

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

NALIN, VOLUNTEER

"I've used VAC's services myself, if I can reach out and let other people know about those services I know there are people out there who could really benefit. The impact on the community is huge, but there's still so much work to be done."



UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

CASEY, VOLUNTEER

"This work is important, and I want to help out. I've been volunteering as a receptionist at VAC for 10 years now, and such a broad spectrum of people come in to use our services."



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UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

CHAD, PRESIDENT

"We celebrate the diversity of the
LGBTI community at VAC, and
working together we can continue
to improve our community's
health and wellbeing."

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As we come to the close of another incredibly busy year for VAC, I reflect on the journey we have made towards achieving our purpose and mission. Our five year Strategic Plan comes to an end in 2017, and as we near its end, it is timely to reflect on how we are progressing our strategic goals and objectives.

MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT

At the forefront we continue to lead the sector in decreasing the rates and impact of HIV on our community, aiming for a future without HIV. Central to this, VAC continues to champion the meaningful engagement of people living with HIV in all the work we do. We have just completed an eighteen month GIPA/MIPA review where an external committee assessed the meaningful involvement of people living with HIV at all levels of the organisation. The review confidently resolved that VAC engages people living with HIV at all levels of the organisation, from our Board of Directors, our staff, our volunteer workforce, and in every program we deliver.

PrEP

VAC's commitment to excellence is evident through our rapid translation of evidence into practice, with VAC supporting and delivering advocacy campaigns to enhance access to Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis for HIV (PrEP). VAC has also been at the forefront this year in supporting Treatment as Prevention (TasP) and healthy lifestyles for people living with HIV through encouraging early treatment as evidenced by our Treat HIV Now campaign.

We continue towards our vision of a world where gay men and other men who have sex with men live healthy and disease free lives, and where all sexually and gender diverse people live healthy lives with dignity, with equal rights, and participate fully in society. This year we launched our amazing, and long overdue, Equinox health service for our trans and gender diverse communities, and we work to support PASH.TM, a cutting edge and innovative group for

trans men. Through delivery in partnership with ACON, we again this year delivered to a full house in Melbourne the transformative Lesbian, Bisexual and Queer Women's Health Conference. These achievements highlight our delivery of best practice health services and health promotion across the diversity of our communities, addressing not just HIV, but health of the people we serve in a holistic way.

REACHING COMMUNITIES

The expansion to reach communities in rural Victoria, with the launch of VACountry, and our community led support to people in South Australia through SAMESH, highlight the commitment of VAC to reach people who live outside metropolitan Melbourne. We are proud to know VAC continues to provide trusted leadership, through a commitment to excellence and innovation in every service we deliver.

WORKING TOGETHER

I would like to thank my fellow Board of directors for their continuing leadership in steering the organisation towards achieving these objectives. A special thanks to my predecessor Greg Carter and his immense contribution to the organization over the many years he served on the Board and as President. I would also like to thank both Glenn Pannam and Michael Tippet who also stepped down from the Board this year, for their respective service and great contributions to the organisation. I would like to recognize the immense work our CEO Simon Ruth, the management team, and all VAC staff give to the organisation on a daily basis. Only with such incredible, dedicated and diligent staff can we find ourselves celebrating the incredible achievements of this past year. VAC continues to be recognised as a leading agency in our sector, and for this, we, the members, proudly thank you.

It has been an honour to be appointed as President of VAC since April of this year. I have enjoyed working closely with a very

talented and hard-working Board, whom I would like to thank for their ongoing support. Our volunteers never cease to amaze us with their generosity and commitment to what VAC stands for, the work we do and the people we support. Without our incredible network of committed and hardworking volunteers we wouldn't be able to maintain the high calibre of services we provide to our communities.

Chad Hughes, President



VACOUNTRY IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF VAC MOVING ITS OFFER TO COMMUNITY BEYOND THE MELBOURNE METROPOLITAN AREA



UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

DEB, BOARD MEMBER

"I'm proud that changes to our constitution reflect the services and support VAC now provides to the wider LGBTI community."

BOARD'S REPORT

At the Annual General Meeting in November 2015, Greg Carter, Christopher McDermott, Glenn Pannam, Jim Hyde and Aram Hosie were elected to the Boards of the Victorian AIDS Council (VAC) and the Gay Men's Health Centre (GMHC). During 2016, Mr Carter and Mr Pannam resigned, and Deborah Sykes and Isaac Huang were appointed to the Board. We thank the outgoing President, Mr Carter, and Treasurer, Mr Pannam, for their distinguished service, particularly in relation to the sale of the Peter Knight Centre in 2015. Chad Hughes became President of the Victorian AIDS Council in April 2016 and Mr Huang became Treasurer. Christopher McDermott was Vice President during the course of 2016. Michael Tippett, Craig Burnett and Chrissie Feagins were the other board members, and Caleb Hawk represented the staff of VAC.

The Board wishes to express its sincere thanks to Simon Ruth, Chief Executive Officer of VAC, and to the VAC staff for their outstanding contribution to fulfilling VAC's objective of a future without HIV. In 2016, VAC has led the way in providing a positive and dynamic response to key issues affecting the LGBTI community, including continued leadership on promoting awareness, use and an evidence base for the effectiveness of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP). The organisation has also provided a principled position in response to the Federal Government proposal for a plebiscite on marriage equality, and has ensured that the LGBTI communities affected by family violence are properly heard.

FACILITIES COMMITTEE

Following on from the successful sale of the Peter Knight Centre, the Facilities Committee continued to provide strategic and logistical advice to the Board about relocation options. This included informing the Board's decision-making on the negotiations with the Victorian Government in the development of a Pride Centre. The Pride Centre will be a physical and virtual facility designed to bring together LGBTI art, history,

advisory, health and support services, and feature community spaces to provide a safe social environment. The Board will continue to work constructively with the Government in the development of this concept over the course of 2016/2017, as we move to a new facility to meet the future service needs for VAC.

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Governance Committee undertook a comprehensive review of the constitution and by-laws, and proposed a suite of reforms for the consideration of members. These reforms were designed to ensure our organisation is best placed to meet the challenges of the future through robust Board governance and the enhancement of our objectives to meet our community's future service-delivery needs. The reforms were proposed to members at the Special General Meeting held in early October, 2016.

FINANCE, RISK & AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Finance, Risk and Audit Committee (FRAC) continued to meet monthly. Pitcher Partners provided audit services to VAC. In late 2015, the Board and FRAC collectively met to resolve the Terms of Reference and Investments Policy for an Investments Committee, principally designed to ensure the growth of the financial assets from the sale of the Peter Knight Centre were best protected. In 2016, our organisation also became accredited under the Quality Improvement Council (QIC) Health and Community Services Standards, meeting all the standards. This is a fantastic achievement that recognises the professionalism of our organisation in key public health service delivery.

RESEARCH, ADVICE & PROMOTION COMMITTEE

The Research, Advice and Promotion Committee continued to monitor and, where appropriate, endorse research in cases where VAC has been asked to provide support in some way.

POLICY COMMITTEE

The Policy Committee continued

to provide trusted leadership on existing and emerging areas of public health and law reform, and the development of appropriate policy responses.

Chris McDermott, Vice President



THIS YEAR WE PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE PROVISION OF PREP TO THE COMMUNITY. WE PARTNERED WITH ALFRED HEALTH IN THE PREPX STUDY, THE FASTEST ENROLLED PREP STUDY IN THE WORLD.



UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

SIMON, CEO

"Diversity is key to our work, in engaging communities, service provision, prevention, treatment and care".

CEO'S REPORT

Change has been a constant in this epidemic over the last three decades, and the changes we have seen in the past year, in both the organisation and the epidemic as a whole, have been unprecedented.

The year began with the Board approving an in-principle agreement to support and reside in the Pride Centre proposed by the Victorian Government. This agreement was given to the government to enable further planning to be undertaken. Further discussion has taken place during the year and we have commenced planning for our interim accommodation once our current lease on Claremont Street expires at the end of 2017.

MOVING ON PrEP

Pre Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) continues to dominate discussions around the future of HIV prevention in this country and I am very proud that VAC, along with Alfred Health, is a partner in the fastest-recruiting PrEP study in the world, PREPX. The study was fully enrolled in metropolitan Melbourne at the end of October with additional places set aside for ongoing enrolment of injecting drug users, rural and regional participants and trans people. This has been a massive effort on the part of Associate Professor Edwina Wright at the Alfred, and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the Victorian PrEP Accord for their tireless efforts in promoting the study and making PrEP accessible.

With all this activity around PrEP it was very disappointing that the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) rejected pharmaceutical company Gilead's submission to have Truvada listed for subsidised access under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). VAC will continue its lobbying efforts with our PrEP Accord partners and the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) as we work towards full

PBS listing for this important prevention tool.

GREATER REACH

This year has seen further expansion of our services to include full sexual-health screening and a PrEP clinic at our PRONTO! site in Collingwood. In addition, Equinox, VAC's trans and gender diverse health service was launched at PRONTO! in May.

This year has also seen the establishment of VACountry, VAC's regional presence set up in the previous offices of the Country Awareness Network (CAN) in Bendigo. Working relationships with community members and stakeholders have been established and we have seen great community involvement at events such as ChillOut and the Bendigo Queer Film Festival.

VACountry represents the most substantive expansion of our rural and regional presence in the organisation's history and one we will build on into the future.

SAMESH, our South Australian partnership with SHineSA, has completed its first year of operations on budget and having exceeded all its key performance indicators. The program is now fully established with a range of activities including peer support, counselling, campaign implementation, a HIV rapid-testing service, volunteer recruitment and training, and safe-sex resource distribution. The SAMESH site in Adelaide's CBD has become a hub of community activity from hosting cooking classes for PLHIV to community forums and a meeting place for a variety of LGBTIQ sporting and social groups.

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

In November, along with AFAO and the Alcohol and Drug Foundation, VAC launched TouchBase, a national website providing information on alcohol and drug use as well as mental health and sexual health for LGBTIQ communities. From basic information on specific drugs,

to education about mental health and sexual health, and personal stories—the website is a comprehensive resource assisting LGBTIQ people to better manage their own health and wellbeing. The feedback on this digital resource both nationally and internationally has been overwhelmingly positive and has enhanced our digital presence significantly.

DRAMATIC MILESTONE

Finally, the cornerstone of VAC's social marketing campaigns, The Drama Downunder, launched a new campaign emphasising the need for regular 'seasonal' testing. The campaign, which enters its tenth year in 2017, was independently evaluated and it was demonstrated that, without

being explicitly mentioned in the campaign materials, over 60 per cent of the 400 gay men surveyed knew that the campaign message was about getting tested four times a year. This is a testament to a well established sexual-health brand, recognised in the community, consistently implemented over time and constantly refreshed.

The Drama Downunder is another example of the durability of our response, founded in community strength, engagement and passion.

Finally, I would like to thank the Board for their continued support and commitment and our volunteers who remain the passionate heart of our organisation.

Simon Ruth, CEO



THE DRAMA DOWNUNDER SEASONAL CAMPAIGN, SPRING



UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

DONNA, VOLUNTEER

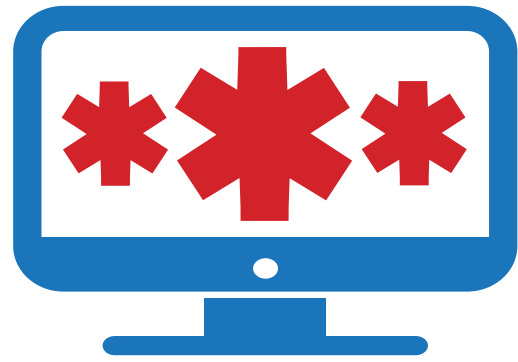
"I've learned a lot of new things since I started volunteering at VAC about HIV and about the LGBTI community. The diversity at VAC means I get to meet people from all walks of life."

CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY



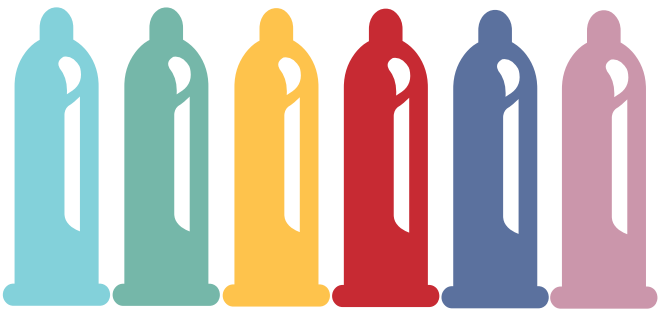
\$120,232.00

WAS DISTRIBUTED THROUGH THE DAVID WILLIAMS FUND FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV NEEDING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE



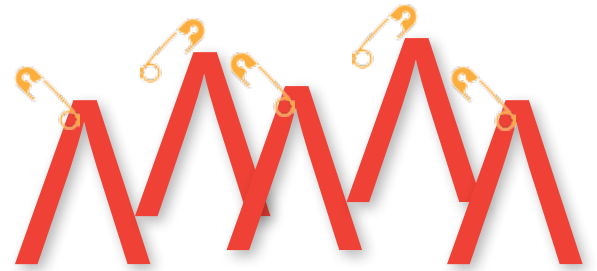
333,507

PEOPLE VISITED ORGANISATIONAL WEBSITES FROM DRAMA DOWNUNDER THROUGH TO PRONTO! AND OTHERS



59,000

CONDOMS WERE DISTRIBUTED TO VENUES, PARTIES AND OTHER COMMUNITY EVENTS



38,000

RED RIBBONS WERE DISTRIBUTED DURING OUR WORLD AIDS DAY STREET APPEAL

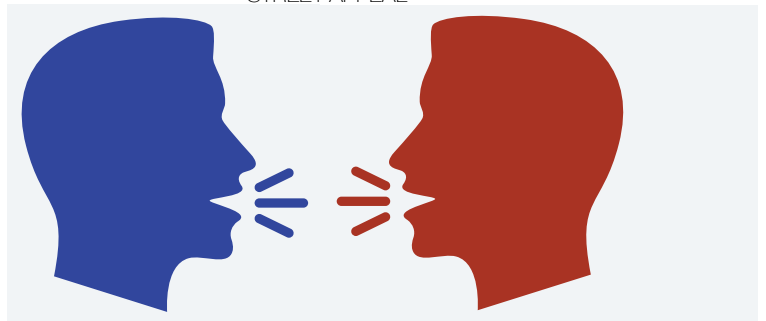


320

PEOPLE ATTENDED THE SECOND NATIONAL LESBIAN, BISEXUAL AND QUEER WOMEN'S HEALTH CONFERENCE

366

TIMES VAC WAS FEATURED IN THE MEDIA



250

PEOPLE MADE CONTACT WITH OUR OUTREACH VOLUNTEERS



UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

PETE, VOLUNTEER

"Volunteering at VAC is a way for me to give back to the Australian LGBTI community."

20 STORIES FROM VAC



1 Plebiscite

After the Abbott Government announced it would put marriage equality to a national plebiscite, VAC announced its position condemning it. The statement outlined the detrimental effects a plebiscite would have on the health and wellbeing of LGBTI people. When the Turnbull Government began finalising details for the plebiscite, VAC used the position statement to lobby

Parliamentarians and leadership, calling on them to block any enabling legislation for a plebiscite, saying: "The staging of a plebiscite is a complete dereliction of Parliament's responsibility. It is unnecessary, insulting to LGBTI people, and serves no legitimate purpose."

In response to this and other efforts, Labor announced plans to block the plebiscite, a major win for the LGBTI community.

2 DanceWize

In May this year VAC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Harm Reduction Victoria (HRV) so the two organisations can work together utilising a harm-reduction approach towards LGBTI people who use alcohol and other drugs at dance parties and similar events.

VAC staff and volunteers work with the DanceWize representatives providing health promotion information, and distribute materials often promoting our Sexually Adventurous Men Project. At dance parties and other events, teams of paired volunteers patrol the dance floor and other spaces ensuring all patrons are well and not requiring assistance.

3 Volunteers

As part of National Volunteer Week, VAC acknowledged the dedication of our volunteers with a celebration at Functions on Chapel on 13 May.

At the well attended thank-you event, City of Stonnington Mayor Claude Ullin gave out service awards and delivered a speech acknowledging the importance of volunteering in communities. VAC President Chad Hughes gave thanks to our volunteers and commented that their strength and talent is always recognised.

Award recipients on the night included Colin Krycer (30 years), Madeleine Barbara (25 years), Dimitri Christou (10 years) and Dereck Collins (10 years).

4 Treat HIV Now

The Treat HIV Now campaign was a joint initiative between VAC and Living Positive Victoria. It is a campaign that focuses on highlighting the benefits of commencing HIV treatments after a HIV diagnosis. The results from several research projects showed that the sooner treatment was commenced after a diagnosis, the more markedly improved health outcomes were in both the short and long term.

The campaign is the first of its kind to be developed and implemented in Victoria aimed at HIV-positive people not on treatment.

PLHIV community members appeared in the campaign, putting a human face to the campaign's messages. This emphasised the importance of treatment to an individual's health, showing that they were in control of their HIV and empowered through being informed.

5 Alcohol & Drugs

'Kate' came to VAC homeless and in crisis, struggling with substance use. Her mental health had worsened significantly since the breakdown of her relationship with her family following a difficult coming out process. She was offered Care and Recovery Co-ordination and Counselling. Determined to make positive changes she attended every appointment with her outreach worker rain, hail or shine.

Six months after first presenting she had completed two residential detox stays, begun a rehab program, gained secure housing and started to make social connections in her new community. Her hope upon completing rehab is to reach out to her family. Of her experience as a Care and Recovery Client she said: "My worker is awesome. She helped me believe things really could get better."



PART OF THE TREAT HIV NOW CAMPAIGN



UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

FELIX, VOLUNTEER

"Queer health is something I'm passionate about, and one day I'd love to be a counsellor for an organisation like VAC. I love being a part of this community, so it's great to have any opportunity to be more involved."

6 LBQ Women's Health

In partnership with ACON, VAC hosted the second national Lesbian, Bisexual and Queer Women's Health Conference in Melbourne on 27 May. The conference aimed to bring together lesbian, bisexual and queer women and people working with this population from around Australia to network and share their knowledge on how to improve their community's health and wellbeing.

Over 320 people attended the conference, and content included sexual health, disability, sex work, inclusive practice, trans and gender diversity, mental health, drug and alcohol, intimate partner and family violence, Aboriginal health, cancer, multiculturalism and ageing.

7 Community Support

'Peter' was a client of VAC's In-Home Support Program for 15 years. He lived in one of the social housing properties managed by the program, and received support from care coordination and attendant care workers.

He was living with schizophrenia in addition to his HIV, and his needs were often not understood by workers from the external agencies that used to provide VAC's attendant care.

Early this year, Peter received a diagnosis of terminal lung cancer and knew he had only months to live. He had always been fiercely independent and his greatest wish was to continue living in his own home. This was made possible with support from VAC's new Home Care team, which replaced the external providers in February this year. Four workers from the team coordinated high-level care to allow Peter to keep living at home, providing help with housework, meals, transport to medical appointments and social support.

One of his Home Care workers brought him to the Positive Living Centre to collect food from the Pantry program just three days before he died. He remained independent to the end.



8 Ice Action

VAC's ice campaign is just one component of a larger Ice Action Plan project that aims to tackle issues related to methamphetamine use in the LGBTI community.

The campaign aims to make methamphetamine users aware of their use and the impact that it may be having on their lives by asking one simple question, "Got meth? Or has meth got you?" This was designed for both problematic and recreational users as a visual cue for them to question their behaviour in a non-judgemental way.



OUR PANTRY SERVICE REMAINS IMPORTANT FOR OUR CLIENTS



9 Company of Men

VAC partnered up with the Company of Men exhibition, through our Staying Negative campaign and the Sexually Adventurous Men Project, to bring the community an exhibition aimed at exploring the concept of masculinity through the lens of a gay, bisexual or trans man.

We commissioned two artists from the community, Kiarash Zangeneh and Rogan Richards, to produce artwork, and following the exhibition's launch, we supported a bondage demonstration and a community forum. The forum brought together the exhibition curator, several artists involved and key leaders in health promotion to discuss the relationship between health promotion and art.

10 Client Centred

VAC's Positive Living Centre (PLC) continues to be a very important and safe environment for people living with HIV, providing a broad variety of services focusing on enhancing people's health and wellbeing from massage and vitamin services to art and fitness classes.

In the past year, the PLC has had 600 individuals access the Centre, and perhaps the best way to express the impact the PLC has had on some individuals can be reflected in a quote from a letter we received in May: "I just wanted to express my absolute gratitude for the service that you guys at the PLC provide. The staff that I have met have been exceptional people, non-judgemental and supportive."



UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

JESSE, VOLUNTEER

"I have a couple of family members affected by HIV so I know how important it is to have somewhere you can go to find information and support. No one can do it alone, and VAC is a place where I can connect with community."

11 RDNS Partnership

In 2016 VAC and the Royal District Nursing Service (RDNS) recommitted to our partnership. The RDNS HIV team now has a dedicated Hospital Admissions Risk Program (HARP) nurse to reduce unnecessary hospital admissions, and the team now resides within the Homeless Persons Program at RDNS.

The strength of this approach is that it allows a total community focus, working and engaging with other community-based organisations involved in non-clinical service delivery with the ultimate goal of better client care. This is of particular importance for working alongside staff and trained volunteers within VAC's Community Support Program and the Positive Living Centre. It also underpins our new Home Care Service.

12 Orlando Vigil

On June 12, 2016 a horrific attack took place at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida, where members of the LGBTI community were targeted by a lone gunman. 49 were killed and over 50 were wounded.

With only 36 hours notice VAC worked with the Office of the Commissioner of Sexuality and Gender Diversity, Federation Square and the City of Melbourne, as well as St Paul's Cathedral to ensure the "Orlando Solidarity Vigil" took place on Thursday, 16 June.

Keynote addresses were given by VAC President Chad Hughes and our Policy Analyst John Manwaring, and the backdrop was VAC's giant pride flag, which filled the stage. The message was simple: LGBTI people have a right to live in a supportive environment.

13 PRONTO!

PRONTO! now offers comprehensive peer-delivered STI-testing services, an achievement that has led to an increase in return HIV-testing rates and the identification and treatment of chlamydia, gonorrhoea and syphilis in our clients. PRONTO! is the only rapid HIV and STI-testing service in Australia that offers an entirely peer-delivered service of this nature.

The engagement of doctors was required to prepare the STI pathology requests and to review pathology results for the peer testing service. With doctors on site we saw the opportunity to expand further and created a PrEP clinic for clients wishing to access PrEP. The doctors also treat clients that present symptoms or test positive for STIs.



14 Meet Pete & Dale

As part of beyondblue's Stigma Reduction Interventions: Digital Environments (STRIDE) project funded by the Movember Foundation, we have partnered with ACON, the Centre for Social Research in Health (UNSW), Liquorice, Living Positive Victoria, and GAMMA NSW to develop two websites aimed at tackling stigma associated with mental health for two specific populations of men.

Pete.org.au is aimed at men living with HIV; meanwhile,

Dale.org.au is tailored toward same-sex attracted men living in a heterosexual relationship (commonly known as 'gay and married men').

Both sites have been designed to find out if online interventions are successful at reducing stigma associated with anxiety and depression. Both Pete and Dale use common elements, featuring articles, personal stories, peer-moderated live chats, and discussion forums.

15 David Williams Fund

The David Williams Fund (DWF) works to improve our clients' quality of life in a holistic manner by providing emergency relief, study assist packages, a no interest loan scheme and financial counselling.

The financial counselling service has helped hundreds of clients improve their financial situations through budgetary skills, debt negotiation, advocacy and

financial literacy. Our approach empowers clients to manage their own financial affairs rather than relying just on a hand out.

One client said: "I'm proud to inform you that I successfully completed my studies. I'm now a nurse. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and the DWF for being a part of my journey."





UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

LEON, VOLUNTEER

"VAC does so much for the community, so it was important for me to feel like I was able to give back for all the support you've given us."

16 Pride Centre

With the sale of our Claremont St site in late 2015, VAC is looking for a new home.

VAC has been in consultation with many other community-based organisations, both HIV and LGBTI-focused, as well as the State Government, in exploring practical options for our future needs.

Many partner organisations have responded favourably to VAC's idea of developing a Pride Centre—a space to house many LGBTI organisations which the government has supported.

VAC would be one of the largest organisations looking for an alternate home so discussions are underway, consulting and exploring suitable site options.

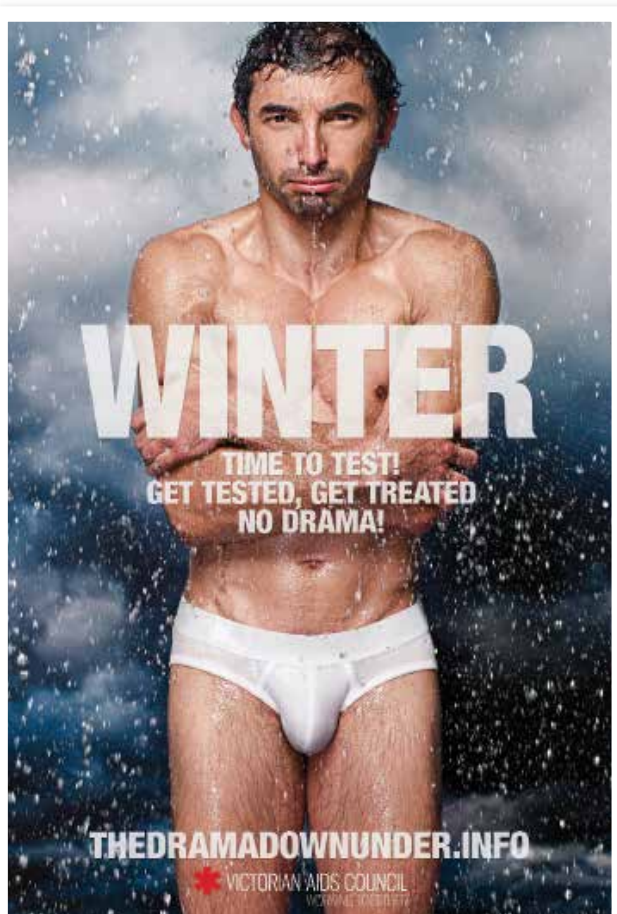
17 Community Support

David was diagnosed in the early days of HIV, and was introduced to VAC's Community Support services more than 10 years ago. He receives volunteer transport to medical appointments, shopping assistance, social activities and care coordination from a Community Support worker.

David recalls that before receiving support he was confused and frustrated in the community.

With support, he no longer experiences these anxieties. He also enjoys the program's social support. He said: "It alleviates the cabin fever I feel when locked up here at home all the time."

David feels well protected by the confidentiality of the service he receives and is developing greater confidence.



DRAMA SEASONS CAMPAIGN, WINTER

18 Information Technology

VAC has taken leaps forward in technology, allowing a more seamless and time-saving approach to much of the work we undertake. A new virtual server has been installed at the Peter Knight Centre, which now allows us to easily expand capacity as new and updated technology is deployed.

We have replaced our old payroll system with a new electronic system called the Employee Services Portal (ESP). The internet has also been upgraded at Claremont St, with a faster fibre-optic service that is more reliable and robust in supporting VAC's ever increasing online activities.

We continue to invest in technology in this rapidly changing environment to enhance operations at every level.

19 Holding the Man

In August 2015, VAC held a special screening of Neil Armfield's film *Holding The Man*.

Actors Craig Stott and Ryan Corr, who played John and Tim respectively, and HIV clinician Edwina Wright, the film's clinical advisor, also participated in a Q&A at the cinema. They spoke of the personal challenges in

20 Drama Downunder

The Drama Downunder campaign is one of the most recognisable sexual health campaigns in the country, and the latest version used the four seasons to reinforce the importance of regular testing. Each version was shown outdoors, online and in print when the season was at its height, and thus the message of, for example, 'Winter, time to test', was at its most relevant and applicable.

By running the campaign four times over the course of 12 months, the message of regular sexual health checks was reinforced, making the target audience more aware of both when their last check was, and when their next test was due.

interpreting such a well known story, the issues it brought up for those who worked on the production and the impact on the community.

Edwina was an HIV physician involved in their care at Fairfield Hospital, and is portrayed in the book, and in Tim's words, as "the blond doctor with red lips".



TIM CONIGRAVE AND JOHN CALEO



UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

PENNY, VOLUNTEER

"I think VAC creates a very safe environment for a lot of people, one that's completely non-judgemental. As a volunteer I feel very supported."

SAMESH ONE YEAR ON



PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL FOR OUR RAPID TESTING SERVICE



WILLS LOGUE, TEAM LEADER, SAMESH

When the AIDS Council of South Australia was forced to close its doors in July 2013, the state was left without an AIDS Council. The South Australian Government gave assurances the money previously used to fund the council would continue to be spent on related programs and services, but the local community were devastated to lose the organisation. It had been running since 1984, founded the year after VAC's origins in Melbourne's gay community.

A GRASS ROOTS APPROACH

When the opportunity arose for VAC to bid for a tender to run sexual health and HIV programs and services in South Australia, it was an opportunity to bring VAC's grass-roots approach to community building to the neighbouring state. Partnering with local sexual health organisation SHine SA, VAC sought to ensure the same spirit of activism and engagement would underpin the new South Australian program.

"As a community we have achieved our greatest efforts when working together, this interstate collaboration is an exciting opportunity for both states and organisations to create something highly effective and

controlled by the community," said VAC CEO Simon Ruth.

That partnership created SAMESH: South Australia Mobilisation and Empowerment for Sexual Health.

"It was really important for us that the name of the new service include the word 'empowerment'," said Colin Batrouney, VAC's Director of Health Promotion, Policy and Communications. "We were mindful of the grass-roots nature of the way VAC began as an organisation, and the risk was that this would disappear in the state with the closure of the AIDS Council of South Australia."

STRONG FOUNDATIONS

VAC and SHine SA won the tender in February 2015, and set about recruiting staff to establish the new service. SAMESH's first priority in the community was to address the most urgent need, by establishing support services for people newly diagnosed with HIV and run by people living with HIV.

Fostering that grass-roots approach, SAMESH would be advised by a community advisory group, one including both LGBTI people and people living openly with HIV.

"SAMESH answers a need within the community for support and information about sexual health and HIV that comes from members of that same community," said SHine SA CEO, Jill Davidson.

From that beginning, SAMESH grew. Wills Logue was hired to oversee the program day-to-day as Team Leader, supported by a staff who would engage the community through various programs and services.

NEW CONNECTIONS

SAMESH's commitment to being a community-led program is evident in its volunteer engagement in particular—a legacy of VAC's history as a volunteer-driven organisation. After just over a year of operation, SAMESH has 92 active volunteers working across the program. This is a huge achievement for a small, relatively new program.

Now, SAMESH connects with the community in a range of ways. That connection comes through programs like 'Stepping Out', a peer-education workshop for young, same-sex attracted men, and through services like counselling, cooking classes for people living with HIV, and the

peer-led rapid HIV testing service RAPIDO! Learning from Victorian programs like 'Young and Gay' and PRONTO!, SAMESH is demonstrating the ways VAC's knowledge and expertise can inform this work in South Australia. SAMESH is also implementing social marketing campaigns in South Australia. The acclaimed Drama Downunder 'Seasons' campaign and an SA-specific campaign to promote post-exposure prophylaxis for HIV (PEP) have both engaged the community around sexual health and HIV-prevention. And importantly, SAMESH has been engaging with South Australia's vibrant and passionate LGBTI community, sponsoring events like the queer cultural festival, Feast, and providing a meeting place for local community groups.

The coming year will see SAMESH strengthen its position as the program continues to deepen community connections as a truly community-led HIV and sexual health service for South Australia.

A close-up portrait of a man with a full, dark brown beard and mustache. He has short-cropped hair and is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. He is wearing a blue patterned shirt under a dark jacket. A red asterisk graphic is positioned on the right side of the image, partially overlapping the text.

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

ARAM, BOARD MEMBER

"I'm proud of the way the organisation continues to advocate for and respond to our community's health needs—be that advocating for PrEP, hosting the LBQ Women's Health Conference, or opening Equinox, Australia's first ever medical clinic especially for trans and gender diverse people."

VAC has been increasing its engagement with Victoria's trans and gender diverse communities for several years now, and in the past 12 months that work has culminated in some of the most cutting-edge services in the country—services for some of the most vulnerable people in our community.

DEVELOPING THE SERVICE

Early steps with Transformed, a therapeutic group engaging trans and gender diverse people around improving general health and wellbeing, quickly grew into more. VAC began integrating information about the needs of trans and gender diverse people into both internal and external training, educating the organisation and those outside LGBTI communities around how to better meet those needs. VAC's Trans Health Project Lead Jeremy Wiggins also carried out a whole-of-organisation review of how VAC's policies and processes shape the organisation's engagement with trans and gender diverse communities.

Around the same time, VAC's rapid-HIV testing service PRONTO! was undergoing significant changes, with the introduction of full STI screening and a PrEP Clinic—both services that would require the involvement of GPs in the clinic. GP and trans health specialist Dr Pauline Cundill was one of the first doctors to come on board, and along with Jeremy and PRONTO!'s new clinic manager Peter Locke, came to the idea of running a GP service specifically for the trans and gender diverse community. While the service would share space with PRONTO!, operating out of the same building, it would have its own identity—the goal would eventually be to establish not only a health centre, but a community hub for trans and gender diverse people.

ENGAGING COMMUNITY

Early on VAC recognised the need to engage the community in the development of this new service, and established a Trans and Gender Diverse Advisory Group. Made up of trans and



MEMBERS OF THE TRANS & GENDER DIVERSE ADVISORY GROUP

gender diverse community leaders, the advisory group worked to develop the look and feel of the new service, and gave it a name: Equinox.

More importantly, the group worked hard to get the word out about the service in trans and gender diverse communities. Given the common experiences of misunderstanding and mistreatment by medical and health services within these communities, VAC's advisory group played a vital role in building relationships of trust, serving as "ambassadors" for Equinox. Equinox would be a safe space. This approach extended to all aspects of the service—from language and culture, to proactive hiring practices that meant trans and gender diverse people were engaged not just as clients, but as staff.

THE FUTURE OF EQUINOX

The Trans and Gender Diverse Advisory Group continues to be involved in shaping the future of Equinox, both as a service and as a physical space. When

Equinox officially launched on 17 May, International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia, the building was packed full of people who had turned out to celebrate the beginning of Australia's first ever community-led trans and gender diverse health service. Speakers at the launch reiterated how important it is that trans and gender diverse people are able to access basic health services without fear of being mistreated or misunderstood. Many spoke about their experiences of transphobia.

Equinox could not have come so far in such a short space of time without the support of the community, the hard work of many within VAC and the direction of the Trans and Gender Diverse Advisory Group. People regularly make requests to use the space to host events—it is transforming into a hub of activity, a place to connect with community. Equinox has already become more than a health service, it is a genuine community centre, and a safe space for some of the people who need it the most.



UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

DESI, VOLUNTEER

"I volunteer with the outreach program, talking to people in gay venues about sexual health. I love it because it's so immediate—I'm raising awareness by having a conversation with people from our community."



BUNJIL'S RAINBOW BY PETER WAPLES-CROWE
COMMISSIONED FOR VAC'S RECONCILIATION
ACTION PLAN 2015 - 2016

THE MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH AND AFFECTED BY HIV (MIPA)

VAC is a community-led organisation that is driven by the engagement of our communities. VAC recognises that the meaningful involvement of people living with HIV is vital to an effective HIV response. As the HIV sector has grown globally, best practice standards have been developed to ensure that people living with and affected by HIV remain at the core of the design, implementation, monitoring and review of prevention, treatment and support programs. These formal standards are known as the MIPA Principle – Meaningful Involvement of People Living with and Affected by HIV (formerly GIPA – Greater involvement of People Living with HIV).

In 2014, the VAC Board began the process that has seen a team of dedicated community members and staff undertake a detailed and comprehensive review of all VAC's work against the MIPA Principles. Through this process staff and community members examined

all areas of our organisation to answer the questions: Are PLHIV meaningfully involved in each part of this work? And, how can we increase the role of PLHIV in this work?

We are proud that VAC exceeds the MIPA Standards and we are delighted to have completed the MIPA Report and Action Plan 2016-18, outlining VAC's formal review process and identifying our areas for further improvement.

Other key initiatives that VAC has undertaken this year include our ongoing work as a part of the Positive Leadership Development Institute and an increase in Peer Support roles across programs including the Positive Living Centre, Community Support and the Alcohol and Other Drugs Service.

We would like to thank all those community representatives who, voluntarily, have worked so hard on the MIPA Review and the Action Plan and across the organisation in so many ways over the past year.

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

In December 2015 during Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HIV Awareness Week, VAC launched our first Reconciliation Action Plan. This was the culmination of the work of VAC's Reconciliation Committee working under the guidance of Reconciliation Australia.

Reconciliation Action with organisations is designed as a proactive step to facilitate reconciliation by building relationships, respect and trust between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to enable all Australians to contribute to the reconciliation of the nation.

Through our Reconciliation Action Committee, VAC has worked with staff and members of our Aboriginal community to undertake many activities including:

- | Staff cultural awareness training
- | A consistent Aboriginal Acknowledgement process
- | Relationship building with Aboriginal controlled organisations

| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peer Education & Support Project in collaboration with The Victorian Aboriginal Health Service

| Aboriginal key note speaker at the Lesbian, Bisexual & Queer Women's Health Conference during Reconciliation Action Week

| Hosting NAIDOC Week event at The Positive Living Centre

| VAC presence at the NAIDOC March

| Staying Negative campaign also featured the stories of Aboriginal men during NAIDOC week

| VAC staff members attended the Anwernekenhe HIV conference in Alice Springs and VAC funded a scholarship for an Aboriginal Elder to attend.

After successfully achieving against our current Reconciliation Action Plan we hope to further build our Reconciliation work in the coming year. A big thank you to all members of the Reconciliation Action Committee and an acknowledgement of the hard work and guidance of our Aboriginal members.



UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

RIAN, VOLUNTEER

"VAC gives people an opportunity to experience a part of themselves they might not have even been aware of."

AWARDS



SPECIAL SERVICE AWARD

John Manwaring, Jarrod Lester & Craig Burnett

These three men have shown extraordinary courage in not just being open about their HIV status, but by being the public face of VAC and Living Positive Victoria's early treatment campaign, Treat HIV Now. Pictures of John, Jarrod and Craig have adorned tram, train and bus stops all over Melbourne—a national first. We celebrate their groundbreaking participation.



SPECIAL SERVICE AWARD

Gareth D'Souza

Gareth is primarily seen as part of the VACreach sex-on-premises venues (SOPV) team. Earlier this year when Gareth was mentoring a new VACreach SOPV volunteer he was of great assistance to a venue patron who had slipped accidentally. Gareth went out of his way to assist this patron, who then contacted VAC congratulating us on having such a caring individual among our volunteers.



PRESIDENT'S AWARD

PrEP Access Now

PrEP Access Now (PAN) have assisted thousands of men nationally to access affordable PrEP by establishing an access scheme through Green Cross Pharmacy in Swaziland, which also supports those unable to afford PrEP at all. They have provided policy support to both VAC and the Victorian State Government, and campaigned to get the PrEP-X study off the ground.



LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Vikki Sinnott

Vikki began volunteering with VAC in the early days, amidst the fear, panic and anxiety of AIDS. Just some of a long list of contributions to VAC: Vikki was part of many care teams, an active Board member, and chaired the first Ethics Committee. As a psychologist, Vikki volunteered with the Counselling Service for a number of years, establishing the service's reputation as a gender-sensitive service.



SPECIAL SERVICE AWARD

PASH.tm

The Peer Advocacy network for the Sexual Health of Trans Masculinities is engaged in ongoing advocacy, community engagement and policy work to improve and increase HIV health promotion and services to transgender men who have sex with cisgender men. The work is groundbreaking and addresses an unmet need to educate and support transgender men to become empowered around their sexual health.



GREIG FRIDAY YOUNG LEADER AWARD

Rian Branthwaite

Rian joined the Peer Education Program in 2015, and continues to demonstrate his eagerness to meaningfully contribute to the LGBTI community. Rian's commitment is also reflected in his contribution to other VAC programs. Rian's warmth and sense of humour make him an excellent peer facilitator and a positive role model for other young people in the community.



LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Bev Greet

Bev is a long-standing member of VAC and was integral to the establishment of Positive Women Victoria. Bev has also been a leader in the Aboriginal community's response to HIV in both Victoria and nationally. Bev launched VAC's Reconciliation Action Plan and is a member of both VAC's Aboriginal Community Advisory Group and MIPA Committee.



LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Bruce Parnell

Bruce is a former Education Program Manager at VAC, and the creator of many VAC education campaigns in the '80s and '90s. Bruce now works at the Burnet Institute. Bruce is now a Principal Fellow of Burnet Institute's Centre for International Health working on preventing HIV in developing countries.



SPECIAL SERVICE AWARD

Myka Williams

Myka is a volunteer known to most VAC staff, volunteers and clients because of his dedication and his many volunteer roles. Myka's strong leadership and organisational skills created the impetus for us to write team leader position descriptions for volunteers. Myka is a passionate volunteer who gives freely for the good of our community and especially for those living with or affected by HIV.



MEDIA AWARD

Mark Kearney

Mark started at the Bendigo Advertiser seven months ago, around the same time VAC launched the new VACountry program. Mark has engaged proactively with VACountry staff and volunteers, and his positive and meticulous coverage of HIV and LGBTI issues in local press has increased the awareness and visibility of the LGBTI community, often directing people to support services.



LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Bill O'Loughlin

Bill is a long-term HIV survivor, a former staff member and volunteer worker at VAC and contributor to major UNAIDS projects over the past 30 years. Bill has worked across all HIV affected populations and has supported VAC in further developing our alcohol and drug programs.



REVENUE BREAKDOWN

- Grant income 77%
- Operating income 19%
- Investment income 4%



Revenue breakdown

Grant income	6,997,426
Client fees	955,869
Donations, fundraising and bequest income	730,556
Membership fees	5,070
Other revenue	21,454
Interest income	416,670
Total revenue	9,127,045

Revenue summary

Grant income	6,997,426
Other income	1,712,949
Investment income	416,670
Total	9,127,045

EXPENSES BREAKDOWN

- Operating expenses 11%
- Employee costs 61%
- Campaign expenses 18%
- Client support expenses 9%
- Professional fees 1%
- Other expenses 0.3%



Expense breakdown - Detailed

Operating expenses	994,288
Employee costs	5,429,968
Campaign expenses	1,649,572
Client Support expenses	790,116
Professional fees	89,410
Other expenses	27,143
Total	8,980,497

VICTORIAN AIDS COUNCIL INC. / GAY MEN'S HEALTH CENTRE INC. (COMBINED)

Summary Statement of Comprehensive Income for the Year Ended 30 June 2016

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
Revenue	9,127,045	7,817,618
Less: expenses		
Operating expenses	(994,288)	(787,588)
Employee costs	(5,429,968)	(4,916,468)
Campaign expenses	(1,649,572)	(1,037,794)
Client support expenses	(790,116)	(642,025)
Professional fees	(89,410)	(200,901)
Other expenses	(27,143)	(171,516)
	(8,980,497)	(7,756,292)
Surplus for the year	146,548	61,326

Summary Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2016

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	18,441,713	3,299,717
Receivables	12,327	13,138
Other assets	179,336	102,012
	18,633,376	3,414,867
Assets and liabilities classified as held for sale	-	14,600,000
Total current assets	18,633,376	18,014,867
Noncurrent assets		
Property, plant and equipment	162,740	161,166
Total noncurrent assets	162,740	161,166
Total assets	18,796,116	18,176,033
Current liabilities		
Payables	351,703	215,375
Provisions	618,643	593,013
Other liabilities	650,564	323,501
Total current liabilities	1,620,910	1,131,889
Noncurrent liabilities		
Provisions	26,940	42,426
Total noncurrent liabilities	26,940	42,426
Total liabilities	1,647,850	1,174,315
Net assets	17,148,266	17,001,718
Members funds		
Reserves	-	13,414,556
Accumulated surplus	17,148,266	3,587,162
Total members funds	17,148,266	17,001,718

The above summary financial information has been extracted from the audited financial statements.

No audit opinion has been issued in relation to the summary financial statements. These should be read in conjunction with the audited financial statements that are available to the members on our website www.vac.org.au/financials

Summary Statement of Changes in Members Funds for the Year Ended 30 June 2016

	Reserves	Accumulated surplus	Total equity
	\$	\$	\$
Balance as at 1 July 2014	6,824,556	3,525,836	10,350,392
Surplus for the year	-	61,326	61,326
Revaluation increment of 6 8 Claremont Street	6,590,000	-	6,590,000
Total comprehensive income for the year	6,590,000	61,326	6,651,326
Balance as at 30 June 2015	13,414,556	3,587,162	17,001,718
Balance as at 1 July 2015	13,414,556	3,587,162	17,001,718
Surplus for the year	-	146,548	146,548
Total comprehensive income for the year	-	146,548	146,548
Transfers	-	13,414,556	13,414,556
Transfer from asset revaluation service - Balance as at 30 June 2015	(13,414,556)	-	(13,414,556)
Balance as at 30 June 2016	-	17,148,266	17,148,266

Summary Statement of Cash Flows for the Year Ended 30 June 2016

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
Cash flow from operating activities		
Grants received	8,082,786	6,771,892
Other operating receipts	1,637,339	1,638,574
Interest received	416,670	117,826
Payments to suppliers and employees	(9,535,063)	(8,342,649)
Net cash provided by operating activities	601,732	185,643
Cash flow from investing activities		
Proceeds from sale of property, plant and equipment	14,602,148	-
Payment for plant and equipment	(61,884)	(39,536)
Net cash used in investing activities	14,540,264	(39,536)
Reconciliation of cash		
Cash at beginning of the financial year	3,299,717	3,153,610
Net increase in cash held	15,141,996	146,107
Cash at end of financial year	18,441,713	3,299,717

The above summary financial information has been extracted from the audited financial statements.

No audit opinion has been issued in relation to the summary financial statements. These should be read in conjunction with the audited financial statements that are available to the members on our website www.vac.org.au/financials

ACON
AFAO
AIDS ACTION COUNCIL ACT
AIDS MEMORIAL QUILT
ALFRED HEALTH
ALGA
ROWENA ALLEN
AIDS TRUST OF AUSTRALIA
ANZ PRIDE NETWORK
AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT
AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH CENTRE IN
SEX, HEALTH & SOCIETY
AUSTRALIAN SERVICES UNION
TOM BALLARD
BANK OF MELBOURNE
BARBA
DEAN BECK
DORIS BEECHER
BENDIGO & DISTRICT ABORIGINAL
CO-OPERATIVE
BENDIGO COMMUNITY HEALTH
SERVICES
BENT TV
BETTER HEARING AUSTRALIA
BEYONDBLUE
STEVE BLUNT
TIERNAN BRADY
DR STEPHEN BRIGHT
ANNA BROWN
BURNET INSTITUTE
GREG CARTER
CATHOLIC AIDS MINISTRY
CENTRE FOR ETHNICITY IN HEALTH
CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE IN
RURAL SEXUAL HEALTH
CENTRE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH IN
HEALTH UNSW
CHILLOUT
CHRONIC ILLNESS ALLIANCE
CINEMA NOVA
CITY OF GREATER BENDIGO
CITY OF STONNINGTON
CITY OF YARRA
CLUB 80
NIC DIMOPOULOS
ZIGGY DISCOBALLS
DRUMMOND STREET SERVICES
EAGLE LEATHER
EGONS BAKERY
DR JACO ERASMUS
A/PROF NADINE EZARD
FARMERS ARMS DAYLESFORD
FEAST FESTIVAL
BRUCE FITZGERALD
KAREN FROM FINANCE
LUKE GALLAGHER
GAMMA NSW
GAY AND LESBIAN HEALTH VICTORIA
GH HOTEL
AUNTIE BEV GREET
CHARLOTTE GRIEG
GSK
HARES & HYENAS
HARM REDUCTION VICTORIA
PROF MARGARET HELLARD
HEPATITIS VICTORIA
HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS
HOCKING STUART REAL ESTATE
DAYLESFORD
NIC HOLAS
HOUSING CHOICES AUSTRALIA
PROF JENNY HOY
INNER SOUTH COMMUNITY HEALTH
SOPHIE ISMAIL
JON JACKSON
BARRY JANE
JOY 94.9
RICHARD KEANE
MIKE KENNEDY
COLIN KRYCER
LAIRD HOTEL
PROF SHARON LEWIN
LIQUORICE
LIVING POSITIVE VICTORIA
JOHN LOTTON

MAC AIDS FUND
MANNHAUS
A/PROF RUTH MCNAIR
MCV
MELBOURNE GAY AND LESBIAN
CHORUS
MELBOURNE POLYTECHNIC
DAVID MENADUE
MIDSUMMA
MINUS 18
MONASH HEALTH
LOZ MONTGOMERY
MQFF
MSMGF
NAB
NAPWHA
NATIONAL CENTRE FOR FARMER
HEALTH
NATIONAL LGBTI HEALTH ALLIANCE
NORTHSIDE CLINIC
NORTON ROSE FULBRIGHT
NTAHC
BILL O'LOUGHLIN
MARK ORR
GLENN PANNAM
PAUL KIDD
PITCHER PARTNERS

POSITIVE WOMEN VICTORIA
PRAHRAN MARKET CLINIC
PREP ACCESS NOW
PREP'D FOR CHANGE
PROLEGIS LAWYERS
QUAC
QUEST ON CHAPEL
ADAM RICHARD
ROYAL DISTRICT NURSING SERVICE
SALVATION ARMY CRISIS SERVICES
DENISE SCOTT
SHINE SA
SIRCUIT
CATH SMITH
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT
STEVEN SPENCER
ALDO SPINA
ST MATHEW'S ALBURY
ST VINCENT'S HOSPITAL
STAR OBSERVER
SUBWAY SAUNA
SURGE WATER POLO CLUB
SWAN INSURANCE
SWITCHBOARD VICTORIA
TASCAHRD
THE ARGONAUTS ROWING CLUB
THE MELBOURNE CHARGERS

GARRY THOMSON
TILDE FILM FESTIVAL
MICHAEL TIPPETT
TRACY MAIR PUBLICITY
TRANS GENDER VICTORIA
UNITING CARE REGEN
VAADA
VACCHO
VIC BEARS
VICLEATHER
VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL HEALTH
SERVICE
VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT
VICTORIAN INFECTIOUS DISEASES
REFERENCE LABORATORY
ViiV HEALTHCARE
WA AIDS COUNCIL
DAVE WALTON
WET ON WELLINGTON
BETH WILSON
TIM WILSON MP
ASSOC PROF EDWINA WRIGHT
Y GENDER
YEAH
YSAS
ZOE BELLE GENDER COLLECTIVE
BAMBI

THANK YOU!



IZAK, VOLUNTEER
"VAC has such a significant legacy. I'm here studying from the Netherlands and I'm learning a lot. I recently volunteered at an event for trans men, and it was good to have that opportunity to learn about the different needs of people in our community."



UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

NIK, VOLUNTEER

"I've met such amazing people here. I wanted to volunteer somewhere where everyone would be accepting of LGBTI people, and I've found that at VAC."