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# MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Launch of the Declaration of Rights of People Living with HIV/AIDS

There are sound legal, ethical and practical reasons for protecting the human rights of people living with HIV/AIDS, a conference in Adelaide has been told.

Speaking at the launch of the *Declaration of Rights of People Living with HIV/AIDS*, barrister David Buchanan, SC, argued that human rights and responsibilities go hand-in-hand. "Human rights are not baggage to be discarded at the first breach of a duty, and duties are not baggage to be discarded at the first infringement of a human right," he said.

The Declaration has been developed by the National Association of People Living with HIV/AIDS (NAPWA), the organisers of a three-day national conference currently underway at the University of Adelaide. It updates a previous declaration from 1993 and asserts the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS to live free from discrimination, to access quality medical care and to live full and productive lives.

"It's all about respect," said Buchanan. "If you respect me and show that you respect me, the chances are that I will show respect for you. People living with HIV/AIDS don't need sermons about avoiding harm to others. The perception that positive people are in need of laws criminalising disease transmission tells us more about the stigma attaching to HIV than about actual disease transmission risk.

"At the end of the day, if the State, if people in groups and if people as individuals take a social justice approach to people with HIV/AIDS, then a reduction in disease transmission will be but one of the social and public health benefits which ensue.

"It's all part of the package."

### **For more details contact:**

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### **Eds Note:**

The full text of the *Declaration of Rights of People Living with HIV/AIDS* is available on the NAPWA website [www.napwa.org.au](http://www.napwa.org.au).

High-resolution photographs are available of the launch. Contact Paul Kidd on 0438 203 754.

The NAPWA conference is not a public event; media representatives are welcome but should contact Paul Kidd on 0438 203 754 to arrange entry.

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