

Celebrating Change: 40 Years of Progress and the Future of Sexual Health in Western Australia

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Background/Purpose

WA Sexual Health Week is held annually in February, aligning with National Condom Day (February 14). The 2025 theme, Celebrate Change, highlighted progress in dismantling stigma, improving access to sexual health services, and addressing systemic inequities. This year's event also marked the 40th anniversary of WAAC, celebrating four decades of activism, peer support, education, and community-led responses to HIV and other STIs.

Approach

WAAC led a week-long program of events and initiatives in collaboration with organisations across the state:

- A creative Dude With a Sign media campaign challenged sexual health misconceptions and engaged the public.
- Small grants were awarded to 11 regional and rural organisations to support local events, education sessions, and STI testing outreach.
- A condom-packing party at a local pub attracted over 30 attendees, promoting safer sex in a fun and inclusive way.
- Outreach was conducted at events like Perth Fringe Festival, alongside street interviews in the CBD to raise awareness.
- A workforce development webinar addressed common misconceptions and strengthened sector capability.
- A high-visibility campaign at Yagan Square Tower amplified awareness in Perth's city centre.

Outcomes/Impact

Sexual Health Week 2025 engaged diverse communities across WA and demonstrated the importance of accessible, grassroots initiatives in advancing sexual health equity. By combining humour, visibility, and peer engagement, the campaign reflected a shift toward more inclusive, community-informed health promotion.

Innovation and Significance

Community-led action has been central to WA's HIV and STI response over the past 40 years. As the landscape evolves, continued innovation, adaptability, and collaboration are essential. With the virtual elimination of HIV in sight, new challenges emerge in improving quality of life for people living with HIV and preventing other STIs and BBVs. Sexual Health Week 2025 reaffirmed the need for equity-driven, future-focused approaches in sexual health.

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