

Planning for the longer term

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For two days in June this year, HIV sector workers gathered in Sydney to showcase some of this country's most innovative positive services. The Positive Services Forum placed emphasis on planning for the long-term and forms part of a much larger strategy which is responding to the changing needs of positive Australians.

As well as providing a springboard for workers to share their successes, it was also an opportunity to collect tips from the work of others.

Peter Thoms from the Bobby Goldsmith Foundation outlined his organisation's Phoenix Project – a series of workshops designed to help people living with HIV build their confidence, feel more optimistic about the future and initiate positive change in their lives.

While providing clients with new skills and the other steps required to return to work or study, the workshops have a profound effect on improving participants' sense of wellbeing and quality of life.

A significant component of the project is outreach to different positive enclaves, including culturally and linguistically diverse ones. This was one example of how an established HIV agency can creatively expand. In this case, skilling-up their client base with the support of traditional financial assistance and guidance.

There was also an engaging session on ageing that examined emerging health and other issues for older people with HIV. Although many services for the aged may ostensibly cater to the entire community, people living with HIV are finding these services are unprepared and ill equipped to address their needs. Issues discussed in this session included improving aged care facilities, addressing HIV stigma in services and treating cancer in older people with HIV.

- [living with HIV](#)