



Getting to zero

We all play a role in HIV prevention

World AIDS day December 1

www.worldaidsdaysa.org.au



WORLD AIDS DAY BREAKFAST AND ART EXHIBITION

Opening Speech by Judith Cross, CEO Relationships Australia (SA)

Art Gallery of South Australia, December 1, 2014

I wish to acknowledge that we meet here today on Kurna land and to pay my respects to elders past and present and to acknowledge the Kurna peoples and other Aboriginal peoples of South Australia's ongoing spiritual and cultural connection to the land.

Thank you for joining with us today for the opening event of World AIDS Day, 2014. The global World AIDS Day theme for this year continues on from last year's theme: Getting to Zero: Zero new HIV infections. Zero discrimination. Zero AIDS related deaths.

Last year there were 69 newly diagnosed HIV infection cases in South Australia and whilst numbers fluctuate, we know that more must be done to promote safe sex practices, increase the use of testing and improve the health and wellbeing of people who are HIV positive. In achieving change partnerships with key affected communities and sector organisations is vital if we are to remove barriers to testing, treatment, prevention, care and support and this was acknowledged recently with the signing of the COAG Health Council AIDS 2014 Legacy Statement by the Hon. Jack Snelling, Minister for Health, who is represented here today by the Hon. Steph Key, member for Ashford.

As the work of Norman Fowler in the UK reminds us, it is discrimination and prejudice that is one of our major challenges as we tackle this important global public health problem. More than 35 million people world wide are living with HIV and about half do not know they are positive. In Australia 30% of people living with HIV are unaware they have the virus and may unknowingly transmit it to others. As Fowler reminds us, it is the wall of discrimination and prejudice that stops people from getting tested and seeking treatment. Discrimination against gays, lesbian and transgendered people, discrimination faced by drug users and sex workers and the discrimination faced by refugees and CALD people. Discrimination is rife and operates in such a way that it increases risk - by preventing people talking about HIV transmission, preventing the acknowledgement of risk and getting tested, preventing people who are HIV positive accessing not only medical treatments but also knowledge about how to take care of their health and wellbeing.

Discrimination also all too often results in isolation and yet we know that it is our connectedness to others, our relationships with intimate partners, families, friends and communities that are fundamental to health, wellbeing and empowerment. This message of the importance of connection is one of the many reasons I love the design by Louis Bullock which was selected by our Gay Men's Health team to be the face of the World AIDS Day campaign in South Australia. It is an image which shows people turning towards each other, people who are connected in solidarity and as Louis has said about his work "The piece features two figures – simplified as to not be biased to any gender affected – in an intimate closeness, to show the relationship, not the stigma, and to remind the viewer that HIV prevention starts with the relationship."

Relationships Australia

SOUTH AUSTRALIA



Getting to zero

We all play a role in HIV prevention

World AIDS day December 1

www.worldaidsdaysa.org.au



This is a fantastic exhibition which is curated from local and international artists and is designed to educate and inform South Australians that HIV can and does touch the lives of many in our community. Each artist was asked to choose a concept, fact, or conversation to explore in order to educate others through their artwork. It is such a rich array of images and I am really honoured to be here today to launch it. Lynlee Hanan and members of the HIV positive community worked with the artists to guide their initial drafts and I think you will all agree, produced some wonderful messages which will be able to be used in years to come. I would like you to join with me in showing our appreciation for the work that the artists, Lynlee, our community members, the Gay Men's Health Team and our Relationships Australia communications team who put together this exhibition.

Before I formally open the exhibition I want to acknowledge the collective contributions that make AIDS Awareness Week a success. This week there will be 20 events which is a remarkable achievement for a small state like South Australia. Key to this is the involvement of community groups, as well as many organisations who are represented here today. This includes the work of SA Health who provide crucial and much needed funding and public health leadership, the Aboriginal Health Council, Hepatitis SA, FEAST, ANZ, Positive Life SA, Shine, the Relationships Australia PEACE and Mosaic teams, BFriend, Pilgrim Church who will be hosting the exhibition, Adelaide City Council, Centacare and the Art Gallery of South Australia who provided this morning's venue. We thank you all for your involvement and commitment to making AIDS Awareness Week a success. I'd also like to thank Funk Coffee Shops who are distributing 10,000 of our Getting To Zero coffee cups and postcards at all 12 of their coffee shops, and the Adelaide Oval which will be coloured red throughout the week in honour of those who have died from AIDS and in support of those living with HIV. What an amazing achievement and collective effort this week will be! If we all have anything to do with it, we will be making sure that people sit up, notice, learn and most importantly take action - so that we really can Get to Zero.

It is now my pleasure to declare the World AIDS Day art exhibition officially open and to invite you all to enjoy the morning and join us in sharing the message by encouraging people to visit the exhibition in person at Pilgrim Church or in the virtual world by going to our website and also to honour those who have lost their lives to AIDS and those currently living with HIV by tying a red ribbon at our Memorial Wall. The work by the artists is inspiring, and hope you too will feel inspired to join in sharing the message of Getting to Zero.

Thank you