

q community: HIV TARGETED GRANTS

New grants awarded to community-led programs
targeting HIV toughest challenges
Positive Action Community Grants

Viiv Healthcare, the global specialist HIV company, has awarded over \$148,000 in funding grants in 2018 for vital community-led programs that aim to improve the health literacy of people with HIV (PWHIV) in Australia.

Viiv Healthcare's Positive Action Community Grants (PACG) will enable the four winning organisations, Queensland Positive People, Positive Life NSW, Open Doors Youth Service and The Bobby Goldsmith Foundation, to address the shifting needs of PWHIV, through innovative solutions that combat barriers to diagnosis, long-term treatment and care.

"Poor HIV health literacy can prevent people with HIV, or those at risk of HIV, from receiving much needed care. At Viiv Healthcare, we believe that solutions to these challenges and others faced by PWHIV, should be developed and led by the community. We're therefore proud to offer grants to local HIV organisations to enable programs that engage and deliver support in an effective and culturally appropriate manner. We are confident these programs will make a real, lasting and positive impact on Australia's HIV community," said Michael Grant, Country Manager, Viiv Healthcare.

Although Australia has made significant progress in its fight against HIV, it is estimated approximately 20 per cent of people diagnosed with HIV are not receiving the care they need. With the HIV population in Australia changing, new approaches are required to engage and support PWHIV.

In Queensland, although prevalence of HIV remains low amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (A&TSI) people, the number of new cases increased by 30% between 2012 – 2016, making them one of the fastest growing at-risk groups of HIV in Australia. The increase in diagnosis prompted Queensland Positive People to rethink how they could collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders in A&TSI health to deliver culturally sensitive healthcare services.

Also in Queensland, Open Doors Youth Service was awarded a PACG grant for a social marketing campaign to improve HIV testing literacy in gender variant and sexual diverse (GVSD) young people.

"We are seeing a growing number of young people reject the traditional labels of gender and sexual identity and as a result, current HIV and sexual health services may not meet their needs. Poor sexual health literacy and limited knowledge of HIV means GVSD might not engage with HIV testing and we want to try and address that through our campaign," said Chris Pickard, Open Doors Youth Service.

In New South Wales, grants awarded to The Bobby Goldsmith Foundation and Positive Life NSW will provide appropriate health services to areas of high HIV prevalence and support PWHIV at risk of isolation.

"We have evidence that PWHIV are moving away from Inner Sydney and the delivery of HIV services has remained the same for 20 years. Isolation is of critical concern for PWHIV and our Peer Navigation program will enhance the existing HIV service delivery arrangement, whilst supporting PWHIV to navigate the health system at crucial times during their HIV treatment journey. Therefore, empowering PWHIV and reducing the risk of them disengaging from care." said Craig Cooper, Positive Life NSW.

The final grant awarded to The Bobby Goldsmith Foundation will support a program for PWHIV in the Northern Rivers region of NSW - one of the highest areas of HIV need in the state.

"We are thrilled to receive Viiv Healthcare's PACG grant enabling us to expand our Positive Self-Management program into the Northern Rivers Area of NSW. Now in its fourth year, this program has been shown to improve the quality of life, psychological health outcomes and health literacy for PWHIV. It will improve service delivery for our clients with complex care needs in rural and regional NSW, helping them to better manage their HIV and general health," said Nick Lawson, Bobby Goldsmith Foundation.

Viiv Healthcare awards the Positive Action Community Grants each year to provide local organisations with the resources they need to implement programs that respond to the most pressing needs of people with HIV and reduce the burden of the disease in Australia.

More information about the 2018 PACG programs can be found at www.viivhealthcare.com.au