



gltb health & wellbeing

# shine

## FACING UP TO



# RACISM

New campaign set to get under our skin

### OUT IN THE STICKS

Making life better for GLBT's in the bush

### IN GOOD COMPANY

When it comes to therapy, are 12 heads better than one?

### STREET FIGHTERS

Battling gay hate on the streets of NSW



# TOGETHER WE CAN...

BE **PROUD** OF WHO WE ARE AND  
OVERCOME HIV DISCRIMINATION BY

- IMPROVING OUR  
OWN ATTITUDES
- UNDERSTANDING  
THAT HIV IS  
A VIRUS NOT A  
PERSON
- MAKING A STAND  
AGAINST  
HIV DISCRIMINATION



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[WWW.ACON.ORG.AU/TOGETHER](http://WWW.ACON.ORG.AU/TOGETHER) OR CALL 1800 063 060.

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# TOGETHER WE SHINE!

Welcome to the Autumn '08 edition of Shine, a biannual magazine which profiles the work of ACON.

ACON is a community-based organisation that promotes the health and wellbeing of NSW's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community. We also provide information and support for people living with HIV or at risk of acquiring HIV, including sex workers and people who use drugs.

With the summer party season well and truly behind us, ACON's attention has now turned to a range of exciting new projects and programs for our community. But we can't let the 30th anniversary of Mardi Gras go by without looking back on how we celebrated the big "3-0!"

Under the banner of *Together We Can*, ACON's health promotion campaign acknowledged the unique culture of care that exists in the GLBT community



Volunteer's lead ACON's Mardi Gras float

and provided important information on staying healthy and safe during Mardi Gras. For more info, check out [www.acon.org.au/together](http://www.acon.org.au/together)

We presented a range of workshops and public forums, thousands of people visited ACON Alley at Fair Day and our Mardi Gras fundraising events such as *Hats Off*, *The Great Debate* and *BIG Bingay* raised over \$50,000 for our work in the community.

The ACON Rovers, Safe Sex Sluts and TOM Boys looked after thousands of partygoers at the major

Mardi Gras events and more than 700 staff, volunteers and community members marched, danced and strutted their way along Oxford Street in the various parade floats that were either presented or supported by ACON.

It was a massive undertaking and everyone at ACON would like to thank all the volunteers, supporters and community members who helped us shine so brightly. Together We Can... do anything!

**MICHAEL BADORREK**  
EDITOR

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# GETTING UNDER OUR SKIN

Just because the GLBT community understands discrimination doesn't mean that racism isn't a part of the scene. However, a new campaign aims to tackle racist attitudes...

**I**n a community which regularly puts out the call for diversity and acceptance, it may come as a surprise to discover that racism is as evident in the GLBT community as it is in the general population.

"On the one hand, being a minority within a minority brings with it a much stronger sense of identity and belonging," says ACON Aboriginal Project Team Leader Michelle Sparks. "But it also leaves the way open for a much stronger sense of exclusion and isolation as a result of the negative perceptions and attitudes of other people in our community."

Michelle says research by ACON shows that GLBT people of Asian, Arabic and Aboriginal backgrounds experience a high level of racism from other members of the GLBT community.

"These groups have reported that social exclusion, offensive jokes, verbal abuse and an expectation to conform to stereotypes are the most common forms of racism," she says. "In addition, there's a widespread and unhelpful attitude that people who complain about racism or racist slurs are being oversensitive and shouldn't take it too seriously.

"Obviously, not everybody in the

GLBT community is racist. But the sad and ugly reality is that some are and getting them to change their attitudes is not an easy process. There are, however, many people who are not racist but who turn a blind eye and allow racist behaviour to go unchallenged. This is a much easier problem to target because basically all you're doing is asking people to stand up for something they believe in."

This is the principle behind *One And Many*, a new social awareness campaign that ACON has developed in close consultation with members of Sydney's Asian, Arabic and Aboriginal communities. To be promoted through community media and at community events, the campaign is designed to encourage people to take a stand against racism.

John Wang, from ACON's Asian Project, says the campaign points out that racism is just as hurtful and offensive as homophobia and asks people to not only challenge racist behaviour but to report it as well. "We're not trying to be the racism police and we're not asking people to do in their family or friends," he says. "What we're trying to do is create a

database of social research that will continue to inform our anti-racism work and allow us improve our response to the issue."

People can phone in their report, record it on our website or come and see the staff at ACON. "We also understand that discussing racist behaviour can make some people feel uncomfortable and intimidated," John says. "That's why we've developed an online reporting system so people who have experienced racism can report it discreetly and in their own time."

ACON CEO Stevie Clayton says she hopes the campaign will help bring the GLBT community closer together. "What we're trying to do, on a whole lot of different levels, is really get under people's skin and help them realise that everyone is a unique and valuable member of our community."

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE

You can help ACON fight racism by reporting racist behaviour.

Reports can be made at [www.acon.org.au/racism](http://www.acon.org.au/racism) or by calling 1800 063 060.



## Would you wear it?

*Racism is as hurtful and offensive as homophobia.*

Excluding people or making jokes, assumptions and negative comments based on race may make some people feel superior - but it's racism!

Challenge our own and other people's ideas about race. Let's work towards a community where everyone is accepted & respected.

*Report racism and get more information on how you can make a difference at [www.acon.org.au/racism](http://www.acon.org.au/racism)*

*"The problem of co-morbidity is fairly significant."*

- Nicky Bath, ACON

## DUAL CHALLENGE

When a person has a mental illness as well as a drug problem, the consequences can be serious, not only for themselves but also for their loved ones. Two new projects are set to get ACON much better at helping people find a way out.

**F**or many people in the GLBT community, drinking alcohol and taking recreational drugs is not uncommon. In fact, studies by the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC) reveal gay men and lesbians use more drugs more often than the general population.

Most users don't experience significant problems as a result of their drug use. However, there are some who do. These people may have dependency issues or have medical conditions such as HIV and Hepatitis C which can be complicated by drug use.

Among this group, a significant number also have a mental illness and the combination of the two issues can seriously impact on a person's health and welfare. The clinical term for this is co-morbidity.

"The word has different meanings in different contexts," says Nicky Bath, ACON's Alcohol And Other Drugs Program Manager. "But we generally use it to describe people who are living with both a drug or alcohol issue and with a mental health issue."

Nicky says co-morbidity can produce a range of long-term physical and psychological conditions and can create a great deal of social

dysfunction not only for people living with co-morbidity but also for their partners, family and friends.

The extent of co-morbidity in the GLBT community is not clear due to a lack of research. However, Nicky says the problem is evident. "There are high rates of mental health issues among gay men and lesbians as well as high rates of drug use, so we can assume the problem of co-morbidity is fairly significant. Also the increase in the use of methamphetamine (a.k.a. ice or crystal) has increased the need for both drug treatment and mental health services."

But helping people in the GLBT community to manage their co-morbidity is a challenge. Little research has been done into co-morbidity among gay men and lesbians, and, as a result, treatment options are not as effective as they could be. This has been recognised by both the Commonwealth and NSW governments which have recently provided funding for two new ACON projects.

A grant from NSW Health will finance a two-year partnership with NDARC to study people in the GLBT community who are living with co-morbidity to find out why and how they access treatment.

The project will also assess the capacity of relevant health services to meet the needs of the GLBT community.

A grant from the Commonwealth will allow ACON to provide GLBT-specific training and resources for mainstream health care providers. It will also enable ACON to deliver in-house clinical care by employing specialist staff in Sydney and Newcastle and by training existing staff to recognise the symptoms of co-morbidity.

Nicky says the evidence and the insight gained from the initial research project will be applied to the capacity building project to ensure the outcome is as effective as possible. "That outcome is a more skilled workforce at ACON and a better informed public health sector," she says. "Ultimately that means more opportunities for people in our community to live healthier lives."

### MAKE A DIFFERENCE

There are many alcohol and drug related health issues in our community. We'd like to do more to help but we don't have the resources. Check out p14 or [www.acon.org.au/angels](http://www.acon.org.au/angels) to see how you can help us help others.



# INS AND OUT

A FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL SIX WEEK  
GROUP RUN FOR AND BY SAME SEX  
ATTRACTED WOMEN 26 YEARS AND UNDER

MEET NEW PEOPLE. CONNECT TO YOUR COMMUNITY.  
GET THE LATEST INFORMATION.  
HAVE FUN!

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
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CALL 9206 2007  
FREECALL 1800 063 060  
EMAIL: [smay@acon.org.au](mailto:smay@acon.org.au)  
WEB : [www.acon.org.au](http://www.acon.org.au)



**acon** BUILDING OUR COMMUNITY'S  
HEALTH & WELLBEING

# IN GOOD COMPANY

ACON's popular group therapy sessions prove that 12 heads can be better than one...

**O**n the surface, Dave seems like he has everything to be confident about. The outgoing 30 year old health practitioner from Sydney's Newtown enjoys his job, keeps fit and has plenty of friends and interests. But when it comes to personal relationships, Dave admits that he's had some problems.

"I was having trouble with managing intimacy," he says. "Sometimes I'd be way over the top, especially with boyfriends. But then with other people, my family for instance, I'd be kind of distant and remote. I didn't understand it and couldn't control it.

"I'd tried one-on-one therapy sessions with a counsellor and that helped to a certain extent but I felt I needed something more. I wasn't connecting with the problem in a way that I felt was helping me really understand it."

Dave's case is not uncommon among people in the GLBT community. In fact, mental health is an issue that an increasing number of gay men and lesbians are embracing as part of maintaining good overall health and wellbeing.

For example, studies show that over the past five years more than 50 percent of people in the GLBT community have sought professional help for anxiety or depression. ACON helps to meet this need with a range of therapy programs and each year provides over 3000 occasions of service to people requiring counselling and support.

Last year, ACON introduced a new group therapy program designed to help clients explore various aspects of their lives through sharing their experiences with others. Facilitated by professional counsellors and psychotherapists, the groups run for 12 weeks and explore a range of issues including anxiety,

depression, sadness, anger and intimacy.

"Within the group we recreate patterns of behaviour and forms of relationship that exist in our everyday lives," says ACON counsellor Anne Maree Rundle. "This provides a unique opportunity for people to explore various aspects of themselves within the context of being in a relationship with others. This can lead to the discovery of new and improved ways of relating to other people including partners, family, friends and work colleagues."

The groups are open to people of all genders over the age of 21, although some groups are specifically for men and others for women. "Because of the subject matter, our intimacy groups are gender specific," says ACON counsellor Curt Mason. "These groups have been particularly helpful for gay men by broadening their understanding of intimacy beyond the narrow confines of sexual contact".

Curt says the response from participants of previous groups has been really positive. "In fact, we've now extended the program to run twice a year because we see the benefits that these groups are bringing to people's lives."

So, did Dave find that 12 heads were better than one? "It really opened up doors for me and let me see things a lot more clearly," he says. "I'm still not exactly where I want to be but I'm dealing with my family and friends in a much more meaningful and satisfying way and that's made a real difference in my life."

For more info about ACON's therapeutic groups, visit [www.acon.org.au/grouptherapy](http://www.acon.org.au/grouptherapy)

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE

We'd like to offer more counselling programs for people in our community. But we don't have the resources. Check out p14 or [www.acon.org.au/angels](http://www.acon.org.au/angels) to find out how you can help.



- 7. Location of incident - suburb ==> Darlinghurst
- 8. Location specification ==> Oxford Street
- 9. Type of incident ==> Physical assault
- 10. What happened ==>

Victim was walking along Oxford Street (after leaving the Oxford Hotel and en route towards the Midnight Shift) when four men attacked him from behind near a convenience store. Victim was first hit in the back of the head. He stumbled forward and was then hit again. Victim fell over and, in a state of shock, picked himself up and tried to retaliate. He was then attacked again and perpetrators bashed him unconscious.

- 11. What was said by the perpetrator(s) ==> "Take that, you f\*\*king poofter"

- AVP incident report extract

# STREET FIGHTERS

Putting an end to homophobic street crime is a real battle. ACON's Anti-Violence Project is meeting the problem head on.

The above extract is from a report made to ACON's Anti-Violence Project (AVP), just one of 70 reports made between January and March this year. However, government research indicates that only 13 percent of incidents are reported, meaning the actual figure for that period is probably well over 500. Welcome to the world of gay hate.

The issue of homophobic violence received widespread attention following the brutal bashing of Sydney man Craig Gee in Darlinghurst in December 2007. Since then, local police have been working on ways to address the problem but it continues to fester throughout NSW, especially in Sydney's Oxford St precinct.

"Government stats show that gay men and lesbians are between four and six times more likely than the general population to experience abuse, harassment or assault," says AVP Coordinator Nancy de Castro. "The same research also shows that 85 percent of people in the GLBT community have experienced some form of homophobic violence."

The AVP tackles this problem by taking reports, supporting victims, organising self-defence workshops, promoting anti-homophobia education in schools, running the Safe Place

program and lobbying relevant authorities for safer city planning.

Following a surge in gay hate crimes in the Oxford St precinct late last year, the AVP and the City of Sydney trialled a dedicated Safe Place on Oxford St where victims and witnesses of gay hate crimes could get help. The six-month trial led to an increase in reporting of incidents. Nancy says it was an important outcome.

"One of the biggest problems ACON faces in terms of improving security for the GLBT community is that most victims of and witnesses to homophobic violence don't report it. As a result, the stats are a lot lower than they should be which diminishes the need for the relevant authorities to take action.

To help us improve security, we need people to report these incidents and get them on the record."

Nancy says better reporting also needs to fit in with a range of other strategies if the fight against homophobic violence is to be effective. These include:

- addressing homophobia in schools and in the broader community before it happens
- empowering the GLBT community with personal strategies for avoiding violence

- making spaces like Oxford St safer for the GLBT community
  - ensuring that the police and the courts do their job adequately
  - ensuring appropriate support is readily available for victims of violence
- "We're doing what we can to put these strategies in place but it requires real commitment from government and our community," Nancy says. "It's a tough job but until we live in a society where everyone upholds values of tolerance, understanding and respect, we need to take action."

**MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

Seen it? Heard It? Report it! Reports of violence can be made to the AVP by SMS to 0416 905 105, online at [www.avp.acon.org.au](http://www.avp.acon.org.au) or by calling the AVP on 9206 2116 or 1800 063 060.

There's a moment in the hit film *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen Of The Desert* when the world weary transsexual Bernadette Bassenger comments on the protection that life in the big city provides for the queer community.

"It's funny. We all sit around mindlessly slagging off that vile stink-hole of a city. But in its strange way it looks after us. I don't know if that ugly wall of suburbia has been put up to stop them getting in or us getting out."



Members of Hume Phoenix at this year's Mardi Gras

"The bush seems to have become more conservative towards gays and lesbians in recent years, and people in our community seem to have pulled their heads back into the woodwork," he says.

"What we need help with is anti-

discrimination and anti-violence and providing protection for our community. The issue is being able to be out and proud without the fear of being discriminated against or beaten up. But this isn't easy in a small town where many of the locals are really negative and even hostile towards us."

He says health care is another big problem because local health care providers don't always respond adequately to the needs of GLBT or HIV positive people due to a lack of knowledge, understanding or acceptance. As a result, he says many GLBT people don't get the information or treatment they need to stay healthy. "A lot of people also struggle with loneliness and isolation, either because they're too scared to come out or

If you're GLBT or living with HIV, life in the country isn't always a rural idyll. Small town attitudes can be very cruel,

# OUT IN

Bernadette makes the comment following the brutal outback bashing of fellow traveller Adam by a gang of drunk locals. At the time, it was a potent metaphor for what it meant to be GLBT and living in rural Australia. And while a lot has improved in the 15 years since the film was released, for many GLBT people who live out in the bush, life is still imitating art.

Les is 52 and lives 30km out of Albury-Wodonga in southern NSW with his partner Robert. They're both members of Hume Phoenix, a community group for GLBT people in the Riverina. While they're a long way from the out and loud life of Sydney's Oxford Street, Les says the local GLBT community still has to deal with many of the same social and support needs. The problem is they have to do it without access to the same kind of services and facilities. He says safety is a key issue.



"The redneck homophobes are still out there plucking their banjos."  
- Jill, Lismore

because they live a long way from other like-minded people. And then of course there's the drought which places a tremendous amount of stress on finances and relationships."

To help overcome these issues, Hume Phoenix provides information, support and social networking for its members. While the group receives some assistance from ACON, it gets no direct funding from the government which means fundraising has to be conducted throughout the year. Les says this is easier said than done. "We had a social night at a local hotel and wanted to follow up with another but we were refused because the manager said he didn't want his hotel to become known as 'the local poofter place'. That's the kind of thing our community faces every day down here. But we're doing all we can to change things, day by day."

Les and Robert are part of a new wave

of GLBT people in rural Australia who are no longer fleeing to the gay ghettos in major cities. Instead, they're staying in the bush, determined to contribute to the communities in which they grew up. It's a brave decision and one which deserves to be supported. That's why ACON has launched a new plan to help improve the health and wellbeing of GLBT and HIV positive people in regional and rural NSW.

Nic Parkhill, ACON's Regional Services Director, says the new plan identifies a comprehensive range of issues and lays out strategies on how to address the problems. "For a start, concerns about confidentiality and homophobia can often discourage a person from seeking help from local doctors and health care providers,



Hume Phoniex members sell Red Ribbon merchandise in the Riverina during AIDS Awareness Week

in consulting with local communities and researching their needs. Now we've got a plan that sets out a series of projects, services and partnerships that will enable us to progress our work throughout regional NSW." These initiatives include:

care and information should be available to everyone, irrespective of gender, race, sexuality, cultural background or, in this instance, where they choose to live," says Nic. "That's what this new plan is all about and that's what we'll be working towards over the next few years."

For some people, it can't happen soon enough. Jill lives on a farm outside a small village in the Northern Rivers and helps out with some of ACON's local lesbian health projects. She says any move to provide better services for GLBT people in regional areas is extremely welcome. Like Les in Albury, she says homophobic violence is one of the biggest issues facing GLBT people in the bush and admits that she fears for her safety in some circumstances. "I

# THE STICKS

access to services can be very limited and like-minded friends can be very few and far between. But a new plan is set to improve the situation...

particularly in relation to HIV/AIDS or their sexual health," he says. "Also, a lack of supportive social networks can make it hard for some people to understand or even acknowledge their health needs. And then there's the tyranny of distance which often makes it difficult to get to whatever services are available."

Nic says ACON already helps thousands of GLBT and HIV positive people in regional NSW through a network of branches and outreach services in Wollongong, Newcastle, Lismore, Port Macquarie and Tweed Heads. He says ACON also has an extensive range of partnerships with health and welfare services throughout the state. However, he admits a lot more can be done, especially in areas where ACON doesn't already have a branch. "We've invested a lot of time and effort

- new campaigns to increase the visibility of people with HIV in regional NSW as well as programs to help overcome the social isolation they often experience
  - the development of a comprehensive website to provide relevant and up-to-date information on issues that affect the lives of GLBT and HIV positive people in regional and rural areas
  - hosting and promoting support groups for people who are coming out, especially young men and women
  - continuing to work with Aboriginal communities to address their specific needs regarding HIV/AIDS and sexuality
  - developing an outreach model to provide services to communities in regional and rural NSW where ACON doesn't have a branch
- "Good, timely and effective health

still have to remain closeted for fear of assault in some places" she says. "The redneck homophobes are still out there plucking their banjos, let me tell you!"

ACON's Rural and Regional Action Plan is available on the ACON website: [www.acon.org.au](http://www.acon.org.au)

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE

We'd like to expand our successful Safe Place program to more towns in regional NSW. But we don't have the resources. Check out p14 or go to [www.acon.org.au/angels](http://www.acon.org.au/angels) to find out how you can help.



Members of the ACON-supported Asian Marching Boys perform during this year's Chinese New Year celebrations.



Staff and volunteers from ACON's Community Support Network at the launch of a new training DVD for volunteer HIV/AIDS carers.



Young GLBT people celebrate at 21 Down, ACON's annual alcohol and drug free Mardi Gras youth party.



ACON staff help out with the Gay Men's Periodic Survey during Fair Day.



Participants learn about staying safe at the Young Women's Alcohol & Other Drugs Forum.



Two bootylicious divas from the ACON supported Blackbooty Mardi Gras float.



The cast of *Butterflies of the Mughal Garden*, a play created and performed during this year's Mardi Gras festival by Salam Namaste, an ACON support group for GLBT people with South Asian heritage.



Detail from *I Kandi's Got Moe?*, part of the *Fantasy* exhibition organised by ACON's Young Women's Project.



NSW police officers team up with staff from ACON's Anti-Violence Project to launch the Oxford St Safe Place.



Over 300 staff and supporters help promote health messages for the GLBT community as part of ACON's Mardi Gras float.

# PUT YOUR HAND UP

COMMUNITY

Want to help others in the GLBT community? By becoming an ACON volunteer, you can make a difference in many different ways...

**W**hether they're carers, counsellors, performers, fundraisers, cleaners, gardeners, event staff, researchers, admin assistants or project workers, ACON's volunteers play a vital role in the health and wellbeing of NSW's GLBT community.

Ray Sarsin and Lorraine Villaret are just two of ACON's volunteers and between them have supported many different ACON endeavours. Ray, a 66 year old retiree from Annandale, has been volunteering for over seven years and was named 2007's Volunteer Of The Year by ACON staff. Lorraine, a 19 year old welfare student from Western Sydney, has been volunteering for just over 12 months. Here they share a little about what volunteering means to them.

**What motivated you to become an ACON volunteer?**

**R:** "Like a lot of people my age, I lost friends and workmates to AIDS and wanted to do something to help out."

**L:** "I was a participant in ACON's *Ins & Out* program for young lesbians early last year. Going through the program really motivated me to get out there and do my part for our community."

**What kind of work do you do?**

**R:** "I started out by helping to distribute ACON posters, information booklets and other resources. I still do that but now I also do fundraising and promotional mailouts, help make up the safe sex packs and set up for fundraising events."

**L:** "I sold ribbons for the Red Ribbon Appeal in November last year. I've also done project, research and admin work for ACON's Young Women's Project which helped me learn a lot about working in community health."

**What's it like working with the staff and other volunteers?**

**R:** "It's fabulous – just like a big family really. Some of the volunteers have been here for more than 14 years. And where else would a CEO sit with a bunch of old farts and make red ribbons?"

**L:** "It's fantastic. Everyone is passionate about what they do. The working environment is fun and very laid back."

**What do you get out of being a volunteer?**

**R:** "I'm always learning new things. And it's very satisfying to know I'm helping people look after themselves."

**L:** "Helping out others is very fulfilling. Also the knowledge and experiences I gained from volunteering have made me feel much better about myself."

**What's the best thing about being an ACON volunteer?**

**R:** "Belonging to a fab group where's there's no discrimination against who you are, what you are, or how old you are – just everyone working together as a team and having fun."

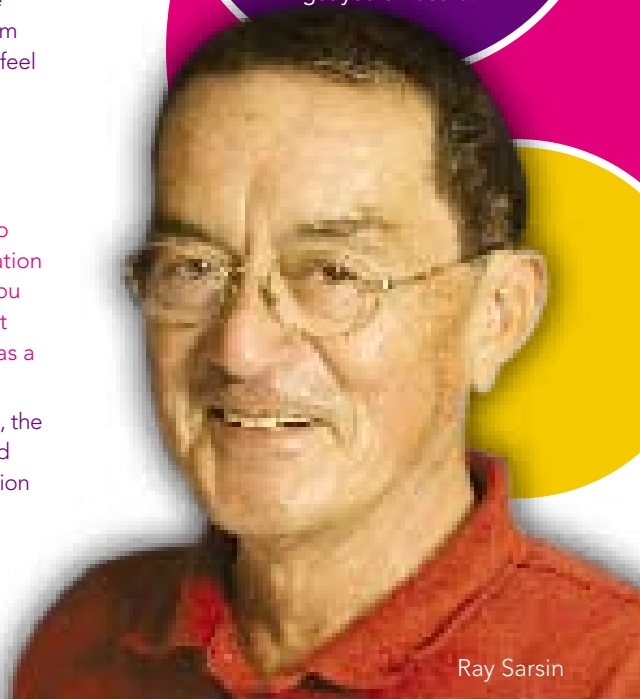
**L:** "The people you work with, the new friendships you make and basically the fun and the passion the people have."

Lorraine Villaret (right) with friend



## MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Want to be an ACON volunteer? There's heaps of different ways you can help out. Just contact Kim on (02) 9206 2022 or [volunteers@acon.org.au](mailto:volunteers@acon.org.au) and she'll get you on board!



Ray Sarsin

Derick Dunphy (third from left) parties with friends at his pirate-themed fundraising event

Get an info pack from ACON

Think of an event

# TREASURE HUNTERS\$

ACON puts the fun back into fundraising with a new program that lets you choose your own money-making adventure...

Have a great time

Invite all your friends

Help others in your community by raising money for ACON

**H**ow many times have you heard (or even said) something like this: "Honestly, I'd really like to do some community work – it's not like I don't care, but I just don't have the time. I've got to have a life, you know!"

Sound familiar? Well now there's a way you can have your cake and eat it too because ACON's new Community Fundraising program gives you the freedom to have a great time with your mates while making a valuable contribution to your community.

"Basically, we're encouraging people to create their own fundraising events for ACON or to add a fundraising element to an existing social activity," says ACON Business Development Manager Mark Thomas.

"For example, if you're organising a Melbourne Cup lunch, you could include a \$5 donation to ACON on the cover price, or you could start a monthly ten-pin bowling night where each person in the group brings along \$5 as a donation. Maybe you could organise a karaoke competition with an entry fee of \$5 which goes to ACON, or get sponsors to support you and your mates in a one-month detox. You could even have a garage sale and donate the proceeds.

"The possibilities are endless. We also provide all the necessary paperwork which means the only thing you have to worry about is having fun."

Recently, the friends of corporate account director Derick Dunphy got together to plan his birthday party. "The idea started off as just a regular get together but eventually it morphed into this great big pirate-themed day party," says Derick. "I wasn't in need of anything present-wise so we decided to turn the party into a fundraising event.

"I know that a lot of work that ACON does isn't paid for by the government so we decided to donate the proceeds to ACON. We mentioned it was a fundraiser for ACON on the invitation and a couple of scantily dressed pirates passed the plate around on the day. Everyone was more than happy to contribute and we raised about \$1000. We even got a stuffed parrot!"

The money raised for ACON is then used to help fund a range of much-needed services and programs.

"We get a significant amount of funding every year from NSW Health, but that money can only be spent on work we do in relation to HIV/AIDS," Mark says. "Our broader work in relation to GLBT health and wellbeing –

such as alcohol and other drugs, lesbian health, anti-violence, mental health, ageing, community care and advocacy – is financed by revenue we generate through donations and fundraising.

"We've already got a couple of well-known fundraising activities in place such as the Red Ribbon Appeal, our ACON Angels program and the ever-popular *Bingay*. But the more money we raise, the more people we can help. That's why we've set up our new Community Fundraising program, so people can have a really fun and creative way of being involved in building our community's health and wellbeing."

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Become a fun-lanthropist!  
Call Kim on (02) 9206 2022 for a Community Fundraising info pack or download one from the ACON website: [www.acon.org.au/communityfundraising](http://www.acon.org.au/communityfundraising)

# Help support our angels

*Nicky*

**ACON's Alcohol & Other Drugs Project Manager**

Nicky and a large team of volunteer Rovers attend a range of events, assisting people to party safely. At ACON hundreds of our angels provide a range of services and programs that are as diverse as the community we serve. By committing to a regular donation of as little as \$10 per month, you can support our angels' work.

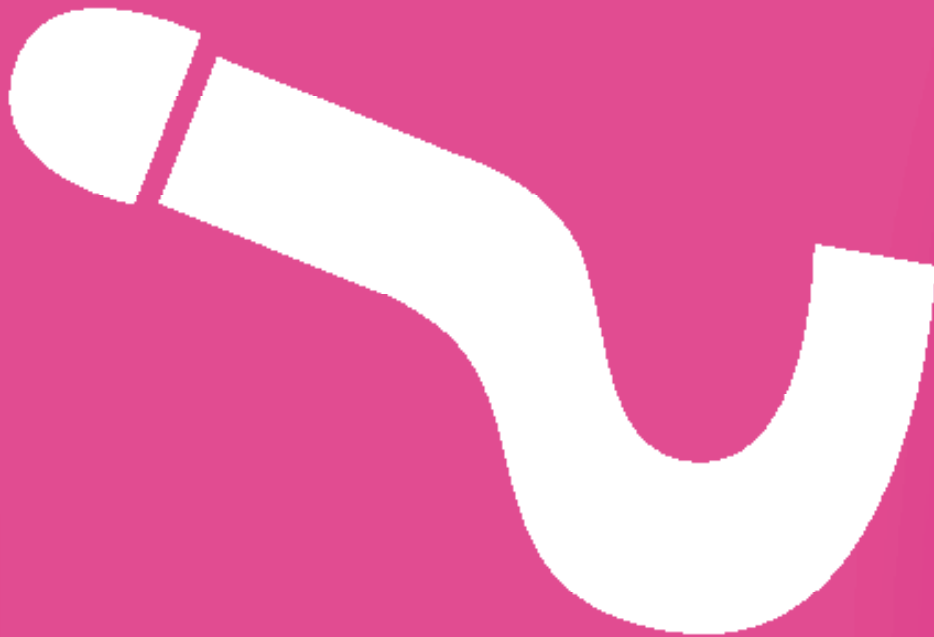
As a non-government, community organisation ACON depends on the support of individuals like you\*. Your ongoing gift will ensure that we have the funding available to build these vital services and plan for the future.

**To support ACON's work in building the health and wellbeing of our community visit [www.acon.org.au/angels](http://www.acon.org.au/angels) or call 9206 2022 .**

\*ACON is a not-for-profit organisation. All donations are used for the benefit of the community.

**acon**  
BUILDING OUR COMMUNITY'S  
HEALTH & WELLBEING

**Are you thinking he's negative too?**



***You just don't know.***

1 in 5 guys who recently contracted HIV believed that the other guy was HIV negative.\* Protect yourself and your partners by using condoms and lube.