

# ACON ANNUAL REPORT

2018  
2019



ACON's WE TEST / WE CAN float at the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade in March 2019



## ABOUT ACON

We are a fiercely proud community organisation. For our entire history, the work of ACON has been designed by and for our communities.

Established in 1985, our early years were defined by community coming together to respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in NSW, and we remain committed to ending HIV for everyone in our communities. We do this by delivering campaigns and programs to eliminate new HIV transmissions. Supporting people living with HIV to live healthy and connected lives remains core to our work.

As we have grown, we have been proud to work with a diverse range of people to ensure their voice and health needs are represented in the work we do.

We help our communities take control of their health so they can look after themselves as well as their partners, family and friends. We offer a range of services including sexual health, mental health, alcohol and drugs, safety and inclusion, domestic and family violence and ageing.

We have continued to evolve as an organisation, developing significant new programs and services to meet the needs of our community, especially in the areas of training, capacity building, cancer prevention, and clinical testing and screening services.

Our head office is in Sydney and we also have offices in regional centres across New South Wales. We provide our services and programs locally, state-wide and nationally.

ACON acknowledges and pays respects to the Traditional Custodians of all the lands on which we work.



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ACON President Dr Justin Koonin (main, left) and ACON CEO Nicolas Parkhill (main, right) at ACON's WE TEST / WE CAN photo booth at Mardi Gras Fair Day

## PRESIDENT & CEO MESSAGE

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2018-2019 heralded an important milestone for ACON – the release of a new strategic plan, which provides an important framework that will guide our work for the next four years. Developed from an extensive research and consultation process, the plan outlines our vision, direction, values and focus areas, and articulates strategies in addressing the diverse and changing health needs of our communities.

Central to the delivery of this plan is our revised organisational purpose: “We create opportunities for people in our communities to live their healthiest lives”. It is a concise statement that encapsulates both our history and our outlook, defining who we are and what we do.

Core to our purpose is ending HIV transmission for all in our communities – this is the

foundation of ACON’s work. In 2018-2019, we continued to make significant progress towards this objective.

Data from the NSW Ministry of Health showed that in 2018, there were 278 new HIV diagnoses in NSW, a reduction of 17% when compared to the average for the same period of the previous five years. Among these, gay men and other men who have sex with men (MSM) accounted for 216 diagnoses, which was a 19% decrease on the five year average.

Crucial to this outcome has been the comprehensive approach to combination HIV prevention in NSW that includes high rates of testing, earlier uptake of treatment for people newly diagnosed with HIV, and the use by gay men and other MSM of other prevention tools such as PrEP, UVL and condoms. Across all these fronts, we made promising strides.

Such headway is only possible because of the strong partnership ACON continues to have with the NSW Government, as well as our many sector partners and allies, in delivering NSW’s world-leading contemporary response to HIV.

This partnership remains as important as ever, as we experience a divergent trend in HIV notifications. While HIV diagnoses are declining among Australian-born gay men and other MSM, they continue to increase among those born overseas – largely driven by those being diagnosed late. There may well be further increases in new diagnoses in this population group as we detect undiagnosed cases from increased testing.

In the past year, ACON has implemented a range of initiatives specifically targeting culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) MSM to ensure they are receiving

appropriate testing and prevention messages. This included the launch of our a[TEST] Chinese Clinic and the translation of our Ending HIV digital resource in simplified Chinese and Thai. We will continue to develop strategies to ensure the health needs of everyone in our communities, including those born overseas, are adequately addressed.

We continued to deliver initiatives and make inroads in areas such as mental health, ageing, alcohol and other drugs, domestic and family violence, and community safety. While we have some program coverage in these health areas, we recognise that these are inadequate to meet the scale of need in the community. Through partnerships, advocacy and pursuing new funding opportunities, we will continue our efforts to expand these services in order to address support, care and education needs.

A key piece of work in sexuality and gender diverse health has been to support our communities with cancer prevention and screening and this year, we bolstered activity in this area with a new multi-disciplinary and community-led breast cancer awareness campaign, along with various event activations promoting breast screenings and ongoing initiatives around cervical cancer prevention. Now, with a new three-year partnership with the Cancer Institute NSW, we look forward to further expanding our service offerings to improve cancer outcomes for our communities.

An area that has long been under-addressed is the health and wellbeing of trans and gender diverse (TGD) people and this year, ACON committed resources to address the needs of TGD communities and to ensure they feel safe and included in everything that we do. The launch of our TGD health strategy – *A Blueprint for*

*Improving the Health & Wellbeing of the Trans & Gender Diverse Community in NSW* – in April provides us with a plan of action so that TGD people also benefit from the gains we are making in other areas of sexuality and gender diverse health. We look forward to working with our communities, as well as our many partners in the health, legal and social sectors, in taking steps to progress key priority areas in TGD health.

Giving voice to our communities and strengthening inclusion is a key strategic focus for ACON. Throughout the year, we continued to support employers, sporting organisations and service providers in becoming more inclusive of people from sexuality and gender diverse communities and achieving best practice. Participation in our training and consultancy programs continues to increase year on year, demonstrating the importance of inclusion to health and wellbeing outcomes.

The contexts in which our communities live, work and play are constantly changing. In the past year, we continued our advocacy work to ensure the needs of people of diverse sexualities and genders and people living with HIV are at the forefront of policy and research design, decision-making and delivery. Our ability to be agile in responding to issues, challenges and opportunities is vital to our growth and success.

This is particularly pertinent in the coming months as our communities once again come into focus because of proposed legislation around religious freedoms and mandatory HIV testing. We will continue to work with our partners in advocating for outcomes that will not negatively impact the lives of people in our communities.

ACON would not be able to make a difference to so many people without the passion, dedication

and hard work of its staff and volunteers. ACON is only as good and effective as the people that propel it. We acknowledge their time, skills and efforts in helping us improve the health and wellbeing of our communities. A strong workforce, and a connected community of volunteers, has been integral to our work over the last 34 years, and the achievements outlined in this report are only made possible because of their contributions. We thank you.

Partnership is central to who we are and how we work, and we thank the support of our many sector partners, other not-for-profit organisations, corporations, and other federal, state and local government agencies. We particularly pay tribute to the NSW Government for continuing to lead the way in delivering a bold, innovative and comprehensive HIV response.

Finally, we wish to express our sincere thanks to all our clients and community members for their ongoing support. ACON is a fiercely proud community organisation and since our inception in 1985, our work has been designed by, and for, our communities. We look forward to standing with you, shoulder to shoulder, as we continue to create opportunities for people in our communities to live their healthiest lives in our 35th year and beyond.

Dr Justin Koonin  
ACON President

Nicolas Parkhill  
ACON CEO

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## OUR STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2022

This year, we released our new strategic plan that charts a path forward and shapes our response to the changing health needs of people from sexuality and gender diverse communities.

The ACON *Strategic Plan 2019-2022* maps our direction for the next four years, setting out our purpose, vision, values and priorities.

It outlines key objectives that will inform and propel our work as we continue to strive to be a global leader in community health, inclusion and HIV responses for people of diverse sexualities and genders.

This plan supports the ongoing development and transition that ACON has been committed to over three decades.

It sets out objectives that will ensure we continue to lead the way on ending HIV transmission while also meeting the diverse health needs of our community currently under addressed or not addressed at all. It articulates focus areas that will ensure we are financially sound, able to continue to grow, provide a voice and advocate for our communities. It also provides a mandate for us to explore new programs which will benefit many.

We are a fiercely proud community organisation, unique in our connection to our community and in our role as an authentic and respected voice.

The plan has been developed in consultation with community, staff and other stakeholders including funding bodies, service delivery partners and research organisations.

We look forward to working with our communities, our partners and our allies over the life of the plan to deliver better health outcomes for our communities.

### OUR PURPOSE

We create opportunities for people in our communities to live their healthiest lives.

### OUR VISION

We strive to be a global leader in community health, inclusion and HIV responses for people of diverse sexualities and genders.

### OUR VALUES

**Our values inform who we are:**

- Community
- Collaboration
- Informed

**Our values inform how we work with people:**

- Equity
- Inclusion
- Compassion

**Our values inform how we make decisions:**













- Excellence
- Courage
- Innovation

### OUR WORK IS FOCUSED ON

1. Ending HIV transmission for all in our communities
2. Delivering excellent, client-centred care and innovative community health programming
3. Giving voice to our communities and strengthening inclusion
4. Developing financial diversity, strength and growth
5. Building a workplace that attracts and develops the best people



SNAPSHOT

 <div><b>3 million</b> Sessions in ACON's Ending HIV website</div>	 <div><b>2.5 million</b> Users across ACON websites</div>
 <div><b>1.2 million</b> Video views on ACON campaigns, corporate and social videos</div>	 <div><b>112,840</b> Safe sex packs distributed</div>
 <div><b>85,000</b> Connections across ACON social media channels</div>	 <div><b>10,000</b> Clients across a[TEST] services</div>
 <div><b>9,500</b> HIV tests across our network</div>	 <div><b>3,167</b> Recruited for Sydney Gay Community Periodic Survey</div>
 <div><b>563</b> Volunteers across ACON</div>	 <div><b>400</b> Outdoor placements We Test / We Can campaign</div>
 <div><b>1732</b> Meals free meals served at our weekly HIV meal service</div>	 <div><b>145</b> Full time, part time and casual ACON team members</div>





**OUR PURPOSE**

*We create  
opportunities  
for people in our  
communities to  
live their  
healthiest lives*







# HIV PREVENTION

Continued efforts to maintain high rates of testing, greater reach and earlier uptake of treatment, and ongoing use of combination prevention strategies such as PrEP, Undetectable Viral Load (UVL) and condoms by gay men and other men who have sex with men (MSM) are all helping to move us closer towards our goal of virtually eliminating HIV transmission in NSW.

In order to keep this momentum going, we must continue to effectively engage and mobilise people in our communities to test often, treat early and stay safe.

We continue to help them do this by developing and promoting campaigns, operating HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STI) testing services, running HIV prevention and risk reduction community workshops, providing a range of support services and distributing thousands of free condoms every year throughout 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 June 2019, the number of NSW residents newly diagnosed with HIV decreased by 10% compared to the average for the same period of the last five years.

The number of early stage infections diagnosed in Australian-born and overseas-born men MSM fell by 39% and 38% respectively during the first half of 2019, compared to the January to June average for 2014-2018.

In 2018, there were 278 new HIV diagnoses in NSW which represented 17% fewer notifications when compared to the average for the same period of the previous five years. Gay men and MSM accounted for 216 diagnoses, which was a 19% decrease on the five year average.

Key to HIV prevention is knowing one's status and in 2018, there were 592,318 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. By the end of last year, the median time between diagnosis and treatment initiation more than halved from 45 days in 2013 to 19 days in 2018.

Of those newly diagnosed with HIV infection in 2018, 83% initiated treatment within six weeks of diagnosis, and 39% within two weeks – up from 22% in 2017. Of those on ART by six months, 89% had an undetectable viral load at the time of the six month follow-up, which means that it is no longer possible for them to transmit HIV.

But while we are seeing a reduction in HIV notifications among Australian-born gay men and other MSM, we are still not seeing a decline among people born overseas.

Between January and June 2019, there were 75 new HIV notifications of overseas born MSM – a 23% increase compared with the same period over the last five years – and almost half had evidence of late stage infection.

The rise in notifications of late stage infection in overseas-born MSM may, in part, reflect an increase in testing in this group due to initiatives targeting culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) MSM, including ACON's a[TEST] Chinese Clinic and the translation of ACON's Ending HIV resource in simplified Chinese and Thai.

ACON continues to work with the NSW Ministry of Health and other partners in engaging all groups at risk of HIV transmission, including overseas-born gay men, in HIV prevention, testing and care messaging and services.



In 2018, there was a 19% decrease in HIV notifications among gay men and other MSM



592,318 HIV tests were performed in NSW in 2018 – a 6% increase on the previous year



Of those newly diagnosed with HIV in 2018, 83% initiated treatment within six weeks of diagnosis



## WE TEST / WE CAN CAMPAIGN

In late 2018 and early 2019, we launched our HIV testing and HIV prevention campaign, WE TEST / WE CAN. Implemented in two phases – during World AIDS Day in 2018 and the Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras Festival in 2019 – the campaign reinforced HIV testing as a health habit that is culturally ingrained in the gay community, and encouraged gay men and other MSM of all backgrounds to incorporate regular HIV and STIs screenings as a central part of their sexual health regimes. It also promoted HIV prevention strategies such as condoms, PrEP and UVL. WE TEST / WE CAN was implemented across community, social and outdoor media. The accompanying campaign video drew significant engagement recording more than 160,000 views and nearly 5,000 engagements. The campaign is the 15<sup>th</sup> health promotion initiative launched under ACON's community engagement platform, Ending HIV. For more about WE TEST / WE CAN, turn to page 18.

## ENDING HIV: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLATFORM

The Ending HIV initiative has been a multi-platform vessel for mobilising the community, striving to educate and engage gay men and other MSM around HIV prevention and sexual health. Launched in 2013, Ending HIV comprises three key messages: to encourage frequent HIV and STI testing, encourage the early uptake of HIV treatment for those who are diagnosed, and continuing the practise of safe sex in all its forms (condoms, PrEP or Undetectable Viral Load). With the goal of seeing a reduction of HIV infections by 80% in NSW, Ending HIV continues to be a recognisable and trusted name within the community and has become one of ACON's most visible and long-standing health education platforms to date.

We continued to generate strong community engagement on the Ending HIV website and associated social media platforms. In 2018-2019, we had over 2.2 million visits, up 229% from the previous years, and over 3 million page views – an increase of 205%. Our combined social media community exceeded 25,000 contacts across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Youtube.

With an increasing proportion of HIV notifications among people born overseas, we also launched the Ending HIV website in simplified Chinese and Thai languages to ensure Asian gay men are able to access and receive important health messages.



ACON's WE TEST campaign

## EMEN8: NATIONAL HIV & SEXUAL HEALTH DIGITAL INITIATIVE

Emen8 is our national digital health promotion initiative for gay men and other MSM, produced in partnership with Thorne Harbour Health and funded by the Australian Government.

In late 2018, Emen8 launched a campaign with an easy to use, interactive map helping thousands of guys locate sexual health testing services nearby and across Australia.

Following its success, the team delivered a high impact, video campaign that speaks to men's real world experiences. We know that HIV prevention is no longer a one-size-fits-all approach or a condom every time message. Rather, the campaign showcased personal narratives from community members around the country, harnessing the power of peer influence to educate guys on the many different ways there are to choose and combine HIV prevention options and encouraged them to have conversations with their sexual partners.

Community feedback and connection toward the campaign demonstrated strong resonance, with findings from an audience survey showing over 80% of people found it engaging and more than 40% took further action, such as considering going on PrEP or starting a conversation with their doctor.



Wade was among a diverse range of community members featured in Emen8's 'Guys Like Me' digital campaign

## OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- We distributed over 112,840 safe sex packs (condoms and lube) to pubs, clubs, clinics, other venues and events across NSW.
- We conducted 44 peer workshops across NSW on HIV, safe sex and risk reduction. These included Looking for Mr Right, Belonging and Becoming, Start Making Sense and ConversAsians.
- We conducted 622 HIV prevention and awareness outreach sessions across NSW. This includes our Sexperts program in selected sex-on-premises

venues and digital apps, as well as community events such as Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras and the Sydney Lord Mayor's International Students Welcome Event.

- We convened 17 community forums relating to HIV and STI prevention across NSW, including Finding Mr Right Now and the Tathra Rainbow Forum.
- We recorded nearly 570,000 digital interactions relating to HIV prevention through our various online platforms and digital channels.



Posters of ACON's WE TEST / WE CAN campaign



Campaign images from WE TEST launched on World AIDS Day 2018



## HIV CAMPAIGNS: WE TEST / WE CAN

In the lead up to World AIDS Day 2018 and throughout the 2019 Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras festival, we launched **WE TEST / WE CAN**, a multi-platform campaign to encourage frequent HIV testing and promote HIV prevention strategies.

### RATIONALE

Across NSW, gay men and other MSM belong to a community that's just as diverse as the physical landscape. The concept of the campaign was borne from the idea that despite our many differences – be that how we identify, where we reside, or whom we love – caring for our health and the health of our community is something we all share.

To that, the first phase of the campaign, **WE TEST**, aimed to position HIV testing as an integral element to ending HIV transmissions in NSW. The design featured various destinations across NSW and a diverse cast of 15 community members.

For the second phase, **WE CAN**, an additional 10 members of the community were featured, comprising men from various cultural backgrounds, ages and lived experiences.

The key message revolved around ending HIV transmissions through means of prevention, and was supplemented with messages regarding the health benefits of HIV treatment and the importance of combating HIV-related stigma.

### DISTRIBUTION

The campaign used a comprehensive mix of distribution channels including social media, outdoor media, video, online dating applications, print and radio. Presence at key events such as World AIDS Day, Mardi Gras Fair Day, the Mardi Gras Parade and Party and numerous regional festivals helped broaden reach and visibility, and enabled community engagement with the campaign.

An online video was developed to highlight the ease of HIV testing and aimed to speak to individuals in areas where HIV testing may not be as well understood, such as those living in suburban settings or regional centres.





The WE TEST / WE CAN campaign was supported by over 10,000 promotional products



The We Test video was viewed more than 160,000 times and garnered nearly 5,000 engagements.



The We Test / We Can campaign was deployed across over 400 outdoor placements



97% of respondents said the We Test / We Can campaign was effective at communicating its message.

In posters and billboards across NSW, it featured the message: 'WE TEST. It's who we are, it's what we do.'

For WE CAN, community members were featured in one of six additional messages regarding HIV prevention, HIV treatment or ending HIV stigma: 'WE CAN', 'WE BANG', 'WE CARE', 'WE TREAT', 'WE TALK' and 'WE LOVE'.

Across the four-month period, the campaign was displayed on over 400 outdoor placements including billboards, digital panels and street posters, and the WE TEST video was shared widely via social media including Facebook and Instagram. These activities were supported with over 10,000 promotional products distributed to various venues and events.

## RESULTS

The online evaluation survey collected responses from 550 gay and bisexual men across NSW.

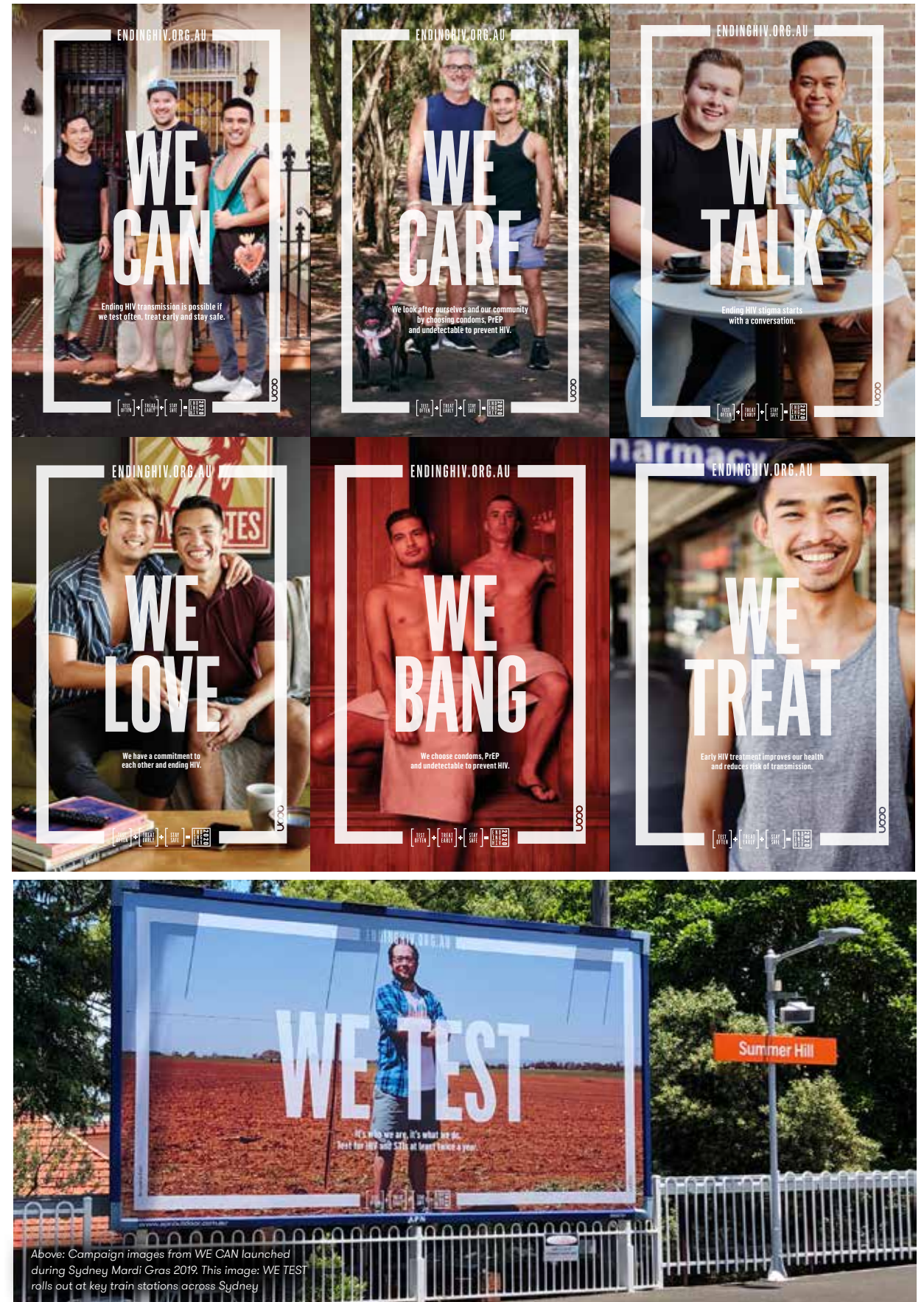
Advertisements achieved a very high level of recall. Overall, 68% of respondents had seen the

campaign and for people who were born in countries where English is not the first language, this figure rose to 79%. A large proportion of respondents – 97% – said the campaign was effective at communicating its message.

The WE TEST video was viewed more than 160,000 times and attracted nearly 5,000 engagements.

We continue to measure the knowledge and beliefs of our audience towards HIV prevention, treatment and testing.

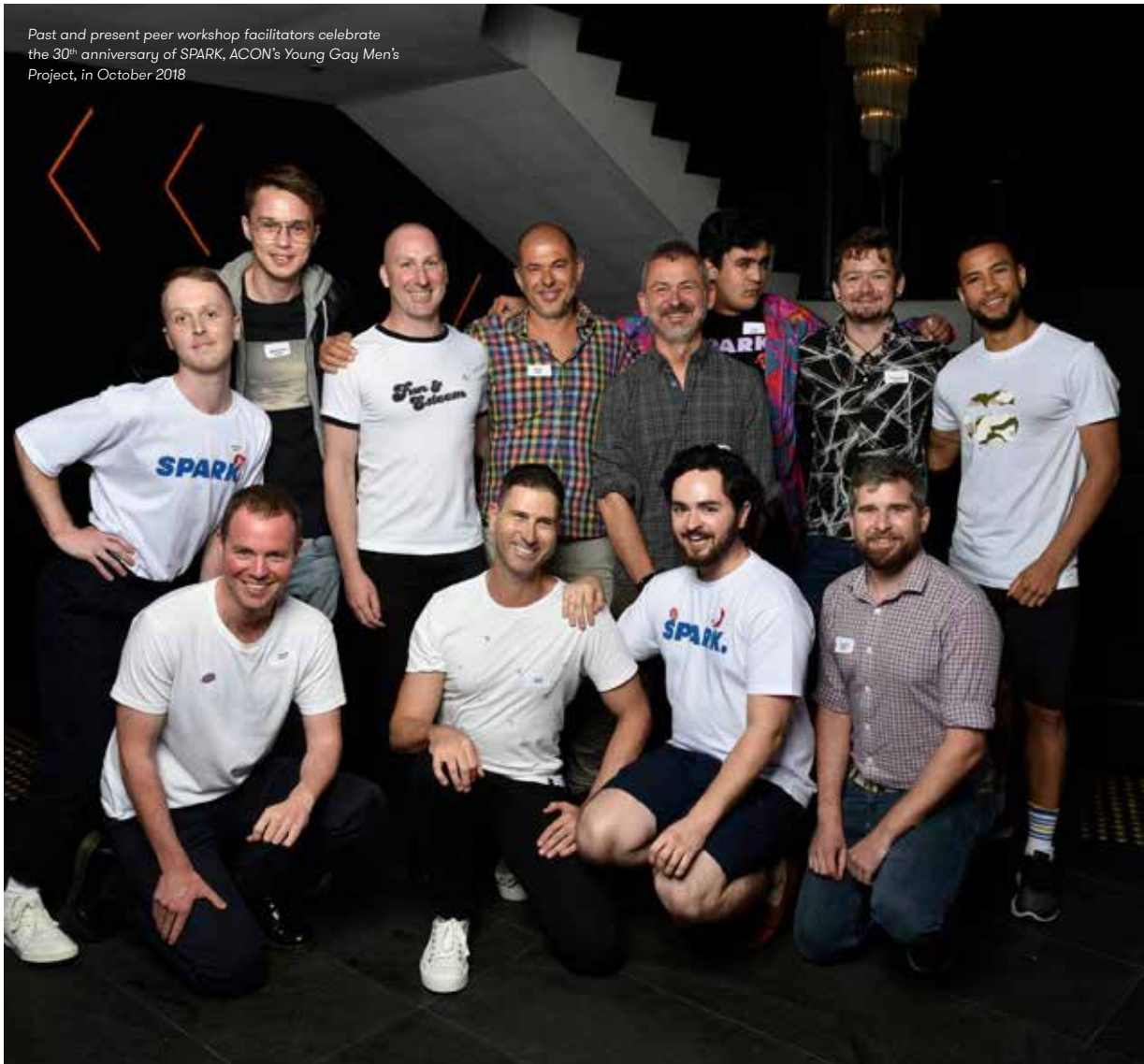
Following this campaign, 85% of community members surveyed agreed with the statement, 'Everything has changed, we can now dramatically reduce HIV transmission', a marked shift from 48% six years ago. Similarly, 83% of respondents agreed 'HIV treatments now significantly reduce the risk of passing on HIV', rising from 33% in 2013. Increasing health literacy and improving sexual health and HIV knowledge among gay and other MSM are vital to efforts in reducing HIV transmission.



Above: Campaign images from WE CAN launched during Sydney Mardi Gras 2019. This image: WE TEST rolls out at key train stations across Sydney



Past and present peer workshop facilitators celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of SPARK, ACON's Young Gay Men's Project, in October 2018



We're here to help sexuality and gender diverse 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 STIs; sex, health and relationship workshops; free condoms, safe sex packs and resources; and dedicated programs for young gay men, sexually adventurous men, LGBTQ women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as well as gay men from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

#### ENGAGING ASIAN GAY MEN

We continued to engage with gay men and other MSM from Asian cultural backgrounds to help them take control of their sexual health and wellbeing. Asian gay men face unique barriers when it comes to HIV prevention, treatment and care, and we work with these

## HIV & SEXUAL HEALTH



Over 10,000 people have attended ACON's peer education workshops since 1989



We trained 19 new volunteer workshop facilitators throughout the year



Peer volunteers contributed approximately 1,210 hours in 2018-2019



ACON's Ending HIV digital resource was translated into Simplified Chinese (pictured) and Thai

communities to ensure they have access to appropriate messages and services.

This year, we implemented a range of initiatives specifically targeting Asian gay men including the launch of a[TEST] Chinese Clinic. Staffed by Mandarin-speaking peers and nurses, clients can access HIV and STI screening and information in language. We also translated our Ending HIV digital resource in simplified Chinese and Thai.

ACON's Asian Gay Men's Project developed a new four-week workshop called Belonging and Becoming. The peer-led workshop, co-designed with 24 gay Asian men from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds, covered topics such as HIV, sexual health, migration and what it means to be gay and Asian. It was delivered three times with a total of 27 participants completing the workshop.

Our education workshops, ConversAsians, and social event series, SocialisAsians, which both provide important HIV and STI education and information, continue to attract strong engagement. The Asian Gay

Men's project supported 25 peer volunteers to deliver these events throughout the year, which were attended by over 100 people each month.

We also participated in a range of community forums including When Worlds Collide, an information event for gay international students. In partnership with the HIV/AIDS Legal Centre and Positive Life NSW, we delivered an information night exploring issues around living with HIV and migrating to Australia.

Throughout the year, we attended and supported a number of community events and activations including Mr Australasia and Mardi Gras International Queen to promote our HIV prevention and safe sex messages.

#### HEALTH PROMOTION FOR YOUNG GAY MEN

SPARK, ACON's project for young gay men, continued to engage young same-sex attracted guys through programs that explore HIV, sexual health, community and relationships. This year, we delivered 10 peer





education workshops, which were attended by 75 participants.

In November, the project celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary at a community event at The Beresford Hotel in Surry Hills. Over 150 people attended the event, paying tribute to the project's legacy. Since its establishment, SPARK – formerly known as Fun & Esteem – has delivered hundreds of workshops on HIV prevention, risk reduction and safe sex. Over the course of three decades, it is estimated that over 10,000 have attended Fun & Esteem and SPARK workshops.

Throughout the year, we participated in and supported a number of community events including Mardi Gras Fair Day, The Sydney Lord Mayor's Welcome for International Students, Queer Lunar New Year, Minus18 Queer Formal, NAIDOC Week and several

university orientation days to raise awareness of HIV and sexual health.

### PEER EDUCATION COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

Educating gay men and other MSM on HIV prevention, risk reduction and sexual health remains a strong focus of our health promotion work, and this year, ACON's All Ages Peer Education Programs team delivered six workshops that attracted 61 participants. The aim of these workshops is to provide same-sex attracted men of all ages with health information and resources.

We also continued to connect with same-sex attracted Middle Eastern men by supporting two local projects that explored issues of identity and sexuality.

Throughout the year, we trained 19 new volunteer workshop facilitators who helped deliver a range of peer education workshops and events, contributing to approximately 1,210 volunteer hours in 2018-2019.

### INITIATIVES FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

Engaging gay men and other 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.

The Aboriginal Project was involved in the production of the First Nations Float, which led the 2019 Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade, and featured more than 100 LGBTQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island marchers.

Throughout the year, we engaged with community members at various events such as the Yabun Festival, Koori Knockout, Mardi Gras Fair Day and IDAHOBIT in Western Sydney.

During NAIDOC week, we attended the National Centre for Indigenous Excellence's 10th birthday celebration and supported the event by promoting our HIV and sexual health messages.

### SUPPORTING SEXUALLY ADVENTUROUS MEN

Reaching sexually adventurous men continues to be a focus of ACON's health promotion work.

This year, we developed and delivered a targeted community forum that aimed to reach sexually adventurous Asian same-sex attracted men. The forum, which was attended by over 25 participants, focused on how to play safely and respectfully and also provided participants the latest information on

HIV and STIs, risk reduction as well as broader health information.

ACON continued to bring sexual health education to the sexually adventurous men's community through our Sexperts program, which sees specially trained volunteers provide sexual health information at sex-on-premises venues. As part of this program, we coordinated 15 Sexpert shifts, which included 45 hours and 183 interactions.

ACON also distributed 878 play packs through a variety of channels, providing safer sex equipment, and our HowHard initiative continued to highlight sexual health and harm reduction messages.

### OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- Our ACON Tradies, a team of volunteers that promote safe sex messages, provided hundreds of hours of community engagement around sexual health, and distributed thousands of condoms and safe sex packs over the Sydney Mardi Gras Festival and the Tropical Fruits Festival in Lismore.
- ACON continues 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. Regular compliance audits and staff training ensure that the ten SOPVs achieve 100% compliance to the code, maintaining safety and regular sexual health promotion.
- ACON continued to play a key role in the STIs in Gay Men Action Group (STIGMA). We helped develop, deliver and host the STIGMA Think Tank in May 2019, which explored issues such as testing, community perspectives, antibiotic resistant STIs and more. ACON also maintains representation on the STIGMA Clinicians Communications Working Group, contributing to the development of resources such as the gay friendly GP list and the NSW HIV and STI testing guidelines.



TOP IMAGE: STEVE CHRISTO. INSET: STEVE CHRISTO





Mandarin-speaking nurses and peers at ACON's a[TEST] Chinese Clinic

# HIV TESTING

Getting people in our communities to test for HIV more often is vital to efforts to ending HIV transmissions in NSW. By knowing their HIV status, gay men and other MSM can continue to take control of their health or take action to prevent potential transmissions.

Making testing easier and more accessible as well as educating gay and other MSM about the importance of testing more regularly are important areas of focus for our approach to HIV prevention.

## a[TEST] SERVICES

Our a[TEST] services continue to offer community based rapid HIV and STI screening at four sites across Sydney in Oxford Street, Newtown, Kings Cross and Surry Hills. The service, launched in 2013, is operated

in partnership with Local Health District clinical services including Sydney Sexual Health Centre, RPA Sexual Health Centre and the Kirketon Road Centre. Throughout the year, 20 trained peers attended to over 10,000 clients across the a[TEST] network, administering 9,581 rapid HIV tests. Around 7,862 of these tests were conducted at a[TEST] Oxford St, making it the state's most popular community based testing facility for gay men. According to our Annual Client Satisfaction survey, 100% of survey respondents would recommend a[TEST], and they all they said would use the service again. In May, we expanded the operating hours of a[TEST] Newtown to meet community demand.

As well as HIV and STI screening, clients at a[TEST] are also given access to information and resources on HIV prevention strategies such as PrEP, PEP and UVL, as

well as information on testing guidelines.

The service also acts as an active referral pathway into other ACON services such as counselling, peer education workshops and more.

Our integrated 'walk in' STI Xpress clinic at a[TEST] Oxford St also continues to be popular. This service provides testing for gonorrhoea and chlamydia without the need for a full consultation. The STI Xpress clinic meets the needs of those who are testing regularly and within recommended guidelines for HIV, but might want to test at a greater frequency for STIs.

## a[TEST] CHINESE CLINIC

In December, the a[TEST] Chinese clinic was launched at a[TEST] Surry Hills. This service has been set up in response to rising HIV notifications among overseas-born gay men in NSW. Operated in partnership with the Sydney Sexual Health Centre, the clinic aims to provide Chinese-speaking gay men and other MSM easier access to HIV and STI screening and information. Services are delivered in language with registration systems in simplified Chinese, and peers and nurses fluent in Mandarin. The clinic also provides an entry point for Chinese gay men and other MSM to be connected with community health services and networks.

## HIV SELF-TESTING

A HIV self-test is a HIV test that people can perform in the privacy of their own home. It is discrete and accurate, with results available in 15 minutes. Following years of advocacy, HIV self-testing was finally approved in Australia in November and the first device was made available for sale online in April.

Self-testing helps overcome key barriers some people experience when testing, such as fear of a positive result in the presence of a healthcare provider, avoiding screening due to privacy concerns or lack of access to sexual health services.

Providing more options for people to know their status and take control of their health is critical to ensuring more people regularly test for HIV.

## DRIED BLOOD SPOT TESTING

ACON continues to support the NSW Ministry of Health with the Dried Blood Spot (DBS) study. The DBS test uses technology that allows people to test for HIV at home. It is a self-collection test that requires a finger prick sample of blood to be collected at home and sent by mail for laboratory testing. Results are delivered by phone, text message or email.




ACON has been promoting the DBS study throughout the year, with a statewide campaign on social media digital apps to raise awareness and increase participation. Moreover, ACON has acted as a participating study site distributing DBS kits at sex-on-premises venues, via our digital channels and through ACON regional outreach services.

## HIV TESTING IN REGIONAL NSW

Key to achieving our goal of ending HIV transmissions in NSW is getting gay men and other MSM to test more frequently, including those living in regional areas. Throughout the year, we delivered temporary or 'pop up' HIV and STI screening sites in key locations in regional NSW, coinciding with major LGBTIQ community events.

In September, we provided on-site rapid HIV testing, STI screening as well as registrations for the DBS test at the Broken Heel Festival in Broken Hill, while in December, we operated a DBS site at the Tropical Fruits New Year's Festival in Lismore Showgrounds. In Newcastle, we continued to provide HIV testing and STI screening through our partnership with Pacific Clinic Newcastle.

We also continued to provide HIV and sexual health outreach across Southern and Far West NSW, the Hunter, South Coast and Northern Rivers, providing community members in those regions the opportunity to receive information relating to HIV testing, STI screenings, where to get a test, as well as PrEP, HIV and STI risk.

 <p>We attended to over 10,000 clients across the a[TEST] network in 2018-2019</p>	 <p>At a[TEST] Oxford St – our most popular site – 7,862 rapid HIV tests were administered</p>	 <p>100% of clients surveyed said they would recommend a[TEST] and use the service again</p>
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# HIV SUPPORT

We're here to help sexuality and gender diverse 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. These include workshops, one-on-one peer support, counselling support groups, meals, care coordination, home-based care and health retreats.

## HELPING NEWLY DIAGNOSED PEOPLE WITH HIV

ACON continues to support our community members living with HIV, with a variety of support options for those newly diagnosed with HIV. In partnership with Positive Life NSW, ACON continued to deliver Genesis, with three weekend workshops running throughout the year. The workshops explore issues relevant to a new diagnosis such as treatment, disclosure, and building resilience, all while connecting men going through the same experience in a safe and confidential environment.

ACON also launched the peer navigator program, to support those newly diagnosed in a one on one environment. The program delivers the content often covered in a Genesis workshop but in weekly meetings and with a recently diagnosed community member and peer. ACON has also expanded the language and cultural reach of this work training peer navigators from a range of CALD backgrounds.

There was a total of 11 workshops/programmed events which supported newly diagnosed people with HIV in 2018-2019, including Genesis and the Dog Day Afternoon social event for people living with HIV.

## 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 care coordinators work closely with clients and allied health professionals in ensuring access to relevant healthcare and support services. This year, we provided over 1,200 care coordination

occasions of service to people living with HIV experiencing complex health needs.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT NETWORK

Community Support Network, or 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 60 volunteers provided more than 1,200 occasions of care to over 70 clients.

## OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- Our health retreats for people living with HIV provide participants the opportunity to socialise, connect and get access to health information and resources. Our annual Rural Retreat for Gay Men with HIV, held in the Byron Bay Hinterland in Northern NSW in April, attracted 17 participants.
- We provided 2,526 counselling and care coordination occasions of service to people living with HIV.
- Our counsellors and care coordinators provided 45 occasions of service to people newly diagnosed with HIV.
- Our counsellors provided 697 counselling occasions of service to people living longer term with HIV.
- We served 1,732 meals to people living with HIV in the ACON Cafe in Surry Hills, with between 40-60 people attending each week.
- Our CSN volunteers provided over 1,200 occasions of service to around 70 clients aged over 50 years.
- Our counselling and care coordination services scored very well in our annual client satisfaction survey. High scores of 9 or 10 out of 10 were reported for:
  - Satisfaction by 91% of clients who used these services
  - Value by 89% of clients who used these services
  - Would recommend the service to others by 90% who used the services





In partnership with the Cancer Institute NSW, we expanded our service offerings to help improve cancer outcomes for people of diverse sexualities and genders

## LGBTQ HEALTH

We're here to help sexuality and gender diverse people in NSW take control of their health by providing information and a range of testing services, cancer awareness campaigns, workshops, as well as support services.

### OUR UNITED FRONT: BREAST CANCER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

This year ACON launched *Our United Front*, an inclusive campaign to promote the importance of regular breast screening among LGBTQ people in NSW. The campaign was developed in partnership with BreastScreen NSW and supported by Cancer Institute NSW.

Focusing on the importance

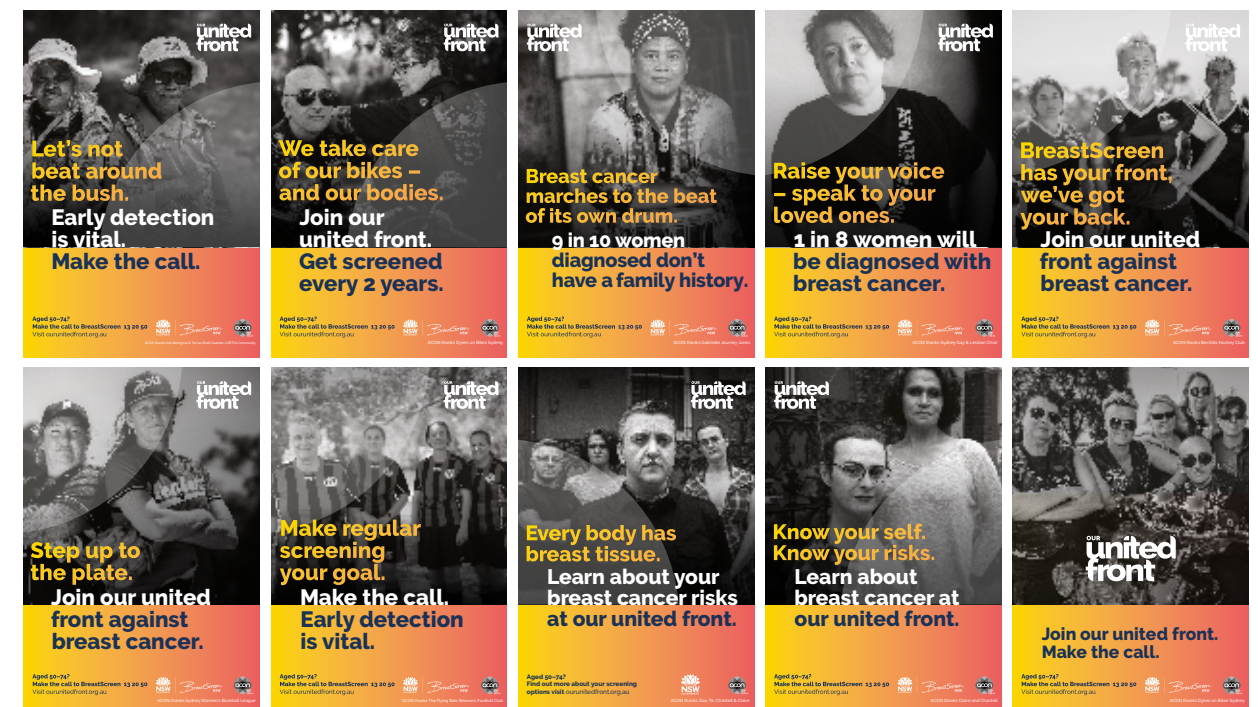
of regular breast screening, *Our United Front* builds on 2016's #TalkTouchTest campaign which focused on self-examination. Over the two year funding period, *Our United Front* produced 11 community engagement events across NSW including events that brought the BreastScreen NSW mobile screening van directly to LGBTQ communities. The campaign also collaborated with ACON's Aboriginal Project, Aboriginal Medical Services Redfern and BreastScreen NSW to promote regular breast screening among Aboriginal communities, which tend to have lower screening rates.

The campaign launched with a video which had over 82,000 views and over 8,000 engagements

across social media during the nine week digital campaign.

*Our United Front* produced print resources including posters, flyers and postcards that were distributed to over 100 medical centres and BreastScreen clinics across NSW. It also has a dedicated website where healthcare providers can download and print or order pre-printed resources.

*Our United Front* was promoted in Sydney's Inner West through outdoor advertising. The campaign concluded with an exhibition featuring the photography of ACON's Photographer in Residence Nicola Bailey who engaged with a diverse range of LGBTQ community groups and individuals across urban and regional NSW, exploring



Campaign images from *Our United Front*





Our community-led campaign Our United Front featured a range of local identities. We celebrated their participation at an exhibition at the M2 Gallery in Surry Hills

the importance of community in regards to LGBTQ health and wellbeing, particularly around breast cancer.

We are grateful for the support of the Cancer Institute NSW in the development of Our United Front campaign, and other community-led engagement initiatives. Since 2016, ACON has worked with the Cancer Institute NSW to raise awareness of our communities' cancer risks, ways of reducing these risks and screening options. We look forward to strengthening this partnership with the Cancer Institute NSW in coming years as we continue to work to improve cancer outcomes for people in our communities.

### INNER CIRCLE PHASE 2: CERVICAL SCREENING CAMPAIGN

The Inner Circle is ACON's ground-breaking cervical cancer screening awareness campaign for all LGBTQ people with a cervix. Responding to our communities' questions about cervical screening, the relationship between HPV and cervical cancer,

as well as the complicated medical rationale behind the change from the Pap Smear to the new Cervical Screening Test, The Inner Circle Phase 2 campaign produced a series of 10 new videos, adding to its suite of digital content.

Using diverse community talent, the video series *LGBTIQ&A: Your Questions, Answered by The Inner Circle*, were clear, concise, and accessible answers to FAQs. The videos garnered over 180,000 views across social media and drove over 3,000 visitors to The Inner Circle website. An overwhelming majority of people surveyed after the campaign thought the videos were informative, high quality and encouraged them to get tested – with 80% saying they were motivated to get screened when they were next due.

### CHECK OUT: LGBTIQ+ SEXUAL HEALTH CLINIC

Check OUT is a community-led sexual health clinic run in partnership with Family Planning NSW. The clinic is staffed by expert

sexual health nurses and trained LGBTIQ+ peer workers. Check OUT is open to anyone who identifies as LGBTIQ+, and sex workers are always welcome. Over the year, the clinic saw 285 clients for HIV and STI testing, and/or cervical screening. While the majority of our clients were queer-identified cis women, 25% were trans and gender diverse, 1.75 % had an intersex variation, 2.5% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and 32% were born outside of Australia. Almost 20% identified as living with a disability.

We hired and trained five new LGBTIQ+ peer workers, and over this time, 99% of clients were satisfied by our service and 99% would use the service again.

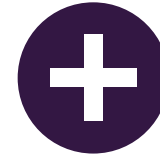
### SYDNEY WOMEN & SEXUAL HEALTH SURVEY

In March, findings from the Sydney Women and Sexual Health Survey (SWASH) were released, providing a snapshot on the health and wellbeing of LGBTQ women and non-binary

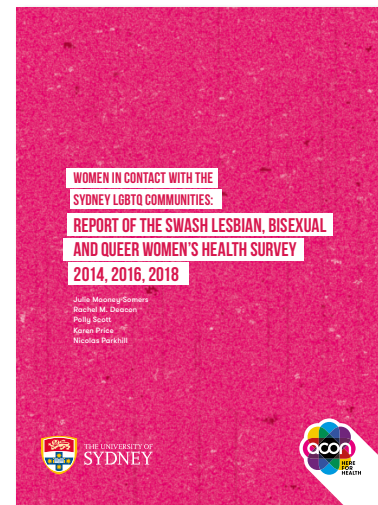
Our United Front video was viewed more than 82,000 times and attracted over 8,000 engagements



80% of survey respondents said they would get a cervical screening after seeing our Inner Circle videos



The Check OUT: LGBTIQ+ Sexual Health Clinic saw 285 clients for HIV and STI testings in 2018-2019



people in Australia. A long-running project between ACON and the University of Sydney, SWASH captures data relating to LGBTQ women and non-binary people on a wide-range of issues such as sexual and gender identity, sexual health, mental health, violence, tobacco and drug use, cancer screening behaviours and more. Insights from SWASH helps inform our programs and policy work around LGBTQ health. Almost 1300 participants were involved in the 2018 SWASH survey with an age range of 16 to 94.

### OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

ACON ran two four week LGBTQ+ Resilience and Empowerment workshop series for young LGBTQ women and non-binary people in Surry Hills and Parramatta. The workshops explored identity and being LGBTQ, queer sexual health and referral pathways, communication and boundaries, barriers, resilience and confidence, and leadership. Over the four weeks and two locations, 32 young people completed the program.



Peer volunteers at the Check OUT: LGBTIQ+ Sexual Health Clinic





ACON's counselling and client services team

## MENTAL HEALTH

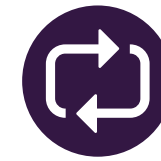
While many in our communities lead happy, healthy and productive lives, there are a range of issues relating to poorer mental health outcomes, such as anxiety, depression, self-harm, suicide ideation and suicidality, which affect a higher number of sexually and gender diverse people compared to the wider population. We're here to help sexuality and gender diverse 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



311 people accessed our HIV-related counselling service for HIV support and prevention



We provided 2,128 care coordination occasions of service to 120 sexuality and gender diverse people



60 ACON volunteers provided regular support to older LGBTI people to reduce social isolation

people newly diagnosed with HIV. This year over 311 people accessed our HIV-related counselling services for HIV support and prevention. For sexuality and gender diverse people experiencing other mental health issues, we provide a low cost fee-based service. This year our LGBTIQ counselling service supported close to 100 people. Fifty-nine people residing in the Sydney, South East Sydney and St Vincent's LHDs received support for suicidal thoughts and aftercare through funding from NSW Ministry of Health.

### HELPING PEOPLE WITH COMPLEX NEEDS (CARE COORDINATION)

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 1,200 care coordination occasions of service to 55 clients living with HIV, and a further 2,128 care coordination occasions of service to 120 sexuality and gender diverse people.

### WAYAHEAD/MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

This year, we partnered with mental health advocacy organisation WayAhead to present an accolade at the Mental Health Matters Awards. The awards recognise the achievements of individuals and organisations that have worked to improve understanding, awareness, service provision and the general mental health of our communities in NSW. ACON is presenting the Mental Health Matters Rainbow Inclusion Award, which acknowledges mental health programs, projects

or initiatives that demonstrate commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of sexuality, and gender diverse people. Award recipients are announced in October.

### OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- ACON continued its advocacy efforts for the mental health of sexuality and gender diverse people by ensuring participation in the mid-term review of *Living Well: A Strategic Plan for Mental Health in NSW 2014-2024*, and contributing to the development of the *Central and Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network Regional Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan*.
- We delivered a training session as part of the Lived Experience Network of LGBTIQ People supported by the NSW Mental Health Commission. Fourteen people attended this co-designed workshop.



Promoting our care and support services at Mardi Gras Fair Day





The LOVE Project's LOVE Lines art series helped rainbow seniors explore their creativity and make new social connections.

## AGEING

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

### LOVE PROJECT

Established in 2013, ACON's LOVE Project (Living Older Visibly & Engaged) continues to provide support for older LGBT people through a range of programs and events. The project works to improve the health and wellbeing of older LGBT community members by providing social opportunities, addressing social isolation, creating understanding about health ageing issues and encouraging people to maintain healthy lifestyles. Among the initiatives delivered by the LOVE Project in 2018-2019 were LOVE

Stories, LOVELines, LOVE Club and Afternoon Delight.

### AFTERNOON DELIGHT

Afternoon Delight is ACON's premier annual calendar event for older LGBT people. Hosted by ACON's LOVE Project, it comprises a series of free movie matinees and afternoon tea parties for LGBT seniors and their friends, providing a safe and welcoming environment to come together for an afternoon of entertainment, refreshments and social contact. This year, Afternoon Delight was presented in partnership with Uniting and Seniors Rights Service, and supported by Queer Screen, the NSW Nurses and Midwives Association and LGBTIQ+ Funerals. Screenings were held in Wagga Wagga, Newcastle, Lismore, Katoomba,

Sawtell and Sydney, giving rainbow seniors access to health information and the opportunity to make connections to improve their support networks.

### LOVE STORIES

In February, ACON celebrated older community members with a special event at Petersham Town Hall called LOVE Stories. Hosted by ACON's Love Project, LOVE Stories gave LGBT seniors and their friends an opportunity to come together and share their personal stories. The day featured a range of activities including short-story telling, song and poetry writing, life drawing and musical performances. The event was hosted by media personality and 78er, Julie McCrossin, with workshops by writer and poet Ellen Van Neerven, singer songwriter



The LOVE Project's LOVE Stories event, supported by NSW Seniors Festival and the Aurora Group, gave older members of our communities an opportunity to share their stories.

Jeremy Brennan and artist Guy James Whitworth. LOVE Stories was supported by NSW Seniors Festival and the Aurora Group.

### LOVELINES

We supported older LGBT people to explore their creativity and make new social connections with a series of life drawing workshops called LOVELines. Held over 12 weeks, participants were able to develop their artistic skills while receiving important health information in a safe and inclusive environment. The workshops were led by award-winning artist Guy James Whitworth and featured

a diverse range of life models. At the conclusion of the series, a community exhibition was held, allowing participants to showcase their works and further strengthen their social networks and connections.

### LOVE CLUB

This year, ACON's LOVE Project launched the community initiative, LOVE Club. Held once a month at ACON, LOVE Club is a gathering led by older LGBT people for older LGBT people, their supporters and friends. LOVE Club is all about maintaining connections, making new ones and building ongoing



The LOVE Project's Afternoon Delight movie matinee and tea party and Event Cinemas George St.

support networks. Activities included sharing lived experiences and stories, supporting physical and emotional wellbeing, field trips, inter-generational conversations and community speakers.

### 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. Over 60 volunteers provided community visits to over 70 clients in their own homes and residential facilities providing friendship, social support and community connection, and alleviating isolation. Additional funding will enable ACON to deliver this service in the Sydney region for a further three years.

### OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- In February, ACON's LOVE Project co-presented the Sydney premiere of the documentary *Becoming Colleen*, which was followed by a panel discussion on diversity in aged care.





ACON Rovers continued to provide important harm reduction and health promotion services across Sydney and regional NSW

# ALCOHOL & OTHER DRUGS

We're here to help people in our communities 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 sexuality and gender diverse people and people living with HIV.

## SUBSTANCE SUPPORT SERVICES

We know that most sexuality and gender diverse 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 people are able to access support services remotely through phone or online. Since



this service commenced in 2009, it has supported a range of community members to manage their substance use 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 222 people through this service, which was funded through Primary Health Networks.

## PIVOT POINT: DIGITAL HARM REDUCTION INITIATIVE

Pivot Point is ACON's website for LGBTQ community members who are looking for support in relation to their AOD use. In the lead up to, and just after the 2019 Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras festival, approximately 14,000 people visited the Pivot Point website to access harm reduction information. Community members continue to access the Pivot Point self-assessment tool and the site has been used to advertise a range of community consultations and research projects, including a consultation and scoping project about alcohol use among communities of LGBTQ women and non-binary people.

## PARTNERS FRIENDS AND FAMILY: HARM REDUCTION RESOURCE

This year ACON redeveloped, designed and disseminated the *Partners, Friends and Family* resource. The only resource of its kind in NSW, it aims to support those who are providing support and care for their LGBTQ loves ones around AOD. Six thousand community members across the state were reached by a digital promotion of the resource in June, and it continues to be disseminated in both digital and print mediums.



Staff at ACON's Needle Syringe Program in Sydney

## ACON ROVERS: HARM MINIMISATION PROGRAM

The ACON Rovers continue to provide AOD harm reduction services at LGBTQ dance parties and events in NSW. Rovers work alongside medical teams, security and venue staff to identify the early signs of drug overdose among patrons and help to prevent serious adverse incidents, and are highly valued and respected at the events they attend. There are over 100 volunteer Rovers across NSW, and this year Rovers attended a total of 19 separate LGBTQ community events. In May, ACON conducted a community survey about the program, which indicated 98% of respondents believed Rovers provide a very important health promotion service at parties and community events.

## MDMA & GHB HARM MINIMISATION CAMPAIGNS

Funding from NSW Ministry of Health allowed ACON to develop and disseminate a harm reduction campaign on MDMA and GHB over the 2019 Mardi Gras season. The objective of the MDMA and GHB

campaigns were to provide harm reduction information to people in our communities prior to, and during, Mardi Gras to reduce the likelihood of GHB and MDMA overdoses. Over the campaign period there were a total of 12,097 visits to the GHB and MDMA campaign landing pages on Pivot Point. The campaign achieved high level of engagement with the average time spent on the MDMA campaign page an impressive 5 minutes and 22 seconds, and the GHB campaign 3 minutes and 55 seconds.

## NEEDLE & SYRINGE PROGRAM

We continued to provide sterile injecting equipment to drug users across NSW via our Needle and Syringe Programs (NSP) located in Sydney, Newcastle and Lismore. Collectively these sites dispense over 500,000 units of sterile injecting equipment on an annual basis. This year, 16,118 occasions of service were delivered across the three facilities. This activity substantially contributes to efforts to reduce the transmission of blood borne viruses such as HIV and Hepatitis C among people who inject drugs in NSW.



# SAFETY & SOCIAL INCLUSION

We're here to help sexuality and gender diverse people who have experienced violence and discrimination, and to improve safety and security of our community by providing information and a range of programs and services.

## PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO HISTORIC HATE CRIMES

In May 2018 ACON released a report, *In Pursuit of Truth and Justice*, which summarised key issues and provided recommendations relating to 88 alleged gay and transgender hate killings between 1975 and 1999. ACON, in conjunction with key community partners, used the report to advocate for the establishment of a Parliamentary Inquiry, which commenced in September 2018. ACON worked to support community input by promoting the Inquiry and holding an information session. ACON made a significant contribution to the Inquiry by providing a comprehensive submission and giving evidence at two hearings. The Inquiry concluded in February 2019 with a detailed report tabled in Parliament recommending the Inquiry be extended to allow for further submissions and extra hearings in regional settings.

## BONDI MEMORIAL PROJECT

In partnership with Waverley Council, ACON has continued work to bring awareness, healing and justice to victims, families, survivors and the LGBTQ community who experienced an epidemic of prejudice related violence throughout the 1970s to 1990s.

Work has progressed on the development of a public memorial to honour victims and survivors of historical hate crimes, following Waverley Council's commitment in 2016 for ACON to raise funds and construct a public art work. Waverley Council have shown ongoing and significant commitment to the project by agreeing to locate the site of the art work at Marks Park, the most historically relevant site, and committing \$100,000 to the project. ACON also secured a major donation from community members Stephen Heasley and Andrew Borg toward the monument. Expressions of Interest for the artistic concepts have opened with designs expected to be revealed in 2020. ACON will continue to consult extensively with the community as the project progresses.



ACON made submissions at the Parliamentary Inquiry into Gay and Transgender Hate Crimes Between 1970 and 2010 in August



Information sessions were held to update the community on the inquiry into historic hate crimes



Since its launch in August, over 900 businesses and more than 6000 services have signed up to the Welcome Here Project

## THE WELCOME HERE PROJECT

We continued to help businesses and organisations demonstrate their support for sexuality and gender diverse communities with the Welcome Here Project. The project, which is a revamp of the Safe Place Program, aims to support community-based organisations, health services and commercial businesses like cafes, supermarkets, bars, restaurants, gyms and services throughout Australia in fostering inclusive environments. Since its launch in August, over 900 business and more than 6000 services and sites across NSW have signed up to the program, expressing their commitment to provide welcoming spaces for people of diverse sexualities and genders.

## IDAHOBIT GRANTS

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

For the seventh year, we delivered funding to a range of initiatives and events across NSW. Our IDAHOBIT small grants scheme provided support to eight community groups and organisations to help them undertake activities that focused attention on the impact discrimination and prejudice has on the community. Among the activities held were film screenings, panel discussions, community legal awareness workshops, and other events aiming to connect communities.

## WESTERN SYDNEY

We continued to support sexuality and gender diverse communities in Western Sydney to improve their health and wellbeing, as well as develop capacity with a range of events and initiatives. Among the activities held throughout the year supported by ACON were initiatives marking Wear It Purple Day and International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia in Bankstown; the Western Sydney Pride Soccer match in Parramatta; the Pride Radio show based in Liverpool; LGBTQ cultural awareness training in Campsie; and a community forum hosted by the University of Western Sydney community forum. Our Parramatta Pride Picnic celebrated its 12th year, bringing together LGBTIQ people, their families and allies for a day of pride, celebration and solidarity.

## OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- For the sixth 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.
- Our 'Diversity Days' program continues to increase visibility and awareness of LGBTIQ people with the aim of contributing to the creation of safe and inclusive spaces across NSW. The program 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.

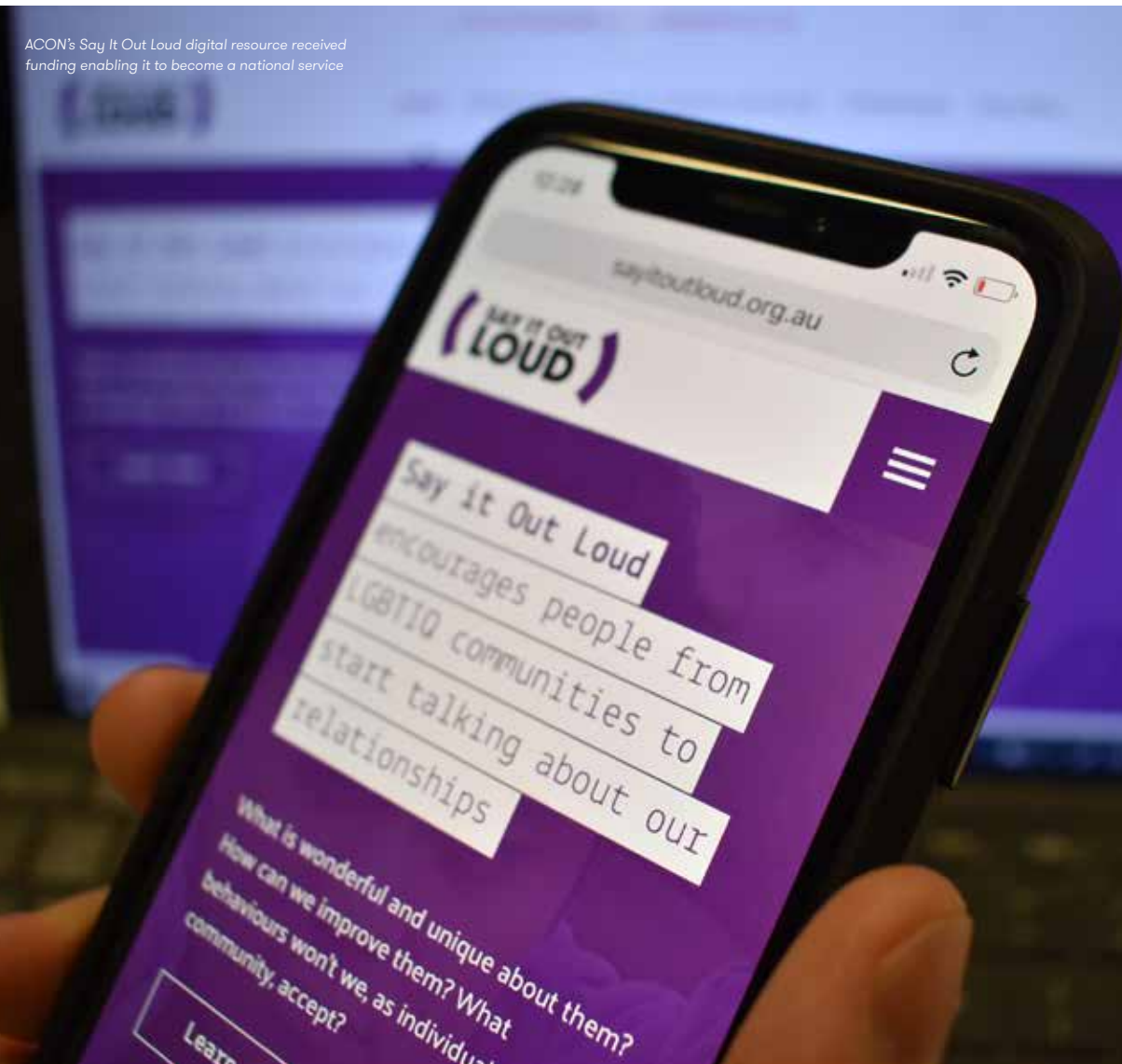


## OUR VISION

*We strive to be a global leader in community health, inclusion, and HIV responses for people of diverse sexualities and genders.*







ACON's Say It Out Loud digital resource received funding enabling it to become a national service

## DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE

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

### DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE PROJECT

Sexuality and gender diverse 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. ACON has had a dedicated DFV project since 2004 as we recognise it as an important issue for the communities that ACON works with and represents. Our primary activities in this area include social marketing

campaigns and awareness-raising activities, research, resource development, capacity building and training for service providers, policy development and advocacy. ACON also currently sits on several expert advisory committees and interagency committees. This year, for the first time, ACON has also been funded by Women's NSW to work in the sexual assault space.

### SAY IT OUT LOUD RESOURCE GOES NATIONAL

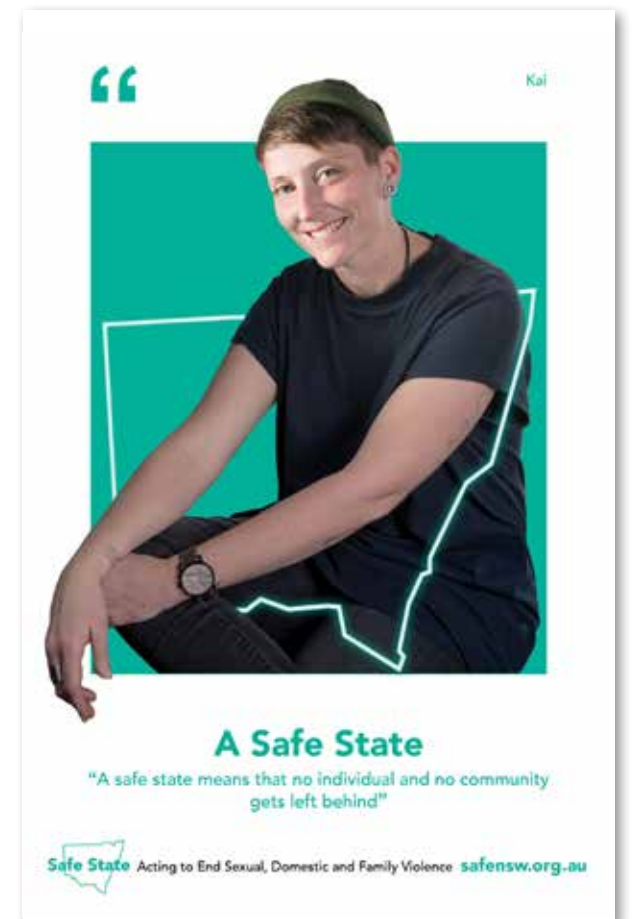
Funding from the Australian Department of Social Services announced in February will enable ACON's ground-breaking DFV digital resource Say It Out Loud to be rolled out nationally. Launched in 2016, the website ([sayitoutloud.org.au](http://sayitoutloud.org.au)) provides information, support and resources to address abuse in LGBTIQ relationships as well as information about what a healthy relationship looks like and tips on how to have one. With federal funding over a two year period, ACON is now working to expand Say It Out Loud with nationally appropriate and state-specific content, such as state-wide referral information, support options, as well as relevant legal information and legislation for each state to create a single digital resource for LGBTIQ community members and build the capacity of services and professionals working with LGBTIQ individuals across the nation.

### SORTING IT OUT: INTIMATE PARTNER AND SEXUAL ASSAULT RESEARCH

In May, ACON released the research report *Sorting It Out: Gay, Bisexual and Queer (GBQ) men's attitudes and experiences of intimate partner violence and sexual assault*. The report sheds light into GBQ men's understanding of, and attitude towards, abuse in relationships and on their experiences as bystanders where they had witnessed abuse. Following the release of *Sorting It Out*, ACON undertook a social media awareness campaign and held community consultations with GBQ men. The *Sorting It Out* report also received significant media attention.

### INCLUSIVE CAPACITY BUILDING

Following our successful partnership with the Women and Girls' Emergency Centre last year, ACON has begun year-long capacity building projects with three mainstream services working in sexual, domestic and family violence: Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia, Marrickville Youth Resource Centre and Barnardos, Western NSW. ACON is working with these services on a policy and practice



In partnership with a range of services and peak bodies, we participated in Safe State, a campaign to raise awareness of domestic and family violence

review which includes training, guidance with intake and assessment and assistance with policy and procedural development. These partnerships will build service capacity to work inclusively and responsively with sexuality and gender diverse people who have experienced violence. This work increases the service options available for our communities, including in regional areas.

### OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- This year we contributed to major state and national policy reviews, including the NSW review into sexual consent laws, the Fourth Action Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children and the Australian Human Rights inquiry into sexual harassment.
- As part of the NSW Women's Alliance, ACON provided significant support with the Safe State campaign, which advocated in the lead up to the NSW state election for all political parties to commit to 49 recommendations to make NSW A Safe State for those who have experienced DFV.





# TRANS & GENDER DIVERSE HEALTH

ACON staff raising awareness of Transgender Day of Visibility in March

We're here to help trans and gender diverse (TGD) people take control of their health.

## FOCUS ON TGD HEALTH & WELLBEING

ACON has long offered its programs and services to people with TGD experiences. This year, the health and wellbeing of TGD people became an important focus of our work.

We know that compared to the general population there are significant disparities in the health outcomes of TGD people in many areas such as mental health issues, suicidality, self-harm, substance abuse, domestic violence and exclusion. TGD people also face barriers when accessing effective and appropriate healthcare.

ACON has implemented a range of programs, services and initiatives on improving the health and wellbeing of TGD and will continue to do so as we fulfil

our purpose of giving opportunities for people in our communities to live their healthiest lives.

## TGD HEALTH BLUEPRINT

In 2017, ACON undertook the development of a health strategy to better understand, articulate and make recommendations to improve health outcomes for the trans and gender diverse (TGD) community in NSW. After an intensive 18 month process, the landmark *Blueprint for Improving the Health and Wellbeing of the Trans and Gender Diverse Community in NSW* (the Blueprint) was launched at NSW Parliament House in April 2019.

The Blueprint was developed in partnership with ACON's TGD Community Health Advisory Group, which comprised TGD community members, clinicians and community organisations, and was informed by a comprehensive review of national and international

literature, and an extensive consultation process. This included a community survey that elicited more than 450 responses, six community meetings across NSW and interviews with 23 key stakeholders including TGD community leaders, GPs, endocrinologists, sexual health physicians, NSW Health officials, and human rights lawyers.

The Blueprint recommends the key actions required to improve the health and wellbeing of TGD people in NSW, and to strengthen the inclusion of TGD people within ACON's programs and services.

## MANAGER, TGD HEALTH EQUITY

Through the Blueprint development process, ACON identified an urgent need for a comprehensive and coordinated set of activities to advance efforts in reducing the health and wellbeing disparities experienced by TGD people in NSW.

In order for ACON to effectively implement the recommendations of the Blueprint, the Board approved the recruitment of a new and senior position at ACON, the Manager, Trans and Gender Diverse Health Equity. This position, enabled through the use of ACON's own funds, is responsible for engaging in policy, education, advocacy and partnership activities across the NSW health, government, legal and community sectors. This position also works in collaboration with staff to ensure every aspect of ACON's programs, services and facilities are safe, welcoming and inclusive for TGD people, including rolling out all-gender bathrooms across ACON's buildings.

## ADVOCACY

We commenced direct engagement and advocacy with key stakeholders across the NSW health system on the need to deliver specific training, resources and support





Community members, advocates and allies at the launch of the Blueprint for Improving the Health and Wellbeing of the Trans and Gender Diverse Community at NSW Parliament House in April

for health professionals in providing gender-affirming health care to TGD communities. This has resulted in the delivery of a number of accredited training sessions for GPs and the participation in forums and on panels in a range of health, legal and government settings. In response to a sustained and targeted anti-trans media campaign, thought-leadership articles by ACON that supported TGD communities were published in the media. We also corresponded with policy makers and industry bodies such as the Royal Australasian College of Physicians about the crisis of healthcare for TGD people.

**COMMUNITY WORK**

In partnership with a number of stakeholders, we delivered a range of activities that supported the health and wellbeing of TGD people. These include facilitating training sessions for GPs, presenting on TGD health at conferences and summits, convening a Trans Clinical Care Roundtable, launching the ACON Gender Affirming Doctor List, establishing a Trans Clinical Care Community of Practice, launching trans[TEST] a peer-led HIV and sexual health service for TGD people and implementing the Right Stuff, a four week peer education workshop for trans men who are gay, bisexual or queer. To counteract the harmful social narratives about TGD people, we produced a set of resilience resources such as Trans & Strong, and

The umbrella term ‘trans and gender diverse’ describes a population of people whose gender is different to what was presumed for them at birth. We recognise and celebrate the diversity of the TGD experience, so when we use the term ‘trans and gender diverse’, ‘trans’ and ‘transgender’ we mean all people who are not cisgender. Cisgender is a term used to describe people whose gender is the same as that was presumed for them at birth (male or female). Trans people may position ‘being trans’ as a history or experience, rather than an identity, and consider their gender identity as simply being female, male or a non-binary identity. Some trans people connect strongly with their trans experience, whereas others do not.

continue to distribute them through social media. Over the course of the next twelve months, activities will include the launch of a digital hub for health, support and gender affirmation in NSW. Additional sections to support allies and clinicians will also be included. Further, a TGD leadership and advocacy program will be developed as will further peer education initiatives.





ACON at Tropical Fruits in Lismore

## REGIONAL NSW

We're here to help sexuality and gender diverse 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 community members and people living with HIV in providing care coordination and counselling services, delivering health promotion campaigns, undertaking community development and peer education initiatives, supporting community groups and events, providing training and support to mainstream services, and providing access to needle and syringe programs. Our regional teams also provide face-to-face and off-site

counselling and care coordination via phone and the internet.

### ACON NORTHERN RIVERS

ACON Northern Rivers works with sexuality and gender diverse communities, partners and services throughout the Northern NSW and the Mid North Coast local health districts. The team works out of offices in Lismore and conducts outreach across the Northern Rivers region – from Tweed Heads in the north, to Coffs Harbour in the south, and out to Drake in the west. Highlights this year include:

- Delivering ACON's HIV prevention campaigns and sexual health messages at local events and services throughout the Northern Rivers and the Mid North Coast regions of NSW.
- Supporting the annual Tropical

Fruits NYE Festival with a range of health promotion activities including HIV and STI screening on the festival campgrounds and coordinating ACON Rovers to provide harm reduction services at various festival events. We also distributed resources throughout the festival, providing safe sex packs and health promotion posters and fans.

- Delivering the NSW Rural Health Retreat for Gay Men with HIV at the Midginbil Hill Outdoor Educational Centre in the Byron Bay Hinterland. The retreat offered a range of wellbeing and health activities and workshops. Seventeen participants from Albury, Wagga Wagga, Bellingen, Queensland and Northern Rivers attended the retreat.
- Releasing results of the

Northern Rivers SWASH study at two community events – at the University for Rural Health in Lismore, part of the Lismore Women's Festival, and at the Lismore Country Women's Association Tea Rooms.

- Supporting the presentation of research findings that looked at the impact of natural disasters on sexuality and gender diverse communities. The University for Rural Health presented data on the 2017 Lismore floods and Gender and Disaster Pod from Victoria highlighted the impacts of bush fires.
- Giving evidence at the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug Ice during the Lismore hearing in June, focusing on LGBTQ-specific service models, local service gaps, and usage patterns in the sexuality and gender diverse communities in regional areas.

### ACON HUNTER

ACON Hunter works with partner and service organisations throughout the Hunter New England, Central Coast, Western NSW Local Health Districts. Working out of the offices in Newcastle, we continue to deliver our HIV prevention campaigns and sexual health messages at local events. Highlights this year include:

- Supporting Newcastle's inaugural Pride Festival in August 2018 with a range of health promotion activities including the festival opener, Short N Curlies, and Fair Day. We partnered with Pacific Clinic to deliver a pop up sexual health clinic at Fair Day, and provided condoms and resources at other festival events.
- Partnering with the Central West Rainbow Alliance to support Central West Pride in Dubbo in October. We delivered health promotion information and resources throughout the festival



ACON in Tweed Heads



ACON in Coonabarabran





- from opening night to the Pride Parade and Fair Day.
- Continuing to establish new partnerships and strengthen relationships with communities and services across central and north-western NSW.
- Delivering a range of health promotion activities in conjunction with the Koori Knockout in Dubbo including co-facilitating an STI/BBV health promotion day and an Aboriginal women's health forum.
- Supporting a Clinical Practice Improvement project with Child and Adolescent Mental Health in Taree that was subsequently awarded the Excellence in the Provision of Mental Health Services Award in Hunter New England.
- Introducing a Centrelink assistance service to support clients in the Hunter.

- In partnership with Pacific Clinic Newcastle, provided sexual health testing to over 200 clients – of these 118 were MSM.

### SOUTHERN, FAR WEST, NEPEAN AND BLUE MOUNTAINS OUTREACH

ACON's Regional Outreach team works with partners and services throughout the Illawarra Shoalhaven, Southern NSW, Nepean Blue Mountains, Murrumbidgee, Albury Wodonga and Far West Local Health Districts. Among the highlights this year were:

- For the fourth 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 chill out space.
- We were proud to be the community partner and sponsor of the second Rainbow On The Plains Festival in Hay held in March. Our Regional Outreach team hosted the Festival Reception, marched in the parade, held a stall at Fair Day and provided ACON resources and safe sex packs for the Mardi Gras Party.
- ACON supported the development of Wagga Wagga's first Mardi Gras, marched in their street parade, hosted a stall at the party in the park, and supplied local venues with ACON resources and safe sex packs.
- We hosted an information stall at the Deni Ute Muster over the course of the festival, providing



- resources and safe sex packs while connecting with community members, friends, family, and allies from far and wide.
- ACON supported the inaugural Rainbow Wave Festival in the Bega Valley, which saw a hugely successful series of community events in Pambula that culminated in a flash mob and dance party. ACON had a health promotion presence throughout the festival and in the days leading up to it ran training sessions for local service providers.
- We were a major sponsor of the 15th annual bentART exhibition in Wentworth Falls, which celebrates LGBTQ artists from the Blue Mountains and beyond.
- We celebrated NAIDOC Week in Albury Wodonga by bringing local Aboriginal LGBTQ

- community members together to have a yarn about sexual health, and supported three fierce drag queen sisters who ran a 'Drag Koorioke' session.
- ACON co-hosted and supported events across the regions marking World AIDS Day including screenings of BPM in Katoomba and Wagga Wagga, a community gathering in Griffith and a showing of the production STIGMA in Albury Wodonga.
- We supported the development of the new Illawarra LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Network (ILIN).
- We presented 11 in-services and delivered 80 outreach sessions including direct and online outreach. We also facilitated seven peer workshops and convened eight community forums.



Empowering local communities is an important part of our work. This year ACON was proud to be a major partner of several rural and regional pride festivals.



We continued to provide health promotion support to the Rainbow on the Plain Festival in Hay.



We delivered a range of health promotion activities at the Tropical Fruits NYE Festival in Lismore



We provided a rapid HIV and STI screening site at the Broken Heel Festival in Broken Hill



We supported the inaugural Newcastle Pride Festival



## INCLUSION

We're here to help make the places where our community members live, work, study, play and heal more inclusive of people of diverse sexualities and genders. Through our Pride Inclusion Programs, and our training and consultancy division, 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 support employers, sporting organisations and service providers with all aspects of LGBTIQ inclusion and a means by which to measure and benchmark work in this area. While the reach of these programs spans all states and territories, our work covers international consulting and guidance in terms of similar program establishment, content training/development and benchmarking, having now advised organisations in the UK, US, Hong Kong, Canada, Ireland, Italy, Israel, the Philippines, Japan, New Zealand and India. Programs and associated offerings include Pride in Diversity, the Australian Workplace Equality Index, the Australian LGBTI Inclusion Awards, Pride in Sport, Pride in Sport Awards, Pride in Sport Index, Pride in Health+Wellbeing, Health+Wellbeing Equality Index and the Pride in Practice Conference.

### PRIDE IN DIVERSITY

Pride in Diversity provides Australian employers with year-round support in LGBTIQ workplace inclusion and has been the critical driver for the rise of LGBTIQ inclusion in corporate Diversity & Inclusion practice since its launch in 2010. Membership currently sits at 291 organisations covering federal, state and local government, higher education and a significant number of industries ranging from ASX Top 50, blue collar industries such as mining and construction, engineering, higher education, hospitality, aged care and small business. Membership currently accounts for 2.5 million employees and professionals, having grown by 15% from 252 members last year to 291 at end of July 2019.

In addition to the provision of ongoing annual support to our membership, Pride in Diversity also focuses on several key strategic projects. Currently

these include LGBTIQ Women, Regional Reach, Trans & Gender Diverse Recruitment and Intersectionality (CALD and LGBTIQ). In 2018, Pride in Diversity partnered with PwC to produce a study entitled *Where are all the Women?* focusing on the invisibility of LGBTIQ women within the workplace, providing guidance for members in terms of understanding the challenges faced by LGBTIQ women and the impact of lack of visible role models in the workplace. The study provided practical advice for organisations wishing to create a safer and more inclusive workplace for this demographic.

Pride in Diversity also runs a three-day Train the Trainer program equipping members to be self-sufficient in their inclusion training, participates in a growing number of industry forums and provides extensive consulting/support to non-members via a fee-for-service model.

### THE AUSTRALIAN WORKPLACE EQUALITY INDEX (AWEI)

Pride in Diversity is the developer and owner of the Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI), the national benchmarking instrument for workplace inclusion in Australia. This year we saw a participation increase of 15.7% for medium-sized employers and 27.3% for small employers. 27 of the current ASX Top 50 participated. Participation in the accompanying employee survey rose by 18% with 27,349 respondents providing feedback on the impact of their employer's inclusion initiatives. The average score across submissions rose by 19% showing that practice continues to shift towards a positive and more inclusive culture for LGBTIQ employees. The resulting Australian LGBTI Inclusion Awards, celebrating the results of the index and peer nominations, once again broke all records with attendance peaking at venue capacity (721 attendees). RMIT University, Melbourne took out top honours for 2019 Employer of the Year, obtaining highest points within the AWEI.

### PRIDE IN SPORT

The Pride in Sport programs works with national and state sporting organisations as well as university sports, professional and amateur teams to increase the LGBTIQ inclusivity within Australian Sport. While membership within Pride in Sport has remained steady (currently 17 members), participation within the Pride in Sport Index (PSI), measuring and benchmarking LGBTIQ



Celebrating outstanding achievements in inclusion in sport at the annual Pride in Sport Awards in held in Melbourne





The Pride in Practice Conference attracted over 300 participants over three days in December in Melbourne

inclusive practice within Australian Sport rose by 61% with a total of 18 sporting organisations participating, of which 15 were a mix of both national and state sporting organisations. The Pride In Sport Awards saw a 70% increase in community award nominations, a 20% increase in attendance and for the first time, event sponsorship. Tennis Australia and Melbourne University Sport took out highest honours for the highest scores with the Pride in Sport Index.

**PRIDE IN HEALTH & WELLBEING**

Our newest program, Pride in Health and Wellbeing, saw a 37.5% increase in membership this year,

rising from 16 to 22 and we also launched its first publication *Getting Started with Pride in Health + Wellbeing* in addition to its first benchmarking index for LGBTIQ inclusive service provision within the health and wellbeing sectors; a total of nine organisations participated within the inaugural index. This year Service Provider of the Year was awarded to Uniting for obtaining the highest score within the inaugural index.

**PRIDE IN PRACTICE CONFERENCE**

The three-day national Pride in Practice Conference brings together members from all three Pride Inclusion Programs and a large cohort of non-member



Pride in Diversity provided year-round support to 291 member organisations



Participation in the Australian Workplace Equality Index employee survey rose by 18%



There was a 61% increase in participation in the Pride in Sport Index



ACON's Pride Training delivered 10+ in-person training sessions throughout the year

organisations to discuss LGBTIQ inclusion and showcase best practice across the three streams. Our December 2018 conference held in Melbourne broke all attendance records with approximately 300 people attending per day across the three-day event. For the first time, Pride in Practice opened up an exhibition area attracting a total of nine first-time exhibitors.

**ACON PRIDE TRAINING**

Launched in June 2018, Pride Training is ACON's training and consultancy service that assists organisations with sexuality and gender diverse inclusion and awareness. It offers training packages for services and organisations in the areas of mental health, domestic and family violence, aged care, social work, alcohol and other drug support, tertiary education 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 people who are sexuality and gender diverse. Throughout the year, we delivered 10+ in-person training sessions reaching 1608 professionals. Other highlights in 2018-2019 include:

- A two-year contract to continue delivering training programs on 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 24 training sessions throughout the year, which were attended by around 335 people.
- The creation of a three-module eLearning program on LGBTI Awareness, which has seen significant uptake among health and wellbeing service providers across Australia. The program includes engaging video content featuring real community members and information about LGBTIQ communities.





Politicians across the spectrum participated in the NSW State Election community forum

## ADVOCACY

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

### STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2022

In 2019, we released our new strategic plan, which charts a path forward and shapes our response to the changing health needs of our communities. The plan was developed from an extensive research and consultation process that included staff and community surveys, stakeholder interviews, development of position papers and fact sheets, as well as consultation workshops with staff and the ACON Board. The plan will be used to guide and inform our work as we deliver better health outcomes for our communities.

### NSW ELECTION FORUM

2019 saw a state election in NSW and in continuing our commitment to informing and supporting members of sexuality and gender diverse communities, ACON worked with key partners to compile an Election Issues Questionnaire, which was sent to the major parties and independent representatives. Among the topics covered were HIV prevention, religious freedoms, education and law reform. ACON compiled responses from this survey into the *2019 NSW State Election Issues* for community members, and hosted an information forum attended by key candidates. This event was attended by over

100 people and livestreamed to community members across NSW, helping to ensure people made informed decisions about issues important to them.

### IMAGINING HIV IN 2030

In 2019, ACON released the discussion paper *Imagining HIV In 2030*, which challenged the HIV sector and the community to consider the impact of HIV epidemic over the next decade. The paper explored what needs to be done to ensure that community, sector and government responses to HIV prevention, treatment and support in NSW remain on course. *Imagining HIV in 2030* was launched at a community forum at the Eternity Playhouse in Darlinghurst. Over 150 people heard from a panel discussion hosted by writer Benjamin Law and a range of researchers and health experts including NSW Chief Health Officer Dr Kerry Chant; Kirby Institute Director Professor Anthony Kelleher; Kirby Institute researcher Dr Ben Bavinton; Dr Horas Wong, registered nurse and affiliated with the Centre for Social Research in Health, Positive Life NSW's Lance Feeney and ACON CEO Nicolas Parkhill.

### TRANS & GENDER DIVERSE HEALTH BLUEPRINT

This year, we launched the Blueprint for Improving the Health and Wellbeing of the Trans and Gender Diverse Community in New South Wales. This landmark document, which outlined key health priorities in trans

and gender diverse health, was the culmination of strong partnership work between ACON and members of the trans and gender diverse communities across the state. A series of community consultations in Sydney and across NSW accompanied its development, including a community survey and meetings, which over 450 people contributed to. The Blueprint was launched at NSW Parliament House and ACON is now working to deliver on the goals set out in the plan.

### POLICY SUBMISSIONS & POSITION STATEMENTS

ACON continues to amplify the voices of our communities through advocacy and policy work. In the last year, we made submissions on a wide variety of subjects including mandatory testing of people whose bodily fluids come into contact with emergency service workers, changes to the definition of consent in relation to sexual assault, religious freedoms and suicide prevention. Significant work also went into the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Gay and Transgender Hate Crime Between 1970 and 2010, the NSW Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug 'Ice', the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Mental Health Inquiry and the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

### RESEARCH

Our commitment to supporting the development of a strong evidence base on the health of our communities remains strong. ACON continues to support external researchers through our Research Ethics Review

Committee. In the last 12 months, we supported 25 research projects, covering areas such as HIV prevention, mental health and wellbeing of LGBTQ people in regional and rural communities, and the experience of ageing for people in our communities. Additionally, we continue to participate in new research areas, such as experiences of LGBTQ perpetrators and survivors of domestic and family violence, and safety, risk and wellbeing experience with dating apps.

### SYDNEY GAY COMMUNITY PERIODIC SURVEY

The Sydney Gay Community Periodic Survey is an annual cross-sectional survey of gay men and other MSM recruited from a range of community sites in Sydney and online throughout NSW. The aim of the survey is to provide data on sexual, drug use and testing practices related to the transmission of HIV and other STIs. ACON deployed 25 community members as Survey Participant Recruiters to engage respondents across 19 sites over 10 days in the lead up to the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade. Participation in this year's survey exceeded expectations – in total, 3,167 gay men and other MSM participated in the 2019 survey.

### OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

We supported the Sydney launch of the book *The Children of Harvey Milk*. This event brought together LGBTQ politicians and candidates from Australia, the US and New Zealand to discuss sexuality, gender and leadership.



NSW Chief Health Officer Dr Kerry Chant speaking at ACON's *Imagining HIV in 2030* forum

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The ACON Reflect RAP was launched at a series of community events including Sydney (main), Newcastle (inset, right) and Lismore (inset, left)

# RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

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## 'REFLECT': OUR FIRST RAP

This year marked a key milestone in our reconciliation journey and commitments to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with the launch of our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

ACON has a long history of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to reduce HIV transmissions and improve their health and wellbeing. Our RAP builds on this legacy and the work of our dedicated Aboriginal Project to improve the way we engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the organisation, including service users, community members, organisations and suppliers.

Our first RAP, known as a 'Reflect' phase, is about building relationships and celebrating the richness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures,

reflecting on how we do things and laying the foundations for further transformations.

## CULTURAL AWARENESS

A key priority for our first RAP was to strengthen our understandings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures, a pre-requisite to improving cultural competency across the organisation.

Over 100 ACON staff undertook a one day face-to-face cultural awareness training. The training invited participants to reflect on our history and the impacts of colonisation, reflect on how we do things and communicate, and appreciate the richness of Aboriginal cultures, nations and protocols, family and kinship systems, and contemporary Aboriginal identities.

## NAIDOC WEEK

NAIDOC Week provides us with an important opportunity to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In Sydney, we hosted a community event that celebrated Aboriginal leadership during the peak of the AIDS epidemic and offered participants free testing and sexual health resources. This event was organised in partnership with the Sex Workers Outreach Project, Hepatitis NSW, the HIV/AIDS Legal Centre, Positive Life NSW and the NSW Users and AIDS Association. ACON staff also volunteered to help out with logistics of the National Centre for Indigenous Excellence's NAIDOC celebrations.

## EMPLOYMENT

We know we need to do better to make ACON a great place to work



for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We have reviewed our recruitment and professional advancement policies – we want to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people great opportunities to work with us, thrive in our organisation and advance their careers.

## PROCUREMENT

Buying goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait suppliers is another great way to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait employment and entrepreneurs. We've procured a total of \$114,000 worth of goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander



businesses, a majority of which were in-training services.

## COMMUNITY RAP LAUNCHES

To celebrate the release of our RAP and share our commitments with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, we organised community launches in Sydney and in regional NSW. Events were held at the National Centre for Indigenous Excellence in Redfern, the Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service, ACON Northern Rivers Office in Lismore and Yamuloong Cultural Centre in Newcastle. We partnered with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and

services to deliver these events.

## INNOVATE: NEXT STEPS

As our first Reflect RAP is coming to an end, we are about to embark on the next phase of the reconciliation journey: innovation.

In this next phase, we will explore new ideas for actions that work towards achieving our vision for reconciliation. An Innovate RAP focuses on developing and strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, engaging staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and developing and piloting innovative strategies to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

TOP IMAGE: RENATA ALDANA

BOTTOM, LEFT: TOBIN SAUNDER, BOTTOM RIGHT: KAGE GOLD





Volunteers supporting the Red Ribbon Appeal in Circular Quay

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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

## OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEERS

We have over 500 volunteers across NSW who play a crucial role in helping us run programs and services that improve the health and wellbeing of our communities. Our volunteers work in many roles across the organisation including the delivery of safe sex education programs, packing safe sex equipment, delivering care and support services, providing governance and guidance at the board level, helping us run community events and raising much needed funds. ACON's foundation is built on the commitment and actions of volunteers and we are extremely grateful for their contributions. Every year, we thank them with a special event in Sydney during National Volunteers Week in May, which was attended by over 200 volunteers and supporters.

## SYDNEY GAY & LESBIAN MARDI GRAS

Every year at the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, ACON executes a range of activities to promote

key health messages and engage with community members. The annual festival provides us with an important opportunity to further amplify our work and raise awareness of issues affecting our communities. At this year's Fair Day, we focussed on promoting our WE TEST / WE CAN campaign, and connected with thousands of people through our stalls at the 'ACON Zone'. Throughout the festival, we provided harm reduction services such as our ACON Rovers and engaged community members on important research with the Sydney Gay Community Periodic Survey. Over 200 people participated in the ACON float at the Mardi Gras Parade, which showcased important HIV prevention messages.

## RED RIBBON APPEAL

The Red Ribbon Appeal is ACON's biggest and most iconic fundraising campaign. Held in the lead up to, and on, World AIDS Day, it allows us to remember those we have lost to an AIDS-related illness, educate others on HIV and raise money for programs and services that are vital to our HIV prevention and support efforts. This year, Red Ribbon Appeal activities were held in Sydney and regional NSW. These ranged from theatre productions, film screenings, art exhibitions and





community events. Hundreds of volunteers supported our street-based fundraising drive, selling red ribbon merchandise and collecting donations at train stations and community hubs in the Sydney CBD and Inner West, as well as regional centres such as Lismore and Newcastle. Across our own events, as well as others we supported, we raised \$70,000.

## HONOUR AWARDS

The Honour Awards is an annual event we produce which recognises outstanding achievements within the LGBTI community in NSW. In addition to celebrating exceptional community services, the awards is a gala fundraising event for ACON. This year, LGBTI rights champion and defenders were featured prominently among the award recipients, with Mardi Gras 78er Robyn Kennedy, historian Shirleene Robinson, trailblazing community group CAMP Inc, The Equality Campaign and the Human Rights Law Centre all recognised for their work and contributions in activism and advocacy. Other honourees included fashion designer Bayvick Lawrance, HIV advocate David Crawford, artist Kim Leutwyler, entertainer Mark Trevorrow and local retailer Sax Fetish. The winners were selected from a

field of 140 nominations and awards were presented at a ceremony at the Ivy Ballroom in October, attended by over 300 people.

## OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- Our long-running community engagement and fundraising event Bingay continued to generate strong attendance. Events throughout the year were held monthly at the Beresford Hotel in Surry Hills, as well as at Wild Sage in Barangaroo during the Colour the Streets Festival in February and Paddington RSL in December. In 2018-2019, nearly 2000 people attended Bingay, raising around \$47,000 for ACON.
- We provided important health and safe sex information and resources at the Mardi Gras Party in March.
- In partnership with Positive Life NSW, we produced the Candlelight Memorial in May to commemorate those we have lost to AIDS-related illness. 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 that work in our community.



Throughout the year, over 500 volunteers supported ACON's various initiatives and programs



We raised over \$70,000 from our Red Ribbon Appeal in November and December 2018



Nearly 2000 people attended Bingay over the year, raising around \$47,000





# ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Pivotal to ACON's effectiveness is our Corporate Services team, which performs vital operational functions relating to human services, financial planning, facility management and information technology. Over the year, ACON enhanced its organisational capacity and operations by supporting our staff and improving our workplace, strengthening organisational and financial governance, establishing new systems and processes, driving efficiency improvements and implementing new technology initiatives.

### STAFF ENGAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT

We continued our organisational wide learning program, providing staff with a wide range of professional development opportunities. Over the year, 82 staff participated in 1693 hours of targeted professional learning and development.

In April, a new Enterprise Agreement was approved by the Fair Work Commission, following successful negotiation by ACON Management and Staff Bargaining Representatives.

We recorded an increase in employee satisfaction with a result of 86% up from 79% in the previous

year. 90% of staff participated in the annual staff engagement survey.

We implemented the ACON Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to realise our vision for reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

We delivered our annual two-day learning and development seminar for all staff members – Big Days In – in October, drawing over 100 participants. A key component of the conference was staff engagement in the development of our new strategic plan

We undertook a review of our facilities in our regional offices.

We implemented our new digital performance management system to enhance staff experience of the performance feedback and appraisal cycle.

We developed a plan for improving workplace culture to ensure staff remain engaged and supported across all levels of the organisation.

We maintained all Work, Health and Safety compliance obligations with only a single lost time accident for the year.

### IMPROVED SYSTEMS & DRIVING EFFICIENCY

We continued to develop and implement improved systems, processes and initiatives to strengthen our operational capabilities and drive efficiency, as part of our commitment to continuous improvement and a



- quality framework. These included:
- The launch of a new online human resource information management system.
  - The implementation of an improved intranet, facilitating better access to internal systems and information.
  - Continued improvement to our organisational reporting framework and dashboard.
  - Investigation of a new platform for the digital distribution of documents.
  - Commenced review of ACON's risk management framework against ISO/Australian standards.
  - Ongoing digitisation and the streamlining of business processes through cloud technologies.
  - Continued improvement in CRM system to engage with volunteers and donors.
  - Automated workflow for accounts receivable.
  - Continued focus on centralising our digital data records and assets, including improvements to IT security to ensure our digital information is secured, protected and in compliance with new data breach regulations and privacy requirements.

### MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

We continued to increase ACON's profile and extend the reach of our health promotion messages through our marketing and communications activities. Key highlights include:

- We reached an estimated online audience of 1.9

- million in 2018-2019, resulting from placements and coverage in community and mainstream media. These included media releases and announcements on ACON activities and campaigns.
- Engagement on social media through various channels and platform continued to grow. Across 22 Facebook channels, our followers grew by 15% to 65,865 compared to 55,783 in the previous year. Across seven Twitter accounts, connections rose from 12,312 to 14,471, an increase of 14%. On Instagram, followers grew by 33% across accounts, rising from 3483 to 5209.
- We continued to deliver a range of external and internal electronic newsletters to keep supporters and staff engaged with ACON's work and activities. Our external digital subscribers continued to grow across our mailing lists.
- There was significant engagement across ACON's suite of websites including ACON Health, Ending HIV, Emen8, Pivot Point, Welcome Here Project, Pride Inclusion Programs, Say It Out Loud. Collectively, we recorded 2.5 million users accessing our digital resources throughout the year. Traffic to ACON's corporate website traffic grew by 11% garnering over 269,000 unique pageviews.
- We continued to amplify the reach of our health promotion and community engagement messages through video. Across Facebook and YouTube, views on our various campaign, corporate and social marketing videos grew by 45%, rising to 1.2 million compared to 660,000 in the previous year.

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# FINANCIALS

## ACON HEALTH LIMITED

ABN 38 136 883 915

### Financial Report

#### For the year ended 30 June 2019

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

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

414 Elizabeth Surry Hills NSW 2010

A description of the nature of the consolidated entity's operations and its principal activities is included in the directors' Report on pages 2 to 7 which is not part of these financial statements.

The financial statements were authorised for issue by the directors on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019. The directors have the power to amend and reissue the financial statement

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 2019.

### 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:

- Atari Metcalf
- Andrew Purchas
- Anne-Marie Eades (appointed 3 July 2019)
- Benjamin Bavinton
- Christian Dunk
- Kim Gates (resigned 12 July 2019)
- Julie Mooney-Somers
- Justin Koonin
- Louisa Degenhardt
- Richard Lee (resigned 19 August 2019)
- Somali Cerise (appointed 3 July 2019)
- Steven Berveling



ACON BOARD



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

Justin has worked within LGBTQ community organisations for over a decade, and is a former convenor of the NSW Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby. Internationally, he represents civil society on the steering committee of the UHC2030 partnership, working towards the health-related UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2030. He is co-chair of the Civil Society Advisory Group for the Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-Being for All, as well as the WHO Social Participation Technical Network. 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 15 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 competed 3x in the Race Across America, has won numerous golds in Gay Games, and holds the Australian record for the Hour Record (age). Steven seeks to confirm that HIV is no barrier to sport, both physically and socially, and 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, GradCert EdStud, 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.



**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 across sectors 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.



**Louisa Degenhardt**  
BA (Hons), MPsychology (Clinical), PhD

Louisa is UNSW Scientia Professor, NHMRC Senior Principal Research Fellow and Deputy Director at the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC) at UNSW. She was awarded her PhD in 2003, examining the comorbidity of drug use and mental disorders in the Australian population. She has honorary Professorial appointments at University of Melbourne's School of Population and Global Health, Murdoch Children's Research

Institute, and University of Washington's Department of Global Health in the School of Public Health. Louisa conducts diverse epidemiological studies including data linkage studies focusing on people with extra-medical or dependent opioid use, chronic pain, analysis of large-scale community and clinical surveys, and cohorts of young people. She is currently CI with CI Dore and Farrell on an NHMRC Program Grant focussed on drug dependence and viral hepatitis.



**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.





**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.



**Anne-Marie Eades**  
PhD

Anne-Marie Eades an Aboriginal woman, is a registered nurse and early career researcher whose PhD thesis focused on Understanding how individual, family, and societal influences impact on Indigenous women's health and wellbeing. Following the completion of her PhD in 2017, she was awarded a Scientia Fellowship from the University of NSW and commenced at the George Institute for Global Health in 2018. Her post-doctoral research involved exploring strategies to prevent the removal of children from first-time Aboriginal mothers with vulnerabilities during their first pregnancy.



**Somali Cerise**  
BA, MS (Human Rights)

Somali has over 15 years of experience as a human rights and gender equality expert with an international profile. She has led large research and policy initiatives focussed on range of gender equality issues in Australia, the UK at the OECD and United Nations.

Somali is currently a Program Director with the Male Champions of Change and supports Elizabeth Broderick's international gender equality work including her role as an Independent Expert with the UN Working Group on Discrimination Against Women.

Somali is also an Adjunct Associate Lecturer in the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences at The University of Sydney. She has previously been a Convener of the NSW Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby, a board member of the Inner City Legal Centre and Aurora Foundation.

Somali has a BA (UTS) and a Master of Science (Human Rights) (London School of Economics and Political Science).



**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).

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:

From 1 July 2018 - 30 June 2019 [The Board Meeting of 22 June 2019 was rescheduled to 3 July 2019]		
Board member	Meetings Held	Meetings Attended
Atari Metcalf	6	5
Andrew Purchas	6	6
Benjamin Bavinton	6	5
Christian Dunk	6	4
Julie Mooney-Somers	6	5
Justin Koonin	6	6
Kim Gates	6	2
Louisa Degenhardt	6	3
Richard Lee	6	4
Steven Berveling	6	5

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 relevant and useful for people with HIV.
- Developing a HIV Health Promotion Strategy focussing on post diagnosis support, living well with HIV and planning for healthy ageing.

Promoting the health throughout life of LGBTI people and people with HIV by:

- Providing HIV Care and Support services including:
  - Counselling
  - Enhanced Primary Care
  - Community Support Network
  - Newly Diagnosed Service
- Reviewing our current care and support programs to ensure they continue to meet the needs of people with HIV.
- Intensifying our focus on immediate post diagnosis care and support to prevent infection rates and improve the health outcomes for newly diagnosed
- Enhancing our intake and case management processes to ensure person centred, tailored responses.
- Enhancing our treatments advice and adherence support capacity to educate people with HIV about the benefits of earlier and increased treatment uptake.
- Developing programs to address the health areas that have the most negative health impact on people living with HIV, e.g Enhanced Primary Care.
- Addressing substance support use co-morbidities through counselling from the substance use service, Needle Syringe Programs, harm minimisation support and referrals to drug and alcohol treatment services.
- Addressing the health disparities experienced by the LGBTI community and to reduce the impacts of negative health determinants including:
  - 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 NGO's, health care providers, researchers and affected communities
- Ensuring all direct LGBTI services are sensitive to the needs of and available to all of our communities,
- Ensuring all of our training packages for service providers are inclusive of our populations,
- Ensuring our advocacy work in the areas of discrimination and human rights are inclusive of the needs and views of all our communities and is conducted in consultation with relevant stakeholders,
- Developing strategies, in collaboration with key partners to maximise inclusiveness and reach of health promotion strategies.
- Developing 'population specific' communication strategies to ensure our programs are visible to all of the communities they are intended to reach

Performance measures (key performance indicators)

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

REVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Operations for the year ended 30 June 2019 resulted in an operating surplus of **\$875,450** (30 June 2018: operating surplus of **\$244,943**). 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.

	2019 \$	2018 \$	2017 \$
Operating result	875,450	244,943	645,880
Adjustment of grant receipts on a performance basis	(559,819)	(42,008)	(430,279)
<b>Adjusted result</b>	<b>315,631</b>	<b>202,935</b>	<b>215,601</b>

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 2019 that has significantly affected, or may significantly affect:

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

Likely developments and expected results of operations

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

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Board.

Dated at Sydney this 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019



Justin Koonin  
President



Andrew Purchas  
Vice President



**CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND  
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2019**

Income	Notes	2019 \$	2018 \$
<b>Grants:</b>			
NSW Department of Health		11,916,636	10,949,093
Local Health Districts		418,573	567,127
Other grants		2,309,567	2,530,274
Fundraising	13(a)	861,650	5,320,658
Interest received/receivable		163,390	199,528
Membership		3,385	2,350
Fee for service		2,538,932	2,235,356
Rent received		267,489	258,795
Sale of vitamins		7,285	8,447
Sale of materials		122,684	81,141
Other Income		337,173	379,351
<b>Total revenue from operations</b>		<b>18,946,764</b>	<b>22,532,120</b>

<b>Expenditure</b>			
Salaries & associated costs		10,901,402	9,778,549
Campaigns & Education		1,600,087	6,800,443
Rent and rates		1,908,868	1,836,496
Depreciation – plant & equipment		293,904	294,645
Amortisation – lease incentive		150,500	150,500
Building maintenance		293,315	314,566
Communications		173,302	227,098
Travel and representation		481,095	481,823
Donations given		65,016	47,555
Events and activities		526,710	635,801
Administrative costs		1,626,937	1,672,361
Cost of goods sold		50,178	47,340
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>18,051,314</b>	<b>22,287,177</b>
<b>Net Surplus (Deficit) for the year before tax</b>		<b>875,450</b>	<b>244,943</b>
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
Operating surplus (deficit) of ACON Health Limited		<b>875,450</b>	<b>244,943</b>

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 2019**

	Notes	2019 \$	2018 \$
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	4	7,765,291	7,194,533
Receivables	5	1,435,305	478,710
Inventories		2,330	2,632
Prepayments		163,931	52,403
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>9,366,857</b>	<b>7,728,278</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>			
Other Financial Assets		24,454	22,000
Plant & equipment and lease incentive	6	893,951	1,159,127
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>		<b>918,405</b>	<b>1,181,127</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>10,285,262</b>	<b>8,909,405</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables	7	1,831,241	1,428,284
Employee entitlements	8	1,637,946	1,389,996
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		<b>3,469,187</b>	<b>2,818,280</b>
<b>Non-current Liabilities</b>			
Deferred lease liability	9	238,292	388,792
<b>Total Non-current Liabilities</b>		<b>238,292</b>	<b>388,792</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>		<b>3,707,279</b>	<b>3,207,072</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>6,577,783</b>	<b>5,702,333</b>
<b>Accumulated Funds</b>	15		
Retained surplus at the end of the year		5,060,691	4,500,754
Funds Reserve		1,485,272	1,169,759
Revaluation Reserve		31,820	31,820
<b>Total Accumulated Funds</b>		<b>6,577,783</b>	<b>5,702,333</b>

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



CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN STAKEHOLDERS’ FUNDS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2019

	Retained surplus	Revaluation reserve	Funds Reserve	Total
<b>Year ended 30 June 2019</b>				
Total stakeholder funds at the beginning of the financial year	4,500,754	31,820	1,169,759	5,702,333
Transfer to funds reserve	(315,513)	-	315,513	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	875,450	-	-	875,450
Total stakeholder funds at the end of the financial year	5,060,691	31,820	1,485,272	6,577,783

<b>Year ended 30 June 2018</b>				
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

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 2019

	Notes	2019 \$	2018 \$
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Receipts from customers, granting bodies & fundraising (inclusive of goods & services tax)		19,705,118	24,468,024
Payments to suppliers and employees (inclusive of goods & services tax)		(19,118,522)	(24,071,825)
Interest received		163,390	199,528
<b>Net cash inflow from operating activities</b>		749,986	595,727
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Payments for property, plant & equipment		(179,228)	(133,002)
<b>Net cash outflow from investing activities</b>		(179,228)	(133,002)
<b>Net increase in cash held</b>		570,758	462,725
Cash at the beginning of the year		7,194,533	6,731,808
<b>Cash at the end of the year</b>	<b>4</b>	7,765,291	7,194,533

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



NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

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

A. BASIS OF PREPARATION

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

i) *Compliance with Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements*

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

ii) *New and amended standards adopted by the group AASB 9 Financial Instruments*

AASB 9 Financial Instruments replaces AASB 139 Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement. It makes major changes to the previous guidance on the classification and measurement of financial assets and introduces an ‘expected credit loss’ model for impairment of financial assets. There were no financial assets that required changes to their classification or recognition as a result of the introduction of AASB 9. The effect of the changes to estimated credit losses can be seen in Note 5.

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 2018.

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 2019 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.

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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 14). 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 16).

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. The group makes use of a simplified approach in accounting for trade and other receivables as well as contract assets and records the loss

allowance at the amount equal to the expected lifetime credit losses. In using this practical expedient, the group uses its historical experience, external indicators and forward-looking information to calculate the expected credit losses using a provision matrix. 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.



NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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

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

M. EMPLOYEE ENTITLEMENTS

Wages and salaries, annual leave and sick leave

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

Long Service Leave

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

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

Superannuation

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

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 16 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.



NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

4. CURRENT ASSETS – CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

	2019 \$	2018 \$
Cash on hand	3,425	3,125
Cash at bank:		
Cheque account – operations	7,761,866	7,019,903
Deposits	-	171,505
	7,765,291	7,194,533

5. CURRENT ASSETS – RECEIVABLES

Trade receivables	1,456,048	462,892
Provision for doubtful debts	(20,000)	-
Accrued income	20,743	15,818
	1,455,305	478,710

The amount of the provision for doubtful debts was \$20,000 (30 June 2018: \$nil). All of the group’s trade and other receivables have been reviewed for indicators of impairment. Certain trade receivables were found to be impaired and an allowance for credit losses of \$nil (30 June 2018: \$nil) has been recorded accordingly within other expenses.

The movement in the allowance for credit losses can be reconciled as follows:

Reconciliation of allowance credit losses		
Balance 1 July	-	-
Amounts written off (uncollectable)	-	-
Impairment loss	20,000	-
Balance 30 June	-	-
	20,000	-

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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 \$
<b>At 30 June 2018</b>						
Cost or fair value	894,649	1,597,875	146,650	1,393,003	1,505,000	5,537,177
Accumulated depreciation	(879,224)	(1,364,877)	-	(1,017,740)	(1,116,209)	(4,378,050)
<b>Net book value</b>	15,425	232,998	146,650	375,263	388,791	1,159,127

<b>Year ended 30 June 2019</b>						
Opening net book value	15,425	232,998	146,650	375,263	388,791	1,159,127
Additions	29,909	138,689	-	10,630	-	179,229
Depreciation/ amortisation charge	(5,773)	(169,934)	-	(118,197)	(150,500)	(444,404)
<b>Closing net book value</b>	39,562	201,753	146,650	267,696	238,291	893,952

<b>At 30 June 2019</b>						
Cost or fair value	924,558	1,736,564	146,650	1,403,633	1,505,000	5,716,405
Accumulated depreciation	(884,997)	(1,534,811)	-	(1,135,937)	(1,266,709)	(4,822,454)
<b>Net book value</b>	39,561	201,753	146,650	267,696	238,291	893,951



NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

7. CURRENT LIABILITIES – TRADE AND OTHER PAYABLES

	2019 \$	2018 \$
Goods & Services Tax net payable	350,193	176,407
Trade creditors	162,218	119,937
Accrued expenses	295,300	352,053
Deferred/(Unearned) Revenue	1,023,530	779,887
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,831,241</b>	<b>1,428,284</b>

8. CURRENT LIABILITIES – EMPLOYEE ENTITLEMENTS

Employee entitlements - annual and long service leave	1,637,946	1,389,996
Number of employees at reporting date (full time equivalent)	109	131

9. NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES – DEFERRED LEASE LIABILITY

414 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills	238,292	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 2019/2020 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.*

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

a) Income Statement

	2019 Total	2018 Total
Gross income received from fundraising	861,650	5,320,658
Cost of fundraising	287,306	348,589
<b>Net proceeds from fundraising</b>	<b>574,344</b>	<b>4,972,069</b>
Application of net proceeds	574,344	4,972,069
<b>Net surplus from fundraising</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

	Red Ribbon \$	Vivid \$	General \$
Gross income received from fundraising	77,158	260,837	523,655
Cost of fundraising	7,522	92,468	187,316
<b>Net proceeds from fundraising</b>	<b>69,636</b>	<b>168,369</b>	<b>336,339</b>
Application of net proceeds	69,636	168,369	336,339
<b>Net surplus from fundraising</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

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

	2019 Total	2018 Total
Cash at bank	-	-
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Other payables	-	-
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

<b>Net assets</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
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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:

	2019 \$	2018 \$
Within one year	1,984,656	1,989,562
Later than one year but not later than 5 years	1,840,419	2,978,035
Later than 5 years	-	-
	3,825,075	4,967,597



NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

15. RETAINED SURPLUS

Retained surplus at the beginning of the year	4,500,754	4,458,746
Transfer to funds reserve	(315,513)	(202,935)
Current year surplus	875,451	244,943
Retained surplus at the end of the year	5,060,691	4,500,754

The retained surplus represents accumulated funds of **\$5,060,691** 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:

Balance sheet	2019 \$	2018 \$
Current assets	9,377,489	7,719,030
Total assets	10,295,895	8,900,157
Current liabilities	(3,489,187)	(2,818,281)
Total liabilities	(3,727,479)	(3,207,072)
Stakeholders' Funds		
Total Accumulated Funds	6,568,416	5,693,084
Operating surplus/ (deficit) for the year	875,332	244,967

(b) Contingent liabilities of the parent entity

The parent entity did not have any contingent liabilities as at 30 June 2019 (30 June 2018 \$nil).

DIRECTOR'S DECLARATION

In the directors' opinion:

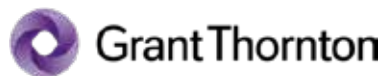
- The consolidated financial statements and notes set out on pages 8 to 22 are in accordance with the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission Act 2012, including:
  - giving a true and fair view of the Group's financial position as at 30 June 2019 and of its performance for the financial year ended on that date; and
  - comply with Australian Accounting Standards (including Australian Accounting Interpretations) and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Regulation 2012; and
  - There are reasonable grounds to believe that the Group will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.
- the financial statements and notes are in accordance with the *Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 (NSW)* and the *Charitable Fundraising Regulations 1993 (NSW)*;
  - 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
  - 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 18<sup>th</sup> Day of September 2019.



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Independent Auditor's Report

To the Members of ACON Health Limited

Report on the audit of the financial report

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial report of ACON Health Limited (the "Registered Entity") and its subsidiaries ("the Group"), which comprises the consolidated statement of financial position as at 30 June 2019, and the consolidated statement of comprehensive income, consolidated statement of changes in equity and consolidated statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies and the Directors' declaration.

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

- giving a true and fair view of the Registered Entity's financial position as at 30 June 2019 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- complying with Australian Accounting Standards and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*.

Basis for 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 are independent of the Registered Entity in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's *APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

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

The Directors 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 2019, but does not include the financial report and our auditor's report thereon.

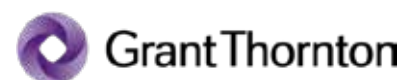
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Our opinion on the financial report does not cover the other information and accordingly we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

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.

#### Responsibilities of the Directors for the financial report

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

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

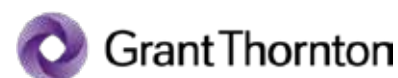
The Directors are responsible for overseeing the Registered Entity's financial reporting process.

#### 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.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Registered Entity's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Directors.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Registered Entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Registered Entity to cease to continue as a going concern.



- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

#### 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 2019.

#### Our Opinion

In our opinion:

- a ACON Health Limited has properly kept the accounts and associated records during the year ended 30 June 2019 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 2019 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 ACON Health 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 ACON Health 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

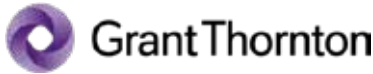
Because of the inherent limitations of any compliance procedures, it is possible that fraud, error or noncompliance may occur and not be detected. An audit is not designed to detect all instances of noncompliance with the requirements of the Act and Regulation, as the audit procedures are not performed 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, 18 September 2019



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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 2019, 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, 18 September 2019

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hunter@acon.org.au

## Southern & Western NSW Outreach

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regionaloutreach@acon.org.au

## ACON Pride Training

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pridetraining.org.au

## Pride Inclusion Programs

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prideinclusionprograms.com.au

## Annual Report 2018-2019

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