



**MEDIA RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NATIONAL HIV STRATEGY FAILS GENERATION Y

There are some disturbing trends in the rates of HIV infections in Australia. Although the total of new infections might be stable at around 1,000 per year, 2009 saw the highest number of new diagnoses for 17 years and there appears to be a significant and steady increase in the number of younger men becoming HIV positive.

“The Australian response to HIV has been famously successful in containing the HIV epidemic in a few segments of the community” says Andrew Burry, General Manager of the AIDS Action Council, “but one of its weakest areas is in the prevention of HIV in the broader community and amongst young people. This is a huge chasm in our prevention efforts.”

The National HIV Strategy released this year continues to advocate for an education approach targeted only at at-risk communities, despite international evidence that a complementary mainstream approach is more effective.

“The result is that most Australians are falling through this prevention gap. The assumption is that our teachers, parents and youth workers are informed enough about HIV to talk to our kids” continues Mr Burry. “But what have we told them?”

In launching World AIDS Awareness Week 2010, AAC is calling for a major program of information about HIV in a mainstream setting. Mr Burry says that HIV needs a greater profile in the home and school particularly if we really want to equip young people to make choices that keep them safe. The theme this year is “What have we told our kids about HIV?”

“By not talking to our kids about HIV we’re failing an entire generation – and future generations.” he said.

ACT Launch of World AIDS Awareness Week 2010

10.00am Wednesday 24 November

Canberra Museum and Gallery, Civic Square

(ENDS)

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