

ACON NORTHERN RIVERS BEACH OUTREACH PROGRAM PROVIDES INNOVATIVE TARGETED HEALTH PROMOTION IN UNIQUE SETTINGS FOR GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN (GBM).

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Background/Purpose:

ACON Northern Rivers provides sex positive peer based health promotion outreach where no permanent LGBTIQ social or sex venues exist. This warrants innovative and culturally sensitive responses to the health and wellbeing of GBM. For over 8 years this fun in situ health promotion targets GBM in unique ways. Harnessing the summer migration of tourists and locals this outreach provides personal delivery of health promotion, information and support. Offering free 'showbags' containing a variety of resources, condoms and lube it provides an excellent opportunity to engage with GBM around STI/HIV prevention through casual conversation.

Approach:

This targeted peer based health promotion outreach engages beach users at busy times during the summer holiday and New Year period. With no established LGBTIQ bars, pubs or Sex On Premises Venues (SOPV's) the outreach is a key opportunity to provide condoms, lube, resources, sexual health support and health promotion for GBM.

Outcomes/Impact:

This peer outreach provides HIV/STI prevention, health promotion and general safety and wellbeing for mobile and hard to reach populations. In the last 8 years beach outreach has:

- Reached over 1500 gay and bisexual men
- Trained 5 peer volunteers
- Distributed over 2000 safe sex packs
- Distributed over 4000 health and information resources
- Maintained 3 strong key agency partnership's

Innovation and Significance:

Key partnership and education provide a strong foundation for this program. Partners include Local Aboriginal Land Council, Byron Shire Council and NSW Parks and Wildlife Service. ACON and these partners have developed an effective and culturally sensitive approach to outdoor health promotion and HIV/STI prevention for GBM in socially mixed settings.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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