

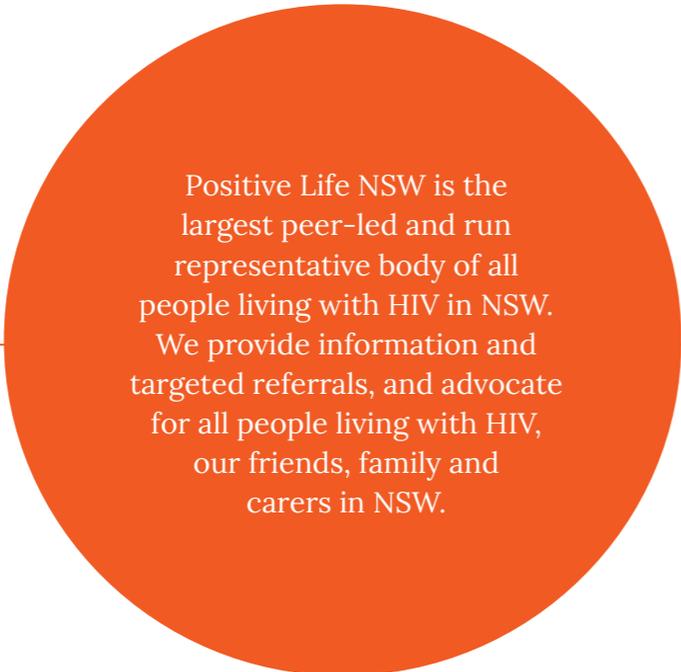


Annual Report

2020-2021



Positive Life NSW



Positive Life NSW is the largest peer-led and run representative body of all people living with HIV in NSW. We provide information and targeted referrals, and advocate for all people living with HIV, our friends, family and carers in NSW.

Informing, advocating & representing

The voice of all people living with HIV



2020

2021



July

Aug

Sep

Oct

Nov

Dec

Jan

Feb

Mar

Apr

May

June

7 Jul
Treatments Update in partnership with ACON

20 Jul
NSW HIV Strategy Consultation

13 Aug
Aboriginal Advisory Committee meeting

20 Aug
South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) HIV/STI Implementation Committee Meeting

1 Sep
Representation of people living with HIV at Adahps Consumer Advisory Group Meeting

1 Sep
PozAction Operational Leadership group with NAPWHA

10 Oct
Consultation draft feedback: NSW HIV Strategy 2021-2025

16 Nov
Murrumbidgee & Southern NSW LHD consultations

23 Nov
Mid North Coast LHD consultations

1 Dec
World AIDS Day event in conjunction with the NSW Ministry of Health

3 Dec
Positive Life NSW AGM

10-11 Dec
2020 NAIDOC Week Art Workshop with Arone Meeks

20 Jan
PLNSW establish a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) working group to develop and implement a Reflect RAP

9 Feb
PLNSW Strategic Plan 2021-2025 launched

9 Feb
In the Know HIV, COVID-19 and the Vaccine Forum

6 Mar
Mardi Gras Parade

9 & 16 Mar
ASHM HIV s100 Prescriber training modules on women living with HIV

29 Mar
NSW Health launched the NSW HIV Strategy 2021-2025

10 Apr
Yaralla House Luncheon BBQ

28 Apr
Palliative Care Partners Steering Committee meeting

30 Apr
NSW STI Strategy Stakeholder Consultation

3 May
COVID-19 and the Vaccine Forum with HIV Sector partners

16 May
Annual Sydney Candlelight Memorial 2021

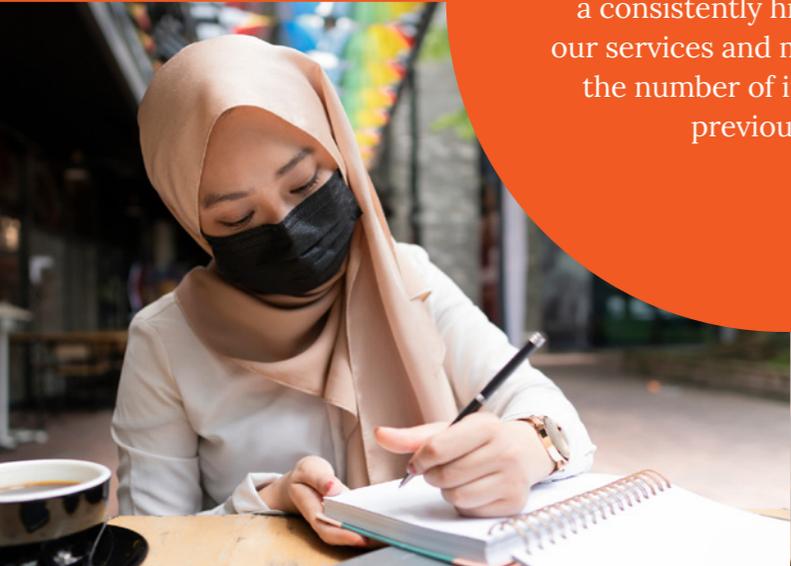
16 May
NSW Health HIV Data Advisory Group Meeting

3 June
Real Time Prescription Monitoring consultation with eHealth NSW

5 June
Heterosexual Workshop

17 June
NSW Digital Health Forum 2021

Despite the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 throughout 2020-2021, Positive Life NSW has experienced a consistently high demand for our services and more than double the number of inquiries to the previous year.



“What an amazing session. I feel so alive and hopeful for the future. Looking forward to the next get together.”

– The Women’s Room participant



“Just to say I love the new logo and idea behind it. The colours are refreshing and inviting. Well done to all of you and thank you for all you do.”

– David



Peer Support

Positive Life NSW offers peer support for all people living with HIV across NSW to navigate and access medical, clinical, employment or vocational pathways to improve our health and quality of life, as well as a range of peer support groups and social inclusion events to maintain mental health and wellbeing.



491 enquiries received from community members living with or affected by HIV in NSW.



179 people received peer navigation support:

- 158 males
- 16 women
- 5 transgender people



517 peers were supported through our social support groups.



149 new clients were supported by our housing support program.



37 peer inclusion events were hosted by Positive Life, such as The Social Club, Peers Connect Online!, Peer2Peer and [+Connect].

From the CEO

Jane Costello,
Chief Executive
Officer

It is with great pleasure that I present Positive Life NSW's Annual Report 2020-21 and reflect on the agency's accomplishments and efforts to reduce the impact of HIV and improve the outcomes for all people living with and affected by HIV in NSW.

Positive Life NSW can be proud of our adaptability and achievements in the face of the ongoing COVID-19 challenges. We continued to find innovative ways to engage with and represent all people living with HIV (PLHIV) across NSW as we strengthened our processes throughout 2020/21 to offer information, referrals, representation, advocacy, and peer support across a range of issues of importance to all our community.

In 2020/21, we redesigned and refreshed our website and received positive feedback you found the new design easier to navigate and to access information. We added COVID19-specific website pages to inform all in our community supported by regular updates via the COVID-19 Toolkit, an updated FAQs page and a series of *In The Know* forums focused on HIV, COVID-19 and the vaccines.

Our messaging for 2020/21 was HIV is *Everyone's Business* promoting a key message that HIV affects anyone who is sexually

active. Whether we're living with HIV or not, we all have a shared responsibility around HIV including testing, transmission and stigma and discrimination.

This messaging and our work were underpinned by the agency's strong performance framework which included Positive Life's 2020-21 Business Plan and new 2021-2025 Strategic Plan over four key focus areas as endorsed by the Body Positive. Positive Life also fed into the development of the new NSW HIV Strategy 2021-2025, and then began a series of community engagement and discussion sessions titled *Beyond 2021: Ending HIV*, Next Steps where we examined what the new Strategy means for all people living with HIV in NSW.

Our peer support programs are operated by a diverse range of peers with lived experience who support, inform, build capacity, and connect PLHIV across NSW to better navigate and access medical, clinical, employment or vocational pathways to improve our health and quality of life, as well as a range of peer support groups and social inclusion events to maintain mental health and wellbeing. Some of our most significant achievements include the Aboriginal Health Program which continues to develop an innovative PLHIV

co-designed NSW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health needs assessment, and we have undertaken the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan committing to the ongoing process of achieving cultural competency. Our employment and vocational support, ageing programs and Digital Mentors program have contributed to improving the quality-of-life indicators for NSW PLHIV. Our Housing Support program has seen increased activity throughout the year supporting PLHIV across NSW to access, achieve and maintain stable accommodation.

In 2020-21 and in accordance with the agency's key delivery objectives, Positive Life held community events throughout the year including World AIDS Day in partnership with the NSW Ministry of Health, Mardi Gras Parade, the Australian National Day of Women Living with HIV in partnership with Femfatales, the annual Sydney Candlelight Memorial in partnership with ACON, and a full day workshop for people who identify as heterosexual in partnership with Pozhet.

The work of Positive Life as the voice of all PLHIV in NSW remains possible because of the commitment of the remarkable staff, Board and our volunteers who are to be congratulated for what they have achieved

over the past 12 months, and for their resilience and commitment to the work of the organisation. I would like to acknowledge the continuing partnership and funding from NSW Health, City of Sydney, the Mac AIDS Fund, Gilead, 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. Our impact on delivering on our vision for a better quality of life for all PLHIV in NSW is the result of all your collective efforts.

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About the 'Life Beyond' heterosexual workshop: "It was a great time for me to catch up with you and have opportunity to catch up others. The program was running wonderful and helpful. Hospitality was excellent. I am looking forward to seeing you and other people again in the future."

– Mary

Advocate & Represent

Positive Life NSW collaborates with our HIV sector and allied health partners and stakeholders to raise, represent and advance the interests of all people living with HIV across NSW.

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49 advisory groups & committees
 in relevant Ministry, NSW Health and HIV sector groups to improve the health and quality of life of all people living with HIV.
- 
52 stakeholder meetings
 with HIV sector partners targeting marginalised populations at risk of HIV and increase their awareness of late HIV diagnosis and benefits of testing and treatment.
- 
12,880 audience members
 attended one of the 40 Positive Speakers Bureau presentations.
- 
6 community consultations
 engaging with all people living with HIV about our emerging issues and needs, including three Beyond 2021 NSW HIV Strategy Workshops.
- 
16 training & information sessions
 in partnership with clinicians and prescribers supporting the needs of all people living with HIV.



“Thank you for the opportunity to participate in tonight’s Peers Connect Online group. Thanks again for the contribution of you and your colleagues at Positive Life.”

– Shane

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President's Report

Robert Agati,
President

As I set out writing this year's report, I set myself a simple task; to ensure that the last twelve months of living with COVID-19 doesn't overshadow what Positive Life NSW has done for the past 33 years to support people living with HIV. Although COVID certainly disrupted HIV services, they quickly transitioned to online delivery models, and we learned new strategies for engagement with our communities and laid the groundwork for new programs at Positive Life that reflect the diversity and divergence of both the HIV epidemic and the COVID pandemic.

In March 2021, NSW Health released its 2021--2025 NSW HIV Strategy. As a demonstrated leader in the response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic from its earliest days, the new NSW HIV Strategy builds on the successes of its previous two iterations. The most obvious is the dramatic reduction in HIV transmission through biomedical HIV prevention options such as PrEP and the use of TasP, expanded and accessible

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testing options and extraordinary levels of early and immediate antiretroviral treatment for those newly diagnosed. These achievements have been possible with the partnerships between people living with HIV, clinicians, general practice, researchers and communities at risk, which maintain the momentum of striving toward NSW Health's very ambitious target for the virtual elimination of HIV transmission in NSW.

Positive Life remains committed to reaching out to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and heterosexuals who may (but mostly don't) fit the epidemiological definitions of sexuality or sexual practices, and for whom strategies based on identity and sexuality do not readily translate the message of HIV risk, transmission and prevention.

Positive Life has also been vocal on the issue of aged care use and acceptability by an increasingly ageing population living

with HIV. Following the Aged Care Royal Commission, our Community Report released in December 2020 set out NSW-specific findings from the first national Australian consultation, and the intersection of health burdens and attitudes of people living with HIV including those of our carers, partners and family. Our report highlighted the fears and concerns held both by people living with HIV and by HIV specialist service respondents about stigma and discrimination in aged care facilities. These are compounded by prejudicial views about HIV, homosexuality, gender diversity and drug use, not to mention how to deal with aged care recipients living with HIV-associated neurocognitive disorders (HAND) and HIV-associated dementia (HAD).

As the leading peer-based HIV community organisation in NSW, our ability to connect and engage with and to remain focused and respond to the emerging needs of all people living with HIV remains possible because of the commitment and dedication of our Board, staff and volunteers, the contributions from our members and collaboration with our agency partners and sector allies. Overarching this is the support

we receive from NSW Health, the MAC AIDS Fund, Gilead and ViiV Healthcare. You have done, and continue to do, more for people living with HIV than you realise and for that, I can't thank you enough.

”

I meant to say how moving the Candlelight Memorial was. The Memorial service was the first I have attended. Hearing my friend's name as well as those I recognised, plus the many many more certainly brought back memories of 33 years ago. I know those who are no longer with us would be ever so grateful they were remembered.”

– Ian

Treasurer's Report

Cameron Clark,
Treasurer

I'm pleased to present my report and the financial statements of Positive Life NSW for the financial year ended 30 June 2021.

The 2021 financial year saw income totalling \$1.167m, slightly up on the previous year. Other revenue was higher than last year due to donations received and Government subsidies. Expenses overall were slightly higher than the previous year, which has resulted in the Agency making a profit of \$138,359.

Grants received this year are from the NSW Ministry of Health being our Core Grant for all advocacy work; Department of Communities & Justice; Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources; the Network of Alcohol and Other Drugs Agencies; National Indigenous Australians Agency; City of Sydney Matching Grants ; and Good Things Foundation Australia. We continued to deliver services as part of grants received in the previous financial year from ViiV Healthcare and Gilead.

Net Positive Speakers Bureau (PSB) income and expenses were below budget and that of the previous year due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing and the assistance of the government during the period has seen an increase in cash flow and income for the association. While it has been financially positive for the Agency up to 30 June 2021, it is not practicable to estimate the potential impact, positive or negative, after the reporting date.

Positive Life maintained a sound balance sheet position throughout the year. Assets were predominantly cash at bank and on deposit, while total liabilities included grants in advance. Cash, reserves and financial ratios remained healthy throughout the period, which ensured that we were able to meet our financial obligations as and when they fall due.

At the end of the financial year, Positive Life retained earnings of \$346k which provided a buffer in case of any unforeseen expenses, or interruption or delays in relation to our sources of funding.



“It has been well noted that the organisation has taken on a much more inclusive direction and this is evidenced in both the work of the CEO, it’s Board and staff.”

– HIV Sector Partner

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Inform & Connect

Positive Life NSW communicates by speaking up and speaking out for all people living with HIV across NSW. Our health promotion informs on the issues, concerns and needs empowering the Body Positive in NSW.



912,908 hits
on our website and over 100 communications with Positive Life community members:

- 12 Life.mail bulletins
- 11 submissions
- 9 factsheets
- 3 Talkabout magazines



12,462 blog hits
across 23 published blog articles this financial year.



20 articles
were published in media outlets along with 14 media releases.



3 community surveys
were conducted this financial year with the results published and available on our website.

Warning: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this document may contain images of deceased Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

Images used in this publication are sourced stock photography and are used for illustrative purposes. They do not imply any particular HIV status, sexuality, attitudes, or behaviours.



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