

## TWO YEARS AND OVER 53,000 TESTS: AUSTRALIA'S FIRST FREE NATIONAL HIV SELF-TESTING SERVICE HIVTEST.AU

### Authors:

MacGibbon J<sup>1</sup>, Newham B<sup>2</sup>, Warner M<sup>3</sup>, Cogle A<sup>2</sup>, Holt M<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Centre for Social Research in Health, UNSW Sydney, Sydney, Australia, <sup>2</sup>National Association for People with HIV Australia (NAPWHA), Sydney, Australia,

<sup>3</sup>Queensland Positive People (QPP), Brisbane, Australia

### Background:

NAPWHA and QPP launched their National HIV Self-Testing Project in October 2023, the first national online project to offer free HIV self-test kits (HIVST) to any adult in Australia, delivered by post. To assess who is requesting testing, users are asked to complete a brief, optional survey about their characteristics.

### Methods:

Descriptive analyses evaluated: (1) the geographical distribution of people ordering tests, and (2) optional survey responses. Logistic regression identified characteristics of users ordering an HIV test for the first time using the service, compared to service-users who had been previously tested.

### Results:

By December 2025, 22,185 unique service-users had ordered 53,552 test kits: 32.4% to inner-metropolitan, 41.1% to outer-metropolitan, and 26.5% to regional/remote areas.

Surveys were completed by 5,139 first-time respondents (23.2% of service-users). Median age was 35yrs (IQR=27-46), 80.9% were male, 15.8% female, 3.3% non-binary. 50.3% were gay, 24.9% bi+, and 22.1% heterosexual. 48.2% of users were born overseas and 24.7% did not have Medicare. 69.5% had male partners only, 10.8% female partners only, 13.9% various gender partners, and 5.8% no partners. 44.4% had tested for HIV in the last year, 30.4% over 1 year ago, and 25.2% had never tested for HIV.

Compared to those previously tested (n=3,844), respondents making their first order (n=1,295) were more likely to be: younger (*aOR*=0.95, 95%CI=0.94-0.96), bi+ or heterosexual (*aOR*=3.16, 95%CI=2.67-3.74 and *aOR*=4.99, 95%CI=4.09-6.08, respectively), and living in outer-metropolitan or regional/remote areas (*aOR*=1.39, 95%CI=1.18-1.64 and *aOR*=1.53, 95%CI=1.28-1.83, respectively). First-time testers were less likely to be overseas-born (*aOR*=0.68, 95%CI=0.59-0.79).

### Conclusion:

Offering free HIVST across Australia has engaged a diverse range of users, including high proportions of overseas-born, Medicare-ineligible, suburban and regional users. The project successfully engages first time and repeat testers and people disproportionately at risk of HIV in Australia (recently arrived migrant gay and bisexual men without Medicare cover).

**Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

The Centre for Social Research in Health, NAPWHA and QPP receive funding from the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing and philanthropic donations including those from pharmaceutical companies. This study was supported by the Commonwealth Government of Australia and Gilead Sciences, and support from Australian state and territory health departments. Study funders were not involved in the analysis or interpretation of data.