



40 Years of HIV. World AIDS Day. 1st December 2021.



QUEENSLAND COMMEMORATES 40 YEARS OF HIV AND ASKS "WHERE TO NEXT?" THIS WORLD AIDS DAY

The **2021 World AIDS Day** will be held on **Wednesday 1st December 2021**. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the first official reporting of what was to become known as AIDS. This year's national theme is "**40 Years of HIV. Where to next?**".

We have come an incredibly long way in the last four decades since the first HIV diagnoses. We have made incredible medical and treatment advances. We have educated our communities. We have provided support to countless people. We have come so far and yet there is so much more that needs to be done.

2021 we also celebrate the **30th anniversary of the Red Ribbon**, which is regarded as the longest-running disease awareness initiative in the history of public health. The wearing of this ribbon signals the support for people living with HIV (PLHIV), and those who care for PLHIV. It is also a symbol that represents the ongoing challenges against stigma and discrimination, and advocacy for and with PLHIV for continued funding for treatments, research and showing we care.

In 1981, no one could have predicted the scale and impact of the global HIV epidemic. With millions of lives lost and close to 37 million people currently living with HIV, including approximately 6,000 in Queensland, we, as a global community, remain profoundly challenged by this epidemic.

"For most in Australia, a world leader in HIV care, HIV has become a manageable chronic illness, where most PLHIV are on effective daily treatment which allows them to live healthy, productive and vibrant lives, and also prevents the virus from being passed on to partners. However, unlike other chronic illnesses, 40 years on PLHIV still experience stigma and discrimination because of their HIV status, adversely impacting their quality of life." Melissa Warner, QPP CEO

Yet for far too many people globally, HIV is still a daily life or death struggle for treatment and care, adequate food, housing, and income, often in the face of pervasive HIV-related stigma, discrimination, and violence.

This year, in asking, "40 Years of HIV. Where to next?" we mark a significant milestone in the history of the HIV pandemic and focus on the future and the promise that it holds. As a community and as individuals, there is a lot we can do around HIV.

Working in partnership with people with HIV, we can encourage others to understand how HIV is transmitted. We can support people to access compassionate testing, treatment, and care. We can continue the work on developing effective treatments and potential cures. Finally, we can work together to dismantle stigma and discrimination around HIV where it still exists in our communities.

For more media queries or photographs contact Adam Finch on 0400 596 957 or wad@qpp.org.au
Upcoming World AIDS Day events and information are featured at www.qldworldaidsday.org.au

