

2020-2021 HNSW SERVICES & ANNUAL REPORT

Working towards a world free of viral hepatitis



WELCOME BY DENISE AND STEVEN

Welcome to our Hepatitis NSW Services and Annual Report 2020/21. This report gives a snapshot of our work and its impact, as well as describing the programs and services we provide for people living with or affected by hepatitis C and hepatitis B in NSW.

The primary focus of our work, for which we are funded by the NSW Ministry of Health, remains working towards the elimination of hepatitis C in NSW by 2028.

Despite the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic, HNSW had another very successful and positive year. We met and exceeded our service goals and activity targets. Like many organisations we adapted and worked from home, online, in virtual spaces and by phone. We designed new ways of reaching and supporting people affected by viral hepatitis, offering outreach services, partnership activities, and delivering community education online. Our lived experience speakers made videos and joined webinars to reach health care workers, service providers and community members, in order to address the stigma and discrimination experienced within our communities.

Our hepatitis C health promotion campaigns – *Clearing the Path* and HEP CURED – included peer worker promotion to support people who inject drugs into testing and treatment within familiar spaces. The program reached and spoke to thousands through the carefully designed messaging and on-site clinical services.

In addition to our focus on hepatitis C affected communities, we also work to mobilise people at risk of, or living with hepatitis B into testing, vaccination, liver health monitoring and treatment. We continued to support people from Chinese-Australian, Korean-Australian and Aboriginal communities, and have created partnerships, resources, and a website to support people living with hepatitis B. Our hepatitis B work is achieved with limited independent funding and resources so we are proud of what we have achieved. We continue to seek ways to fund these services to meet this important and identified need to achieve elimination by 2028.

Please take a few minutes to read about our achievements and the services we provide for our communities.

Denise Jarratt
President

Steven Drew
Chief Executive Officer



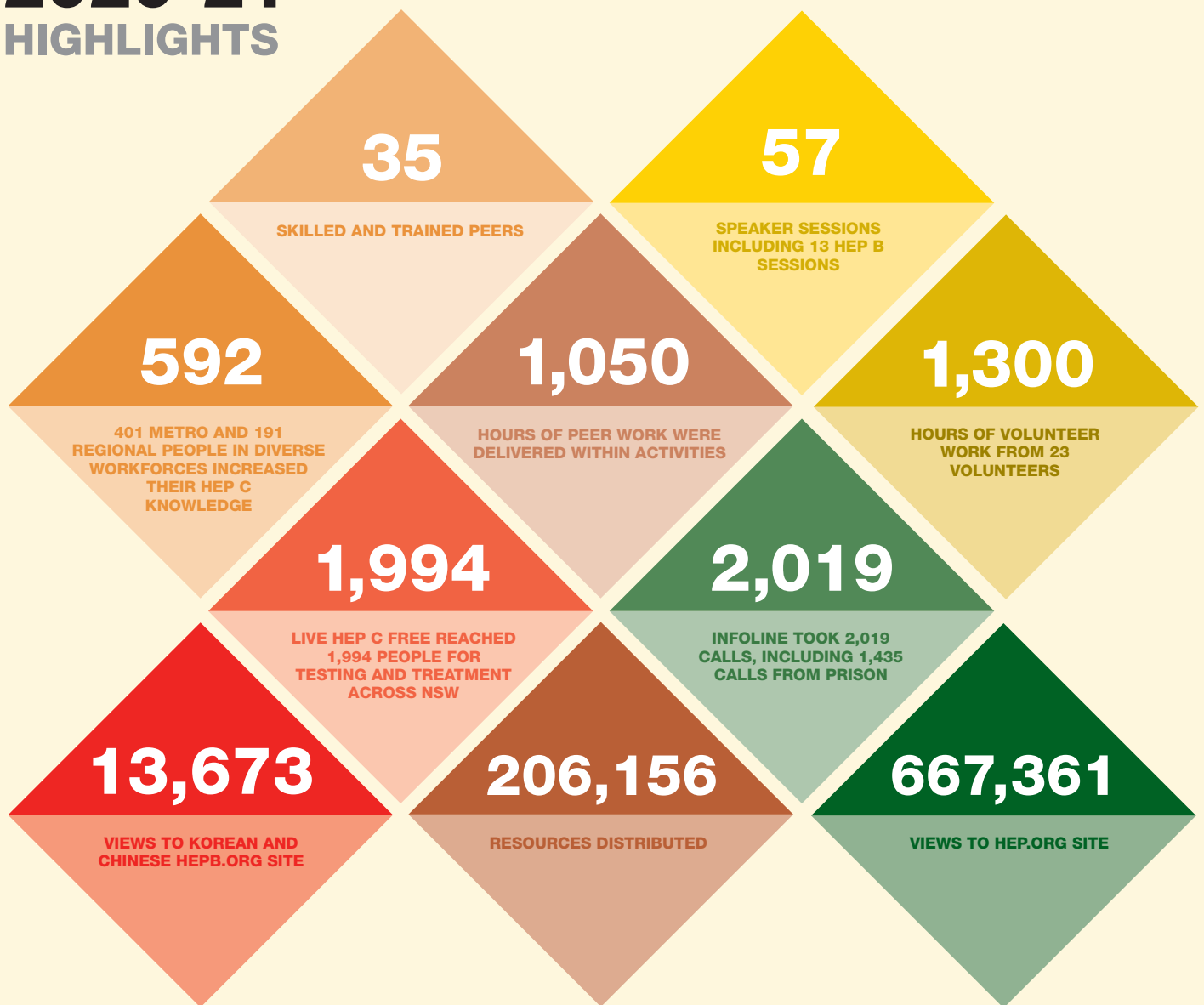
HEPATITIS NSW PEERS AND STAFF TAKING PART IN A MOBILE TESTING VAN DAY, WESTERN SYDNEY

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Hepatitis NSW is proud to acknowledge Aboriginal people as the traditional owners and custodians of our lands and waters.

2020-21 HIGHLIGHTS



2020-21 FINANCES

In 2020-2021 our income was \$2,335,592. The overwhelming majority of our income was spent on activities, resources and services for people living with or affected by viral hepatitis across NSW.

Through careful budget planning and management, we kept our total expenditure at \$2,300,730.

Hepatitis NSW achieved a small operating surplus of \$34,862. This enabled us to increase our equity (members' funds) to \$780,814 at year-end. Hepatitis NSW remains in a stable financial position with a healthy cash flow that will help ensure we remain solvent in years to come.

Our funding comes from a variety of sources. The NSW Ministry of Health provides our core annual grant of \$2,078,500. Other funding comes from private and public bodies, as well as income generated through donations,

membership fees, interest earned and cost sharing payments for some products and services.

We gratefully acknowledge and thank all our funding bodies and partners: the NSW Ministry of Health, NSW Dept of Communities and Justice, Western NSW LHD, South Western Sydney LHD, Sydney LHD, South Eastern Sydney LHD, Western Sydney LHD, Southern NSW LHD, Central Coast LHD, WentWest PHN, Justice Health and Forensic Mental health Network, Department of Corrective Services and pharmaceutical company Abbvie who provided an unrestricted education grant.

We sincerely thank our members and donors for their continued support.

Our Annual Financial Statements were audited by Portman Newton, Chartered Accountants. They contain a full breakdown of our income and expenditure and are available to download from our website www.hep.org.au and a copy can be obtained from our office by email request to admin@hep.org.au

LIVE HEP C FREE TESTING AND TREATMENT ACCESS

Our health information and treatment access program, *Live Hep C Free*, is run by people who have experience of living with hep C and treatment, called peers.

The program makes hep C testing and treatment as easy-to-access as possible, by partnering hepatology nurses with our peers in priority settings. We take healthcare to people in opioid substitution services, alcohol and other drug services, residential rehabs and homelessness services and remove the barriers to hep C treatment.

The service had strong outcomes with 770 people testing for hep C. However, fewer people were found to need hep C treatment. Many were referred on for further healthcare. During COVID restrictions, when opportunities for clinical outreach were limited, we implemented initiatives to retain our peer workforce, including training on Dried Blood Spot (DBS) testing; Naloxone as overdose prevention; an update from the Kirby institute on hep C elimination progress; and using our communications campaign messaging and merchandise to engage people. The peers were ready to support people into testing and treatment once restrictions eased.

OUR 35 SKILLED AND TRAINED PEER WORKERS WERE PLACED ACROSS ALL LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICTS (LHDS). 1,994 PEOPLE ENGAGED WITH ABOUT HEP C

1,994 ENGAGED BY LIVE HEP C FREE



- 999 SAW THE NURSE
- 770 DBS OR BLOOD TESTS
- 149 REFERRED FOR FURTHER HEALTHCARE
- 56 DISCUSSED REINFECTION OR RETREATMENT WITH NURSE
- 51 ACCESSED TREATMENT

7,099 PRIORITY POPULATIONS REACHED



- 1,994 PEOPLE AFFECTED BY HEPATITIS C
- 1,435 PEOPLE IN CUSTODY
- 1,393 ABORIGINAL PEOPLE
- 1,021 PEOPLE TESTED FOR HEP C
- 825 PEOPLE WHO INJECT DRUGS
- 431 PEOPLE AFFECTED BY HEPATITIS B

RAP

Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) was launched in July 2019. We are tracking well against the actions and deliverables with an increase in staff awareness through Aboriginal cultural competency training, and increased partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations for service delivery, resource development, training, events and purchasing of supplies and services.

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES

This year has been challenging for reaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and service providers as the COVID pandemic created barriers for working with communities. We've focused on training for service providers, developing resources and online education sessions, and reached people via webinars and online events. We reached 44 people through education sessions where we raised awareness of hepatitis B and C, promoted harm reduction, reduced stigma, and encouraged screening and treatment. A booklet named *Yarnin' about hep B*, a companion to *Yarnin' about hep C*, will be out soon, informed by a community and expert Advisory Group.

WEBSITE HEP.ORG.AU

Check out www.hep.org.au for resources and information. Our website is the best place 24/7 to find out about our education, support and advocacy projects.

NSW HEPATITIS C COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2020-2021

We continue to work in partnership with NUAA and the Ministry of Health in the development and delivery of state-wide hepatitis C public awareness campaigns.

The campaign aims to focus on and reach people who inject drugs, to promote access to hep C testing and cure. Two campaigns were delivered in 85 key settings across the state, such as NSPs. The *Clearing the Path* campaign was implemented July to November 2020 followed by the *HEP CURED* campaign from March 2021. A unique feature was peer worker promotion at 34 campaign sites across NSW, to create a bridge into testing and treatment. Hepatitis NSW and NUAA peer workers talked with people who inject drugs about hep C testing and treatment, using the messaging from the campaign. The peer workers distributed 96,000 merchandise items to help engage people and get the campaign messages out. They encouraged people to consider testing and treatment, then walked alongside them to take the next step to see the clinical staff. The campaign website can be visited at hepc.org.au and posters can be ordered from our website.

We thank our project partners, NUAA, the Ministry of Health, staff at Local Health Districts, the peer workers and all the people who have been involved with ongoing activations across NSW.



HEP CURED BANNER, MAROUBRA

PEER WORKER PROMOTION IN 34 SITES

MEDIA/ONLINE

- Street posters
- Street pole posters
- Washroom advertising
- Street stencils (pavement)
- Street banners (City of Sydney, Randwick City Council)
- Campaign website
- e-newsletters
- 3rd party promotion (print, online)

PRINT

- 550 posters
- Postcards
- Concertina cards (Z-Card)
- Stickers for dispensing machines (ADMs)
- Pull up banners

MERCHANDISE

- T-shirts (long & short sleeve)
- Bucket hats
- Drink bottles and pens
- Face masks (reusable) and lanyards
- Phone cardholders (Z-Card inserted)
- Hand sanitisers



HEPATITIS B PROGRAM CHINESE AND KOREAN COMMUNITY

Our Hepatitis B programs aim to raise awareness of hepatitis B, particularly for Sydney's Chinese and Korean communities. Our bilingual educators work with multicultural community organisations to deliver in-language workshops covering transmission, prevention, vaccination, management, and treatment. We team with clinical staff to offer screening opportunities. This important work was funded from private funds.

COVID reorientated our services to deliver events safely including online. The online community sessions offered anonymity for participants, attracting large numbers. The website was updated with COVID19 and hep B information in Korean and Chinese. The website hepb.org.au has been redesigned with English, Korean and Chinese Live Chat, lived experience stories and blog pages. Video storytelling from our hep B lived experience speakers and information messages in language have been popular during lockdowns with more produced and promoted via our blogs and hep B pages.

778 PEOPLE WERE REACHED THROUGH 24 EVENTS OR SESSIONS. 35 PEOPLE WERE SCREENED FOR HEPATITIS B



PHOTO BY | COMMUNITY MIGRANT RESOURCE CENTRE

HEP CONNECT

Hep Connect provides support to people undertaking hep C treatment.

Hepatitis NSW has partnered with Perx Health to transition the service to the interactive Perx Health app for people managing hep C treatment. Perx provides handy prompts, daily support and rewards people as they take steps on their journey to cure. The Perx App is free through Hep Connect and was launched in March 2021.

**14 CLIENTS SUPPORTED WITH 506 TEXTS
11 COMPLETED TREATMENT OR ACHIEVED SVR**

SPEAKER SERVICE

Our speaker service connects the community and workforce with personal accounts of living with hepatitis C and B.

Our speakers challenge stereotypes and address the stigma associated with living with hepatitis. Witnessing personal accounts of people's lived experience develops an understanding of how stigma and discrimination impact access to support and services. This is the most effective strategy in changing and improving attitudes, values and behaviours.

Our speakers are trained in public speaking and share their stories as part of education sessions, and at community workshops and events. During COVID restrictions, our speakers delivered sessions online, in videos and shared their stories in blogs on the website. We have a collection of recorded speaker sessions, and a set of YouTube videos. We increased views of our speaker sessions through promotion of the Hepatitis NSW YouTube channel.

57 SPEAKER SESSIONS 26 SPEAKERS MAINTAINED

1,412 HOURS COMMUNITY PEER WORKER ENGAGEMENT

910 LIVE HEP C FREE

252 COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

180 SPEAKER SERVICE

21 COMMUNITY MEDIA SPEAKERS

18 METRO EDUCATION

12 HEPATITIS INFOLINE

10 REGIONAL EDUCATION

5 HEPATITIS B

4 ABORIGINAL PROJECTS

HEPATITIS INFOLINE

Our *Hepatitis Infoline* offers confidential information, support, and referrals across NSW.

Services are available via phone, online Live Chat, website email and within NSW prisons through the free auto-dial telephone system. We took a larger proportion of calls from people in custody, and from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We encouraged more conversations about hepatitis B and vaccination than in previous years, while having parallel conversations as the COVID vaccination messages reached people. Our callers discuss topics including transmission, prevention, testing and treatment, hepatitis B vaccination and COVID vaccination and viral hepatitis.

2,019 CALLS



HEPATITIS INFORMATION PACKS FOR PEOPLE IN CUSTODY

2,019 HEPATITIS INFOLINE CALLS

1,209

HEPATITIS INFOLINE PACKS SENT TO PEOPLE IN PRISON

INFOLINE CALLER DEMOGRAPHICS



- CALLERS FROM PRISON
- ABORIGINAL OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE
- CALLERS IDENTIFIED AS CALD (CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE)

▲ HEP B AND VACCINATION DISCUSSIONS INCREASED



480

ONLINE ENQUIRIES INCLUDING 360 EMAILS AND 120 LIVE CHATS

PEOPLE IN PRISON

There was an increase in callers and requests for Hepatitis Information Packs to be sent to people in custody. The packs contain our men's and women's leaflets on hep C and the *Tx! Mag* carries prison-specific stories. A customised version of the Clearing the Path campaign, which addresses myths and misinformation was developed for prison settings with messaging on water bottles, posters and playing cards. People calling the Infoline from prison can receive a Hepatitis Information Pack (HIP) by mail, giving them information and resources about hepatitis C and B testing, treatment and prevention.

1,209 HEPATITIS INFORMATION PACKS SENT TO PEOPLE IN PRISON

HEALTH PROMOTION AND EDUCATION

The education program delivers free training and workshops around viral hepatitis for a diverse workforce across NSW, with the aim of increasing access to testing and decreasing barriers such as stigma and discrimination in services including residential rehabs and AOD services, community health centres, pharmacies and correctional settings. The program includes a strong Health Promotion focus aiming to engage priority communities as well as building a confident workforce. To deliver sessions during COVID the team is developing online modules for hep B and hep C, and on topics of interest, such as liver health.

EDUCATION SESSIONS DELIVERED TO 203 MEMBERS OF WORKFORCE & COMMUNITY AND 14 PEOPLE IN CUSTODIAL SETTINGS



VOLUNTEERS

Hepatitis NSW engaged more than 23 volunteers this year. Volunteers carried out various tasks and services, working as Board Members, mail-out workers, packing materials for distribution, helping with events, and providing administrative support, such as data transfer into our new customer relationship management software. Our work would not be possible without the support of our volunteers; they enhance the reach of programs and services that we provide to our partners and communities.

1,300 VOLUNTEERING HOURS

THE CHAMPION E-NEWSLETTER

The Champion is our monthly newsletter sent to our members and other subscribers. It provides news on viral hepatitis and Hepatitis NSW's work. Each edition promotes our services and links people to our website and to significant events within the NSW viral hepatitis community. *The Champion* also helps recruit community members to social and clinical research studies. 38,959 copies were distributed this year.

90% OF READERS SAID THE CHAMPION WAS USEFUL



237,429 WEBSITE PAGE VIEWS

CHECK OUT HEP.ORG.AU FOR:

<p>HEP INFO & NEWS</p>	<p>SERVICES DIRECTORY</p>
<p>INDUSTRY & COMMUNITY EVENT CALENDAR</p>	<p>LIVE CHAT ONLINE SUPPORT</p>
<p>IN-LANGUAGE HEP PAGES</p> <p>COME VISIT OUR NEW KOREAN LANGUAGE SITE >>> 한국어 웹사이트</p>	<p>DOWNLOADABLE FACTSHEETS & INFOGRAPHICS</p>
<p>READ & ORDER RESOURCES</p>	<p>TX! MAG</p>

Pages in response to COVID, vaccination and viral hepatitis were developed and proved popular.

WE REPORT PUBLICLY ON OUR PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS HERE: WWW.HEP.ORG.AU/ABOUT-US/HOW-WE-ARE-PERFORMING

Tx! MAG

Tx! Mag is our easy-read magazine. The magazine helps get people living with hep C into testing, treatment and cure. Combining comics, puzzles and basic information about viral hepatitis, it aims to connect with its readers on issues that relate to their lives.

We run workshops with community members to develop the themes and storylines. One edition per year focuses on hep B testing, monitoring and treatment and generally targets Aboriginal communities, and aims to help Close the Gap on viral hepatitis care and treatment.

38,088 COPIES DISTRIBUTED

RESOURCES ABOUT HEP B AND C

We develop innovative resources that are responsive to peoples' needs.

We produce many resources, developed in partnership with affected communities and relevant health specialists. Over 206,000 resources were distributed during the year. These include "easy-read" resources with illustrations and messages in a visual format that are helpful for people with lower literacy skills. Resources can be ordered from our website.

206,000+ RESOURCES DISTRIBUTED