

Prevention is everybody's business

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This year's World AIDS Day theme, *HIV/AIDS – Prevention is everybody's business*, presents an opportunity for people living with HIV to talk about our role in response to the HIV epidemic in this country.

As the peak organisation representing HIV positive people, NAPWA's mission is to represent and advocate for the services needed by positive people to improve their quality of life and support people living with HIV to make healthy choices for themselves and their sexual partners.

This year NAPWA has had to challenge the negative portrayal of positive people in the media and by politicians as a result of several cases around Australia of people charged with deliberately infecting others with HIV. This has occurred at the same time as we experience an increase in the number of people diagnosed with HIV.

We need to be focussed on what responses are required to reduce the number of new infections in this country and this means we need your help. NAPWA strongly maintains that only an evidence based response to public health policy is effective in controlling the spread of HIV, and that HIV positive people are central to the development, implementation and evaluation of all programs and policies associated with the HIV epidemic in this country.

The evidence is clear - when people living with HIV are supported to participate in HIV prevention, HIV infection rates decline. Positive people require a supportive social, health and political environment which provides the best possible treatment options and social health structures that enable them to actively contribute to their own communities as well as the broader Australia society. This environment promotes positive people taking responsibility for their own health and actions and as a consequence reduces the isolated incidences of people knowingly putting others at risk of infection.

NAPWA has responded by countering the current suite of media and public statements that stigmatise and marginalise HIV positive people. By working with our state based member PLWHA organisations to increase their capacity and improve access to services by their communities we endeavour to ensure that the services will improve the health and quality of positive people's lives.

NAPWA continues to work with state and federal governments, the pharmaceutical industry and community service providers to ensure that the most up to date treatments are available for all positive people and that the health services that they access are adequately funded. We continue to advocate with medical practitioners and regulators to ensure that the latest knowledge and best practices are used in [clinical](#) [1] Pertaining to or founded on observation and treatment of participants, as distinguished from theoretical or basic science. care and that there is improved access to GP's, specialists and pharmacy services in the community.

This comes at a time when positive people are living healthier and longer lives while access to services is becoming mainstreamed, it is therefore vitally important that we advocate for adequate and appropriate services as these changes in our lives continue.

Positive people need to talk about HIV - with each other and in the broader community. We need to ensure that the obvious and hidden impacts that this infection has on our lives increases the knowledge and understanding of our partners, family, friends, mates and the in the community.

The importance of taking responsibility for preventing the spread of HIV is in everyone's hands and in ours it is paramount. I encourage you to talk openly, honestly and with passion and in return NAPWA will ensure that your voices are conveyed as widely as possible to all levels of government and the community. It is vital that the responses to the HIV epidemic in this country are informed by our voices and that positive people are heard and understood as we develop the strategies and responses to this epidemic.

I know that together we are stronger. That we are the foundation of an effective response to the HIV epidemic in this country and that we need to build upon our diverse experiences to ensure that no one gets left behind and that there is an even better response in the future.

- [HIV prevention](#)
- [involvement of positive people](#)
- [positive in prevention](#)
- [World AIDS Day](#)

Links:

[1] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/475>