



ashm
Australasian Society for HIV Medicine Inc

MEDIA RELEASE

HIV Honour: Fighting the Pandemic

The Australasian Society for HIV Medicine (ASHM) is proud to announce that ASHM's CEO, Levinia Crooks, is being appointed as a Member in the General Division of the Order of Australia for service to community health through contributions to HIV/AIDS policies and education, to support for people living with the condition (HIV/AIDS), and to the promotion of improved health care delivery.

This acknowledgement of Levinia's decades of work in the area of HIV comes as Australia marks 25 years since the diagnosis of the first case of HIV in Australia. Levinia's early work in social research with positive people and their carers, to inform the development of support services, gave her a unique insight into the impact of HIV on society. She was part of the development of Australia's first National HIV/AIDS strategy (and contributed to the development of all subsequent strategies), and has been involved in the development and implementation of policy to support our response to HIV throughout the pandemic in Australia and the region.

"Through the very bad years, we saw many friends and colleagues dying," Levinia said. "In the pre-antiretroviral therapy period, we treated one opportunistic infection, only to see another more devastating infection take hold."

Levinia has been head of ASHM for eight years, growing the organisation to its present strength of 30 staff and extending the development of health care providers' skills to work in the HIV and related diseases sector, both in Australia and more recently overseas, particularly in Papua New Guinea. Levinia has worked with the PNG Medical Association, PNG Health Department, mining organisations and faith-based groups to support the response to and prevention of HIV.

The organisation's work now includes hepatitis B and C and sexual health issues. ASHM also provides policy development and input, education and training and collaborates with others in the communicable diseases sector to assist the transfer of intellectual capital, learned in the HIV sector, to other conditions.

Media enquires:

Contact: Dr Jonathan Anderson, President of ASHM: 0417 545 078

Levinia is available for interview on 0411 249 891, 02 8204 0700 (Mon-Fri) or 02 9518 3606 (after hours). Photographs available on request.

ASHM is the Peak member organisation representing medical practitioners and other health care professionals working in the HIV, viral hepatitis and related diseases sector in Australasia. ASHM Website: www.ashm.org.au