

AIDS : Australia faces the issues : a sampling of publicity produced by the Australian government, state governments/ territories and community groups / produced by the Dept. of Community Services and Health.

Contributors

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INTRODUCTION



The Australian Government took the view from the outset of the AIDS epidemic that co-operation from all sectors of the community was essential if we were to have any chance of containing the disease.

As at April 19 1989, a total of 1301 cases of AIDS had been reported in Australia. Of these 625 have already died.

Currently it is estimated that between 15,000 to 25,000 Australians are infected with HIV.

In the absence of a cure or a vaccine, our most effective weapons against the spread of AIDS is prevention through public education to increase awareness and promote safe practices.

Our initial public awareness and education programs were primarily targeted to those most at risk of catching the disease.

However, research showing a wide-spread belief within the community that AIDS was a disease of homosexuals and intravenous drug users highlighted the need for a more general AIDS education campaign.

The first stage of the National AIDS Education Campaign — called the 'Orin Reaper' campaign because of its central character — was launched

Aboriginal communities, women and adolescents. The majority of education funds (65%) in 1988/89 have gone to target high risk groups.

The Government's education strategy has been highly successful in a number of areas, particularly with regard to high risk groups. A number of studies have provided evidence of significant behaviour change amongst gay and bisexual men, intravenous drug users and prostitutes.

But there is no place for complacency. All of those engaged in AIDS prevention recognise how much remains to be done to counter one of the greatest public health threats our nation has faced.

We have learned much from our fellow workers overseas and we hope that others will find it helpful to review this selection of educational material produced by the Australian Government, State Governments and community organisations.

Neal Blewett
The Honorable Neal Blewett
Minister for Community Services and Health

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS



There are the over 100 of the AIDS Education Campaign, distributed during the second phase of the National AIDS Education Campaign. A TV commercial identified the condom and 'safe sex' was also played. Over 10 million leaflets have been distributed nationally.

RAISING AWARENESS

The first stage of the National AIDS Education Campaign was the first step in the national AIDS education campaign launched in 1987. The concept was designed to draw attention to a disease which is a humanised disease. Because of the 'new' of the message, the material was designed for a new way, and was followed by a series of posters, brochures and a video distributed nationwide. Public reaction was remarkable in terms of the awareness of the disease. The campaign was considered to be a success. The first two weeks of the campaign were considered to be a success. The first two weeks of the campaign were considered to be a success.



The first stage of the national campaign in September 1987 was to target young people considered to be at risk. This phase came from the National AIDS Education Campaign which targets young people and women against the danger of injecting drug use with specific reference to the risk of AIDS through the sharing of injecting equipment. Strong emphasis is on the young people market.

The national campaign strategy included several means of getting information to the public. The AIDS poster in April 1989 represents one example of the campaign targeting young people, including bisexual and homosexual men, usually other males and females and intravenous drug users. The poster was produced for the poster and poster of the poster.

BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

The most recent campaign has been directed at achieving behaviour change and 'normalising' condom usage among young, sexually active homosexuals.

The Government's major media campaign has helped to create widespread public awareness of AIDS, how it is transmitted, and how the likelihood of infection can be minimised. But significant modification of at-risk behaviours has not been achieved in the homosexual community.

In particular young (16-24 year old) heterosexual active males and females are potentially a high risk group because of their behaviour and lack of motivation and skills in negotiating safer sex. The current campaign therefore focuses on young people.



The AIDS poster, in December 1988, was widely regarded as people in relationships not was designed to reduce the risk of AIDS.

It does this by simply and directly showing how and why sexually active heterosexuals, particularly the young, might be infected by the virus through the use of condoms and the use of condoms without enforcement or restriction. This is a very important message since there is strong evidence that the fear of enforcement or restriction is one of the most important barriers to condom use.



The AIDS poster was designed to show how a young couple can safely have sex in a condom and often to their desire. In 'no condom as sex' message, it illustrates a possible role model for young people, showing how to use the use of a condom without enforcement or restriction. This is a very important message since there is strong evidence that the fear of enforcement or restriction is one of the most important barriers to condom use.

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STATE AND TERRITORY GOVERNMENT CAMPAIGNS

The various State and Territory governments play a major role in the provision of educational programs and case and treatment services. The funds provided to community organisations complement and underpin the broader media campaigns. The Federal government provides funds, under a cost-shared program with the State and Territory governments, to assist in the provision of these programs and services. The States and Territories have responsibility for the delivery of all health services and their major activity is in this area. In addition to providing funds to community organisations the States and Territories also take a responsibility for educational strategies for groups not reached by the community based organisations. The Inter-Governmental Committee on AIDS which consists of representatives from State, Territory and Federal governments, helps to co-ordinate programs between governments and to encourage communication of activities and recent developments in the AIDS area.



The New South Wales government has produced a series of video tapes aimed at people from non-English speaking backgrounds. The tapes have been produced in 12 community languages and have proved to be a valuable resource for health care and community workers. The Health Department is currently working on another language to enable wider distribution of this material.



Some government workers and services personnel needed to be aware of the potential problems associated with this risk. The Queensland Police produced an explanatory video for all police officers covering infection control procedures and practices in the workplace. Other 'first' service governments on also representing infection control policies and workplace infection strategies.



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