

HIV prevention strategies within the Australian sex worker population

- an overview of successful implementation



In the 1980's Australian sex workers responded very quickly to the threat of HIV infection. This occurred through:

- increased condom use and
- peer led education campaigns

Other contributing factors to the Australian 'success story' of HIV prevention for sex workers include:

- funding of sex worker organisations,
- legislative reforms and
- Inclusion and consultation of sex workers in policy development – at both local and national levels.



To date, there is no known case in Australia of a sex worker transmitting the virus to a client through sex work or vice versa.

This is formally acknowledged by the government within the National HIV/AIDS Strategy



Overview of Scarlet Alliance

- Formed in 1989
- completely autonomous sex worker organisation
- all paid and unpaid positions, voting delegates and elected office bearer roles held by former or current sex workers
- Four key strategies inform the work of Scarlet Alliance:
 - community engagement;
 - community development;
 - health promotion and
 - peer education.



ProVision- the National sex workers' magazine.



Scarlet Alliance National Training Project

- To be eligible for assessment, a sex worker needs to fulfill the following requirements:
 - you are working in a peer educator role or you are volunteering in a peer educator role, and
 - you have at least 12 months experience in your role, and
 - you are working/volunteering at a Scarlet Alliance member organisation, project, network or group
- The competencies have been grouped into five 'work function areas' including:
 - Communication,
 - Community Development,
 - Project Management,
 - Public and Community Education and
 - Working with sex workers.



Chlamydia Awareness for Sex Workers Health Project (CASH)

- national component :developed a training manual for peer educators
- the Chlamydia Education Training Package.
- 3 local components : development and distribution of three key resources within the local sex work community in Tasmania, Adelaide and sistergirl sex workers in Darwin
- key messages centered around Chlamydia:
 - improving knowledge amongst sex workers about the STI;
 - increasing information on testing and treatment;
 - skills utilised by sex workers to prevent STIs; and
 - sex workers as safe sex educators of their clients.



Chlamydia Awareness for Sex Workers Health Project (CASH)

Final resources

- the Darwin sistergirl community developed a t-shirt,
- the Tasmanian sex workers created a board game
- while the sex workers in Adelaide created a resource folder for every brothel that can be updated constantly by brothel workers and outreach staff.





www.scarletmen.org.au

- The Scarlet Men website is an initiative of Scarlet Alliance and is a site about health, services, and other issues important to male sex workers in Australia.
- It also links to the Scarlet Alliance Male Sex Worker information pages which include an archive of articles, information, interviews, stories, artwork and research by and for male sex workers in Australia.

HIV positive sex worker needs analysis project

- funded through the Elton John AIDS Foundation grant, administered by the AIDS Trust.
- Aims of the project was to capture the self identified issues facing HIV+ sex workers, barriers to accessing services, and the impact of discrimination, stigma, policy and laws

The project has created two reports:

1. a comprehensive needs assessment of HIV+ sex workers,
2. An assessment of the legal frameworks currently regulating HIV+ sex workers in Australia and the impact these regulations have had on both their work and private lives



Friends Frangipani Association
- the new Papua New Guinea sex worker
organisation



Thank you!



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