

HIV TESTING WEEK

IN SOUTH EASTERN SYDNEY LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT

An effective call to action in the new era towards ending HIV

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INTRODUCTION

According to estimates, up to 10-20% of people living with HIV in NSW remain undiagnosed which represents a major challenge to achieving the treatment and prevention targets in the *NSW HIV Strategy (2012-2015) A New Era*.

Promoting HIV testing and making it easier to have an HIV test is a key tactic of the *NSW HIV Strategy (2012-2015)* which aims for the virtual elimination of HIV transmission by 2020.

HIV Testing Week was initiated by the HIV/AIDS and Related Programs (HARP) Unit in South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) as a key strategy to achieve the KPIs set by the Ministry of Health (MOH) for Publicly Funded Sexual Health Services (PFSHS) in NSW.

The campaign quickly gained traction with key stakeholders including the MOH, and it was rolled out by all health districts in NSW.

HIV Testing Week was held 14 – 20 July 2014 in the lead up to the International AIDS Conference in Melbourne.

HIV Testing Week aimed to raise awareness about HIV testing and new ways of getting tested for HIV.

METHODS

The HARP Unit coordinated the SESLHD and Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (ISLHD) campaign.

A collaborative approach was used with active involvement from all HIV related clinical services and community organisations. A comprehensive social marketing strategy was also initiated.

A website, using a matrix format, promoting HIV testing clinics across the districts was launched to support the online campaign. It provides easy access to information about clinics, opening hours and contact details:

www.seslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/freehivtest

Gay male social networking application *Grindr* was used to geo-target gay and other men who have sex with men in SESLHD and ISLHD.

Pop-up messages on *Grindr* promoting HIV testing encouraged men to click through to the SESLHD HIV testing website.

Traditional advertising in *SXNews*, the main free weekly gay magazine in Sydney, also included the testing matrix.

This was complimented by inclusion in the Gay News Network the online portal for *SX News* and

in *SameSame*, Australia's main GLBTI online portal.

Feature articles in local papers and editorials in the gay press focused on HIV testing during the week. Facebook and Twitter were also used.

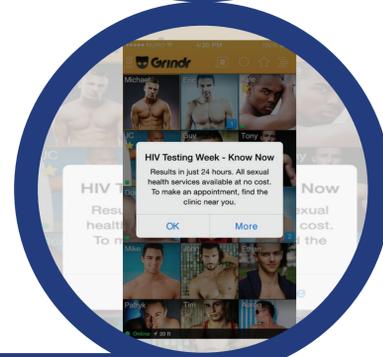
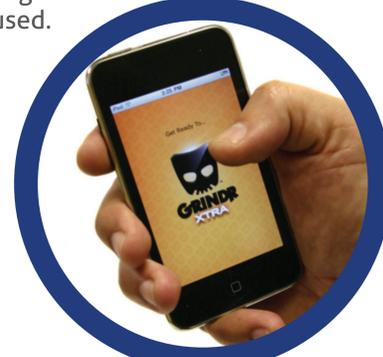
A fold out card with the testing clinic matrix and a poster were developed and distributed widely in venues where gay men were likely to be.

There was a state-wide and SESLHD launch of HIV Testing Week including online activations with *#helpendHIV* and the opening of a new peer led clinic in SESLHD.

All PFSHS increased testing hours and offered walk in services throughout the week.

A "Pop-up" Testing site was established in Taylor Square offering rapid HIV testing using the Alere Determine™ HIV Combo.

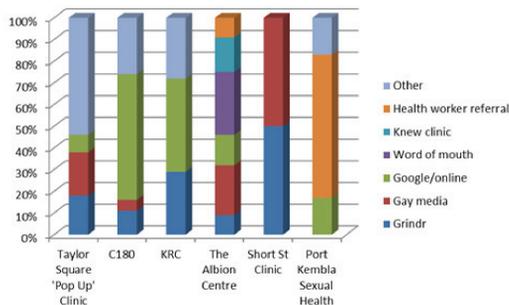
Posters in bus stops in the City of Sydney and banners around Taylor Square and Oxford Street promoted HIV Testing Week.



RESULTS

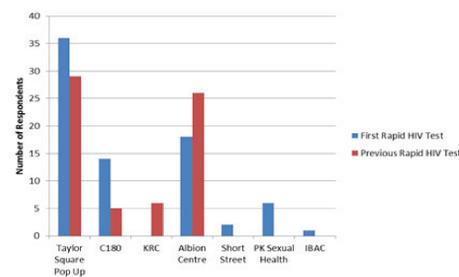
34% of 138 respondents who attended testing clinics in SESLHD said they heard of the clinic via the social marketing campaigns run on Grindr and in the gay media (including paper and online)

Figure 1: How attendees knew of HIV testing site by PFSHS in SESLHD and ISLHD (n = 144 respondents)



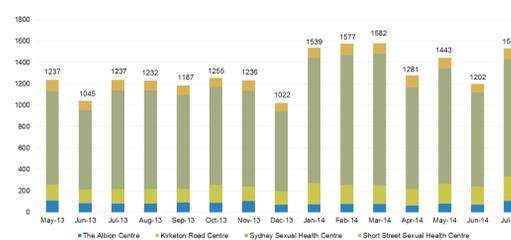
53% of 144 survey respondents in SESLHD and ISLHD who attended for testing had not had a rapid HIV Test before

Figure 2: Respondents who had first rapid HIV test during HIV Testing Week by PFSHS (n=144)



There was a significant increase in monthly HIV testing for SESLHD PFSHS from June 2014 to July 2014

Figure 3: SESLHD monthly HIV testing by PFSHS May 2013 – May 2014

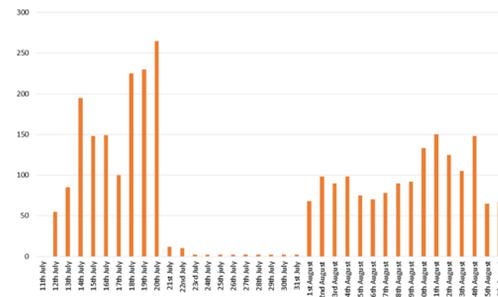


The Albion Centre experienced a 44% increase from June to July; Kirketon Road Centre 37%; Sydney Sexual Health Centre 24% and Short Street Sexual Health Centre 27%

2969 visits were made to the SESLHD HIV testing website between the 11th of July, when website and the Grindr campaign went live and the 31st of July

290 visitors visited the page more than once during that time

Figure 4: Daily click throughs on Grindr ads in Sydney geographical area from July 11th to August 16th:



CONCLUSIONS & NEXT STEPS

HIV Testing Week was a powerful vehicle to focus PFSHS, community organisations and the community on the common goal of increasing HIV testing rates across SESLHD.

HIV Testing week provided a great opportunity to promote testing, testing opportunities and to increase testing using a range of media channels and activities such as "Pop-Up" testing and increased testing hours.

Grindr proved an effective means of reaching the target population and HARP continues to use Grindr and other gay social networking applications and the gay media.

World AIDS Day, Mardi Gras and related campaigns provide further opportunities to continue a focus on HIV testing.

"Pop-Up" testing sites continue to be explored in areas frequented by gay men and men who have sex with men. An outreach clinic in a Sex On Premises Venue in SESLHD has since been established.

HIV Testing Week was held again in June 2015 with a focus on gay men and culturally linguistically diverse populations in the south of SESLHD.

