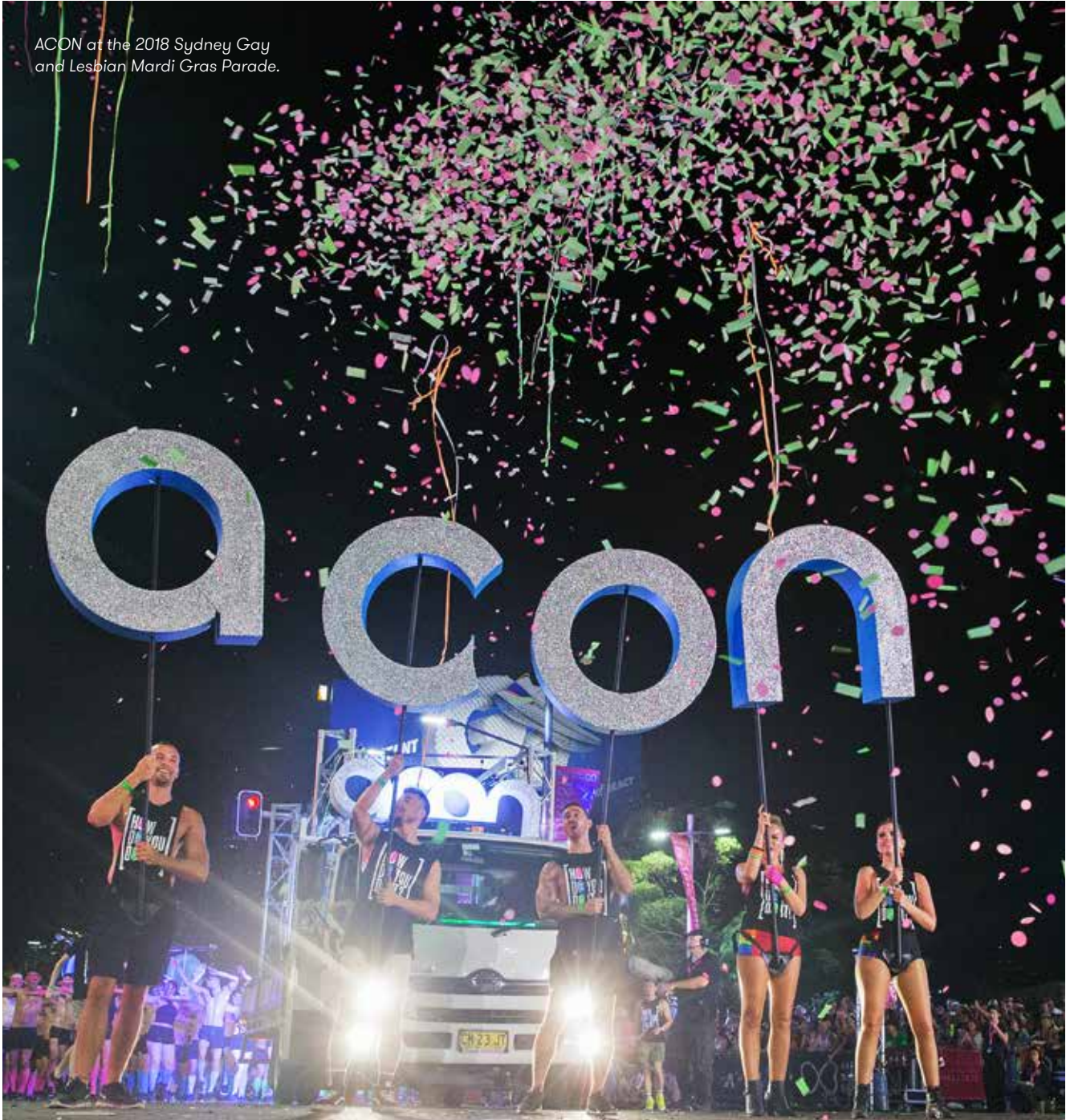


Annual Report



2017

2018



ACON at the 2018 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade.

PHOTO: STEVE CHRISTO

About Us

We are Australia’s leading health promotion organisation specialising in HIV prevention, HIV support and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) health.

We’re here to end HIV transmission among gay and other men who have sex with 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 a number of services and programs nationally. 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.

Our Mission

Our mission is to enhance the health and wellbeing of our communities by:

- Ending HIV transmission among gay and other men who have sex with men.
- Promoting the health, throughout life, of LGBTI people and people with HIV.

Our Values

Courage, Empathy, Diversity, Equality, Partnership, Community, Adaptability

ACON acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of all the lands on which we work and pays respects to the Elders, past, present and emerging.

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ACON at the 2018 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Fair Day at Victoria Park.

PHOTO: STEVE CHRISTO

Our Work

Who We're Here For

- People living with HIV
- Gay and bisexual men
- Lesbians and same-sex attracted women
- Transgender and gender diverse 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

Why We're Here

The people and communities we serve face the same broad health issues as everyone else. However, mainstream service providers don't always respond adequately to their needs due to a lack of knowledge, understanding or acceptance.

Our communities also have specific health needs that are best met by community-based organisations with specialist knowledge and experience, particularly in relation to HIV, sexual health, discrimination and social isolation.

We meet these challenges by providing information and services which support the specific needs of LGBTI people and people with HIV, and which improve their access to mainstream services.

President & CEO Message

Last year marked a period of great change and progress for our communities. After a long, divisive and public debate, marriage equality finally became a reality in Australia. It was a landmark moment not only for LGBTI rights, but also for the health and wellbeing of our communities.

LGBTI people have long experienced the negative health impacts of discriminatory legislation. By allowing people in our communities access to the same rights, privileges, responsibilities and institutions as the rest of the population, we can achieve broader acceptance, greater inclusion and better health outcomes. We salute all the activists and allies who worked tirelessly over the years on this frontier and commend their courage, cooperation, determination and synergy in realising this historic reform.

These principles of partnership and collaboration also form the foundation of Australia's HIV response. Such tenets have underpinned our approach to HIV for over three decades; as a result, NSW is a world leader in responding to the HIV epidemic. Last year, NSW was leading the way in Australia's journey to end HIV, recording the lowest rate of HIV notifications since 1985 when surveillance began. Twelve months on, the downward trend continues.

NSW Ministry of Health data released this year showed that between April and June, there was a 27 per cent drop in newly diagnosed HIV cases. This builds on figures that show the number of early stage infections diagnosed in Australian-born gay men and other men who have sex with men (MSM) in the first half of 2018 was 49 per cent less than the average for the same period of the previous five years.

This declining trend in HIV diagnoses demonstrates that we are starting to get results from our collective HIV prevention efforts, and are advancing slowly towards the goal of virtually eliminating new HIV transmissions in NSW by 2020.

Key to this advancement has been the removal of barriers in accessing PrEP – an important milestone in the HIV response. In April, the highly effective HIV prevention drug was finally listed for federal subsidy on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, enabling widespread access to people across Australia. PrEP has had an enormous impact in halting HIV transmissions in targeted populations, as evident with the success of the EPIC-NSW study.

With broader access, we're confident that its impact will be greater still. Coupled with high HIV testing rates among gay men, wider reach and earlier treatment among people with HIV and the continuing high rates of condom use, we now have the tools to deliver the biggest reductions in HIV transmission rates in NSW in three decades.

But while we are heading in the right direction, we still have a long way to go. Although we are seeing a reduction in HIV transmission rates among Australian-born gay men and other MSM, we are not seeing this decline among people born overseas. Moreover, while HIV testing rates are at an all-time high, there are still a number of people being diagnosed late with infection. In the coming year, ACON will be re-orienting resources and implementing new strategies to make sure we are reaching these population groups with appropriate and tailored HIV testing, prevention and treatment messages.

And we will do this in collaboration with the NSW Government, whose bold and innovative approach to the HIV response continues to propel us in our endeavour, as well as our many sector partners – we commend them for their passionate and dedicated work in caring for our communities and people living with HIV. Only with a comprehensive and coordinated approach can we achieve true and meaningful progress.

In addition to our efforts in addressing the impacts of HIV, we continued our march towards improving the health outcomes of LGBTI people. In the past year, we made significant gains in broader LGBTI health and wellbeing with expanded programs in mental health, alcohol and other drugs, domestic and family violence, ageing, and community safety and social inclusion.

Among our key pieces of work in this area has been to support LGBTI people that have experienced historical violence. Throughout the year, we continued to advocate for victims and survivors of past hate crimes and, at the time of writing, a parliamentary inquiry has commenced, which we hope will finally deliver healing and justice for those impacted by these terrible events.

Such events underscore the importance of our LGBTI inclusion programs, which work towards making the places we work, play and study more inclusive of LGBTI people. This year, we saw continued growth in our inclusion services with the launch of ACON

ACON President Dr Justin Koonin (left) and ACON CEO Nicolas Parkhill.



Pride Training, a new offering that will assist health professionals and organisations improve their inclusion practices to better serve the needs of LGBTI clients, customers and staff.

We also made significant progress in our work supporting the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ women, particularly in breast and chest health, and cervical cancer prevention. And we have commenced work to address the health needs of trans and gender diverse (TGD) communities with the establishment of an advisory group that will guide the formulation of our first TGD Health Strategy to be released in 2019.

As well as the TGD strategy, the coming year will also see the development of a new strategic plan to guide our work for the next five years. As the pace of change increases and our work becomes more complex, our new strategic plan will provide us with the blueprint that will enable us to meet the challenges facing the organisation and the communities we serve in coming years.

Many of the achievements and outcomes detailed in this report are only possible because of so many people and organisations in our community, and we thank our staff, board, members, volunteers, partners and supporters for the hard work, passion, energy,

friendship and support. ACON would simply not be able to do the work that it does without your tireless efforts.

We also acknowledge the support of our many sector partners and allies, as well as the NSW Government, for their ongoing commitment and work in contributing to a world-leading contemporary response to HIV.

Finally, we say thanks to all our clients and community members for their continued support. Over the next 12 months, we look forward to strengthening our partnership as we march further towards positive change and progress. By working together, we can continue to improve and build the health and wellbeing of our communities.

Dr Justin Koonin
President

Nicolas Parkhill
Chief Executive Officer



ACON Deputy CEO Karen Price
(front) with ACON team members.

PHOTO: REG DOMINGO

Snapshot

4.2 million
Reach

Estimated audience reach through media

1.2 million
Pageviews

Online pages across our digital network

800,000
Visits

Unique visits to ACON websites

660,000
Video Views

ACON campaigns, corporate & social videos

171,000
Safe Sex Packs

Assembled & distributed throughout NSW

20,500
Client Interactions

Through our HIV and LGBTI support services

8,500
HIV Tests

Administered at a[TEST]

500
Volunteers

Assisting us in various roles across ACON

174
Staff

Full-time, part-time and casual
ACON team members throughout the year

AUSTRALIA SAYS ‘YES’ TO EQUALITY

“We thank the many advocates and allies who have worked tirelessly over the years to achieve marriage equality in Australia. Their passion, commitment and zeal for equality has truly been remarkable. And we commend our elected representatives for listening to the Australian public and finally legislating for marriage reform. Australia is a nation with strong egalitarian values built on a solid foundation of fairness and opportunity. Today’s landmark vote will facilitate greater acceptance, reduce discrimination and, over time, improve the health of LGBTI Australians.”

Dr Justin Koonin, ACON President, 7 December 2017

Image: The announcement of the results of the Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey at Prince Alfred Park in Surry Hills, Sydney on 15 November 2017. Over 60% of Australians voted ‘yes’.



Here For

HIV Prevention

Higher rates of testing, continued use of condoms, greater reach and earlier uptake of treatment, and broad utilisation of evidence-based HIV prevention technologies such as PrEP and UVL are moving us closer towards our goal of virtually eliminating new HIV transmissions in NSW by 2020. In order to maintain momentum, we must continue to effectively engage and mobilise gay men and other men who have sex with men (MSM) – the population group at most risk of HIV transmission – to test often, treat early and stay safe. We continue to help them do this by developing and promoting campaigns, operating HIV and STI testing facilities, running HIV prevention and risk reduction workshops, providing a range of support services and distributing hundreds of thousands of free condoms every year across NSW.

NSW HIV Data

Data released this year by the NSW Ministry of Health showed that HIV transmission rates continued to decline in NSW. Between January and July 2018, there were 107 new HIV diagnoses in gay men and men who have sex with men – 20% less compared with the average for 2013-2017. The number of early stage infections diagnosed in Australian-born MSM in the first half of 2018 was 18 – a 49% decrease on the average for the same period of the previous five years.

In 2017, there were 313 new HIV diagnoses in NSW which was 11% less compared to the average for 2011-2016. Gay men and other MSM accounted for 232 diagnoses, which was a 19% decrease on the five year average.

Key to HIV prevention is knowing one's status and in 2017 there were 596,605 HIV serology tests performed in NSW – a 6% increase in HIV testing on the previous year.

Starting HIV treatment early provides great health benefits and stops onward transmission. Of those newly diagnosed with HIV infection in the first half of 2018, 73% initiated treatment within six weeks of diagnosis, and 93% within six months.

But while we are seeing a reduction in HIV transmission rates among Australian-born gay men and other MSM, we are not seeing this decline among people born overseas. Moreover, while HIV testing rates are at an all-time high, there are still a number of people being diagnosed late with infection. More focus and energy is required into the future in engaging these population groups in HIV prevention, testing and care messaging and services.

How Do You Do It? Campaign

Following the success of our *How Do You Do It?* (HDYDI) campaign in 2017, we implemented a refreshed activation of the campaign during the 2018 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras festival



In 2017, there were 313 new HIV diagnoses in NSW which was **11% less** compared to the average for 2011-2016



Gay men and other MSM accounted for 232 diagnoses, which was a **19% decrease** on the five year average



There were **596,605** HIV tests performed in NSW in 2017 – a **6% increase** on the previous year



Of those newly diagnosed with HIV infection from January to June 2018, **73%** were on treatment within six weeks

in February and March. The HDYDI 2018 campaign promoted condoms, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and undetectable viral load (UVL) as effective HIV prevention options while encouraging sexually active gay men and other MSM to choose an HIV prevention strategy that works for them and their partners. Delivered on multiple platforms, including print, social and outdoor media, the campaign was effective in reinforcing its messages with 77% of evaluation survey respondents recalling the advertisements. Across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube the eight campaign videos accrued over 160,000 video views, with approximately 1,300 engagements.

Ending HIV: Community Engagement Platform

From its inception in 2013, *Ending HIV* continues to provide a platform that educates gay men and other men who have sex with men about HIV prevention, and what they can do to end HIV transmission in NSW by 2020. The multi-award winning campaign's website was relaunched this year, optimised to be a mobile-first experience meeting current content browsing trends. The website update contributed not only to better user experience, but helped grow our organic traffic, expanding *Ending HIV's* footprint with just under 689,000 visits to the site and 993,000 page views in the 2017-2018 financial year.

Ending HIV's key messages of staying safe, testing often and treating early have continued to feature heavily in new campaign activity. Community feedback and connection towards the campaign and its messages continues to resonate. In 2018, 87% of community members surveyed on the campaign strongly agreed with the statement, 'Everything has changed, we can now dramatically reduce HIV transmission', a marked shift from 48% recorded at launch of *Ending HIV* five years ago.

PrEP Campaigns

PrEP is an antiretroviral medication taken by HIV negative people at high risk of acquiring HIV to prevent infection. In April, the highly effective HIV prevention drug was approved for federal subsidy

Our How Do You Do It? campaign activation at Mardi Gras Fair Day.



PHOTO: STEVE CHIBETO



State of Play: HIV in NSW was among a number of forums on HIV, PrEP, risk reduction and safe sex we convened in 2017/18.

PHOTO: DAVID ALEXANDER

and was listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), allowing greater access and availability. To support awareness and education efforts, we produced a comprehensive campaign to inform the community on the changes as well as assist participants in the Expanded PrEP Implementation in Communities (EPIC-NSW) study transition to new access arrangements. Ten videos were produced outlining key information regarding PrEP access, resulting in over 200,000 video views across social media channels. To ensure broad reach, advertisements also ran on other platforms including dating apps, Google search and outdoor placements. A post campaign evaluation survey highlighted strong engagement and recall, with 64% of respondents indicating campaign awareness and recognition.

Emen8: National HIV & Sexual Health Digital Initiative

Emen8 is our national digital health promotion initiative for gay, bisexual and MSM, produced in partnership with Thorne Harbour Health (formerly the Victorian AIDS Council) and funded by the Australian Government. Emen8's innovative approach integrates evidence-based HIV and STI prevention strategies into a variety of everyday topics that reflect the lived experience of its target audience. The platform harnesses the power of social media, and leverages community connections and social influence to amplify sexual health and wellbeing messages.

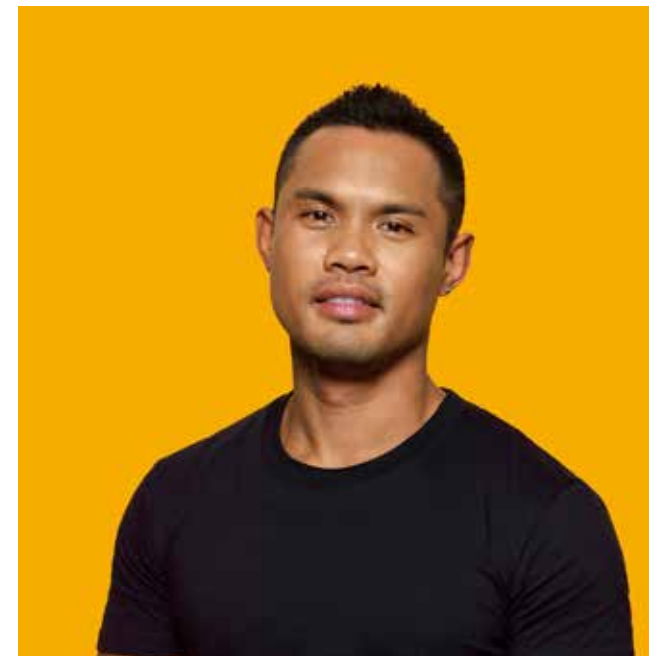
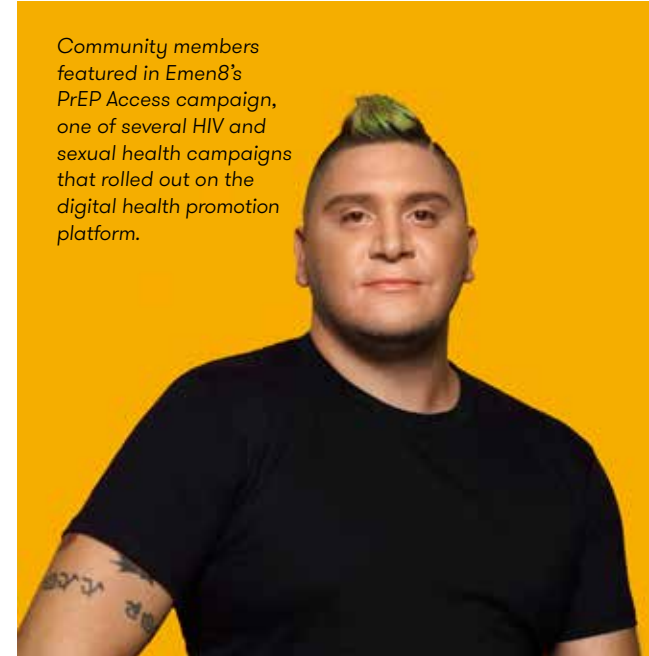
During the past year, over 600 pieces of original content were published through the Emen8.com.au website, Facebook page and YouTube channel, helping attract over 160,000 website

visitors and generating over a quarter of a million pageviews. Additionally, Emen8 delivered six sexual health campaigns, promoting the benefits of an undetectable viral load, PrEP, testing and combination HIV prevention. Campaign messages were seen over 12 million times across various online channels, achieving engagement rates more than five times that typical of Facebook.

Other Achievements

- We distributed over 171,000 safe sex packs (condoms and lube) to pubs, clubs, clinics, events and sex-on-premises venues across NSW.
- We distributed HIV prevention and risk reduction resources to 327 venues, promoters and services across NSW.
- We delivered 36 peer-run workshops across NSW on HIV, safe sex and risk reduction. These workshops included Start Marking Sense and ConversAsians.
- We convened six community forums relating to HIV prevention and risk reduction. These workshops included State of Play: HIV in NSW and Sex Positive.
- We convened five community forums on PrEP in Sydney and in regional NSW.
- We recorded over 680,000 digital interactions through our various online platforms relating to HIV prevention and risk reduction.
- We conducted 319 HIV prevention and awareness outreach sessions across NSW. This included our Sexperts program in selected sex-on-premises venues, as well as community events such as Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras and Tropical Fruits.

Community members featured in Emen8's PrEP Access campaign, one of several HIV and sexual health campaigns that rolled out on the digital health promotion platform.



Here For

HIV Prevention & PrEP

Combining PrEP with high HIV testing rates, wider reach and earlier uptake of treatment and continued condom use give us the tools to deliver the biggest reduction in HIV transmission in NSW in three decades.

Implementing PrEP

PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) 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, and demonstration projects in Australia, such as the Expanded PrEP Implementation in Communities in NSW (EPIC-NSW) study, have demonstrated excellent public health outcomes. PrEP was approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration in May 2016. Just under two years later, in April 2018, PrEP was listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

PrEP Trial: EPIC-NSW

Commencing in March 2016, the Expanded PrEP Implementation in Communities in NSW – or EPIC-NSW – study aimed to assess the impact of the rapid expansion in access to PrEP amongst those at high risk of acquiring HIV. Led by the NSW Ministry of Health and The Kirby Institute and supported by a range of clinical and community partners including ACON, it was the first large-scale trial of PrEP in Australia. ACON was heavily involved in the study, including education, promotion and engagement efforts, as well as facilitating recruitment, dispensing of PrEP and follow-up HIV and STI testing.

When EPIC-NSW was finalised in April 2018 (when PrEP was listed on the PBS), around 9,714 people were taking part in the trial. No new HIV diagnoses have been made in EPIC-NSW participants who continued to take PrEP as directed throughout the trial.

Since the launch of EPIC-NSW, NSW has recorded sustained reductions in HIV notifications, highlighting the important role of PrEP in the HIV prevention landscape. Recent HIV notifications in gay men and other MSM in NSW have declined by almost one-third following the EPIC-NSW trial.



9,714 men and other MSM were enrolled in EPIC-NSW and taking PrEP



Recent new HIV notifications in gay and other MSM in NSW declined by almost one-third following EPIC-NSW



Declines in HIV notifications were highest among Australian-born gay men and other MSM (48.7%)



Knowledge of PrEP in the community has increased. In 2017, belief that PrEP was available was reported by 71.8% of men, compared to 47.7% in 2016

PrEP on the PBS

The listing of PrEP on the PBS in April marked an important milestone in Australia's HIV response. With federal subsidy, people could now access the highly effective HIV prevention drug affordably. Combining PrEP with high HIV testing rates among gay men, strong treatment uptake among people with HIV and the continuing high rates of condom use gives us the tools to deliver the biggest reductions in HIV transmission rates in NSW in three decades.

PrEP Education Campaigns

PrEP has been a focus of ACON's HIV prevention messaging, featuring prominently in key campaigns since it was approved by the TGA. In June 2016, our campaign *Is PrEP For You?* helped to raise awareness of PrEP in the community. In 2017, PrEP was a key component in our combination prevention campaign, *How Do You Do It?* which sought to educate gay men on the range of options available to prevent HIV transmission. Over that time, we also delivered a range of community forums to further inform the community about PrEP. Our most recent campaign, launched earlier this year, raised awareness of the changes surrounding access to PrEP as well as assisted participants enrolled in EPIC-NSW in the transition process.

According to the Sydney Gay Community Periodic Survey, there has been a significant increase in knowledge of PrEP, particularly between 2016 and 2017. In 2017, belief that PrEP was available increased sharply and was reported by 71.8% of men, compared to 47.7% in the previous year. And PrEP use rose significantly too, with 13.9% of respondents saying they had recently taken prescribed PrEP compared to 4% in 2016.

Advocacy on PrEP

ACON, along with a range of partners such as the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisation, have long advocated for PrEP access and approval in Australia. Over the years, we engaged with



To support awareness of changes in access to PrEP, we produced an education campaign that was featured in digital and outdoor media.

regulators, bureaucrats, politicians, and manufacturers for timely and affordable access to PrEP. We explored alternative access schemes and produced resources to assist those in our community who would benefit most from PrEP gaining legal access. With PrEP now available on the PBS, we will continue our advocacy efforts to ensure other population groups, such as those not on Medicare, can get access to PrEP.

The Future with PrEP

The advent of PrEP has changed the HIV prevention landscape in NSW. Coupled with increased HIV testing rates among gay men, wider reach and earlier uptake of treatment among people

with HIV and continued condom use, we are now able to progress further in our goal towards ending HIV transmissions.

We commend the NSW Government for its commitment to the HIV response, and the ongoing dedicated work of our sector partners. And we thank gay men for their ongoing commitment to preventing HIV transmission. Gay men in NSW have consistently shown that they're committed to ending HIV and have adopted the use of new technologies such as PrEP as soon as they have become accessible. ACON salutes gay men, both HIV positive and HIV negative, for their commitment and action to end HIV transmission. We remain steadfast in our commitment to further driving down infection rates.

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 peer-run testing facilities for HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs); sex, health and relationship workshops; free condoms, safe sex packs and resources; and dedicated programs for young gay men, sexually adventurous men, LGBTIQ women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as well as gay men from Asian and Middle Eastern cultural backgrounds.

Ending HIV/STI Campaign

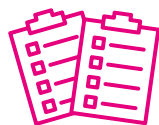
In December, we implemented a new sexual health campaign to inform the community about STIs. In NSW, STI rates have increased steadily and unprecedented levels of testing have led to more STIs being diagnosed. The campaign, produced in partnership with the Sexually Transmissible Infections Gay Men Action Group (STIGMA) and delivered through our Ending HIV platform, provided the latest information on specific STIs, including ways to prevent transmission and how to treat infections. Featured in print, online, social and outdoor media, we encouraged gay men and men who have sex with men to screen regularly and reinforced condoms as an effective way to prevent transmission. To assist people in looking after the health of their partners, we developed a notification tool on the Ending HIV website, which allows people in the community to notify their sexual partners of an STI and to prompt them to get an STI screening. An accompanying video, *Meet Sam and His Friends*, was voiced by Australian theatre icon John Bell and featured a diverse group of community members. With a suite of campaign collateral addressing various STIs, we are now able to implement health promotion messages quickly and effectively should there be an STI outbreak in the community.

Asian Gay Men's Initiatives

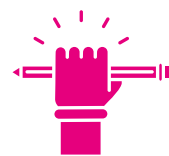
Asian gay men continue to face barriers when it comes to HIV prevention, treatment and care, and we continue to work with these communities to help them take control of their sexual health. This year, our Asian Gay Men's Project led the community engagement for an important research project examining the behaviours of gay men from Asian cultural backgrounds on issues such as HIV and STIs, HIV treatment and the use of alcohol and other drugs. Responses from the Gay Asian Men Survey will help inform programs and services that improve the sexual health and wellbeing of Asian gay men. ACON led the data collection for the



We delivered **13 peer education** workshops on HIV and sexual health for young gay men



We collected over **700 responses** from Asian gay men on a survey on HIV and sexual health



Our ACON Sexperts, a team of specially trained volunteers, provided over **240 hours of sexual health education**



In the first five months of operation, Check OUT, our sexual health clinic for LGBTIQ people and people with a cervix, attended to **115 clients**

survey receiving over 700 responses. Engagement with ConversAsians, our bi-monthly workshop that combines HIV and STI education and information with social activities, continues to be strong, with 209 people participating in five sessions. In collaboration with our young men's project SPARK, we delivered a HIV prevention and sexual health workshop for young Mandarin-speaking gay men. We also hosted two community forums exploring PrEP and sexual health.

Young Gay Men's Project

Our SPARK project continued its successful approach to engaging young gay men around issues relating to HIV, sexual health, identity and relationships. This year, we delivered 13 peer education workshops which were attended by 154 participants. We trained 20 new volunteer facilitators and, for the first time, expanded to Western Sydney, delivering a workshop in Penrith. Throughout the year, our SPARK team attended and supported various community events including Mardi Gras Fair Day, ARQ, the Minus18 Queer Formal and several university pride and orientation days to promote our HIV prevention and safe sex messages.

Engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

Engaging gay men and MSM from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities remains a strong focus of our health promotion work and this year our Aboriginal Project undertook several activities to promote our HIV prevention and sexual health messages. We supported the Boomalli Art Exhibition held during the Sydney Mardi Gras Festival, which showcased the work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. We led the Sydney Mardi Gras Parade with the First Nations Float that featured over 100 LGBTI Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander marchers. During NAIDOC Week, we participated in a PrEP forum and supported a local social gathering in Albury-Wodonga. Also our Ngalawy

In December, we implemented a sexual health campaign to inform the community about STIs (insets, below), which was accompanied by a video entitled *Meet Sam and His Friends* (main image, right images).



PHOTOS: HUGH STEWART





ACON staff and volunteers part of our young gay men's project, SPARK.



ACON's Aboriginal Project at Koori Knockout.

Djardi HIV Positive Retreat provided four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with HIV a space to relax, socialise and receive important health messages.

Health Promotion Among Sexually Adventurous Men

Sexually adventurous men are a high risk group for STIs and HIV. Engaging this population group is an important part of our sexual health work. This year, we delivered four community forums exploring HIV, STIs and broader sexual health, which were attended by over 100 people. We delivered education outreach through our Sexperts program, where teams of specially trained volunteers provide sexual health information at sex-on-premises venues. As part of this program, we coordinated 82 Sexpert shifts, which included 246 hours and 183 interactions. We also distributed 2,128 play packs through a variety of channels, providing safer sex equipment, and our HowHard initiative continued to highlight sexual health and harm reduction messages.

Focus on LGBTIQ Women's Sexual Health

We continued to engage LGBTIQ women on issues around sexual health through a range of activities, events and partnerships throughout the year. In February, we launched a new weekly sexual health service for LGBTIQ women at ACON in Surry Hills. Check OUT: LGBTIQ+ Sexual Health Clinic provides STI screening for LGBTIQ+ people, including lesbian, bisexual and queer women (trans, intersex and cis), and all trans and intersex women, trans and intersex men and non-binary people (of any sexuality). Run in partnership with Family Planning NSW, the clinic also offers cervical screening to anyone with a cervix. In the first five months of operation, around 115 clients attended the clinic.

Check OUT was launched in conjunction with our cervical screening campaign *The Inner Circle*. Our women's team also distributed over 750 safe packs which contain condoms, gloves, lube and sexual health information to people all over NSW. Over 2,000 individual safe sex packs were delivered to venues and events. To read more about our work in LGBTIQ women's health, go to page 23.

Other Achievements

- We delivered 36 peer-run workshops across NSW on HIV, safe sex and risk reduction.
- Our ACON Tradies, a team of volunteers that promote safe sex messages, provided hundreds of hours of community engagement around sexual health, and distributed 8,000 condoms and safe sex packs over the Sydney Mardi Gras Festival.
- We continued to work with the Sexually Transmissible Infections and 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 (SOPV) through PlayZone, our Code of Practice on SOPVs. All ten venues that are signatories to PlayZone achieved 100% compliance to the code, maintaining safety and regular promotion of sexual health and HIV prevention messages.
- We continued sexual health outreach to Western Sydney, including providing rapid HIV testing at key community events and SOPVs. At Aarows in Rydalmere, we performed over 100 tests throughout the year.



Participants at a workshop hosted by ACON's Asian Gay Men's Project.

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 men and other MSM about the importance of testing more regularly are important areas of focus for our approach to HIV prevention.

a[TEST] Services

We continued to support gay men and other MSM take control of their health by knowing their status through our a[TEST] facilities. Launched in 2013, a[TEST] is a peer-led service that offers rapid HIV testing and STI screening in community-based settings. We run four sites across Sydney in Oxford Street, Newtown, Kings Cross and Surry Hills,. Operated in partnership with Local Health District clinical services including Sydney Sexual Health Centre, RPA Sexual Health and Kirkeaton Road Centre, a[TEST] is now one of the largest testing services in NSW.

Throughout the year, we attended to over 10,000 clients across the a[TEST] network. Across all four sites, we administered over 8,500 rapid HIV tests. In October, we expanded hours of service in Newtown and Kings Cross.

Our a[TEST] facility on Oxford Street in Darlinghurst continues to be the state's most popular community-based testing centre for gay men – in this financial year, over 7,000 rapid HIV tests were administered at this location.

a[TEST] Oxford St also continued to provide support to clients that were part of EPIC-NSW, such as PrEP dispensation and STI screening. In March, we introduced an integrated 'express' STI service, which allowed clients, including those on PrEP, to get tested for gonorrhoea and chlamydia with far less waiting times. Between May and June, 12% of clients chose to use the STI Xpress service.

We appreciate the support of our clinical partner – Sydney Sexual Health Centre – who are critical to a[TEST] Oxford St's success.

Dried Blood Spot Testing

The Dried Blood Spot (DBS) HIV test is a self-collection test, which enables people to collect a finger prick sample of blood at home, and send it by mail for laboratory testing. Results are delivered by phone,



We attended to over **10,000** clients across four a[TEST] sites



We administered over **8,500** rapid HIV tests across NSW



At a[TEST] Oxford St alone, over **7,000** rapid HIV tests were performed



We have **expanded hours of service** in Newtown and Kings Cross

text message or email. The DBS test is now accessible as part of a study project being conducted by the NSW Ministry of Health to help improve access to HIV testing for people at risk of HIV transmission. In support of the project, ACON became a study site and over the year, we developed resources and distributed DBS tests at sex-on-premises venues, needle and syringe program sites and during regional outreach activities, as well as through our play packs. To raise further awareness among gay men and other MSM, we developed a digital campaign, which was rolled out on social apps.

HIV Testing In Regional NSW

Key to achieving our goal of ending HIV transmissions in NSW is getting gay men to test more frequently, including those living in regional areas. Throughout the year, we delivered 'pop up' HIV and STI screening sites in key locations in regional NSW, coinciding with major LGBTI community events. In September, we provided rapid HIV testing as well as registration for the dried blood spot test at the Broken Heel Festival in Broken Hill, while in December, we operated a 'pop up' testing bus on-site at the Tropical Fruits New Year's Festival in Lismore Showgrounds.

We also continued to provide HIV and sexual health outreach online across Southern and Far West NSW, providing gay men and other MSM in those regions the opportunity to receive information relating to HIV testing, and where to get a test, as well as PrEP, HIV and STI risks.



PHOTOS: REG DOMINGO

ACON peer workers at a[TEST] Oxford St in Darlinghurst, which is the state's most popular community-based HIV testing centre for gay men.





In partnership with Positive Life NSW, we hosted five Genesis workshops in 2017/18 for people newly diagnosed with HIV.

Here For

HIV Support

We're here to help people living 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 the success of contemporary HIV treatments, dealing with a HIV diagnoses can be a very difficult and challenging experience. We're here to support people newly diagnosed with HIV through our long-running workshop, Genesis. Presented in partnership with Positive Life NSW, Genesis operates for gay men who have been diagnosed with HIV within the last two years. It is 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. In 2017-2018, five workshops were held.

Care Coordination For People With HIV

We continued to assist people living with HIV experiencing health, personal and social issues receive appropriate support and care through our Care Coordination Service. These needs may include mental health issues, domestic and family violence, alcohol and/or drug use, financial/legal matters, or housing stress. Our counsellors work closely with clients and allied health professionals in ensuring access to relevant healthcare and support services. This year, we provided over 1,000 care coordination occasions of service to people living with HIV experiencing complex health needs.

Community Support Network

Community Support Network (CSN) provides much-needed practical support for people living with HIV. Through this program, 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 40 volunteers provided more than 1,500 occasions of care to over 50 clients.



Over **430** people accessed our HIV-related counselling services



We provided over **1,000** care coordination occasions of services to people living with HIV



40 volunteers provided home-based practical support to **50 clients** living with HIV



In partnership with Positive Life NSW, we delivered **five workshops** to help people newly diagnosed with HIV

Health Retreats

We continued to produce a range of retreats for people living with HIV, providing a unique opportunity for participants to relax, connect and receive key health promotion information. Our annual NSW Rural Retreat for Gay Men with HIV, held in Midginbil in the Northern Rivers region in February, attracted 25 participants from across regional and rural NSW, while our Ngalawi Djardi (Sit and Yarn) HIV Positive Retreat for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people saw four attendees gather in Lake Narrabeen.

Partnerships

We continued to work closely with Positive Life NSW, who work to promote a positive image of all people living with or affected by HIV, with the aim of eliminating prejudice, isolation, stigma and discrimination. ACON also works closely with organisations across the country, like the National Association of People with HIV Australia.

Other Achievements

- We provided 1,488 occasions of service to people living with HIV.
- Our counsellors provided 67 occasions of services to people newly diagnosed with HIV.
- Our counsellors provided 434 occasions of counselling service to people living with HIV.
- We provided 42 meal-based social services for people living with HIV in the ACON Café in Surry Hills, with between 40-60 people attending each week.
- We conducted 39 outreach sessions on HIV treatment at community events and venues.
- We delivered 11 peer support programs for people living with HIV.

Here For

Women

We're here to help LGBTIQ women in our communities take control of their health. We are working across policy, advocacy and research domains. We deliver services that increase awareness of and improve the health of women in our communities.

The Inner Circle: Cervical Screening Campaign

In February, we launched *The Inner Circle*, a campaign to increase cervical screening among LGBTIQ people with a cervix and communicate important changes in the National Cervical Cancer Screening Program. Funded by the Cancer Institute NSW through a Cancer Screening and Prevention Grant, the multi-faceted campaign – one of only a few in the world that targets all people with a cervix, including trans and gender diverse people – educated our communities about the efficacy of the new test and provided them with strategies to overcome barriers to testing.

As part of the campaign a total of nine videos were produced amassing a total of over 94,000 video views, while attracting over 3,700 engagements across social media. *The Inner Circle* website attracted just over 5,000 visitors and over 12,000 pageviews where users accessed information about changes to the cervical cancer screening program and other frequently asked questions about screening.

The Inner Circle, developed by ACON and our creative partner Bench Creative, was awarded the prestigious Good Design Award for Communication Design Advertising.

Checkout: LGBTIQ+ Sexual Health Clinic

Coinciding with the launch of *The Inner Circle* and to support our efforts to increase cervical screening participation, we launched a new weekly sexual health service for LGBTIQ people in February. Run in partnership with Family Planning NSW, Check OUT offers sexual health testing and cervical screening for LGBTIQ people. In the first five months of its operation, the clinic saw 115 clients. Over 30% of our clients are trans and gender diverse, including trans women, trans men and non-binary people. Check OUT's feedback has been overwhelmingly positive with 100% of people reporting they would use the service again and 100% would recommend the service to a friend.

#Talktouchtest: Breast & Chest Health Awareness

This year, we produced Lazy Sunday, a community picnic held at Enmore Park, supported by BreastScreen NSW (Sydney LHD) and the Inner West Council. Part of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Festival program, the event raised awareness of the importance of breast screening with support from the Cancer Institute NSW. Around 300 people attended the event, providing ACON an important opportunity to engage the community on breast and chest health and deliver health promotion messages.

The picnic builds on ongoing work by ACON in raising awareness on breast cancer through our #TalkTouchTest campaign. Breast cancer is the most common form of cancer affecting women, with

1 in 8 women diagnosed in Australia. LGBTIQ women have different experiences, health profiles and other factors that make them a priority group for cancer awareness and screening.

This year, we received new funding from the Cancer Institute NSW to further the #TalkTouchTest campaign. The funding, to be delivered over two years, will be used to recruit an LGBTIQ Cancer Prevention Officer to engage community groups and organisations, coordinate events and activities and lead the next phase of #TalkTouchTest, which will be launched during the 2019 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Festival.

LGBTIQ Women's Health Conference

For the fourth year, we co-presented the LGBTIQ Women's Health Conference, in partnership with Thorne Harbour Health. The conference was held in July in Melbourne where over 350 delegates attended and participated in a diverse range of workshops, talks and plenary sessions exploring issues relating to LGBTIQ women's health. Over 75 speakers and panellists presented, comprising activists, industry experts, health and human services providers, academics and community members.

Sydney Women & Sexual Health Survey

The Sydney Women and Sexual Health (SWASH) survey is an important research project for ACON, which helps to inform our programs and policy work around LGBTIQ women's health. Run in partnership with the University of Sydney, it is the longest-running survey into the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ women in Australia, providing a biennial snapshot on issues such as sexual and gender identity, sexual health, mental health, violence, tobacco and drug use, alcohol consumption, cancer screening behaviours and more. This year, ACON coordinated the data collection, which was held within the 2018 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Festival period. Thirty SWASH recruiters travelled to 24 events across Sydney and regional NSW to engage women in the survey.

Other Achievements

- In partnership with Twenty10 and filmmaker Elizabeth Duck-Chong, we produced a series of short videos that highlighted our Smoke Free Still Fierce campaign, which focuses on smoking cessation among LGBTIQ young people. Two community engagement workshops were held throughout the year, which were attended by 15 young people who got an opportunity to learn and develop skills in film production. This project was funded with support from the Aurora Foundation.
- We continued advocacy on LGBTIQ women's health with the Women's Health NSW, Women NSW and local community services. We received funding from Women NSW to create a young women's leadership strategy.



ACON Deputy CEO Karen Price with ACON staff and volunteers promoting Lazy Sunday, an event that raised awareness of breast and chest health. Above: Posters from ACON's award-winning cervical screening campaign *The Inner Circle*.



Volunteer recruiters for SWASH.



Peer workers at Check OUT.

PHOTOS: REG DOMINGO

Here For

Mental Health

While many people within the LGBTI community lead happy, healthy and productive lives, there are a range of issues relating to poorer mental health outcomes, such as anxiety, depression, self-harm, suicide ideation and suicidality, which affect a higher number of LGBTI people compared to the wider population. We're here to help LGBTI people and people living 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 people who sought help from us in relation to their mental health. Our principal focus is on people living with HIV and providing free counselling for people living with, at risk of, affected by or testing for HIV, as well as a special service for people newly diagnosed with HIV. This year over 430 people accessed our HIV-related counselling services. For LGBTI people experiencing other mental health issues, we provide a low cost fee-based service. This year our LGBTI counselling service supported close to 50 people, and over 250 clients of the Sydney, South East Sydney and St Vincents LHDs received support for suicidal thoughts and aftercare. Our Substance Support Service provides counselling services for LGBTI people and people living with HIV who need help in relation to their use of substances. This year, we supported 202 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 1,000 occasions of care coordination for clients living with HIV and a further 220 LGBTI people received care coordination support.

Support During The Marriage Equality Debate

We supported people in our communities during the Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey and in the lead up to the announcement of the result. Demand for our client services increased during this time, and we responded accordingly to ensure people in our communities got the support they needed. Additionally, our counsellors developed two resources to assist people in staying strong and resilient during the divisive survey. The first resource – 'Staying Strong During the Marriage

Equality Debate' – was released in the lead up to the survey, while the second – 'Stronger Together' – was launched ahead of the announcement of the results. Both resources garnered high engagement on social media, were widely distributed and adopted, downloaded and used by organisations and groups across Australia.

Home-Based Support And Care

Social isolation can have a deleterious effect on a person's mental health, and its impacts can be more severe for older LGBTI people. Our team of trained volunteers provided support to older LGBTI people experiencing isolation as part of our Community Visitors Scheme funded by the Australian Government. This year, over 60 volunteers delivered in home support to LGBTI clients. We also continued to provide much-needed support to people living with HIV through our Community Support Network. This year, over 40 volunteers provided 1,500 occasions of service of care to over 50 clients.

Mental Health First Aid

With funding from the City of Sydney, we delivered three Mental Health First Aid Training courses, designed to strengthen the maintenance, management and improvement of the mental health and well-being of LGBTI people within the Sydney municipality. Three courses were held with 46 people completing the training. The overwhelming majority of participants reported feeling confident helping a friend with mental health problems after completing the course.

Other Achievements

- We supported the mental health advocacy organisation, The Banksia Project, in hosting a panel discussion that explored gender, sexuality and mental health in June. Moderated by ABC journalist Monique Schafter, panelists included independent Melbourne Councillor Tony Briffa, former Olympian Matthew Mitcham, openly gay Imam Nur Warsame, comedian and musician Jordan Raskopoulos and City of Sydney Councillor Professor Kerry Phelps.
- 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 9.4/10 for satisfaction, 9.4/10 for value and 9.6/10 for recommending to others.

Demand for our client services increased during the marriage equality debate, and we responded accordingly to ensure people in our communities got the support they needed.



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.

Ageing Health Outcome Strategy

In September, we launched our *Ageing Health Outcome Strategy 2017-2021*, a strategic framework shaping our response to ageing within the LGBTI community. The strategy outlines a clear set of goals relating to equitable access to services, supporting providers to address needs of older LGBTI people, ensuring involvement of this community in the planning and delivery of aged care policies and services and promoting the inclusion of older LGBTI people in research. Over the life of this strategy, we will continue to bring our health promotion and community engagement experience to this field and develop healthy ageing programs addressing LGBTI communities, in partnership with federal and state governments, local councils, older people's networks and other service providers.

LOVE Project: Living Older Visibly and Engaged

We continue to shine a light on the needs of older LGBTI people through our LOVE Project (Living Older Visibly & Engaged). The project, established in 2013 and primarily funded through a range of small grants including from the Aurora Group, Viiv Healthcare and the AIDS Trust of Australia, 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.

LGBTI Ageing Forums Supported by City of Sydney

Funding from the City of Sydney supported three one-day events for older LGBTI community members. Each event had a theme: 'Planning For Your Future', 'Health and Wellbeing' and 'Social Connections'. Held at the Glebe Town Hall, they were all well attended by over 170 people. Health and allied services were invited to share information and activities with guest presenters from the Seniors Rights Services, Dementia Australia, Volunteering NSW and aged care providers, local GPs and dietitians.

Afternoon Delight: Movie Matinee & Tea Party Series

Afternoon Delight is ACON's premier 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. This year we celebrated Afternoon Delight's 10th anniversary, and delivered this event in seven locations across NSW, in partnership with Queer Screen and Seniors Week. Events were held in Sydney, Newcastle, Lismore, Sawtell, Shellharbour, Katoomba and Wagga Wagga. Over 700 people attended the various screenings, which

gave community members access to health information and the opportunity to reconnect with old friends and to make new connections to improve their support networks.

Wellness Weekends For People 50+ Living With HIV

Thirty-five older people living with HIV attended our 'Wellness Weekends for People 50+ Living with HIV' in Newcastle, Sydney and Kiama which were designed to promote healthy lifestyles for older LGBTI people. The events include workshops, information sessions and activities on topics such as maintaining a balanced and healthy diet; increasing regular exercise; promoting mental health wellbeing; reducing negative impacts of alcohol and drug consumption; maintaining regular face-to-face connections with friends, social groups, and family; and improving health service utilisation and relationships with health professionals.

Community Visitor Scheme

Launched in 2015, our Community Visitors Scheme, funded by the Australian Government, 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. Sixty volunteers provided community visits to 108 older LGBTI people in their own homes and residential facilities providing friendship, support and connection to the LGBTI community, and alleviating isolation. This exceeds the 50 client packages ACON is funded to provide. With increasing demand particularly outside of Sydney metro, ACON will work towards securing ongoing funding to expand this service beyond 2018.

Other Achievements

- We launched a survey canvassing the views of older members of the community living with HIV on navigating the aged care system. Over 180 people aged 55 and over took part in the survey, providing important and useful insights on ageing with HIV and aged care. The information assisted ACON in the development of a community factsheet resource for older people living with HIV accessing aged care and will be used to inform future initiatives.
- The LOVE Project delivered a satellite event for the 5th National Elder Abuse Conference with funding from the Seniors Rights Service and the City of Sydney. Sixty-five senior LGBTI community members attended and were able to access information about planning for their future.



Participants at our forums produced by The Love Project. Supported by the City of Sydney, the forums were a series of gatherings for older members of the LGBTI community and featured talks and activities on living well, healthy and connected.



PHOTO COURTESY CITY OF SYDNEY/KATHERINE GRIFFITHS/REG DOONINGO

Here For

Safety & Social Inclusion

We're here to help LGBTI people who have experienced anti-LGBTI violence and discrimination and to improve safety and security of our community by providing information and a range of programs and services.

In Pursuit Of Truth & Justice

Throughout the year, we continued to advocate for justice and healing for victims and survivors of historical hate crimes. The effects of these crimes – committed between the 1970s and the 1990s – continue to be felt by people in our communities today. ACON and a range of community partners have been working hard to address the ongoing impacts of these terrible events on survivors, victims' families and loved ones and the broader LGBTI community.

In May, we released the report *In Pursuit of Truth and Justice: Documenting Gay and Transgender Prejudice Killings in NSW in the Late 20th Century*. The report, produced in partnership with a range of organisations including Dowson Turco Lawyers, NSW Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby, the Inner City Legal Centre, as well as a number of dedicated advocates, delved into a number of cases. It presented a series of recommendations aimed at achieving justice and healing for victims and survivors, enhancing current responses to hate crimes and strengthening ongoing efforts in violence prevention.

Coinciding with the report's launch was a video that explored the ongoing impact of historical violence on our community. The video, which featured personal reflections from Sydney historian Garry Wotherspoon and former Dykes on Bikes member Nora Savona, has garnered more than 19,000 views on social media.

Bondi Memorial Project

In partnership with Waverley Council, we continued to plan for the Bondi Memorial Project, which aims to construct a memorial artwork in Marks Park in honour of victims and survivors of historic hate crimes. We continued to raise awareness of the project with a series of initiatives and events including a guided history walk around Mackenzies Headland Bondi. The walking tour explores local and LGBTIQ history and sheds light on the circumstances that gave rise to the wave of violence during the 1980s and 1990s and pays respect to the many lives impacted. Greg Callaghan, author of the true crime novel *Bondi Badlands* developed the content of the history walk and delivered three pilot walks. A total of five walks were held and further walks are being scheduled for the coming year.

In June, we supported Waverley Council's *We, the People Who Live for the Beautiful*, a cultural program which sought to raise awareness of the Bondi Memorial Project. The month-long festival included exhibitions, workshops, panel discussion and film screenings.

IDAHOBIT Campaign & Grants

This year, we marked International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) with a series of initiatives to help raise awareness of LGBTI rights, and the violence and discrimination that many LGBTI people throughout the world continue to experience.

In partnership with a range of community organisations including Positive Life NSW, HIV/AIDS Legal Centre, City of Sydney, Inner City Legal Centre, Rainbow Families NSW and the NSW Police Force, we developed a digital campaign which included various social media activations including a custom frame, a virtual event and a video on Facebook.

For the sixth year, we also delivered funding to a range of initiatives across NSW. Our IDAHOBIT small grants scheme provided support to 11 community groups and organisations – 10 of them in regional NSW – to help them undertake activities that focused attention on the impact of LGBTI discrimination on the community. Among the activities held were community picnics, film screenings, safety workshops, art exhibitions, a bush dance and a masquerade party.

The Welcome Here Project

Following a comprehensive review and community consultations, our Safe Place program was rebranded as The Welcome Here Project. The new-look project continues Safe Place's mission to encourage businesses and organisations to demonstrate their support for the LGBTI community, but also aims to foster inclusive and welcoming environments. The project is targeted at community-based organisations, health services and commercial businesses like local cafes, supermarkets, bars, restaurants, gyms, theatres, cinemas, and other businesses throughout Australia. The revised project also strengthened its focus on outer suburban and regional locations. The Welcome Here Project was introduced in February and officially launched in August.

Other Achievements

- We conducted six LGBTI Safety and Inclusion Consultations across NSW to help shape the direction of ACON's LGBTI Safety and Inclusion Project. We also coordinated an LGBTIQ Community Violence Advisory Group with representatives from 11 LGBTI community groups and organisations that provided advice on key services, community, research, and policy and advocacy needs and opportunities.
- For the fifth 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.
- We introduced a new project called LGBTIQ Diversity Days to increase visibility and awareness of LGBTIQ people thereby contributing to the creation of safe and inclusive spaces across NSW. The project involves promoting a range of LGBTIQ days of significance and providing free downloadable resources to support individuals and organisations to join in celebrating the days of significance.

ACON marks International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT). Main image: ACON CEO Nicolas Parkhill (second row, left) and ACON Deputy CEO Karen Price (third row, left) with community activists and NSW Parliamentarians. Below: ACON staff marking IDAHOBIT day.



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.

Pivot Point: Digital Health Promotion Initiative

In January, we launched a new online resource, Pivot Point, which links people in our communities to support relating to AOD use and harm minimisation. The resource, funded by Central and Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network (CESPHN), provides information on alcohol and other drugs, features a self-assessment tool for people to assess their alcohol and drug use, and offers information on how to get support for problematic alcohol and drug use. Since its launch, Pivot Point has had 10,854 visits and close to 17,000 page views.

Substance Support

We know that most LGBTIQ people and people living with HIV who use AOD 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. Since this service commenced in 2017, it has supported a range of community members to manage their substance use (take control, reduce use and, for some, quit) and improve their overall mental health and wellbeing. Community feedback indicates that the service is delivering great outcomes for people using alcohol and other drugs. This year, we supported 202 people through this service.

Needle & Syringe Program

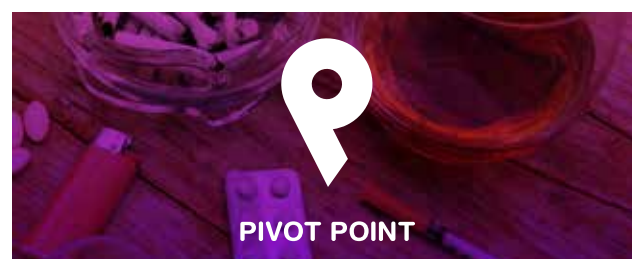
ACON continues to provide sterile injecting equipment to injecting drug users across NSW via our Needle and Syringe Programs (NSP) located in Sydney (Surry Hills), Hunter (Newcastle) and Northern Rivers (Lismore). At our primary NSW program at ACON Surry Hills, we dispensed an estimated 266,846 units of sterile injecting equipment while our secondary service in the Hunter dispensed 257,989 units of injecting equipment. Throughout the year, we delivered over 15,608 occasions of services and made 906 referrals to a variety of health, housing, employment and social services.

ACON Rovers Harm Minimisation Program

ACON Rovers are teams of specially trained volunteers who provide health promotion services relating to AOD use at LGBTI events. Operating for 15 years, the Rovers program supports partygoers to have a safe and enjoyable time. Easily identified in their famous pink vests, Rovers play a crucial role at parties and events, being the first tier of the health response – significantly reducing the burden on hospital, accident and emergency services, and the broader public health system. The Rovers program receives no government funding – it is entirely funded by ACON. This year we had 240 volunteers contribute over 750 hours, supporting our communities at events such as Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras and Tropical Fruits. In recognition of its impact and contribution, the program was the recipient of the Excellence in Health Promotion Award at the 2018 AOD Awards for the NSW Non Government Sector organised by the Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (NADA).

Other Achievements

- In partnership with the Kirketon Road Clinic (South Eastern Sydney LHD), we launched CLINIC 414. The clinic operates on Monday afternoons and provides services such as wound-care, STI check-ups, hepatitis B vaccinations, flu-vaccinations, fibro scans and Naloxone training. Attendees are provided with take-home kits by the Kirketon Road Centre nursing staff specialists. In the past year 57 clients have received assistance with five clients with complex needs completing hepatitis C treatment.
- In response to the increase in GHB overdoses, we launched the Avoid the Drop Zone campaign in December, which was funded by the Ministry of Health. Utilising existing resources, ACON worked with the community to revise ACON's existing GHB resources. The campaign reached close to 80,000 people via Facebook and a campaign video was viewed 53,080 times.



Operating for 15 years, the ACON Rovers program supports partygoers to have a safe and enjoyable time. This year, we had over 240 volunteers contribute over 750 hours, supporting our communities at events such as Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras and Tropical Fruits (pictured).



Clinic 414 in Surry Hills.

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.

Domestic & Family Violence Project

LGBTIQ 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 services, and when they do they are less likely to find support services that meet their specific needs. DFV is an important issue for the LGBTIQ communities that ACON works with and represents. Our primary activities in this area include client support, counselling, referrals to specialist legal and court support and victims compensation, social marketing campaigns and awareness-raising activities, research, resource development, capacity building and training for police and other service providers, policy development and advocacy. ACON currently sits on several expert advisory committees and interagency committees and has had input into all major NSW policies and strategies this year.

Say It Out Loud Digital Campaign

In 2016 we launched a ground-breaking resource to raise awareness of domestic and family violence in the LGBTI community. Called Say It Out Loud (sayitoutloud.org.au), the online resource was designed for LGBTIQ people, their friends, family and community and for professionals who work with individuals from the LGBTIQ community, and encourages people to start talking about their relationships. This year we revamped the website with a range of improvements and new features, enhancing the site navigation and user experience. Among the new features were a new interactive quiz to help people determine if they are in a healthy relationship, an expanded section for people who use abuse in their relationships – including a six-step process to getting help – a section for community members to submit their own story, more videos and a bystander intervention toolkit.

'Our Relationships' Video Series

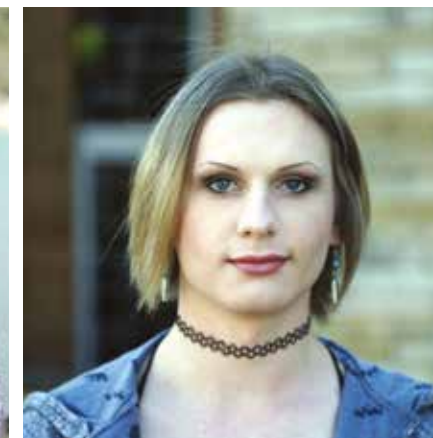
In December, we launched *Our Relationships*, a series of mini-documentaries that provide positive representations of the diverse range of relationships that exist within the LGBTIQ community, and showcased what healthy relationships can look like. The eight-part series delved into the lives of real NSW-based LGBTIQ-identifying people as they open up about their relationships – what works for them, what challenges they have faced and how have they worked through these challenges. The series was launched on Facebook and garnered media attention. The first episode alone had over 150,000 views, and the series were among ACON's most watched videos on social media for the year.

Bystander Intervention Toolkit

This year, we produced an online 'Bystander Intervention Toolkit' to help LGBTIQ community members recognise DFV as a community issue, identify it in their own social networks, and to develop some skills, and confidence to respond. Bystander theory focuses on the role of the individual and community in intervening, and confronting potentially harmful and abusive situations to prevent further violence and abuse. The toolkit was divided into three parts – Recognise, Respond and Recover – and was accompanied by a three-part animation that was promoted through ACON's social media networks.

Other Achievements

- We partnered with the Women and Girls' Emergency Centre (WAGEC) to improve the support available to LGBTIQ people experiencing homelessness and DFV. We worked with WAGEC to build their internal capacity, provided training and consulted on their practices to assist them to be more inclusive. The model will act as a pilot for similar partnerships with mainstream services in the coming year, helping to overcome limited service options for LGBTIQ communities.
- In partnership with Relationships Australia, we continued to operate Safer Pathways, a pilot program providing support to male victims of DFV. Funded by Justice NSW, the program provides safety planning information, referrals and advocacy for gay, bisexual and transmen. Throughout the year, we received 261 referrals through this program and provided 295 occasions of service.



Stills from ACON's *Our Relationships* video series. The videos showcased the diversity of relationships in our community and what healthy relationships can look like. Opposite page: ACON's Bystander Intervention Toolkit.



ACON Northern Rivers team at a 'pop up' rapid HIV testing facility at the Tropical Fruits NYE Festival, Lismore Showgrounds.



PHOTOS: REG DOMINGO, LISA KONNEBERG

Here For

Regional NSW

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 Northern Rivers and Hunter regions, with outreach services operating across Western and Southern NSW.

Our regional teams engage with LGBTI community members and people living with HIV through a range of programs, services and activities. Throughout the year, our local regional staff supported and implemented our HIV and sexual health campaigns, including *How Do You Do It?*, and campaigns on STIs and PrEP. They delivered HIV and sexual health education and outreach across regional NSW.

Our regionals teams also provided care coordination and counselling services for people with HIV and members of the LGBTI and gender diverse communities, undertook community development and peer education initiatives, supported community groups and events, provided training and support to mainstream services, delivered needle and syringe programs and face-to-face and off-site counselling.

ACON Northern Rivers

ACON Northern Rivers works with partners and services throughout Northern NSW and the Mid North Coast local health districts. The team works out of offices in Lismore and conducts outreach right across the Northern Rivers region from Tweed Heads in the north, to Coffs Harbour in the south, and out to Drake in the west. Among the highlights this year were:

- Supporting the annual Tropical Fruits NYE Festival with a range of health promotion activities including providing free rapid HIV and STI testing on the festival camp grounds, and coordinating ACON Rovers at various festival parties. We also distributed resources throughout the festival, providing safe sex packs, play packs and health promotion posters and fans.
- Collaborating with the local 'Be Young and Proud' group, alongside other service providers and passionate community members, to deliver a community event affirming the health and vibrancy of local LGBTI youth facing mental health challenges at the time of the marriage equality debate.
- Collaborating with University of Sydney researchers to roll out the very first SWASH survey for the Northern Rivers and Mid-North Coast regions. We promoted the survey online and did face-to-face recruitment at eight local events. More than 250 people completed the survey, providing an excellent local sample to understand the health needs of local LGBTIQ women.

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. Among the highlights this year were:

- Delivering ACON's HIV prevention campaigns and sexual health messages at local events and services throughout the Newcastle and Hunter region.
- Partnering with Pacific Clinic Newcastle to provide rapid HIV testing at our ACON Outreach Clinic throughout the year.
- Sponsoring the second Pokolbin Pride Festival in the Hunter Valley. Held over three days in October, the festival drew visitors from across the Hunter Valley region, allowing ACON to engage with the local community on our programs and services.
- Partnering with Relationships Australia to deliver an information night for support groups for LGBTIQ people affected by domestic and family violence (DFV).
- Supporting 'Yes Fest', a picnic event held in Newcastle's King Edward Park in October in support of the local LGBTIQ community and marriage equality. Attendees were able to access important health and wellbeing information at the ACON Hunter stall.
- Sponsoring the Central West Pride March to engage LGBTI communities in Dubbo and the Central West region of NSW on HIV prevention, sexual health and LGBTI health.



ACON Hunter team at Central West Pride March in Dubbo.

ACON Regional Outreach team works with partners, services and community organisations through southern and far west NSW. This page: ACON's rapid HIV testing site at Broken Heel Festival in Broken Hill.



ACON Hunter team supporting the Red Ribbon Appeal.

Southern, Far West, Nepean & Blue Mountains 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. Among the highlights this year were:

- For the third year, we supported the Broken Heel Festival in Broken Hill by providing a range of health promotion activities and services. This year, in partnership with the Far West LHD, Western NSW Sexual Health team staff and the NSW HIV reference laboratory, we provided on-site rapid HIV testing, STI screening as well as registrations for the Dried Blood Spot test, and a photo booth and chill out space.
- ACON was proud to be the community partner and sponsor of the inaugural Rainbow On The Plains Festival in Hay held in March. Our Regional Outreach team marched in the street parade, distributed safe sex resources and ACON campaign materials, and hosted a community recovery BBQ brunch. We also delivered an Inclusive Practice training session to local support providers during the festival.
- As a founding member of the newly established LGBTIQ+ Alliance Albury Wodonga, we participated in delivering another hugely successful Border Pride Fair Day in Albury-Wodonga. We worked with, supported and built the capacity of local community members, coordinated a sponsorship drive, developed the program, engaged with suppliers, produced promotional materials, managed stakeholder relationships and acted as media liaison for the alliance. Over 1,000 people attended the fair, providing a great opportunity to engage with the local Albury-Wodonga community and deliver health promotion messages.
- We co-hosted and supported events across the regions marking World AIDS Day including an interactive Rocky Horror Picture Show screening at Broken Hill, a 'Strike Out Stigma' ten-pin bowling event in Wagga, a community gathering with speakers and entertainment in Albury-Wodonga called 'Remember Me: HIV', a high tea for service providers in Wollongong, a community picnic in Wollongong and the UNITY Red Ribbon Party in Wollongong.
- We supported community members, groups and events focussed on the "Yes" campaign across regional NSW. We distributed community care resources, promoted local initiatives, supported and referred community members into ACON's counselling services and provided support and advice to newly established and long term community action groups, community leaders and regional service providers.
- Over the course of the year, across the South Coast, Southern, Far West, Nepean and Blue Mountains regions of NSW, we facilitated seven peer workshops, hosted 10 Rainbow Social Catch-Up events, delivered 23 LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Practice Training sessions and convened three community forums. We also partnered with community groups on four large-scale regional pride festivals, attended five regional community health expos, supported the development of the new LGBTIQ+ Alliance Albury-Wodonga, and spoke at various local theatre productions, panels and conferences. We distributed all of ACON's new campaigns and, alongside other ACON projects, co-hosted several activities including Afternoon Delight events and a community violence consultation. And we presented 38 in-services and delivered 125 outreach sessions including direct and online outreach.



ACON Regional Outreach Team supporting the Rainbow on the Plains Festival in Hay.

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.

Advocacy on PrEP

The listing of PrEP on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme in April marked an important milestone in Australia's HIV response. With federal subsidy, the highly effective HIV prevention drug is now available to those who would benefit most. Widespread access to PrEP is critical to our efforts in eliminating HIV transmissions in NSW, alongside HIV testing rates, continued strong uptake of treatment among people with HIV and continuing high rates of condom use. We continue to work with partners on advocating for access to PrEP for other members of the community including international students and those not on Medicare.

Policy Submissions and Position Statements

Over the past 12 months, we delivered numerous submissions and policy statements across a broad range of important areas relating to the health and wellbeing of our communities. These included responses to changes in the NSW Public Health Act, a proposal by the NSW Government to legislate for the mandatory testing of people whose bodily fluids come into contact with emergency service workers, the meaningful inclusion of trans and gender diverse people in HIV prevention, the NSW Government's response to LGBTI bullying, and the rapid uptake of HIV treatments.

Advocating for Marriage Equality

Research shows that LGBTI people experience higher levels of depression, anxiety disorders, self-harm, suicidal ideation and suicide compared to the general population because of stigma, prejudice, discrimination and exclusion, and these health conditions were exacerbated by the protracted debate on marriage equality. In the lead up to last year's reforms, we delivered a range of policy documents and submission relating to marriage equality and the LGBTI community, including a report on the impacts of marriage discrimination on the health of LGBTI people and a submission on the collection of statistical information from the Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey.

Trans & Gender Diverse Health Strategy & Advisory Group

While there have been strides in LGBTI health, there are significant barriers to trans and gender diverse people in many areas of health service provision. This year, ACON commenced the development of a strategy that will respond to the health needs of people in trans and gender diverse communities. To assist with the strategy's formulation, we established an advisory

group comprising members of the TGD community, community organisations and groups, researchers and ACON staff to provide strategic advice on specific health issues relating to the TGD community. The strategy will be launched in 2019.

Research Collaborations and Projects

ACON continues to work in partnership with researchers to better understand the health needs of LGBTI people and people living with HIV. Through direct involvement in research projects, data collection, or with support from our Research Ethics Committee we gain deeper insights into the health and wellbeing issues affecting our communities and develop effective responses.

In collaboration with research partners, we conducted studies on family and domestic violence in the LGBTI community, behaviour and trends on dating apps, and the HIV and sexual health of Asian gay men, as well as recruited for the Sydney Gay Community Periodic Survey and Sydney Women and Sexual Health survey.

Sydney Gay Community Periodic Survey

The Sydney Gay Community Periodic Survey (SGCPS) is an important research project for ACON, which helps to inform programs and policy work. Data findings allow researchers to monitor changes in sexual behaviour, drug use and other key health behaviours amongst men in our communities. Each year, ACON coordinates data collection during the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras festival. In 2018, survey participants were also invited to take part in the Community-based study of Undiagnosed HIV and Testing (COUNT) study, which is examining the prevalence of undiagnosed HIV infection in the community, by submitting an oral swab for HIV testing. This year, we engaged 2,860 men for the SGCPS questionnaire, and 950 men tested for HIV for COUNT. Both studies are being run by the Centre for Social Research in Health, a key research partner for ACON.

Sydney Women and Sexual Health Survey

A collaborative project between ACON and the University of Sydney, the Sydney Women and Sexual Health (SWASH) survey is a comprehensive biennial snapshot on the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ women covering issues ranging from sexual and gender identity, sexual health, mental health, violence, tobacco and drug use, alcohol consumption, cancer screening behaviours and more. Results from SWASH helps inform programs and responses



Volunteer recruiters for ACON's Sydney Women and Sexual Health (SWASH) survey. A collaborative project with the University of Sydney, the SWASH survey is a comprehensive biennial snapshot on the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ women. Below: Promotional images for the Gay Asian Men Survey.



to key health issues impacting LGBTIQ women. This year, ACON coordinated venue-based data collection, with 30 survey recruiters engaging women across 24 events during the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Festival.

Gay Asian Men's Survey

In partnership with the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Gay Men's Action Group, we delivered the Sydney Asian Gay Men's Periodic Survey to better understand the sexual health needs of men from Asian cultural backgrounds. Supported by ACON's Asian Gay Men's Project, the survey received more than 700 responses through outreach at various community venues, bars,

SOPVs and sexual health clinics. Participants were also able to access the survey online, which was made available in five languages, including Mandarin, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Thai and Indonesian.

Other Achievements

- In partnership with Sydney Health Ethics, ACON hosted a forum – *From Pink Triangles to Social Acceptance? LGBTI Human Rights Public Lecture* – at the Eternity Playhouse in March. Over 150 people attended the lecture which explored the intersections of human rights and LGBTI people with diverse sexualities, genders and sex characteristics.

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 organisations and service providers to help ensure LGBTI people and people with HIV feel included and supported.

Pride Inclusion Programs

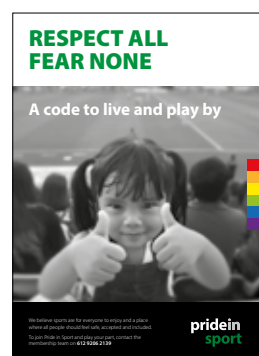
Our Pride Inclusion Programs comprise a suite of social inclusion initiatives designed to assist employers, sporting organisations and service providers with all aspects of LGBTI inclusion. The programs include Pride in Diversity, Pride in Sport and Pride in Health + Wellbeing. As part of the programs, we also conduct the Australian Workplace Equality Index and survey, the Pride in Sport Index and survey, as well as the Pride in Practice Conference, the only national conference dedicated to advancing LGBTI inclusion in Australian workplaces, sports organisations and the health and human services sector.

Pride In Diversity

Pride in Diversity continues to provide Australian employers with year-round support for all aspects of LGBTI workplace inclusion. Membership covers all states and territories, sectors and a significant number of industries ranging from ASX Top 50, blue collar industries such as mining and construction through to small business and not-for-profits. This year membership has grown by 28.6% from 196 to 252 supported by eight relationship managers (six in Sydney and two in Melbourne). During the year we partnered with Norton Rose Fulbright and a number of subject matter experts to produce a publication that supports employers in the development of LGBTI inclusive Domestic & Family Violence Policies; and with PwC on a joint publication that addresses the lack of visible out role models for LGBTI women.

Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI)

Participation in our National Benchmarking Instrument for LGBTI Workplace Inclusion (AWEI) – an annual benchmarking tool that allows employers to measure their LGBTI inclusion practises against their sector – continues to grow. This year we saw a 17% increase in participation within the Medium – Large Employer instrument and 120% increase in participation within the Small Employer Index. Participation in the accompanying survey increased



ACON's Pride Inclusion Programs comprise a suite of social inclusion initiatives designed to assist employers, sporting organisations and service providers with all aspects of LGBTI inclusion.

by 17% with 136 employers participating resulting in a response rate of 23,120. We also, for the first time, produced a dedicated publication for Small Employers focusing on their benchmark data and survey results. The AWEI continues to provide the only national survey gauging the impact of LGBTI inclusion initiatives on Australian employees, providing an immense amount of data to inform and support our work going forward. The annual awards luncheon celebrating the results of the AWEI once again broke record attendance with 698 people attending.

Pride In Sport

The Pride in Sport program works within national and state sporting organisations as well as university sports, professional and amateur teams to increase the LGBTI inclusivity of Australian sports. This year membership grew by 46% and participation in the accompanying Pride in Sport Benchmarking Index (PSI), grew by 10%. For the first time, we held a dedicated Pride in Sports Awards event in Melbourne, celebrating the results of the PSI with approximately 100 people attending.

Pride In Health + Wellbeing

Pride in Health + Wellbeing, our newest Pride Inclusion Program works to provide year-round support to health and wellbeing providers, assisting them in the ongoing development of LGBTI inclusive services. This program focuses on change initiatives, the building of internal capability and the ongoing development and improvement of practice as opposed to the development of clinician skills, which is covered by the ACON Training team. Membership has continued to grow over the last year.

Pride In Practice Conference

The annual three-day Pride in Practice conference brings all three focus areas of the Pride Inclusion Programs into an event open to both members and non-members focusing on LGBTI inclusion. This year the conference held 12 plenary sessions,



Celebrating LGBTI inclusion at the Australian LGBTI Inclusion Awards. Main image: ACON President Dr Justin Koonin with Qantas CEO Alan Joyce and PwC's James Collins, recipient of the Executive Leadership Award. Below, left: ACON's Pride Inclusion Programs team.



PHOTOS: ANN-MARIE CAULHANA



Celebrating LGBTI inclusion in sport at the Australian Pride in Sport Awards ... (from left) Athletes Daniel Kowalski, Casey Dellacqua and Casey Conway.

PHOTO: EVAN MERY



The Pride in Practice Conference held in Melbourne featured over 12 plenary sessions, 32 breakouts and over 100 speakers.

PHOTO: FINLAY LONG

32 breakouts and over 100 speakers in addition to hosting the United Nations Australian launch of their Corporate Standards of Conduct and a CEO Roundtable attended by approximately 20 leading CEOs. This conference was held in Melbourne for the first time. A record 715 tickets to the conference were sold over the three days.

Training & Consulting

Through our Training and Consulting program, we're here to assist organisations with LGBTI inclusion and awareness. We provide a range of learning and development programs that help health and community organisations increase their knowledge of LGBTI people, communities and health issues. Among this year's highlights were:

- The relaunch of our training and consultancy service with a new look and website. ACON Pride Training – formerly ACON Training and Consulting – provides training programs and packages for health services and organisations in the areas of mental health, domestic and family violence, aged care, social work, alcohol and other drug support workers, and sexual and reproductive health. Through customised learning programs and training sessions, participants learn to understand the differences between sex, gender, identity, gender expression and sexual orientation, experiences of health disparities and how to be inclusive and responsive to the needs of LGBTI people and communities.
- Delivering training programs exploring LGBTI inclusive practice

to disability workers across NSW. This program was developed and delivered by ACON as part of a statewide training initiative for Ability Links and funded by the NSW Government. Around 350 staff attended 15 days of training on supporting people with disabilities, their families and carers, who identify as LGBTIQ.

- We delivered training programs on LGBTI inclusive practice for aged care workers. This training module was developed and delivered as part of a training initiative funded by the Australian Government through the National LGBTI Health Alliance. ACON delivered 10 training sessions throughout the year, which were attended by around 158 people.
- We delivered LGBTI inclusive practice training to people that work in the alcohol and drug sector across NSW. These training sessions allow attendees to develop their skills and capacity in supporting people in LGBTI communities and to deliver appropriate care and support. The program was delivered as part of a training initiative funded by the Australian Government through five Primary Health Networks: Central Eastern Sydney, Sydney North PHN, South Western Sydney PHN, South Eastern NSW PHN (Coordinare) and Murrumbidgee PHN. ACON delivered 28 sessions, which were attended by 145 participants.
- Around 145 people that work to support victims of crimes enrolled in our LGBTI inclusive practice workshops. The training was developed and delivered as part of a training initiative by the NSW Government through Victims Services NSW. ACON delivered eight workshops over four days.



Over 100 volunteers took part in our annual Ending HIV Red Ribbon Appeal, selling red ribbon merchandise at locations across Sydney and NSW.



PHOTOS: REG DOMINGO, DAVID ALEXANDER, DAN BYRNE, MATT AERSTEN

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.

Hats Off Charity Concert

This year, the much-loved HIV/AIDS benefit *Hats Off!* wrapped up its two-decade long run with a farewell concert at the Sydney Lyric in November, in the lead up to World AIDS Day. ACON presented this year's showcase, in association with Oz Showbiz Cares/Equity Fights AIDS (OSCEFA). Over 20 artists donated their time and talents, including Mitchell Butel, Shaun Rennie, Lara Mulcahy, Nancye Hayes, Queenie van de Zandt and the cast of *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*. Helmed by the original producers Margi de Ferranti and James Lee, and directed by Trevor Ashley, *HO2O! Hats Off! To Fabulous Years*, drew over 1,000 attendees and raised around \$50,000 for ACON's Red Ribbon Appeal and the Bobby Goldsmith Foundation. We're extremely grateful for the work of OSCEFA over the years and thank the many artists, friends and attendees for their wonderful support.

World AIDS Day & Red Ribbon Appeal

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 transmissions in NSW by 2020 and raise money for programs and services that are vital to ending HIV. This year, our World



We had over **500** volunteers assist us in various roles across the organisation



Over **350** people attended the Honour Awards, celebrating outstanding achievements in the community



Around **1,000** people attended our various events in Western Sydney throughout the year, including the Parramatta Pride Picnic



More than **300** staff, volunteers and supporters represented ACON in the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade

AIDS Day-related activities included our state-wide Ending HIV Red Ribbon Appeal, which saw dozens 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. Other new initiatives included the World AIDS Day benefit concert *Hats Off!*, a forum at the Art Gallery of NSW and a screening of the acclaimed film *Tom of Finland*. We also held 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 \$96,000.

Honour Awards

First held in 2007, the Honour Awards is an annual event produced by ACON that celebrates outstanding contributions and achievements within NSW's LGBTI community. Held this year at the Ivy Ballroom in Sydney, the awards is also a gala fundraiser for ACON. More than 350 people attended the event to honour the work of those making a difference in the lives of LGBTI people in NSW. This year, nine individuals and organisations were selected as winners from a diverse field of 140 nominations and 34 finalists. Long-time marriage equality advocate and local volunteer Elaine Czulkowski was named Community Hero, while Professor David Cooper and The Kirby Institute were given the prestigious ACON President's Award in recognition of their pioneering work in Australia's HIV response.

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 focussed on promoting our *How Do You Do It?* HIV prevention campaign and connected

with thousands of people through our stalls as well as roving promotional teams. Our entry in the Mardi Gras Parade, which featured over 300 volunteers, allowed us to further showcase our refreshed *How Do You Do It?* campaign, as well as exhibit 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 Lazy Sunday, which promoted breast and chest health; Koori Gras, in support of LGBTI Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; and a host of films as part of the Queer Screen Mardi Gras Film Festival.

Western Sydney Events

We continued to support LGBTI communities in Western Sydney through a range of events and initiatives, delivered with a health promotion and community development focus. This year, our annual Parramatta Pride Picnic, held at the River Foreshore Reserve in late October, was the biggest yet. Now in its 11th year, the event brings together LGBTI people, their families and allies for a day of pride, celebration and solidarity. We also held a film screening, activities for International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia, and the Red Ribbon Appeal. These events attracted over 1,000 people.

Other Achievements

- We provided important health and safe sex information and resources at the Mardi Gras Party in March.
- In November, we re-launched our long-running community engagement and fundraising event Bingay at a brand new location at the Beresford Hotel in Surry Hills. We also held two special Bingay editions – at Paddo RSL in December and at Barangaroo in March. Over 1,700 people attended our various Bingay events throughout the year, raising around \$35,000 for ACON.
- We provided health promotion services at a range of regional festivals including Pokolbin Pride in the Hunter Valley, Tropical Fruits in Lismore, Broken Heel in Broken Hill and Central West Pride March in Dubbo.
- In partnership with Positive Life NSW, we produced an event to commemorate International Candlelight Memorial Day in May. Over 150 people attended the memorial at the Eternity Playhouse in Darlinghurst.
- We provided office accommodation, meeting spaces and small grants for a range of health, sporting and cultural organisations which work in our community.



Hats Off at Sydney Lyric.



ACON supporters at Bingay.



2017 Honour Awards.



In partnership with the Art Gallery of NSW, we hosted a forum exploring the role of photography in capturing LGBTI culture and featuring leading queer artists and photographers.



The 2017 Parramatta Pride Picnic was our biggest yet. The event is among a range of activities we produce to support the health and wellbeing of LGBTI people in Western Sydney.

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.

Corporate 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.

Our operating performance delivered a surplus of \$202K from self-generated sources including our Pride in Inclusion Programs and fundraising initiatives, allowing us to strengthen our reserves for meeting new services and investing in operational capacity.

During the year ACON further developed our organisational capacity including strengthening organisational and financial governance, and establishing a range of initiatives to provide staff support, engagement and professional development. Key highlights this year included:

Supporting Our Staff

- ACON Management and Staff Bargaining Representatives successfully negotiated a new Enterprise Agreement which is now awaiting approval by the Fair Work Commission.
- 94% of staff participated in the annual staff engagement survey and an overall engagement score of 79% was achieved, up from 76% in the previous year.
- 100 staff undertook 1,000 hours of professional learning and development.
- Our annual staff development conference, Big Days In, was held over two days in October, attended by 100 staff.
- Around 500 volunteers made an invaluable contribution to our counselling, harm minimisation and home-based care programs, allowing us to increase our reach with highly personalised and peer-based services. Volunteers also played a critical role in our fundraising appeals during the Red Ribbon Appeal and Vivid Sydney.
- We maintained all Work, Health and Safety compliance obligations and achieved zero workers compensation claims.

Improved Systems And Processes

We continued to develop and maintain our organisational governance and capacity, and we are continually working to improve business processes in line with our commitment to continuous improvement and a quality framework. These included:

- Development and launch of a new organisational reporting framework and dashboard.
- Design of a new online HR information management system.
- Ongoing promotion of our public campaign database, providing important historical references in various exhibitions, presentations, journals and academic projects.
- Digitisation and streamlining of business processes by introducing new cloud technologies to the organisation.
- Investment in new online donation platforms to better engage with our donors.
- Implementing improved sales and stock systems for our Vivid fundraising campaign.
- Automated workflow for accounts receivable.
- Negotiating a new voice and data contract with significant cost savings.
- Development of an ACON 'Reflect' Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), to realise our vision for reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Continued focus on centralising our digital data records and assets.
- Undertaking key upgrades to IT security to ensure ACON's digital information is secured, protected and in compliance with privacy policy amendments.

ACON also undertakes an accreditation program through the National Quality Improvement Council (QIC) every three years. In May 2017, ACON was assessed for accreditation against five QIC Health and Community Services Standards – Governance, Management Systems, Consumer and Community Engagement Diversity, Cultural Appropriateness and Service Delivery – and we were awarded the three years accreditation having met the criteria for all five standards.



ACON's Dai Aoki (centre), pictured here with ACON CEO Nicolas Parkhill and long-time ACON supporter Charisma Belle, was recognised with the ACON Icon Award for his hard work in 2017.

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 3,200 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 419 million people.
- 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 29% to 22,138.

- We managed ACON's suite of websites including ACON Health, Ending HIV and Emen8. This year, our corporate website traffic grew by 6%, garnering over 205,000 unique pageviews.
- We increased our engagement on social media through various channels and platforms. Across 22 Facebook pages, followers increased by 11% while Twitter activity grew by 30%. We also recorded strong engagement on Instagram, increasing our followers by 10% to 3,300 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 660,000 views on various ACON campaigns, corporate and social marketing videos.



PHOTO: DEEP FIELD PHOTOGRAPHY

Here For

Financials

The annual financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2018.

ACON Health Limited

ABN 38 136 883 915

Financial Report

For the year ended 30 June 2018

These financial statements are the consolidated financial statements of the consolidated entity consisting of ACON Health Limited and its subsidiary, the 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 Director's Report on pages 53 to 56 which is not part of these financial statements.

The financial statements were authorised for issue by the directors on 15 August 2018. The directors have the power to amend and reissue the financial statements.

The ACON Board

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 2018.

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
- Manda Hatter resigned from the ACON Health Ltd Board on 31 January 2018
- Kim Gates was appointed to the ACON Health Ltd Board on 22 November 2017



Justin Koonin, President

BSc (Hons), PhD, CFA, GAICD

Justin is a former convenor of the NSW Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby, having worked within LGBTI community organisations for over a decade. Internationally, he represents civil society in the UHC2030 partnership, working towards the health-related UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2030. Justin is also a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors Not-for-Profit Chairs Advisory Forum. 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 the legal, financial services as a senior associate with Corrs Chambers Westgarth and Chief Security Officer for the Westpac Banking Corporation. He has significant commercial experience in business process redesign, change management, risk management, software development and business development. He is currently the Commercial Director for Hivery, a data analytics start up. Andrew has had a long involvement with sports administration and is founder of the Sydney Convicts Rugby Club, co-founder of the Pride in Sport Index and was President of the Bingham Cup Sydney 2014 and Chairman of International Gay Rugby.



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 amongst other races has won numerous golds in Gay Games and has competed 3× in the Race Across America, always 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 has experience in political advisory roles across three Australian jurisdictions and works as an adviser to the NSW Government. 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.



Louisa Degenhardt

BA (Hons), MPsychology (Clinical), Ph.D.

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, Stories and Go to Market Strategies of brands around the world. Skilled in Purpose & Value set creation, Equity Leverage & Protection, Brand Story Frameworks, Integrated Go to Market Strategy, Research & Analytics, Business Strategy, Cultural Change Strategy, Creative Idea Generation. A firm believer people should drive the heart of every organisation as social, cultural, economic creation is stronger.



Kim Gates

Kim was born in Mount Lawley in Western Australia. Her cultural connections are to the Nukuna people in South Australia. Kim recently relocated to Sydney to take up a position as a Senior Project Officer at the University of Sydney in the Indigenous Strategy and Services Portfolio. Kim has a long standing commitment to Indigenous Health and social issues and has worked in Indigenous health related roles for the past 20 years, including alcohol and other drugs and sexual health. Her previous role was as the Executive Director of the Northern Territory AIDS and Hepatitis Council (NTAHC)



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. Atari is a sessional academic at Curtin University’s School of Public Health and 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 to2016) 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.

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 2017 - 30 June 2018		
Board Director	Meetings Held	Meetings Attended
Atari Metcalf	8	6
Andrew Purchas	8	7
Benjamin Bavinton	8	6
Christian Dunk	8	6
Julie Mooney-Somers	8	5
Justin Koonin	8	8
Kim Gates	4	2
Louisa Degenhardt	8	5
Manda Hatter	5	5
Richard Lee	8	5
Steven Berveling	8	6

PRINCIPAL 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 non-condom 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 people.
 - 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.

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 NGOs, 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 of 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 2018 resulted in an operating surplus of **\$244,943** (30 June 2017: operating surplus of **\$645,880**). 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.

	2018 \$	2017 \$
Operating result	244,943	645,880
Adjustment of grant receipts on a performance basis	-42,008	-430,279
Adjusted result	202,935	215,601

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 2018 that has significantly affected, or may significantly affect:

- the Group's operations in future financial years, or
- the results of those operations in future financial years, or
- 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 15th August 2018

Justin Koonin
President

Vice President
Andrew Purchas

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018

Income	Notes	2018 \$	2017 \$
Grants:			
NSW Department of Health		10,949,093	10,637,700
Local Health Districts		567,127	435,149
Other grants		2,530,274	2,367,147
Fundraising	13 (a)	5,320,658	1,375,127
Interest received/receivable		199,528	189,519
Membership		2,350	3,188
Fee for service		2,235,356	1,526,564
Rent received		258,795	251,933
Sale of vitamins		8,447	10,087
Sale of materials		81,141	33,003
Other Income		379,352	447,163
Total revenue from operations		22,532,121	17,276,580

Expenditure			
Salaries & associated costs		9,778,549	8,614,895
Campaigns & Education		6,800,443	2,780,816
Rent and rates		1,836,496	1,754,656
Depreciation – plant & equipment		294,645	337,672
Amortisation – lease incentive		150,500	150,500
Building maintenance		314,566	247,868
Communications		227,098	204,774
Travel and representation		481,823	391,273
Donations given		47,555	57,659
Events and activities		635,801	485,064
Administrative costs		1,672,801	1,565,846
Cost of goods sold		47,340	39,676
Total expenditure		22,287,177	16,630,700
Net Surplus (Deficit) for the year before tax		244,943	645,880
Total comprehensive income for the year		-	-
Operating surplus (deficit) of ACON Health Limited		244,943	645,880

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 2018

	Notes	2018 \$	2017 \$
Current Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	4	7,194,533	6,731,808
Receivables	5	478,710	380,882
Inventories		2,632	4,101
Prepayments		52,403	83,898
Total Current Assets		7,728,278	7,200,689
Non-Current Assets			
Other Financial Assets		22,000	25,300
Plant & equipment and lease incentive	6	1,159,127	1,320,770
Total Non-Current Assets		1,181,127	1,346,070
Total Assets		8,909,405	8,546,759
Current Liabilities			
Trade and other payables	7	1,428,284	1,346,351
Employee entitlements	8	1,389,996	1,354,226
Total Current Liabilities		2,818,280	2,700,577
Non-Current Liabilities			
Deferred lease liability	9	388,792	388,792
Total Non-Current Liabilities		388,792	388,792
Total Liabilities		3,207,072	3,089,369
Net Assets		5,702,333	5,457,390
Accumulated Funds	15		
Retained surplus at the end of the year		4,500,754	4,458,746
Funds Reserve		1,169,759	966,824
Revaluation Reserve		31,820	31,820
Total Accumulated Funds		5,702,333	5,457,390

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 2018

	Retained surplus	Revaluation reserve	Funds Reserve	Total
Year ended 30 June 2018				
Total stakeholder funds at the beginning of the financial year	4,458,746	31,820	966,824	5,457,390
Transfer to funds reserve	(202,935)	-	202,935	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	244,943	-	-	244,943
Total stakeholder funds at the end of the financial year	4,500,754	31,820	1,169,759	5,702,333

Year ended 30 June 2017				
Total stakeholder funds at the beginning of the 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 at the end of the financial year	4,458,746	31,820	966,824	5,457,390

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 2018

	Notes	2018 \$	2017 \$
Cash flows from operating activities			
Receipts from customers, granting bodies & fundraising (inclusive of goods & services tax)		24,468,024	17,087,061
Payments to suppliers and employees (inclusive of goods & services tax)		(24,337,830)	(15,529,238)
Interest received		199,528	189,519
Net cash inflow from operating activities		301,082	1,747,342
Cash flows from investing activities			
Payments for property, plant & equipment		(133,002)	(276,794)
Net cash outflow from investing activities		(161,643)	(276,794)
Net increase in cash held		462,725	1,470,548
Cash at the beginning of the year		6,731,808	5,261,260
Cash at the end of the year	4	7,194,533	6,731,808

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, the 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 2018 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 deconsolidated 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).

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 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.

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 including 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 rendering 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.

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.

Provisions for employee benefits

Provisions for employee benefits payable after 12 months from the reporting date are based on future wage and salary levels, experience of employee departures and periods of service. The amount of these provisions would change should any of these factors change in the next 12 months.

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

	2018 \$	2017 \$
Cash on hand	3,425	3,520
Cash at bank:		
Cheque account – operations	7,019,603	6,559,559
Deposits	171,505	168,729
	7,194,533	6,731,808

5. CURRENT ASSETS – RECEIVABLES

Trade receivables	462,892	335,614
Accrued income	15,818	45,268
	478,710	380,882

As at 30 June 2018, no receivables were considered impaired (30 June 2018: \$nil). The amount of the provision for doubtful debts was \$nil (30 June 2018: \$nil).

6. NON-CURRENT ASSETS- PLANT & EQUIPMENT AND LEASE INCENTIVE

Reconciliations of the carrying amounts of each class of plant and equipment and lease incentives at the beginning and end of the current financial year are set out below:

	Furniture & fittings \$	Office & IT equipment \$	Library Works of Art \$	Leasehold improvements \$	Lease Incentive \$	Totals \$
At 30 June 2017						
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

Year ended 30 June 2018						
Opening net book value	12,130	270,655	146,650	506,193	539,291	1,474,918
Additions	6,863	125,449	-	690	-	133,002
Depreciation/amortisation charge	(3,568)	(159,457)	-	(131,620)	(150,500)	(445,145)
Closing net book value	15,425	236,647	146,650	375,263	388,791	1,474,918

At 30 June 2018						
Cost or fair value	894,649	1,601,524	146,650	1,393,003	1,505,000	5,540,826
Accumulated depreciation	(879,224)	(1,364,877)	-	(1,017,740)	(1,116,209)	(4,378,050)
Net book value	15,425	236,647	146,650	375,263	388,791	1,162,776

7. CURRENT LIABILITIES – TRADE AND OTHER PAYABLES

	2018 \$	2017 \$
Goods & Services Tax net payable	176,407	174,704
Trade creditors	119,937	270,735
Accrued expenses	352,053	319,549
Deferred/(Unearned) Revenue	779,887	581,363
Total	1,428,284	1,346,351

8. CURRENT LIABILITIES – EMPLOYEE ENTITLEMENTS

Employee entitlements - annual and long service leave	1,389,996	1,354,226
Number of employees at reporting date (full time equivalent)	131	108

9. NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES – DEFERRED LEASE LIABILITY

414 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills	388,792	388,792
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10. 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.

11. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

During the year ACON Health Limited had no transactions with related parties.

12. 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 2018/2019 financial year.

13. CHARITABLE FUNDRAISING ACT 1991

Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 (the Act) prescribes the manner in which fundraising appeals are conducted, controlled and reported. 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.

The Entity has disclosed the income statement, balance sheet and related notes below in respect of fundraising appeals it conducted during the year. These disclosures have been made in accordance with Section 6 of the Charitable Fundraising Authority Conditions, which have been issued to the Entity under section 19 of the Act.

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) Income Statement

	Red Ribbon \$	A4E \$	Vivid \$	General \$
Gross income received from fundraising	107,579	4,788,511	168,415	256,153
Cost of fundraising	54,276	120,017	89,445	84,851
Net proceeds from fundraising	53,303	4,668,494	78,970	171,302
Application of net proceeds	53,303	4,668,494	78,970	171,302
Net surplus from fundraising	-	-	-	-

	2018 total	2017 total
Gross income received from fundraising	5,320,658	1,279,812
Cost of fundraising	348,589	299,445
Net proceeds from fundraising	4,972,069	980,367
Application of net proceeds	4,972,069	980,367
Net surplus from fundraising	-	-

Forms of general fundraising activities conducted during the year covered by these financial statements were: Concerts, Appeals, Bingo, Dinners and Special Nights at Venues.

The net proceeds from the Red Ribbon Appeal, Vivid Appeal and General Appeal were used for general purposes throughout the year as part of ACON Health Limited's daily operation.

b) Balance Sheet

	2018 Total	2017 Total
Cash at bank	-	-
Total assets	-	-

Other payables	-	-
Total liabilities	-	-

Net assets	-	-
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14. COMMITMENTS FOR EXPENDITURE

Lease Commitments

The Group leases the head office building under a non-cancellable operating lease expiring within 3 years. Excess building space is sub-let to third parties under operating leases.

Non-cancellable Operating Leases

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

	2018 \$	2017 \$
Within one year	1,989,562	1,725,762
Later than one year but not later than 5 years	2,978,035	4,624,454
Later than 5 years	-	-
	4,967,597	6,350,216

15. RETAINED SURPLUS

Retained surplus at the beginning of the year	4,458,746	4,028,455
Transfer to funds reserve	(202,935)	(215,589)
Current year surplus	244,943	645,880
Retained surplus at the end of the year	4,500,754	4,458,746

The retained surplus represents accumulated funds of **\$4,500,754** and includes provision for Employee entitlements, grant income received in advance, and provision for depreciation.

16. 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:

	2018 \$	2017 \$
Balance sheet		
Current assets	7,719,030	7,191,423
Total assets	8,900,157	8,537,492
Current liabilities	2,818,281	2,700,583
Total liabilities	3,207,072	3,089,375
Stakeholders' Funds		
Retained surplus	5,693,084	5,448,117
Operating surplus/(deficit) for the year	244,967	645,868

b) Contingent Liabilities of the Parent Entity

The parent entity did not have any contingent liabilities as at 30 June 2018 (30 June 2017 \$nil).

DIRECTOR'S DECLARATION

In the directors' opinion:

- 1) The consolidated financial statements and notes set out on pages 57 - 65 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 2018 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 15th Day of August 2018.



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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 2018, 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.


Grant Thornton Audit Pty Ltd
Chartered Accountants


A G Rigele
Partner - Audit & Assurance

Sydney, 15 August 2018

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

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

Auditor's Opinion

We have audited the 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 2018, and the consolidated statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, consolidated statement of changes in equity and consolidated statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and comprising notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies and the Director's 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 2018 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.

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 2018, but does not include the financial report and our auditor's report thereon.

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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.

Responsibility 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 intends to liquidate the Registered Entity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

The Directors 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.

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_responsibilities/ar3.pdf. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Report on the requirements of the NSW Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and the NSW Charitable Fundraising Regulation 2015

We have audited the compliance of ACON Health Limited (the "Registered Entity") and its subsidiaries ("the Group") with the requirements of Section 24(2) of the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 for the year ended 30 June 2018.

Our Opinion

In our opinion:

- a ACON Health Limited has properly kept the accounts and associated records during the year ended 30 June 2018 in accordance with the NSW Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and NSW Charitable Fundraising Regulations 2015 (section 24(2)(b) of the Act);
- b ACON Health Limited, has, in all material respects, properly accounted for and applied money received as a result of fundraising appeals conducted during the year ended 30 June 2018 in accordance with section 24(2)(c) of the Act; and
- c there are reasonable grounds to believe that ACON Health Limited will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due over the 12 month period from the date of this report (section 24(2)(d) of the Act).

Responsibilities of the Directors under the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991

The Directors of the Registered Entity are responsible for compliance with the requirements and conditions of the NSW Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and NSW Charitable Fundraising Regulation 2015 and for such internal control as the Directors determine is necessary for compliance with the Act and the Regulation. This responsibility includes establishing and maintaining internal control over the conduct of all fundraising appeals; ensuring all assets obtained during, or as a result of, a fundraising appeal are safeguarded and properly accounted for; and maintaining proper books of account and records.

The Directors are also responsible for ensuring the Registered Entity will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to form and express an opinion on the Registered Entity's compliance, in all material respects, with the requirements of the Act and Regulation, as specified in section 24(2)(b), 24(2)(c) and 24(2)(d) of the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991.

Our audit has been conducted in accordance with the applicable Standards on Assurance Engagements (ASAE 3100 *Compliance Engagements*), issued by the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board. Our audit has been conducted to provide reasonable assurance that Police Citizens Youth Club NSW Limited has complied with specific requirements of the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and Charitable Fundraising Regulation 2015, and whether there are reasonable grounds to believe the Registered Entity will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due over the 12 month period from the date of this independent auditor's report (future debts).

Audit procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement. The auditor designs procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances and incorporate the audit scope requirements set out in the Act. The audit procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion on compliance of Police Citizens Youth Club NSW Limited with the Act and Regulations and its ability to pay future debts. Audit procedures include obtaining an understanding of the internal control structure for fundraising appeal activities and examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the Registered Entity's compliance with specific requirements of the Act and Regulation, and assessing the reasonableness and appropriateness of the Registered Entity's assessment regarding the Registered Entity's ability to pay future debts.

Inherent Limitations

Because of the inherent limitations of any compliance procedures, it is possible that fraud, error or noncompliance may occur and not be detected. An audit is not designed to detect all instances of noncompliance with the requirements of the Act and Regulation, as the audit procedures are not performed continuously throughout the year and are undertaken on a test basis.

Whilst evidence is available to support the Registered Entity's ability to pay future debts, such evidence is future orientated and speculative in nature. As a consequence, actual results are likely to be different from the information on which the opinion is based, since anticipated events frequently do not occur as expected or assumed and the variations between the prospective opinion and the actual outcome may be significant.



Grant Thornton Audit Pty Ltd
Chartered Accountants



A G Rigele
Partner - Audit & Assurance

Sydney, 15 August 2018



PHOTO: STEVE CHRISTO

THANK YOU!

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