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December 1, World AIDS Day and HIV is Still Here in NSW

Twenty one years since World AIDS Day was declared as an international health day, HIV notifications in NSW remain stable. But the reality is *HIV is still here* with over 300 new cases of HIV infection diagnosed each year in NSW ¹and there is no cure.

Garry Taylor was diagnosed with HIV in 2007. While Garry is confident with the effectiveness of new HIV drug treatments, the diagnosis of HIV was a life changing event for him. He is concerned people are forgetting about HIV. "We need to get people, especially young people, who don't think they are at risk, thinking about practising safe sex. It may only take one unprotected sexual encounter to contract HIV".

"The most effective way for people to prevent HIV transmission is by using condoms. Testing regularly for STIs including HIV is also an important part of staying healthy" said Dr Roger Garsia, Chair of the peak NSW Ministerial Advisory Committee on HIV and STIs. "Also, young people travelling overseas, particularly to high HIV prevalence countries, many of which are nearby, need to be proactive with their sexual health and take condoms with them from Australia and consistently use them for their own protection."

Across NSW health workers, non government organisations and HIV/AIDS charities are holding events to raise awareness that *HIV is still here* and that HIV is being diagnosed on a daily basis.

On this year's World AIDS Day, people in NSW are being asked to say that *HIV is still here* and show their support for those living with HIV, by wearing a red ribbon and attending a World AIDS Day event.

For NSW World AIDS Day events go to www.worldaidsdaynsw.org

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