

talkabout

Where we speak for ourselves

VOTE

1

HIV

HEALTH / AGED CARE /
DISCRIMINATION / HOUSING

Election 2011

Moving to the country

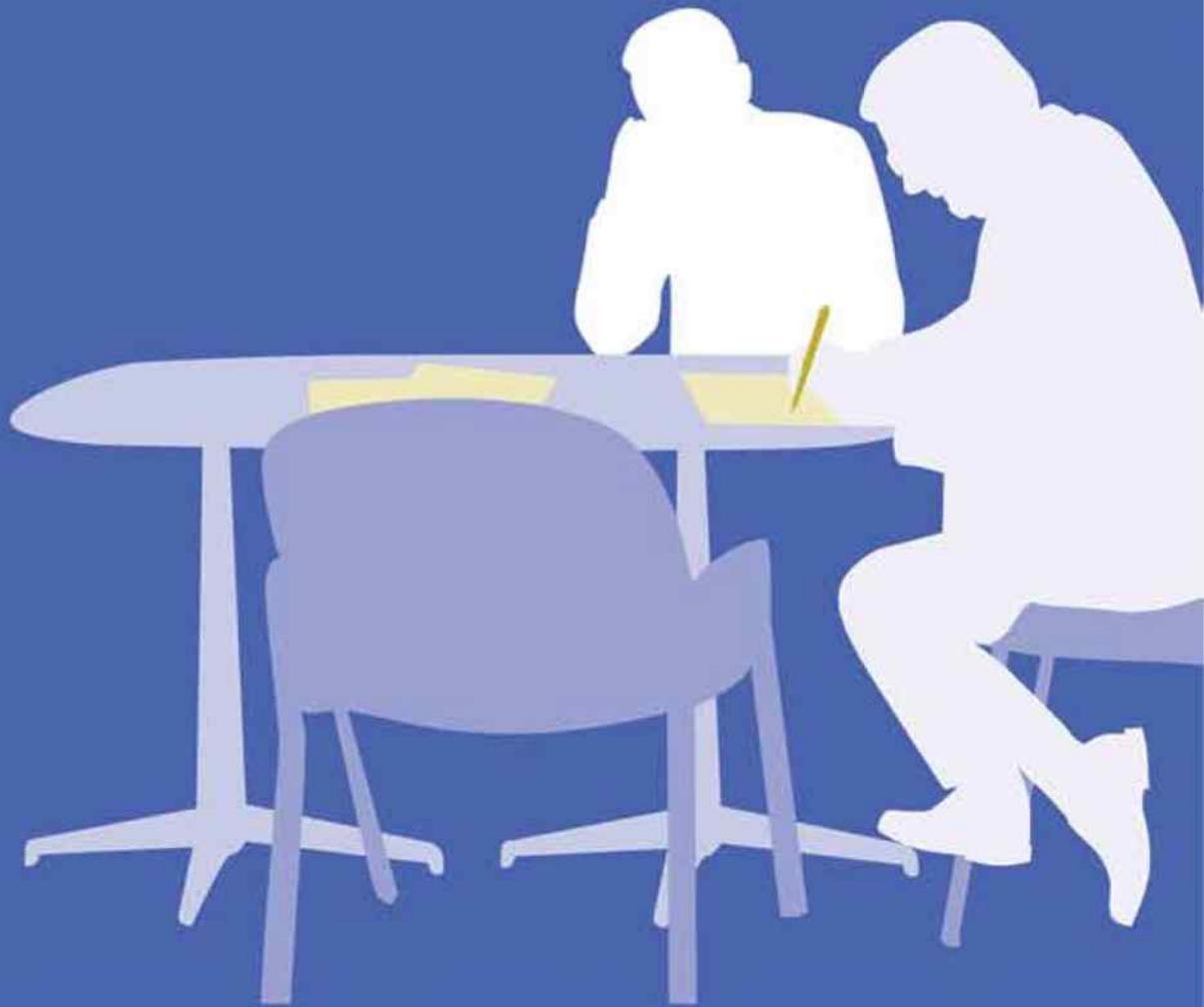
**Positive Life Strategic
Plan 2011-2015**

PositiveLifeNSW
the voice of people with HIV since 1988

Do you have a Social Security problem?
Need help with Centrelink?

Free advice and advocacy

Welfare Rights Centre



For information or advice:

Phone: (02) 9211 5300

Toll Free: 1800 226 028

TTY: (02) 9211 0238 or visit
www.welfarerights.org.au

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Where we speak for ourselves

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DISCLAIMER

Images of people included in *Talkabout* do not indicate hiv status either positive or negative.

If a person discloses their hiv status in *Talkabout*, either in a submitted article or in an interview for publication, that personal information is in the public arena on publication. Future use of information about such a person's status by readers of *Talkabout* cannot be controlled by Positive Life NSW.

In this issue

Happy New Year to all. In his column, Malcolm welcomed the new Board elected at the November AGM. We're looking forward to planning our work for 2011-2012 based on the Strategic Plan which you can read in this issue of *Talkabout*. Very soon, we will appoint a new person to the Communications position. This person will be responsible for getting the word out, whether that is via *Talkabout*, the website, our new Facebook page or in other media. We hope to also reach people who don't currently read *Talkabout*.

We've got a number of projects nearing completion. The pilot Health workshop in December was very well received. We'll be reworking a few things based on feedback, and plan to promote and run it several times over this year. Kathy's interviews with people with HIV about mental health are complete. She is finalising a report based on what the findings and recommendations mean for us and for other services people with HIV use or want to use.

Despite a lot of noise about Health Reform and the new Local Health

Networks, most services are still in the same place. If you have difficulty tracking down your local services, get in touch with us and we can help out.

If you haven't had a chance to do the *Stigma Survey*, have a look at it. The more info we have, the more NAPWA can do with the analysis and results.

The photo on this page is from our Mardi Gras Fair Day Stall. We've tried to make it easier to find us, talk to you, distribute resources and help you find the information you might need.

Unfortunately, there is not good news about Sculptra. It was fantastic to have the drug listed on PBS. Unfortunately, the delay in getting the procedure listed as a Medicare funded procedure continues. We will be working with NAPWA, BGF and ACON to look at what we can do until this listing happens.

Finally, read our election info on pages 8 - 9. If you want to find out about other issues, check out the ACON website, www.acon.org.au and make your vote count on Saturday 26 March.

Rob Lake CEO





An end to stigma

**The stigma of HIV is something we can live without.
And with your help we can make a start.**

We want to hear from all sorts of people about what it means to be positive.

**When you can spare 20 minutes, log on to
www.hivstigma.net.au and complete the online survey.**

This research is being conducted by the National Association of People Living With HIV/AIDS and the National Centre in HIV Social Research. It is the first step in a program of activities aimed at putting an end to the stigma of HIV.

Keeping you informed



At the AGM last February the new Board was elected. I welcome new Board members Craig Cooper (Vice President), Paul Ellis (returning Treasurer), James Wilson (Secretary), Brett Paradise (returning Director) as well our new Director's Jane Costello, Simon Chaplin, Peter Thoms and Scott McKeown. It has been some time since we have seen so many new faces on the Board. A previous Board member said to me: "New people mean new ideas". I will add new perspectives to that. The staff has elected Hedimo Santana and Lance Feeny to alternate as their Board representatives. I thoroughly look forward to working with the new Board.

The holiday season was a busy one and I am pleased to report that the Christmas party at the Taxi Club was well attended as was Planet Positive the following night. Fortunately the weather was favorable this year and we had a great day at the annual barbeque. I hope that you all had a happy holiday season no matter what you did and for those of you who took a break I hope you had a great one.

The Board met in January for the Board Induction day which informed new members of their rights and responsibilities while being a refresher for the rest of us.

It was also a great way for the Board to get to know each other. This year the Board Governance Charter was presented and subsequently signed by all members. At the January meeting the Board also confirmed that I would be one of the NAPWA State representatives for 2011. Peter Thoms will be the other representative until the end of the SGM in April.

The Governance Working Group was re-constituted at the first meeting as well. Members include Craig Cooper, Douglas Barry, Bernard Kealey, Rob Lake, Harry Richardson and myself (Chair). The group resumed its work on the Constitution.

The Board also determined the convenors and co-convenors for the Board Advisory Groups (BAGS). Craig Cooper will convene 'Health' and Brett Paradise will convene 'Wellbeing' with Scott McKeown as co-convenor. BAGS will take a slightly different and improved format this year. The Board will now determine the topics. These will come from a variety of areas including research, emerging needs or topics raised at prior BAGS meetings.

If you want further information about what is going on with the Board please contact me at president@positivelife.org.au

Malcolm Leech - President

Dr Mark Alastair Robertson

5/6/1953
5/2/2011



On 12th February Mark's life partner Maurice (Moz), confidant Mary, and many friends and family farewelled Mark, with the eulogies led by David Marr, at St Patrick's Nulkaba near Cessnock. The ceremony seemed uniquely warm and sensitive for a Roman Catholic Church, thanks to the leadership of Mark's dear friend and drinking buddy Father Paul Maloney who was as moved as any of the assembled.

Mark was legendary for his beauty, affability, generosity (he called money 'fun vouchers'), compassion, and dedication as a primary care doctor at the Taylor Square Private Clinic through the darkest days of the 1980s and 1990s. His patients were also his friends, and he lost far too many friends. By the time the new treatment regimes arrived Mark was spent. He split Sydney and worked in remote Aboriginal communities and in other areas of medicine.

Mark was chastised both before and after his death for neglecting his health, but maybe he knew death too well to fear it any more. Yet, as one of the unsung heroes of the epidemic and as a friend, Mark added much to the lives of many.

Basil Donovan

7
29



HIV positive and getting on with it?

Would you like to meet with other gay men living longer with HIV?

729 is a social discussion night for you!

Thursdays, monthly from 7pm

Contact Hédimo on 9361 6011

Email: hedimos@positivelife.org.au

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the voice of people with HIV since 1988

POZ
VIBRATIONS.COM

HIV+ and single ?
Poz Vibrations
HIV+ Dating Australia
www.pozvibrations.com
An Australian Owned HIV dating site.

HIV+ DATING
SYDNEY | BRISBANE | MELBOURNE



We need your feedback

Geoff Cole (Coordinator ADAHPS) reports on the HIV Case Management Project.

Approximately 70% of people living with HIV report they are living well and require routine HIV monitoring. However, some HIV-positive people require linkages and support between a number of services. These include medical and psychological support, as well as accommodation/housing, financial planning and welfare/daily living services. These services need to be tailored to individual need to enhance quality of life and continued well-being.

NSW Health has appointed Susan Johnston Consultancy to receive feedback from HIV sector stakeholders and to recommend options in order to better meet the needs of this group of people. The Consultant's report to NSW Health will identify good service models for people with complex needs; point to barriers to improve services outcomes,

identify the roles and responsibilities of service providers, advise on resource implications and suggest outcomes to strengthen case management and referral services. Recommendations will feed into the next NSW Health HIV/AIDS Strategy 2011 to 2015.

ADAHPS is providing project advice and assistance to the consultancy. We welcome your input, particularly if you are living with a complex range of issues, or you are a friend or a partner of someone who has HIV and complex needs.

ADAHPS would like to hear your experiences

These questions are a guide; however any feedback will be helpful.

- Where do you live?
- Where do you receive treatment for HIV?

- Are there any other conditions you are being treated for?
- What makes your situation complex?
- Who helps you with the day to day coordination and linkage of treatment and support services? What needs to be done to make this easier for you?
- What has been helpful to you?
- Have you had a service visit you at home? Which service/s?
- Do you have a computer or mobile phone to receive text or Internet reminders?
- Can you suggest any electronic arrangements that could work for you?

Names and personal details are not required.

Please forward your responses to Geoff Cole (Coordinator ADAHPS)

Email: adahps@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au or Call 8382 1810

Thank you



CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR HEALTH CARE? LET US KNOW!

If you are concerned about the health care provided to you, talk to your provider or call the Health Care Complaints Commission toll free on **1800 043 159** for a confidential discussion.

For more information about the Commission visit www.hccc.nsw.gov.au



WRAPPED OR RAW

WANT
THE FACTS

POS-POS SEX

www.wrappedorraw.org.au

We can make
assumptions about HIV
status. But do we mean
the same thing?

PositiveLifeNSW
the voice of people with HIV since 1988

Election 2011

Following a survey of the major parties in the lead up to this month's NSW election, we're reproducing their responses about HIV policy and services. The responses are from the Coalition, Labor, the Greens and independent MP Clover Moore. The survey was conducted by ACON, NSW's leading GLBT health and HIV/AIDS organisation, the NSW Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby (GLRL) and Positive Life NSW. Full results on all the issues are available on the ACON website at www.acon.org.au/advocacy/2011-NSW-Election

Liberal/ National

The NSW Liberals and Nationals appreciate that our State's multi-faceted response to HIV has been central to keeping the infection rate in NSW low and relatively stable in recent years. The NSW Liberals and Nationals are committed to ensuring that HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment initiatives continue to receive an appropriate share of government funding. The NSW Liberals and Nationals endorse the 2010-13 National HIV Strategy and commit to the renewal or development of a NSW HIV Strategy.

While we recognise the benefits of a varied approach, the question of which specific programs are adopted will be subject to budgetary considerations and the outcome of consultations with stakeholders and expert medical practitioners.

In relation to the actual treatment of HIV infection, the NSW Liberals and Nationals believe that, given the complexity of the issues involved, testing procedures should never be separated from expert counselling services and that pharmaceuticals should only be dispensed by people appropriately qualified to provide expert advice about all aspects of health management.

There will be no tolerance for discrimination in any part of the health system in relation to HIV/Hep C or any other illness and appropriate education programs to address this issue will be put in place. It was the Coalition State Government led by Premier John Fahey that introduced legislation against the vilification of people with HIV/AIDS and the Liberals remain committed to addressing discrimination against people with HIV and ensuring that all patients in our health system receive the highest standard of care without discrimination.

Premier Fahey's Government also provided ACON with its offices in Commonwealth Street.

Clover Moore

Would you support the policy of maintaining or increasing in real terms the current levels of investment in HIV/AIDS in NSW?

Australia's successful HIV/AIDS strategies rely on maintaining education and support programs that meet current needs and reach target groups at risk, and I support this investment. I note the research identifying a return of \$13 for

every \$1 invested in HIV prevention.

Would you support the renewal or development of a NSW HIV Strategy?

Yes, community health policy and programs require regular updating.

Would you support the policy of funding a pilot project trialling rapid HIV testing provided by a community based organisation?

I note the recent research identifying a drop in the HIV testing rate, and support the proposal to trial rapid HIV testing.

Would you support a pilot project to allow community pharmacies to dispense HIV medications?

Yes, I support practical and innovative measures to address health and welfare concerns.

Would you support policies to reduce the discrimination experienced by people with HIV in the health system through HIV education campaigns and HIV awareness training for staff?

I share community concern that people with HIV not suffer discrimination from health services, which are vital to their survival and health. All health workers should understand and respond appropriately, based on need rather than prejudice.

Labor

Will your party commit to maintaining or increasing in real terms the current levels of investment in HIV/AIDS in NSW?

In 2010/11, the NSW Government is investing more than \$110 million in direct efforts to prevent HIV, sexually transmissible infections and hepatitis C, and to provide treatment and support for people living with or affected by these conditions.

Approximately \$46.5 million was spent directly on prevention and control activities. This has proved to be a sound investment.

Independent analysis concluded that the HIV prevention program prevented some 45,000 HIV infections and 2,750 deaths in NSW.

For example, programs such as the Needle and Syringe Program have proven highly successful in preventing the spread of infections such as HIV and Hepatitis C among drug users.

We are a signatory to the National Drug Strategy which includes harm reduction as one of three key approaches to tackling drug use and harm in Australia. Harm reduction is about reducing the harm of drug use both to individuals and minimising the transmission of HIV and blood-borne viruses and reducing other drug related harm in the community. In NSW, we have seen positive results with HIV rates stabilised and the use of illicit drugs has decreased.

Labor committed and spent more than \$150 million per year on drug treatment and prevention measures which include a range of education, treatment and prevention programs designed to drive down drug use.

Will your party commit to the renewal or development of a NSW HIV Strategy?

Labor is proud of its record on HIV prevention, and is committed to the successful programs currently in place. We will continue to consider any new proposals that are shown to be effective.

Will your party commit to funding a pilot project trialling rapid HIV

testing provided by a community based organisation?

As above.

Will your party support a pilot project to allow community pharmacies to dispense HIV medications?

As above.

Will your party reduce the discrimination experienced by people with HIV in the health system through HIV education campaigns and HIV awareness training for staff?

As above.

Greens

Will your party commit to maintaining or increasing in real terms the current levels of investment in HIV/AIDS in NSW?

Yes

Will your party commit to the renewal or development of a NSW HIV Strategy?

Yes

Will your party commit to funding a pilot project trialling rapid HIV testing provided by a community based organisation?

Yes

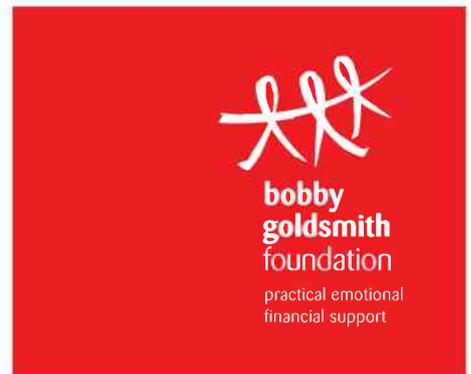
Will your party support a pilot project to allow community pharmacies to dispense HIV medications?

Yes

Will your party reduce the discrimination experienced by people with HIV in the health system through HIV education campaigns and HIV awareness training for staff?

Yes

Remember to
VOTE
on March 26



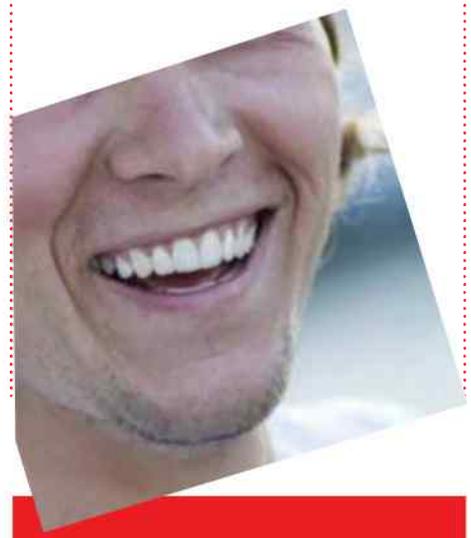
Dental

We hold dental funding of up to \$1000 per person for people living with HIV on Centrelink benefits in the SESIAHS area.

This can be used as a stand alone sum or to top up dental treatment received under the Enhanced Primary Care Scheme.

You need to be a client of BGF to access and talk to caseworkers for information

**Contact our intake officers Peter Thoms and Gitta Backhausen
9283 8666 / 1800 651 011**



Upcoming activities at BGF



**bobby
goldsmith
foundation**
practical emotional
financial support

Art Phoenix Workshop

Unleash your creative side – an 8 week introductory program in drawing and painting for beginners or people who want to brush up on their skills.

When:

Wednesdays – March 2 to 30 and
May 4 to 18 - 10 am to
1 pm (including light lunch)

Where:

Pine Street Creative Arts Centre
– Art Space, Cnr Shepherd & Ivy
Streets, Darlington

Your artist and coach is:

Ian Barnett

Art materials are provided –
participant cost is \$5 per week

**Contact Kit Ayers at BGF to
register – Call 9283 8666 /
1800 651 011**



Phoenix Directions Workshop

For people living with
HIV considering a
positive life change

7 workshops cover -
managing change and
considering future directions

developing an understanding
of the resources and support
services that are available to
people returning to study or to
paid or unpaid work

It also includes the 'Building
Resilience Workshop' by Black
Dog Institute

When:

Thursdays – 17 March to
28 April 2011

Where:

Gordon Ibbett Activities Centre
– 77 Kellick Street, Waterloo

The workshop begins with a
complimentary lunch at 12.00
pm – session 12.30 to 3.30 pm

**Call BGF 9283 8666 /
1800 651 011**

Oral Health Workshops at the Luncheon Club

We are running 3 oral
health workshops at
the Luncheon Club on
Mondays in conjunction
with St Vincent's
Hospital.

Participants will learn oral
hygiene techniques and receive
tips on good brushing practice.
All participants will be given a
free electric toothbrush.

When:

The next workshops are on
March 21 and April 18, 2011.

Where:

Workshops will be held at the
Gordon Ibbett Activities Centre
– 77 Kellick Street, Waterloo.

**Contact Max Greenhalgh at
BGF- 9283 8666 /
1800 651 011**

He's negative and you're positive?

Or you're negative and he's positive?

What works for you?

We are planning a follow up to our successful magazine on pos-neg relationships (SERO DISCO – Why let HIV get in the way of a good relationship?) If you are in (or thinking about) a pos/neg relationship we would like to talk to you about your experiences.

If you are interested in coming along to a discussion group or confidential interview please call **9361 6011** or email kathyt@positivelife.org.au

You will be remunerated for your time.



PositiveLifeNSW
the voice of people with HIV since 1988

Rural Dispatch

It's a little bit different... it's a little bit slower... it's a little bit country...

a new, regular article focusing on regional and rural issues. If you wish to contribute to this column or have suggestions on regional issues you would like us to cover please contact the *Talkabout* editor.

Planning your sea or tree change can make all the difference

Making the decision to change your life and have a sea change or tree change by moving to the country, can be an exciting and liberating experience. A chance to get away from the hustle and bustle of city life and discover new places, with a change of pace to a slower way of life, can be a great adventure and change to your life style. Moving to a rural area can also, but not always, help reduce stress and improve your quality of life. However, a little planning about the place you want to move to can make a difference between a great new life and a hideous nightmare.

Finding a doctor

Whilst the country can give you a new lease on life, if you're HIV positive, there may also be things that you had not thought of. For example, there may not be as many doctors or health services in rural areas and even less s100 prescribers. It pays to find out where the local health

Whilst the country can give you a new lease on life, if you're HIV positive, there may be things that you had not thought of.

services are and if they are taking on new patients, as many do not. Additionally, it may be worth knowing how far away the nearest place to pick up your HIV drugs is. Many people who have moved to rural areas keep their city doctors and HIV specialist and visit them every 3 or 6 months as a way around this. Extra travel time and expenses is worth considering.

Think about your reason for moving

People often move to a new place for a range of different reasons, including the end of a relationship, to start a new one, or because they recently had a holiday to the place and loved it so much they thought they'd stay! Whilst these are all valid reasons, moving to any new place takes work and living in a new area is not the same as being on holidays there. Try and find out a little about the town or area before you move. Is there an existing set of friends and contacts who you could imagine spending time with? What are the main social activities in the area and do they interest you? If you are single and looking to maybe pair up, how are you going to do that? If not it might feel like you are Joanna Eberhart from Stepford Connecticut (younger readers can look up Stepford Connecticut at Wikipedia).

An acquaintance of mine once went on holidays and spent time in a country town where a dance party and activities for GLBT people happened with over five thousand people in attendance. He had a wonderful time at various events, parties and the local pub and met some very eligible new friends and potential new partners. He thought this was such a fantastic place with a vibrant gay scene he decided to move there. Apart from the considerable cost of moving, before leaving the city he informed most of his friends that they bored him and that this had influenced his decision to move. Unfortunately when he arrived in his new town he was shocked to find out that dance parties only happened once a year, that the majority of the people at the event were from other areas or out of town, and really there was no gay scene to speak of. He moved back to the city shortly after with his tail firmly between his legs and his friendship circle greatly diminished.

If you're on benefits

People, who are receiving job search benefits and or housing benefits, also need to check that the place they are moving to is not in an area of greater disadvantage than where they are currently living. If a location has greater unemployment than where you are currently living, and you are not moving to start a new job, your benefits may be suspended for a period of time. It's important to check these

things out with Centrelink or the Welfare Rights Centre. The same applies for social housing. If the waiting list for the area you are moving to is longer than where you are currently located, you may have to wait longer to be housed. Many people talk about living in the country being cheaper but rents in regional towns can be high, so researching rent or house prices before moving is well worthwhile.

A move to the country can be a great change, but a little research can really help you decide if it's the right move for you.

Living in the country is not for everyone; it can be isolating and considerations like access and availability of transport can be a factor in making a move to the country. Many rural areas do not have the public transport that is available and affordable in the city, so you may need your own car and driver's license, depending on where you plan to live.

Good news

Now don't get me wrong, there are many advantages to a country lifestyle and I love living in the bush. Everyday I am grateful for making the decision to move from Sydney. I have a great life style and was able to afford a small acreage. My s100 prescriber is one hours drive from home. Because of the hours the practice is open I usually have to take a morning or an afternoon off work to fit it in. It took me a while to find work and I went from being a manager to a cleaner and dish hand before finding a full time job, but I knew that would be the case and I planned and saved for it. My social life is greatly changed from when I lived in the city and I tend to do more bushwalking, swimming or lunch at friend's places. Nights out with my tribe are more likely to happen every three months rather than every other week. A move to the country can be a great change, but a little research can really help you decide if it's the right move for you.

Calendar

Freecall: 1800 812 404
 Web: www.pozhet.org.au
 Email: pozhet@pozhet.org.au
 Online forum:
www.pozhet.org.au/pozhetforum

2011



FEBRUARY

Tuesday 8th HHAS Consumer Reference Group
Wednesday 16th Women's Day at the Haven in Western Sydney

MARCH

Friday 11th – Sunday 13th HHAS & SE Sydney Retreat
 (men, women, partners, family & friends)
Friday 25th Open House, Treatment Forum
 (men, women, partners, family & friends)

APRIL

Check www.pozhet.org.au for calendar updates

MAY

Saturday 14th Women's Information and Support Day

JUNE

Don't forget to check the website regularly for updates on treatments, news and to participate in the online forum

JULY

Tuesday 5th HHAS Consumer Reference Group
Wednesday 27th Web Chat Forum

AUGUST

Saturday 13th Women's Information and Support Day

SEPTEMBER

Friday 9th – Sunday 11th HHAS Retreat
 (men, women, partners, family & friends)

OCTOBER

Friday 14th Open House (men, women, partners, family & friends)
Tuesday 25th HHAS Consumer Reference Group

NOVEMBER

Saturday 12th Annual Workshop (men, women, partners, family & friends)*
 *Travel & accommodation scholarships available to people living in regional and rural areas

DECEMBER

Friday 2nd End of Year Event (men, women, partners, family & friends)

Call HHAS (Pozhet) on 1800 812404 (Free call)

- for venue details, times & to RSVP
- for referral to Social Group
- for details of monthly African Women's Group
- to receive regular updates

African Women's Group: This group meets in the first week of each month – call the Women's Officer at HHAS (Pozhet) on 1800 812 404 (free call) for dates, times and venue. This group is organised by the LemonGrove Unit in South Western Sydney & by Women & Families at ACON in partnership with Pozhet.

SocialClub: HHAS(Pozhet)participantsareorganisingtheirownsocialactivitieswithsupportfrom Pozhet. Contact Pozhet for referral to the Social Club. More details are also available on the Pozhet website.

Consumer Reference Group: HHAS believes in the value and strength of consumer participation. This group consists of people who are interested in becoming more involved in the direction of the service. If you want more information or are interested in participating call Pozhet on the free call number or email.

Counselling for gay men

Stu Fenton offers counselling in Sydney for gay men experiencing challenges around addictions, self-esteem, HIV, internalised homophobia and any of the below.

Coming out

Grief and Loss

Anger Management

Body Image

Life Skills

Crystal Meth Addiction

Communication and Assertiveness

Ageing in the Gay Community

Internalised homophobia

Relationships

Family conflict

Goal setting

Co-dependency

Stuart works in Potts Point and Woolloomooloo.

Please call 0410324384 to make an appointment or go to www.practicalpower4gaymen.com

About Stu

I am a counsellor and I work from a mainly Gestalt perspective. I am dedicated to helping individuals achieve their goals in regard to alcohol and drug addiction, self esteem issues, life skills, grief and loss and more. My desire to work in this field comes from my own experiences with addiction, body image issues and family conflict. My background is in high school and primary school teaching as well as completing a graduate diploma in counselling in 2008. I am currently half way through a four year course of study at the Sydney Gestalt Institute working towards, a qualification in Gestalt Psychotherapy,

As part of my work I use psychodynamic interventions and aspects of cognitive behavioral therapy and pragmatic skill building. I draw also upon Pia Melody's 'Relational Developmental Model' the key stone and style of therapy used at South Pacific Private in Curl Curl, Sydney. I place great emphasis on understanding each person for who they are, their particular formative life experiences and valuing each individual without trying to pathologise them.

Live in Sydney South West? Need Free general dental care?

Who: People with HIV who hold a health care or pension card and live in the Sydney South West Area Health Service (SSWAHS) catchment area

What: Free general dental services, including dentures

Where: Royal Prince Alfred or Liverpool Hospital dental clinic*

Bookings: Please ask your SSWAHS health care worker to make a booking for you

More information: HIV/AIDS & Related Programs (HARP) Unit on 02 9828 5945 or harpunit@sswahs.nsw.gov.au

*A treatment plan will be developed at your first appointment. You can then make subsequent dental clinic bookings at other dental clinics within SSWAHS if this is more convenient for you.





A good news story from PozVibrations

I logged on (not so long ago) just like any other day. It seemed so routine, like brushing my teeth or ironing my CK undies for the day (Extra starch! It holds me in place).

Would today be the day I meet the man that was going to change my life for the better?

I don't know. I didn't even know if today was going to be the day that anyone said "hello" to me, let alone change my life. But I logged on anyway. I said "hi" to a few guys - 60% ignored me and 29% weren't able to write more than "wt u in 2"?

Ten per cent wanted to do things to me that I just could not get my head around or any other body part for that matter. And one guy said "Would you like to come over this afternoon? I like your profile and I think we have lots in common."

Well the starch in my CK's liquefied and I was outside his door before he knew what hit him. I pressed the doorbell and the whole neighbourhood shook as his dogs ran down the hallway to answer the door faster than he could get to it. It's already going well and the door had not even opened. I like animals and its obvious this guy does too.

"Now don't get ya hopes up", I said to myself. The door opened and (what is now my knight in shining armour) was standing there saying sorry for his dogs

jumping all over me. "You're kidding, this is life to me. They are great, what are their names?" We shook hands and introduced each other; he then introduced me to his puppies. We had coffee, cake and a laugh and then took the dogs for a walk to get to know each other.

I played it different this time. I liked the vibrations I got from this guy.

I played it different this time. I liked the vibrations I got from this guy. We saw each other over a few weeks and started to phone or text each other daily. We had dinners out, we had dinners in. It was not perfect, but show me something that is perfect and I will hand it back to you. I am not a collector of the perfect, I am just an average Joe living life and wanting to share it with someone. I now wanted to live my life as US not ME.

I told him my dreams to move out of Sydney and of changing my life in many

ways. He agreed and said he would like to come along for the ride, change his life and always have me in it. He would resign from his work and come with me. You mean someone cared for me that much?

Eight weeks after meeting we were living together, twelve weeks later we were driving to our new home out of Sydney. Two cars, three dogs, one truck load of furniture and two guys - Thelma and Louise style, hitting the highway at 110 kms per hour (where permitted) for what seemed like hours of driving. No cliff in sight to drive over, just our dreams being realised as we dared to try them out.

It was one in the morning and after eleven hours of driving we were almost there but could go no further. We checked into a roadside caravan park and crashed (our heads) onto pillows, our dogs by our bedside and highway trucks rolling past. We slept in each other's arms glad for the day that we both logged online.

Six months later our vegetable garden is about to give us our first harvest and the herb garden is flourishing with parsley, sage, basil and Thyme (what we hope to have heaps of together).

So would this be the day I log on and meet the man that changed my life for the better? YES!

It's a true story. Want one of your own? Feel the vibrations you deserve it.

www.pozvibrations.com



Nevirapine more likely than Efavirenz to suppress HIV viral load to zero

Report by **Jae Condon** (Treatment and Support Officer- Positive Services and Health Unit, ACON)

The goal of HIV treatment is to reduce the amount of HIV in your blood to 'undetectable', thus enabling your CD4 count to increase and your immune system to return to optimal function. An undetectable result does not necessarily mean that there is no HIV in your blood, or other parts of your body, rather the test used cannot detect (find) any HIV in your blood.

Most tests used in pathology labs have a 'sensitivity' or ability to detect HIV at 40 or 50 'copies'¹ per ml or drop of blood. This means such tests cannot detect HIV below these levels, so someone with an undetectable result could still have active HIV in their blood below these levels. In recent years, new and more highly sensitive HIV viral load tests have been developed that can detect a viral load below one copy/ml. Although being undetectable at less than 1 copy/ml could be considered to be zero in plasma, or the liquid part of blood, HIV can still 'hide out' in parts of the body called reservoirs. Examples of these reservoirs include the brain, gut and the lymph nodes.

A team of French investigators has found that people who are taking an HIV treatment combination that includes Nevirapine (Viramune) are more likely to achieve a viral load of zero than people taking a combination that includes Efavirenz (Sustiva, also in the combination pill Atripla).

The researchers designed a retrospective study involving 75 patients treated with Nevirapine and 90 individuals taking Efavirenz-based combinations who had an undetectable viral load below 50 copies per ml of blood for at least six months using a test capable of detecting virus below one copy/ml. The results showed that 81% of people taking Nevirapine had

a viral load of zero compared to 56% of individuals treated with Efavirenz.

Previous research has suggested that treatment combinations that include a drug from the NNRTI (non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor) group of HIV drugs are more likely to suppress viral load to extremely low levels than treatment based on a protease inhibitor (PI), a different class of drug.

There is also some evidence that Nevirapine is more effective at reducing viral load to lower levels than Efavirenz. The investigators believe that research demonstrates "the stronger ability of Nevirapine than Efavirenz to better control residual (HIV), in patients with (undetectable viral load)." They suggest that this is because Nevirapine is better able to penetrate "reservoirs", or places in the body that HIV can 'hide' and treatments are unable to get to.

"The clinical relevance of having a viral load below 1 copy/ml has yet to be shown," conclude the researchers, who call for studies "to explore, for example, the relationship between the level of (HIV) and *systemic inflammatory or immune activation markers*²."

It's currently unclear what the benefits are of having a viral load of zero. However, it's known that even low levels of HIV can cause inflammation³ and that this can increase the risk of some serious illnesses, for example cardiovascular disease and some cancers. Therefore including Nevirapine in your combination could in theory reduce the risk of developing these health issues. It is also theorised that the lower someone's viral load the less chance they have of passing on HIV during unprotected sex, in the absence of another STI or lesion (cut or sore) to the genitals.

So is Nevirapine for me?

For people starting treatment for the first time with a combination that includes Nevirapine there is a risk of liver toxicity depending on your CD4 count. The risk is different for men and women. Men with a CD4 count above 400 per ml, and women with CD4s above 250 per ml, are at higher risk of experiencing liver related side effects if starting Nevirapine.

However people who have been taking other HIV treatments, have an undetectable viral load and do not have resistance to Nevirapine can switch to Nevirapine quite safely. If you think you would benefit from taking Nevirapine, or would like to include it into your combination, you should discuss your options with your HIV doctor.

Reference:

Haïm-Boukobza S, Morand-Joubert L, Flandre P, Valin N, Fourati S, Sayon S, Lavignon M, Simon A, Girard PM, Katlama C, Calvez V, Marcelin AG. (2011) Higher efficacy of Nevirapine than Efavirenz to achieve HIV-1 plasma viral load below 1 copy/ml, AIDS. 2011 Jan 28;25(3):341-4.

Footnotes

- 1 The term 'copies' is used when giving HIV Viral Load (VL) results because pathology tests detect HIV genetic material, or the building blocks for HIV. This genetic material assembles to form new viral particles, which are then released from the CD4 cell to go on to form new immature HIV's that must go through a process of maturation before they can recommence the replication cycle. Until the process of maturation is complete HIV is not yet able to start the replication cycle again, but the genetic material is still able to be detected by HIV Viral Load tests and is called a copy.
- 2 These terms refer to chemical markers measurable in blood. The level of these 'markers' give an indication of the amount of immune related inflammation caused by HIV. These chemical markers are thought to contribute to HIV related health issues such as premature signs of heart disease and other health issues related to HIV and ageing.
- 3 Even with effective treatment and an undetectable viral load, HIV continues to stimulate the immune system to release an ongoing or chronic inflammatory response by way of releasing pro-inflammatory chemicals. Chronic inflammation can lead to a range of health issues for people with HIV. The higher ones viral load, the more likely a person will experience health issues related to inflammation.



STRATEGIC PLAN

2011 – 2015

Positive Life NSW has been the voice of people with HIV since 1988. Since then, we've responded to changes in what living with HIV means. For some of us in NSW, despite new treatments, major treatment benefits have not made enough difference. Long term unemployment, poverty, and poor health continue to make life hard particularly those who have lived longer with HIV.

We changed our name to acknowledge the hope that improved treatments bring for many. We will continue to seek widespread access to these benefits, and to ensure that the future is something to look forward to and not fear.

Once, we talked mainly about HIV treatments. Today, our human rights are as important as our right to health. Timely and affordable access to health care is important, but can only succeed when we can also be confident of protection from discrimination in hospital, at work and in the rest of our lives. We will continue to advocate for the respect of human rights and to reduce the impacts of the social determinants of health. Evidence suggests that programs that comprehensively address health where we live, work, learn and play can have greater impact on health outcomes at the population health level than programs using interventions aimed solely at individual behaviour change.¹

People with HIV, and their needs, are diverse. We will advocate so that no matter who they are or where they live, people with HIV can access the services and support they need for health and wellbeing. This includes gay men, young people,

women, people with disabilities, migrants and refugees, people in sero discordant relationships, older people, heterosexual men, people living long term with HIV and people with HIV and Hepatitis C.

People with HIV do not and should not live in isolation. Our partners, families, children and carers need to be able to access the services and support they may need. They too must be able to live and work without fear of HIV related discrimination.

We will continue to play an active and energetic role in HIV prevention. Our approach will reflect safer sex, risk reduction and combination prevention strategies as appropriate. We will continue to advocate to make it easier for people to get the health tests they need affordably and quickly.

During this Strategic Plan, we will engage strongly with emerging trends and new challenges and opportunities as they occur. Electronic health records, health reform, welfare reform, the changing needs of older people with HIV and combating discrimination are major challenges and opportunities to make new allies.

We will achieve this through our Key Goals: Building supportive environments, Health, Wellbeing, Advocacy and Organisational development.

1 Establishing a Holistic Framework to reduce inequities in HIV, Viral Hepatitis, STDs and TB in the United States: *National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD and TB Prevention*. 2010

KEY GOAL A: BUILDING SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Positive Life NSW is a trusted grass-roots community organisation that connects with and draws its inspiration from people with HIV, their partners and communities.

Key Principles: Consultation and partnership

Strengthen and maintain a meaningful connection with key population groups who have less contact with Positive Life NSW. These include older and younger gay men living in the inner city; positive Aboriginal people living in Sydney, regional and remote western NSW; newly arrived migrants from South East Asia; refugees from sub-Saharan Africa and positive women across NSW.

Online communication and community events will continue to be our primary tool to reach all. We think this will help support resilience and connection to us and to other people with HIV.

What might this mean in practice

We will:

- talk with and listen to people with HIV, local services and networks so we can best advocate and represent needs and issues.
- continue our successful strategies, develop new ones as needed and review and change what is not working well. We take pride in our outreach, peer and social support programs; and continue to build on these strengths and promote social inclusion for positive people in NSW.
- continue to strengthen contact with people with HIV in regional NSW.

Our Approach

We will be bold and:

- develop a communications strategy that ensures maximum outreach through use of relevant media to best reach people.
- use our website to make information easy to find, interactive and relevant.
- disseminate health education information through Talkabout as well as print and online media and networks.
- promote face to face opportunities wherever we can.

We will:

- **host a Summit in Sydney for NSW people with HIV in 2011 to talk and listen about issues, views and priorities.**
- **prioritise social as well as peer support opportunities.**
- **continue to outreach to regional NSW, in particular Southern, Western and North Western NSW.**

KEY GOAL B: HEALTH

Positive Life NSW is a professional health promotion agency that makes a significant positive impact on the range of health issues experienced by people with HIV, their partners and communities.

Key Principles: Access, partnership, responsiveness

1. Core issues

We will continue to recognise and address:

- the fact that people living longer with HIV are more likely to be affected by ageing and also non HIV health conditions.
- equitable access to health services and treatment across NSW, particularly as health reform changes existing GP and hospital networks and relationships.
- the health needs of marginalised positive people.
- strategies that make getting and keeping good health easier.

2. Emerging issues

We will address the health issues and needs:

- facing our aging population such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer and mental health.
- associated with premature aging.
- of the most disadvantaged and isolated who may be dealing with poverty, homelessness, long term ill health and mental health issues, recognising their social as well as clinical needs.
- the emotional health and social support needs of people with HIV and their families.

3. Preventive health

We will focus on:

- identifying relevant preventive health information, clinical and resource needs for people with HIV.
- support for people in and entering sero-discordant relationships.
- sexual health, including risk reduction initiatives.
- smoking cessation.

We will achieve these by continuing to

Take a lead role in the field of HIV health education and promotion, we will strengthen existing partnerships and develop new ones to respond to emerging research, evidence and best practice. We will maintain our focus on working with mainstream health organisations so they can best meet the needs of positive people.

Respond to the sexual health needs of gay men with HIV with culturally appropriate language, mixed approaches and contexts that reflect and affirm these needs. HIV prevention will be an ongoing priority.

Play a key role in identifying and responding to international, national and state health research and initiatives, enabling us to be timely and responsive in our actions.

Our Approach

We will:

- make good use of the research, planning and evaluation that is available to us.

- offer culturally sensitive and socially relevant strategies and programs.
- be bold and innovative in our approaches.
- work to improve equity of access to resources, information and activities.

We will:

- **continue to use research, evidence and consultation to identify priorities, develop resources and campaigns and measure their impact and effectiveness.**
- **respond to the impact of ageing with information, advocacy and campaigns as needed.**
- **make smoking cessation a shared objective for people with HIV and for HIV services.**
- **continue our HIV prevention work using risk reduction, safer sex and combination prevention strategies.**

» KEY GOAL C: WELLBEING

Positive Life NSW works collaboratively with HIV and mainstream organisations to improve the quality of life and well-being of positive people through education, health and social policy advocacy, all supported by evidence and research.

Key Principles: Human rights and social inclusion

Positive people have the same human rights as other residents of NSW. Stigma and discrimination restrict access to services, participation and inclusion within the community. We will endeavour to break down barriers and support positive people to address their common as well as unique issues and needs.

Discrimination on the basis of HIV status together with challenges such as poverty, unemployment and health care costs has a profound impact on the wellbeing of positive people, particularly older people with HIV and those who are dealing with physical and mental illness.

What might this mean in practice

To improve the quality of life and wellbeing of positive people, we and others must address their human rights and social inclusion, so we will:

- work collaboratively with our partners in HIV, disability and community care organisations to ensure integrated, appropriate care, support and community services.
- develop strategies to identify and fight discrimination against people with HIV, whether at work, in education, health care settings or elsewhere.
- advocate for access to affordable housing and culturally appropriate supported accommodation.
- advocate to ensure that income and financial support and health safety nets are available and effective.
- address law and justice issues that continue to affect the wellbeing of positive people, such as the implications of disclosure, criminal prosecution of HIV transmission, immigration and Medicare eligibility.

Our Approach

We will:

- through research and evidence, continue to identify and address the key barriers to social inclusion faced by people with HIV.
- work throughout the HIV sector and with new partners to develop and implement a strategic response to improving the wellbeing of positive people in NSW.
- build on our existing programs, activities, and support services that meet needs, including health and social support.
- advocate for changes to services to better meet these objectives.

We will:

- **Continue to identify and develop peer support best practice and revise our existing work on the basis of the 2010 Peer Support Review.**
- **Ensure that social connection and opportunities for peer social support are available for Sydney and regional NSW residents.**

» KEY GOAL D: ADVOCACY

Positive Life NSW is an effective advocacy organisation that builds powerful coalitions, harnesses evidence and creates supportive environments that improve the quality of life for people with HIV, their partners and communities.

Key Principles: Human rights and participation

Positive Life is committed to challenging discrimination against positive people wherever that might occur, whether that be in the justice system, at work, housing or health services, anywhere it impacts on the quality of life of positive people.

What might this mean in practice

We will:

- continue and strengthen our strategic relationships with government, HIV sector and mainstream organisations.
- develop effective working relationships with relevant Local Health Networks and Medicare Locals.
- build new strategic relationships with housing, ageing and disability support organisations.
- advocate for the working rights of positive people with employers, unions and government.
- advocate for the broad HIV population of NSW by identifying systemic issues in the health system, and offering solutions to address these.
- support better, more user friendly complaints systems.
- provide informed, active representation on relevant and effective committees.
- continually develop new roles and opportunities for positive speakers and other positive people to inform and raise awareness about living with HIV and to broaden the voice of people with HIV.

Our Approach

- advocacy priorities and initiatives will be informed by consultation, research, evidence and evaluation.
- we will monitor our advocacy efforts and partnerships and report on progress.
- continue to work in partnership to advocate for current and changing health needs of positive people, in particular in relation to health reform, Ehealth, preventative health and the health implications of ageing and premature ageing.

We will:

- **work on strategies that support people with HIV at work, including privacy and disclosure, flexible work practices and employer and union awareness.**
- **find opportunities to highlight and fight HIV related stigma and discrimination.**
- **continue to base our work on identified priorities and opportunities to collaborate.**
- **develop and progress an advocacy plan related to ageing and people with HIV.**

KEY GOAL E: ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Positive Life NSW is an employer of choice, with a creative, vital and multidisciplinary workforce supported by effective systems and diverse, sustainable funding sources, an engaged membership and skilful and committed Board.

Key Principles: Accountability, excellence and participation

We endeavour to provide a high quality, professional and sustainable approach in our management of Positive Life NSW ensuring our organisation is grounded in:

- transparency and accountability.
- organisational structures and processes that provide a strong foundation for our work.
- our ability to access a range of funding sources
- providing comprehensive and reflective reporting of our work.
- being responsive to emerging issues and challenges for positive people.
- quality accreditation processes.
- improving our policy development and strategic planning processes.
- monitoring and reflecting on our success as well as our challenges.

What might this mean in practice:

For our Staff

- recruitment practices that are equitable and transparent.
- ensuring we continue to have a multidisciplinary team that is committed and passionate and who take a professional, evidence based approach to their work.
- a welcoming workplace to all – regardless of HIV status, gender and sexuality.
- professional development and supervision opportunities for all staff.

For our Members

- continue to develop ways to increase our member's understanding of our work.
- as a member organisation, we value the critical contribution made by our members so we will continue to support member involvement in our advisory processes.
- annual members' events will continue to offer opportunities for members to meet, socialise and reflect on the work of Positive Life NSW.
- members take their responsibilities seriously and we will work closely with our members to assist them to make their contributions where they see fit, such as volunteering.
- strengthen and expand our recruitment to encourage increased membership.

For our Board

- provide ethical leadership and sound governance.
- provide training to new and continuing directors to meet learning needs.
- provide excellence by striving to reflect and improve on performance.
- providing advice that is financially responsible and with transparent accounting practices.
- provide risk management processes grounded in good practice.
- seek access to government and non government funding.
- be diverse and representative of positive people in NSW.
- develop a succession plan that will ensure committed leadership and governance.
- continue to include the Board Advisory Group as a valued source of input, advice and consultation.

Approach

We will ensure:

- the organisation operates in line with environmental principles.
- ethical and transparent reporting.
- responsive to feedback.
- flexibility in providing opportunities for people from around NSW to participate.

We will:

- **continue to use the Positive Life Evaluation Framework as a guide to continuing review of our work and practice.**
- **maintain accreditation and seek a more affordable way to maintain appropriate quality improvement processes.**
- **put in place Professional Development strategies for all employees and the Board.**
- **use the 2011 Enterprise Agreement as our core industrial relations agreement.**

Hep C Support Groups are Changing!

To make sure that we support clients in a focused and sustainable way, Hepatitis NSW has made some changes to our Hep C Support Groups. They're now called 'Drop In Evenings', will run four times a year and feature a guest speaker.

The guest speaker will present from 6pm - 7pm. The last half hour will be a time for people to chat to one another, have a cup of tea or coffee and ask any questions they have of the speaker.

When:

Tuesday 5 April, 2011

6:00pm (sharp) – 7:30pm

Topic: Alcohol, Other Drugs and Your Liver

Tuesday 28 June, 2011

6:00pm (sharp) – 7:30pm

Topic: Legal Issues for People With Hep C

Tuesday 30 August, 2011

6:00pm (sharp) – 7:30pm

Topic: Complementary Therapies

Tuesday 25 October, 2011

6:00pm (sharp) – 7:30pm

Topic: New Developments

Where:

Hepatitis NSW, Level 1, 349 Crown St, Surry Hills

Contact:

Niki or Toby on 1800 803 990

Web:

www.hep.org.au

> Talking Hep C > Support Groups



NEWLY DIAGNOSED HIV+ WANT TO TALK?

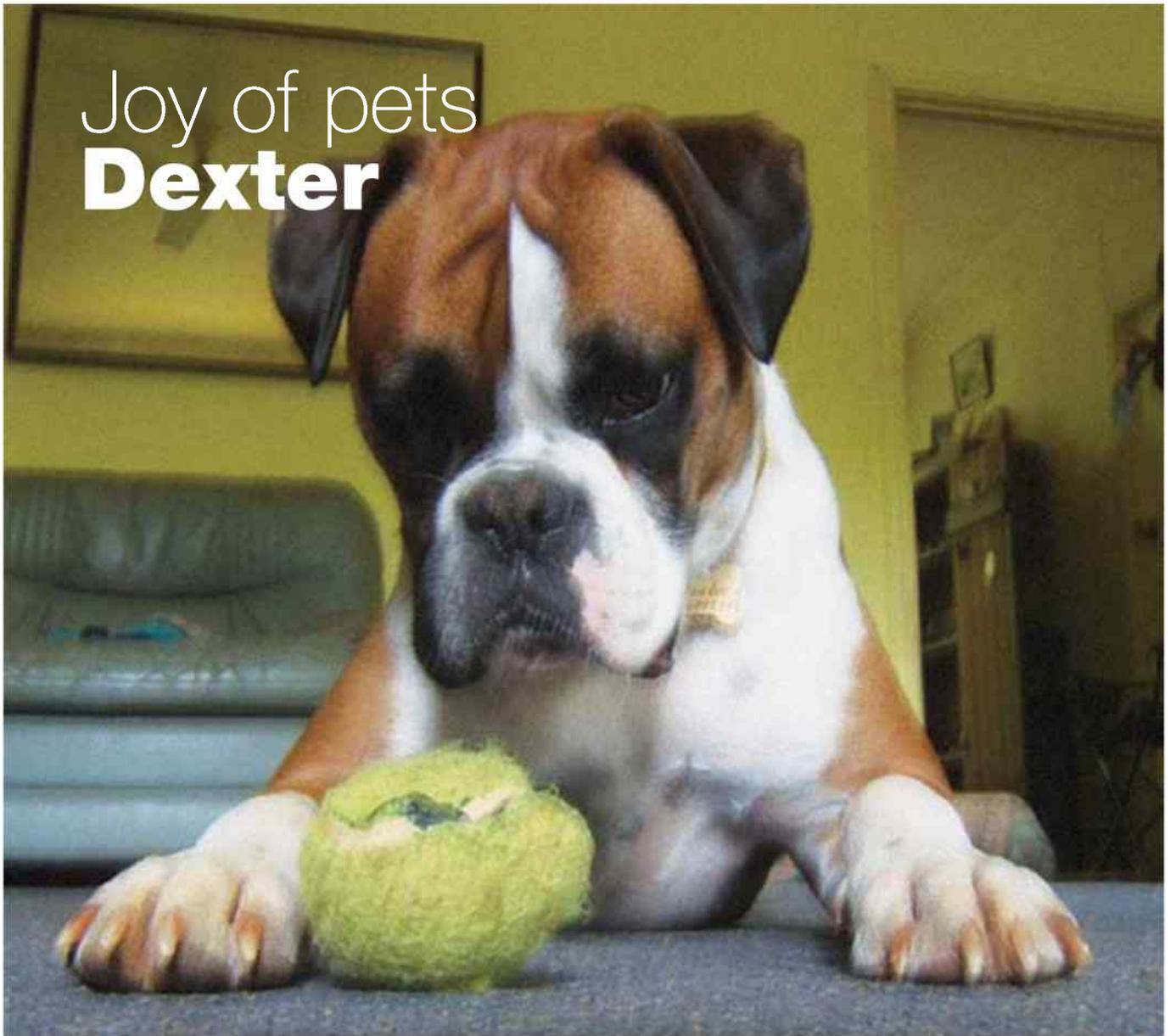
Nexus is a peer support / discussion group developed exclusively for newly diagnosed HIV+ gay men.

- > Compassion and understanding
- > A place of safety
- > A willingness to listen
- > Accepting and non-judgemental

For more information email hivliving@acon.org.au or call 9699 8756 and we'll get back to you asap

acon
BUILDING OUR COMMUNITY'S
HEALTH & WELLBEING

Joy of pets **Dexter**



“The joy’s of pets” doesn’t even come close to explaining how happy I am to have this guy in my life. I live in a pretty isolated environment tucked away in a valley in Northern NSW. Since leaving Sydney back in the early 90’s, I have always had a companion buddy. Like others, I had experienced many losses when HIV swept through our community. I was getting pretty sick myself and could not have coped with starting over without someone to look after other than myself.

I lost my last Boxer four years ago and was totally devastated. Friends told me it would get easier and to consider the benefits of not having a dog – like being able to stay out without worrying about getting home, going on holidays overseas

My life would be very dull without Dexter. What can I say? I love my boy to bits!

etc. After six months of being totally free and alone, I found myself getting very depressed and lonely. The advantages of being free of a dog never happened because I’m pretty much a home body.

When you’re busy being alone is not an issue. It’s waking up to nothing and watching TV alone that turns those quiet times into a big black hole.

After hunting down Boxer pups on the Internet and finding none, I was getting pretty desperate. A wonderful friend called and said they had found one for me. I went to Byron and picked him up. He is now 3 yrs old, comes everywhere with me and life is good again. He is a regular visitor to our Northern Rivers Luncheon Club along with up to five other companion animals. He gets me out exercising and also makes me drive a little safer too! LOL

He’s been sitting with me while I’ve been writing this article with his ball ready. He looks at me as if to say: “Come on there’s better things to do than sit here, come and play!”

My life would be very dull without him. What can one say? I love my boy to bits!

We’re off for a game of ball!

Nick

Are you thinking about returning to work?

BGF are pleased to introduce to you a new project called Job Futures, a partnership with Inner West Skill Centre (IWSC).

Inner West Skills Centre (IWSC) is an employment, training and recruitment company that has been assisting the local community for over 20 years. As a non-profit community-based organisation, IWSC is committed to providing services to assist the most disadvantaged by creating opportunities, enriching lives and ultimately benefiting the community.

Sue Wood (caseworker from BGF) is working with IWSC to assist you if you are thinking about returning to work in any capacity. She will help you to create an employment pathway plan (EPP), working out your skills/strengths and training or study needs.

Sue and IWSC will also:

- **assist you in searching for the job right for you**
- **help you with your resume writing and submitting your job applications**
- **refer you to vocational and motivational short courses which will increase your labour market competencies**
- **provide ongoing job search mentoring and support**
- **prepare you for job interviews**
- **negotiate with employers on your behalf to increase your opportunities to gain permanent employment**
- **offer employers incentives and information about traineeships and apprenticeships to give you a long-term career path**
- **provide ongoing post placement support for up to six months after gaining employment.**

If you are interested call Sue Wood on (02) 9283 8666 or email sue.wood@bgf.org.au



All people shown are models and are used for illustrative purposes only.

**A time to share, learn and feel supported.
And have some fun too!**

Every month, women and their families affected by HIV meet in a safe place. Why not come along and join us?

To find out more please call 02 9699 8756, or email us at family@acon.org.au

acon 25 YEARS
BUILDING OUR COMMUNITY'S
HEALTH & WELLBEING 1985-2010

AFFORDABLE VITAMINS & SUPPLEMENTS

The ACON Vitamin Service provides quality vitamins and supplements at discounted prices to help maintain and improve the health of people with HIV.

Popular products include spirulina, zinc, co enzyme Q10, selenium and a range of nutritional supplements.

To access the service, you need a letter or ACON vitamin 'script' from your dietician, GP or complementary therapist indicating the vitamins or supplements that suit your needs.

Visit www.acon.org.au/hiv/Vitamins, email vitamins@acon.org.au or call 9699 8756 for more information.

Fresh fruit & vegetable delivery

If you are living with HIV in the City of Sydney and surrounding suburbs, you may be eligible to have fresh fruit and vegetables delivered to your home for just \$9 a box.

The box has about 30 pieces of fresh fruit and/or vegetables and is delivered each week or fortnight.

The service is also available for older people, people with disabilities and carers, and those who need assistance living independently at home. You must be assessed for this service and places are limited.

Please call 9699 1614 or e-mail coordinator@fdn.org.au for more information or a client assessment.

The service is provided by the Food Distribution Network, a not-for-profit organisation funded by ACON, the Bobby Goldsmith Foundation and Positive Life, as well as the HACC program.

HIV positive and living in the Hunter area?

Drop in to the Karumah Positive Living Centre for a full range of services, including social lunches for people with HIV, carers, partners and significant others.

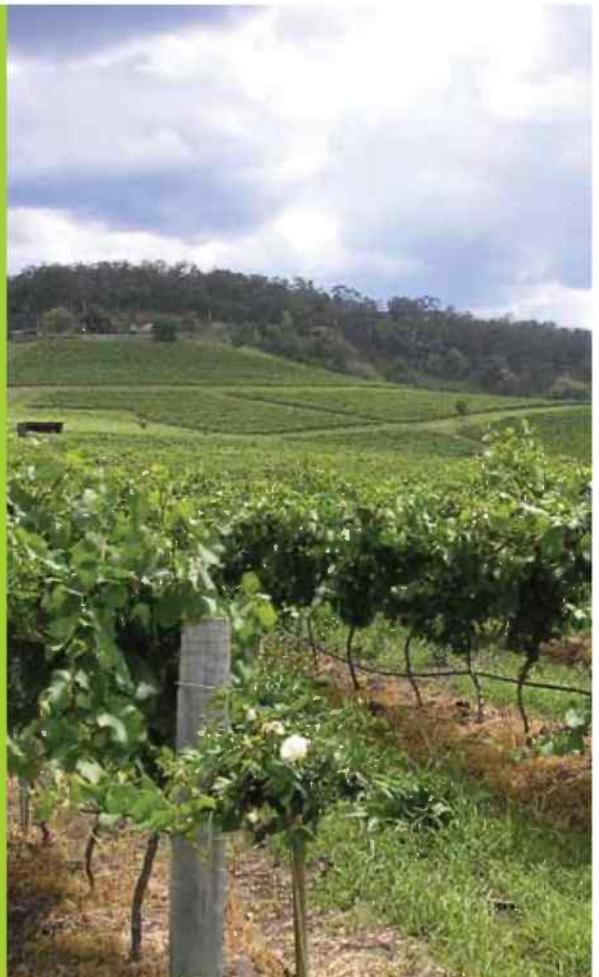
- Social lunches, Tuesday and Thursday, 1pm
- Complementary therapies by appointment, Tuesday and Thursday
- Internet access and computer assistance
- Monthly discussion group
- Counselling and many other services

For more information or to become a member of the Karumah Positive Living Centre, contact:

Tel: 02 4940 8393

Email: peersupport@karumah.com.au

Web: www.karumah.com.au





Pick up your HIV meds

These are the outpatient pharmacies in public hospitals and sexual health clinics in NSW that dispense HIV meds (S100 drugs). In theory, every hospital pharmacy in NSW is authorised to dispense HIV meds, but they only stock them if there is local demand.

The first time you access the service, you must provide the pharmacy with a prescription from an S100 prescriber (your GP), together with a letter stating you are entitled to the Prescribed Benefits Scheme (PBS). Talk to your doctor before going to a new pharmacy for your HIV meds.

Some pharmacies may close on Fridays or prior to a public holiday. If you are running low on your medicines, try to plan ahead. Call your local pharmacy to check whether they are open before you go. If you have difficulty getting your HIV meds, call your pharmacy to see if they can give you some advice.

Sydney

Albion Street

150–154 Albion Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010
Tel: 02 9332 9650

Pharmacy hours:

Monday–Wednesday 9.00–17.30, closed 13.30–14.30

Thursday 9.00–19.00, closed 13.30–14.30

Friday 9.00–15.45, closed 12.30–13.30

Note: Lunchtime pharmacy service is subject to staff availability. Clients are advised to telephone and check service hours before arrival.

Prince of Wales Hospital

High Street
Randwick NSW 2031
Tel: 02 9382 2337

Tel: 02 9382 2332 (switch)

Pharmacy hours:

Monday–Friday 10.00–17.00, closed 13.00–14.00

Royal North Shore Hospital

Pacific Highway
St Leonards NSW 2065
Tel: 02 9926 7015

Pharmacy hours:

Monday–Wednesday, Friday 8.30–17.00

Thursday 8.30–17.30

Royal Prince Alfred Hospital

Missenden Road
Camperdown NSW 2050
Tel: 02 9515 8609

Tel: 02 9515 6111

Pharmacy hours:

Monday 8.00–17.00

Tuesday 8.00–7.00pm

Wednesday–Friday 8.00–17.00

St George Hospital

Gray Street
Kogarah NSW 2217
Tel: 02 9113 3051

Pharmacy hours:

Monday–Friday 10.00–17.00

St Vincents Public Hospital

Victoria Street corner of Burton Street
Darlinghurst NSW 2010
Tel: 02 8382 2594

Pharmacy hours:

Monday–Friday 9.00–17.00 Note: the pharmacy closes on low activity days (usually on a Friday). Clients are advised to telephone and check service hours before arrival.

Sydney Hospital

Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Tel: 02 9382 7379

Pharmacy hours:

Monday–Thursday, Friday 8.00–17.00

Wednesday 9.00–17.00

Westmead Hospital

Corner of Hawkesbury and Darcy Roads
Westmead NSW 2145
Tel: 02 9845 6542

Pharmacy hours:

Monday–Friday 9.00–17.00

Note: One Friday every month the pharmacy is closed. Clients are advised to telephone and check service hours before arrival.

Parramatta Community Health Service

Jeffery House, 162 Marsden Street
Parramatta NSW 2150
Tel: 02 9843 3135

Pharmacy hours:

Monday–Tuesday 9.00–12.30, Wednesday

9.00–16.00, Thursday 16.00–19.30

Regional NSW

Blue Mountains

Blue Mountains Hospital

Great Western Highway
Katoomba NSW 2780

Tel: 02 4784 6597 Direct

Tel: 02 4784 6560 Switchboard

Pharmacy hours:

Monday–Wednesday, Friday 8.00–16.30

Thursday 11.30–16.30

Central Coast

Gosford Public Hospital

Holden Street
Gosford NSW 2250

Tel: 02 4320 2647

Tel: 02 4320 2111

Pharmacy hours:

Monday–Friday 8.30–17.00

Hunter

John Hunter Hospital

Lookout Road
New Lambton NSW 2305
Tel: 02 4921 3635 Direct

Tel: 02 4921 3000 Switchboard

Pharmacy hours:

Monday, Wednesday–Friday 8.45–18.00

Tuesday 9.15–18.00

Wollongong/Illawarra

Port Kembla Hospital

Corner of Cowper Street and Fairfax Road
Warrawong NSW 2502

Tel: 02 4223 8000 Switchboard

Tel: 02 4223 8190 Direct

Pharmacy hours:

Monday–Friday 10.00–12.00

Mid-North Coast

Coffs Harbour Health Campus Pharmacy

345 Pacific Highway
Coffs Harbour NSW 2450
Tel: 02 6656 7472

Pharmacy hours:

Monday–Friday 8.30–16.15

Port Macquarie Health Campus Pharmacy

Wright's Road
Port Macquarie 2444
Tel: 02 6580 1024

Pharmacy Hours:

Monday–Friday 9.00–17.00

Saturdays 10.30–12.00

New England

Tamworth Rural Referral Hospital

Dean Street
Tamworth NSW 2348
Tel: 02 6767 7370

Pharmacy hours:

Monday–Friday 8.00–16.30

Northern Rivers

Lismore Base Hospital

Uralba Street
Lismore NSW 2480
Tel: 02 6621 8000

Tel: 02 6620 2477

Pharmacy hours:

Monday–Friday 8.30–17.00

Tweed Heads Hospital

Powell Street
Tweed Heads NSW 2485
Tel: 07 5506 7420

Pharmacy hours:

Monday–Friday 8.30–17.00

Positive Life NSW membership

Membership of Positive Life NSW is **FREE** and is open to any person in NSW living with or affected by HIV.

Members receive a **free subscription to *Talkabout***, the Annual Report and occasional email updates.

For more information, visit www.positivelife.org.au/about/membership

Full member (I am a NSW resident with HIV)
As a person with HIV, you are entitled to full voting rights. You must tick the Personal/Health Information Statement at the bottom of the page.

Associate member (I am a NSW resident affected by HIV, ie, a partner, family member, carer, healthcare worker)

Note: Applications for membership must be approved by the Positive Life NSW Board of Directors. Our Rules of Association are available online at www.positivelife.org.au/rules

Privacy / Health Information Statement

Positive Life NSW collects your personal information in accordance with our Privacy Policy (www.positivelife.org.au/about/privacy). Your details are strictly confidential and only used to add you to our membership database. We will send you information about Positive Life NSW and our magazine and email updates. You can unsubscribe to email updates following the instructions in the email.

We store your personal information in hardcopy or electronically or both. Access to your information is strictly limited to Positive Life staff members and will not be passed on to any other organisation or individual.

You can access and correct your personal/health information by contacting us on 02 9361 6011 or 1800 245 677 or admin@positivelife.org.au.

I have read the Privacy / Health Information Statement and consent to my information being collected and stored.

Name

Address

State Postcode

Email

Please return the completed form to:

Positive Life NSW
Reply Paid 831
Darlinghurst NSW 1300
No stamp is necessary.

Fax
02 9360 3504

Talkabout subscription only

Non-members can receive *Talkabout* as a paid subscriber. We produce five copies of *Talkabout* each calendar year and a subscription is valid from 1 July to 30 June.

Individuals

- I am an NSW resident receiving benefits (Please enclose a copy of your current healthcare card) **\$5**
- I am an NSW resident not receiving benefits **\$20**
- I live outside NSW **\$33**
- I live outside Australia **\$77**

Organisations

- Full (Business, government, university, hospital and schools either for-profit or government-funded) **\$88**
- Concession (PLHIV groups and self-funded community organisations) **\$44**
- Overseas **\$132**

Fees and donations

Membership to Positive Life NSW is free. If you are subscribing to *Talkabout*, please refer to the subscription rates above.

Talkabout subscription

Donations

I would like to make a donation of
(Donations over \$2 are tax deductible. You will be provided with a receipt for tax purposes.)

Total payment

Cheque/money order
(Cheques should be made payable to Positive Life NSW.)

Please charge my VISA MasterCard
(\$10 minimum for credit card payments.)

Card number

Name on card

Expiry date

Signature

Positive Life NSW • ABN 42 907 908 942

Suite 5, Level 1,94 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst • PO Box 831, Darlinghurst NSW 1300
Tel: 02 9361 6011 • Fax: 02 9360 3504 • Freecall: 1800 245 677
Email: admin@positivelife.org.au

All resources listed are free of charge.

For large orders we will invoice you for postage.

Mail, Fax or Email Order to:

Positive Life NSW
PO Box 831
Darlinghurst NSW 1300

Fax: 02 9360 3504 Ph: 02 9361 6011
Email: healthpromotion@positivelife.org.au
Website: www.positivelife.org.au

Health Promotion Fact Sheets

Quantity	Item
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 Boosting your energy
<input type="checkbox"/>	3 Getting Started on Combination Therapy
<input type="checkbox"/>	4 I want to return to work
<input type="checkbox"/>	5 Living with body shape change
<input type="checkbox"/>	6 Positive Pregnancy – Available on the website only
<input type="checkbox"/>	7 Clinical Trials
<input type="checkbox"/>	8 A Night with Tina (Methamphetamine and HIV) – Available on the website only
<input type="checkbox"/>	9 HIV and your mouth (a pamphlet is also available)
<input type="checkbox"/>	10 The Dynamics of Disclosure – Available on the website only
<input type="checkbox"/>	12 Changing Horizons – Living with HIV in Rural NSW
<input type="checkbox"/>	14 Growing Older – Living Longer with HIV
<input type="checkbox"/>	15. 10 reasons to test for STIs – Available on the website only
<input type="checkbox"/>	16 Relationship Agreements Between Gay Men
<input type="checkbox"/>	17 Dealing with diarrhoea
<input type="checkbox"/>	18 Disclosing to your child
<input type="checkbox"/>	19 Living with HIV and hep C
<input type="checkbox"/>	20 Balancing act: HIV and cancer

The content of our fact sheets was checked for accuracy and all references to programs and contacts were accurate at the time of publication. Please note that some facts are no longer available for distribution, but can still be found on our website where we will include links to more recent or relevant information.

Social Marketing Campaigns

Quantity	Item
<input type="checkbox"/>	10 reasons to test for STIs encourages regular testing for sexually active positive gay men. – Available on the website only
<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive or Negative HIV is in Our lives – Fact Sheet 1 Living with Risk and Taking Control: Why do we take risks? How do I manage risk and take control? If I have had unsafe sex what can I do to take back control? How do I deal with a positive diagnosis? – Fact Sheet 2 Positive Sex and Risk: What does risk mean after a positive diagnosis? Do boundaries and attitudes to sex change? How do we think or talk about risk? – 4 post cards with key campaign images – Available on the website only
<input type="checkbox"/>	Getting On With It Again <i>Living longer with HIV</i> (booklet) is based on stories and interviews and shares some strategies for change and enhancing the quality of life of people living longer with HIV.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Get The Facts Syphilis (booklet) updates HIV positive gay men who practice adventurous sex on strategies to maintain their health and the health of their partners. Key messages focus on transmission, the importance of testing for syphilis and strategies to prevent them from getting or passing it on to their partners.
<input type="checkbox"/>	KNOW THE FACTS SEX AND HEP C (booklet) updates sexually adventurous HIV positive gay men on hep C transmission, testing and strategies to prevent them from getting or passing it on to their partners.
<input type="checkbox"/>	SERO DISCO Why let HIV get in the way of a good relationships? gives gay men some practical ideas on how to look after each other in a serodiscordant relationship (where one partner is HIV positive and one partner is HIV negative). This can include everything from starting a relationship, disclosure, condoms and intimacy, relationship agreements, communication strategies, testing for HIV and STI awareness. One-off lifestyle magazine and 4 postcards with key campaign messages.

Workshop Resource

<input type="checkbox"/>	Let's talk about it (me, you and sex): a facilitator's resource & workshop guide on positive sexuality. (160 pages)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Simple Pleasures (Workshop Guide) builds on material presented in our booklet GETTING ON WITH IT AGAIN Living longer with HIV . The workshop is designed to be used with HIV positive peer support groups or in HIV support groups facilitated by healthcare workers.

Organisation

Name

Address

State

Postcode

Ph

Email

Date ordered

Olga's personals

Men Seeking Men

Single 35yo active/versatile. Slim athletic body. HIV+ healthy ISO 18–35YO slim, skinny bottom/versatile. Looking for friends, relationship. I'm mild to wild in bed. WLTM adventurous guys with few limits. Pen pals into kink welcome. **Reply 180209**

Northern Rivers. Mature HIV+ man. I'm affectionate, caring & looking to share my life & experiences. 76kg, slim built, fit & versatile. Age, nationality & beliefs no barrier. ALA. **Reply 070409**

Totally active guy, well presented. WLTM a quiet, easy-going, home-loving passive guy for a long-term 1:1 relationship. Looks & build not important. You must be 100% totally passive, enjoy lovemaking often and be under 40. **Reply 220409**

35yo Aussie in gaol to 2010, looking for pen pals maybe more. I'm genuine, honest & caring. Love hairy guys & into leather. Very lonely. I'm 5'10" slim, 70 kg healthy dude. Love country living and animals. ALA. **Reply 140509**

Nude yoga master needed CBD or nearby. Mowhawked muscled PA pierced mature guy who enjoys the art of Ashtanga yoga seeks nude yoga with 1:1 gay teacher. **Reply 200509**

Tall, dark, handsome, late 30s, fit masc caring DTE genuine fun non-scene passionate top Aussie guy. WLTM other masc genuine poz guys for friendship, fun or LTR depending on chemistry. **Reply 250509**

Mid North Coast. 55yo HIV+ average build/looks, versatile, honest, DTE, GSOH, NS. ISO regular buddy for friendship and good times together. Age and nationality not important, but honesty, GSOH and discretion are. ALA. **Reply 290509**

Melbourne, Victoria. 48yo HIV+ guy, 5'10" short dark hair, blue eyes, goatee, muscular build (85-90kg) passionate & versatile. ISO F/Bs (or more) who are aged 40–50, are passionate & versatile, DTE + GOSH. **Reply 020609**

Country NSW. 35yo good looking masculine build (92kg), Caucasian. Likes keeping fit, spending time with friends and family. Poz for three years and in great health. Seeking other poz guys up to 45yrs with view to becoming friends and maybe more. **Reply 280609**

Newcastle. Mature guy, HIV+ 20 years. Seeking genuine 1:1 friendship to LTR. Caring, affectionate, versatile and well presented. ISO similar partner. 5'10, 34" waist, 69 kg. Prefers mature age and stability. Appearance/area no barrier. Just be yourself. **Reply 290609**

38yo Poz GWM, 5'10", 72kg seeking my kind of special gentleman in his mid 30s who knows how to be a man when and where it counts. I love romance, being held and sharing my journey with someone on the same page. **Reply 080210**

Poz guy 40yo, tall, black hair, blue eyes, Caucasian, tatts. Seeks F/Bs 40–55YO for regular meetings (all scenes considered) with no strings attached. If chemistries are right, we can see where it leads... **Reply 160310**

Rugged, Euro/Aussie man, late 50s, medium build, totally passive, long-time HIV healthy and fit. WLTM easy-going, younger TOP for LTR. To share good time and fun depending on chemistry. See you soon. **Reply 040510**

Bankstown area, 56YO ISO good friend to be close to. I work part time. I am caring, affectionate, versatile and well presented. Prefer mature age and stability 55 to 60. **Reply 120710**

Professional 43YO, young-looking, good-looking, well-endowed HIV positive GWM, 71kg, slim, 5'9" tall, brown hair, [sexually] passive, live good, healthy lifestyle, work full-time. WLTM attractive, very masculine & straight-acting, healthy-living, interesting, good, non-scene, non-addictive, passionate, cool top for LTR. Hung, even better. **Reply 200710**

Greek 33YO, very fit, attractive HIV+ male, fitness/exercise physiology student (Parramatta area). ISO specifically to make friends and have LTR with other guys. Must be very honest, healthy and hygienic. I am very straight acting and DTE **Reply: 300710**

South Coast. 49YO Poz guy, 78kg, mo + goatee, hairy chest, 5'8". Looking for friendship or LTR with Poz guy in local area. Quiet nights, GSOH, single. ALA. **Reply 230810**

Genuine 40YO Aussie guy, 5ft7, 73kg with brown hair, caring, affectionate, with GSOH and varied interests. ISO friendship, relationship, fun with slim to medium guys any nationality to 45yo. ALA. **Reply 240810**

Leura – 44yo Poz man who recently moved to the area ISO friends and/or partner aged btwn 30-40 for LTR. My interests include music, house renovating, cars, cooking and movies. **Reply 151110**

Men Seeking Women

Mid North Coast NSW. Straight, young 48yo guy, non user. HIV+ unstoppable in life. GSOH. Definitely individual, but like us all has moments. Genuine, sincere, wants children, seeking lady wanting same. Kids OK. Discretion given and expected in return. **Reply 150409**

Carpe Diem. 40yo young and attractive Sydney male. I'm kind, considerate, new-age spirited, intelligent, artistic. Want to meet a lady to adore, worship and share life forever. Hopefully I've made you smile! Seize the day! **Reply 160709**

Looking to grow in love, to be resourceful in how one lives life and transcends everything which can drag you down. Do interesting things. In my 40s, youthful, healthy, HIV+. 6' tall, Caucasian; Work at maintaining a good appearance and attitude. Is there a Soul to match? **Reply 061009**

Victoria. Youthful and energetic 38YO guy working in Melbourne, caring, understanding, and happy to have kids sometime. Seeking to meet that soul mate who accepts my HIV status and is happy to spend her time with me and enjoy life together. **Reply 021109**

Port Macquarie, NSW. Young 48yo guy straight non user HIV+. Tired of being single seeks lady wanting same. Genuine, sincere. Discretion given and expected in return. Nothing to lose, so drop me a line and see how things go. **Reply 201009**

Sydney 56 YO genuine, fit, active poz guy seeking a secure independent lady to enjoy the fun things in life with. I have a wide circle of friends and interests. So let's make contact and see what happens. ALA. **Reply 150810**

Women Seeking Men

Papua New Guinea (PNG), 32yo poz lady ISO pen pals aged 33 to 49yo. Looking forward to your letter. **Reply 080810**

Share love & life with a woman positively in love. Today was a beautiful day in Sydney, I had time and spirit to share. I stretched my hand but there was no one there... Hi Mr Awesome what are you waiting for? Do not die with your song within you! **Reply 170110**

Spicy & very attractive dark skin girl seeks a special, secure & independent guy to share the journey of life with. I am caring, honest, DTE person. I love to laugh and I do believe in LOVE. **Reply 210110**

Attractive, faithful, humble, God-fearing positive white female, mid-30s, seeks responsible African-Australian male for marriage aged 36-49, fully committed to Christ, who does not touch cigarettes or alcohol at all and is gainfully employed. WLTM a nice, calm, gentle person with GSOH and optimistic outlook. Looking for a family-oriented, reliable and faithful man who above all loves God. **Reply 220210**

Placing personals

Write an ad of up to 50 words describing yourself and what you are looking for. You can be creative, but it pays to be realistic to avoid disappointment. Please include your location if you are outside the Sydney metro area.

Olga encourages you to be polite. Claims about blood test results will not be published. Olga's is a safe space for people to declare their HIV-positive status. Any ads that refer to illegal activity or include homophobic, racist, sexist or abusive language will not be published.

You can send your personal ad to Olga, including your name and postal address for replies, to editor@positivelife.org.au or by post to:

Olga's Personals, PO Box 831, Darlinghurst NSW 1300

Ads will remain in Olga's personals for 5 issues or a period of 12 months. We encourage you to submit a new ad if your circumstances change or your ad has expired.

Common acronyms

ALA	All letters answered
DTE	Down to earth
GAM	Gay Asian male
GSOH	Good sense of humour
GWM	Gay white male
ISO	Looking for
LTR	Long-term relationship
NS	Non smoker
TLC	Tender loving care
WLTM	Would like to meet

Answering personals

If you want to reply to an ad, think carefully about your response. Olga suggests that you not give you out work or home address or telephone number until you can trust the person. As Olga's personals are anonymous, you should establish trust first. You may want to give out your email address as a first step and take it from there.

Place your response in a sealed, stamped (55c) envelope. Write the reply number in pencil on the outside and place this inside a separate envelope and send it to:

Olga's Personals, PO Box 831, Darlinghurst NSW 1300

Olga then forwards your response to its intended recipient.

Meeting someone

Olga wants you to have fun, but asks you to take some simple precautions when you agree to meet in person.

It might be best to meet in a public place so that you can confirm the person is who they say they are. You can always go someplace private later if you really hit it off!

If you are going somewhere unfamiliar, let a friend know the details or ask them to call you to make sure you are alright.

Use commonsense and remember the basic rules of personal safety. Maintain a healthy degree of suspicion: if anything seems odd, be careful and leave if you feel uncomfortable.

Finally, have reasonable expectations. It can be exciting to meet someone new but the person may be different from what you expected. Keep this in mind and have fun!

Protecting your privacy

Your personal details remain strictly confidential. Olga keeps your personal details on file in accordance with our Privacy Policy, available at www.positivelife.org.au/about/privacy. If you have questions about your privacy, please contact Positive Life NSW at admin@positivelife.org.au or 02 9361 6011 or 1800 245 677.

