



**STRONG
AND VIABLE
ORGANISATION
AHEAD**

- Preventing the transmission of hepatitis C
- Increasing access and referral to quality hepatitis C information, care, treatment and support
- Providing leadership and coordination for the community response to hepatitis C
- Building a strong and viable organisation that works effectively across all activities.

HEPATITISVICTORIA
Highlights 2008/09

Hepatitis C Victoria Board



Peter Waples-Croft

Peter Higgs

Isobell Howden

Cathy Mead

Jenny Kelsall

Gareth Wills

Michelle Wills

Board members not shown:

Richard Hoffman, Naomi Ngo, Jean Wyldbore, Adam Wright, Sonia Caruan, Mark Farmer

- Providing leadership and coordination for the community response to hepatitis C
- Building a strong and viable organisation that works effectively across all activities.

As you will see in this review of key highlights of 2008/09, our incredibly talented, dynamic and dedicated staff have approached this challenge with great enthusiasm, and we are already making significant progress in each of these areas.

We are fortunate to enjoy a strong relationship with our primary funders, the Department of Health (formerly Department of Human Services), and we thank them for their support. Our grateful thanks also to:

- Our many partners across the clinical, research, health and community sectors - we couldn't do our work without you.
- Sarah Hodggers from *Corrs Chambers Westgarth* for the pro bono legal advice that she provided on policy and advocacy matters.
- Leila Greenfield and Tracey Bloxsome from *Greenblox* who were generous in giving their time to assist with human resources management.
- The volunteers who made time to work with us, including Georgia Galli, Peter Brammer, Patrick Chappalone, Barbara Roberts, James Synot, and Zuni Zacutti.

Finally, thank you to our wonderful members who continue to demonstrate their support of Hepatitis C Victoria's work through our membership program and their donations.

Helen McNeill
CEO
Hepatitis C Victoria

President's Report

During the last 12 months we have seen significant strategic developments commence in our field. Nationally, the initiation of the 3rd National Hepatitis C Strategy and the first National Hepatitis B Strategy and importantly at State level, the establishment of a Viral Hepatitis Taskforce. This taskforce will be crucial in providing high level strategic advice as Victoria implements the two new viral hepatitis strategies and we congratulate the Government on its establishment.

I have now completed three terms as a member of the Board of HCV, so I farewell the Board at this year's AGM. Working with a vibrant community organisation in an area as important as hepatitis C has been very rewarding.

I would like to thank my fellow Board members for their enthusiastic support for the organisation and their commitment to the work of the Board. A committed board is essential for a strong and effective organisation.

Finally I would like to thank Helen McNeill, the CEO, for adding so much to my term as Chair of the Board.

Cathy Mead
President of the Board



Cathy Mead
President



Helen McNeill
CEO

CEO's Report

It has been another action packed year at Hepatitis C Victoria. Our new Strategic Plan 2009-2012 provides us with a clear and strong mandate for action in four key areas. Our work is focused on:

- Preventing the transmission of hepatitis C
- Increasing access and referral to quality hepatitis C information, care, treatment and support

“I truly appreciate everything you have done for me and for being a friend on the end of the phone ”

Young People's Program

We have worked with young people to create **four short educational films** about hepatitis C called Hepatitis C: Any Person, Any Age. The films are educational videos about hepatitis C and cover the topics: what hep C

is, what hep C does to you, how hep C is transmitted, and how to prevent hep C. This was done through our **peer education program**, which is part of our Young People's Program and is all about young people talking

to young people. The program has been a hit in schools. The films can be **downloaded from the internet**. They're on YouTube – search for username 'hepcvic' – or on our own website at www.hepcvic.org.au.

The Young People's Program helps organisations figure out how to talk to young people about injecting drug use and hepatitis C. We look at the best ways to help young people stay safe, to get information and to learn about treatment. We partnered with Youth Justice, Child Protection and other organisations such as Jesuit Social Services and alternative schools to support young people that have AoD (that's alcohol and other drugs) or mental health issues. We also work with young people directly in residential AoD services.

This program:

- delivered 7 sessions to 69 Youth Justice workers
- delivered 5 sessions to 85 child protection workers
- completed a postcard project with Artful Dodgers Studio (Jesuit Social Services)
- contributed hepatitis C information to the YouthCentral web site.
- delivered 12 education sessions to over 260 workers in the Loddon Mallee and Barwon regions
- promoted Hepatitis C Victoria services in Mildura to 28 GPs
- delivered 7 sessions to 153 workers and students in the Hume region.
- delivered sessions to more than 50 home-based carers employed by the Ballarat City Council



Campaigns and Advocacy

Our Campaign and Advocacy Program is about fighting stigma and discrimination. Even though discrimination is illegal in Australia, it still happens. This means that people living with hepatitis C often choose to remain silent.

We train organisations in how to work with people with hepatitis C, and we work with individuals to support them in accessing recourse when they feel they've been discriminated against and wish to pursue the matter.

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“Thank you so much for your advice and your help. I'm so glad I called and spoke to you”

Prisons Program

For the first time, hepatitis C has been formally included in the Corrections Victoria **Transitional Assistance Program (TAP)** for pre-release prisoners. During the year a module on hepatitis C was developed by prisoners at

Langi Kal Kal Prison in collaboration with Hepatitis C Victoria. It imparts information on hepatitis C transmission, testing and treatment, as well as offering contacts for information and support services on the outside.

Now prisoners can learn about how to **protect themselves and their loved ones** against hepatitis C once they return to the community.



The Prisons Program provides information, education, training, and support to prisoners. The aim is to help prisoners be better prepared to prevent contracting or transmitting hepatitis C. The Program also focuses on maintaining the good health and wellbeing of prisoners while they are incarcerated. Rates of hepatitis C infection in prisons are around 60 times higher than the general population so there's a lot of work to do!

This program:

- delivered 23 hepatitis C sessions involving 300 prisoners as part of the Transitional Assistance Program (TAP) offered to pre-release prisoners
- delivered 29 hepatitis C training sessions to 153 prisoners as part of the peer education program at 5 prisons and 1 juvenile youth centre
- delivered 3 hepatitis C and basic infection control sessions to 55 prison officers
- delivered 10 general hepatitis C sessions to 185 prisoners in response to specific requests
- worked with groups of prisoners at 3 prisons to develop resources that are developed by prisoners, for prisoners.

“I called the Hep C Infoline on the worst day of my life and thank God I did!”

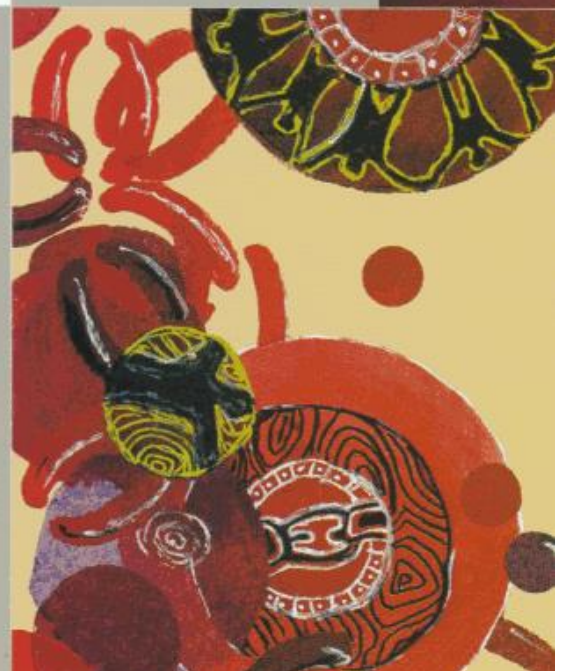
Indigenous Program

The Indigenous Program is all about finding ways to talk to Indigenous people about hepatitis C. There can sometimes be a shame factor for Indigenous people affected by hepatitis C, and we work to overcome that while continuing to respect Aboriginal culture. We provide support to Indigenous workers and strive to make sure that our programs are culturally sensitive.

This program:

- delivered sessions to 12 Aboriginal health workers in Gippsland
- delivered training sessions to Indigenous prisoners at Loddon and Mangoneet Prisons
- held a barbecue at the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service
- developed an Indigenous specific health promotion poster of key hepatitis C information
- supported the Ilibjerri Theatre Co-operative in delivering the Chopped Liver play right across Victoria.

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Cultural Diversity Program

The Cultural Diversity Program reaches out to people from diverse cultures. Outside of Australia hepatitis C has been spread through mass immunisation programs, poor medical

of a lack of needle and syringe programs. CALD communities in Australia can still have trouble accessing care and prevention programs. This can be because of social isolation, low awareness of hepatitis C, or social and cultural

issues. Our program looks at the issues that affect people from culturally diverse backgrounds and we partner with organisations which work with those people to assist them to address hepatitis C issues in their community.



This program:

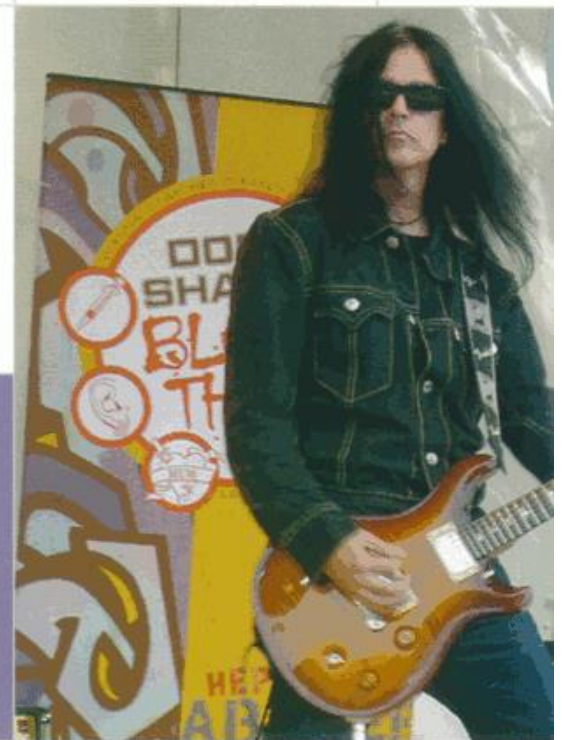
- delivered sessions to more than 50 SE Asian community members and workers in Springvale and at the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre
- gave a total of 7 sessions to over 150 participants – a huge increase on the previous year!

“Congratulations for all the great work you’re doing, especially with things like the HepChat podcasts”

Hep C: Take Control

We’ve just started a **new project** called *Hep C: Take Control*. The project is about chronic disease self management. What this means is helping people with hepatitis C make decisions about their own health and how they want to manage it. It’s all about

lifestyle choices. Rather than telling people what to do, we’ll be helping people find the confidence to make decisions about how to manage their own health. This is the **first time** we’ve run a project like this for people with hepatitis C – we’re breaking new ground!



“Our staff have been raving about they are now more inspired to



“I’ve so needed a friendly voice. Someone who knows what they’re talking about”

Community Participation Program

There is such a thing as a free lunch! More than 50 people turned up for the first ever **Love Your Liver Lunch**.

This was held at Chocolate Buddha in Federation Square. A tasty time was had by all!

The lunches are all about promoting **healthy eating**, as well as bringing people affected by hepatitis C together in a comfortable and social way. You can get more information at www.loveyourliver.com.au. The first one was held as part of Awareness Day 2009 and others have been held round the state since then.

“WOW! Thank you so much. I did not expect such a comprehensive and caring response”

This program:

- took over 1000 calls on the Hep C Infoline
- distributed more than 6500 information booklets
- facilitated support groups for nearly 100 people
- distributed Hep C Infoline posters with information in 6 languages.

Communications Program

Rock for Hep

Hepatitis Awareness Day 2009 was a big hit. We held the national launch and the **Rock For Hep** concert. Some great acts played, including X, Russell Morris and Crison Barker and The Hepcats. There were videos on the **big screen at Federation Square** of people talking about their own lives with hepatitis C and Nicola Roxon, the Federal Health Minister, was there to formally launch the event.

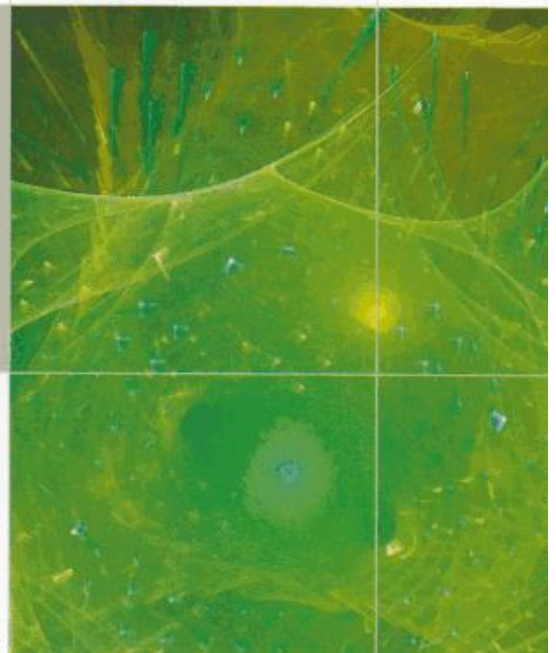
“We enjoy reading the Good Liver. Congratulations on a great publication”

This program:

- produced an organisational poster and brochure and had 10,000 printed
- developed 10 new Infosheets
- celebrated 8 years and almost 400 shows of *HepChat* on Radio 3CR
- published 4 editions of *Good Liver*
- produced 8 e-newsletters.

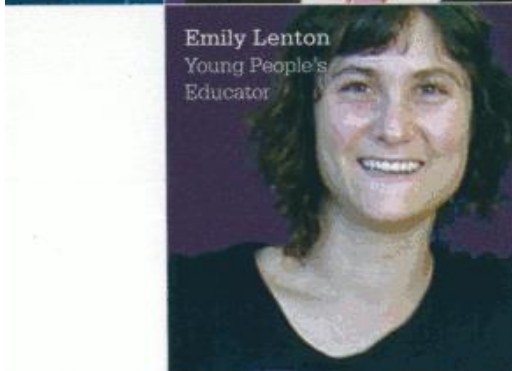
The Hep C Infoline is the best way for people to get information, support and referral related to hepatitis C. Anyone can call 1800 703 003 and get information, have pamphlets sent out to them in the mail or even book a visit to their workplace. We’ve also recently installed recorded information for people who call outside of opening hours – so people can get information 24 hours a day!

out what they have learned, and get the message out there”

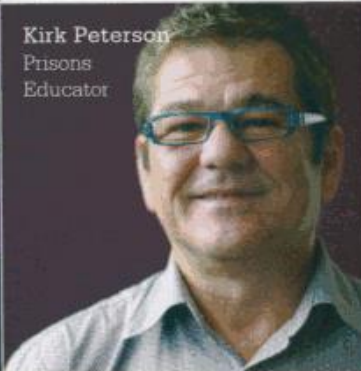




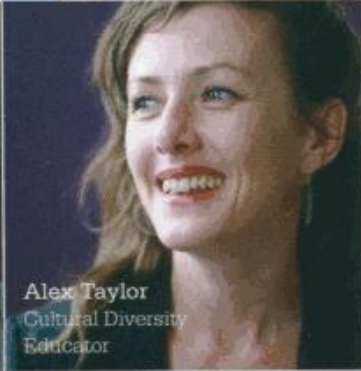
Emily Adamson
Programs Manager



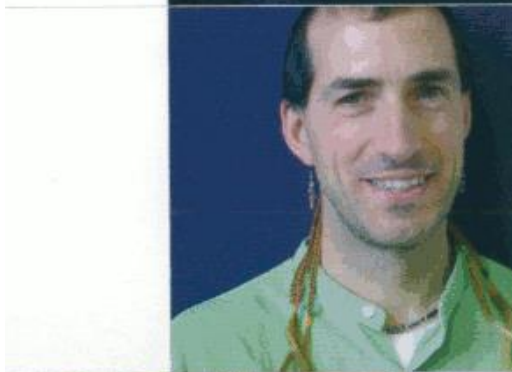
Emily Lenton
Young People's
Educator



Kirk Peterson
Prisons
Educator



Alex Taylor
Cultural Diversity
Educator



Piergiorgio Moro
Campaigns and
Advocacy Educator



Garry Sattell
Community Participations
and Hep C Infoline Coordinator



Ray Hehr
Communications
Coordinator



Halo Jones
Office Coordinator



Staff members not shown:

Kim Dick Indigenous Educator
Kathy Don Young People's Educator

Mark Farmer

It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the passing of Mark Farmer who was a long-term member of Hepatitis C Victoria, an active participant in our support group and, since 2003, a member of the Board. He brought to the Board his own experience of living with hepatitis C, and **never let fear stop him from speaking out**. Through his commitment to the values of Hepatitis C Victoria and his willingness to share his own life story at a time when others were reluctant to do so, he helped create a potency to our work that is his real legacy today.

Mark died earlier this year after complications from a liver transplant in 2008. He continued his work with the Board as long as he was able.



In order to honour his contribution to Hepatitis C Victoria, this year we will present the **inaugural Mark Farmer Memorial Award**. This is in recognition of a person who was a motivated and strong self manager in their daily life, shared their knowledge and experience to help others and increased community knowledge and understanding of hepatitis C. It is through this award that we acknowledge and continue the legacy of Mark's work in the community.

Hepatitis C Victoria

For more information about Hepatitis C Victoria, about becoming a member or a volunteer, or to find out more about our resources please contact us at:

Suite 5, First Floor
200 Sydney Road,
Brunswick
Victoria 3056.

Telephone: 9380 4644
Hep C Infoline: 1800 703 003

Email: info@hepcvic.org.au
Web: www.hepcvic.org.au

Donations are gratefully accepted. Donations can be made with your credit card and all contributions over \$2 are tax deductible.

Highlights 2008/09 is an extract of Hepatitis C Victoria's Annual Report.

The Financial Report and other Annual Report documentation can be supplied on request. Please contact us on the address above.

HEPATITIS VICTORIA