



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **HIV/AIDS VOLUNTEERS HISTORY PROJECT**

A new project led by historians at Macquarie University and the University of Adelaide will examine the role of volunteering in Australia's response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Researchers wish to speak to individuals across Australia who volunteered in HIV/AIDS-related capacities in the 1980s and early 1990s. While Australia's response is widely considered one of the world's best, the crucial role of volunteers is yet to be fully acknowledged. This project will explore volunteers' contributions and the impact of their involvement on individuals and non-profit community-based organisations.

Volunteers came from a diverse backgrounds, including gay men and members of the lesbian, bisexual and transgender community, people living with HIV/AIDS, people living with Hepatitis C, people with hemophilia, intravenous drug users, sex workers, and members of the broader community. They made a wide range of contributions from answering telephones, conducting community outreach, caring for and nursing people, providing administrative and business skills to AIDS organisations, publishing newsletters, serving on Boards as officials, and much more.

Project Leader Dr. Shirleene Robinson explains, "it is crucial we acknowledge the role that volunteers played in managing what threatened to become one of the biggest public health crises in this country in the twentieth century." She adds: "many of the men and women who served as volunteers were members of marginalised communities and their role has never properly been recognised."

Volunteer work is an invaluable resource for many non-profit organisations. This study will also shed light on the role volunteers' play in times of crisis and how they can be best supported.

The project is being conducted by Dr. Shirleene Robinson and Associate Professor Robert Reynolds at Macquarie University, and Associate Professor Paul Sendziuk at the University of Adelaide, with support from the Australian Research Council. The project has ethics approval from both universities.

Interested participants can learn more about the project and express an interest in being interviewed at [www.hivaidsvolunteers.com.au](http://www.hivaidsvolunteers.com.au)

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