Positive Life NSW

Positive Life NSW

Annual Report 2026



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An Invitation

We warmly invite you to explore Positive Life NSW's 2025–2026 Annual Report. This report shares our achievements, the challenges we continue to address and the collective contribution of our members, volunteers, staff and partners.

Thank you for taking the time to read about our work and for being part of our community. Your experiences, ideas and support help shape our direction and strengthen our shared commitment to improving the lives of people living with HIV across NSW.



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands on which Positive Life NSW operates from, the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, and the traditional owners of all of the lands across NSW, and we pay our respects to their Elders, past and present.

We acknowledge the ongoing connection that Aboriginal people have to land, water, culture and heritage, and recognise Aboriginal people as the original custodians of this land. We recognise and acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded, and always was, and always will be Aboriginal Land.

Artwork by Steven Morgan, illustrating a Gathering Circle with pathways extending outward to represent the pursuit of a brighter future for those living with HIV.

Who We Are

Positive Life NSW (Positive Life) is the peer-led and run representative community organisation of all people living with and affected by HIV in NSW.

- We have over 38 years of community experience advocating for all people living with HIV with the aim of eliminating stigma and discrimination, and alleviating social isolation.
- We empower and support all people living with HIV to achieve optimal quality of life and health and wellbeing outcomes through the provision of health promotion information, targeted referrals, and policy advice through a range of peer support and community engagement activities.
- We represent and advocate on behalf of all people living with HIV, and collaborate with a range of stakeholders including government, clinicians, researchers and other sector partners on issues that impact all people living with HIV in NSW.
- We provide peer navigation (by and for people living with HIV), health and wellbeing, testing, prevention and treatment information, social inclusion groups and activities, referrals, and counselling services.
- Our programs include ageing, employment and vocational support, partner notification assistance, digital capacity building, and the Positive Speakers Bureau, sharing diverse lived experiences of HIV with schools, tertiary institutions, organisations and health sector partners.

Our membership is inclusive of all people living with or affected by HIV in NSW, including gay and bisexual men, heterosexual people, women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, trans and gender diverse people, people from multicultural communities, older people, people who use drugs, migrants and refugees, and our family, friends and partners.



Our Values

Respect

We value and celebrate difference in others

We treat each person with dignity, care and consideration

We strive to understand and appreciate difference in others

Integrity

We are transparent and accountable in all our operations and actions

We act from a just and ethical base and take responsibility for our actions

We strive to be authentic and approachable in the way we work

Excellence

We are committed to professionalism and high standards in all we do

We value ongoing learning and development

We create an environment where people can optimise their potential

Equity & Fairness

We ensure equity of access and fair treatment of all without prejudice or discrimination

We are impartial and unbiased in provision of support and care

We value the lived experience of our community

Thank you very much for what you have done and are doing for me on my life journey. I am very grateful that our paths have crossed and that I now have an organisation and a community that I belong to.

– Community Member

Peer Support a Cross Pillar

In May 2026, the NSW Government released the NSW HIV Strategy 2026–2030, setting a clear direction towards the virtual elimination of HIV transmission while supporting people living with HIV to lead healthy, supported and stigma-free lives.

The inclusion of Peer Support as a cross-pillar focus area strongly reinforces the work of Positive Life NSW and recognises the value of approaches informed and delivered by people with lived experience. Peer-led services, including Positive Life's Peer Navigators, play an important role in supporting people following diagnosis, maintaining engagement with care, and providing ongoing support across different stages of life, including as people age.

Our Peer Navigators also bring diverse cultural and linguistic perspectives, alongside lived experience of the complex interplay between HIV, culture, language and stigma. This enables support to be responsive to the circumstances, identities and experiences of our communities.

This recognition reflects a longstanding principle of Positive Life NSW: people living with HIV are not simply recipients of services, but leaders, educators, advocates and partners in shaping the HIV response. Lived experience provides insights that complement clinical knowledge and can assist people to navigate complex health and social systems, address isolation, make informed decisions and connect with care in ways that are safe, respectful and relevant to their circumstances.

While recognising this progress, we must not lose sight of the work that remains. A successful HIV response must also consider whether people are living well, feel safe and comfortable accessing services, remain connected to community, and experience a sustained commitment to challenging stigma.

The NSW HIV Strategy provides an important foundation for building on this work. It creates opportunities for greater collaboration and supports our ongoing efforts to challenge stigma, promote equitable access to healthcare, and ensure that the voices and experiences of people living with HIV remain central to decisions that affect their lives.



Reports

From the President

As I reflect on the past financial year, I do so with an immense sense of pride, gratitude and optimism for the future. It has been a year of significant activity, meaningful engagement and important progress across a range of issues affecting people living with and affected by HIV. Throughout this work, our commitment has remained unwavering: to promote a positive and powerful image of people living with HIV, challenge stigma and discrimination, and ensure that people in our communities have access to the care, support, information and connections they need to live healthy, fulfilling and empowered lives.

One of the most significant achievements of the past year has been the continued growth of our engagement and reach. We have strengthened and expanded our Peer Navigation programs, creating new opportunities to connect with people wherever they live. This has included greater engagement with regional communities through our online programs, regional visits and other innovative approaches to peer support. We have also continued to strengthen our work with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, recognising the importance of ensuring that every person living with HIV can access support that is inclusive, culturally responsive and relevant to their individual circumstances.

None of this work happens in isolation. It is made possible through the passion, commitment and generosity of our members, volunteers, staff, partners and supporters. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Board for its ongoing support and, in particular, for stepping up so strongly over the past year to support the many events, activities and initiatives delivered by Positive Life NSW.

I also want to acknowledge our agency partners and sector allies, whose collaboration allows us to remain responsive to the changing needs of our communities. Most importantly, I extend my deepest gratitude to our funders, NSW Health, ViiV Healthcare, Gilead Sciences, the MAC AIDS Fund and the City of Sydney. Your ongoing commitment enables us to continue this vital work and make a genuine difference in people's lives.

Above all, I want to thank our members and community. You are the heart of Positive Life NSW. Your courage, resilience, voices, and willingness to stand together continue to inspire everything we do. You are not simply part of the story but the reason we exist, and a fundamental part of our success.

As we look ahead, we do so with renewed determination, passion and hope. Together, we will continue to build stronger connections, amplify the voices of people living with HIV, challenge stigma and create a future where every person living with HIV can live their best life.

Stephen Lunny
President



From the Treasurer

Financial Year Ended 30 June 2026

I am pleased to present the Treasurer's Report for Positive Life NSW Incorporated for the financial year ended 30 June 2026.

It has been another year of meaningful work, connection and impact for Positive Life NSW. Despite changes in our funding environment, we have continued to manage our finances carefully and ended the year with a positive financial result of $44,146. This provides a solid foundation as we look ahead and continue our work with and for our community.

Financial Performance

Grant funding continued to be the foundation of our financial sustainability, with total grants of $1.33 million received during the year. Core grant funding increased from $1.19 million in 2024–25 to $1.24 million, providing important stability for our ongoing work. One-off grant funding decreased from $163,185 to $91,796, highlighting the importance of maintaining strong funding partnerships and continuing to explore opportunities to diversify our income.

We received $2,709 in donations, compared with $28,153 in the previous year, largely reflecting the significant one-off MAC donation received in 2024–25. Other income increased slightly to $57,155, including $22,507 in interest income and $24,896 in other revenue.

Investing in Our Community

Our financial resources exist to support the work that matters most – our people, our programs and our community.

During the year, we invested $246,371 in activities, supporting events, social inclusion, mental health support services, Talkabout and workshops. We also invested in campaigns and capacity building, including conferences, training, development and volunteer support.

Our staff are at the heart of delivering this work. Employee expenses totalled $782,779, making this our largest area of expenditure and reflecting our continued investment in the people who deliver our programs, services and advocacy.

At the same time, total operating expenses decreased from $1.38 million in 2024–25 to $1.34 million in 2025–26, demonstrating our continued focus on responsible and sustainable use of our resources.

A Stronger Financial Foundation

Our financial position has strengthened over the year. At 30 June 2026, Positive Life NSW held total assets of $466,286, including cash and cash equivalents of $171,370 and term deposits totalling approximately $256,674. Total liabilities were $164,126, resulting in net assets of $302,159.



Looking Ahead

While a positive financial result is important, what matters most is what these resources enable us to achieve.

As we move into the new financial year, we will continue to focus on financial sustainability, strong funding relationships and responsible stewardship of our resources. We will also continue to look for opportunities to strengthen and diversify our income, so that Positive Life NSW can remain resilient and responsive to the changing needs of our community.

Our financial strength gives us an important platform, from which to continue delivering meaningful programs, services, advocacy and connection for people living with HIV and our broader community.

Acknowledgement

This result is a reflection of the collective effort across Positive Life NSW.

We sincerely thank our CEO, staff, Board members, funding partners, volunteers, members and supporters for their commitment and contribution throughout the year.

We also acknowledge the ongoing support of our funding and community partners, whose contribution helps make our work possible.

As Treasurer, I am proud of the financial stewardship demonstrated throughout 2025–26. Together, we have continued to balance responsible financial management with investment in the work that makes a real difference.

We look forward to building on this strong foundation and continuing to create positive change for our community in the year ahead.

Chompol Chaimongkol
Treasurer

There are so many others on the same journey as me who do not have many friends and outlets for them to socialise. The work that you do has always been so important and meaningful especially to those who have limited friendships and acquaintances. This evening that you put together was a platform, for those especially who are living with HIV to have this opportunity to interact with others.

– Community Member



From the CEO

It is my pleasure to present Positive Life NSW's 2025/26 Annual Report, reflecting on a year of organisational growth, community engagement and continued commitment to representing all people living with and affected by HIV across New South Wales.

Throughout the year, we have delivered a broad range of peer-led programs, health promotion and education initiatives, community engagement activities and advocacy, while strengthening our capacity to respond to the changing needs of our community.

A significant focus has been the development of our Strategic Plan 2026–2030. Building on the achievements of our previous plan, this process provided an opportunity to reflect on our progress, consider the changing HIV landscape and establish a shared direction for the organisation. Our new strategy recognises the increasing diversity of people living with HIV and the importance of ensuring our programs, services and advocacy remain relevant, inclusive and responsive.

As a community-based, non-government organisation, we continue to navigate a complex operating environment, balancing growing demand for services, funding constraints and changing regulatory requirements. Our ability to respond to these challenges reflects the dedication of our staff, Board and volunteers, the strength of our partnerships and, importantly, the ongoing engagement of our communities of people living with HIV.

Our Impact at a Glance

Expanding Peer Navigation and Culturally Responsive Support

During 2025/26, we restructured our Peer Navigation Program to strengthen service delivery and respond to increasing demand and the diverse needs of people living with HIV. We welcomed three new Peer Navigators, including two from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Our expanded team now speaks more than ten languages, including English, Mandarin, Hokkien, Thai, Bahasa Indonesian, Malay, Swahili, Kikuyu, Shona and Spanish. This linguistic and cultural diversity strengthens our ability to provide confidential, culturally responsive peer support and reduce barriers to accessing services.

Our in-clinic Peer Navigation Program continued at Western Sydney Sexual Health Clinic, Liverpool Sexual Health Clinic and the Immunology Department at Liverpool Hospital. Working alongside multidisciplinary clinical teams, Peer Navigators provide practical support, strengthen connections to care and complement clinical services by responding to the broader health and social needs of people living with HIV.

Strengthening Community Connection and Social Inclusion

Positive Life NSW continued to create opportunities for social connection and to reduce social isolation for people living with HIV through a range of peer-led and community programs which remain a central part of our work.

We introduced Kitchen Table Stories, a pilot program that delivered 15 social inclusion events for Asian, African and Latin American communities, and also delivered seven [+Connect] events for all people living with HIV, our partners, family and friends across Greater Western and metropolitan Sydney.

Our targeted peer-led programs included 10 face-to-face support and discussion groups for heterosexual people living with HIV, five Peer2Peer events for gay and bisexual men, nine online support groups for women and four online support groups for heterosexual men living with HIV.

Through ten Positive Conversation webinars, community members engaged with healthcare professionals on a range of health and wellbeing topics. The online format enabled people across metropolitan, regional and rural NSW to access evidence-based information, ask questions and connect with Positive Life NSW.

We also partnered with regional Local Health Districts to undertake three visits to regional and rural NSW, providing health promotion, community engagement and individual peer support.

Together, these activities reinforced the importance of social connection, shared lived experience and access for all people living with HIV across NSW to participate in our programs.

Health Promotion, Education and Community Engagement

Our health promotion and education activities continued to respond to emerging issues and the changing needs and diversity of people living with HIV.

Highlights included a community consultation on NSW Health's introduction of the Single Digital Patient Record (SDPR), inviting the SDPR Implementation Authority to present to our community in partnership with our partners across the HIV and consumer health sectors. The consultation provided an opportunity for people living with HIV to better understand the implementation of the system, raise questions and discuss the importance of transparency, privacy, and confidentiality in digital health reform.

We also delivered an In The Know research and treatments evening focused on HIV survivorship and emerging models of care, three a[START] x workshops for gay and bisexual men in collaboration with ACON, three workshops for heterosexual and bisexual people, and a Long-Term Survivors Day event exploring healthy ageing and quality of life.

As part of our Consultation and Engagement Framework, we published the International Student Sexual Health Survey Report, drawing on responses from 182 international students. The findings identified barriers to HIV prevention, testing and care, including limited awareness of available services and concerns about healthcare costs. The report highlighted opportunities to strengthen accessible, confidential and culturally responsive sexual health education and support.

These activities reflect our commitment to ensuring that health promotion messaging, community education and consultation are relevant and responsive to the populations they are intended to reach.

Strategic Priorities and Progress

The development of our Strategic Plan 2026–2030 was a major organisational milestone.

Following a review of our previous Strategic Plan, the Board and staff participated in a facilitated planning day in 2025 to consider our achievements, emerging community needs and future priorities. This collaborative process informed a new strategic framework built around four pillars.

Health Promotion

We continued to deliver accessible, peer-led education and health promotion responding to emerging health needs and the changing demographics of people living with HIV in NSW. Our work increasingly recognises the diversity of bodies, genders, sexualities, relationships, cultures, experiences and health priorities within our communities.

Representation and Advocacy

We continued to advocate for the rights, health and wellbeing of people living with HIV. Working with the HIV/AIDS Legal Centre and other sector partners, we contributed to advocacy and submissions concerning migration legislation, the review of the Mandatory Disease Testing Act 2021 (NSW), sexual consent legislation and the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW).

We also maintained an active role in HIV research through participation and community representation in a range of research studies, advisory groups and collaborations with NSW Health, the Kirby Institute, the Centre for Social Research in Health at UNSW, University of Technology Sydney (UTS) and La Trobe University. This engagement helps ensure that the diverse experiences, perspectives and priorities of people living with HIV inform research co-design, implementation and the translation of findings into policy, practice and service delivery.

Our advocacy and research engagement remain grounded in lived experience, with a focus on addressing systemic barriers, strengthening equitable access to healthcare and social support, and ensuring people living with HIV play a meaningful role in shaping the decisions, research and policies that affect their lives.

Connection and Capacity Building

We invested in community connection, peer-led participation, workforce development and organisational capability. Our programs, partnerships and professional development activities contributed to a more connected community and strengthened our ability to deliver effective services.

Together, these four pillars provide a clear foundation for our work over the coming years.

Organisational Capacity and Governance

Positive Life NSW maintained stable governance throughout the reporting period, alongside continued growth in Full and Associate memberships.

Community interest in Board participation remained strong, with nominations exceeding the number of available positions. Board elections and appointments were undertaken in accordance with our Rules of Association, supported by succession planning and a commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Directors participated in governance training and an annual Board performance survey, while a comprehensive induction program was delivered in early 2026 for new and continuing Board members.

Following our accreditation under the National Standards for Disability Services in July 2025, we continued to strengthen our quality assurance processes in preparation for our mid-term assessment in January 2027.

Significant operational improvements were also undertaken, including a comprehensive review of organisational policies and procedures, standardisation of human resources position description templates ahead of forthcoming SCHADS Award changes, enhanced cybersecurity through additional Intune and Defender services, and refinements to risk management processes.

We continued to invest in staff and volunteer development through supervision, debriefing, national peer navigation training, professional development, workshops and short courses. Monthly lunchtime in-service presentations with sector partners and academics also supported ongoing learning and knowledge sharing.

These initiatives have strengthened our governance, operational resilience and capacity to meet the needs of our community.

Challenges and Opportunities

The HIV landscape in NSW continues to change, bringing new challenges for prevention, continuity of care and peer navigation.

While HIV notifications have declined significantly among Australian-born gay and bisexual men, progress has not been experienced equally across all communities. Different modes of HIV transmission and prevention needs among overseas-born gay and bisexual men, heterosexual men and women highlight the importance of targeted and culturally responsive approaches.

At the same time, people living with HIV are navigating a range of health, social and economic pressures. We continue to experience strong demand for support relating to ageing, employment and vocational opportunities, counselling, digital inclusion and individual peer navigation.

Mental health concerns, housing and financial insecurity, social isolation and the complexities of migration remain significant issues for many community members. Increasing enquiries relating to immigration have also highlighted the connections between migration processes, mental health and access to healthcare.

These experiences reinforce the importance of services that recognise the broader circumstances of people's lives, rather than focusing solely on HIV-related clinical care.

Our growing and increasingly diverse workforce, Board and community networks place us in a strong position to respond. However, maintaining and expanding our capacity will require continued investment, collaboration and a commitment to ensuring that people who experience barriers to accessing services are not left behind.

A key opportunity is to deepen our engagement with communities whose experiences and priorities have historically been less visible in HIV policy, research and service delivery. This will remain central to our approach as we work to ensure that all people living with HIV in NSW can access the information and support they require for optimal quality of life.

Looking Ahead

As we enter 2026/27, our new Strategic Plan will guide the next phase of Positive Life NSW's work.

Our priorities will include strengthening culturally responsive peer navigation, expanding opportunities for community engagement, addressing social isolation, supporting healthy ageing and wellbeing, and advocating for equitable access to healthcare and social support.

We will continue to invest in community consultation and partnerships, ensuring that the diverse experiences and priorities of all people living with HIV inform our programs, advocacy and organisational decisions.

The continued growth and diversity of our community presents both challenges and opportunities. Positive Life NSW is committed to meeting these with innovation, collaboration, adaptability and a strong focus on equity.

While the environment in which we operate will continue to evolve, our commitment remains clear: to represent and support all people living with and affected by HIV across NSW, promote their rights and wellbeing, and contribute to a more inclusive and equitable future.

Acknowledgements

None of this work would be possible without the dedication, generosity and commitment of the many people and organisations who contribute to Positive Life NSW.

I extend my sincere thanks to our Board of Directors for their leadership, guidance and stewardship, and to our staff for the professionalism, care and commitment they bring to their work every day. Their collective efforts have enabled us to navigate change, strengthen our services and continue responding to the needs of our community.

To our Positive Speakers and volunteers, thank you for sharing your time, knowledge and lived experience. Your contributions are central to who we are and what we achieve.

I would also like to acknowledge our healthcare, research, and sector partners, including clinicians, researchers, and other community organisations, whose collaboration and expertise strengthen our programs and collective advocacy.

We are particularly appreciative of our funders and supporters - NSW Health, ViiV Healthcare, Gilead Sciences, the MAC AIDS Fund, Good Things Foundation and the City of Sydney for their investment in our work and their support for initiatives that make a meaningful difference to all people living with HIV.

Finally, and most importantly, I thank our community who contribute to consultations, share their lived experience and help shape our priorities. Your voices, perspectives and contributions continue to and have always underpinned everything that we do.

As we look to the coming year, I am grateful for what we have achieved together and assured of our collective capacity to continue building a stronger, more connected and inclusive community.

Jane Costello
CEO





The Candlelight Memorial is not only a vigil for the dead. It is a mirror for the living. It asks us: how are we carrying this forward?

It reminds us that community is not just something we belong to - it is something we build, every single day, for one another.

– Candlelight Memorial Attendee

Our Year in Numbers

100
In Clinic Peer Navigation Services held, with 360 occasions of support delivered

8
Number of staff

484
Total number of counselling sessions

4920
Occasions of service were offered during this financial year

180
Government/HIV Sector Research Committees and Advisory Groups participated in

655
Unique community members living with HIV who received support from our Peer Navigators

35
Community Training and information sessions held

85
Social inclusion events

1,973
Total number of community members who attended the social inclusion events

257
Stakeholder meetings attended

11
Collective Languages Spoken

16
Total number of health promotion workshops

4
Hosted HIV/AIDS Community Events – NSW World AIDS Day, Candlelight Memorial, National Day of Women Living with HIV and HIV Long-Term Survivors Awareness Day

3
Community participation at major events such as Fairday, Mardi Gras and Parramatta Pride Picnic

1300
Number of show bags handed out at community events

Year in Review

HIV Diagnoses in NSW, 2025

211 new HIV diagnoses in 2025 of which:

40
were heterosexual people
25 were male
14 were female

148
were men who have sex with men (MSM)

2
identified as Transgender and gender diverse people

80
were aged 40 years or over

125
under 40 years of age

38.9%
diagnosed by a GP, not a HIV specialist

32.7%
Never tested before



In 2025, NSW recorded an **11% decline in newly diagnosed HIV cases** compared with 2024. The demographic and epidemiological characteristics of people newly diagnosed with HIV remained largely consistent with previous years, with similar distributions observed across reported population groups.

Men who have sex with men (MSM) continued to account for the majority of new HIV diagnoses, representing **70.1%** of all reported cases.

Rates of **early HIV diagnosis remained comparable** to 2024, indicating stability in the timeliness of diagnosis. Early detection through regular HIV testing, together with prompt initiation of antiretroviral treatment, is critical for improving individual health outcomes and reducing onward transmission.

Overall HIV testing activity declined slightly in 2025, with the total number of tests performed decreasing by 1% compared with 2024. This is consistent with the modest decline observed in the previous year and does not appear to have substantially affected the proportion of infections diagnosed early.

Comparison of newly diagnosed cases between 2024 and 2025 showed **minimal changes across most demographic and clinical characteristics**, with no statistically significant differences observed for stage of infection, age, gender, reported exposure, testing history, or area of residence.

Data sourced from 2025 NSW HIV Annual Data Report

Our Impact

Peer Navigation Programs

Peer Navigation work is underpinned by the principles of lived experience, peer-based practice, autonomy and focuses on empowering people living with HIV through compassionate, trauma-informed, and person-centred care. By building trusting relationships, Peer Navigators help people strengthen their confidence, increase self-advocacy, and develop the skills to manage their health and wellbeing.

A core part of the Peer Navigator role is assisting people living with HIV to access and engage with health and community services that can often seem difficult to navigate. They provide practical guidance, advocacy, and tailored support while offering the unique reassurance of connecting with someone who has firsthand experience of living with HIV. Peer Navigators also support people at every stage of their HIV journey, from understanding a new diagnosis and accessing treatment to maintaining long-term care. In addition, they provide sensitive support around assisting people with disclosure, helping people around considering who to tell and why, when to disclose, and how to approach these conversations in a way that prioritises safety, agency, and respect.

During the past financial year, Peer Navigators provided one-on-one support to 655 unique individuals. Through the delivery of relevant, reliable, and evidence-based information, they enabled community members to make informed decisions about their health and play an active role in managing their ongoing HIV care.



Counselling

Throughout the year, our Counselling Program continued to provide flexible, respectful, peer-based, and person-centred support to people living with HIV. We delivered more than 500 hours of counselling, creating a safe and supportive space where community members could access care at their own pace and for as long as they needed, without limits or time pressures. This approach acknowledges that adjustment, healing, and wellbeing are unique experiences, and that support should remain available until people feel ready to move forward.

The Positive Life NSW Counselling Program supported people experiencing a broad range of challenges, including mental health concerns, adjusting to an HIV diagnosis, relationship difficulties, stigma, migration-related stress, and the ongoing impacts of living with HIV long-term. All support was provided with a strong commitment to confidentiality, responsiveness, and cultural safety.

Our professionally accredited counsellors, who are peers living with or personally impacted by HIV, worked collaboratively with community members to provide understanding, practical support, and connection. Through these trusted relationships, people were supported to build resilience, strengthen their support networks and feel confident making choices that reflect their individual health needs and priorities.

Capacity building

Positive Life NSW has seen a growing demand for assistance with digital support as more aspects of everyday life move online. Our Peer Navigators work alongside community members to build the skills and confidence needed to navigate the digital world and ensure no one is left behind. Through practical, individual peer led support, community members are able to develop essential digital skills while increasing their awareness of online safety, including recognising scams, protecting personal information, and using digital tools with confidence. By fostering a personalised, inclusive and welcoming learning environment, the Digital Mentors Program helps community members stay connected, informed, and independent.

Employment and Vocation

The Positive Life NSW Employment and Vocational Support Program provides practical advice and tailored support to people living with HIV across metropolitan and regional NSW who are exploring study, training, paid employment, or volunteer opportunities.

In 2025, demand for the program increased significantly as more community members sought assistance in response to cost-of-living pressures, the challenges of building employment pathways while settling into Australia, or to re-enter the workforce. We also saw a notable increase in people seeking support to enrol in TAFE and other vocational training programs, reflecting a growing desire to upskill, retrain, or transition into new careers.

Women and HIV

The Positive Life NSW Women's Support Program provides tailored peer support

for women living with HIV, delivered by women with lived experience in a safe, inclusive and supportive environment. Throughout 2025, the program fostered meaningful opportunities for connection, shared learning and peer support, recognising the diverse experiences, strengths and challenges of women living with HIV across New South Wales.

Through strong partnerships with HIV service providers, clinicians and community organisations, the program strengthens women's access to care and support that is responsive to their individual needs, experiences and priorities. By centring women's voices and lived experience, the program promoted wellbeing, built confidence and created referral pathways to services that meet women's health, social, cultural and family needs.

Alongside providing direct support, Positive Life NSW continued to create opportunities for women living with HIV to share their experiences, celebrate their strengths and achievements, and have their voices heard through events, storytelling and community engagement. We proudly hosted the National Day for Women Living with HIV, bringing together women, allies and the broader HIV sector to recognise and acknowledge women's resilience and their contributions while raising awareness of the unique challenges women living with HIV continue to face. Throughout the year, Talkabout magazine and the Positive Life NSW blog featured articles, personal stories and practical resources developed specifically for women living with HIV, helping to amplify their lived experience, share knowledge and support women to live well and improve their quality of life.

Ageing Support

More than half of all people living with HIV in Australia are now aged over 50 years, highlighting the growing need for HIV-inclusive ageing services that respond to the complexities of ageing with HIV. Today, people ageing with HIV are managing much more than HIV itself. As they grow older, their lives may also involve changes in work and retirement, caring responsibilities, housing and transport needs, social connection, long-term health conditions, cognitive health, and the many other transitions and priorities that come with ageing.

The Positive Life NSW Ageing Support Program provides personalised support to people living with HIV aged 45 years and over across metropolitan, regional and rural New South Wales. Working alongside each individual, the program helps people navigate often complex aged care, disability and healthcare systems, identify appropriate pathways, and connect with services that reflect their unique circumstances, priorities and health goals.

As the community continues to age, the program is supporting a growing number of people living with multiple chronic health conditions. Many are not yet eligible for aged care services but still require coordinated, tailored support to maintain their health, independence and quality of life. This highlights the importance of early intervention and flexible support that bridges the gap between mainstream health and aged care services.

In 2025, Positive Life NSW hosted its annual HIV Long-Term Survivors Awareness Day event, bringing together community members and leading experts to explore key issues affecting people ageing with HIV. Guest speakers included Professor Bruce Brew, who presented on HIV-associated neurocognitive disorders (HAND), and Dr Craig Sinclair from the EARLI Project, who discussed enhanced advance care planning and ways to assist people improve their emotional wellbeing and decision-making confidence. The event provided an opportunity for education, connection and discussion around the evolving needs of long-term survivors and reinforced the importance of informed, person-centred approaches to ageing with HIV.

Health Promotion

Health promotion remains at the core of our work. Our tailored workshops are designed to improve health literacy, build confidence, and empower community members to take an active role in managing their health and wellbeing. Each program combines practical information with evidence-informed strategies and tools that people can apply in their everyday lives.

Throughout 2025–2026, we continued to deliver a range of targeted health promotion programs that support people living with HIV at different stages of their journey.

Torque is a workshop designed for heterosexual and bisexual people who have been recently diagnosed with HIV. The program provides practical information about HIV management, including treatment, navigating the healthcare system, and making informed decisions about health, relationships, and wellbeing.





Peer Navigators provided one-on-one support to 655 unique individuals. Through the delivery of relevant, reliable, and evidence-based information, they enabled community members to make informed decisions about their health and play an active role in managing their ongoing HIV care.

Delivered in partnership with ACON, a[STARTx] supports gay and bisexual men who have been recently diagnosed with HIV. The workshop focuses on building self-esteem, developing healthy relationships, understanding treatment and disclosure, adopting healthy lifestyles, and strengthening the skills needed to navigate the broader determinants of health. Participants are also encouraged to continue their personal development through short, follow-on programs designed to reinforce learning, strengthen peer connections, and build on the outcomes achieved through a[STARTx].

Positive Impact is a series of weekend workshops for people living with HIV who identify as heterosexual or bisexual which provides a dedicated opportunity to explore self-esteem, confidence, resilience, and personal wellbeing in a supportive environment. Two Positive Impact workshops were delivered during the financial year, providing participants with opportunities for peer connection, shared learning and personal development. Feedback from both workshops highlighted the value of peer support and connection, alongside increased self-reflection, self-awareness and confidence. Participants described feeling motivated to make positive changes and expressed a renewed sense of possibility in their lives.

Participants particularly valued meeting people with diverse experiences, having opportunities to share openly and learn from one another, and gaining new perspectives on their own experiences. Many reflected on recognising their capabilities and leaving the workshops with practical ideas and strategies they could incorporate into their everyday lives.

In-Clinic Peer Navigation

Positive Life NSW's Peer Navigation Program continues to provide in-clinic peer support at three Greater Western Sydney sites: Western Sydney Sexual Health Centre in Parramatta, Liverpool Sexual Health Clinic, and the Liverpool Hospital Immunology Department. Working alongside clinical staff, Peer Navigators help people living with HIV build their health literacy, strengthen self-management skills, improve engagement with healthcare, and achieve better health and wellbeing.

Clinicians consistently highlight the value of having Peer Navigators available within the clinic, particularly at the time of diagnosis. This integrated model ensures people can access both essential HIV healthcare and peer support in the one location, improving the timeliness of support and reducing barriers to engagement. Being introduced to someone with lived experience from the outset helps reduce feelings of isolation and uncertainty during what can be an overwhelming time, while connecting people with practical support and a trusted community resource from the beginning of their HIV journey.

In 2025, the program supported 47 people referred through these clinics and delivered more than 360 occasions of service. This ongoing work demonstrates the value of peer support in improving access to care and empowering people to confidently navigate their HIV journey. Subject to available capacity and resources, Positive Life NSW's hopes to expand the in-clinic program to additional sexual health clinics in the coming financial year, extending access to peer support across a broader range of clinical settings..

Regional

More than a quarter of new HIV diagnoses in 2025 were among people living in regional New South Wales.

Positive Life NSW has responded by delivering outreach services that connect people living with HIV to peer support, peer navigation, and local referral pathways. These provide valuable opportunities to hear directly from community members about their experiences, needs, and the challenges of accessing care in regional areas. In the 2025/26 financial year, we delivered in-person regional outreach services to Dubbo and the Northern Rivers.

To ensure people living with HIV in regional and rural communities can access support regardless of where they live, Positive Life NSW also delivers a range of online peer support programs, including Positive Conversations, The Men's Room, The Women's Room, and For Women.

Community Consultation and Engagement Forums (CCEF)

In 2025, together with a number of our health sector community partners, we hosted a community consultation to support people living with HIV to understand and engage with NSW Health's introduction of the Single Digital Patient Record (SDPR).

The consultation provided information about the new electronic health record system and its intended role in creating a more integrated view of care across NSW Health services. Importantly, it also created a space for people living with HIV to ask questions, raise concerns and contribute their perspectives on what this significant change could mean for them.

For our community, the introduction of new systems for sharing and accessing health information must be accompanied by transparency, meaningful consultation and strong safeguards for privacy and confidentiality. This is particularly important for people living with HIV, given the sensitive nature of health information and the potential consequences of inappropriate disclosure.

The consultation enabled open discussion about the potential benefits of the SDPR alongside community questions and concerns about access to information, confidentiality and privacy. We will continue to advocate for people living with HIV to be informed, heard and meaningfully involved as digital health systems evolve, and for their rights, privacy and choices to remain central to their design and implementation.

Our Impact

Social Inclusion Programs

A cornerstone of good psychosocial health is social connection and belonging. We aim to reduce social isolation and strengthen community connections through our range of social inclusion programs. Our community is diverse, and we respond by creating tailored, welcoming spaces that promote safety, impactful conversations, health promotion and connection. During the 2025–26 financial year, we delivered the following programs:

Kitchen Table Stories

During the 2025–26 financial year, we delivered eight Kitchen Table Stories events across three culturally specific groups for African, Latin American and Asian communities. Bringing people together over shared culture and food.

[+Connect] and [+Connect] OutWest

We hosted seven [+Connect] events, for all people living with HIV, their partners, families, friends, and allies to foster connection, community, and belonging. Held at accessible locations across Liverpool, Parramatta, and Sydney's inner city.

The Social Club

We facilitated 10 peer-led, face-to-face support and discussion groups for heterosexual people living with HIV. The Social Club is a space to cultivate connection, build confidence and share experiences.

The Women's Room and For Women

We ran nine dedicated online support groups for women living with HIV – The Women's Room for women aged under 45 years, and For Women for those over 45 offering age specific health topics.

The Men's Room

We hosted four on-line conversations for heterosexual men living with HIV, bringing together men from metro and regional areas to discuss men's health.

Positive Conversations

We presented 10 online Positive Conversation sessions where we invite healthcare professionals to share on a range of health-related topics to educate and provide access to people in regional and remote areas.

Peer2Peer

We delivered five face-to-face Peer2Peer events for men living with HIV who identify as gay or bisexual. Where health related topics are discussed over a shared meal.



Thank you so much for organising the Kitchen Table Stories event, it was truly meaningful, and I'm grateful to be part of such a supportive community.

Participating in events like these are really helpful for my wellbeing.

– Community Member

Positive Life NSW Annual Report

Our Impact

Representation and Advocacy

Boards

Health Consumers NSW (HCNSW) Board

Consumer Advisory Groups

Albion Centre Consumer Advisory Group

Central & Eastern Public Health Network (CESPHN) Community Advisory Group

European AIDS Clinical Society (EACS) Women Against Viruses in Europe (WAVES) Menopause & HRT Group

HCNSW Consumer Organisations Taskforce

National Network of Women Living with HIV

Sexual Healthcare for Asian-Born GBM Community Advisory Board (La Trobe University)

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) PLHIV Advisory Group

South Western Sydney Mental Health Consumer Carer Community Committee

Government/HIV Sector Committees and Advisory Groups

ASHM Anal Cancer Screening Guidelines and Writing Committees

Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing World AIDS Day Coordinating Committee

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Sexual Health and HIV Action Group (CALD SHAG)

HIV/ID Pharmacy & Nurses Education Team NSW (HIPNET) Executive Committee

HIV Geriatric Nurse Practitioner Working Group

HIV Housing Interagency

Inner West Aged Services Interagency

Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Service (MHAHS) Multicultural Advisory Group

NSW Assessment Panel

NSW Health Bloodborne Virus & Sexually Transmitted Infections (BBV & STI) Aboriginal Reference Group

NSW Health BBV & STI Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Advisory Group

NSW Health HIV Data Advisory Group

NSW Health HIV Molecular Epidemiology Group

NSW HIV Strategy Implementation Committee

NSW Health HIV Strategy Implementation Committee

NSW Health MyTest Advisory Group

NSW Health STI Data Advisory Committee

NSW Safework BBV Advisory Group

Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) Reference Group

PlaySafe Program International Students Consortium

Positive Life NSW Anal Cancer Advocacy Group

Positive Life NSW Complex Care Working Group

Positive Life NSW HPV Working Group

SESLHD HIV & Sexual Health Steering Committee

Social Workers HIV Advisory Group

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District Health literacy of PLHIV regarding monitoring results and its impact on stigma and discrimination Investigator Committee

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) HIV & Sexual Health Steering Committee

South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) HIV & STI Implementation Committee

Yaralla House Management Advisory Group

Research Committees and Advisory Groups

ACCESS: The Australian Collaboration for Coordination Enhanced Sentinel Surveillance of Sexually Transmitted Infections and Blood-Bourne Viruses Reference Committee

Centre for Social Research in Health (CSRH) BBV & STI Research, Intervention and Strategic Evaluation (BRISE) Advisory Board Group

Kirby Institute Annual Surveillance Report Advisory Committee

Kirby Institute Clonal hematopoiesis and HIV Infection are Associate with Geriatric Outcomes (ARCHIVE) Protocol Steering Committee

Kirby Institute Cohort of Australian Women with HIV (CLIO) Protocol Steering Committee

Kirby Institute GoGoVax Protocol Steering Committee

Kirby Institute Glendonbrook Strategic Advisory Group

Kirby Institute HIV and HCV Sequencing (H2Seq) HIV Working Group

Kirby Institute HIV and STI Cascades Reference Group

Kirby Institute HIV and STI Cascades Reference Group

Kirby Institute HIV Survivorship Steering Committee

Kirby Institute International NeuroHIV and Ageing Advocacy Group

Kirby Institute Pilot study of Anal Neoplasia Treatment in people with HIV-Evaluation and monitoring (PANTHER) Protocol Steering Committee

Kirby Institute NSW HIV Prevention Research

Implementation Science Monitoring (PRISM) Partnership Protocol Steering Committee

PRISM Annual Scientific Meeting Working Group

Kirby Institute PRISM HIV Testing Working Group

Kirby Institute PRISM HIV Prevention Working Group

Kirby Institute PRISM HIV Treatment Working Group

Kirby Institute PRISM HIV Stigma Working Group

Kirby Institute SWISH Management Committee (Swabs to Improve Anal Cancer Screening for People with HRHPV)

PEACH Project Implementation Committee (Preventing and Eliminating Anal Cancer in people with HIV -- Implementing new Australian anal cancer screening guidelines for people living with HIV in rural NSW

Research Participation

Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (ARCSHS), La Trobe University

Driving stronger peer, lived and living experience programs and leadership to transform health and social care outcomes for marginalised, stigmatised and criminalised communities project

HIV Futures 11

Psychological Pathways to Mental Health Care for Migrant People Living with HIV in Australia study

Newly Positive study

Peer/Lived Experience project

PozQol

Centre for Social Research in Health (CSRH), University of New South Wales (UNSW)

BRISE3

BRISE Peer Workforce Long-Term Impact and Role of Stigma project

Gay Community Period Survey

HIV Stigma Complaints Portal

LGBTQ+ Health Data project

PrEPARE project

Curtin University

Reaching consensus on Australia's response to HIV and population mobility

Edith Cowan University

Living with Multi-Stigma: The Role of Chosen Families in Supporting the Psychosocial Well-being and Sexual Health of Rainbow Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Australia study

Kirby Institute, UNSW

ACCESS study

ARCHIVE study

CLIO study

EACS-WAVE HRT Group

Equitably maximising survivorship care and quality of life for people living with HIV in Australia study

GoGo Vax study

H2SEQ study

Heterosexual Men with HIV Qualitative Project

HIV Data Linkage project

NeuroHIV and Ageing research group

PANTHER study

Positively Women project

PRISM Partnership study

SWISH study

The Third Australian Study of Health and Relationships (ASHR3)

TraX study

La Trobe University

Ageing and accessing aged-care service among LGBTQI+, including Sistergirl and Brotherboy people study

Mid North Coast and Northern NSW Local Health Districts

PEACH study

Monash University

HIV Cure research

Understanding the preferences for gonorrhoea vaccination through a Discrete Choice

Experiment among GBMSM in Australia study (GOV-DCE)

South East Sydney Local Health District

Health literacy of people living with HIV (PLWHIV) regarding monitoring results and its impact on stigma and discrimination study (U=U)

Sydney Local Health District

Needs assessment of CALD Women living with HIV

UNSW Ageing Futures Institute

The Enhanced Advance care planning and life Review Longitudinal Intervention (EARLI) project study site

UNSW

Health+Law Legal Needs Study (LeNS) survey

Post-release care engagement (PiCs) research project

Reflective Medical Practitioner Curriculum teaching seminars

University of Western Australia

Complex Experiences of Gender Affirmation study

University of Wollongong

Striving for HIV Elimination: Is There a Role for PrEP Among Australian Women? study

Our Impact

Communicate and Inform

Positive Life NSW provides information, advocacy and community-focused communications for the more than 11,000 people living with HIV across New South Wales. Through strategic, evidence-based communications, we deliver clear, accessible and relevant information that supports people to have greater choice and confidence in decisions about their health and wellbeing.

We develop communications that keep our communities informed about emerging issues, raise awareness and understanding of the diverse experiences and priorities of people living with HIV, and bring community perspectives to the attention of policymakers, researchers and the broader NSW health sector. Through this work, we advocate for policies, services and resources that are responsive to the needs of people living with HIV, contributing to improved access to healthcare and support, and better health and wellbeing outcomes for all people living with HIV.

Over **13.3 million** hits were received by the Positive Life Website

841 blog hits across published blog posts

Over **141** community electronic direct mails (eDMs) were sent to Positive Life NSW community subscribers

10 Life.mail bulletins were sent to community subscribers

3 Talkabout magazine editions were published

7 media releases were distributed

1,200 community member received copies of the Talkabout magazine



Published **three times** a year, TalkAbout is a magazine for the community, by the community. It explores emerging topics, provides evidence-based information and **shares the voices and experiences** of people living with HIV, keeping our community informed and connected.

Our Thanks

At Positive Life NSW, we are committed to advancing the rights, health, and wellbeing of all people living with and affected by HIV, while ensuring our communities are heard, represented, and supported across New South Wales.

We gratefully acknowledge the ongoing support of NSW Health and extend our sincere thanks to our partners, supporters, peers, and contributors from across the HIV sector. Your collaboration and commitment enable us to continue delivering advocacy, education, and programs that create meaningful and lasting outcomes for people living with HIV.

We also recognise the dedication and invaluable contributions of our Board, staff, volunteers, and members. Their passion, expertise, and lived experience are integral to our work and continue to strengthen our organisation.

Above all, Positive Life NSW acknowledges the enduring leadership, resilience, and participation of people living with HIV. Your voices, experiences, and advocacy remain at the heart of our purpose and continue to guide everything we do.

2024/25 Audited Financial Report



Positive Life NSW

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