



Bobby Goldsmith
Foundation

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Michael Kirby and Johan van Vloten announce retirement as BGF co-patrons after 22 years of service.

The Bobby Goldsmith Foundation (BGF) has announced the retirement of the Hon. Michael Kirby AC CMG and husband, Johan van Vloten as co-patrons after 22 years of tireless dedication and advocacy.

The announcement was made recently at The Red Ball Gala Auction – BGF’s flagship event where Michael and Johan were remembered as steadfast supporters throughout their patronage.

Michael Kirby and Johan van Vloten joined BGF in 2002 and played a critical role in shaping the organisation over the past two decades. At the time, Michael emphasised the importance of staying grounded through their work with BGF, stating "my new association with BGF will ensure that, in my international work on HIV/AIDS, I keep my feet on the ground and always face practical daily realities."

His extensive work in human rights and HIV advocacy has elevated BGF’s profile. His passionate commitment has – and continues to have a profound impact on both BGF and the wider community.

Hamish Macdonald, journalist and broadcaster, will take on the role of patron alongside Ita Buttrose, continuing Michael and Johan’s ongoing legacy.

Reflecting on their time as co-patrons, Michael said “Johan and I have been very proud to serve as patrons. This is not a one-person effort, this is an effort of a community that has come together to deal with a very big challenge, a horrible challenge [but] to reach out and to give help and to give kindness.”

He went on to say of BGF, “40 years young, a continuing service and an inspiration amongst the [HIV] organisations of our community. But the time comes to give way to the new generations and we want to say good luck and good wishes.”

Nick Lawson, CEO of BGF expressed his gratitude for Michael and Johan’s long-term commitment. “[Their] unwavering support, dedication and tireless advocacy have been instrumental in shaping BGF into what it is today. We are so fortunate to have had their guidance over the years, and I, for one am thankful to have worked alongside them both.”



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As BGF enters a new chapter, it remains committed to its mission of supporting people living with HIV, ensuring that Michael and Johan's legacy will continue to inspire and influence its work for many years to come.



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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:

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