

POSITIVE WOMEN VICTORIA

ANNUAL REPORT



2022-2023

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

Positive Women Victoria
Coventry House
Ground Floor, 95 Coventry Street
Southbank VIC 3006
E | info@positivewomen.org.au
W | positivewomen.org.au
PH | (03) 9863 8747

About

Positive Women Victoria (PWV) is the only community-based organisation specifically funded to support women living with HIV in Australia and was established by and for women living with HIV. PWV provides peer support, information and advocacy for women in Victoria living with HIV.

Since 1988, PWV has responded to changing needs and recognises the impact gender has on the way women, including cisgender and transgender or those who identify as non-binary, experience HIV, as we work to address specific needs and emerging needs in Victoria.

PWV is funded by the Victorian Department of Health.

Our Vision

All women and girls living with HIV in Australia are free from stigma and supported in their unique journey.

Our Mission

Supporting, representing and promoting effective change for women and girls living with HIV to enable their needs to be met.

Structure & Management

PWV is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).

It is an incorporated association governed by a Board of Management. PWV offers support and advocacy for all women living with HIV regardless of whether or not they are members of the organisation.

COVER ART

'LET US BLOOM' - BY JANE

Positive women are unique, strong and bristling with potential. We are like trees and have a root system that acts as an anchor and stores water and nutrients: stores our inner strength. We are Thriving. We stand tall. We hold all our wishes in our hands to bloom beautifully!



PWV is proud to support its members and clients who are emerging and established artists.

CONTENTS

4 - 5

Words from the Chair

Stephanie Raper

6 - 7

Words from the Executive Officer

Kirsty Machon

8 - 9

Treasurer's Report

Rachel Meisner

10 - 11

Peer Support & Events The Year In Review

12 - 22

Financials

23

Board & Staff

24 - 25

Community Partnerships

26 - 27

Advocacy Projects The Year In Review

28

Contact



WORDS FROM THE CHAIR



STEPHANIE RAPER - CHAIR

Positive Women Victoria has had an extremely successful year. The peer support services we deliver are life-changing and invaluable to Victorian women living with HIV. Our staff provide advocacy and support for members to help decrease isolation and stigma. Positive Women Victoria is grateful to our passionate and dedicated peer support workers who offer crucial one-on-one peer support and group programs to our members.

I am thrilled to report that our annual PWV Retreat went ahead in March this year, a long-standing and sentimental tradition for many of our members. This weekend provides women living with HIV a space where they can share their experiences with fellow members without fear of judgement or discrimination.

Members are also able to foster long-lasting friendships and gain crucial social support from their peers. This in turn helps strengthen Positive Women Victoria's inclusive, supportive and caring community. Ensuring the retreat is offered to members every year is a top priority for the Board of Positive Women Victoria. I remain committed, and look forward to, advocating for the provision of this integral tradition for many years to come. The next PWV Retreat is scheduled for March 2024.

Our [Reaching Your Potential](#) program recently demonstrated how powerful peer support for women living with HIV can be. Ten talented Positive Women Victoria members worked together to create an incredible filmed visual poetry piece titled *Thriving*, which is available to view on our website.

[Thriving](#) will also be presented on World Aids Day on Friday, 1st December at 12:00pm at Federation Square, Melbourne.

Thanks to ViiV Healthcare's generous grant, the Reaching Your Potential program continues to enable women who have previously kept their HIV status hidden to speak publicly about their experiences.



Positive Women Victoria is dedicated to increasing our relationships with stakeholders; including but not limited to fellow HIV positive support organisations. With this in mind, we have held several joint peer support events with Living Positive Victoria in the last 12 months and are excited to collaborate with them in future projects.

This year NAPWHA extended invitations to the PWV Board, our executive officer and our communications and engagement coordinator to participate in their NAPWHA conferences as well as attend their Annual General Meeting in Sydney.

The Positive Living Centre has been home for many special Positive Women Victoria events, including our Annual General Meetings since Positive Women Victoria formed in 1988. For over two years, Thorne Harbour Health have provided Positive Women Victoria with a space in their Abbotsford offices at no cost. This has been crucial for our events and board meetings and as such we are extremely grateful to the team at Thorne Harbour Health for their continued generosity. The inclusion of tables reserved for our members at the "Ruby Ball" this year was a delight for all who attended. It was a joy and a privilege to be part of the Thorne Harbour Health's 40-year anniversary celebrations.

Positive Women Victoria remains the only women's HIV peer support organisation in Australia. I am proud to be the Chair of the PWV Board and look forward to building on the progress we have made this year with the continuous goal of providing outstanding service delivery to our members.

Stephanie Raper

Chair



PWV MEMBERS RELAX BEFORE VIEWING THE PICASSO EXHIBITION FOLLOWED BY LUNCH. ONE OF THE MANY PEER SUPPORT EVENTS HELD DURING 2022-2023.

"At the PWV Annual Retreat, members are able to foster long-lasting friendships and gain crucial social support from their peers. This in turn helps strengthen Positive Women Victoria's inclusive, supportive and caring community."



WORDS FROM THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER



KIRSTY MACHON - EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Positive Women Victoria's client and member base has increased significantly over the last five years, in large part driven by an increase in referrals and self-referrals, reflecting the value, importance and power of peer support, but also demonstrating the strong desire among women living with HIV to engage with and support one another as a community.

Peer support is challenging work. For each one of our 403 members or clients there is a personal story and unique needs. Helping women to adjust to or navigate an HIV diagnosis is but one part of a complex picture. Our staff work in an intricate referral and support network to encompass many social support services: housing support, finding work, financial counselling, family support, drug and alcohol counselling, or services that can help women who are refugees, who are new migrants, or who are in the often long and complicated process of migrating.

This year, we introduced an important new role, the Community Partnerships Coordinator, focused on developing referral networks, identifying new partnerships to support women with HIV based on emerging needs and issues, and providing information and support to partner agencies about Positive Women Victoria and its work.

The social and epidemiological context of HIV in Australia is changing. While we can continue to take enormous heart in declining rates of new diagnoses, particularly among gay and bisexual men, we must stay focused on the goal of achieving the virtual elimination of HIV in not just some populations, but for all.

An important piece of Positive Women Victoria's work in the past 12 months was to take the lead on a submission to the drafting of the 9th National HIV Strategy, which stressed the importance of making sure the strategy goals were being delivered for women, and for heterosexual men, who are now making up an increasing proportion of new HIV notifications, and are at higher risk of being diagnosed late.

Given the availability of effective antiretroviral treatment, addressing the problem of late diagnoses through awareness and timely testing is crucial.

Underpinning this is an ongoing theme: stigma. Many of the women who access our service report assumptions and attitudes that in some cases, delayed their HIV diagnosis, affecting their health outcomes.

Our staff, clients and members lead the fight against HIV-related stigma on many fronts, by sharing stories, contributing to debate, supporting policy reform, and working with healthcare providers to increase and improve understanding.

One of the highlights of the past 12 months has been to see a new community of courageous women living with HIV empowered by one another to share their stories through fantastic initiatives like the Reaching Your Potential leadership program, or by speaking at conferences, events and in the media. You can see a number of these videos on our website, and we encourage you to watch, learn and use them in your work. [WATCH PERSONAL STORIES](#)

A truly special achievement was [Thriving](#), a collaborative filmed performance poetry project supported by ViiV healthcare, performance poet Fleassy Malay and film-maker Ryan Lee Adams, in which women living with HIV shared their voices and their images to contribute to the ongoing project of making the experience of HIV visible and demystifying it once and for all.

Thriving will be screened on World AIDS Day 2023 at Federation Square and is already proving a major resource to get an important message out there: that HIV science has people undetectable and undetectable means HIV is not transmittable.

At a very different time in the HIV pandemic, the activist group ACT UP reminded us that knowledge is power. Everyone, whether or not they are living with HIV, deserves to know the facts. Ending stigma is inseparable from ending HIV.

Kirsty Machon

Executive Officer

"Thriving will be screened on World AIDS Day 2023 at Federation Square and is already proving a major resource to get an important message out there: that HIV science has people undetectable and undetectable means HIV is not transmittable."



Positive Women Victoria – advocacy during 2022–2023

PWV has a strong commitment to advocacy and this year we were involved in research projects and presentations as well as advocating for our members.

Personal member advocacy highlights:

- Supported a member to obtain working rights on their visa and assisted with a Rose Fund grant for training.
- Supported a member to film an advocacy short film '[Would You Touch Me](#)' raising awareness of HIV stigma.

Development of Research, Resources and Presentations:

- Missing Voices research project, which explored how women engage with HIV clinical and cure research was finalised. The research was in partnership with ASHM (Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health Medicine).
- Contributed to ASHM's Women and HIV online learning resource for healthcare providers.
- [Thriving, a performance poem](#), depicts the lives of seven women living with HIV to raise awareness of the impact of HIV-related stigma and the U=U (undetectable equals untransmissible) message.
- Presentation at ASHM 2022 conference on ensuring the National HIV Strategy delivers transparently for women.
- Viiv Healthcare's PosQol Steering Group. Provided feedback on the PosQol Quality of Life tool for people living with HIV including the Video Ask Tool.
- Contributed to the ViiV Healthcare Knowledge Translation project focusing on Person Centred Care.
- Contributed to HIV Australia magazine (HOLA), and Positive Living Magazine (NAPWHA).

PWV and its staff and members also participates in:

- Victorian Department of Health HIV Working Group
- Victorian Department of Health Advisory Committee on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Viral Hepatitis
- Victorian HIV Cure Consortium Community Advisory Board
- National Network of Women Living with HIV Australia. Supported by NAPWHA (National Association of People With HIV Australia).
- Alfred Hospital HIV Services Advisory Group
- International Community of Women Living with HIV (ICW) Global Board and the ICW Asia-Pacific Board
- INFORM+ (towards a global consensus on HIV and breastfeeding and developing a global data registry)
- HIV Interagency Anal Cancer Working Group
- HIV Phylogenetics HIV Partnership Grant Investigator Group
- Stigma Reduction Toolkit Advisory Group



SUPPORTED BY PWV, THE SHORT FILM '[WOULD YOU TOUCH ME](#)' RAISED AWARENESS OF HIV STIGMA.



That science has us undetectable and untransmittable. That we can make love

[THRIVING](#), A FILMED PERFORMANCE POEM, DEPICTS THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF SEVEN REMARKABLE WOMEN WITH HIV.

TREASURER REPORT

PWV has reported a small surplus for 2022-23 financial year of \$15,613, a result of factors including donations, higher interest rates, and income generated from PWV partner activities including project grants, sitting fees, writing fees, and services provided.

Our total revenue was significantly above that of the last financial years, which were impacted by COVID, and included grants from ViiV Healthcare which allowed 10 women to complete the fantastic Reaching Your Potential leadership program, and to support Thriving, an innovative art collaboration to develop and film a poem depicting the experience of women with HIV, and to tackle HIV stigma through an uplifting video, available on the [Positive Women Victoria website](#).

We have also secured small amounts of income from partner agencies for services including writing, reviewing, contributing lived experience to advisory boards, and for providing staff, Board and volunteer support at partner events.

The Victorian Department of Health continues to provide funding support through our operating grant to allow Positive Women Victoria to undertake our important work as the sole funded agency in Australia focused on peer support and advocacy for women living with HIV. That support totalled \$366,912.11 for the financial year.

Positive Women Victoria's peer support program is also supplemented with support from our partner organisations Living Positive Victoria and Thorne Harbour Health, in recognition of the value of this work in engaging women of many diverse backgrounds. Our membership continues to obtain new referrals and increased by 4 per cent this year, with 403 clients and members engaged with our services as at June 30, 2023.

Positive Women Victoria has a staff of five, all working part-time hours, and an FTE (Full Time Equivalent) of three staff. As well as the Executive Officer, PWV employs two Peer Support Workers, a Communications and Engagement Coordinator, and has created an important new role, the Community Partnerships Coordinator, focused on connecting PWV and its members with a diverse range of service providers across Victoria to ensure referral pathways to clinical, health and social support for our members, many of whom have multiple needs.

PWV is in a strong position from a cash flow perspective, with assets on hand of nearly \$381,596. This financial confidence has given PWV the ability to continue to provide additional assistance when needed and to ensure we are able to advocate for and support our members. Our Rose Fund, a donations account, which at the end of the financial year had over \$51,000 available, supports members through small grant programs to achieve their personal wellbeing goals or to undertake activities of benefit to the community of positive women. This year, we were able to support women to complete education and training, as well as supporting the fantastic [Would You Touch Me?](#) project, a short film by member and PWV Vice Chair Stevie Lee Walsh (formerly Stephanie Lee Dafnomillis), highlighting the impacts of stigma.

We are deeply grateful for their ongoing commitment of all our funders, donors and partners, and for the work this allows us to do supporting women living with HIV from over 30 countries around the world, and advocating for individual and public health gains.

Rachel Meisner

Treasurer

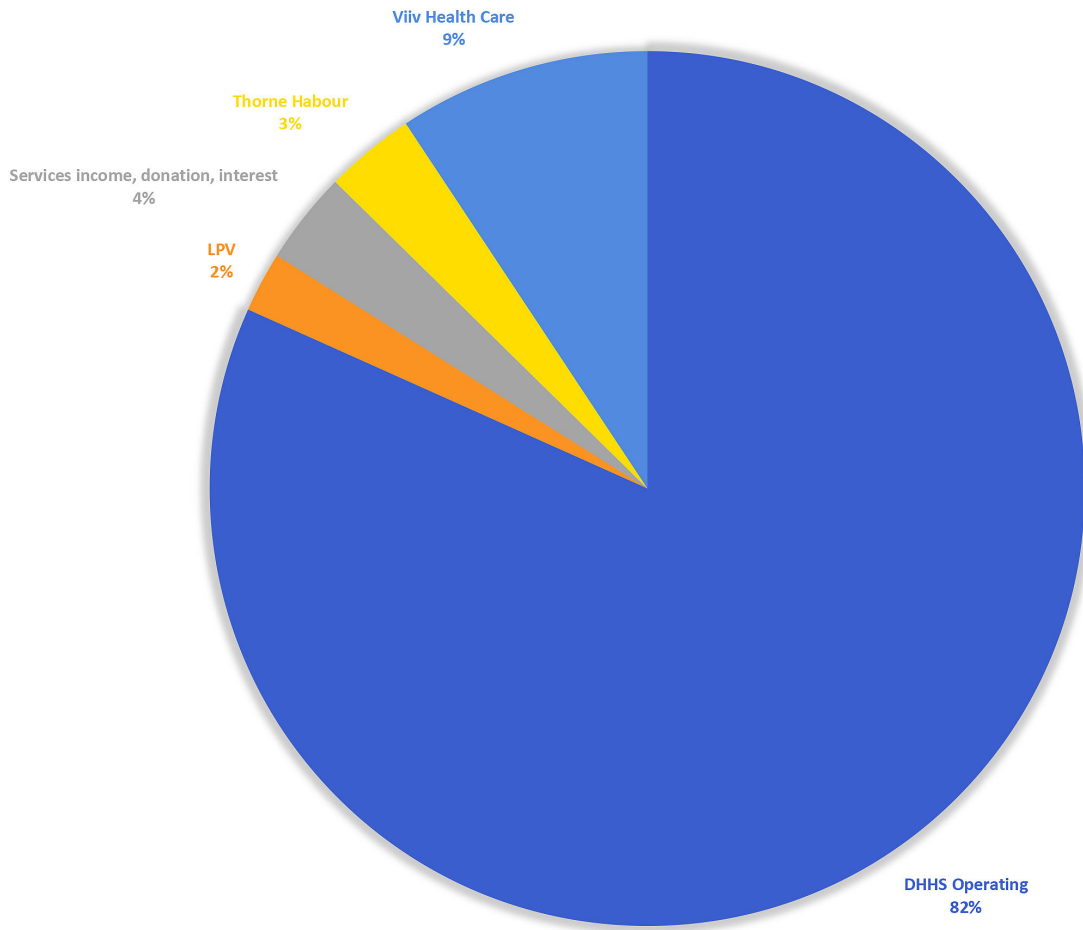


RACHEL MEISNER - TREASURER



"Our membership continues to obtain new referrals and increased by 4% this year, with 403 clients and members engaged with our services as at June 30 2023."

INCOME SOURCE



PEER SUPPORT

Positive Women Victoria employs two part-time peer support workers, Emily Parsons and Bernadette Roberts, who work with our diverse client and membership base: 403 women as at June 30, 2023.

Members and clients are supported one-on-one through telephone, online, or in-person meetings, and the peer support workers also attend events, helping ensure women feel welcomed and part of a community of women living with HIV.

Just under 60 percent of the 14 new clients and members who have been referred to Positive Women Victoria, or made contact after learning about our services themselves, are women born outside of Australia. They are from countries including Indonesia, Myanmar, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Malaysia.

These women may have been recently or newly diagnosed with HIV, while others have been living with HIV for longer, and want to connect, re-connect or meet other women who live with HIV.

The role of the peer support worker is to listen, offer insights from lived experience of HIV, and importantly, to reassure women, especially those newly-diagnosed, that they are not alone.

An important part of the peer support role is also to refer and connect women with other services, including health and social services. Increasingly, women engaging with Positive Women Victoria have a wide range of sometimes complex needs along with highly diverse life stories. Positive Women Victoria supports women who are living in insecure housing or who are homeless, women who may be experiencing financial stresses or who may not be able to work for health or legal reasons (such as their visa or residency status), and women who have experienced complex trauma.

While as a service, we are often not in a position to resolve all of these issues, the peer support team spends a lot of time with clients and will make referrals to appropriate agencies. We have partner organisations providing HIV peer and community services (Living Positive Victoria and the Positive Living Centre), and refer regularly to hospital-based HIV social work teams, counselling services, financial counselling services, employment support services (Fitted for Work), legal services (the HIV/AIDS Legal Centre), and agencies that support and work with people from migrant and refugee communities (including the Multicultural Health and Support Service and AMES).

Throughout the year the peer support team runs many social events and lunches to help the women connect with us and also to connect with each other. These events allow the women to meet in a safe setting where they can have a meal together, talk, connect and learn about each other. The women that come to these events often leave feeling happier and with a feeling that they now have a community of like-minded women who truly understand them and the issues they may be facing.

Through generous donations made to Positive Women Victoria over the years, we are lucky to be able to support members



PWV'S PEER SUPPORT EVENTS INCLUDE OUR ANNUAL RETREAT, REGULAR LUNCHES, CRAFT WORKSHOPS AND A WOMEN'S WELLBEING DAY.

through the Rose Fund, a program that provides small grants of up to \$1000 to support women in their aspirations for education, personal development and growth, or to contribute to the wellbeing of the community of women living with HIV. This year, the Rose Fund has helped members to undertake employment training courses, driving lessons, classes to improve strength and mobility, and with equipment for an art project to tackle HIV stigma.

PWV's peer support is a valued and important service, contributing to the individual wellbeing of members and clients through listening, guidance, reassurance, comfort, connection, and links to services. The peer support team is also able to contribute to policy and program improvement in Victoria. They do this by ensuring the collective lived experiences of women with HIV, and what is important to women, is reflected in the Victorian HIV response more generally, to help tackle stigma, and ensure services understand and are meeting the unique needs of women living with HIV.

Peer support work is important but it can also be personal and intense. Staff in the program are supported with regular group clinical supervision to discuss case studies and approaches, and through a staff workplace counselling program. Training throughout the year has been offered in mental health, first aid, trauma-informed practice, and establishing healthy work-life-client boundaries.

If there are any barriers that our members and clients may face in their lives, an important part of peer support is to help women identify new possibilities, and confidently meet life's challenges.

It can be life-changing for members or clients to meet or speak with other members or clients who may share language, culture or a specific life experience as well as a HIV diagnosis, and we facilitate this connection where we can.

Peer Support Team
Bernadette Roberts & Emily Parsons

"The role of the peer support worker is to listen, offer insights from lived experience of HIV, and importantly, to reassure women, especially those newly-diagnosed, that they are not alone."



THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Our members and their diversity

At June 30, 2023, PWV had 403 members, an increase of 4 per cent over 12 months:

- Referrals came from 11 different partner organisations and agencies including hospitals, health services, and multicultural support services.
- Peer support staff provided 1,126 episodes of individual peer contact.
- We welcomed 14 new members from six countries.
- Languages spoken by our new members include Burmese, Indonesian and Shona: our members in total speak more than 26 languages.
- Six members were supported through the Rose Fund.

“The peer support team runs many social events and lunches to help the women connect with us and also to connect with each other.”



The image shows a webinar poster for 'Liver Health and HIV'. At the top, it says 'Liver Health and HIV' in white on a black background. Below that, 'Positive Women Victoria' is written in white on a dark orange background. The main title 'LIVER HEALTH AND HIV WEBINAR' is in large, bold, white letters. Underneath, it says 'Tuesday, 9 May 2pm to 3pm' and 'hosted by Positive Women Victoria'. The central image is a stylized illustration of a human torso with a liver highlighted in purple and red, set against a yellow background with a grid pattern. In the bottom right corner of the illustration, there is a logo for 'PositiveWomen' with the tagline 'Support and information for women living with HIV'. Below the illustration, it says 'with panellists Dr David Iser, Emily Parsons and Lia Purnomo'.

Events and Webinars

PWV held 15 peer support events this year with 105 members attending our regular lunches, art gallery visits, a Women's Wellbeing Day and our annual Retreat held at Marysville in March 2023.

We also hosted three webinars as part of our health and wellbeing for women living with HIV webinar series:

- [Emotional Support & Counselling](#)
- [Women and HIV Cure Research](#)
- [Your Liver Health](#)

PWV's Rose Fund helps start a member's career in security

PWV member Deodata Masvosva, originally from Zimbabwe, never considered a career as a security guard until she walked into a bank earlier this year.

'I saw this woman working as a security guard and I just knew I needed to do that job. I just couldn't stop thinking about it,' Deodata says.

Deodata researched courses and applied for a Rose Fund grant to pay the course fees. She has now completed the Certificate 2 in Security Operations, a qualification that means Deodata can work as a security guard at venues and events such as shopping centres, banks, music concerts, festivals, weddings and large parties. 'Coming up to Christmas, there is a lot of work for security guards,' she says.

Deodata says with her savings from work, she plans to complete further training, which will allow her to take on more advanced roles such as being a Protection Officer.



DEODATA MASVOSVA ACHIEVED A CERTIFICATE 2 IN SECURITY OPERATIONS

FINANCIAL REPORT

POSITIVE WOMEN (VICTORIA) INCORPORATED (ABN 81 817 554 189)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

Financial Report

- Board of Management Report
- Income and Expenditure Statement
- Statement of Financial Position
- Statement of Changes in Equity
- Statement of Cash Flows
- Notes to the Financial Statements

Statement by the Board of Management

Independent Audit Report

Disclaimer

Detailed Income & Expenditure Statement



BOARD OF MANAGEMENT REPORT

The Board of Management present this report of Positive Women (Victoria) Incorporated for the financial year ended 30th June 2023.

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Chair	Stephanie Raper appointed February 2022
Vice Chair	Stephanie Lee Dafnomilis appointed November 2022
Past Vice Chair	Emma Sheldon-Collins - Left Board November 2022
Past Vice Chair	Mel Spencer to November 2021
Treasurer	Rachel Meisner
Secretary	Nicole (Nicki) Russell re-appointed February 2022.
Board Member	Regina Kipruto co-opted August 2021. Elected November 2021 at the AGM

OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSOCIATION

Positive Women Victoria provides information, support and advocacy for Victorian women living with HIV in Victoria.

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

No significant changes occurred in the nature of this activity during the year.

OPERATING RESULT

The Surplus (Deficit) for ordinary activities after providing for income tax amounted to: \$15,613, Surplus (Deficit) for 2022 (\$35,289).

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Management



Stephanie Raper
Chair



Rachel Meisner
Treasurer

STATEMENT OF PROFIT AND LOSS & OTHER INCOME

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	NOTES	2023 \$	2022 \$
REVENUE FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES	2	449,068	378,844
TOTAL REVENUE		449,068	378,844
EMPLOYEE EXPENSE		(296,487)	(333,337)
DEPRECIATION AND AMORTISATION EXPENSES		(6,572)	(6,116)
LEGAL EXPENSES		-	-
PROJECT EXPENSES		(74,742)	(29,405)
OTHER EXPENSES FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES		(55,654)	(45,275)
TOTAL EXPENSES		(433,455)	(414,133)
OPERATING SURPLUS BEFORE INCOME TAX EXPENSE (INCOME TAX REVENUE)		15,613	(35,289)
SURPLUS/(LOSS) AFTER INCOME TAX EXPENSE (INCOME TAX REVENUE)		15,613	(35,289)
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME		-	-
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME (LOSS)		15,613	(35,289)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2023

	NOTES	2023 \$	2022 \$
CURRENT ASSETS			
CASH ASSETS	3	381,596	378,491
RECEIVABLES	4	1,124	11,000
OTHER	5	1,000	5,209
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		383,720	394,700
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
FIXED ASSETS	6	7,896	12,092
TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS		7896	12,092
TOTAL ASSETS		391,616	406,792
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
PAYABLES	7	13,847	28,184
PROVISIONS	8	27,759	20,701
OTHER	9	1,500	25,000
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		43,106	73,885
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
PROVISIONS	8	0	0
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		0	0
TOTAL LIABILITIES		43,106	73,885
NET ASSETS		348,510	332,907
MEMBERS' FUNDS			
RETAINED SURPLUS	10	348,510	332,907
TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS		348,510	332,907

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	RETAINED EARNINGS \$	TOTAL EQUITY \$
BALANCE AT END OF FINANCIAL YEAR	368,196	368,196
2022		
SURPLUS (DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30/06/2022	(35,289)	(35,289)
BALANCE AT END OF THE YEAR 2022	332,907	332,907
2023		
SURPLUS (DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30/06/2023	15,603	15,603
BALANCE AT END OF THE YEAR 2023	348,510	348,510

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	NOTES	2023 \$	2022 \$
CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
RECEIPTS FROM GOVERNMENT AND SPONSORS		458,944	372,047
PAYMENTS TO SUPPLIERS AND EMPLOYEES		(456,500)	(384,120)
INTEREST RECEIVED		3,037	63
NET CASH PROVIDED BY/(USED IN) OPERATING ACTIVITIES	11(b)	5,481	(12,010)
CASH FLOW FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
PAYMENT FOR PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT		(2,376)	0
NET CASH USED IN INVESTING ACTIVITIES		(2,376)	0
CASH FLOW FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES			
NET CASH PROVIDED BY/(USED IN) FINANCING ACTIVITIES		0	0
NET INCREASE/(DECREASE) IN CASH HELD		3,105	(12,010)
CASH AT BEGINNING OF FINANCIAL YEAR		378,491	390,501
CASH AT END OF FINANCIAL YEAR	11(a)	381,596	378,491

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

NOTE 1: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

This financial report is a special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 and the Australian Charities and Not-for profits Commission Act 2012 (ACNC) Act. The Board of Management has determined that the association is not a reporting entity.

The financial report has been prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historic costs and does not take into account changing money values or, except where specifically stated, current valuations of non-current assets. The Association adopted AASB 1058, AASB 15 and AASB 16 effective from the 1st July 2019

The following specific accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated, have been adopted in the preparation of this report:

(a) Fixed Assets

Fixed assets are carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation.

The depreciable amount of all fixed assets are depreciated over the useful lives of the assets to the association commencing from the time the asset was held ready for use. Leasehold improvements are depreciated over the shorter of either the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful lives of the improvements.

The carrying amount of fixed assets is reviewed annually by the Board of Management to ensure it is not in excess of the recoverable amount of those assets.

The recoverable amount is assessed on the basis of the expected net cash flows which will be received from the assets' employment and subsequent disposal. The expected net cash flows have not been discounted to their present values in determining recoverable amounts.

Depreciation

The depreciable amount of all fixed assets including buildings and capitalised leased assets, but excluding freehold land, are depreciated over their estimated useful lives to the association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

Properties held for investment purposes are not subject to a depreciation charge. Leasehold improvements are amortised over the shorter of either the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful lives of the improvements.

The depreciation rates used for each class of depreciable assets are:

Class of Fixed Asset	Depreciation Rate
Office Furniture & Equipment	20-50%

The assets' residual values and useful lives are reviewed, and adjusted if appropriate, at each balance sheet date.

Asset classes carrying amount is written down immediately to its recoverable amount if the asset's carrying amount is greater than its estimated recoverable amount.

Gains and losses on disposals are determined by comparing proceeds with the carrying amount. These gains or losses are included in the income statement. When revalued assets are sold, amounts included in the revaluation reserve relating to that asset are transferred to retained earnings.

(b) Leases

Lease payments for operating leases, where substantially all the risks and benefits remain with the lessor, are charged as expenses in the periods in which they are incurred.

(c) Employee Benefits

Provision is made for the association's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to balance date. Employee benefits expected to be settled within one year together with benefits arising from wages and salaries, annual leave and sick leave which will be settled after one year, have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled plus related on-costs. Other employee benefits payable later than one year have been measured at the present value of the estimated future cash outflows to be made for those benefits.

Contributions are made by the association to an employee superannuation fund and are charged as expenses when incurred.

(d) Revenue

Interest revenue is recognised on a proportional basis taking into account the interest rates applicable to the financial assets.

The Association has adopted AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers from the 1st July 2019 whereby the entity recognises revenue when the amount of revenue can be reliably measured, and it is probable that the future economic benefits will flow to the entity and specific criteria have been met for each of Positive Women (Victoria) Incorporated's activities.

Revenue is recognised based on the contractual specific period the revenue is applicable to. All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST).

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	NOTES	2023 \$	2022 \$
NOTE 2: REVENUE OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
- INTEREST	2(a)	3,037	63
- OPERATING GRANTS		366,912	350,773
- DONATIONS AND SPONSORSHIP		10,085	2,582
- PROGRAM SUPPORT		66,764	25,000
- OTHER INCOME		2,270	426
		449,068	378,844
(a) INTEREST FROM:			
- BANK ACCOUNT DEPOSITS		0	63
NOTE 3: CASH ASSETS			
CASH AT BANK		30,300	26,586
ROSE FUND BANK ACCOUNTS		51,178	49,824
CASH RESERVE		300,118	302,081
		381,596	378,491
NOTE 4: RECEIVABLES			
CURRENT			
TRADE DEBTORS		1,124	11,000
OTHER DEBTORS		0	0
		1,124	11,000
NOTE 5: OTHER ASSETS			
CURRENT			
PREPAID EXPENSES		1000	5,209
		1000	5,209
NOTE 6: FIXED ASSETS			
(a) PLANT AND EQUIPMENT			
AT COST		44,303	41,926
LESS ACCUMULATED DEPRECIATION		(44,303)	(41,926)
		0	0
(b) ARTWORK			
AT COST		1,500	1,500
LESS ACCUMULATED DEPRECIATION		0	0
		1,500	1,500
(c) WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT			
AT COST		20,980	20,980
LESS ACCUMULATED DEPRECIATION		(14,584)	(10,388)
		6,396	10,592
TOTAL PLANT AND EQUIPMENT		7,896	12,092
NOTE 7: PAYABLES			
CURRENT			
UNSECURED LIABILITIES:			
TRADE CREDITORS		3,258	6,517
SUNDRY CREDITORS AND ACCRUALS		10,589	21,667
		13,847	28,184

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	NOTES	2023 \$	2022 \$
NOTE 8: PROVISIONS			
CURRENT			
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS - PROVISION FOR ANNUAL LEAVE		27,759	20,701
NON CURRENT			
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS - PROVISION FOR LONG SERVICE LEAVE		0	0
AGGREGATE EMPLOYEE BENEFITS LIABILITY		27,759	20,701
NOTE 9: OTHER LIABILITIES			
CURRENT			
PREPAID INCOME		0	0
UNEXPENDED GRANTS		1,500	25,000
		1,500	25,000
NOTE 10: RETAINED SURPLUS			
RETAINED SURPLUS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR		332,907	368,196
NET SURPLUS (LOSS) ATTRIBUTABLE TO MEMBERS OF THE ENTITY		15,603	(35,289)
RETAINED SURPLUS AT THE END OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR		348,510	332,907
NOTE 11: CASH FLOW INFORMATION			
(a) RECONCILIATION OF CASH			
CASH AT THE END OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR AS SHOWN IN THE STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS IS RECONCILED TO THE RELATED ITEMS IN THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS FOLLOWS:			
CASH ON HAND		0	0
CASH AT BANK		381,596	378,491
		381,596	378,491
(b) RECONCILIATION OF CASH FLOW FROM OPERATIONS WITH PROFIT FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES AFTER INCOME TAX			
SURPLUS (DEFICIT) FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES AFTER INCOME TAX		15,603	(35,289)
NON CASH FLOWS IN PROFIT FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES			
DEPRECIATION		6,572	6,116
CHANGES IN ASSETS AND LIABILITIES:			
(INCREASE)/DECREASE IN RECEIVABLES		9,876	(6,797)
(INCREASE)/DECREASE IN OTHER ASSETS		4,209	(5,209)
INCREASE/(DECREASE) IN PREPAID INCOME		(23,500)	25,000
INCREASE/(DECREASE) IN PAYABLES		(14,337)	2,524
INCREASE/(DECREASE) IN PROVISIONS		7,058	1,645
CASH FLOWS PROVIDED BY (USED IN) OPERATIONS		5,581	(12,010)
NOTE 12: ASSOCIATION DETAILS			
THE PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS OF THE ASSOCIATION IS:			
POSITIVE WOMEN (VICTORIA) INCORPORATED			
COVENTRY HOUSE,			
GROUND FLOOR			
95 COVENTRY ST, SOUTHBANK VIC 3006			
NOTE 13: RENTAL BENEFIT RECEIVED BY THE ASSOCIATION			
POSITIVE WOMEN (VICTORIA) INC RECEIVES THE BENEFIT OF THEIR RENTAL OCCUPANCY LEASE BEING PAID BY THEIR MAIN FUNDING BODY			

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

NOTE 14: EVENTS OCCURING AFTER THE BALANCE DATE

No matters or circumstances have arisen between the end of the financial period, and the date of this report, which have directly, significantly affected or may significantly affect the operations of the association, the results of those operations or the state of affairs of the association in future financial years.

STATEMENT BY THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

The Board have determined that the association is not a reporting entity.

The board have determined that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the board the financial report:

1. Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of Positive Women (Victoria) Incorporated as at 30 June 2023 and its performance for the financial year ended on that date.
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that Positive Women (Victoria) Incorporated will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the board and is signed for and on behalf of the Board by:

Dated this 18th day of October 2023



.....
Rachel Meisner
Treasurer



.....
Stephanie Raper
Chair

INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT

TO THE MEMBERS OF POSITIVE WOMEN (VICTORIA) INCORPORATED

REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL REPORT

Opinion: I have audited the financial report of Positive Women (Victoria) Incorporated (the association), which comprises the Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2023, the Statement of Profit or Loss and other Comprehensive Income, Statement of Changes in Equity and Statement of Cash Flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the statement by Board of Management on the annual statements giving a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of the association.

In my opinion, the accompanying financial report gives a true and fair view of the financial position of the association as at 30 June 2023 and of its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1 to the financial statements and the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (ACNC Act).

Basis for Opinion: I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. I am independent of the association in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110: Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Australia. I have also fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Emphasis of Matter – Basis of Accounting: I draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist the association to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (ACNC Act). As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. My opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Responsibilities of the Board of Management for the Financial Report: The Board of Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (ACNC Act), and for such internal control as the board determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. In preparing the financial report, the board is responsible for assessing the association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the board either intends to liquidate the association or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report: My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report. As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the association's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the board.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the board's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the association's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the association to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure, and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the board regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Dated this 18th day of October 2023



Eric Townsend
E Townsend & Co
Chartered Accountant
15 Taylor Street, Ashburton Vic 3147

LEAD AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION UNDER THE ASSOCIATIONS INCORPORATION REFORM ACT (2012) AND THE AUSTRALIAN CHARITIES AND NOT-FOR-PROFITS COMMISSION ACT (ACNC)

To: the Board of Management of Positive Women (Victoria) Inc

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, in relation to the audit of the financial year ended 30th June 2023 there has been:

- No contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act (ACNC) in relation to the audit ; and
- No contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

Name of Auditor Eric Townsend
Name of Firm E. Townsend & Co
Address 15 Taylor Street
P O Box 625
ASHBURTON Vic 3147

Dated this 18th day of October 2023



Eric Townsend
Chartered Accountant

DETAILED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
INCOME		
SUBSIDIES AND GRANTS	366,912	350,773
PROGRAM SUPPORT	66,764	25,000
DONATIONS AND SPONSORSHIP	10,085	2,582
INTEREST	3,037	63
SUNDRY INCOME	2,270	426
TOTAL INCOME	449,068	378,844
LESS EXPENSES		
ACCOUNTING FEES	11,798	11,271
AUDIT FEES	2,900	3,600
BANK CHARGES	1	0
BOARD & ANNUAL REPORT	1,057	2,365
COMPUTER & IT CONSULTANT EXPENSES	14,447	3,499
COMPUTER WEBSITE COSTS	0	47
CONFERENCES & SEMINARS	8,223	1,711
DEPRECIATION & AMORTISATION	6,572	6,116
HOLIDAY PAY PROVISION INCREASE/(DECREASE)	7,059	1,644
INSURANCES (INC WORKCOVER)	3,510	4,634
OFFICE EXPENSES	491	299
PORTABLE LONG SERVICE LEAVE	4,223	4,742
PRINTING AND STATIONERY	196	51
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT - STAFF	5280	3,809
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT - BOARD	1,714	6,575
PROMOTION EXPENSES	0	1425
PROJECT CONSULTANTS	14,140	2,900
SALARIES AND WAGES	254,629	294,625
STAFF AMENITIES	261	1,015
STAFF WORKPLACE COUNSELLING	2,080	2,690
SUBSCRIPTIONS & MEMBERSHIPS	3,009	2,602
SUPERANNUATION	26,734	28,604
SUPPORT EXPENSES	61,955	26,612
TELEPHONE	3,176	2,577
WEBSITE EXPENSES	0	716
TOTAL EXPENSES	433,455	414,129
SURPLUS/(LOSS)	15,613	(35,285)

BOARD + STAFF

Board as at 30 June 2023

Stephanie Raper, Chair

Stevie Lee Walsh (Stephanie Lee Dafnomilis), Vice Chair

Rachel Meisner, Treasurer

Nicki Russell, Secretary

Regina Kipruto, Director

Staff

Permanent staff

Dr Kirsty Machon, Executive Officer

Melissa Iddles, Community Partnerships Coordinator

Heather Ellis, Communications & Engagements Coordinator

Bernadette Roberts, Peer Support Worker

Emily Parsons, Peer Support Worker (appointed June 2022)

Thank you to our members, Board members and supporters who have shared their personal stories, by supporting other women, contributing to much needed research into women's health, and so much more... By being visible and speaking your truth, your involvement in PWV's work has been invaluable.



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Building community through partnership

In September 2022, PWV initiated an important new role, Community Partnerships Coordinator. Experienced Peer Support Worker Melissa Iddles transitioned to this role. This allowed her to bring a wealth of knowledge and understanding of the needs of clients and members and the issues important to women living with HIV to the collective challenge of helping address and meet the needs of clients beyond HIV.

ORGANISATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS & CLIENT REFERRAL PATHWAYS

By **Melissa Iddles**
Community Partnerships Coordinator

I commenced as Community Partnerships Coordinator in September 2022. The role was established with the aim of fostering connections between Positive Women Victoria and other organisations that might have a role to play in supporting women with HIV to have their health and social support needs met. With six years of experience as a PWV Peer Support Worker, I now dedicate my three days a week to focusing on organisational partnerships and client referral pathways.

AN OVERVIEW OF 2022-2023 ACHIEVEMENTS:

Supporting the Peer Support Team

The Community Partnerships Coordinator role remains strongly connected to the Peer Support Workers, and as a team, we meet regularly. These discussions about client needs and experiences help identify service gaps and open us to the potential old and new service or referral pathways that will ensure our members and clients have access to support for their diverse and changing needs. Referrals might encompass social work, psychosocial support or counselling, financial counselling, planning or support, housing, legal services, and refugee health services.

Build and Strengthen Essential Relationships

We maintain connections with many partner services, some of whom are referring partners and others who may refer to us. It's important that when referrals are made between agencies, each understands the others' role and can be trusted to understand the issues that may affect our clients.



Our clients come to us with unique social and health needs, issues and sometimes experience of complex trauma. As part of this relationship-building, I organised visits and discussions for the PWV team to share our organisational knowledge and learning with agencies including AMES, social work and HIV teams at the Alfred Hospital and St Vincent's Hospital, Monash infectious disease clinicians, the Bolton Clarke HIV nursing service, and the Multicultural Health and Support Service. Our team works closely alongside Living Positive Victoria's Peer Navigators, who were a part of many of these engagements. These efforts aimed to facilitate a deeper understanding of how our services intersect and cooperate to support people living with HIV.

Tackling stigma

For many women a HIV diagnosis comes hand in hand with the fear or experience of stigma. An important part of this role is to reduce the impacts of HIV-related stigma in healthcare settings or social support services.

A promotional graphic for a webinar. At the top left, it says 'Positive Women Victoria'. The main title is 'Emotional Support & Counselling Options Webinar'. Below that, it says 'Guest speaker Alexandra Storey, an experienced counsellor from Thorne Harbour Health, explains counselling options for your emotional support and answers questions from attendees.' There is a photo of two women sitting at a table, one with long brown hair and one with dark hair. At the bottom, it says 'This webinar is part of PWVs regular series of health and wellbeing webinars for women living with HIV and was recorded on Tuesday, 27 September 2022'. There are icons for a clock and a speaker in the top right corner.

FROM THE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN POSITIVE WOMEN VICTORIA AND THORNE HARBOUR HEALTH, PWV HOSTED THE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT AND COUNSELLING OPTIONS WEBINAR WITH THE RECORDING AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE. [WATCH THE RECORDING](#)

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Building community through partnership

Tackling Stigma (cont.)

As a member of the Positive Speakers Bureau, I have been able to participate in panel discussions to support health care workers to better understand how stigma impacts on women with HIV. My participation on an advisory panel, which will lead to the implementation of an important [BBV and STI Stigma Reduction Toolkit](#) for the Victorian Health Sector, is another significant contribution to stigma reduction.

In collaboration with Living Positive Victoria, I co-facilitated a weekend workshop to train new facilitators. Giving people living with HIV the opportunity to support each other and share their experiences in safe spaces is also a critical aspect of reducing stigma.

Re-establishing the HIV Interagency Forum

Collaborating with Thorne Harbour Health, Alfred Health, and Living Positive Victoria, I played a key role in reviving the HIV Interagency Forum, which recommenced in June 2023 after three years of inactivity due to COVID lockdowns. This forum is held three times a year and brings together professionals working in the HIV sector, to support each other, hear sector updates, network, and engage with themed topics relevant to supporting people living with HIV.

The Confidence and Capacity to Work

After COVID, we have been able to strengthen ties through a confidential referral pathway to the unique social enterprise Fitted for Work which helps women to become work-ready. PWV clients and members can access Fitted for Work services, which includes outfitting, resume support and interview skills.

Policy Engagement and Advocacy

I participated in discussions surrounding the draft of the Ninth National HIV Strategy, contributing insights into the unique challenges faced by women living with HIV. I represented PWV at a Victorian State Election Forum held in partnership with Thorne Harbour Health and Living Positive Victoria specifically focusing on HIV and AIDS priorities. This forum provided an opportunity to advocate for our members and raise awareness.

"The Community Partnerships Coordinator role was established with the aim of fostering connections between Positive Women Victoria and other organisations which might have a role to play in supporting women with HIV to have their health and social support needs met."

"#HIV Interagency Forum brings together professionals working in the #HIV sector to support each other, hear sector updates, network, and engage with themed topics relevant to supporting people living with #HIV."

SERVICES AND PARTNER ORGANISATIONS WE HAVE WORKED WITH IN 2022-23

- Victorian Department of Health
- Living Positive Victoria
- Thorne Harbour Health and the Positive Living Centre
- National Association of People with HIV Australia (NAPWAH)
- Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society
- St Vincent's Hospital
- AMES Australia
- Monash Health
- The Royal Melbourne Hospital
- The Alfred Hospital
- The Northern Hospital
- Barwon Health
- Bolton Clarke
- Fitzroy Legal Service
- HIV/AIDS Legal Centre
- Melbourne Sexual Health Centre
- Australiasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health Medicine (ASHM)
- Launch Housing
- Multicultural Health and Support Service

OUR ADVOCACY PROJECTS

Building capacity and confidence through advocacy participation

An important part of Positive Women Victoria's work is to advocate on behalf of individual women and women living with HIV to make sure that the experiences and voices of positive women are informing and where needed, helping improve, the health and community services with which they connect.

HIV can often be itself a psychological barrier to accessing services, and when women experience stigma, discrimination or a lack of understanding, even when not intentional, they may respond by disengaging with services or may be wary about further engagement.

Our peer support approach is to encourage and empower women in their interactions with services, but this approach needs to be complemented with an approach that ensures services have the information they need to provide meaningful support for women which is free from stigma and based on up-to-date knowledge.

[Reaching your Potential leadership program](#), an important outcome of this amazing program last year was the production of a number of interviews in which women living with HIV shared their stories, and talked about what was important to them. These stigma-and-myth-busting videos are available on the Positive Women Victoria website, along with some other fantastic audio-visual resources supported or developed by Positive Women Victoria.

[Thriving is a filmed performance poem](#) created by women living with HIV with the support of performance poet and artist Fleassy Malay and film maker Ryan Lee Adams. Thriving is a gorgeous mix of spoken word and the images of women living with HIV created to educate and inspire viewers, and to raise awareness of important messages, particularly the U=U message, which do not always reach a wide public.

[Would You Touch Me?](#) Is a powerful short film that explores stigma by PWV member and Vice Chair Stevie Lee Walsh (formerly Stephanie Lee Dafnomillis) and film-makers Brent Masters and Mark Harrison. Would You Touch Me was supported with funding from Positive Women Victoria's donation fund, in which Stevie reflects on the personal impact of stigma following their diagnosis in 2020. The trailer asks the audience to consider their own attitudes towards HIV, as well as how stigma of all kinds may affect us all.



[WOULD YOU TOUCH ME](#), IS A POWERFUL SHORT FILM THAT EXPLORES STIGMA

Advocacy for individual PWV members

For individual members, advocacy may involve things such as support in challenging a stigmatising experience in a healthcare setting, assisting and encouraging women as they engage with complex processes such as immigration or legal processes and connecting and referring them where needed, or ensuring women are referred to safe services. We have supported women to access emergency housing, legal advice, family violence services, and home and community support.

However, our role is also to contribute to a wider debate and have input into discussions about the issues that can affect the wellbeing and health outcomes for women living with HIV.

Advocacy participation on Panels, Policy Working Groups & Research

Positive Women Victoria and its members participate in panels and on policy working groups, take part in research projects, and by making written submissions on topics of importance.

Missing Voices research project

In 2023, our Missing Voices research project exploring how women engage with HIV clinical research was finalised and submitted for publication. We have contributed to research projects on the HIV antiretrovirals and pregnancy registry, HIV stigma, and quality of life measures.

ASHM Conference 2022

At the ASHM Conference in 2022, Executive Officer Kirsty Machon presented on the important topic of developing outcome measures to ensure the national HIV strategy is delivering for women, and that women are not being left behind as we head towards ambitious targets to virtually eliminate HIV in Australia through a sustained focus on testing, treatment, and retention in care. Kirsty also presented at webinars on HIV clinical research and quality of life.

Strengthening HIV policy through writing projects

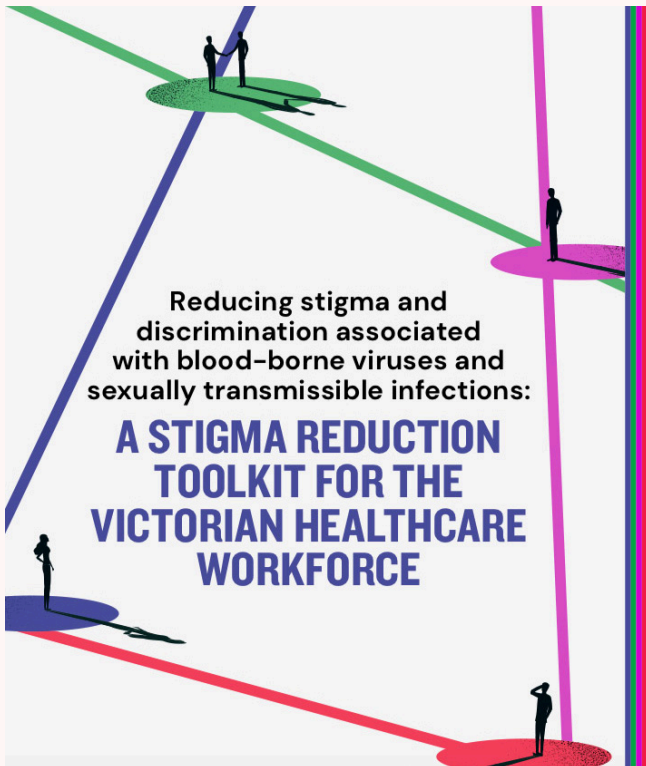
We share our knowledge with other agencies and organisations to make HIV policy stronger and services more responsive. Communications and Engagement Coordinator Heather Ellis is a regular contributing writer to HIV Australia magazine and to NAPWHA's Positive Living magazine, and regularly does personal interviews and speaking engagements. She was a contributing writer to the ViiV Healthcare Knowledge Translation Project, focusing on person-centred care.

National HIV Strategy joint submission for women and heterosexual men

Positive Women Victoria was also the lead agency and author on a national joint submission from peer-led HIV agencies across Australia calling for greater efforts to ensure women and heterosexual men living with HIV are having their needs met by the national HIV strategy, and are accessing timely testing, treatment and services.

"For individual members, advocacy may involve things such as support in challenging a stigmatising experience in a healthcare setting..."

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

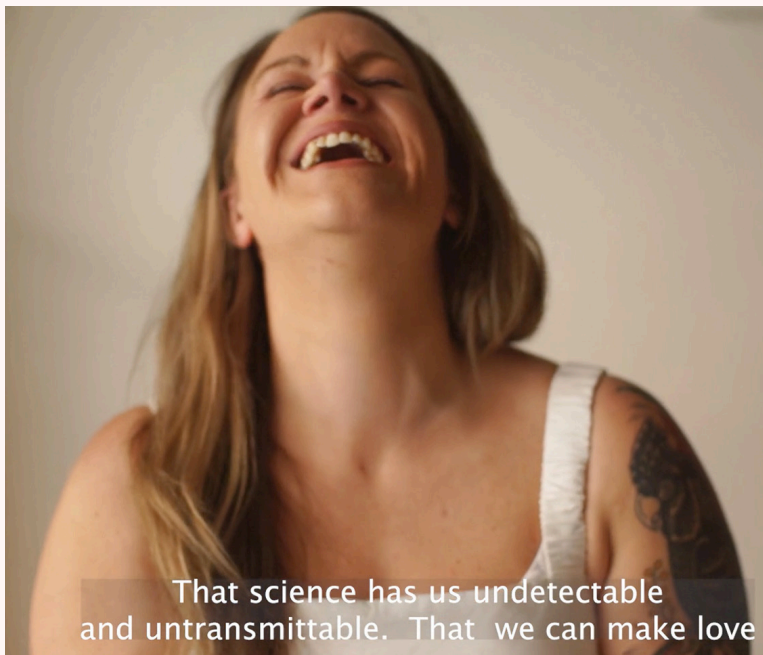


PWV IS REPRESENTED ON THE STIGMA REDUCTION TOOLKIT ADVISORY GROUP, WHICH WILL LEAD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN IMPORTANT [BBV AND STI STIGMA REDUCTION TOOLKIT](#) FOR THE VICTORIAN HEALTH SECTOR.

Advisory Groups and Bodies with representation from Positive Women Victoria

- Victorian Department of Health HIV Working Group
- Victorian Department of Health Advisory Committee on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Viral Hepatitis
- Victorian HIV Cure Consortium Community Advisory Board
- The National Network of Women Living With HIV Australia (an advisory group to NAPWHA)
- Alfred Hospital HIV Services Advisory Group
- International Community of Women Living with HIV (ICW) Global Board and the ICW Asia-Pacific Board
- INFORM+ (towards a global consensus on supporting women living with HIV who choose to breastfeed and developing a global data registry)
- HIV Interagency Anal Cancer Working Group
- HIV Phylogenetics HIV Partnership Grant Investigator Group
- Stigma Reduction Toolkit Advisory Group

Thriving, a filmed performance poem, depicts the lived experiences of women with HIV



To commemorate World AIDS Day 2023, and raise awareness of U=U and HIV-related stigma, watch this inspiring filmed performance poem featuring seven remarkable women living with HIV.

If you are in Melbourne, please join us for a public screening at Federation Square from 12pm to 12:30pm on World AIDS Day, Friday, 1 December 2023.

WATCH THRIVING

Please share or screen at your World AIDS Day event 2023.

FILMED IN AUSTRALIA, THRIVING WAS A COLLABORATION BETWEEN SEVEN WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV AND PERFORMANCE POET FLEASSY MALAY WITH FILMMAKER RYAN LEE ADAMS. PRODUCED BY POSITIVE WOMEN VICTORIA (FROM AUSTRALIA) WITH AN UNRESTRICTED GRANT FROM VIIV HEALTHCARE AUSTRALIA.

CONTACT US

Positive Women Victoria
Coventry House
Ground Floor, 95 Coventry Street
Southbank VIC 3006

E | info@positivewomen.org.au

W | positivewomen.org.au

PH | (03) 9863 8747

 facebook.com/PositiveWomenVictoria

 [@PosWomenVic](https://twitter.com/PosWomenVic)

 PositiveWomen.org.au

Positive Women Victoria acknowledges the lands on which we work are on the traditional lands and waterways on the Kulin Nations.

We pay our respects to Elders both past, present and emerging, and acknowledge their continued spiritual relationship and connection to their country.

