



Out and About Community News

Autumn 2010

From the Managers Desk

ACON Illawarra welcomes



New Administration and Volunteer Officer

Nadia Sneyd-Miller



New Community Health Promotion Officer

Chadwick Spinazza

Hello again. Our first newsletter for 2010 and already it's May!! So much has been happening, where to begin.

We opened on Monday 4 January with a brand new Administration and Volunteer Officer, Nadia Sneyd-Miller. Nadia is the voice at the other end of the phone (most of the time at least) and will take all your bookings for the clinic or appointments for any of the staff. Nadia has extensive experience working with volunteers and has developed and implemented a new volunteer program. So if any of you are wondering what to do in your spare time and think volunteering maybe for you, please have a chat to Nadia. She may be able to offer just what you're looking for.

You may be wondering what the mystery photo means. Yes we have a new worker for the Southern Region, but we haven't a photo as yet! We have been successful in recruiting our new Community Health Promotion officer who will focus on young people. Chadwick Spinazza will begin in the beginning of May.

You may have heard, or taken part in, some of the Illawarra team's trip to the Southern Region. Michael, Trevor and myself made a very rewarding trip to Moruya, Bateman's Bay, Wagga Wagga, Albury and even Yackandandah!

We met many of our regional community, were able to discuss possible new projects and strengthen relationships with our Area Health Service partners.

It was great to put faces to names (from both sides I

think) and listen to our regional brothers and sisters. You are an inspiration for us all in this office and I only wish we could visit more often.

ACON will be piloting an after hours counselling service from the Illawarra office sometime in the next year. Michael and I have been working very closely with the counselling service in ACON Sydney to develop what we think will be a sustainable and valuable service for our regional and local clients.

We will keep you informed with more details closer to the launch of the program

Goodbye for now and stay safe.

Radda Jordan

Manager, Southern Region



Inside this issue:

Managers Report	1
BGF Client Services	2
SWOP News	4
Spectrum Youth	5
Syphilis is back in town!	6
ACON exercise group	7
New GLBT friendly group—SMART Recovery	8
WIWP Launch Report	10
May/June Calendar	11
Community Contacts	16



BGF Client Services - Adapting to Changing Needs

In the 25 years that BGF has been around, we've all lived through the dramatic changes in the nature of the HIV epidemic.

The biggest change came in the mid-1990s. The introduction and widespread access to antiretroviral treatments transformed both the nature of the HIV epidemic and the outlook for those living with HIV. As people are living longer, they have to think about what the future holds for them.

For BGF, it became increasingly clear that longer term solutions were needed to meet the current and future needs of PLHIV. That was why we developed services such as supported accommodation, financial counselling, vocational counselling and capacity building programs to encourage our clients to take control of their lives and plan for the future.

There are now more people in Australia living with HIV than ever. Right now, BGF is providing a range of services to over 1450 PLHIV across NSW. In the 2008-09 financial year, 257 new clients registered with BGF – an increase in new clients of almost 20% on the previous financial year.

Since 2007, BGF's caseworkers have undertaken a process of working more closely with clients to address their individual needs by taking account of each client's specific circumstances (health, financial situation, housing, employment, study, social networks and access to the broader range of community services).

During focus groups with clients and stakeholders, it became clear that many people believed BGF should be encouraging independence among its clients rather than having them continuing to rely on financial assistance.

BGF has considered this feedback and the comments we have gathered during the Client Services Advisory Working Group meetings. From this, we have developed client service programs that are focused on supporting clients to develop skills and resilience to maximise their health and overall well-being, and help plan for the future.

This means that financial assistance will no longer be an automatic, unending service. Instead, it will be targeted to the specific needs of individual clients. We believe that this is a fairer approach in providing financial assistance to an ever-increasing number of clients with very diverse needs. It also reflects how the organisation is planning to give more support and responsibility to clients to manage their own lives.

In order to make this transition, BGF has identified five Financial Assistance priority areas including:

- The capacity to offer access to emergency assistance
- Short-term targeted support for clients who are experiencing a period of difficulty and stress, and require BGF's support to stabilise their lives
- Capacity-building and vocationally-focused assistance, linked with casework, mentoring, workshops and internships
- Ongoing support with health management
- Ongoing support for clients with more complex health and support needs

The new approach to prioritising financial assistance will result in changes to the level and duration of financial assistance that BGF can offer. For new clients, these changes will commence **1 January 2010**. For existing clients, changes to levels of financial assistance will not take place until **1 July 2010** and will vary depending on individual needs of clients.

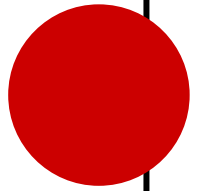
Clients will be contacted by their caseworkers over the coming months to discuss both the changes and their individual service plans, update any information (including income statements) and review client budgets.

There will be **no changes** to certain areas of assistance and service provision including:

- Financial Counselling
- Service coordination
- Capacity-building workshops such as Phoenix Workshops
- Financial assistance with the cost of HIV anti-retroviral and HIV-related medications
- Medical gap assistance for HIV-related procedures
- Assistance with costs associated with approved study and returning to work
- No Interest Loans Scheme® (NILS®)
- Supported Accommodation

A major focus for BGF will be on developing Phoenix Workshops and looking at other programs to support clients seeking to return to employment. We will circulate information about program developments as they become available.

If you have questions about BGF services, please contact your caseworker on 02 9283 8666 or 1800 651 011.



Q & A

For the last 10 years, BGF has been paying my electricity bills. This is the only BGF service I use. Do the changes mean that I'll no longer have BGF's help in getting my bills paid?

BGF will no longer provide regular ongoing assistance with energy bills. Areas of assistance which BGF will continue to provide include one-off or short-term costs involved in helping someone to get back on their feet, assistance with costs associated with health management and vocationally focused costs.

Your BGF Caseworker can work with you to review your overall needs and budget in order to identify resources to assist you.

What is the situation with pharmacy accounts? Will you still help to pay for my meds?

It has become extremely difficult and onerous for BGF to monitor the authorisation process for approved medications, particularly once the medication has been dispensed. There is also a significant concern that some clients appear to be accessing numerous pharmacies and obtaining multiple supplies of different medications. BGF will continue to assist clients by helping to pay for their antiretroviral medications and other non PBS HIV-related medications. However, we are now seeking a contribution from clients for the non PBS HIV-related medications. We understand that every client has different issues and varied capacity to manage their circumstances. Please contact your BGF caseworker to clarify any questions you might have about paying for your meds.

SWOP NEWS



Hello everyone,

There is much work to do to address some of the issues faced by sex workers in the Illawarra. SWOP will continue its outreach work in the afternoons and I'm currently organising a partner for evening outreach work. By working later in the evenings I plan to regularly access the street based sex workers in our region as the issue of sex worker safety is on the agenda. I plan to support these workers to make their safety a priority, and to offer practical support on reporting harassment or sexual assault by a client.

I encourage any of my clients to report any violent abusive or possibly dangerous clients to us. This information is used to alert other sex workers so that they can be aware of ugly mugs. In doing so you could help other workers avoid seeing the same ugly mug! I will also help any clients who want to report these activities to police, follow legal channels and also help arrange referral to support agencies.

Please contact me on 4226 1163 Wednesday and Thursday or call the SWOP mobile on 0417 694 149 for more information and support on making a report or to get the latest copy of the Ugly Mug List so you can familiarise yourself with reports from other sex workers.

Warm Regards

Michelle

Spectrum Youth



Spectrum Youth is an initiative started by young GLBT people within the Illawarra community and aims to advocate on behalf of the community through projects which promote Wollongong as a more accepting space for young GLBT people. Over the past 18 months Spectrum Youth have been meeting fortnightly and members have worked together to build their skills in group organisation and facilitation.

Spectrum Youth has been successful in developing a poster campaign after consulting with various services as well as utilising their skills in photography and art to make creative designs. The first poster, currently in development, aims to promote health services for GLBT young people with scenic shots of the iconic Wollongong lighthouses. The second poster works with short slogans which promote services, such as youth centres and schools, as safe and accepting spaces for GLBT young people and challenges stereotypes and homophobia.

Last year Spectrum organised an event for Sexual Health week and were successful in receiving a grant from NSW Health. The event was a great success for the group with over 120 young people participating. The group organised laser tag, stalls for community organisations and live local music and acts perform on the day. This year Spectrum was also successful in getting a grant to host an event during Youth Week. On April 14 the group held a Mad Hatters afternoon tea party with cabaret performances, food and drag acts.

Spectrum Youth is open to any young GLBT person and supporters who want to get active, increase their skills, and make a difference in the Wollongong community. The groups are held fortnightly at the ACON community space and at Wollongong Youth Centre. For more information about meeting times or information about the group feel free to contact ACON on 4226 1163 or on the office email illaad-min@acon.org.au.

Syphilis

Is back in town!

In 2009 nearly 500 people in NSW were diagnosed with acute syphilis, 90 more than 2008. The Commonwealth convened a working party to develop the Gay Men's Syphilis Action Plan. The key points are:

- Get tested regularly
- Notify your partners

Testing: HIV positive men with multiple partners should have syphilis testing when they have their HIV bloods done. HIV negative men should get a syphilis test any time they have an HIV test. Any man with more than 20 partners in 6 months should have a syphilis test every six months.

Partner notification: You can do it or the doctor can do it. If you're not on speaking terms with a previous partner tell your doctor the name and phone number of your contact and the doctor can advise them to get tested.

Condoms: High levels of condom use reduce the level of risk for all sorts of nasty little bugs!

We are also encouraging doctors to ask all men the following questions:

- Have you had any change of sexual partner in the past twelve months?
- Are your partners female / male / or both?

How can I tell if I have syphilis?

Lots of people diagnosed with syphilis don't have any symptoms. That's why you need regular testing. If you notice any type of ulceration in the mouth, on the genitals or round the anus; develop a rash, have swollen lymph glands, joint pains or start losing your hair – get tested! There could be another reason but it's better to check.

Where can I go for testing?

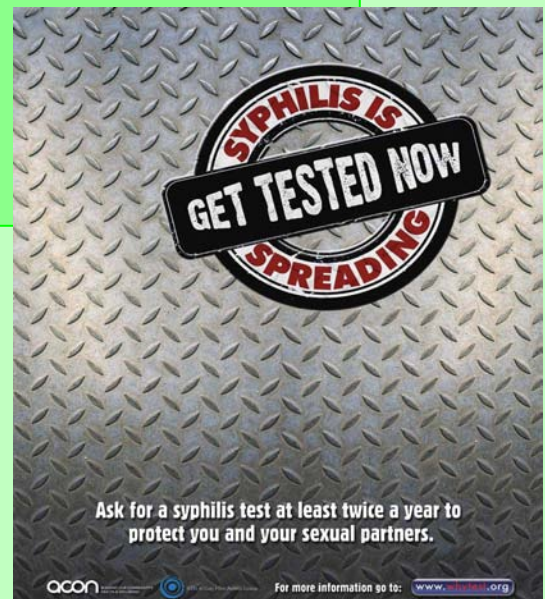
Your GP can order these tests. You can also go to the Sexual Health Clinic at:

ACON (weekly)	4226 1163
Port Kembla (daily)	4223 8457
Nowra (twice a week)	4423 9353

Give syphilis the flick – get tested today.

Clinical Associate Professor Katherine Brown

Director Illawarra Sexual Health Service



ACON Walking Group

Improve your fitness & make new friends!

6:30am Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays-
starts from North Beach Kiosk, North Beach
Wollongong

Please contact the office on **4226 1163** for
more information.



ACON Illawarra Morning Exercise Group

Following on from Healthy Weight Week, the ACON exercise group will be continuing to meet on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings. The group meets outside North Beach Kiosk (near the statue) and begins at 6:30am.

The walking group's focus is on maintaining a consistent pace, getting a good stretch and catching up on news rather than pushing limits and drowning in sweat – so don't let being unfit put you off! It's about getting up and moving, not about breaking records. If you're a slow walker, that's not an issue and we can adjust the group to the needs of those participating.

Please call the office for more information and to let Trevor know if you intending to come. The current walkers like to get moving on time, and it would be a shame if we left without you!

Also, remember to check with your doctor first if you have any underlying conditions that need to be considered before starting a new exercise regime.



SLIPITON



LIVING WITH HIV?

ACON has launched a range of chapters to assist people living with HIV in their daily lives. Chapters include:

- Superannuation • Disability Support Pension (DSP)
- Dental Care • Hepatitis A & HIV • Hepatitis B & HIV
- Hepatitis C & HIV • Employment Rights • Money & Debt

[Click here for more information.](#)



SMART Recovery

New GLBT friendly group at ACON Illawarra

Self Management and Recovery Peer Group

SMART Recovery is a voluntary, peer managed self help group that assists you to recover from alcohol and drug use. This program helps individuals gain independence from addictive behaviours, offering specific tools and techniques for each of the following points:

- Enhancing and maintaining motivation
- Coping with cravings
- Problem solving
- Lifestyle balance

It is absolutely free to attend. If you are interested in joining the group please contact Daniel on 0420 751 998 or ACON Illawarra on 4226 1163. Please remember, ACON is a safe space for the GLBT community and their friends.

ACONews

ACONews is our monthly e-newsletter. Become a subscriber and keep informed about:

- Important health and wellbeing info
- ACON activities and events
- Relevant news and issues

Sign up online at www.acon.org.au/about-acon/Newsroom/newsletter





IDAHO

International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia

17 May 2010

Community Forum needs your input

ACON Illawarra Community Space

Saturday 22 May 2010

1-3pm

The Illawarra has a long history of active groups that have helped support and grow our community over the past years and decades.

Recently however, some of these groups have begun to struggle. With this in mind, members at the UNITY AGM unanimously voted to hold a forum to discuss the role of local groups, their current direction and what the future holds.

Facilitated discussions at the forum will include:

Our community as it was and is, building a picture of who we are, what needs and challenges we can identify, what forms groups may take in the future and their relevance, as well as other topics identified by those present on the day.

Groups will be invited to send their representatives to the forum. If your voice should be among them, please get in touch with your local community group and make sure your views are represented. Please be aware, we are interested to hear from both formal and informal groups of all ages and all persuasions.

Throughout these discussions, it is hoped we can build a better picture of our community as it exists today and get ideas about ways to encourage more community involvement, new possibilities for events, new directions and approaches and approaches for existing groups to work together.

This community forum is for GLBT groups and their friends.

If you, or someone you know would like to have input into these discussions, please contact the ACON Illawarra office on 4226 1163 or email illaadmin@acon.org.au for more information.

This event will be held on the 22nd May 2010 to coincide with the International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO)

Wear it with Pride Illawarra Launch



The Wear It With Pride campaign was launched at ACON Illawarra Community Space on Thursday 25 March 2010 at 6pm

20 community members including ACON volunteers, 3 ACON staff and 2 solicitors from Illawarra Community Legal Centre, Liz Turnbull and Simon Howard attended.

Advertising took place over a number of weeks using e lists of local community groups, word of mouth and our own member's lists. There was also a media release sent to all the media outlets in the region. The Illawarra Legal Centre also advertised the event through their own networks.

David Webber, a local gay activist and community supporter who has been operating Unity for the past 15 years, was the Illawarra's 'local influencer'. Unity is a local GLBT social group that has been offering entertainment and dances and fund raisers in the area. David is an SES officer and wore the number 32 t-shirt. On the morning of the event, David was interviewed by the Illawarra Mercury, the masthead of the region.

The event was led by Radda Jordan, ACON Manager, Southern Region who introduced the evening and the presenters. David spoke of why he was proud to wear the t-shirt and what it meant for him to be considered a 'local influencer'. It was a moving speech that highlighted the struggles and gains the GLBT community had been involved with over many years, including his own journey.

Corey Irlam, the project coordinator then presented a power point show highlighting some of the main reforms to the laws in each of the categories. Corey's presentation was very clear, colourful and full of good humour and information. He was interrupted many times by the audience asking questions and making comments.

During Corey's presentation, the two solicitors from the Illawarra Legal Centre, Liz Turnbull and Simon Howard, were able to clarify some of the reforms and answered some of the more in depth questions relating to the legal issues. We were also lucky enough to have Terry Hancock from the NSW Trustee's office explaining some of the changes to making wills and powers of attorney.

The event was hosted in the community space which still shows a series of posters of the campaign. A number of t-shirts were also on display during the event. The Illawarra Mercury photographer returned the following day for a photo shoot with David and Radda in t-shirts.



ACON manager Southern Region
Radda Jordan



Illawarra's "local influencer" David Webber



Project coordinator Corey Irlam



May 2010						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
					1 WAGS @ ACON 7-9:30pm	2
3	4	5 Spectrum Youth @ ACON 4:30-5:30pm	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13 Doctors Clinic @ ACON 10:30-1pm Young and Proud @ ACON 5-7pm	14	15 WAGS @ ACON 7-9:30pm	16
17	18	19 Spectrum Youth @ ACON 4:30-5:30pm	20	21	22 Community Forum @ ACON Community space 1-3pm	23
24	25	26	27 Doctors Clinic @ ACON 10:30-1pm Young and Proud @ ACON 5-7pm REAL @ ACON 6-8pm	28	29	30
31						



June 2010						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	1	2 Spectrum Youth @ ACON 4:30-5:30pm	3 Nurses Clinic @ ACON 2:30—3:30pm	4	5 WAGS @ ACON 7-9:30pm	6
7	8	9	10 Doctors Clinic @ ACON 10:30-1pm Young and Proud @ ACON 5-7pm	11	12	13
14	15	16 Spectrum Youth @ ACON 4:30-5:30pm	17	18	19 WAGS @ ACON 7-9:30pm	20
21	22	23	24 Doctors Clinic @ ACON 10:30-1pm Young and Proud @ ACON 5-7pm REAL @ ACON 6-8pm	25	26	27
28	29	30 Spectrum Youth @ ACON 4:30-5:30pm				



@ ACON Community Space

18 Ellen St, Wollongong

Tea, Coffee & Cake

4TH THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH FROM

6 PM - 8 PM

P: 0431 887 770 for additional information

E: real.illawarra@gmail.com

W: <http://reailillawarra.blogspot.com/>

RESPECTING EQUALITY AMONGST LESBIANS



SLIP IT ON



**WOLLONGONG AREA
GAYS**

www.wags.net.au

**For information about the WAGS , please contact
Michael at ACON on 4226 1163**

WAGS is a local Gay and Bisexual social, peer support and
networking group for men over 30

WAGS Meets on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month at the
ACON community space


18 Ellen Street, Wollongong (the white building)

from 7 pm to 9 pm

The Sex Industry Outreach Project

All enquiries to Michelle on 4226 1163

For information and support around working in the sex industry



Gay and Lesbian Media

Current and older issues of SSO, SX, AX National, LOTL and Cherrie are all available at the ACON Office.

Come in and pick up a copy today



Community Support Network for people with HIV

If you go into hospital or are sick at home, please let us know

SECONDARY NEEDLE & SYRINGE PROGRAM

Clean Needles & Syringes & Sharps Bin

Referral & Information Service

For more information call 4226 1163



There may be something we can do for you, such as hospital visits, arranging transport to medical appointments, or organising CSN care and assistance.

Please call Michael, Client Services Officer on 4226 1163

Lesbian Health Services

Lesbian health information and referrals are available at the ACON Illawarra Branch.

ACON has a number of lesbian specific resources which are available in the office.

Our office also stocks the latest copies of *Lesbians on the Loose* and the gay and lesbian newspapers.



Computer and Internet

ACON has two computers both with internet access, available for use from 9.30 to 4.30 Monday to Friday



One on one information, support, and referrals for PLWHA clients

Michael, the Client Services Officer is available Monday to Friday, from 10am to 4pm to discuss any issues.

Feel free to drop by for a cuppa, chat, find out the latest community info, or just to pick up the papers.



Vitamins @ ACON

Are you aware of ACON's vitamin supply programme?

ACON has a range of vitamins available for people living with HIV, however we can only supply these products at a discount price on receipt of a script signed by a practitioner.

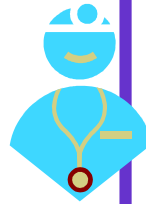
If you are interested in any of these products, call Michael at ACON on 4226 1163 to discuss your requirements.



ACON Illawarra Library

ACON Illawarra Branch has a growing number of books available to borrow from the Library.

With over 400 books, the Library contains a wide range of Gay and Lesbian fiction, non-fiction and resource material available.



Free Medical clinics at ACON

Doctors Clinic

2nd & 4th Thursday of the month

10.30 am - 1.00 pm

Sex Workers Clinic

1st Thursday of the Month

2.30 pm - 3:30 pm

Appointments are essential

Call 4226 1189

for a **confidential** appointment.

Clinic is located at the

ACON Community Space

18 Ellen Street, Wollongong

GLBT YOUTH GROUPS

Held fortnightly on a Thursday, Young and Proud & Label Free Youth are social and support groups for Gay, Lesbian, Bi-Sexual, Transgender (GLBT) youth and those youth who are questioning their sexuality or gender identity

ILLAWARRA AREA



Meetings: 5pm to 7pm

on alternate Thursdays

For more information

call ACON on 4226 1163

Email: youngandproud@hotmail.com

SHOALHAVEN / NOWRA AREA



Meetings: 4pm to 7pm

on alternate Thursdays

For more information

call ACON on 4226 1163

or Nowra Youth Centre on 4422 1988

COMMUNITY CONTACTS

Useful Contact Numbers & Details

ACON

ACON Illawarra Branch: 4226 1163

ACON (Sydney): Ph: 1800 063 060 (freecall)

ACON Counselling @ Illawarra. Available to all GLBT and HIV positive community members Ph: 4226 1163

ACON Treatments Information Ph:1800 816 518

ACON 24 hour Treatment Support Ph: 1800 454 510

DRUG & ALCOHOL SERVICES

Wollongong Crisis Centre, Detox & Rehab Services (24 Hours) Ph: 4272 3000

First Step Programme at Port Kembla Hospital
Ph: 4275 1529 or 0411 408 726

LEGAL

HALC HIV/AIDS Legal Centre- Phone: 1800 063 060 (freecall) or visit www.halc.org.au

Illawarra Legal Centre—Ph: 4276 1939

Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre— Ph: 4422 9529 or 1800 229 529

MEDICAL

Sexual Health Clinics, Illawarra and Shoalhaven Wollongong Ph: 4226 1189

Nowra Ph: 4423 9353

Port Kembla Ph: 4223 8457

Free Dental Care through SESIAHS
(Anyone with a Pension or Health Card) Ph: 1300 369 651

SOCIAL

Label Free Youth (Nowra)- Youth group for GLBT youth and those questioning their sexuality/ gender identity. Ages 15-24. Contact Nowra Youth Services on 4422 1988 or ACON on 4226 1163

Pink Nation- Illawarra Gay and Lesbian weekly radio program presenting queer information, news , entertainment. Thursdays 5pm - 6 pm, 2VOX, 106.9FM

REAL - Respecting Equality Amongst Lesbians. Social & support group for Lesbians
Ph Wendy Mob: 0431 887 770 or ACON: 4226 1163

UNITY Wollongong Inc - Gay and lesbian local social group Ph: 0403 899 015

Email: info@unity-wollongong.org

Website: www.unity-wollongong.org.au

Young & Proud – Group for GLBT youth and those questioning their sexuality/gender identity. Ages 15-18 Ph Andre at ACON: 4226 1163
Email: youngandproud@hotmail.com.

Wollongong Area Gays (WAGS) - Social and support group for gay & bi-sexual men over 30
Ph Michael at ACON: 4226 1163
Website www.wags.net.au

SUPPORT

Gender Centre— Transgender Support and Social network based in Sydney.

Phone: (02) 9569 2366 or www.gendercentre.org.au.

GLLO (Police Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officers)
Wollongong Phone: 4226 7899

Dapto Phone: 4262 9499

Warilla Phone: 4295 2699

Illawarra Women's Health Centre— Phone:4255 6800
Email: info@womenshealthcentre.com.au

Multicultural HIV/AIDS Service

Ph: (02) 9515 3098

Nowra Women's Health Centre—Monday to Friday, open 9am to 4pm. Ph: 4421 0703

PFLAG Illawarra. Support group for parents, family and friends of gay and lesbian people of all ages
Ph: Michael at ACON: 4226 1163

PLWHA (NSW) - Phone:1800 245 677 (freecall) or visit the web: www.plwha.org.au to view talkabout magazine online.

Positive Heterosexuals (POZHET) - For Men and Women who are HIV positive. Ph: 1800 812 404

Positive Support Group (Nowra) for PLWHA
Ph: Michael at ACON: 4226 1163

Sex Industry Outreach Worker. Contact ACON
Ph: 4226 1163 (office) or 0417 694 149 (mobile)

Wollongong Women's Health Centre
Phone: 4228 1499