

Public toilet off limits – but safety messages to continue

For immediate release, 3 June 2009

The AIDS Council of South Australia Inc.

Telephone: (08) 8334 1611

Facsimile: (08) 8363 1046

Web: <http://www.acsa.org.au>

Contact: Shane Dinnison, Executive Director

Public toilet off limits – but safety messages to continue

The AIDS Council of SA (ACSA) today confirmed that health outreach services to Penfold Park will continue despite the recent announcement by Burnside Council that the toilet block will be locked after dark.

ACSA, SA's leading non-government HIV/AIDS organisation, provides outreach services to men who frequent beats to ensure that they have access to education and information regarding health and safety messages.

ACSA Executive Director, Shane Dinnison, said that no level of public or state activity has been shown to stop the existence of beats. "Men using public amenities as a place to meet other men raises many issues in relation to health, safety and the law" said Mr Dinnison. "Men from all walks of life use beats: they may be gay, straight, married or same sex attracted. ACSA will continue to reinforce to these men the message that it is illegal to have sex in a public place, and that Penfold Park will be heavily patrolled by police. It's important to keep in mind that the area is frequented by a vast range of people and a number of behavioural offences occur at this location that are not necessarily related to men engaged in meeting other men for sex".

"Data tells us that a large number of men who use beats are not gay identifying. Many of these men keep their sexuality secret because they're afraid of being harassed or discriminated against by their family, friends and others. That's why our outreach work to these men is very important as it is often the only time we can provide them with health and safety information and referrals to services that can help them deal with sexuality related harassment and discrimination".

For further comment: Shane Dinnison, ACSA Executive Director 0423 159 699



The AIDS Council of South Australia Inc.
Our vision is **A FUTURE FREE OF HIV**