

STEALTH HEALTH: LEVERAGING TRADITIONAL PARTNERSHIP AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES TO REACH NEW CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE (CALD) GROUPS

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Background:

ACON delivers HIV/STI prevention education activities by working in partnership with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI) communities. ACON utilises small grants to build partnerships to extend HIV and STI prevention messages, host community forums and distribute condoms and lube.

Approach:

Community groups provide a unique opportunity to directly communicate with thousands of people. ACON currently has almost 20 separate partnership agreements and small grants in place with sports, arts and cultural groups. Examples include the Convicts Rugby Team – ACON partners with the Convicts for tournaments and fundraisers; the team provides volunteers at ACON events. The Harbour City Bears are sponsored for their annual “Bear Essentials” festival – a tailor-made safe sex campaign is developed each year to reflect the event theme, across posters, coasters and safe packs.

Impact:

This approach directly engages groups, extends ACON’s education and prevention messages, and allows contact with sub cultures and niche groups which may otherwise not connect with ACON’s messaging.

Importantly, partnering with CALD groups helps extend HIV prevention messages to difficult to reach groups. Trikone – a social group for LGBTI people of South Asian heritage – partners to share ACON’s campaigns and resources on their social media platforms and via their extensive cultural network. Partnership with Sydney Queer Muslims is another example of this approach.

Significance:

In an increasingly divergent HIV epidemic in NSW, ACON is focussed on reaching new CALD audiences. Partnerships with CALD community groups creates trust when ACON’s messages are shared through their social networks. Connection with these communities is greatly strengthened, leading to more HIV prevention awareness.

To drive down new infections, ACON’s HIV prevention needs to reach more culturally diverse, less ‘gay community’ connected groups. The small grants process is a value-for-money approach to extending our HIV and STI prevention campaign reach.

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