial asset or group of financial assets is impaired. A financial asset or a group of financial assets is impaired and impairment losses are incurred only if there is objective evidence of impairment as a result of one or more events that occurred after the initial recognition of the asset (a 'loss event') and that loss event (or events) has an impact on the estimated future cash flows of the financial asset or group of financial assets that can be reliably estimated.

## (I) ASSETS CARRIED AT AMORTISED COST

For loans and receivables, the amount of the loss is measured as the difference between the asset's carrying amount and the present value of estimated future cash flows (excluding future credit losses that have not been incurred) discounted at the financial asset's original effective interest rate. The carrying amount of the asset is reduced and the amount of the loss is recognised in the profit or loss. If a loan has a variable interest rate, the discount rate for measuring any impairment loss is the current effective interest rate determined under the contract. As a practical expedient, the Group may measure impairment on the basis of an instrument's fair value using an observable market price. If, in a subsequent period, the amount of the impairment loss decreases and the decrease can be related objectively to an event occurring after the impairment was recognised (such as an improvement in the debtor's credit rating), the reversal of the previously recognised impairment loss is recognised in the profit or loss.

# NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## K. PLANT & EQUIPMENT

Plant and equipment is stated at historical cost less depreciation. Historical cost includes expenditure that is directly attributable to the acquisition of the items.

Subsequent costs are included in the asset's carrying amount or recognised as a separate asset, as appropriate, only when it is probable that future economic benefits associated with the item will flow to the group and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. The carrying amount of any component accounted for as a separate asset is derecognised when replaced. All other repairs and maintenance are charged to profit or loss during the reporting period in which they are incurred.

The Group is gifted works of art from time to time. Works gifted are valued at the time of the gift and are capitalised at that amount. Works of Art are valued at regular intervals at the Directors' discretion. Revaluations reflect independent assessments of the fair market value of works of art.

Depreciation is calculated using the straight-line method to allocate cost, net of residual values, over the estimated useful lives of assets as follows:

Furniture & Fittings: 2-5 years,  
Office & IT Equipment: 2-5 years,  
Leasehold improvements 10 years

The assets' residual values and useful lives are reviewed, and adjusted if appropriate, at the end of each reporting period.

An asset's carrying amount is written down immediately to its recoverable amount if the asset's carrying amount is greater than its estimated recoverable amount (note 1(f)).

Gains and losses on disposals are determined by comparing proceeds with carrying amount. These are included in profit or loss. When revalued assets are sold, it is group policy to transfer any amounts included in other reserves in respect of those assets to retained earnings.

## LEASEHOLD IMPROVEMENTS

The cost of fit out of ACON's head office leased at 414 Elizabeth St, Surry Hills, has been capitalised to leasehold improvement and is being amortised over the lease term of 10 years.

The cost of extensions to the Hunter branch on premises leased at 129 Maitland Road, Islington has been capitalised to Leasehold Improvements and is being amortised over the lease term of 10 years.

## L. TRADE AND OTHER CREDITORS

These amounts represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the group prior to the end of the financial year which are unpaid. The amounts are unsecured and are usually paid within 30 days of recognition.

Included is the Pride in Diversity program includes annual membership paid by participating organisations. The revenue is recognised over the membership period and hence the deferred/(unearned) revenue represents that which is yet to meet the performance criteria.

## M. EMPLOYEE ENTITLEMENTS

### WAGES AND SALARIES, ANNUAL LEAVE AND SICK LEAVE

Liabilities for wages and salaries, including non-monetary benefits, annual leave and accumulating sick leave expected to be settled within 12 months after the end of the period in which the employees render the related service are recognised in respect of employees' services up to the end of the reporting period and are measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled. The liability for annual leave and accumulating sick leave is recognised in the provision for employee benefits. All other short-term employee benefit obligations are presented as payables.

### LONG SERVICE LEAVE

The liability for long service leave expected to be settled within 12 months of the reporting date is recognised in the provision for employee benefits and is measured in accordance with the policy above. The liability for long service leave expected to be settled more than 12 months from the reporting date is recognised in the provision for employee benefits and measured as the present value of expected future payments to be made in respect of services provided by employees up to the reporting date.

The obligations are presented as current liabilities in the balance sheet if the entity does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least twelve months after the reporting date, regardless of when the actual settlement is expected to occur.

## SUPERANNUATION

Contributions are made by the group to several employee superannuation funds of choice and are recognised as expenses as they become payable.



# NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## N. GOODS AND SERVICES TAX (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of associated GST, unless the GST incurred is not recoverable from the taxation authority. In this case it is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of the expense.

Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the taxation authority is included with other receivables or payables in the balance sheet.

Cash flows are presented on a gross basis. The GST components of cash flows arising from investing or financing activities which are recoverable from, or payable to the taxation authority, are presented as operating cash flows.

## O. PARENT ENTITY FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The financial information for the parent entity, ACON Health Limited, disclosed in note 18 has been prepared on the same basis as the consolidated financial statements.

## 2. CRITICAL ACCOUNTING ESTIMATES AND ASSUMPTIONS

The Group makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

### FAIR VALUE OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AT FAIR VALUE THROUGH PROFIT OR LOSS

Fair value of financial assets at fair value through profit or loss is referenced to quoted market prices and assessed for changes in value at the end of each reporting period. Refer to note 7 for further information over the financial assets.

## 3. INCOME TAX

ACON Health Limited is a Health Promotion Charity and the AIDS Council of New South Wales Incorporated is a Public Benevolent Institution. As such, both are exempt from paying income tax.

## 4. CURRENT ASSETS – CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

	2017	2016
Cash on hand	3,520	4,620
Cash at bank: Cheque account – operations	168,729	165,053
Cash at bank: Deposits	6,559,559	5,091,587
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,731,808</b>	<b>5,261,260</b>

## 5. CURRENT ASSETS – RECEIVABLES

	2017	2016
Trade receivables	335,614	331,176
Accrued income	45,268	258,802
<b>Total</b>	<b>380,882</b>	<b>589,978</b>

As at 30 June 2017, no receivables were considered impaired (30 June 2017: \$nil). The amount of the provision for doubtful debts was \$nil (30 June 2017: \$nil).

## NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

6. CURRENT ASSETS - INVENTORIES	2017	2016
Finished goods (vitamins) at cost	4,101	3,696

7. NON-CURRENT ASSETS- PLANT & EQUIPMENT AND LEASE INCENTIVE	FURNITURE & FITTINGS	OFFICE & IT EQUIPMENT	LIBRARY OF ART	LEASEHOLD IMPROVEMENTS	LEASE INCENTIVE	TOTALS
<b>At 30 June 2016</b>						
Cost or fair value	877,237	1,265,559	146,650	1,336,584	1,505,000	5,131,029
Accumulated depreciation	(874,112)	(1,076,939)	-	(678,473)	(815,209)	(3,444,733)
NET BOOK VALUE	3,125	188,620	146,650	658,111	689,791	1,686,296
<b>Year ended 30 June 2017</b>						
Opening net book value	3,125	188,620	146,650	658,111	689,791	1,686,296
Additions	10,549	210,516	-	55,729	-	276,794
Depreciation / amortisation charge	(1,544)	(128,481)	-	(207,467)	(150,500)	(488,172)
CLOSING NET BOOK VALUE	12,130	270,655	146,650	506,193	539,291	1,474,918
<b>AT 30 June 2017</b>						
Cost or fair value	887,786	1,476,075	146,650	1,392,313	1,505,000	5,407,823
Accumulated depreciation	(875,656)	(1,205,420)	-	(886,120)	(965,709)	(3,932,905)
NET BOOK VALUE	12,130	270,655	146,650	506,193	539,291	1,474,918



## NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

8. CURRENT LIABILITIES – TRADE AND OTHER PAYABLES	2017	2016
Goods & Services Tax net payable	174,704	187,164
Trade creditors	270,735	117,810
Accrued expenses	319,549	222,619
Deferred/(Unearned) Revenue	581,363	426,058
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,346,351</b>	<b>953,651</b>

9. CURRENT LIABILITIES – EMPLOYEE ENTITLEMENTS	2017	2016
EMPLOYEE ENTITLEMENTS - ANNUAL LEAVE	1,354,226	1,228,966
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES AT REPORTING DATE (FULL TIME EQUIVALENT)	108	108

10. NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES – DEFERRED LEASE LIABILITY	2017	2016
414 ELIZABETH STREET, SURRY HILLS	388,792	689,793

### 11. REMUNERATION OF MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Members of the Board, serve on the Board of the group in a voluntary capacity and receive no remuneration for this service to the group.

## NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

### 12. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

2017

2016

The following transactions occurred with related parties:

INCOME FROM SEX WORKERS OUTREACH PROJECT INC (SWOP) FOR OVERHEAD ALLOCATIONS

138,460

182,496

During the year ACON Health Limited provided IT and HR support to Sex Workers Outreach Project Inc. The payments were made on normal commercial terms and conditions. From October 2016, ACON Health Limited no longer provided payroll and administration support to Sex Workers Outreach Project Inc.

### 13. ECONOMIC DEPENDENCY

The major source of funding for the group is an annual grant from the NSW Ministry of Health. The NSW Ministry of Health has agreed to maintain current funding levels in the 2017/2018 financial year.

### 14. CHARITABLE FUNDRAISING ACT 1991

ACON Health Limited was issued with an authority to fundraise by the Office of Charities to fundraise for the period 4 May 2017 to 3 May 2022.

Information and declarations to be furnished under the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991.

The information disclosed below is in relation to fundraising activities undertaken by ACON Health Limited.

#### (A) DETAILS OF AGGREGATE GROSS INCOME AND TOTAL EXPENSES OF FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES:

### GROSS INCOME AND TOTAL EXPENSES

2017

2016

Gross proceeds from fundraising:

Donations, Events & Sponsorship

1,279,812

487,428

TOTAL GROSS INCOME FROM FUNDRAISING

1,279,812

487,428

less total costs of fundraising:

Fundraising Costs

299,445

290,838

TOTAL COSTS OF FUNDRAISING

299,445

290,838

NET SURPLUS OBTAINED FROM FUNDRAISING APPEALS

980,367

195,590

## NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

B) FORMS OF FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED DURING THE YEAR COVERED BY THESE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS WERE: CONCERTS, APPEALS, BINGO, DINNERS AND SPECIAL NIGHTS AT VENUES.

C) COMPARATIVE RATIOS	2017	2016
Ratio of costs to gross proceeds	23%	60%
Ratio of net surplus to gross proceeds	77%	40%
Ratio of total cost of fundraising services to total Organisation income	2%	2%
Ratio of total cost of fundraising services to total Organisation income	2%	2%

\* This ratio includes all fundraising activities – appeals and events.

In the view of the Board, all expenses incurred by the ACON Health Limited contribute to the delivery of its programs and services.

### 15. COMMITMENTS FOR EXPENDITURE LEASE COMMITMENTS

The group leases the head office building under a non-cancellable operating lease expiring within 5 years. Excess building space is sub-let to third parties under operating leases.

NON-CANCELLABLE OPERATING LEASES	2017	2016
Within one year	1,725,762	1,788,232
Later than one year but not later than 5 years	4,624,454	5,712,464
Later than 5 years	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,350,216</b>	<b>7,500,696</b>

#### NON-CANCELLABLE OPERATING LEASES

Commitments for minimum lease payments in relation to non-cancellable operating leases are payable as above:



## NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

16. RETAINED SURPLUS	2017	2016
Retained surplus at the beginning of the year	4,028,455	4,376,950
Transfer to funds reserve	(215,589)	(269,219)
Current year surplus	645,880	(79,276)
Retained surplus at the end of the year	4,458,746	4,028,455

The retained surplus represents accumulated funds of \$4,458,746 and includes provision for Employee entitlements, grant income received in advance, and provision for depreciation.

### 17. PARENT ENTITY FINANCIAL INFORMATION (ACON HEALTH LIMITED EXCLUDING AIDS COUNCIL OF NSW INC)

#### (A) SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION

THE INDIVIDUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PARENT ENTITY SHOW THE FOLLOWING AGGREGATE AMOUNTS:

BALANCE SHEET	2017	2016
Current assets	7,191,423	5,939,973
Total assets	8,537,492	7,676,048
Current liabilities	2,700,583	2,184,007
Total liabilities	3,089,375	2,873,799
Net Assets	5,448,117	4,802,249
Total Stakeholders' Funds	5,448,117	4,802,249

PROFIT & LOSS	2017	2016
Current assets	645,868	(79,852)

#### (B) CONTINGENT LIABILITIES OF THE PARENT ENTITY

The parent entity did not have any contingent liabilities as at 30 June 2017 (30 June 2016: \$nil).

## DIRECTOR'S DECLARATION

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ACON HEALTH LIMITED

### DIRECTOR'S DECLARATION

In the directors' opinion:

- 1) The consolidated financial statements and notes set out on pages 7 to 22 are in accordance with the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission Act 2012, including:
  - a) giving a true and fair view of the Group's financial position as at 30 June 2017 and of its performance for the financial year ended on that date; and
  - b) comply with Australian Accounting Standards (including Australian Accounting Interpretations) and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Regulation 2012; and
  - c) There are reasonable grounds to believe that the Group will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.
- 2)
  - a) the financial statements and notes are in accordance with the *Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 (NSW)* and the *Charitable Fundraising Regulations 1993 (NSW)*;
  - b) the provisions of the *Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 (NSW)* and the regulations under this Act and the conditions attached to the authority to fundraise have been complied with; and
  - c) The internal controls exercised by the group are appropriate and effective in accounting for all income received.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the board, and is signed for and on behalf of the board by:



Justin Koonin  
President



Andrew Purchas  
Vice President

Dated at Sydney this 20th Day of September 2017.

# AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION



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## Auditor's Independence Declaration To the Directors of ACON Health Limited

In accordance with the requirements of section 60-40 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, as lead auditor for the audit of ACON Health Limited for the year ended 30 June 2017, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Grant Thornton".

GRANT THORNTON AUDIT PTY LTD  
Chartered Accountants

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "A G Rigele".

A G Rigele  
Partner - Audit & Assurance

Sydney, 20 September 2017

Grant Thornton Audit Pty Ltd ACN 130 913 594  
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# INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT



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## Independent Auditor's Report To the members of ACON Health Limited

### Auditor's opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial report of ACON Health Limited (the "Registered Entity") and its subsidiaries ("the Group"), which comprises the consolidated statement of financial position as at 30 June 2017, and the consolidated statement of comprehensive income, consolidated statement of changes in equity and consolidated statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies and the directors' declaration.

In our opinion, the financial report of ACON Health Limited has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- a giving a true and fair view of the Registered Entity's financial position as at 30 June 2017 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- b complying with Australian Accounting Standards and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*.

### Basis for Auditor's Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

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### **Information Other than the Financial Report and Auditor's Report Thereon**

Those charged with governance are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Registered Entity's annual report for the year ended 30 June 2017, but does not include the financial report and our auditor's report thereon.

Our opinion on the financial report does not cover the other information and accordingly we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial report, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial report or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

### **Responsibilities of the Directors for the Financial Report**

The Directors of the Registered Entity are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the ACNC Act, and for such internal control as the Directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the Directors are responsible for assessing the Registered Entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Directors either intend to liquidate the Registered Entity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

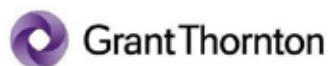
Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Registered Entity's financial reporting process.

### **Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

## AUDITORS INDEPENDENT REPORT

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A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at:  
[http://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors\\_files/ar3.pdf](http://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors_files/ar3.pdf). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

*Grant Thornton*

GRANT THORNTON AUDIT PTY LTD  
Chartered Accountants

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A G Rigele', written over a faint circular stamp.

A G Rigele  
Partner - Audit & Assurance

Sydney, 20 September 2017



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