

Drama Downunder



There is particular concern that rising STI rates amongst gay men and other men who have sex with men in Queensland are partly driving new HIV diagnoses: having an STI can dramatically increase the potential for HIV to be transmitted during sex, as sores and other irritations caused by STIs provide an effective gateway for the virus to pass from one body to the next.

As part of Phase 2 of the national **Drama Downunder** campaign the Federal Government and the Royal College of General Practitioners have approved the brochures for use by General Practitioners and other health professionals.

The three brochures are:

- **Stop the Drama Downunder!** (STI testing guidelines and technical notes)
- **Can We Talk?** (getting started with an STI discussion & STI testing tool)
- **Getting Your Patients Behind Testing** (instructions for GPs on patient self-collection of anal specimens)

The campaign is likely to create significant demand for STI testing from GPs, but should also make it easier for GPs to initiate discussion about sexual health. Men who have sex with other men may not easily volunteer this information, but GPs do need to know to offer effective health care e.g. pharyngeal and anal swabs, Hepatitis A & B and HPV vaccination, and HIV testing as appropriate. Some of these men will be married and not identify as gay, meaning they probably have less access to information and positive peer support.

The campaign website, www.thedramadownunder.info features two interactive services as well as a comprehensive range of information about STIs, testing and treatment. These services are:

- **Remind Me** – where users can sign up for a reminder service (via email or SMS) to help them remember when they should next book in to have a sexual health check
- **Let Him Know** – an online partner notification service where users who have been diagnosed with an STI can notify their recent sexual partners by email or SMS (anonymously if they wish)

A range of additional resources are also available. These include:

- A2, A3 or A4 size posters with 6 health messages
- 6 pop-up postcards providing information for HIV positive and HIV negative men.
- An STI booklet entitled *Stop the Drama Downunder! A sexual health guide for gay men*
- Business card sized cards for GPs to hand to clients to refer them to these online services



To order resources or for further information please contact Tim Spratling, Health Promotion Officer, or email QAHc's Clinical Liaison Officer, Bernard Gardiner on bgardiner@qahc.org.au.

Yours sincerely,

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