



09  
OCT - NOV  
NEWSLETTER

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**AIDS ACTION**  
COUNCIL OF THE ACT

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[aidsaction.org.au](http://aidsaction.org.au)

**The AIDS Action Council knows  
that working with a strong  
Community is one of the most  
effective ways to combat HIV and  
its impacts**

[aidsaction.org.au/fairday](http://aidsaction.org.au/fairday)

This year's AIDS Action Council Annual General Meeting will be held on the 28th October at the CSIRO Discovery Centre, 6:30 pm. Each year awards are given to groups and members of the community. These awards are:

### David Widdup Award

After David Widdup's death in 1999, the AAC Board resolved to remember him by awarding the David Widdup Award for outstanding work by volunteers or members.

### The Community Award

Goes to a group or organisation that has advanced HIV issues in the community.

### The Communication/Media Award

Awarded for work done to provide an avenue for quality communication of HIV issues in the ACT Community.

### Fabulous Member

Life membership of the Council and is awarded to acknowledge long term involvement in and support of the Council.

### The President's Award

The President's Award is the sole prerogative of the President. Previous recipients have been groups and individuals who have done wonderful things within the LGBT community and for people living with or at risk of HIV.

## Who's that guy in the yellow shirt?

He's one of the friendly recruiters for the Canberra Gay Community Periodic Survey 2009!

This is a short, anonymous 'tick the box' questionnaire that takes about 5 minutes to complete.

The Canberra Gay Community Periodic Survey has been conducted every three years since the inaugural survey in November 2000. The collective data and analysis from surveys conducted in each capital city represents one of the most valuable studies for gay men's risk behaviour over time, and has a vital role in informing our response to HIV. The research is conducted in conjunction with the National Centre in HIV Social Research at the University of NSW.

Help us and your community by completing the survey and you can also choose to go in the draw to win a \$100 shopping voucher at the Canberra Centre.

Look for the survey volunteers in the bright yellow shirts at:

- SpringOut Fairday (31 October)
- Bushdance (28 November) and
- At a sex on premises venue in Canberra.

**No personally identifying details will be collected in the survey.**

Out with the Old ...

If ever there was a season for clichés, it is spring. All the talk about new growth, renewal and so on. The "green shoots of recovery" has found favour recently with tentative indicators that the end of the global financial crisis may be closer. Spring is the time of Floriade and our AGM, warmer days and mysterious regressions into late season frosts.

In the last newsletter I commented on the development of the new National Strategy for HIV and suggested that this epidemic requires revolution rather than evolution. Since then a lot of progress has been made, and by the time this issue is published, the new strategy will be heading off to receive ministerial approval. I am happy to say that the final document looks to be a significant improvement over its predecessor and has a much clearer commitment to outcomes and implementation. It will be a strategy that incorporates a clear sense of accountability and a renewed commitment to the partnership approach.

We participated actively in various spheres and made submissions on issues that we felt were needing priority attention. We also participated in a stakeholders' forum and gained a clear insight into matters that many different individuals and groups felt were important.

Our one disappointment is that we were unable to gain traction for the idea of making younger homosexually active men a priority group. We pointed out that although total infection rates are appearing to have become stable at around 1,000 per year, infection rates amongst men under 29 are rising quite significantly. In fact, between 2006 and 2008 infection rates rose by 26%, and this group now represents 1 in 5 of all HIV transmissions. Since gay men and other men who have sex with men are already a priority group (comprising 67% of all transmissions), why should a particular age group be singled out for special priority?

Our concern stems from the different way that younger gay men identify and live their lives. They are much less connected to either labels (gay, bi etc.) or organisations representing those labels. They are the post grim reaper generation. They are .... Well they are "they". And to us, that's really the point. I couldn't help looking around the room at the various forums and consultations for the new strategies I attended, and wonder where "they" were? They seemed to be largely absent, and I think this is unfortunate. We really need to begin to understand what is happening for our younger community members, we need to understand how and what they are thinking, we need to find more and effective ways of communicating with them if we want to help them make decisions that keep them safe.

There has always been an incredibly strong peer element underlying the success in containing HIV in Australia and I think it is more than possible that there is a link between this lack of engagement and what we are seeing happen with infection rates.

It's time for some fresh new faces with fresh new ideas ... because it's spring!

Andrew Burry

# Reclaim the Night

"By taking part in this protest we are able to unite in a joyful celebration of our collective strength and solidarity, demanding not only safety on the streets but at home and in the workplace. We march to reclaim our public"

Anne-Lise Wallis, NCOSS News, September 1993

1976 Rome: 10,000 women and children marched through the streets as a reaction to around 16,000 reported rapes that year.

1977 West Germany: Women marched in protest of the police warning that women should not go out at night because of the 'Ripper' murders.

1977 Leeds: Women took to the streets to demand "The right to move freely in their communities at day and night without harassment and sexual assault."

1978 Australia: Women in Sydney and Melbourne joined women around the world marching for their right to safety.

2009 Canberra: Today we walk for the same reasons... because women still don't have the right to safety in their own communities.

What is Reclaim the Night?

Reclaim the night is a chance for women to walk in solidarity and demand the right to live without fear and reality of rape and male violence.

We demand the right to use public space without fear. We demand this right as a civil liberty, we demand this as a human right.

How can men support Reclaim the Night?

RTN recognises the valuable contribution that men can make in championing this cause. Men can show their support by challenging male attitudes that support violence against women in their day to day lives and by participating in the march from the back.

**Canberra Rape Crisis Centre celebrates**

**reclaim safety and community  
reclaim our rights**



**reclaim  
THE NIGHT**

**Friday 30 October  
Garema Place, Canberra City  
6pm Rally & March**

**Walk in solidarity for women  
to live without the fear and  
reality of rape and male violence.**

# Get a FREE and easy sexual health check!

Taking care of your sexual health is easy thanks to the free and confidential Sexual health Testing, Referral and Information Project (STRIP) available after hours at Westlund House and at Champions Fyshwick.

A check-up is quick and easy, and your results are available the following week. Allow 30 to 45 minutes for your consultation.

For more information contact the AIDS Action Council on 02 6257 2855 or visit [www.aidsaction.org.au/strip](http://www.aidsaction.org.au/strip)

Consultations for the GLBT community at Westlund House, 16 Gordon Street:

- 10:00 am to 12 noon Saturday 7 November
- 10:00 am to 12 noon Saturday 14 November
- 10:00 am to 12 noon Saturday 21 November
- 10:00 am to 12 noon Saturday 28 November

Consultations for men only at Champions Mustang Ranch, Molonglo Mall, Fyshwick:

- 6:00 pm to 8.30 pm Thursday 5 November
- 6:00 pm to 8.30 pm Thursday 12 November
- 6:00 pm to 8.30 pm Thursday 19 November
- 6:00 pm to 8.30 pm Thursday 26 November



**SEXUAL HEALTH CHECKS  
PUT YOU IN CONTROL**

[WWW.THEDRAMADOWNUNDER.INFO](http://WWW.THEDRAMADOWNUNDER.INFO)

# HIV Tests & Treatments 2009

Produced by the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) for people living with HIV and their immediate carers, HIV specialists, GPs and other health workers.

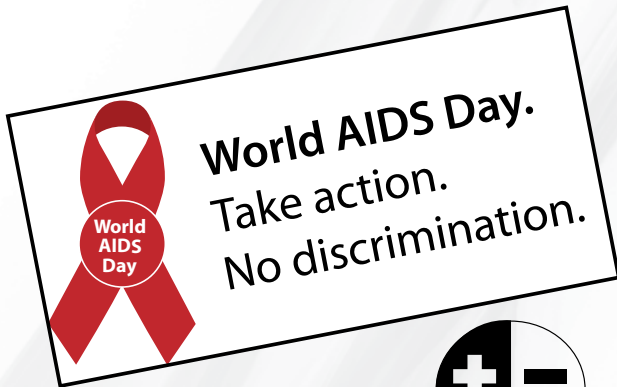


The booklet is for anyone with HIV, whether they have been recently diagnosed, or have known about their HIV positive status for some time, and are considering starting, stopping or changing treatments.

Get your copy now from Westlund House, PLWHA ACT, Canberra Sexual Health Centre, SHFPACT or ask your GP.

# World AIDS Day

## 1 December



## AIDS Action Council Free Legal Clinic

The legal advice service will now be held monthly at Westlund House. John Davey from Herm Legal and Migration Services will continue to provide this invaluable service FREE to members of the AAC.

Consultations through the legal advice service last up to 30 minutes and are available between 6:00 and 9:00 pm.

Call 02 6257 2855 during business hours to make your appointment.

Clients using this service can be fully confident that professional privilege will apply.

Next Clinics:

**October: Thursday 22nd**

**November: Thursday 26th**

**December: No Clinic**

**January: No Clinic**

**February: Thursday 25th**

**March: Thursday 25th**

## There's never been a better time

### Opinion - Jason Appleby

Let's start somewhere just a little bit cheeky, a little bit flippant and a lot provocative:

"There's never been a better time to have HIV than now"

Interesting sentence isn't it? A little bit humorous. A little bit shocking.

"...never been a better time...to have HIV..."

Certainly not words I'd be comfortable seeing out of context. But many people would argue that they're true.

Over the last 25 years, life with HIV has changed remarkably. It's gone from a death sentence to a chronic episodic illness. Life with HIV has travelled through more acronyms than I can recall and ended up in a strange – and in many ways new – place. The latest evidence tells us that the person infected with HIV in Australia today can expect to live at least another 30 years. Some models say that a HIV infection results in less than a ten year reduction in life expectancy.

This is wonderful news. Let's not kid ourselves. Short of a vaccine or a cure; what we've managed to do with HIV in 2009 was unimaginable twenty years ago. Of course, a longer life expectancy means a lot more quality of life to protect and preserve.

Life with HIV is now about health maintenance and maximisation in ways that it wasn't just ten years ago. We're now having serious discussions about things we found laughable to even think about in the recent past. Don't believe me? Even I remember the response to the idea of Quit Smoking campaigns earlier this decade. Hilarious!

Now we have to confront questions about issues relating to ageing and cognitive health. How do people become "good health care consumers", and how do we better focus on tertiary prevention as care and support?

Of course, not everyone equally shares in the gains of the last two decades. We all need to work together to ensure that for the (thankfully) smaller group of people experiencing serious ill health, poverty, or other impacts of living for a long time with a chronic illness – quality services, clinical care and emotional and practical support – are readily available.

Health is about a lot more than medication. All of our health promotion work tells us that we will not secure the ongoing wellbeing of people with HIV with pills alone. Secure housing, income support, practical and emotional support services and a valued place within our community or communities will continue to be critical. It's when we work holistically, when we understand and respect the social and cultural determinants of health, that we achieve the remarkable outcomes that have been realised in Australia.

One of the biggest issues (and successes) in HIV is the growing diversity of people with HIV (and the growing diversity in the lives of people with HIV). One of the big challenges is to ensure that all people with HIV can benefit from these gains; from the Caucasian gay man, to the African heterosexual mother of two. We need to ensure that the services we

provide are accessible to, and work for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people and for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

We need to be fearless in talking about sex, pleasure and risk with gay men and we need to respect the concerns around disclosure and privacy that many people with HIV share.

We need to continue to work to prevent and fight stigma and discrimination in our communities, and this isn't just about the stigma and discrimination of being HIV positive, but also homophobia, racism and other forms of bigotry that actively prevent good health.

Talking about stigma and discrimination leads me to my next point: the concern around criminalisation of HIV transmission. When I say criminalisation, I mean the use of criminal law (and police) rather than public health measures to respond to alleged transmission of or exposure to HIV. The Criminalisation of HIV transmission has presented many challenges to the HIV sector and people with HIV. The resource cost alone of having to realign our public health based response with other contexts such as the legal system, the police and the media has been immense. The potential impact of this growing social phenomenon on our prevention efforts is yet to be fully understood, and I'm sure I'm not alone in wondering how much further this challenge will play out.

I don't think that I am engaging in hyperbole when I say that most people with HIV are fearful of the effects of criminalisation on their lives. People with HIV in NSW are more anxious around disclosure now than they were five years ago.

So I began earlier with a phrase "There's never been a better time or place to have HIV..." And you know what, for some people in Australia there can be no doubt that's true. Many people with HIV have been able to enjoy the advances in health that we've gained over the last twenty five years. And we need to continue to work with these people to continue to improve and maximise their health and keep this sentence true, now and into the future.

But there are some groups of people for whom this sentence is less true. And there's work to be done in advancing the health and improving the lives of these people so that they too can claim that phrase as being true.

*Jason Appleby is President of Positive Life NSW and a former Policy Analyst at the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations. This article is based on a speech presented at the ACT Stakeholder Forum on New National HIV, Hepatitis and STI Strategies.*

# Westlund House SpringOut Fairday

Megan Munro



SpringOut Fairday is on again.

This year the Westlund House SpringOut Fairday will be held on the lawns of Westlund House from 12:00 pm until 5:00 pm.

Last year around 600 people attended on the day. This year it will be bigger and better than ever before.

To entertain everyone we will have the ever wonderful Canberra Gay & Lesbian Qwire. The Qwire is a performance oriented non-auditioned community choir. They perform all year round locally, nationally and internationally, and have been awarded for their excellence as a choir.

Morgan and Jonno will present the annual Pet Parade. Morgan and Jonno are two young guys who currently host the comedy nights at the Hush Lounge. Local drag queen and king celebrities, Anita Lay, Rocco Hardness and Mr Green Teal will be attending Fairday and providing audiences with a show.

Fairday would not be complete without people being able to chill out listening to music. Lyndell Tutty will perform some songs for the crowds and this will be followed by the very popular Adam Hole and Marji Curran Band. These guys have delivered show-stopping performances at festivals such as Port Fairy, Thredbo Blues Festival and Narooma Blues in Australia, and also the Jazz and Blues Festival in New Zealand.

But Fairday is not just about what is happening on the stage.

There will be plenty of stalls hosted by community groups where people can pick up information as to what's going on in Canberra and what services are available to the LGBT community. There will also be businesses selling a range of goods including natural health products, clothes, pride merchandise and food.

There is also going to be an art display brightening the inside of Westlund House, the works all done by local community members.

New this year will be a series of workshops and seminars presented by local community members and a Treasure Hunt for children.

Food and drink served by local groups will be available to help with energy levels throughout the afternoon while you wander through the stalls, chill out listening to the music and getting together for the biggest day time event in the Canberra LGBT social calendar.



# Tales from the Front Desk

## Lynn Parry – Oracle, the real GM and Sometimes Finance and Admin Officer.

“Can I plug in my car battery recharger for an hour?” This is one of the more unusual requests we have received at the front desk from people passing by. What is our reply? “Of course you can recharge your car battery in our foyer. Would you like to look at our material while you wait?” Another “satisfied customer” departs with a pocket full of our handouts and a car battery recharged.

Plumbers are frequent visitors to our front desk, due to tree roots in ageing pipes, as Westlund House was built nearly 50 years ago. Working at the front desk requires an intimate knowledge of sewerage access points and a nose for an overflow on the front lawn, before it becomes a flood. Knowledge of the peculiar electrical circuits of Westlund House is also needed, as this is a mystery to most electricians who come.

Lost people are regular callers. One young man on a motorbike thought he was in Deakin and had to be told that he was on the wrong side of the lake. We offered him a map, but he said that was of no use as he couldn't ride the motorbike and read a map at the same time. We did wonder about him!

We receive many phone calls from people who have found our web site and want to come and speak with us. Some of those don't realise that we are in Canberra, not Queensland or Western Australia. The best phone caller asks “What do you do there?” What a question! Where do I start?

Parking in the city area is difficult. Everyone likes a free car park and ensuring that the appropriate people use the Westlund car park keeps front office staff on their mettle. Nothing discourages the persistent illegal parker. Signs are ignored, letters on the windscreen are flung aside, 4 wheel drive vehicles destroy poles and chains with gay abandon. Our neighbours, National Film and Sound Archive and the Academy of Science fight the same battle as we do, but none of us win. It doesn't stop us trying though. We like a challenge!

“Taxi waiting, hurry, hurry!” This is the cry of a regular customer who bursts through the front door on Friday at 5 o'clock for condoms, just when the front office staff want to do the 5 o'clock dance, shut the front door and go. It becomes a game, do we wait for her till 10 past 5? She probably won't come if we do wait. Will we slam the door shut at 5 on the dot and run? Let's run.



## Shadows



Shadows support group is designed to support Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander young guys in the Canberra and Queanbeyan region.

Shadows offers counselling, advice, friendship and support from other participants. Shadows provides a chance to socialise with other like minded young guys that are looking to build friendships and meet others in the gay community.

We can also offer information to help you understand how to look after yourself physically and mentally.

At this stage meetings are held every 2nd Monday.

Call Ed on 0466 415 456 for more info

# Community Spotlight: Canberra Bushdance 2009

## Pink Tennis Canberra



Canberra's iconic queer dance party with a boot-scooting twist is back on Saturday, 28th November 2009. For over 25 years, Bushdance has been Canberra's largest GLBTI event, and this year will be no exception.

With over 600 people attending last year's event, Bushdance draws a diverse crowd from Canberra, Sydney, the Monaro region, the Central West and beyond. Canberra's Yarralumla Woolshed provides an authentic venue for a fun night of dancing, drinking and BBQing: the great Aussie traditions all under one roof.

And it's not just a night of wholesome fun – Bushdance is also a community fundraiser co-ordinated by Pink Tennis: Canberra's Gay and Lesbian Tennis Club. Last year, money raised at Bushdance was used to support the ACT community through social development grants to local community groups including: Canberra Pride/Springout; Turner Tennis Club (the home of Pink Tennis); and the Canberra Queen of Mardi Gras Float.

Bushdance newbies need not fear - a live band will lead you through the dances of yesteryear – Strip the Willow, The Waves of Bondi, crazy polkas and the perennial favourite, the Hokey Pokey. By the end of the night you'll have danced with everyone, caught up with old friends, made some new ones and helped raise cash for the GLBTI community.

So dust off your hat, polish your boots and get ready to kick up some dust. Bushdance is back!

Bushdance – Yarralumla Woolshed – Saturday 28 November 2009 – 7.30pm – entry \$30 / concession \$25 – licensed bar at the venue.

Pink Tennis meets every Monday evening at Turner Tennis Club from 6.00pm, players of all standards welcome. Find us on Facebook – join the Canberra Bushdance group.

# Top tips for starting a community group

## Megan Munro

So you want to start up some sort of social group? Our community would not be so vibrant if it weren't for the individuals and groups in Canberra that invest their own time and energy into the groups. There are some things that can make it a bit easier to organise a group.

Decide who the group is for. Is it going to be for a very specific part of the community or is it more open? This will help determine how you promote the group and it is good to think about this so that it is pitched accurately. It could prevent some very awkward moments.

Get others to help you. These things can take a bit of time and energy. If you have a few people organising a group then the work can be spread, it also means that the group doesn't hinge on you.

Decide how often the group is going to meet and what form this will take. The more regular and consistent an event, the more likely people are to remember it and be able to attend.

Advertise your event regularly in the appropriate places. Use whatever resources are available to you to keep names of people who are interested. The internet is a fantastic resource. Start a Facebook group. Keep emails from interested people and email them details each week or month. Make sure you provide details for email addresses and phone numbers which can be answered promptly.

Make sure your group is identifiable. Some sort of visible sign is a good idea or a designated meeting area. People can be shy or uncomfortable about coming along to a group, particularly if it is new to them. There is nothing worse than being told 'you'll find me in the red hat' only to turn up and there are 20 people wearing red hats.

Be friendly to new people. Talk to them, introduce them to others and do your best to make them feel comfortable. Thank them for coming along. People won't come back if they were ignored or if it was an unpleasant experience trying to find the group.

Be consistent yourself and remember that things take time. Don't be too disheartened if there are low numbers to begin with, sometimes these things take time.

If you do need more help with starting a group, or promoting one you already have, don't forget to contact the AIDS Action Council on 6257 2855.

## Nov. Volunteer Meeting

November and December are always extremely busy months for the AIDS Action Council with all the work to be done around SpringOut, World AIDS Day and AIDS Awareness Week.

To see how you can help out, come along to the November Volunteers Meeting and find out what exciting things we have planned and need your help for.

Where: Training Room, Westlund House, 16 Gordon St Acton

When: Starts 6:00 pm, Wednesday 18th November

Don't forget to bring friends and family along and get them to experience the fun and satisfaction of being a volunteer of the AAC.

# World AIDS Day 2009

**Megan Munro**  
**Community Engagement Coordinator**

The 1st of December is World AIDS Day and it is fast approaching. Here at the AIDS Action Council we have been busy preparing for the flurry of events.

Last year AIDS Awareness Week was launched one week before at the Legislative Assembly on the 24th of November. The AAC chose to focus on one of its closest neighbours, Papua New Guinea, with all monies raised going to IGAT Hope. IGAT Hope is a peer operated organisation in Papua New Guinea that assists HIV positive people. Guest speakers at the launch included Kenn Basham who provided the audience with a moving account of his first hand experiences of the HIV pandemic in Papua New Guinea. This year the AAC is choosing to direct monies raised to our local organisation, The Trevor Daily Fund.

The Trevor Daley Fund was named as such on World AIDS Day in 1992. It was a fund that had been set up in 1990, and is a financial assistance scheme aimed to provide assistance to people affected by HIV in the ACT. It continues to provide this valuable support to this day.

This year the launch will be held on the 24th of November, in a central location in Civic. There will be guest speakers and a surprise performance that will draw attention to local people affected by HIV. It will definitely be worth coming to see.

Leading up to World AIDS Day, the AAC will hold ribbon making workshops for the community. Special stalls to sell the ribbons will be held in several locations across Canberra on the weekend before World AIDS Day on the 28th and 29th of November. Ribbon boxes will be distributed and seen for approximately one month before and after World AIDS Day. We will be looking for volunteers to assist us with making and selling ribbons. Perhaps you could sell ribbons through your work social club, school or to your friends.

The AIDS Action Council will also hold a community breakfast on World AIDS Day the 1st of December starting at **7:30 am** on the grounds of Westlund House. This will be an open breakfast for the community, all our partners and stakeholders. A fantastic opportunity for the community to come together and remember that there are still 33 Million people across the world with HIV and nearly 1,000 people each year in Australia are diagnosed as well.

If you would like to volunteer your time to assist with World AIDS Day, AIDS Awareness Week or the making and/or selling of ribbons; please contact Megan on 6257 2855 or [megan.munro@aidsaction.org.au](mailto:megan.munro@aidsaction.org.au)

## For your *Diary*

### October

- 22 Legal Clinic 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Westlund House
- 28 AIDS Action Council AGM 6:30 pm CSIRO Discovery Centre, North Science Rd
- 30 Reclaim the Night, 6:00 pm rally and march
- 31 Westlund House SpringOut Fairday, 12 noon - 5:00 pm. Westlund House, Acton

### November

- 5 STRIP Sexual Health Checks at Champions Mustang Ranch 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm
- 7 STRIP Sexual Health Checks at Westlund House 10:00 am - 12:00 noon
- 12 STRIP Sexual Health Checks at Champions Mustang Ranch 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm
- 14 STRIP Sexual Health Checks at Westlund House 10:00 am - 12:00 noon
- 18 Volunteer and Community Meeting, 6:00 pm Westlund House, Acton
- 19 STRIP Sexual Health Checks at Champions Mustang Ranch 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm
- 21 STRIP Sexual Health Checks at Westlund House 10:00 am - 12:00 noon
- 24 - 1 AIDS Awareness Week
- 26 STRIP Sexual Health Checks at Champions Mustang Ranch 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm
- 28 Legal Clinic 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm Westlund House
- 28 STRIP Sexual Health Checks at Westlund House 10:00 am - 12:00 noon
- 28 Pink Tennis Bushdance 7:30 pm, Yarralumla Woolshed

### December

- 1 World AIDS Day Breakfast 7:30 am Westlund House, Acton

**For more community events,** subscribe to the ACTQueer email list: [groups.yahoo.com/group/actqueer](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/actqueer)



## Join the AIDS Action Council

The AAC belongs to you, the community.

Proud to be a grass-roots organisation, we rely on our members. Members help us to carry out important work for our community. Join today and become part of our team.

To join, contact Lynn Parry on 6257 2855 or visit [www.aidsaction.org.au/membership](http://www.aidsaction.org.au/membership)

