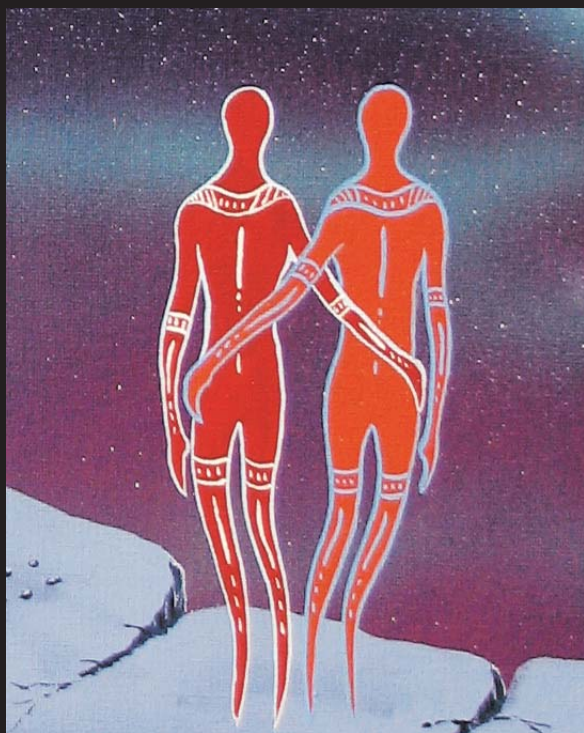
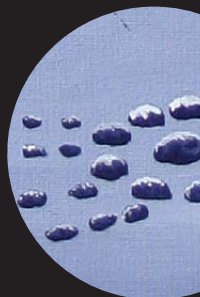


holding our own

An information guide on HIV/AIDS, STI's & hepatitis C for Indigenous Gay Men and Sister-girls.

This information is to help protect our future and improve understanding and support for those living with these infections.



Revised and updated edition 2006

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About this pamphlet

This pamphlet is written by Murri ones who are gay. It tells us as gay men and sister-girls how to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and Hepatitis C (Hep C). It also helps us to understand and support our people who are living with these illnesses.

This pamphlet is for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander gay men and sister-girls no matter which mob you belong to – city or country people, islander or mainlander.

It is important for all of us to be fully aware of the risks of HIV/AIDS, STIs and Hep C, not only to ourselves, but also to our families, our younger ones (young gay men and sister-girls) and our communities. There are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland living with HIV/AIDS and unfortunately some have died from this disease.

This pamphlet is supported by Elders who went to the Minjerriba (Stradbroke Island) HIV/AIDS Elders Forum in 1999. This information does not mean to offend anyone. Non-Indigenous readers should understand respect and not use Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander words without consent when talking or writing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



What is HIV?

HIV stands for Human Immuno-deficiency Virus.

- **Human** = This illness only affects people
- **Immuno-deficiency** = The immune system which fights germs in our bodies is deficient, that means it can't work properly
- **Virus** = A virus is a very small germ that can grow quickly and make us sick when it is inside our body

HIV attacks the body's immune system. The immune system is what protects and keeps our body healthy and strong.



What is AIDS?

AIDS is **A**cquired **I**mmune **D**eficiency **S**yndrome

- **Acquired** = To get infected with illness
- **Immune** = Our body's defence system which fights germs in our body
- **Deficiency** = When our immune system is damaged and not working properly
- **Syndrome** = A syndrome is not just one illness, it means a 'big mob' of illnesses

When the immune system has been badly damaged by **HIV**, a person can become very sick. **AIDS** is the name given to a 'big mob' of different diseases that make people who have **HIV** very sick.



☀ Is there a cure for HIV?

No, there is no cure for HIV.

There are medicines that can help to manage this illness. Many people living with HIV can live healthier lives if they find out **early**, start looking after their health and take HIV medicines, although these do not work for everyone.

☀ What are Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)?

STIs are infections (germs) which can get inside our body when we have sex. Condoms can protect us from most STIs.

Some of the most common STIs include herpes, syphilis (the pox), gonorrhoea (the clap) and Chlamydia.

Some of these STIs can cause open sores, cracks and breaks in the skin on our buddu (penis) or bum.

These sores, cracks and breaks in the skin can let HIV into the body when we have sex without using a condom.

Some STIs can cause pus, blood and other fluids to leak or weep from open sores, or from a person's buddu or bum. With some STIs, it is possible to not even know a person has them unless they have a check-up.

We should have a sexual health check-up regularly (every 6 to 12 months) or get treatment by a doctor for anything that does not look or feel right with our buddu or bum.

If we have an STI and have sex without a condom, we can easily spread these germs to our sex partner/s.

Some STIs, if left untreated, can cause infertility (unable to have babies).

Most STIs can be treated, controlled and cured.

For more information about STIs, don't be shame or embarrassed to talk to the local sexual health worker or doctor.



☀ Who gets HIV and STIs?

While most people with HIV in Australia are gay men, **anyone** can get HIV or an STI if they have unsafe sex (see below the list of things that are **safe** and **unsafe** when having **sex**).

If we inject drugs and share our injecting equipment with others, we risk getting or spreading HIV, Hep C and other illnesses. So we should always have safe sex and not share injecting equipment.

Always using condoms when having sex, and always using new needles and syringes (fits) to inject drugs makes it more difficult to catch HIV and other STIs.

☀ How to prevent catching HIV and STIs

The best way not to get HIV or an STI is to always have safe sex.

Safe sex is not just using a condom when we have sex with our partner/s. There are other things we can do to make sex enjoyable and safe.

☀ What is safe sex?

Safe Sex is:

- using a condom on our buddu (penis) when having sex (anal or bum sex) with someone
- someone wearing a condom on their buddu when they are having sex (bum sex) with us
- cuddling
- kissing
- massaging
- licking
- Wanking each other's buddu (mutual masturbation). Avoid getting someone's cum (semen) in any cuts, sores, or breaks in the skin on the hand. Cover these with a water proof bandage to stop HIV and other germs from getting into our body.
- HIV cannot be spread from mouth to buddu. (see section "What is unsafe sex?")

For more information about safe sex, don't be shame or embarrassed to talk to the local sexual health worker or doctor.

How to use a condom

Check expiry date and open with care.

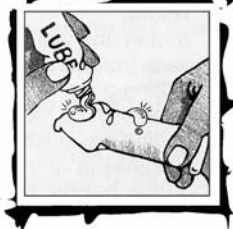
Pinch the top so air doesn't get trapped as you roll down.

Roll the condom on when the penis is hard.

Use 'big mobs' of water-based lubricant on the outside of the condom.

Then you are ready for action.

After cumming and (pulling out), hold the base of the condom so cum (semen) doesn't spill out.



Dispose of the used condom safely. Don't flush it down the toilet.

What is unsafe sex?

Unsafe Sex is:

- Us having anal (bum) sex with someone, without using a condom and 'big mobs' of water-based lube on our buddu (penis) and cumming (ejaculating).
- Someone having bum sex with us, without them using a condom on their buddu and cumming (ejaculating).
- us or someone else having bum sex without using a condom and pulling out (pulling the buddu out of the bum) before cumming
- Sucking buddu (oral sex) is low risk for getting HIV. The risk is much larger if someone cums in our mouth, especially if we have cuts, sores or bleeding gums. (It's best not to brush our teeth for at least **two hours** before sucking buddu.)
- Sucking buddu even without cumming is unsafe for some other STIs like the clap and chlamydia.
- Rimming (licking someone's bum) is unsafe for STIs like the clap and chlamydia. To prevent catching STIs from rimming, we should use a dental dam, glad wrap or a condom that has been split open and covers the bum hole. HIV cannot be passed on by rimming.

If you have questions about what's safe and what's not, be game and talk to the local sexual health worker or doctor.

We can't get HIV from:

- Safe sex (see "what is safe sex?")
- kissing - we can't get HIV from someone's spit (saliva)
- touching someone - like shaking hands, hugging, cuddling or massage
- sharing food and drink, knives, forks, spoons, drinking glasses
- caring and looking after someone who has HIV/AIDS
- mosquitoes, head or genital lice (crabs), fleas, ticks and other biting insects
- swimming pools, bath water, toilets

Is there a test for HIV?

Yes, there is a test.

Talking to our local sexual health worker or doctor will help us to understand what it means to have an HIV

test and how to protect and look after ourselves in the future. We shouldn't feel shame to talk with, and ask questions of our doctor or nurse before and after having the HIV test – they are there to help us.

What to do if we have been exposed to HIV

HIV can take years before it makes someone sick, so it's possible to have the illness and not know.

We can't tell if we have HIV by the way we look or feel. Gay men and sister-girls are not the only ones who get HIV, everyone can.

Remember, it's not who we are that counts, it's what we do.

The only way to find out if we have caught HIV is by having a check-up that tests for HIV. This test can be done by our local sexual health worker, doctor, health service or sexual health clinic.

If we know or think we have been exposed to HIV from:

- **having sex without a condom**
- **a condom breaking on you, or on your sex partner while having safe sex**
- **sharing fits**

There is a special treatment now available called PEP (post exposure prophylaxis). **But we must go to a doctor straight away.**

PEP is best if it is started within **2 hours** or up to 3 days of the HIV risk.

If we think we have come into contact with HIV we should go to a sexual health clinic or accident and emergency at the nearest major public hospital (base or general hospital) **as soon as possible. PEP treatment is not available from anywhere else.**

PEP is not a simple treatment and it must be taken exactly as the doctor tells us. **It is not an easy morning after pill**, it must be taken every day for four weeks.

The **PEP** medicines are very powerful and can make a person feel very sick with a belly ache, diarrhoea (the runs), vomiting (spewing up), headache and tiredness. There are other medicines that can help get rid of these side effects. **There is no guarantee that PEP will work.**

Our best protection from HIV is to always have safe sex and to inject safely.

Living with HIV/AIDS

If we have a HIV test and it shows that we have HIV it is important to remember that we are not alone.

It is normal to feel frightened and alone, angry or unsure about the future.

There are lots of people to talk to. We could talk to other people with HIV/AIDS to learn from them how they deal with the illness.

Talking to others who know and understand can help us to get on with our life.

Finding out early that we have HIV, means that we can start looking after our health. This includes taking HIV medicines which our doctor can help us decide the right time to start. The HIV medicines help most people lead healthier lives. Most people with HIV live for many years without getting sick.

Queensland Positive People (QPP) is an organisation that can give advice about treatments, support groups and offer different sorts of helpful information. It is good to yarn and talk with other people who are living with HIV/AIDS, because they may have had some of the same feelings, fears and experience as us.

The Queensland Association for Healthy Communities (QAHC) is able to provide support and information about HIV/AIDS, Safe Sex Practices, STIs and Hepatitis etc.

Contact details for the nearest QAHC or QPP office are on the back of this pamphlet.

Sex and living with HIV:

Living with HIV/AIDS does not mean we cannot have sex anymore, it just means having **safe sex is more** important for us and our sex partner/s.

Safe sex will help stop HIV being spread to our sex partner/s. Having safe sex protects us from getting other STIs and illnesses that can make us very sick.



What is Hepatitis C (Hep C)?

Hep C is a germ (virus) that can cause damage to our liver over time. If left untreated it can make us very sick.

There are medicines that help some people with Hep C live healthier lives. Taking the medicines can be difficult, but a specialist doctor would be able to explain how and when to use them. People with Hep C should avoid certain foods, drugs and especially alcohol. This can make people feel very sick.

There are a lot more people living with Hep C than HIV in Queensland. Anyone who shares injecting equipment with others can get Hep C.

It is very important that we all learn how to stop the spread of Hep C. It is especially important to explain the risks to our younger ones who might try injecting drugs.

Even if we don't inject drugs, it is good to know about Hep C so we can share what we know with others.

Who is at risk of getting Hep C?

- Anyone who injects drugs and shares needles, syringes (fits) and other injecting equipment is at risk of catching Hep C. Small amounts of Hep C infected blood can remain in used fits. The amount of blood can be so small you may not actually see it. This infected blood can then be injected into someone else's veins.
- Anyone who shares a razor or toothbrush with someone who has Hep C is at risk of catching it. Small amounts of Hep C infected blood can remain on a razor or toothbrush. The amount of blood can be so small; you may not actually see it.
- A few people have got Hep C from having unsafe sex when blood was present. Therefore it is safer to use a condom.

If you are going to inject drugs, always use a new fit every time. If you have sex, do it safely.

For more information about Hep C, contact the Hepatitis Council of Queensland on free call 1800 648 491.

If you are going to inject drugs, only use your own spoon, alcohol swabs, filter, glass, tourniquets and separate lots of water.



Clean the surface you are going to prepare (mix-up) the drugs on. Use a clean cloth, soapy water or alcohol swabs.



Always use alcohol swabs on your fingers and on the spoon before you mix-up the drugs. This kills the germs that cause illness and infections. Alcohol swabs are only good for one use.



Always clean the spot you are going to inject, with a new alcohol swab. Remember to only wipe in one direction so that you don't drag dirt or germs back across the injecting spot.



Only use sterile water in containers from chemists or needle exchanges. If you haven't got sterile water, you can boil up tap or tank water for a few minutes, but let it cool before using it.



Wash your hands before and immediately after injecting yourself or another person. Hep C spreads very easily between people by small amounts of blood on the fingers.

Information for people who inject drugs

It is important if we inject drugs that it is done safely. Safe injecting reduces our chances of getting or spreading Hep C.

These are some tips to make injecting safer:

- Always use a new fit every time we inject.
- If we don't have a new fit, think about taking the drug another way. Other ways of taking the drug are snorting (up the nose), swallowing, stuffing (up the bum) or smoking it. Remember, if we snort it; don't share the straws because they may have small amounts of blood on them.
- Always wash our hands in warm soapy water before and after we inject ourself or someone else.
- Only use our own spoon, alcohol swab, filter, glass, tourniquets and separate lots of water for mixing and rinsing. Hep C spreads very easily by sharing any of these things with others.
- Clean the surface we are going to prepare (mix-up) the drugs for injecting. Always use a clean cloth and soapy water, or alcohol swabs.
- Always use new alcohol swabs on our fingers and on the spoon before we mix the drugs. This kills the germs that cause illness and infections. Alcohol swabs are only good for one use. Remember to only wipe in one direction so that we don't drag dirt or germs back across the spot we are going to inject. Swabs are available from needle exchanges and chemists.
- Always use sterile water in containers from chemists or needle exchanges. They don't cost much and they are much safer than tap water. If we haven't got sterile water we can boil up tap or tank water. Make sure that the water boils well for a few minutes and then cools down before we use it.
- Always choose a new spot to inject each time. This keeps the veins healthy and allows them to heal properly between injections.
- Watch where our fingers go. Hep C spreads easily between people by small amounts of blood on the fingers. Wash our hands immediately before and after injecting ourself or another person. Be sure that others who inject us wash their hands before and after injecting.
- If we already have Hep C, it is possible to infect ourselves again if we reuse our own or someone else's used fit. This can further damage and put stress on our body.

How to get rid of dirty/used needles safely

If we don't have a dirty or used fit container given out from a needle exchange, we should put any used fits in a strong container, such as a plastic bottle. The container should have a tight fitting lid and it should be strong enough so it cannot be broken or punctured by the needle.

The container should be stored in a safe place until it can be handed into a needle exchange or chemist. Do not use a glass container as it may break easily.

Dumping used fits in drains, toilets, beaches and other public places is dangerous and illegal. Needle and syringe exchange outlets give out special containers to put used fits into. A person can return this container for safe disposal.

Everyone is allowed by law to have new and used fits. However, all fits must be kept in a sealed puncture proof container in a safe place such as a locked drawer or cupboard.

Disposing of dirty/used fits



Use the special containers to put used fits in. Needle and syringe exchange outlets give the container to you and you can return it to them for safe disposal.



Do not use a glass container as it may break easily. If you don't have a special container from a needle exchange, use a strong plastic container with a tight fitting lid that cannot be punctured by a needle.



All fits must be kept in a sealed container in a safe place like a locked drawer or cupboard. Everyone is allowed by law to have new and used fits if they are safely stored.

Other risks for catching Hep C & HIV

Sharing needles for body piercing, tattooing and blades for skin cutting or body scarring (for traditional reasons eg. ceremonies) can spread Hep C and HIV and other germs.

If having body piercing or tattooing done at home, make sure it is done safely. Make sure that the friend or relative uses new needles and washes their hands properly with warm soapy water before and after (or even better – wears new latex gloves). Do not share ink for tattooing as Hep C can live in the ink for a long time.

Body piercing and tattoos done in a tattoo or piercing shop should also always use new needles, fresh ink and latex gloves.

If we are having body scarring done, for personal or traditional reasons (eg. ceremonies), the area of skin to be cut must be cleaned properly. Cleaning the skin with alcohol swabs or medical antiseptic from a chemist is best.

The person doing the skin cutting should wash their hands properly with warm soapy water before and after cutting our skin (or even better – wear new latex gloves). A new blade should be used on each person.

DON'T SHARE NEEDLES for body piercing or tattooing.

DON'T SHARE INK for tattooing.

DON'T SHARE BLADES for skin cutting.



contact list

The AIDS Medical Unit and Sexual Health Clinics are able to provide a private and confidential testing service for STIs and HIV.

AIDS Medical Unit

Biala Building
Level 2,
City Community Health
Centre
270 Roma St
BRISBANE QLD 4001
Phone: 07 3837 5622

Princess Alexandra Sexual Health Service

Princess Alexandra Hospital
Ipswich Road
WOOLLOONGABBA QLD
4102
Phone: 07 3240 5881

Brisbane - Sexual Health Clinic

Biala Building
Level 1
City Community Health
Centre
270 Roma St
BRISBANE CBD QLD 4001
Phone: 07 3837 5611

Cairns - Sexual Health Service (The Dolls House)

The Esplanade
Cairns Base Hospital
CAIRNS QLD 4870
Phone: 07 4050 6205

Gold Coast - Sexual Health Clinic

2019 Gold Coast Highway
(upstairs)
MIAMI QLD 4220
Phone: 07 5576 9033

Ipswich/West Moreton - Sexual Health Service

Ipswich Health Plaza
21 Bell Street
IPSWICH QLD 4305
Phone: 07 3817 2428

Mackay - Sexual Health & Sexual Assault Services

C/o Community Health
12-14 Nelson Street
MACKAY QLD 4740
Phone: 07 4968 3919

Mt Isa - Sexual Health Services

Doreen Street Clinic
MT ISA QLD 4825
Phone: 07 4744 4805

Palm Island - Sexual Health

Joyce Palmer Health Service
Beach Road
PALM ISLAND QLD 4816
Phone: 07 4752 5100

Rockhampton- Sexual Health & HIV Services ClinicServices

8 Canning Street
ROCKHAMPTON QLD 4700
Phone: 07 4920 5555

Sunshine Coast - Sexual Health Service

87 Blackall Terrace
NAMBOUR QLD 4560
Phone: 07 5441 2459

Toowoomba - Sexual Health Service (Kobi House)

Toowoomba Health Services
Toowoomba Hospital
Pechey St
TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350
Phone: 07 4778 9600

Townsville - Sexual Health Service

35 Gregory Street
NORTH WARD QLD 4810
Phone: 07 4778 9600

Queensland Association for Healthy Communities (QAHC) is a community based health promotion organisation providing HIV and Hepatitis C prevention and sexual health promotion to gay and other men who have sex with men and Indigenous communities and which also promotes the health of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Queenslanders.

QAHC – Brisbane

30 Helen Street
NEWSTEAD QLD 4006
Phone: 07 3017 1777
Free Call: 1800 155 141
Fax: 07 3852 5200
Email: info@qahc.org.au

QAHC (Gay and MSM) – Cairns

Crangold Centre
192A Lake Street
CAIRNS QLD 4870
Phone: 07 4041 5451
Fax: 07 4041 6092

QAHC (QATSIHAP) – Cairns

269 -227 Hartley Street
PORTSMITH QLD 4870
Phone: 07 4035 6491
Fax: 07 4035 6490

QAHC – Gold Coast

Tower House Business
Centre
2190 Gold Coast Highway
MIAMI QLD 4220
Phone: 07 5572 8739
Fax: 07 5572 8369

QAHC – Sunshine Coast

Pikki Street Corporate Centre
8 Pikki Street
MAROOCHYDORE QLD 4558
Phone: 07 5451 1118
Fax: 07 5452 1611

QAHC – Townsville

Aitkenvale Business Centre
250 Ross River Road
AITKENVALE QLD 4814
Phone: 07 4729 2263
Fax: 07 4725 2908

Queensland Positive People (QPP) are an organisation that is run by people living with HIV/AIDS. QPP provides support and help to people with HIV/AIDS and can serve as a contact point between HIV+ people.

QPP – Brisbane: a safe environment, run by HIV+ people to find contact & support.

Phone: 07 3846 3939

QPP – Cairns

Phone: 07 4031 4350

QPP – Gold Coast

Phone: 07 5576 5601

QPP – Mackay

Phone: 07 4953 5071

QPP – Rockhampton

Phone: 07 4926 9250

QPP – Sunshine Coast

Phone: 07 5441 7077

QPP – Townsville

Phone: 07 4724 0277

Injecting Drug User (IDU) information and services are available in Queensland. They are able to provide needle exchange and safe injection information, such as ways to reduce the risk of HIV and Hepatitis C. Queensland Association for Healthy Communities (QAHC) offices also have information for IDUs.

Hepatitis Council of Queensland – Brisbane

PO Box 13172
George St
BRISBANE QLD 4003
Info Line: 07 3236 0612

Indigenous youth who may be seeking information and support regarding emergency accommodation, drug and alcohol issues, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis C, sexuality issues and legal issues, can contact the following organisations. The Queensland Association for Healthy Communities (QAHC) offices can also provide HIV/AIDS information and referral to appropriate services.

Indigenous Youth Service – Brisbane

60 Ferry Road
West End QLD 4101
Phone: 07 3393 0055

Logan Youth Health Service – Logan City

2-4 Rowan Street
SLACKS CREEK QLD 4127
Phone: 07 3208 8199

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Health Service

Gladstone Road Medical Centre – Brisbane

38 Gladstone Road
Highgate Hill QLD 4101
Phone: 07 3844 9599

Stonewall Medical Centre

52 Newmarket Road
Windsor QLD 4030
Phone: 07 3857 1222

Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Community Health Services (AICHS)

Brisbane AICHS – West End

60 Ferry Road
West End QLD 4101
Phone: 07 3393 0055

Bidgerdii Community Health Service – Rockhampton

162 Bolsover Street
Rockhampton QLD 4700
Phone: 07 4921 3080

Biddi Biddi Housing Co-Op – Atherton

20 Jack St
Atherton QLD 4883
Phone: 07 4091 1297

Charleville and Western Areas for ATSI Health

16 -18 Eyre Street
Charleville QLD 4470
Phone: 07 4654 3277

Gallang Place ATSI Corporation – West End (Brisbane)

31 Thomas Street
West End QLD 4101
Phone: 07 3844 2283

Goolburri Mobile Dental Service – Toowoomba

56 Lyndsay Street
Toowoomba QLD 4350
Phone: 07 4632 0338

Goondir Health Service – Dalby

1 New Street
Dalby QLD 4005
Phone: 07 4662 6199

Gumbi Gumbi Corporation – Rockhampton

25 George Street
Rockhampton QLD 4700
Phone: 07 4922 8355

Gurriny Yealamucka Health Services – Yarrabah

9 Noble Drive
Yarrabah QLD 4871
Phone: 07 4056 9388

Kambu Medical Service – Ipswich

27 Roderick Street
Ipswich QLD 4305
Phone: 07 3812 3843

Kalwun Health Service – Mermaid Waters

14 Kortum Drive
Burleigh Heads QLD 4220
Phone: 07 5520 6799

Mackay AICHS – Mackay

31 – 33 Victoria Street
Mackay QLD 4740
Phone: 07 4951 2833

Mamu Medical Service – Innisfail

10 Ernest Street
Innisfail QLD 4860
Phone: 07 4061 4477

Mudth Niyleta Corporation – Sarina

35 Central Street
Sarina QLD 4737
Phone: 07 4956 2509

Mulungu Health Service – Mareeba

14 Sutherland Street
Mareeba QLD 4880
Phone: 07 4092 3428

North Coast Aboriginal Corporation for Community Health – Maroochydore

27 Evans Street
Maroochydore QLD 4558
Phone: 07 5443 3599

Wuchopperen Health Service – Cairns

13 Moignard Street
Cairns QLD 4870
Phone: 07 4080 1000

Wuchopperen Health Service – Mt ISA

8 Burke Street
Mt ISA QLD 4825
Phone: 07 4749 2929

Yulu Burri Ba – Stradbroke Island

19 Dickson Way
Dunwich QLD 4183
Phone: 07 3409 9596



Queensland Association for Healthy Communities

Brisbane

Ph 3017 1777
Free call 1800 177 434
info@qahc.org.au

Cairns

Ph 4035 6491

Queensland Positive People

Brisbane

Ph 3013 5555

