

# We,

WORKING TOGETHER



BYRON & KEVIN, VOLUNTEERS

\* We volunteer in the Health Promotion, Policy and Communications program. It is amazing to see how many changes there have been in the area of prevention – especially over the last couple of years. It's fantastic to be a part of the organisation during this time of incredibly exciting change.



KELLY & RICHARD, VOLUNTEERS

\*We have a vision at VAC;  
 A future without HIV.  
 A world where all sexually  
 and gender diverse people  
 live with dignity and equal  
 rights and participate fully  
 in our society.



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# We, WORKING TOGETHER



GREG, PRESIDENT & DEB, BOARD MEMBER

\* We work together with an amazingly talented and diverse group of people on the Board of VAC. We work to make a difference and we're shaping the organisation for the future making it stronger, more unified and responsive to the needs of our community – it's also great to draw on the considerable skills of our fellow board members.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

We were very pleased to play a central role when the International AIDS Conference took over Melbourne this year. There is much documented in this Annual Report on this amazing event and VAC's involvement in the conference, suffice to say we were all very proud of VAC our staff, members and volunteers! During 2011 and 2012, the VAC Board engaged in an extensive community consultation process which provided us with some excellent feedback on how we were going as an organisation. The outcome of this process helped the Board, along with the staff of VAC, to formulate the *2012-2017 Strategic Plan*.

This plan has shaped what the organisation has done in the time since and will continue to do so for some time to come. We are nearing the mid-point in our *2012-2017 Strategic Plan*. There have been some significant achievements; but at the same time, a need for more work, and in some cases, re-definition of what we need to achieve in this rapidly changing space. The Board, along with the organisation's senior management, will review the *Strategic Plan* and re-commit to it in February 2015. What follows is a short mid-point review.

### 1. WORK TO DECREASE RATES AND IMPACT OF HIV

We have seen an increase in HIV notifications, partially due to the increase in testing through PRONTO! and our world-recognised health promotion campaigns which promote testing, an understanding of risk and the importance of staying safe.

VAC continues to support PLHIV through the Counselling Service, the Positive Living Centre, our support programs, in-home support and the David Williams Fund.

### 2. PROVIDE TRUSTED LEADERSHIP

We are working in close partnership with other organisations to ensure VAC remains a trusted and reliable voice in the sector. The engagement of a policy officer places us in an strong position and has enhanced our advocacy work.

This year we signed a memorandum of understanding with Living Positive Victoria and we will continue to forge partnerships with other organisations in our sector.

### 3. LEAD THROUGH EXCELLENT AND INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

We have seen an influx of new technologies which are at our disposal in the fight against HIV. VAC has led the community in understanding rapid testing, PrEP, PEP, treatment as prevention and encouraging our target groups to make informed choices for themselves.

### 4. BE A UNIFIED AND STRENGTHENED ORGANISATION

Our legal advice on the value of maintaining the two associations (both VAC and GMHC) strongly recommended keeping the status quo, however it also saw no impediment in promoting VAC over

GMHC in our branding and communications. The launch in June of our new brand has been very successful, particularly throughout the International AIDS Conference.

### 5. ENSURE FINANCIAL STABILITY

We continue to work with our auditors to ensure our financial sustainability and independence. The latter presents many challenges, but the Board is working through some options in this area. VAC is in a strong financial position and the Board continues to monitor the finances closely, whilst ensuring our capital is used for the promotion of our objectives.



ABOVE AND RIGHT, TWO CREATIVE EXECUTIONS FROM VAC'S REBRANDING CAMPAIGN, YOU&ME, IMPLEMENTED DURING AIDS 2014.



### 6. ENSURE PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE

We continue to ensure we maintain a well-trained and resourced staff and volunteer base, along with a relevant and responsible Board. The organisation is looking closely at accreditation which will enable us to ensure our services meet current community standards. We are proud of what we have achieved and we look forward to continuing to implement our strategy with our members, volunteers, staff and supporters.

It has been an honour to be President of VAC this year. I have enjoyed working closely with a very talented and hard-working Board, whom I

would like to thank for their support and encouragement; Simon Ruth, our CEO; and the staff of VAC, who continue to deliver a broad range of services to our community - always engaging, always looking for new and innovative ways to support our clients and always ensuring our messages get to those people we most strongly want to target as we see the epidemic continue to change rapidly. Well done to all on the achievements of this year.

Greg Carter, President

# We,

WORKING TO



DAVID, VICE PRESIDENT & JOHN, BOARD MEMBER

\* We are proud to not only represent the interests of our community but to be an integral part of the organisation, working together at a time when the end of HIV is in sight. It's important that we work to shift stigma and discrimination directed at HIV positive people – to change the perception of what HIV means now – that people with the virus live long, happy and full lives.

## BOARD'S REPORT

We saw an exciting time of change and renewal on the VAC Board at the end of 2013 and the start of 2014. In October we were lucky to have four brand new members Mo El-Leissy, Glen Pannam, Chris McDermott and Deborah Sykes join the Board of Directors. Early in 2014 Michael Williams resigned as President of the organisation after being in the position for three years.

We thank Michael Williams for his hard work, leadership and dedication to VAC as well as outgoing Board members Kirsty Machon, Chrissie Feagins and Mitchell Chipman for their service.

### AIDS 2014

For one week in July the eyes of the world were on Melbourne, and Melbourne's eyes were on VAC. VAC was heavily involved in all aspects of the AIDS 2014 conference from the Mobilisation

March to welcoming arrivals to our wonderful city at the airport. The Board wants to extend its heartfelt thanks to the entire VAC staff. Their dedication, hard work, diligence and patience during the conference was absolutely second to none. We can never thank you enough, and we won't tire of saying it. You all were absolutely marvellous.

The Board also wants to thank every single VAC volunteer that helped us make AIDS 2014 such a memorable event, not just for us here in Melbourne, but for all the national and international visitors we hosted during the conference.

### FINANCE, RISK AND AUDIT COMMITTEE (FRAC)

The FRAC has continued to meet monthly. Pitcher Partners was engaged in 2013 as our new auditors and have successfully undertaken their second financial audit of the organisation.



THE AIDS 2014 CONFERENCE WAS CHARACTERISED BY A STRONG, CONSISTENT AND JOYFUL COMMITMENT FROM VAC STAFF, BOARD AND VOLUNTEERS.

Pitcher Partners has also been helping us develop our Finance Strategy so that VAC can have a robust plan with a solid direction for long term financial planning, investment and income diversity to better achieve our goals and aims in the future.

### GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Governance Committee has bedded down work to streamline Board induction and document Board policies. The policies are available for all members to view on our website. The Governance Committee has also been diligent in monitoring any risks that may impact our ability to do our work.

### RESEARCH, ETHICS AND PROMOTION COMMITTEE

The Research, Ethics and Promotion Committee continues to monitor and, where appropriate, endorse research where VAC

has been asked to support the research undertaking in some way.

### MEMBERSHIP SUB-COMMITTEE

The Membership Sub-Committee has been actively reviewing how we can improve membership of VAC and what benefits we can offer current and potential members to entice them to join and remain committed to our mission, vision and values.


The Board wishes to thank CEO, Simon Ruth as well as the talented senior management team for their work during the last year, particularly in making sure that VAC was front and centre during AIDS 2014.

# We,

WORKING TOGETHER



BRENT, EO, LIVING POSITIVE VICTORIA & SIMON, CEO, VAC

 We work closely together to strengthen and extend the work of VAC and Living Positive Victoria to reduce the stigma and discrimination experienced by PLHIV and to provide services, prevention, care and support for everyone with or affected by HIV in the community.



VAC'S WORKING TOGETHER, STRONGER TOGETHER MOBILISATION MARCH DURING AIDS 2014 AND SOME OF THE POSTERS WE PRODUCED FOR THE EVENT.

## CEO'S REPORT

We have had a big year at VAC. The year started off with a restructure and a new management team put in place to take VAC/GMHC into its next phase. I came on board as Director of Services having met CEO Matt Dixon and having been impressed with his vision for the organisation.

### Leadership change

It seems like I was just settling in when Matt decided it was time to look for new challenges and headed to Victoria Police to take up leading VicPol's relationship with GLBTI communities. I need to thank Matt for welcoming me into the organisation and thank the Board for giving me the opportunity to lead VAC into its next stage. I'd also like to recognise the staff, senior management team and volunteers for their great work and support during the year. Our organisational responsibilities are huge and we simply could not function without the dedication and passion of our staff and volunteers, working together.

### Ending HIV

When I arrived the *Ending HIV* campaign was in full swing and our motto of *Test More – Treat Early – Stay Safe* was everywhere to be seen across Melbourne. 'Treatment as Prevention' was the buzz phrase on everyone's lips and it felt like a biomedical led revolution was approaching. The PRONTO! service got underway in August 2013 with Australia's first peer based testing service.

### VAC Re-visioned

2014 began with a new look. After twenty years we moved away from our much loved, but ageing, logo to our new image and went from Victorian AIDS Council/Gay Men's Health Centre to simply VAC. The new image has been met with almost universal praise.

### Turning points

But throughout rebrands and marketing, the epidemic continues.

Broadly speaking, there have been four turning points during the course of the epidemic with regard to prevention. The first was when the 'gay related' cancer known as GRID, was found to be caused by a virus called the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). The second was when gay men around the world decided, that in an effort to protect themselves from HIV, they would start to use condoms and water-based lube to prevent HIV infection. The third was in 1996 when, as a result of research findings presented at the XI International AIDS Conference in Vancouver, combination therapy (including the use of protease inhibitors) turned HIV into a chronic manageable infection rather than an infection that was inevitably fatal. The latest turning point occurred this year when the findings of the iPREX OLE study found that if individuals took four or more doses of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) each week, they would have protection against HIV acquisition. Furthermore, the

PARTNERS study, determined that if an HIV positive person had a consistent undetectable viral load, they would not be able to transmit HIV. These findings have the capacity to fundamentally change the way we view HIV infection and prevention into the future. It is possible that people will be able, for the first time in the history of the epidemic, to have safe condom-less sex under the protective cover of antiretroviral drugs.

### Bringing down the barriers

The barriers between PLHIV and those without it are collapsing. Although AIDS is still touching many within our community, and VAC will continue to advocate to ensure no one is left behind, the future looks bright. With PrEP on the foreseeable horizon, ending HIV is within our grasp and the stigma facing PLHIV and gay men is diminishing. It is an exciting time to be working for VAC.

Simon Ruth, CEO

# We\* didit!

AND SO MUCH MORE!

WE MADE CONTACT WITH OVER



# 200

GUYS LOOKING FOR INFORMATION ABOUT SEXUAL HEALTH, FROM BASIC SAFE SEX TO RISK REDUCTION STRATEGIES THROUGH THE OUTREACH PROJECT.

WE CONDUCTED OVER

# 3,000



WE SERVED OVER

# 9,000

MEAL AND SNACK SERVICES TO CLIENTS, FRIENDS AND VISITORS AT THE POSITIVE LIVING CENTRE.

COUNSELLING SESSIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS.

WE REACHED OVER

# 350



COMMUNITY MEMBERS, SECTOR PARTICIPANTS AND OTHERS THROUGH OUR FORUM SERIES.

WE DISTRIBUTED OVER

# 45,000



CONDOM AND LUBE SAFE PACKS TO VENUES, COMMUNITY EVENTS, PARTIES AND GAY MEN EVERYWHERE - EAGER TO PARTICIPATE IN GREAT, SAFE SEX!

WE PROVIDED OVER

# 1,200



CLIENTS WITH SAFE INJECTING EQUIPMENT.

WE GAVE AWAY OVER

# 180,000

RESOURCES TO PEOPLE WHO ATTENDED MAJOR COMMUNITY EVENTS IN 2013 - 2014 INCLUDING MIDSUMMA, CHILL-OUT, MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL QUEER FILM FESTIVAL AND PRIDE MARCH.

WE REACHED OVER

# 300,000

PEOPLE THROUGH OUR WEEKLY RADIO SHOW, WELL,WELL,WELL ON JOY 94.9!



**PRONTO!**

WE PERFORMED OVER

# 1,000

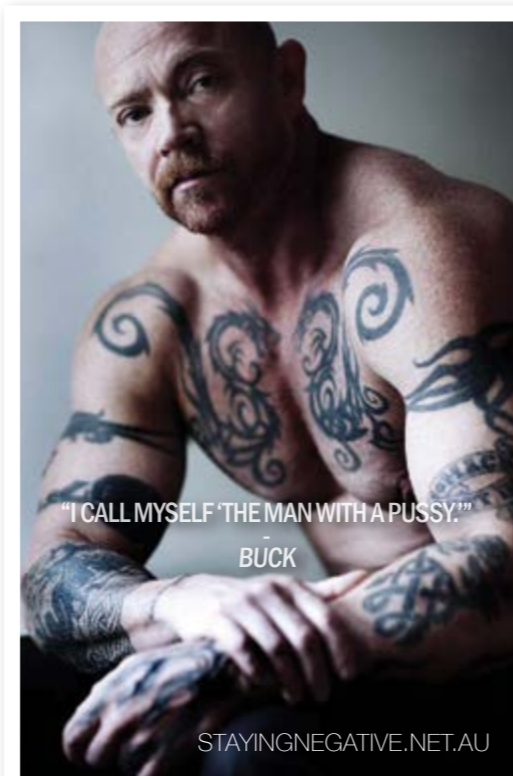
RAPID HIV TESTS THROUGH OUR PRONTO! SERVICE IN FITZROY.



TWO OF THE POSTERS FROM THE TODAY/TONIGHT CAMPAIGN.

**1 Will You Get HIV Today? Will You Get HIV Tonight?**

We developed the *Today/Tonight* messaging as a new condom reinforcement campaign to build upon the *Wherever Sex Happens* (2010-2012) campaign. It poses the question of HIV transmission risk to gay, bisexual and other MSM in Victoria in response to rising numbers in unprotected anal intercourse with casual partners, which remains the leading cause of HIV transmission in Victoria. This campaign suggests that sexual activity could happen anywhere, anytime of the day and that people need to be prepared for the possibility that, whilst they might be having great sex, they need to be mindful about safe sex, particularly with casual partners. The campaign is reinforced with the message: *Wherever Sex Happens, Use Protection*.



BUCK ANGEL, STAYING NEGATIVE CAMPAIGN VOLUNTEER.

**2 Staying Negative**

We have seen *Staying Negative's* website go through some exciting changes this year, including a massive content update with the latest sexual health information on top of the site's fresh, new look and feel. This unique campaign aims to emotionally engage gay, bisexual, trans men and other MSM through shared personal experiences, and it has proven to be incredibly popular. With the inclusion of celebrity personalities from around the world such as porn stars Josh West and Buck Angel as well as the stars from the show *Where the Bears Are*, the campaign has been a continued success and has gained international recognition.



**3 PrEP: a new way to prevent HIV**

We saw the emergence of new HIV prevention technologies in 2014, particularly, HIV Pre Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP). If taken daily PrEP, can be up to 100% effective at preventing HIV. In June 2014, the VicPrEP demonstration commenced with VAC as a community partner in the study. To support the recruitment of participants for the VicPrEP demonstration, VAC hosted a community forum on 1 May 2014. The forum aimed to provide the community with knowledge about PrEP. If PrEP is approved in Australia, it will provide people who are, for whatever reason, unable to use condoms consistently with better access to HIV prevention strategies.



VAC PRESIDENT, GREG CARTER WITH UN AIDS PRESIDENT, MICHEL SIDIBÉ AND VAC EVENTS COORDINATOR, ILAN WERBELOFF.

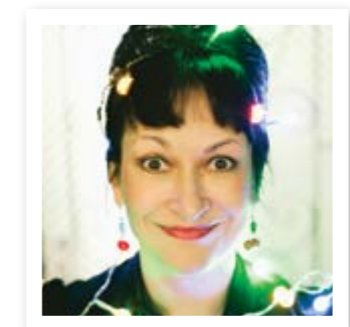
**4 World AIDS Day**

We capitalised on this year's World AIDS Day activities due to its focus on the International AIDS Conference in July. Our newest initiative involved partnering with over 20 cafés and asking them to use our disposable red ribbon coffee cups for World AIDS Day. Through this partnership, over 50,000 coffees were distributed with a red ribbon on them. We also partnered with YEAH and Living Positive Victoria at Federation Square where Michel Sidibé (President of UNAIDS) spoke of the need to remain energised in the fight against HIV/AIDS around the world.



JASON & SAM, VOLUNTEERS

**\***We work in the Peer Education Program. It's amazing to see the diversity of guys that come to the groups and to see how they grow as they get to know and trust each other. Guys share their stories about growing up, coming out and relationships, by the end there is a real bond that's formed a great social network that lasts.



JANET A McLEOD, COMPERE OF SHORT & GIRLY TRIVIA.

**5 Short & Girly Trivia**

We ran *Short & Girly Trivia* again this year at North Melbourne Town Hall. This was the second time the event has run and will continue to run biannually. Raising nearly \$5,000, this event was a great success and has helped us build and grow the *Short & Girly* brand.



VOLUNTEERS POSING FOR THE DOWNANDDIRTY PHOTO SHOOT.

## 6 DownAnDirty

We extended the reach of the Sexually Adventurous Men (SAM) Project's *DownAnDirty* campaign by further community involvement. In 2014, the SAM Project recruited Melbourne photographer, and active bear community member, Steve Scalone (2012 *Laird Men-on-Men Art Competition Winner*) along with Nik Dimopoulos (creator of Melbourne/Sydney's *Trough* and *John* dance parties) to create new imagery for a *DownAnDirty* campaign reboot. The result is 32 stunningly provocative images featuring talented members from Melbourne's SAM community. These images have been compiled in a 2015 calendar that is strategically distributed at adult retailers as well as local venues, clinics with MSM clients and *Hares & Hyenas* bookshop.



## 7 HIV and the law: Repeal Section 19A

We, along with Living Positive Victoria, have been lobbying the Government, Opposition and stakeholders to repeal *Section 19A of the Crimes Act, 1958 (Vic)*. This law criminalises the intentional transmission of HIV.

Our central concern is that HIV is a public health issue and not a criminal justice issue. HIV laws frame PLHIV as dangerous and as people who put the community at risk of harm.

On 20 July 2014, the Minister for Health announced that the Government would amend the law. Subsequently, the State Opposition committed to repealing the law within 12 months, if elected at the next election.



## 8 VAC Employment Agreement

We were guided by the objectives and the principles of honesty, fairness and respect in the *VAC Strategic Plan*, and sought to apply a collaborative partnership approach to reinvigorate and resume the negotiation of the *VAC/GMHC Employment Agreement* with its staff members and their union representatives.

Within four months, the wrangling of the past was forgotten. A more innovative response was developed to accommodate VAC operational requirements and budget constraints. The underlying movement is to the *Modern Award* and the Fair Work Commission's *Equal Remuneration Order* which seeks to progressively correct, over a ten year period, systemic underpayment of salaries in the community health sector. With such complexities, it is not surprising that VAC is one of only a few community sector agencies that has successfully managed to conclude such negotiations and lodge an agreement with the Fair Work Commission.



## 9 BAMBI Vs GODZILLA

We participated at the *National Communities in Control Conference* in May, in a debate entitled, *Should We Merge: Godzilla vs Bambi*. The topic arose from the *Shergold Report; A Roadmap for Community and Human Services Reform* which recommends a cross-sectoral approach to service delivery. The issue was debated before nearly 1000 participants attending the conference and although *Bambi* won, and organisations voted not to merge for the sake of the debate, this important topic will continue to be considered by all not-for-profit organisations for the foreseeable future.



DETAIL FROM THE PRONTO! SITE MURAL.



DEX & DERECK, VOLUNTEERS

\* We met through Peer Education training. After thirty years, men are still coming to Peer Education courses to learn, meet and make friends. There is a huge cross-section of people who come from 19 year olds with little experience in the gay community to 65 year old married men who are struggling to come out. Everyone's story is different.

## 10 PRONTO!

We performed almost 1500 rapid HIV tests by June 2014 at PRONTO! after less than a year of operation. In June 2014 PRONTO! also commenced rapid syphilis testing. PRONTO! uses a unique and innovative non-medical peer-based testing model in a community friendly space. Early evaluation data compiled by the Burnet Institute after 6 months of operation indicates:

- a high level of community satisfaction with all aspects of the peer-led service model;
- PRONTO! clients tend to be younger than clients attending other HIV testing clinics;
- many have never tested before; and
- most report risk that would recommend a 3-monthly testing regime.





DAVID WILLIAMS

## 12 David Williams Fund

We met Bob when he came into our service feeling suicidal, homeless and in-and-out of psychiatric wards. We linked him into a housing service where he found housing. Bob could not function well, so we set up payment plans for his bills, rent, etc. We negotiated Bob's debts, leaving him debt free and able to focus on the good things in life and not being in constant need of food vouchers and material aid.

He came in after it all and cried. He said, "To think only a year ago, I wanted to end it all. I had nothing, no support, home, money, and now, I have a reason to live. I have hope. I have support to help me when I'm down, and I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Your kindness has changed my world."



## 14 Alcohol and Drug Services

We established Victoria's first specialist treatment service for LGBTI community members who experience problems with alcohol or other drug use following project funding in 2012-13. This includes the implementation of *Re-wired*, a specialist suite of therapeutic groups, brief intervention and counselling for men who have sex with men (MSM) addressing methamphetamine use. *Re-wired*, like all VAC AoD services is free and helps clients learn skills and strategies to change methamphetamine use and better manage mental health.

VAC has also designed specialist program, *Over The Limit* for MSM to address alcohol use and *Drink Limits* targeting lesbian and bisexual women who want to address alcohol use.

Late in 2013-14 VAC was successful in obtaining Victorian government funding to further develop LGBTI specific AoD services. VAC's innovative new alcohol and other drug treatment program is to commence in September 2014 offering counselling and care coordination to LGBTI community members with significant alcohol and drug use issues.

## 15 Support Merger

We merged two support programs, Community Support and In-Home Support, this year. Community Support provides volunteer services including social and practical support as well as transport to medical appointments. In-Home Support provides case management of complex clients and paid attendant care for services including cooking and cleaning.

The merged program enables all Support services to be accessed with a single referral, which has reduced confusion for agencies in the sector. The end result is a much more flexible and targeted program, allocating support services where they are most needed.



PHILLIP ADAMS BALLETLAB.

## 11 Partnerships: Broadening Our Horizons

We continue to foster and support established relationships and forging new opportunities within the commercial, creative arts and community sectors.

VAC's well established partnership with the Melbourne Chargers continued with a joint focus on events, particularly Midsumma. VAC also ventured into theatre, recruiting over 60 people throughout the year impacted upon by HIV, to tell their story through Phillip Adams BalletLab. This culminated with a public performance called *Live With It*, which formed part of the cultural program of AIDS 2014.

Transgender Victoria & *Dude* Magazine partnered with VAC to support the Buck Angel tour where we hosted workshops and community events to increase awareness and celebrate gender diversity.

Melbourne Surge, has joined our partnership fraternity assisting with the successful AIDS 2014 Mobilisation March. Surge is also participating in our Health Promotion activities.

Partnerships ultimately help to strengthen our public profile and underpins VAC's services and activities.



## 13 The Centre Clinic

We engaged an external consultant in January 2014 to conduct a Centre Clinic Renewal Project which would ensure the sustainability of the highly regarded service.

The recommendations of the report have been implemented in full, and patients are benefitting from efficiencies and new care pathways that will positively affect health outcomes and improve revenue streams.

A successful grant application to develop a Nurse Practitioner model will see our highly regarded Practice nurse assume Nurse Practitioner candidate status and embark upon a two-year training program. This represents an exciting opportunity for VAC to lead access to innovative care initiatives within the sector.



CRAIG & BERT, VOLUNTEERS

\* We work in the Online Outreach Project.

Sometimes guys are more likely to ask questions about sex in the relative anonymity of an online encounter.

We've had all sorts of questions regarding sexual health. Initially people might have thought it was odd that we were giving sexual health advice online, but now we're part of the furniture!





STEPHEN & ANGEL, VOLUNTEERS

\* We work for VAC in the events area. This year there has been such a great variety of things to work on. We were part of the MSM Global Forum meeting here in Melbourne, along with the AIDS 2014 Conference. The most amazing event was the AIDS 2014 Mobilisation March, such a diversity of people from all over the world. It was joyous, moving and affirming!



**17 John Tortorella 1936 - 2014**

We celebrate the life one of VAC's longest-serving and most dedicated volunteers, John Tortorella, who died this year. John had been a volunteer for 20 years, working with both the Education team and Community Support. In the 1990s he was an excellent facilitator of Gay Now, Momentum and Relationships courses. Many participants in these groups benefited from John's warm, inclusive and enthusiastic approach, complemented by a wicked sense of humour. John also mentored many new facilitators, maintaining the high standard of the courses. John's sense of humour was also extremely effective in his work with a range of Community Support clients. He was prepared to take on any challenge and deliver service in his own unique way. John became a life member of VAC in 2000.



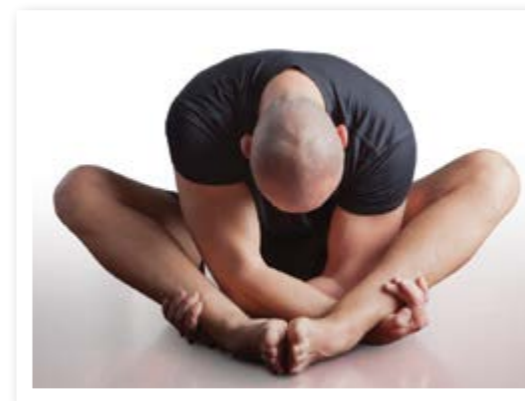
**18 Nutritional Services at the Positive Living Centre**

We provide a range of nutritional support services at the Positive Living Centre (PLC) to PLHIV. In the past year, the Pantry was improved by expanding the hours available to clients to access the service, a development that was responsive to a client survey undertaken the year before. This has allowed for greater access by a broader range of people, improved the dignity of the process and facilitated enhanced staff client interaction. Feedback has been extremely positive, with many commenting how much easier and more responsive the service is. This year we commenced an exciting new initiative in collaboration with the KAPS Institute of Management, allowing clients to gain a Certificate IV in Commercial Cookery, which provides participants with essential grounding in aspects of food preparation, presentation and the development of skills necessary to become a commercial cook.



**20 Positive Living Centre Highlights**

We continue to provide a broad range of activities and programs for clients and others at the PLC. The ever-popular Women's Day was held again in December, in partnership with Positive Women and Straight Arrows. Whilst women are active at the PLC year around, this is the day where we dedicate a special afternoon to women only including M.A.C. Cosmetics, massage, delicious afternoon tea and lots of time for social connection and peer support. In the coming year women only events will be expanded. A new initiative has been a series of Art Therapy Workshops, facilitated by our qualified in-house art therapist. The response from participants, both male and female, has been overwhelmingly positive. PLC services have changed during the year to allow for weekend activities, in the hopes of encouraging a broader range of clients who often don't get the chance to use the services we offer during the week day. Our first weekend event was a Family Barbecue in March. It was very well attended by a wide range of people, many bringing their family members, including children of all ages.



**19 Service use at the Positive Living Centre**

We are constantly looking to ways to improve our services at the PLC. To gain an insight into the utilisation of the PLC it can be useful to highlight some statistics. Over the year approximately 600 individuals utilised our services. On average, each person visited seventeen times, reflecting 10,000 visits. People used the variety of services offered, such as meals, pantry, massage, yoga, art class, exercise class and HALC (HIV/AIDS Legal Centre) a total of 7500 times. If you incorporate support from Client Care and Support Staff, this translates into the delivery of close to three significant services delivered to each client every time they enter the building.



**16 Volunteer Award**

We congratulate Community Support volunteer Ray Carr, who received an award from Victoria's Health Minister, David Davis, this year. The 2014 Minister for Health Volunteer Awards were presented during National Volunteer Week in May. Ray's award was for outstanding individual achievement in volunteer services in primary care. As a Support driver and member of our Kensington volunteer team, Ray's dedication to his work, despite his own health challenges, is an inspiration to clients, volunteers and staff. Last year, he contributed 453 hours of volunteer support and drove clients for a total of almost 8000 kilometres.



ALDO & CHRISSE

\* We worked together on the 2014 organisational rebrand. This was an incredibly exciting project because it meant drawing on three decades of community mobilisation, commitment, passion and creativity. The rebrand gave us the opportunity to re-vision VAC as a vibrant, responsive and relevant organisation ready to meet the challenges of the epidemic for now and the future!



The new brand was arrived at by taking one of the central elements of the existing brand, the red ribbon shape, and abstracting it slightly. Once this was done, we combined three ribbon shapes to arrive at the final brand. The shape is intended to convey strength, unity and dynamism.

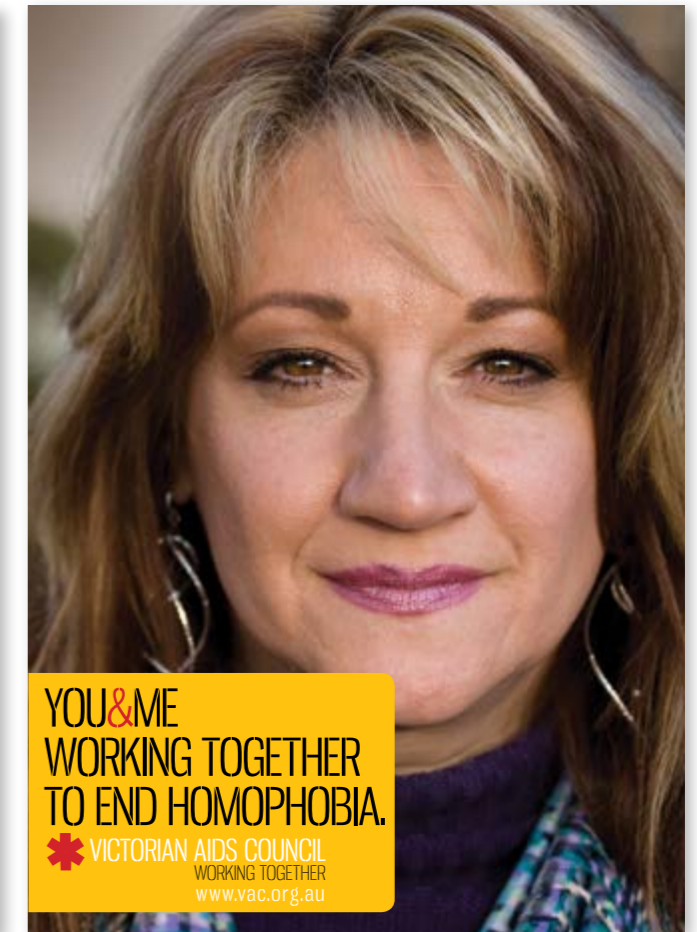
## LEAVING OUR MARK - THE VAC REBRAND

We had worked for over 30 years in the cause of HIV/AIDS in Victoria and for most of that time we had the same organisational brand. That brand, originally designed by Chris Gill had served us extremely well. It had seen us through the early days of the epidemic and through major changes like the advent of combination therapy and the transition of HIV from an almost inevitable precursor to an AIDS diagnosis and possibly death to a chronic manageable infection - all in the space of three decades! Since October last year, the organisation has been engaged in a process of consultation with stakeholders, community members, volunteers, members and employees to determine how the organisation was viewed, what people thought of our existing

brand and how we might be re-visioned for the future. In all, over 500 people were either consulted or surveyed to gather the information we needed in the re-branding process. What we found was that whilst a majority of people were aware of the organisation, many were confused by the name, particularly 'GMHC' with the overwhelming majority of people simply referring to us as 'VAC' or 'V.A.C.' In addition, many people felt that our old logo was out of date. The task of coming up with the new organisational identity was not a simple one. We needed something that was modern and flexible, whilst retaining an element of our history and our rich organisational legacy.



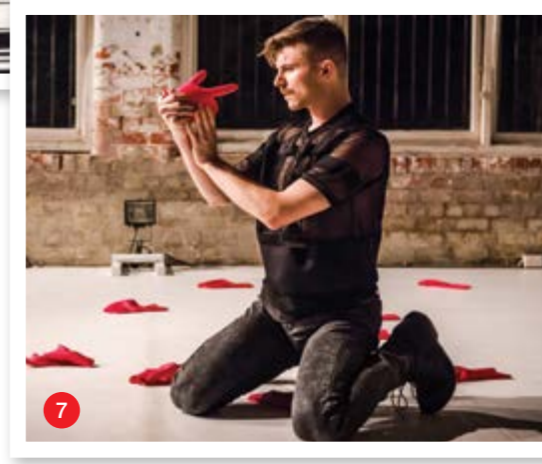
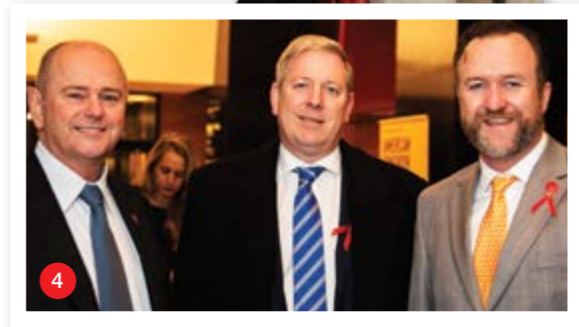
Our new organisational identity was supported by a mainstream campaign that was seen around Melbourne during the International AIDS Conference. Many people in the general public would not be aware of VAC or our work, and for that reason, our full name 'VICTORIAN AIDS COUNCIL' appeared on the campaign.



The campaign appeared in tram, train and bus shelters throughout metropolitan Melbourne and highlighted different aspects of our work, from HIV prevention, to fighting homophobia and providing care and support to people living with HIV. The campaign garnered a great deal of positive feedback for the organisation.

The new brand represents a unification of all aspects of our work, our associations, our partnerships and our strategy. Our new identity draws from our past, acknowledges our heritage with an expansive, dynamic brand that is evocative of stability, unity and strength - all elements of the organisation's strategic plan. There is a common misconception that re-branding an organisation is all about a new logo, but the process of re-branding is really about refining how we want to be perceived into the future. It gives us an opportunity to tell our story anew and provide us with an organisational identity that acknowledges our past and looks to our future.

The tagline we chose to accompany our identity is *WORKING TOGETHER*, and, once again, it is an acknowledgement of our history and our future. From our very beginning it is a fact that everyone connected to VAC has been characterised, enriched and strengthened by our relationship to and collaboration with others. *Working together* to provide access to testing, treatment and care. *Working together* with all our supporters to end stigma and discrimination that affects LGBTI communities, and finally, *working together* to remove all the barriers to providing people with every available tool to end the epidemic of HIV.



1. AIDS 2014 signage on Princes Bridge.
2. Conference attendees at the mobilisation march.
3. VAC's rebranded presence was seen everywhere throughout the conference.
4. L to R, VAC President, Greg Carter, Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon David Davis with VAC CEO, Simon Ruth at our members event during AIDS 2014.
5. Our participation at AIDS 2014 was enhanced by our wonderful volunteers.
6. A conference attendee takes in the view at our stand at the Global Village.
7. James Welsby's dance performance, *HEX* was featured during the cultural program for AIDS 2014.

## AIDS 2014

We were given an amazing opportunity with the announcement that Melbourne would host the 2014 International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2014). On a local, national and international scale, we forged new partnerships as well as strengthened long-standing ones to create, support, sponsor and host a program of events that was one of the biggest undertakings for the organisation in recent history. As a result, we finished the conference with an increase in brand recognition, a global network of new affiliations and a reinvigorated sense of awareness amongst our local community about the response to HIV/AIDS.

### 'Hi! I'm with VAC.'

With the organisational rebrand launched just one month prior, AIDS 2014 afforded us the chance to familiarise a global audience with VAC's new brand identity. Whether it was at the Melbourne Airport AIDS 2014 Welcome Desk or quietly sitting on the lapel of a conference delegate, the red ribbon-inspired asterisk was everywhere.

### MSM Pre-Conference & Networking Zone

Working with The Global Forum on MSM & HIV (MSMGF), we worked to ensure the pre-conference event, *Setting The Pace: Gay Men, MSM, and Transgender People in the Global AIDS Response* was a success. This overseas partnership continued into the conference as we co-hosted the MSM Networking Zone in the AIDS 2014 Global Village. Accessible to the general public, the MSM Networking Zone was both a hub for VAC during the conference but also an outlet to offer a diverse range of programming looking at the issues affecting the global MSM community.

### Social Event Partnerships

Whether it was through The Laird's *United Nations of Men* or as the Principal Health and Education Partner for the Yarra Social Hub, we worked closely with local community partners to ensure both locals and delegates alike could connect on a social level through events like *United We Dance* (hosted by the Australian Gay and Lesbian Multicultural Council) and the SAM Project's

SOPV Tours which drew enormous interest, particularly from international delegates.

### Cultural Programming

We helped ensure arts and cultural projects got off the ground and were engaging audiences during AIDS 2014. From BalletLab's cross-arts performance *Live With It: We All Have HIV* to James Welsby's modern look at the epidemic through *HEX*, we saw dance performances across the city. We watched real life experiences with HIV/AIDS play out in *STATUS* at the Arts Centre, and we saw films tackle complex issues during the *Outrage: HIV Justice Film Festival* at the ACMI as well as Swedish film director and journalist Staffan Hildebrand's *Face of AIDS* documentary. Visual exhibitions offered further insight through both *Transmissions* and ALGA's *Vital Signs: Interpreting the Archive*.

### Members Event

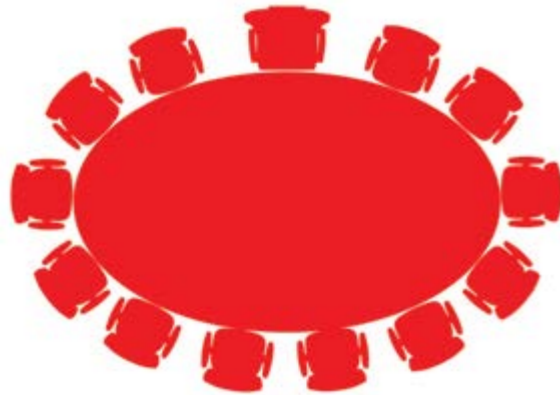
On 22 July 2014, we celebrated thirty-one years of fighting to end HIV in Victoria with a members cocktail event at the

Melbourne Recital Centre. With a keynote speech on the future of HIV/AIDS activism, we heard from the Founding Editor of *POZ* magazine Sean Strub. Guests on the night also heard from the Minister for Health, the Hon David Davis as well as VAC President Greg Carter and VAC CEO Simon Ruth.

### Working Together, Stronger Together Mobilisation March

Working with Victorian Trades Hall Council, we facilitated the *Working Together, Stronger Together* Mobilisation March. Taking the global issues surrounding HIV/AIDS to the streets of Melbourne's CBD, the March started with a rally at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (the site of AIDS 2014) before marching down Flinders Street. After the observance of a minute of silence out of respect for those colleagues lost in the tragic events of Flight MH17, the March continued to Federation Square where it was immediately followed by the AIDS 2014 Candlelight Vigil.

## AWARDS



### LIFE MEMBERSHIP MICHAEL WILLIAMS

Mike began as a volunteer lawyer with our HIV/AIDS Legal Centre in 2007, becoming its Coordinator for two years. In his time there, he was able to build on the service which has become an essential part of the organisation's work to protect the legal rights of people with HIV. In 2008 he was elected to the Board of VAC/GMHC and again in 2010, after which he was made President. Mike's Presidency involved some major transitions in the organisation's history with changes in senior management and the management structure and involved much deft and diplomatic expertise on Mike's part. He was a conscientious and diligent President, leading a cohesive Board, consulting widely on decisions and developing strong networks with the community and government.



### LIFE MEMBERSHIP RAYMOND RICH

Raymond Rich has been a volunteer with Community Support for the more than 20 years. Raymond has a deep commitment to his work that has enabled him to provide effective long-term support, sometimes for quite challenging clients. Raymond joined Community Support's North group at the peak of the epidemic and then became a founding member of the Central Group. In recent years Raymond has been a member of the Footscray volunteer team and now the Richmond team, where he continues to provide shopping assistance and social outings for clients. Community Support depends on the experience and dedication of volunteers like Raymond Rich and we thank him for his great contribution over two decades.



### PRESIDENT'S AWARD PAUL KIDD & IAN MUCHAMORE

This award goes to Paul and Ian for their tireless determination to educate the community about the injustices around Section 19A of the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)*, the stigmatising effect it has on PLHIV, and the negative impact it is having on prevention efforts. Paul and Ian worked with passion and creativity alongside VAC in lobbying politicians to bring about the announcements of an amendment to 19A during the International AIDS Conference. This was followed by a commitment by the Labor Party to repeal Section 19A if they are elected to govern after the election in November 2014.



### SPECIAL SERVICE AWARD CLAYTON WIMSHURST

Clayton is a volunteer in our Outreach program. The program aims to improve the sexual health of gay and other same-sex attracted men who use saunas, 'sex-on-premises' venues and gay cruising websites, by utilising volunteers to provide peer-based support by answering specific sexual health related questions. Clayton has and continues to enrich the Outreach program in a way that has ensured that the men who engage in the program are supported, listened to and informed in addressing their sexual health.



### MEDIA AWARD BENJAMIN RILEY

As Melbourne hosted the 20th International AIDS Conference, we saw Ben Riley work tirelessly to produce comprehensive coverage – from the tragic news of MH17 to the MSM Global Forum Pre Conference, from the announcements surrounding the amendment/repeal of Section 19A of the Victorian *Crimes Act 1958* to the international interest in Victoria's peer-led rapid HIV testing model at PRONTO!. His recent in-depth coverage of the international debate surrounding Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis offered our community insight into this development in HIV prevention even before it's readily available to Australians. That article, *The New Gay Sex*, is one of many in the portfolio of the *Star Observer's* only Melbourne-based journalist.



### SPECIAL SERVICE AWARD

#### CITY OF YARRA & CITY OF MELBOURNE

Through their incredible partnership with VAC and the International AIDS Society Conference Secretariat in hosting AIDS 2014, both the City of Melbourne and the City of Yarra showcased the metropolitan Melbourne area to the global audience and highlighted its ongoing response to HIV/AIDS in Victoria through the various conference and satellite events.



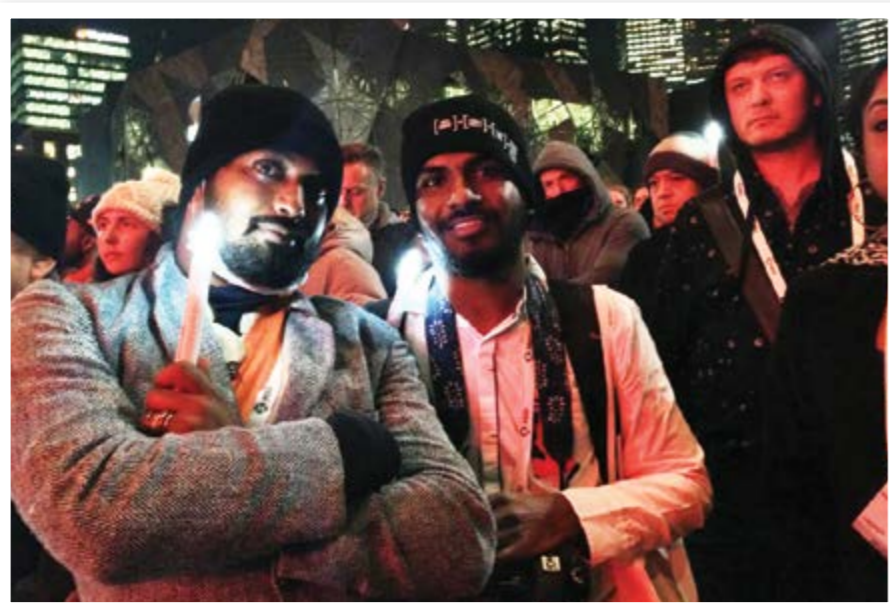
### SPECIAL SERVICE AWARD TONY WHITE

Since March of this year we have implemented a major improvement to the Pantry service delivered at the Positive Living Centre. This improvement allowed greater access times for clients. The change also allowed for a more regulated provision of the service which facilitated a more dignified process for clients and allowed for greater interaction with client support staff. Tony White has been instrumental in overseeing many of these logistical requirements, ensuring the equitable provision of service to all clients. Without doubt, his hard work has allowed this improvement to be successfully implemented and maintained.



### SPECIAL SERVICE AWARD DEAKIN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

'Team Newton' - Brandon Longley, Joseph Saba, Xin Ding, Melanie Krienke, Yashna Sharma and Ailun Li, each of these students were responsible for the implementation of a new volunteer data management system for the organisation. The significance of this project was realised over three months, with the students working diligently with Volunteer Coordinator, Murray Sayers to source a new data management system called 'Vogistics'. During the project period, the students successfully migrated existing volunteer data into the new system, customised the system to VAC's needs, as well as provided training for all end users.



DELEGATES FROM THE AIDS 2014 CONFERENCE AT LIVING POSITIVE VICTORIA'S CANDLELIGHT VIGIL.

## GIPA: GREATER INVOLVEMENT OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS

We work in partnership with our community to ensure meaningful engagement of all those affected by our work.

### What is GIPA?

It is a principle that aims to realise the rights and responsibilities of PLHIV, including their right to self-determination and participation in decision-making processes that affect their lives.

### What is VAC doing?

Key examples of the application of the GIPA principle in 2013/14 include:

The VAC Board endeavours to ensure PLHIV representation at a governance level and encourages PLHIV to nominate for election.

VAC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Living Positive Victoria.

VAC developed a joint election platform with Living Positive Victoria and with support from Positive Women Victoria and Straight Arrows.

VAC encourages PLHIV through its recruitment processes and employs many PLHIV.

The Positive Living Centre Consumer Reference Group (CRG) helps ensure that clients participate in planning and development of services and initiatives. This has included guiding the full redesign of the Pantry grocery assistance program completed in March 2014.

The Positive Living Centre in partnership with peer-based organisations Positive Women and Straight Arrows have

established a regular women only space. These events create space where women can relax and share their stories in a nurturing environment.

The Pre-HAART program (a therapeutic group for people living with HIV before the 1996 introduction of combination antiretrovirals) uses a model of participant driven planning to choose content. The program also includes pre- and post-course evaluations to help improve the course for the future.

Community Support utilises a model of client and volunteer consultation to adapt to meet changing client needs. This has included changes to allow increased access to case management and in home care.

VAC collaborated with Living Positive Victoria on joint initiatives such as the *Protection & Ending HIV* campaigns.

VAC supported Living Positive Victoria's Positive Women's Health Promotion Plan.

VAC partnered with Living Positive Victoria in planning community based initiatives and events such as the AIDS 2014 Candlelight Vigil and the 2014 injustice workshop as part of the satellite events for AIDS 2014.

PLHIV are recruited into focus groups and advisory groups for all health promotion campaigns and programs as a matter of course.

PLHIV participate in the development and delivery of training for all volunteers, peer educators and outreach workers.

### The GIPA Review Plan

As a part of our ongoing commitment to quality improvement, the



MATT & CASEY, VOLUNTEERS

\*We work together at VAC. It's great to be involved in the community and we know this sounds cheesy – but it's good to give something back. People come to VAC, and not everyone is comfortable first off. It's fantastic to see people gradually relax and be more comfortable – this is really a place for everyone!

VAC Board has identified a review of our application of the GIPA Principle as a key organisational goal. VAC has commenced the review of our community participation framework against the GIPA principle.

The VAC Community Participation Working Group has been formed to lead this piece of work in:

Reviewing VAC's current practice against the GIPA principle;

Identifying good practice and benchmarking the application of the GIPA principle;

Developing a VAC Community Participation GIPA Framework & Plan;

Overseeing implementation of the Plan.

Members of the working group include the Director of Services,

PLHIV community leaders, volunteer input and VAC staff. The Working Group is chaired by Beth Wilson, Former Victorian Health Services Commissioner.

The Working Group will oversee the self assessment and application of the *Code of Good Practice for NGO's Responding to HIV/AIDS* and the meaningful involvement of people living with HIV and affected communities. VAC will then become a signatory to this globally recognised code of practice. The code addresses two core principles of community involvement:

We advocate for the meaningful involvement of PLHIV and affected communities in all aspects of the HIV response.

We foster active and meaningful involvement of PLHIV and affected communities in our work.

**Summary Statement of Comprehensive Income for the Year Ended 30 June 2014**

	2014	2013
	\$	\$
<b>Revenue</b>	7,213,688	6,328,309
<b>Less: expenses</b>		
Operating expenses	(693,609)	(622,990)
Employee costs	(4,225,529)	(3,807,577)
Campaign expenses	(874,943)	(866,009)
Client support expenses	(627,316)	(567,953)
Professional fees	(197,229)	(249,663)
Other expenses	(303,670)	(143,075)
	(6,922,296)	(6,257,267)
<b>Surplus for the year</b>	<b>291,392</b>	<b>71,042</b>

**Summary Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2014**

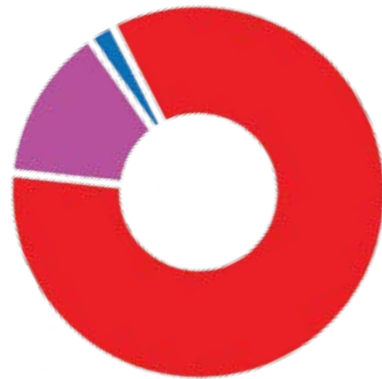
	2014	2013
	\$	\$
<b>Current assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	3,153,610	3,003,184
Receivables	47,795	13,439
Other assets	132,609	56,598
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>3,334,014</b>	<b>3,073,221</b>
<b>Noncurrent assets</b>		
Property, plant and equipment	8,196,644	7,736,843
Total noncurrent assets	8,196,644	7,736,843
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>11,530,658</b>	<b>10,810,064</b>
<b>Current liabilities</b>		
Payables	337,466	236,825
Provisions	538,121	501,932
Other liabilities	273,937	483,372
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	<b>1,149,524</b>	<b>1,222,129</b>
<b>Noncurrent liabilities</b>		
Provisions	30,742	28,935
<b>Total noncurrent liabilities</b>	<b>30,742</b>	<b>28,935</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>1,180,266</b>	<b>1,251,064</b>
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>10,350,392</b>	<b>9,559,000</b>
<b>Members funds</b>		
Reserves	6,824,556	6,324,556
Accumulated surplus	3,525,836	3,234,444
<b>Total members funds</b>	<b>10,350,392</b>	<b>9,559,000</b>

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](http://www.vac.org.au/financials)

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

REVENUE BREAKDOWN

Grant income 79%  
Other income 19%  
Investment income 2%



Revenue breakdown in FS

Grant income	5,707,236
Client fees	828,794
Donations, fundraising and bequest income	518,421
Membership fees	3,150
Other revenue	25,396
Interest income	130,691
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>7,213,688</b>

Revenue summary

Grant income	5,707,236
Other income	1,375,761
Investment income	130,691
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,213,688</b>

EXPENSES BREAKDOWN

Operating expenses 10%  
Employee costs 61%  
Campaign expenses 13%  
Client support expenses 9%  
Professional fees 3%  
Other expenses 4%



Expense Breakdown - Detailed

Operating expenses	693,609
Employee costs	4,225,529
Campaign expenses	874,943
Client Support expenses	627,316
Professional fees	197,229
Other expenses	303,670
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,922,296</b>

### Summary Statement of Changes in Members Funds for the Year Ended 30 June 2014

	Reserves	Accumulated surplus	Total equity
	\$	\$	\$
<b>Balance as at 1 July 2012</b>	6,324,556	3,163,402	9,487,958
Surplus for the year	-	71,042	71,042
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	-	71,042	71,042
<b>Balance as at 30 June 2013</b>	<b>6,324,556</b>	<b>3,234,444</b>	<b>9,559,000</b>
<b>Balance as at 1 July 2013</b>	6,324,556	3,234,444	9,559,000
Surplus for the year	-	291,392	291,392
Revaluation increment of 6-8 Claremont Street	500,000	-	500,000
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	500,000	291,392	791,392
<b>Balance as at 30 June 2014</b>	<b>6,824,556</b>	<b>3,525,836</b>	<b>10,350,392</b>

### Summary Statement of Cash Flows for the Year Ended 30 June 2014

	2014	2013
	\$	\$
<b>Cash flow from operating activities</b>		
Grants received	6,186,889	5,804,470
Other operating receipts	1,211,405	956,243
Interest received	130,691	153,115
Payments to suppliers and employees	(7,343,031)	(6,615,275)
<b>Net cash provided by operating activities</b>	<b>185,954</b>	<b>298,553</b>
<b>Cash flow from investing activities</b>		
Payment for plant and equipment	(35,528)	(49,051)
<b>Net cash used in investing activities</b>	<b>(35,528)</b>	<b>(49,051)</b>
<b>Reconciliation of cash</b>		
Cash at beginning of the financial year	3,003,184	2,753,682
Net increase in cash held	150,426	249,502
<b>Cash at end of financial year</b>	<b>3,153,610</b>	<b>3,003,184</b>

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](http://www.vac.org.au/financials)



PAV & NOEL, VOLUNTEERS

\* We work on reception at the Peter Knight Centre every week. It's a great way to keep track of what's going on at VAC, as well as meeting a whole bunch of new people as they walk through the door! We've developed a real friendship during the time we've been working together. We're like a well seasoned double act – and it happens every week!



# We thank you!

55 PORTER STREET SAUNA ACON AFAO AHAG  
AIDS ACTION COUNCIL AIDS MEMORIAL QUILT  
ALFRED HEALTH ALGA ASSOC PROF EDWINA  
WRIGHT ASU AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES BARRY MICHAEL  
KIELY BEN GORMAN BILL SAUNDERS BUCK ANGEL  
BURNET INSTITUTE CAMERON MENZIES CATHOLIC  
AIDS MINISTRY CENTRE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH IN  
HEALTH UNSW CHINA BAR CITY OF MARIBYRNONG  
CITY OF MELBOURNE CITY OF PORT PHILLIP CITY  
OF STONNINGTON CLUB 80 COLIN KRYCER COTA  
VICTORIA COUNTRY AWARENESS NETWORK  
CRIMINAL BAR ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA DAWN L  
HIBBERT DEAKIN UNIVERSITY DOWN UNDER DAY  
TOURS EAGLE LEATHER ECKERSLEY'S FOLLOW  
US EVENTS GAYDAR HARRY BENNETTS HEPATITIS  
VICTORIA HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS HOME AT LAST  
HOUSING CHOICES AUSTRALIA IAN FRECKLETON  
QC INNER SOUTH COMMUNITY HEALTH JOHN  
FOWLER JON JACKSON JOY 94.9 LADY PRIMROSE  
POTTER LAIRD HOTEL LEGAL SERVICES BOARD  
LIBERTY VICTORIA LIVING POSITIVE VICTORIA LUKE  
GALLAGHER MAC COSMETICS MATHEW HASSLE  
MAURICE BLACKBURN MCV MELBOURNE  
CHARGERS MELBOURNE GAY AND LESBIAN CHORUS  
MELBOURNE HEALTH MELBOURNE SEXUAL HEALTH  
CENTRE MELBOURNE SURGE MULTICULTURAL  
HEALTH & SUPPORT SERVICES NAB NORTON ROSE  
FULBRIGHT NTAHC POSITIVE WOMEN VICTORIA  
PROF JENNY HOY QUAC RDNS RICHARD  
JOHN SCHULTZ ROXANNE PETERS SAM PEARCE  
SENSWIDE SIMON MOGLIA SIRCUI BAR  
SOUTHERN HEALTH STAR OBSERVER STRAIGHT  
ARROWS STUART KOLLMORGEN SUBWAY SAUNA  
SUSAN RYAN AO TASCAHRD THE HUMAN RIGHTS  
LAW CENTRE THE LAIRD HOTEL THE LAW INSTITUTE  
OF VICTORIA THIBAUD PAVLOVIC-HOBBA TIM  
HENNESSY TONY WOOD VICTORIA GAY AND  
LESBIAN RIGHTS LOBBY VICTORIA POLICE VICTORIAN  
GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH VISTA VTHC  
WAAC WET ON WELLINGTON WILLIAM CLARK