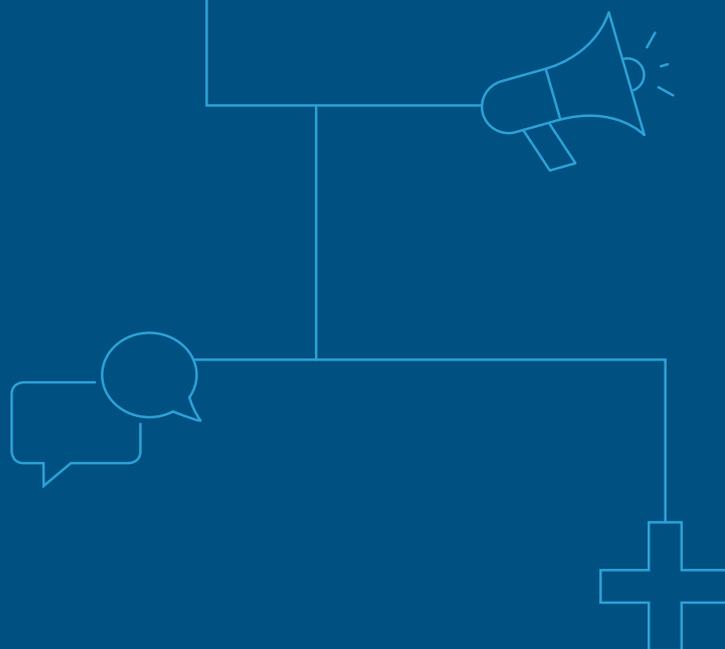


# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2017-18



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Photographs: All images have been used with permission. You must seek permission in writing from Positive Life NSW before reproducing photographs from this report in any medium. The inclusion here of a person's photograph implies nothing about their sexuality or HIV serostatus. *Design: Marsden&Co. Creative Email: sarah@marsdenandco.com*

# CONTENTS

**HIV IN NSW** 02

**SPEAKING OUT** 04

From the President & CEO 05

Treasurer's Report 07

Positive Speakers Bureau (PSB) 08

**REACHING OUT** 10

Consultation & Engagement 12

**OUR VOICE** 16

Communications 18

**MAKING IT HAPPEN** 22

Work Ready 24

Housing Support 25

Treatment Support 26

**GETTING TOGETHER** 30

Peer Support 32



# HIV IN NSW

2017–18

**300**

new HIV diagnoses in NSW during 2017–18



**5.7%**

are women

**79%**

are men who have sex with men, and

**1/4** of these men were born overseas

**1.7%**

are transgender



**8.3%**

are heterosexual men



**63.7%**

are under 40 years of age

**2.7%**

are 70 years and older

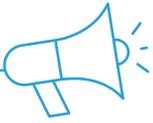


**37%** are 40–69 years of age

# SPEAKING OUT

Representation

## FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO



People living with HIV (PLHIV) in NSW are the best! Our motivated working partnership in health with doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other health service staff has produced results, with more than 95% of us on cART and a reducing trend in HIV notifications. Along with our HIV negative counterparts using PrEP, PEP, condoms and sterile injecting equipment, we are now turning the tide on HIV and actively working toward the 2020 goal of ending HIV transmission in NSW.

One of our achievements in 2017/18 has been the re-introduction of what was formerly known as *Board Advisory Groups*, today named *Community Consultation and Engagement Forums* (CCEF). Our inaugural forum on My Health Record and Digital Health provided a moment where we consulted with PLHIV about their thoughts and experience of digital health and health information management and what the introduction of My Health Record for all (except those who opted-out), meant for us. The feedback from PLHIV resulted in: a blue-print for agency submissions and communications program; and our stakeholder relations approach with Health Consumers NSW, the Australian Digital Health Agency, Commonwealth Department of Health, NAPWHA and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. We have produced factsheets, letters of advice to PLHIV, submissions to the Commonwealth and Senate, and run community information forums.

However, there's always more work that needs to be done within NSW and nationally. The Notifiable Diseases Database and Surveillance Programs need to be improved, such as, the monitoring of transmitted drug resistance via phylogeny; PLHIV hospitalisations and

deaths; and the introduction of PLHIV reported outcome measures, including quality of life measures (PozQoL). We are yet to have same day prescribing of cART on the day of receiving a HIV diagnosis in NSW and Australia. There has been movement with S100 prescribers and in the health system, but this is yet to be uniformly adopted as a standard of care for all PLHIV.

We are both incredibly proud to be working with the Positive Life Board and team. They are to be commended for their tireless support of PLHIV in NSW and the body positive nationally. The agency, our service partners and PLHIV in NSW see the outcomes of our peer support programs, such as HIV Work Ready; Housing Support; and Treatments Support. PLHIV are always informed about decisions made and our daily activities and priorities. Our communications activities and community events remain a crucial feature; namely, Peer2Peer, The Social, Genesis, [+Connect] are some of the social inclusion and peer support programs that enable us to remain connected, actively engaged and mobilised. The Positive Speakers Bureau speakers are the brave vanguards within our communities and provide a public face to what it means to be living with HIV.

In another milestone for Positive Life we are celebrating our 30th anniversary this year and have planned a number of events around World AIDS Day to mark the considerable achievements of the organisation, our community and supporters over this time. In doing so, we can reflect on just how far we have come, and this speaks to the centrality and vitality of PLHIV in the HIV response.

We pay tribute to the many remarkable people living with and without HIV who have been a part of our 30 year journey. It is their extraordinary contribution and commitment that has enabled Positive Life to connect and engage with community and to remain focused and responsive to the emerging needs of all PLHIV.

And so, to the year ahead. Positive Life continues to partner with HIV health and social services to ensure the ageing and complex care needs of our people are met through equitable service arrangements. HIV stigma and discrimination and peer navigation are priorities to ensure PLHIV remain retained in care, motivated and resources when navigating social and health

services. Mental health, and social isolation and inclusions for all PLHIV will continue to be prioritised and progressed.

We would also like to thank and acknowledge the continuing partnership and funding from NSW Health, the MAC AIDS Fund, ViiV Healthcare, and all PLHIV, their partners, families and supporters who have been such a central part of who we are and what we do.

**Jane Costello, President Positive Life NSW  
& Craig Cooper, CEO Positive Life NSW**

“Let’s build on the success of the reductions in HIV diagnoses so that it includes everybody at risk, across not only Sydney, but all of NSW including regional and remote areas.”

– Jane Costello, President, Positive Life NSW (2017)



## TREASURER'S REPORT

“PLNSW generated record revenue, maintained a strong financial position and benefitted from new systems.”

– Campbell Boag, Treasurer, Positive Life NSW

Highlights:

- Record revenue of \$1.125m, support from key funders.
- Maintained strong financial position.
- Full year benefits from new accounting system.

I am pleased to report that the Agency's revenue grew by 7.7% to a record \$1.125m, and that grant revenue exceeded \$1.0m for the first time. I am also pleased to report that the Agency maintained a sound financial position throughout the year, with liquid assets of over \$300k at year end. The agency recorded a modest operating deficit of \$9k which was funded from reserves.

As was mentioned in last year's Annual report, the major recent project in the accounting area has been the transition to Xero, a new cloud-based accounting system. The 2017–18 year represents the first full year of this implementation, and it is pleasing to report that the new system is now well bedded down and has resulted in a significant improvement in the timeliness, accuracy and quality of accounting information available for both management reporting and oversight purposes.

The grant from our major funder, NSW Ministry of Health, increased 3.1% to \$928k. Other major sources of funding included the MAC AIDS fund and Viiv Healthcare as well as new funding from City of Sydney. We greatly appreciate the ongoing support from these organisations. Overall expenses increased approximately in line with the rise in revenue.

Most expense items were quite similar to the prior year (eg: core activity expenses at \$379k), with the exception of the largest expense being employment related at \$717k, up \$75k or 11.5% on the prior year. This increase was due principally to the paying out of accrued leave entitlements and some duplication of staff costs during transition as some staff departed and new staff were training.

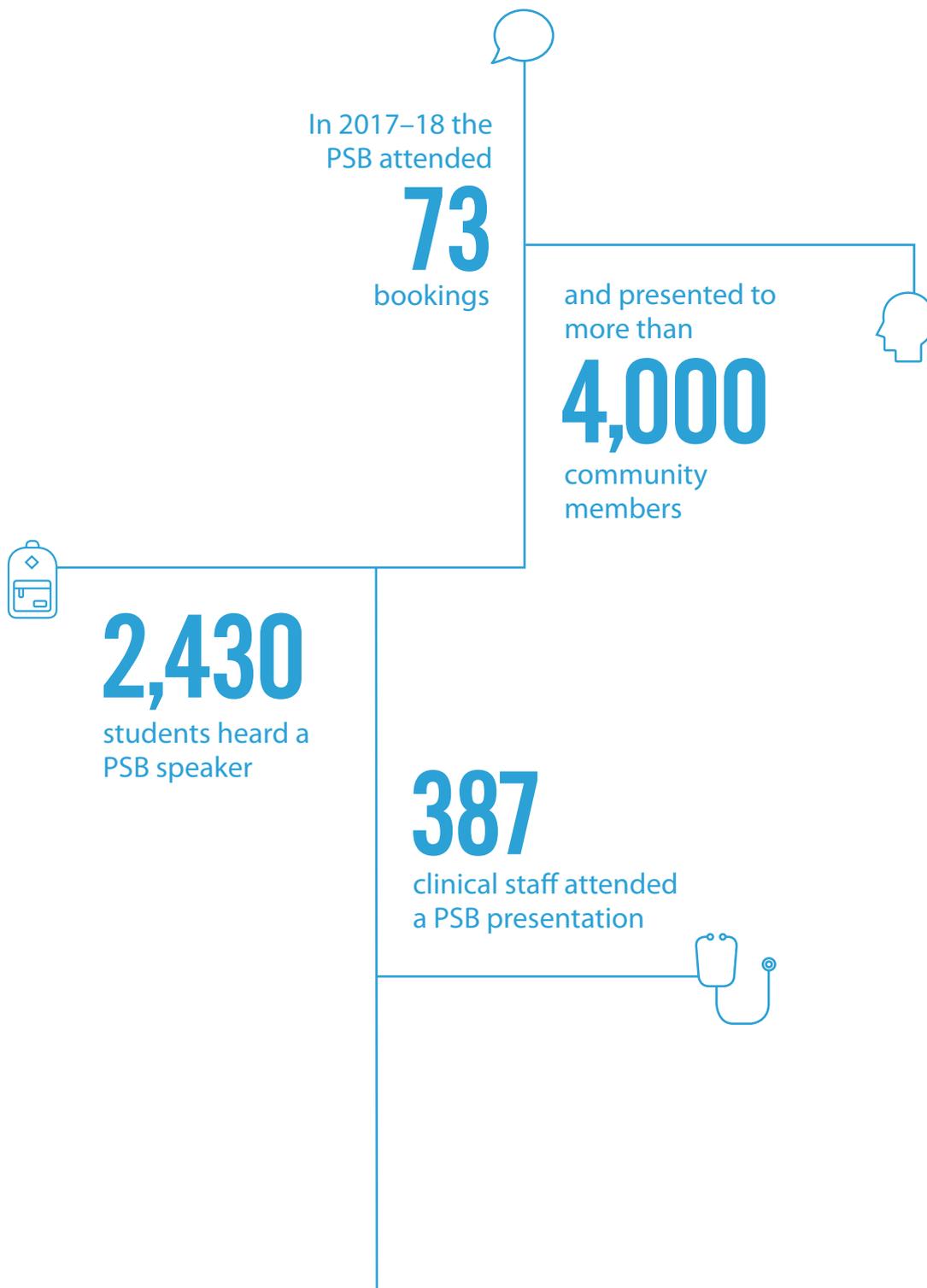
The Agency also maintained its sound Balance Sheet position throughout the year. Cash, reserves and financial ratios remained healthy throughout the period, ensuring that the Agency was well able to meet its financial obligations when they fell due. At the end of the financial year the Agency had retained funds of \$222k, principally comprising term deposits of \$214k. These reserves provide a safety net for the Agency, allowing it to manage unforeseen expenses, or interruption or delays in relation to its sources of funding. Cash and term deposits of \$308k at year end maintains the Agency's healthy liquidity position, while the new accounting system has resulted in better management of receivables and payables.

The Audited Financial Statements for the 2017–18 financial year are available online at [www.bit.ly/PLNSW-FS-2017-18](http://www.bit.ly/PLNSW-FS-2017-18).

**Campbell Boag**  
Treasurer, Positive Life NSW

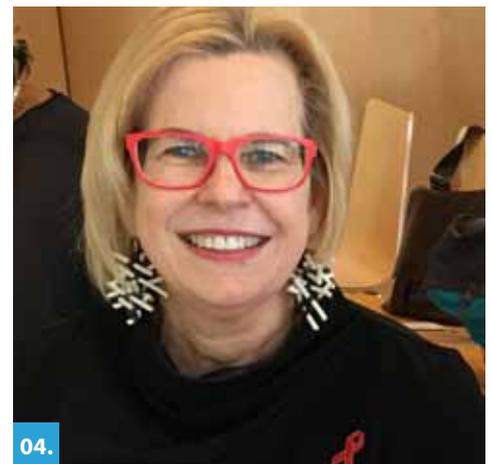
## POSITIVE SPEAKERS BUREAU (PSB)

Now that Ending HIV is in sight and PLHIV seem to be more invisible than ever before, Positive Speakers Bureau speakers ensure our voices are heard by their willingness to speak up and speak out.





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"I'm spending today talking to high school kids in the Bankstown council area about what it was like growing up knowing I was gay. So far it's been a surprisingly difficult experience, but probably one of the most worthwhile things I've done this year."

– Jeremy Medlock, Positive Speaker

**01.** Jeremy Medlock, Positive Speaker at the Youth Inclusion Forum December 2017.

**02.** Peter Schlosser, Positive Speaker.

**03.** Dai Aoki, Positive Speaker.

**04.** Jane Costello, Positive Speaker.

**05.** Dai Aoki and Zyna Kahiye speaking at an Inservice for Health Care workers.

**06.** Jeremy Medlock and Tim Moffitt speaking at an Inservice for Health Care workers.

# REACHING OUT

Consultation &  
Engagement





## CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT

In this financial year, Positive Life consulted broadly with stakeholders and our community engagement and consultation work has been critical in us being able to speak with confidence on behalf of PLHIV in NSW.

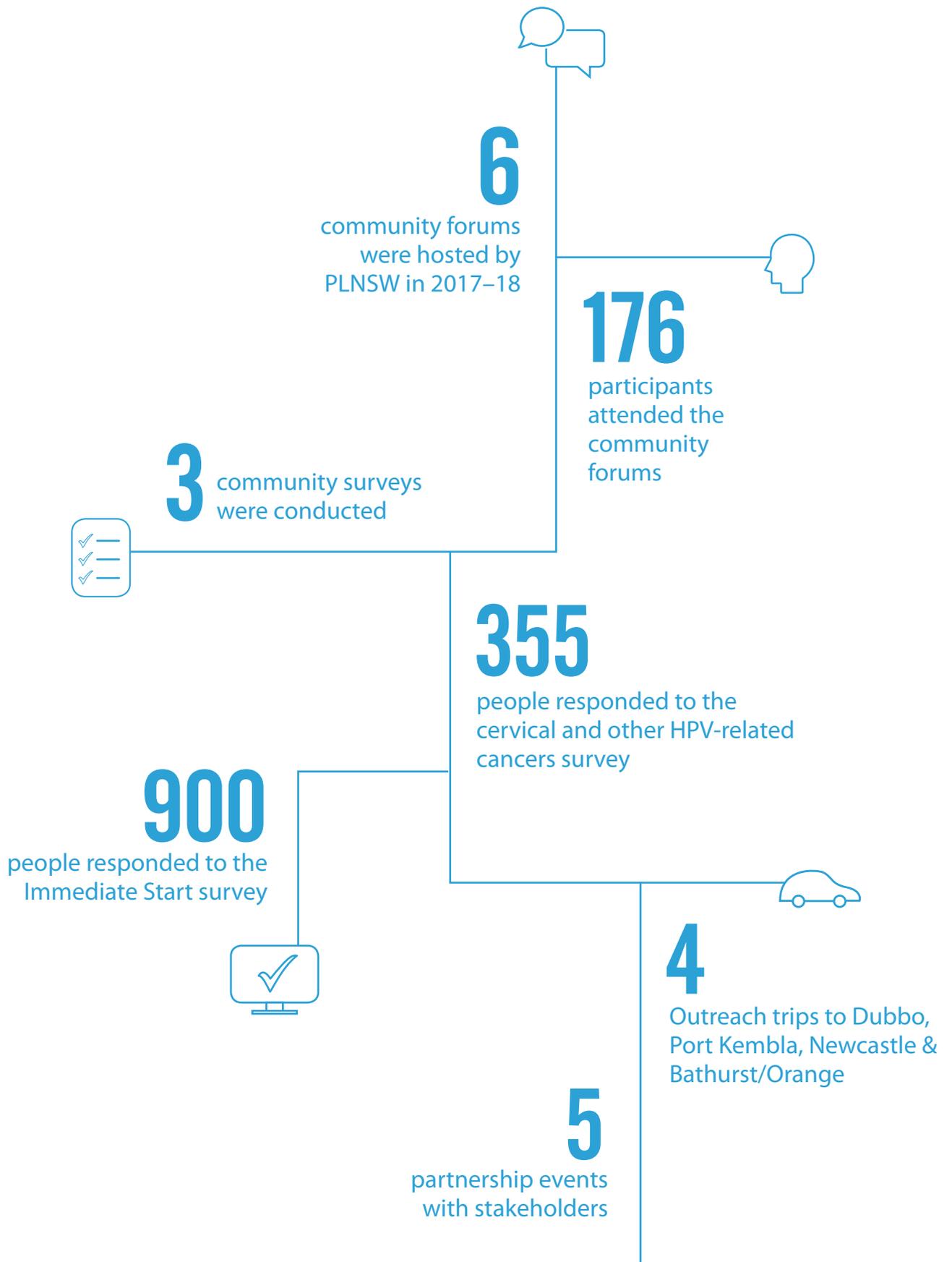
During 2017–18 PLNSW conducted three community consultation surveys.

- July 2017: Immediate Start survey, (n = 900 survey respondents).
- January 2018: Post incarceration discharge needs of GLT people living with BBV.
- March 2018: Survey on Cervical and other HPV-related cancers (n= 355 survey respondents).

During 2017–18 PLNSW carried out six partnership events with stakeholders:

- July 2017: Joint World Hepatitis Day with NUAA, Newtown Neighbourhood Centre.
- September 2017: A Collaborative Affair with NUAA, Positive Life and SWOP.
- October 2017: Positive Life NSW and Harbour City Bears Collaborative Health Forum.
- December 2017: Evidence Brief. Rapid Initiation: Models for the Immediate Uptake of HIV Treatment.
- April 2018: NAPWHA SGM.







01.



08.

**Have your say about immediate treatment for HIV**

What do you think about starting HIV treatment immediately?

At the moment, starting HIV treatment can take weeks while waiting for test results come back. An immediate start to treatment would mean you begin HIV treatment on the day you are diagnosed. There are many health benefits to starting people as soon as possible on HIV treatment.

Tell us what you think about starting HIV treatment in this short quick survey.

[Click here to have your say!](#)

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**EVIDENCE BRIEF**  
 Rapid Initiation: Models for the Immediate Uptake of HIV Treatment

November 2017

**PositiveLifeNSW**  
 the voice of people with HIV since 1988

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**MY HEALTH RECORD**

If in doubt, opt out

**POSITIVE LIFE NSW**

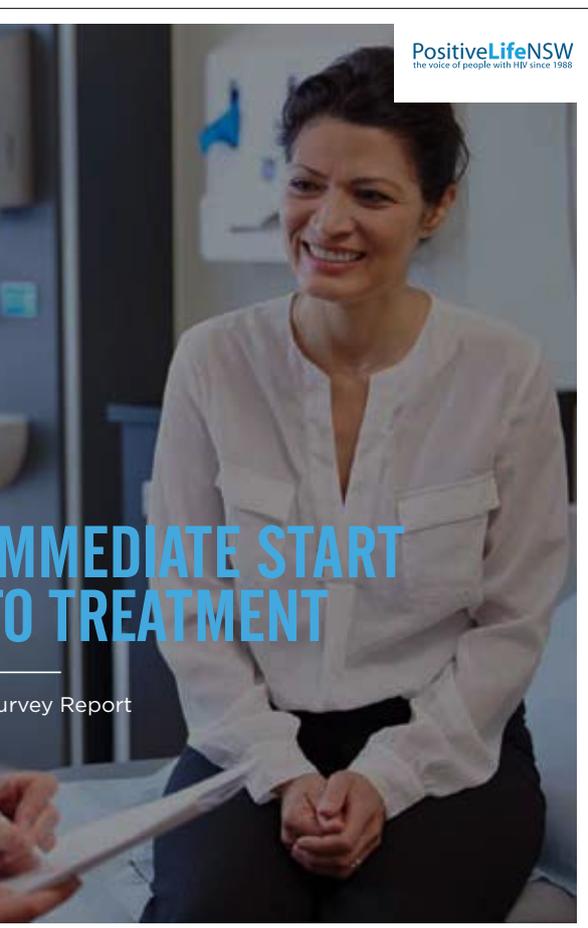
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- 01.** Lance Feeney and Garry Wotherspoon awarded 2017 Distinguished Members, December 2017.
- 02.** Promotion for the Immediate Start Survey.
- 03.** PSB Speakers Jeremy and Paul at Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre at the Positive Life and Harbour City Bears Health Forum, October 2017.
- 04.** 'In the Know' Community Research and Treatment Update Evening at Camperdown, May 2018.
- 05.** Peter Schlosser, acknowledged for his six years of serving on the Positive Life NSW Board, December 2017.
- 06.** Evidence Brief for Rapid HIV Treatment Initiation published, November 2017.
- 07.** Promotion raising awareness of the impending My Health Record.
- 08.** SX Positive Forum in partnership with ACON, June 2018.
- 09.** PLNSW Treasurer Cameron Boag reporting back at the AGM, December 2017.
- 10.** Attendees celebrating at the Positive Life AGM and Christmas Party, December 2017.
- 11.** Immediate Start survey report published, September 2018.



“I just attended a social lunch hosted by Positive Life for the positive heterosexual community. I want to thank your organisation for a fabulous event. It was well organised, well attended and a joyful experience. It is events like this that make it easy for members of an otherwise marginalised and isolated community to come together.”

– Community member living with HIV

# OUR VOICE

Communications





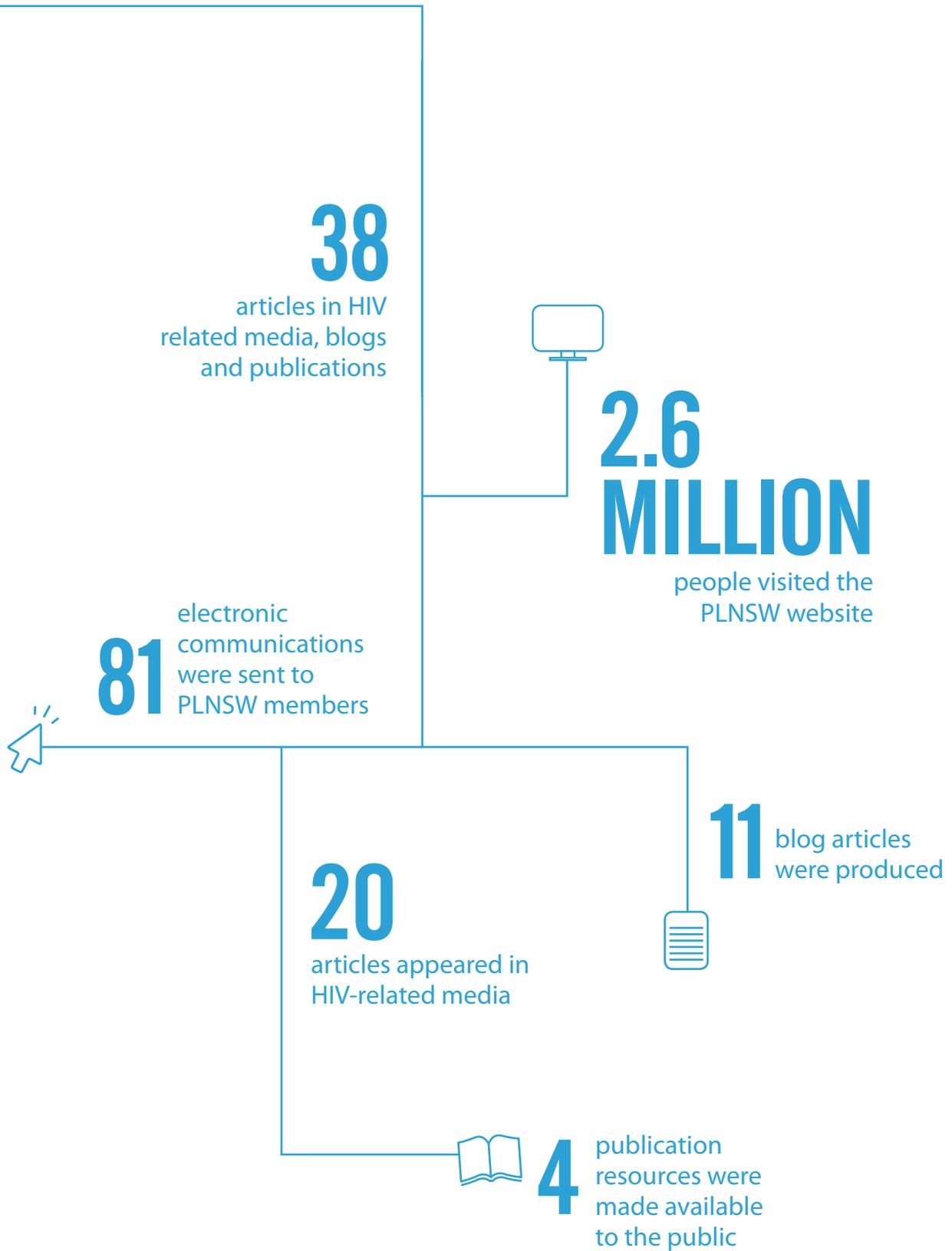
## COMMUNICATIONS

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Our voice has continued to be heard across NSW throughout a range of strategies, platforms both online and in print.

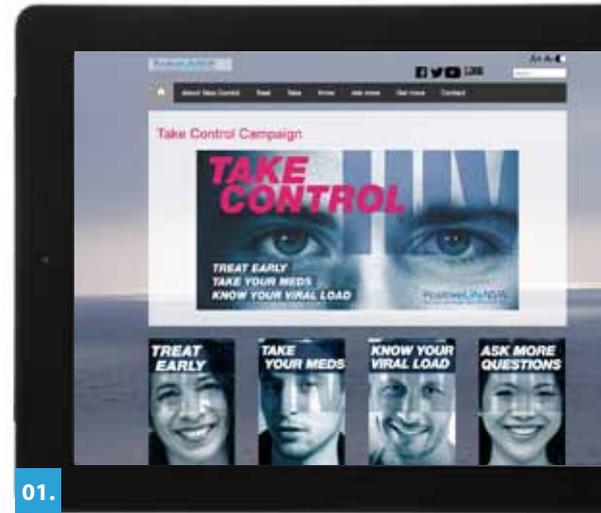
Our four campaign websites have continued strong delivering health promotion messages and HIV related information that our positive community continues to use and engage with to support living our lives with HIV our way.

- **The Choice is Yours** (version 2) relaunched October 2017 with updated information (re: Medicare Ineligible and PrEP) and still promoting the choice of PLHIV when accessing HIV medication in NSW, treatment options and resources to community members, including those who are Medicare Ineligible and our pharmacists who dispense our HIV medications in NSW.
- **HIV Difference?** asks the question 'Why let HIV get in the way of a good relationship?' while promoting the happy reality of living in a 'brave new world' of freedom, desire, pleasure and acceptance alongside our lovers and mates of all sero-status.
- **Wrapped or Raw?** Supports PLHIV and their partners, fuckbuddies and mate in a changing social, sexual and pharmaceutical environment with up-to-date information promoting choice and strategies for pleasure, while minimising STIs and having great sex.
- **Take Control** continues to share the message of taking control of our health, managing our HIV while remaining in the drivers seat of making our own choices without shame or fear.

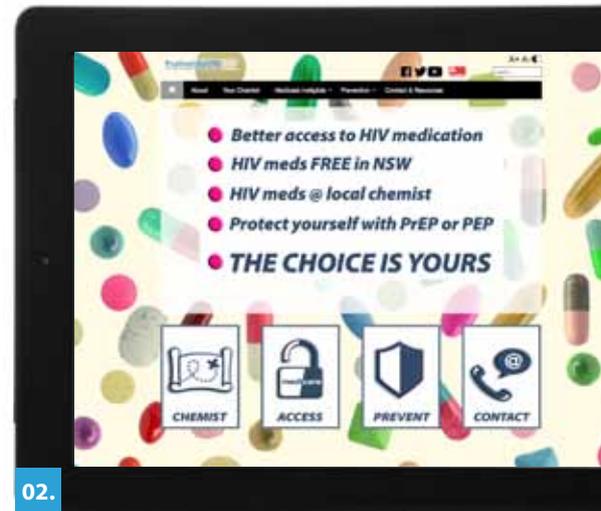


“Thanks is not enough for all the great work the Positive Life Team has done and continues to do for the HIV positive community.”

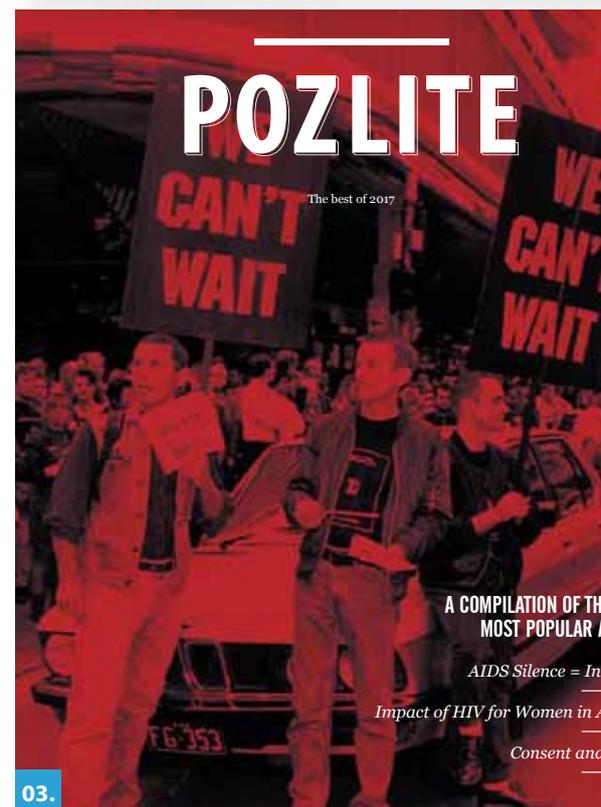
– Positive Life NSW Member



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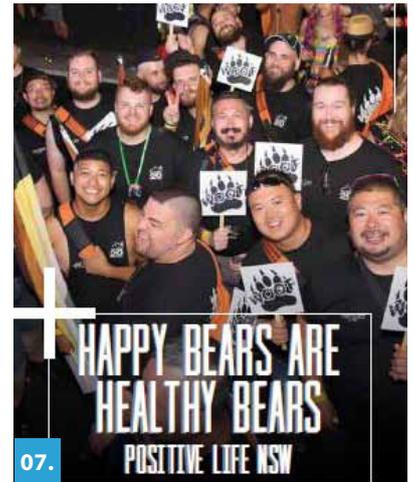


03.

01. Take Control campaign website.
02. The Choice is Yours campaign website.
03. PozLite: The Best of 2017, published June 2018.
04. Talkabout Online 'Talkin' About our History' edition, published May 2017.
05. Talkabout Online 'HIV Divergence' edition, published October 2017.
06. HIV Difference (Sero Disco 3), published March 2018.
07. Happy Bears are Healthy Bears, published September 2017.
08. 7 Good Reasons to Test (joint collaboration with MHAHS and Pozhet), March 2018.
09. Factsheet: HIV and Your Mouth, published December 2017.



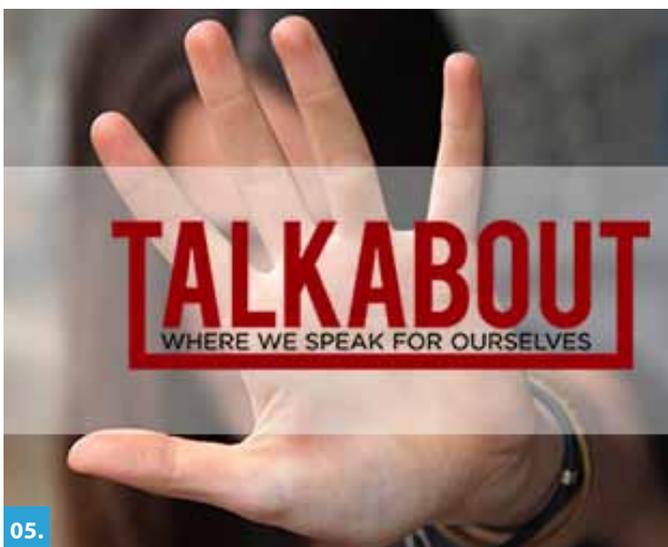
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## HIV & YOUR MOUTH

Taking good care of your mouth and teeth



**HIV AND YOUR MOUTH**

Taking care of your mouth is the first step to good nutrition and overall health. The condition of your mouth – teeth, gums, tongue and throat - can significantly affect your physical and emotional health, including comfort, appearance, self-image, self-esteem, interpersonal relationships, diet and speech, and further impact upon other health conditions.

**FOR GOOD ORAL HEALTH**

- Thoroughly brush your teeth at least twice a day or after meals with a 'soft' toothbrush. Hard bristles damage your gums and wear away the enamel on your teeth.
- Use toothpaste that contains fluoride.
- Clean between your teeth every day with interdental brushes or floss.
- After eating a meal rinse your mouth with water if you're unable to brush.
- Drink plenty of water (2-3 litres per day) between meals.
- Avoid high sugar content foods and acidic foods (soft drinks, vinegar, soy sauce).
- Smoking can lead to dry gums, poor condition of your teeth, bad breath, ulcers and in some cases increase the risk for mouth cancer.
- Visit your dentist twice a year for a scale clean and check-up.

*"Floss, brush, rinse. Limit sugar, drink water and stimulate saliva."*

09.

# MAKING IT HAPPEN

Social Support





## SOCIAL SUPPORT

### HIV Work Ready

HIV Work Ready assists people living with HIV (PLHIV) engage with their community to build confidence and quality of life. The following graphics indicate participant statistics for the 2017–18 financial year.



**20**

people were enrolled in the Work Ready program



**3**

people were successful in finding full time employment

**60%**

are aged between 25–44 years



**80%**

of people who accessed the Work Ready program are male

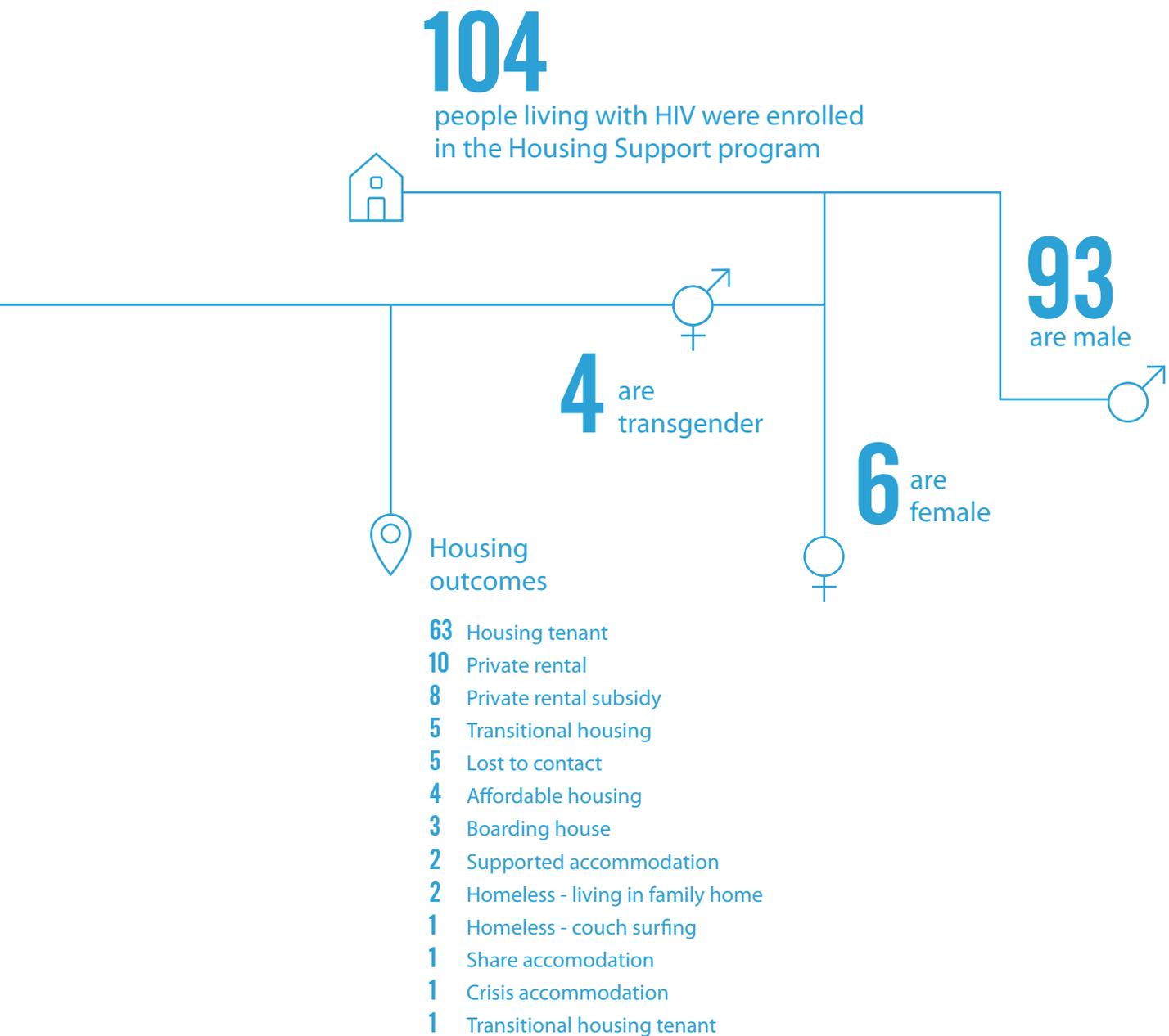


**2**

people have found part time employment

## HIV Housing Support

The Housing Support Officer is responsible for support and advocacy to PLHIV in metropolitan and regional NSW to access, achieve and maintain stable accommodation, including those at risk of homelessness. The below statistics outline the HIV Housing Support participant enrolments and outcomes for the 2017–18 financial year.



## TREATMENTS SUPPORT

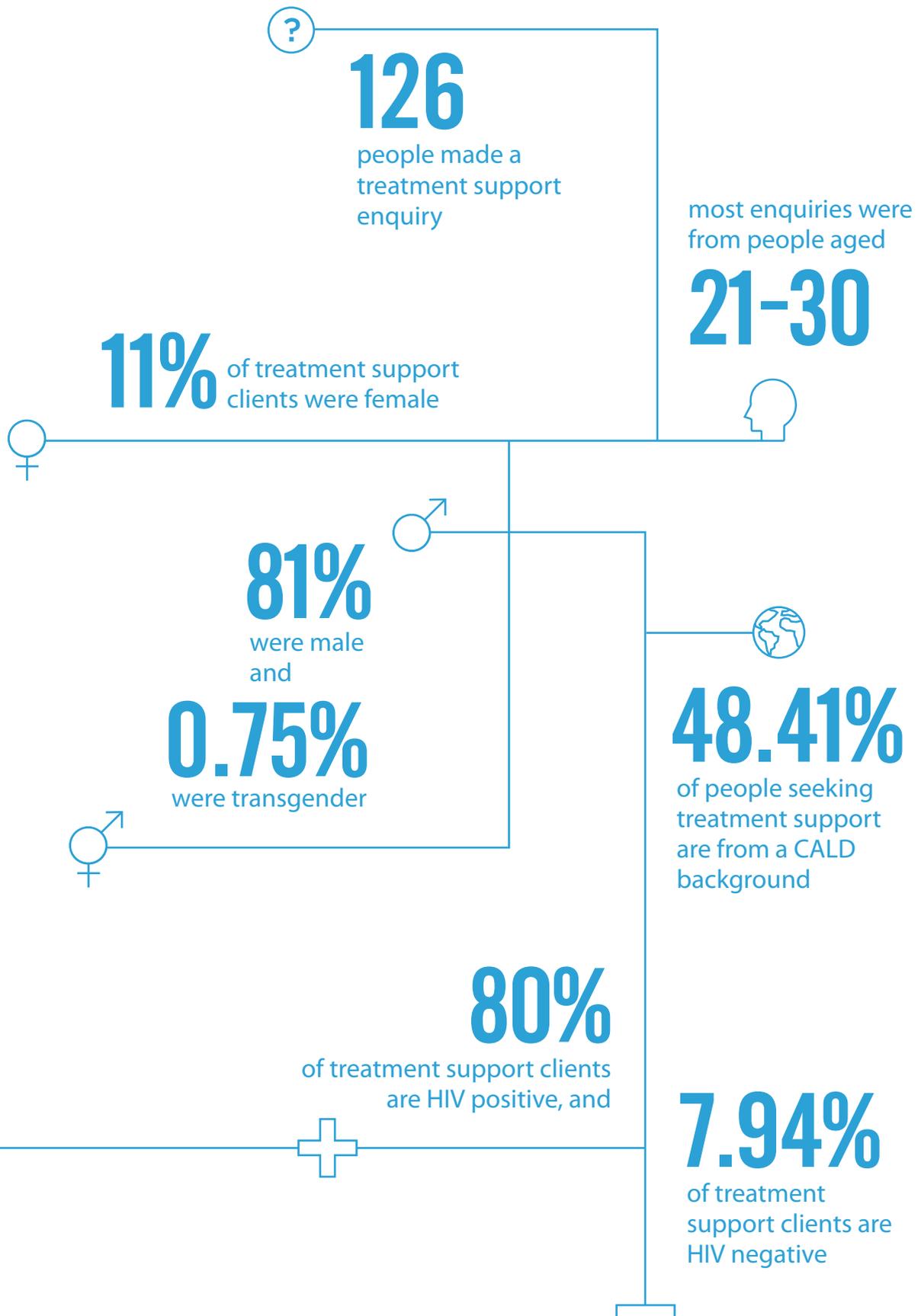
The Treatments Officer is responsible to provide support, information and advocacy in HIV treatments to and for PLHIV and those affected by HIV across metropolitan and regional NSW to increase the knowledge and competencies of PLHIV in healthy decision making.

### Case Study: Jack

'Jack', a young man from overseas was diagnosed with HIV having acquired it locally. While Jack was isolated and didn't know anyone living with HIV, he was supported to attend a clinic for his follow-up HIV care, put onto anti-retroviral treatment and linked into Positive Life NSW social inclusion programs. Jack participated in a Genesis Workshop and he's finding support and making new friends through attending Peer to Peer and [+Connect].

### Case Study: Charlie

'Charlie' experienced stigma and discrimination within the workplace and was supported through a grievance complaint with the assistance of legal advice from the HIV/AIDS Legal Centre (HALC). While the outcome was satisfactory, Charlie's experience highlights some workplaces still lack a readiness to support people living with HIV and other blood borne viruses along with an absence of exiting policy and procedures. It also demonstrates the need for PLHIV who might be experiencing workplace issues related to their HIV to reach out early for assistance.





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**PositiveLifeNSW** | Housing Support  
the voice of people with HIV since 1988

## If you are living with HIV and require support with housing issues, we can help you:

- › Find crisis or temporary accommodation for those PLHIV who are currently experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- › Complete a housing application with Housing NSW or a community housing provider.
- › Apply for a transfer to another property.
- › Address maintenance and/or tenancy issues.
- › Lodge a complaint and/or attend a tribunal hearing ie. NCAT.
- › Provide appropriate referrals to other agencies and services.

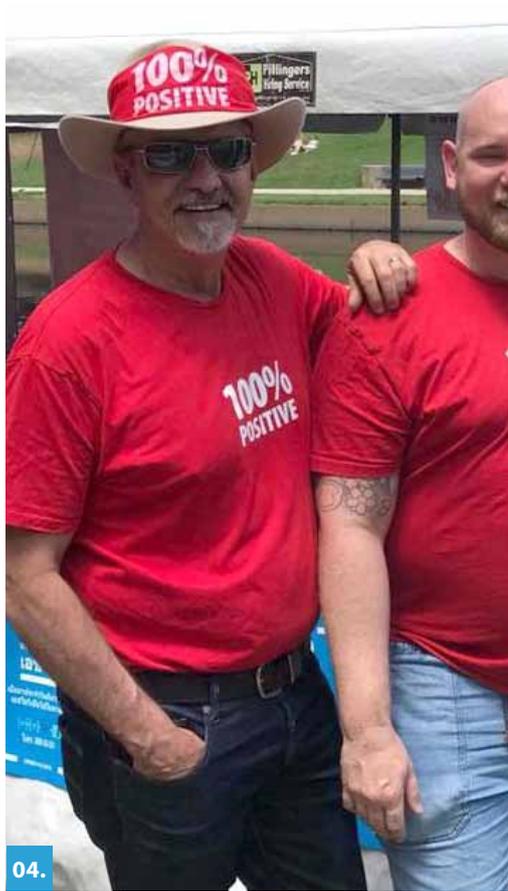
Positive Life NSW provides peer support to help you access, achieve and maintain stable accommodation.

**Contact our Housing Support Officer to discuss your support needs**  
**Phone: 02 9206 2177**  
**Email: [johnc@positivelife.org.au](mailto:johnc@positivelife.org.au)**





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## tell us what you know

ABOUT HPV



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rt.  
“My situation is getting complicated, and I really appreciate the opportunity to be able to talk in person and get some informed advice.”

– Positive Life NSW client living with HIV



- 01.** PLHIV and HIV Sector celebrate together on World AIDS Day 2017.
- 02.** PLNSW Housing Support promotional poster outlining service offerings.
- 03.** PLNSW Housing Support promotional flyer.
- 04.** David Crawford, Treatments Officer and Neil Fraser, Work Ready Program at Parramatta Pride Picnic, October 2017.
- 05.** Promotion for HPV Women's Survey, March 2018.

# GETTING TOGETHER

Social Inclusion &  
Peer Support





# PEER SUPPORT

## [+ Connect] events

[+Connect] is an inclusive social event for all people with HIV, our families and significant others to get together and expand our friendship networks in a safe, accessible and friendly environment.

## Peer 2 Peer meetings

Peer 2 Peer is a support and discussion group that meets every two months over a light evening meal for all HIV positive gay men.

## Genesis workshops

In 2017–18 Genesis was a collaboration between ACON and Positive Life as a weekend workshop for gay men who have been diagnosed with HIV within the last two years. It's a peer-based workshop which means it's run by other gay men with HIV who can relate to the experience of a new diagnosis.

## The Social Club

The Social Club is a peer support group which offers heterosexual people living with HIV the opportunity to meet up in a safe, friendly and accepting social environment. The Social Club met regularly throughout this time period. It is facilitated by peers for peers.

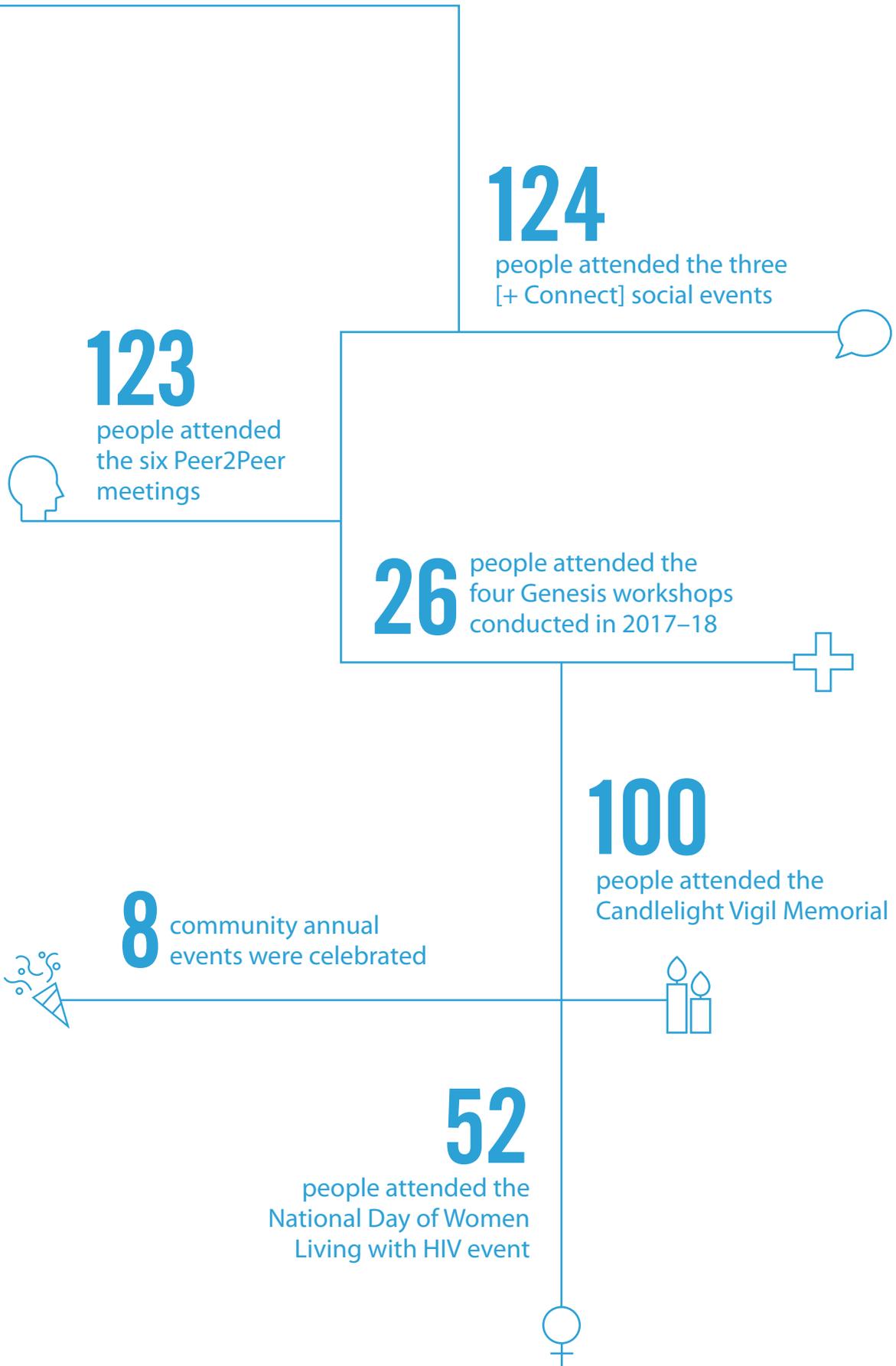
## Annual events

Friday 1 December, Positive Life NSW celebrated World AIDS Day 2017 and introduced our 'Peer-Led Partner Notification' program. This is a program that empowers newly diagnosed PLHIV to take control of notifying sexual and injecting partners of their HIV status, with the support from peers. Unlike clinical 'contact tracing' services which involve a healthcare worker, this peer-led contact tracing service allows people living with HIV to remain in control, build our capabilities and confidence, and support peers to work together with dignity and respect.

Positive Life board, staff and community participated in the Mardi Gras Parade this 2018 season. In keeping with the agency 2018 messaging we wore black t-shirts and walked under a theme of 'Silence = Death: Positive Life through the decades'. We reminded Sydneysiders that the body positive continues to work towards breaking silence and generating discourse in order to eliminate stigma, discrimination, and improve health outcomes for PLHIV.

Positive Life board, staff and community partnered with MHAHS, Femfateles, NAPWHA and Pozhet in the National Day of Women Living with HIV to acknowledge and pay respect to all women living with HIV in Australia. In 2018, Positive Life along with our partner ACON, paid tribute to the memory of our lovers and friends we have lost to HIV/AIDS and remember their treasured friendships and lives.

For HIV Testing Week in June 2018, Positive Life partnered with MHAHS and Pozhet to showcase the new resource '7 Good Reasons to Test for HIV Now' as well as screening *Nothing Without Us: The Women who will end AIDS* – a Film by Harriet Hirshorn.





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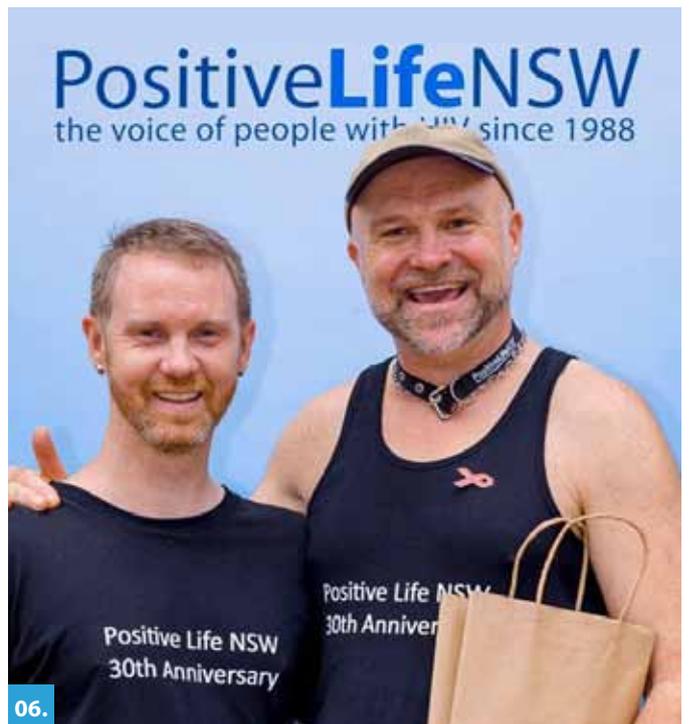
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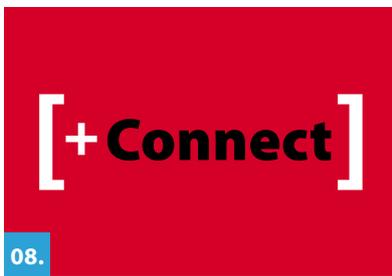


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- 01. PLHIV and community members celebrate the National Day of Women Living with HIV, March 2018.
- 02. PLHIV community at HIV Testing Week 2018 Screening, June 2018.
- 03. Positive Life Community marching tall in the 2018 Mardi Gras Parade, March 2018.
- 04. Fair Day 2017
- 05. Associate Director Joël Murray with Positive Speaker Zyna Kahiye at the HIV Testing Week 2018 Screening.
- 06. Dejay Toborek and Phil Shipton at the 2018 Mardi Gras Fair Day, February 2018.
- 07. Jane Costello speaking at the 2018 Candlelight Vigil, May 2018.
- 08. [+Connect] promotional branding.
- 09. 2018 messaging at Mardi Gras, March 2018.
- 10. 7 Good Reasons to Test resource launch at the HIV Testing Week 2018 Screening, June 2018.



“Thanks for the help, and I enjoyed the workshop very much, it’s a whole new experience for me. Look forward to seeing the group on Thursday.”

– Positive Life Client living with HIV







## **Positive Life NSW**

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