

**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



---

## ACSA WELCOMES DECREASE IN HIV INFECTION RATES

The AIDS Council of SA (ACSA) today welcomed the 2008 data from SA Health showing that HIV diagnoses in the state decreased for the second year in a row.

ACSA says that data released recently recorded 47 HIV notifications in 2008, down from 55 in 2007, and indicated a 22% decrease on the recent peak of 61 notifications in 2006. Sex between men was reported as the risk factor among 30 of the 47 HIV notifications in 2008.

ACSA Executive Director, Shane Dinnison says that while HIV infection rates steadily rose from 2001 and peaked in 2006, they are now on decreasing; however that there is no reason for complacency. The data provides important information about changing patterns of infection with which to better target prevention efforts. "Gay men account for around 65% of new diagnoses in SA and this rate remains relatively stable. Most gay men continue to use condoms most of the time" he said, "and we need to continually congratulate those men and reinforce those messages".

Mr Dinnison says that the decreasing rate is a testament to South Australian gay men's ongoing commitment to caring for themselves and their sexual partners, as well as an endorsement of the education campaigns and prevention strategies that are continually being developed and promoted by HIV service agencies in SA, with support from SA Health. "However, we must improve efforts to drive rates down further. More can always be done and as a result of this data there are some new key areas of work that we will be targeting:

- Men aged between 30 – 50 years, who have sex with multiple sexual partners and do not test regularly for HIV/STIs, and who engage in unprotected anal sex, will be targeted for a specific health promotion campaign
- Despite the very high rates of regular HIV and STI testing by gay men, only around 25% of those who were diagnosed with HIV last year had been tested in the previous twelve months, so a focus of our work will be on increasing testing rates and improved accessibility to STI testing

/Ends/

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**