

From vision to impact: 12 years of Brisbane's peer-led RAPID clinic

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Background/Purpose

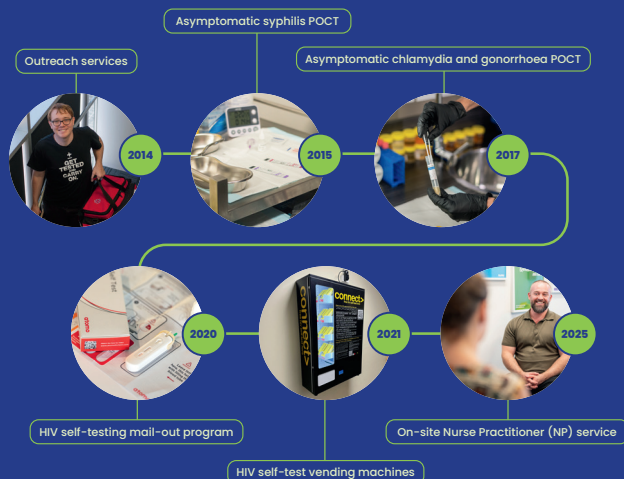
Responding to increased HIV diagnoses in Queensland, particularly late diagnoses among gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM), gaps in accessible, acceptable and timely HIV testing were identified. Leveraging the Therapeutic Goods Administration's (TGA) approval of HIV point-of-care testing (POCT), Queensland Positive People (QPP), HIV Foundation Queensland, and Queensland Health established a peer-led testing model.

Launched in 2014, RAPID aimed to increase testing uptake through free, walk-in, rapid HIV screening and information in a non-judgemental, community-based setting. As Australia's first entirely peer-led testing service—with no clinical staff on site—RAPID pioneered a new model of trusted, community-led care.

With RAPID, QPP became the first HIV organisation in Australia to integrate prevention into its core work supporting people living with HIV, helping reshape the sector's approach to comprehensive, community-centred HIV services, and establishing QPP as a national innovator.

Approach

RAPID has continually expanded its HIV/STI screening, prevention and treatment services. Key developments include:



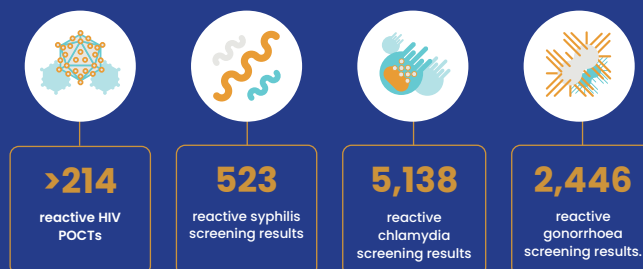
RAPID has also delivered numerous HIV, blood-borne virus and STI prevention and awareness initiatives through research partnerships, supported by ethics and clinical-trial approvals and established clinical oversight. Together, these initiatives have increased testing and treatment options for communities across Queensland.

From 2017 to 2025, RAPID provided asymptomatic screening for *Chlamydia trachomatis* (CT) and *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* (NG) using on-site molecular POCT with the Cepheid GeneXpert under ethics approval. This research generated substantial evidence supporting pooled-sample testing in a peer-facilitated, community setting, as an accurate and cost-effective alternative.

The integration of an NP model of care in 2025 marked a significant evolution for RAPID. For the first time, clinical care was available on site, enabling RAPID to provide testing, treatment, HIV prevention and ongoing HIV care and management within one community-based service.

Outcomes/Impact

Overall, RAPID has delivered more than 75,000 occasions of service identifying:

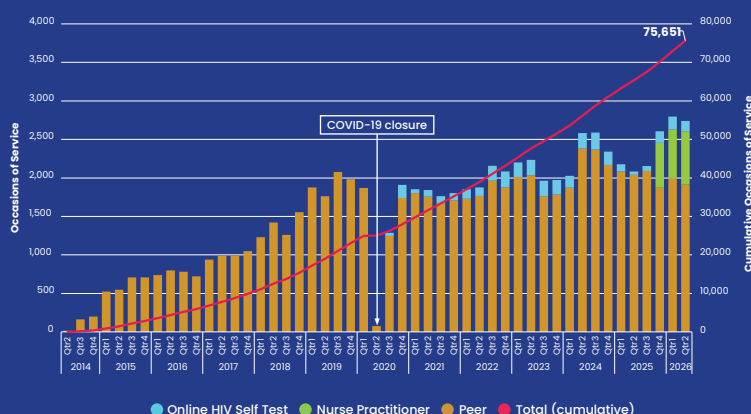


Although initially established for GBMSM, RAPID now supports a broader population that may experience barriers to traditional health services or access them less frequently, including people born overseas and people without Medicare.

By offering a trusted, accessible community-based alternative, RAPID reduces demand on publicly funded sexual health services and allows specialist services to focus their limited resources on more complex care.

Clients requiring treatment or further sexual healthcare can now access the NP service, while people newly diagnosed with HIV are connected directly with QPP's peer navigation and support programs. This creates a more complete continuum of care and reduces the risk of people becoming lost in the system or disengaging from care.

RAPID Occasions of Service by quarter, cumulatively and service (Peer, HIVST and Nurse Practitioner), Quarter 2, 2014 to Quarter 2, 2026



Innovation and Significance

RAPID has made a significant contribution to Australia's HIV response through novel approaches to service delivery, often serving as a forerunner of new HIV technologies, research, and innovation. RAPID demonstrates how POCT and self-testing can be effectively established in community settings to reduce barriers and increase choice.

RAPID provides transferable evidence for cost-effective peer-based care aligned with national HIV testing and prevention targets. Regulatory constraints affecting peer-delivered CT/NG POCT illustrate the structural barriers that remain, while RAPID's response demonstrates the adaptability and resilience of community-led models.

