



Bobby Goldsmith Foundation

Good evening everyone. I'd also like to pay my respects to the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation and their elders past and present and to all First Nations people here this evening. I would also like to pay my respects to all people living with HIV here tonight. This is for you.

Firstly, thank you so much for this incredible recognition. I am very humbled to be here tonight accepting this award on behalf of Bobby Goldsmith Foundation. We would like to acknowledge and pay our deep respect to our fellow nominees – Dr. Shih-Chi Kao and Stephen Allkins. This category – HIV Hero – is only possible because of people like yourselves. You are heroes in your own right and we share this recognition with you both, for your profound and important contribution to our communities.

This award holds special significance for BGF this year as we celebrate our 40th anniversary – for four decades we have worked tirelessly to ensure that all people living with HIV receive the compassionate care, advocacy and support that they deserve. What started back in 1984 in the face of great uncertainty, fear and unconscionable discrimination has since become a lifeline for thousands of people.

I would like to pay tribute to all those we've lost to HIV and AIDS over the years. May the memory and beauty of their lives shine eternally as the constellations of the night sky. And as well, to everyone living with HIV today, who continue to inspire us with their courage and strength.

In addition, this award is for our people – our staff, volunteers and supporters – past and present – who make sure our vital services reach those in need so they can live with dignity, purpose and hope. Today's fantastic team at BGF stands on the shoulders of giants. Those people who with great bravery and the utmost humanity stood up so many years ago in love and solidarity.

And I am minded at this moment in particular of the great Bill Whittaker.

In our 40th year and into the future, we remain committed to our cause – supporting all people living with HIV to thrive, to reduce stigma, to advocate for change, equity and equality and to expand our services so we can reach new communities.

This award tonight is not just for BGF, but for everyone who has ever walked through our doors. Each and every one of them have helped shape the legacy we carry with us in 2024.

Thank you to ACON and the Honour Awards for this recognition and to Positive Life NSW for your support of this category. I look forward to working alongside you – and everyone in this room, to create a healthier, more compassionate world for people living with HIV.

Thank you.