



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Main Committee**

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

**World AIDS Day**

**SPEECH**

**Monday, 1 December 2008**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Georganas, Steve, MP

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**Question No.**

**Mr GEORGANAS** (Hindmarsh) (7.55 pm)—I welcome this motion and thank and congratulate the member for Melbourne Ports for bringing such a critical issue to the parliament. It is significant because we should all be concerned about the global epidemic of HIV-AIDS. As we all know, today marks the 20th anniversary of World AIDS Day. According to a 2008 UN report on HIV-AIDS, globally there were an estimated 33 million people living with HIV in 2007. There were about 2.7 million new HIV infections and about two million AIDS related deaths in 2007. Sub-Saharan Africa remains the most seriously affected region, accounting for 67 per cent of all people living with HIV and for 72 per cent of AIDS deaths in 2007. The number of children living with HIV increased from an estimated 1.5 million in 2001 to about 2.5 million in 2007. Nearly 90 per cent of all HIV-positive children live in sub-Saharan Africa.

Australia's nearest neighbours, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea, are also facing growing numbers of people with the disease. The spread of HIV is one of the biggest development challenges facing Papua New Guinea today. The Australian government is the lead donor supporting Papua New Guinea's national HIV response. The emphasis of Australia's strategy is to prevent the spread of HIV in the region. The strategy also provides for supporting treatment, care and ongoing support for people infected and affected by HIV. Between 1981 and 2007, 27,331 Australians were infected with HIV, 10,230 were diagnosed with AIDS and, sadly, 6,767 died from AIDS related illnesses. Among those 6,767, there were two people whom I knew personally. In 2007 it was estimated that 16,700 people were living with HIV-AIDS.

The number of new HIV diagnoses in Australia has increased each year, from 718 in 1999 to 1,051 in 2007. The number of new diagnoses each year is around 280. Australia was very quick to implement strategies—we all remember the grim reaper advertisements on TV—and this assisted to prevent the acquisition of HIV. The rate here is almost half that of the UK and 10 times lower than that of the US. In my home state of South Australia, 1,127 people have been diagnosed with HIV-AIDS.

In 1988, the World Health Organisation declared the first World AIDS Day in an effort to raise public awareness about HIV-AIDS issues. World AIDS Day is now recognised and observed by millions of people in more than 190 countries around the globe. The Australian theme for World AIDS Day 2008 is, as we heard earlier: 'Enjoy life. Take control. Stop HIV-AIDS.' It is an appeal for all people to take personal responsibility in the fight to stop the acquisition and spread of HIV-AIDS.

Recent studies indicate that HIV infection rates in Australia are gradually increasing. The Australian government developed a national HIV-AIDS strategy which identified five priority areas for action, to be addressed over the life of that strategy. The goal of this strategy was to reduce HIV transmission and to minimise the personal and social impacts of HIV-AIDS infection. One aim of this review is to uncover innovative ways to provide education, support and clinical services that will both decrease the spread of AIDS within Australia and improve access to care for people living with AIDS.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr AJ Schultz)**—Order! The time allotted for this debate has expired. The debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.