

NAPWA conference a work of art

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People living with HIV/AIDS are in “distinguished company” in their struggle for social justice and affordable medical care, attendees of the 2003 NAPWA Conference, held in Cairns in October, were told.

In a wide-ranging keynote speech which asked whether official priorities were skewed in focusing on security issues when Australia’s public health facilities are overburdened, Justice Einfeld argued that the fight for social justice for people living with HIV/AIDS should be seen as parallel with the recognition of Indigenous rights, the treatment of asylum seekers, equal treatment for gay men and lesbians, and other issues facing Australia today.

“Whilst we are putting a lot of words and not inconsiderable effort and money into the so-called ‘War on Terror’, we are clearly not doing anything like our best in health or, importantly, in getting the priorities right,” he said. “And people living with HIV and AIDS are among the most serious victims of this neglect.”



Book readings were a feature of the fair day

Justice Einfeld’s keynote speech was one of the highlights of a highly successful conference, the ninth national conference of people living with HIV/AIDS held in Australia. More than 220 delegates attended the conference, which featured workshops on treatments, activism and social research. Closed satellite sessions for positive youth, women, heterosexuals, gay men and Indigenous people allowed each group to discuss the specific issues that affect them.

The Indigenous satellite session saw the formation of a new national network for Indigenous people living with HIV/



Treatments workshop

Another of the highlights of the program, reflecting the conference theme 'the art of living', was the 'fair day' which showcased positive art, writing and performance in an informal atmosphere. Many delegates enthusiastically welcomed the inclusion of the fair day in the program, saying that it created an initial 'buzz' which carried through the three-day conference.

Also for the first time at a NAPWA conference, a group of HIV-positive people from Papua New Guinea attended the conference and a separate two-day workshop organised by NAPWA through the Consortium for Health in [PNG](#) [2] Papua New Guinea and funded by a specific grant from Merck Sharpe and Dohme.



A break in proceedings

While the business of the NAPWA conference is principally the various workshops, presentations and satellite sessions, several well-attended social functions enabled positive people to meet others from around the country.

The full proceedings of the conference will be available early in 2004. A transcript of Justice Einfeld's speech can be found on the NAPWA website.

- [2003 Conference](#)
- [human rights](#)

Links:

[1] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/380>

[2] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/144>