



Bobby Goldsmith
Foundation

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***It Starts with Me* – Bobby Goldsmith Foundation’s call to action this World AIDS Day**

Bobby Goldsmith Foundation (BGF) will commemorate World AIDS Day on 1 December, widely recognised as the most important global HIV awareness campaign. This year’s theme, *It Starts with Me*, highlights that the fight against HIV is far from over and calls on everyone to take personal action to raise awareness, challenge stigma and support people living with HIV.

BGF, Australia’s longest-running HIV charity, has supported people living with HIV since 1984. In recognising World AIDS Day, BGF reflects on its history and renews its commitment to providing vital services such as case management, financial counselling, health and wellbeing programs and social care and support. BGF’s programs make a critical difference especially for long-term survivors, with over 50% of those we serve having lived with HIV for decades.

“World AIDS Day is a powerful reminder of the resilience within the HIV community and the need for sustained action against stigma and discrimination,” said Nick Lawson, CEO of BGF. “While we have come a long way since the early days of the AIDS crisis, we must remain vigilant, proactive and compassionate. This year, we’re encouraging everyone to reflect on how they can contribute to this movement. At BGF, every action starts with me, with you and with all of us working together.”

BGF’s 2024 campaign aims to raise crucial funds to support its programs and services. All funds raised will allow BGF to provide comprehensive support for all people living with HIV.

This World AIDS Day, BGF Ambassadors David Polson, Steven Spencer, Matt Rule and HIV community advocate, Alice Bedlington will be available for interviews and comment to help spread awareness of BGF’s mission and the current realities of living with HIV.

Our advocates:

- **David Polson AM:** a pioneering HIV advocate and long-term survivor, David was one of the first Australians to be diagnosed with HIV. David has dedicated much of his adult life to raising awareness and breaking down stigma. His personal story is a powerful testament to resilience and hope, making him a compelling voice for the HIV community.
- **Steven Spencer:** a passionate LGBTQIA+ advocate, Steven brings a unique perspective as a bisexual man and HIV peer in his work within the HIV sector. Alongside his role as a BGF Ambassador, Steven is the Vice President of the National Association of People Living with HIV Australia (NAPWHA). He is also a leading advisor and researcher in HIV and LGBTQIA+ health, and he co-founded PrEPaccessNOW, a community organisation



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promoting PrEP accessibility. Steven's work champions the power of understanding, lived experiences along with evidence-based solutions to advance equity for our communities while challenging stigma and promoting understanding within and beyond the HIV community.

- **Matt Rule:** BGF Ambassador and HIV advocate, Matt has lived with HIV for more than 12 years. Matt uses his story to combat stigma and encourage open conversations around HIV. With insights into heterosexual and same-sex relationships, as well as challenges in rural and prison settings, Matt has deep connections with the HIV community. His commitment to raising awareness and supporting others highlights his dedication to improving lives for all people living with HIV.
- **Alice Bedlington:** a long-term survivor, Alice brings a deep, personal perspective. Diagnosed in the early 1990s, Alice has faced her journey with remarkable strength and resilience. Her involvement with BGF as a client has helped her rediscover hope and confidence inspiring her to support others in the community. Her story is one of courage, perseverance and the power of community support.

Each of these advocates remind us that while HIV treatment has advanced, the ongoing fight against stigma continues. Their voices inspire us to act and remind all of us that *It Starts with Me*.

How to support BGF and make a difference this World AIDS Day:

- Start the conversation: contribute towards reducing stigma by sharing accurate information about HIV
- Follow BGF on social media: stay connected to BGF and amplify our messages
 - <https://www.facebook.com/BobbyGoldsmithFoundation/>
 - <https://www.instagram.com/bobbygoldsmithfoundation/>
 - <https://in.linkedin.com/company/bobby-goldsmith-foundation>
 - https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPZNTObvzUqSHkZ_j3R6Aw
- Volunteer: contribute your skills to make a real difference
 - <https://www.bgf.org.au/how-can-you-help-us/volunteer-with-us>
- Make a gift: support BGF's essential programs with a donation. The generosity of our supporters will directly help people living with HIV.
 - <https://bgf.org.au/donate>



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Supporting people living with HIV has never been more important. Whilst transmission rates have dropped significantly, HIV is not over for the almost 30, 000 people living with HIV in Australia. Many of the people who BGF support are Long-Term Survivors, the first generation to age with HIV and have complex health and social needs. Now more than ever, they need our support.

ABOUT BGF:

Bobby Goldsmith was one of the first Australians to die from an AIDS-related illness in June 1984. His friends came together to find a way of giving him the care he needed to remain at home so they could make his last weeks as comfortable as possible. He died with dignity, at home, where he wanted to be.

His friends established the important precedent of providing support and services for people living with HIV. If direct support could be provided for one person, it could be done for many.

We are the legacy of that dedicated group of friends.

Bobby Goldsmith Foundation has been supporting people living with HIV for 40 years. Founded in 1984, we provide practical, emotional and financial support to people living with HIV in New South Wales and South Australia.

We are unique as the only not-for-profit in Australia providing frontline services and support to people living with HIV.

In 2024 however, we expanded our service offering to provide disability services to all people, especially those living with HIV, the broader LGBTQIA+ community and to all people seeking progressive, supportive care.

BGF is a registered not-for-profit with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission and has no political or religious affiliations, just a commitment to help and support people to live well on their own terms through practical, tailored care.

For interviews and further information:

Rhys Leppard
Head of Marketing, Communications and Branding
Email: rhys.leppard@bgf.org.au
Phone: 0434 726 519