

A more socially inclusive approach to government?

Created 26 Jun 2008 - 9:50am

The start of a new year brings changes and a fresh outlook. This is particularly true given the election of a new federal Labor Government that has acted quickly to implement its election promises made to the stolen generation. Is this a reflection of a more socially inclusive approach to government? This is a particularly important question for the HIV sector and NAPWA in particular because this year will see a review of the 5th National Strategy on HIV and the development of the next Strategy. Within NAPWA, development of our next strategic plan for the organisation for the coming four years has also commenced. Therefore it is timely to ask the question of what would we like to see changed in response to the changing experience of living with HIV in both our own organisation as well as at a national level.

The National Strategy on HIV provides the framework for how Australia will respond to the epidemic into the future. After 25 years of the epidemic the outlook in our country is dramatically different than when the epidemic started. NAPWA's role is to act as an advocate for all positive people in Australia and to convey to the government and the broader community what the experience of living with HIV is like in 2008. For the past three years NAPWA has undertaken work to document from personal perspectives the issues that face positive people in accessing services. These documents present the evidence upon which NAPWA will advocate on behalf of positive people in the forthcoming review and planning processes.

I believe that this is a time of great opportunity to reshape the response to HIV in this country and that the experience of living with HIV can be enhanced by changes to the social settings of this country. These changes go beyond just the National Strategy and include changes to the broad health care delivery system, moves to acknowledge same sex relationships federally, cooperation between state and federal governments to unify laws across jurisdictions, and a move to a fairer Australia as indicated by changes in Immigration and Industrial Relations. Does this indicate that the government will also move to reform welfare and social security?

NAPWA represents more than ever before a diverse constituency with a wide range of experiences of living with HIV, therefore the task of advocating on behalf of positive people means that NAPWA must engage across the broad issues that affect us all. This is a challenging task for the organisation that makes planning for the future direction of our own organisation more important if we are to meet those challenges. This also gives us the opportunity to contribute to the review and planning processes of the National Strategy as well as contributing to other areas of reform in government policy with a clear focus on the future needs of positive people and to incorporate those into our own organisations plans for the future.

- [National HIV strategy](#)